PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION:

AN ANALYSIS OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS (2004–2017)



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ABSTRACT

Political exclusion from public decision-making processes is one of the main causes of conflicts worldwide. The scholarship on the political inclusion of marginalised populations in a broad range of contexts and fields is growing rapidly. A specific subject that is receiving increased attention is participatory budgeting, a process that allows citizens to decide how to spend part of the local government budget. Still, the studies that examine the influence of offline and online participatory budgeting on political inclusion in peacebuilding contexts remain scarce. This thesis aims at contributing to the literature by analysing the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Medellín, Colombia's second-biggest city.

A case study approach was used to explore the participatory budgeting process in Medellín, from its launch as a city-wide policy in 2004 until its last regulatory change in 2017. Instead of testing pre-specified hypotheses, the thesis uses grounded theory to identify the factors and pathways that contribute to explain the influence of Medellín's offline and online participatory budgeting on political inclusion in the view of its participants. The qualitative data collected and analysed suggests that participatory budgeting could boost political inclusion, while sometimes, even simultaneously, also reducing it. Using a grounded theory approach, this thesis develops a framework that explains how power dynamics and the deployment of the public budget through the participatory budget might foster or hinder political inclusion, depending on the design and implementation of the participatory budgeting process. The thesis also advances the literature by providing a thick description of political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, that characterises who are the actors that participate in the process and the distinctive dynamics of their interactions, along with how this participation may influence political inclusion.

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‘No es suficiente con decretar la democracia (…). A los individuos no se les puede juzgar por lo que dicen de sí mismos sino por lo que hacen. A los pueblos no se les puede juzgar por lo que declaran en la carta constitucional sino por las relaciones sociales, por la manera como vive la gente. Una sociedad tiene valor de acuerdo con las relaciones que tienen los hombres unos con otros, y no tanto por lo que diga un decreto, así sea la Constitución’.

Estanislao Zuleta, filósofo colombiano, 1988.

‘It is not enough to decree democracy (...). Individuals cannot be judged by what they say about themselves but by what they do. People cannot be judged by what they declare in the constitutional charter but by social relations, by the way people live. The value of a society lies on the relationships that people have with each other, and not so much by what a decree says, even if it is the Constitution’.

Estanislao Zuleta, Colombian philosopher, 1988.

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CHAPTER ONE

DOES PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROMOTE POLITICAL INCLUSION?

INTRODUCTION

'I recently found a news article dated June, 2015. Nothing different from what happened last week. It said that the *Comuna One*[1] is the one that receives more money from the participatory budgeting process, but that it is also the most affected by the extortion of illegal groups', stated Carlos García (2017) during a public hearing about Medellín's participatory budgeting process hosted by the City Council on February 22, 2017. A social leader[2] from Medellín, García was referring to events published on February 13, 2017, in the local newspaper *El Colombiano*, in a piece titled 'The participatory budget will be protected from illegal intervention' (Álvarez, V., 2017).

The article claimed that Medellín's Town Hall was in the process of devising an ambitious transformation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Furthermore, it acknowledged that Medellín's participatory budgeting process, which was formally launched in 2004, had encouraged citizen participation in the city and contributed to the implementation of projects

[1] The word *comuna* in Spanish does not have an equivalent translation to English. It is a territorial division of some Colombian cities that encompasses its urban division. The closest equivalent is the word district.

[2] A social or civic leader is a 'person who is publicly recognised for conducting, coordinating or supporting processes or activities of a collective nature that positively affect the life of their community, improve and dignify their living conditions or build social fabric' (Comisión Colombiana Juristas, 2018, p.9).

that benefited its inhabitants. However, the piece also echoed concerns that some of the resources of the participatory budget were being seized by both white-collar thieves and illegal armed groups alike.

García's intervention evoked a *déjà vu* for many, yet this time the feeling of recurrence produced by the 2017 news article was not an illusion. 'The Town Hall of Medellín assures that it has protected the participatory budget' (Pareja, 2015), was the title of the piece published in 2015 by the newspaper *El Tiempo* to which García referred in his intervention. The article consisted of an interview with the Town Hall's Secretary of Citizen Participation at the time, Juan Correa, who acknowledged the problems of the participatory budgeting process, while also assuring readers that the Town Hall had a plan to guard the public budget against criminal hands. In García's words (2017), despite being published more than two years before, this news 'disclosed almost the same information as last week's publication'. In 2020 and 2021, Medellín's Ombudsman's Office denounced, yet again, acts of violence and corruption in the participatory budgeting process (Personería de Medellín, 2020, 2021).

Participatory budgeting was introduced in Medellín during the demobilisation of former paramilitary combatants, as a means to promote the political inclusion of citizens in policymaking and public expenditure decisions to prevent violence (Concejo de Medellín, 2004, pp.18–20). Nevertheless, as the news articles referred by Carlos García (2017) show, in some cases participatory budgeting was not only far from including citizens in the process, but was in fact triggering exclusion. This is the puzzle that motivated this dissertation. In brief, participatory budgeting was implemented as a city-wide policy in Medellín as a measure to tackle violence produced by political exclusion. Yet, participatory budgeting has also been a source of exclusion

in Medellín. As a result, the main question that I explore in this document, presented as a doctoral thesis for the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies at the University of Oxford, is: *What is the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion in the view of its participants?*

The specialised scholarship on the differing outcomes of participatory budgeting does not yet provide a grounded framework for the pathways that may lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The main purpose of this thesis is to fill this gap. More specifically, instead of testing pre-specified hypotheses, this research examines the case of Medellín's participatory budgeting process from 2004 to 2017, by using a grounded theory approach to analyse the qualitative empirical data and identify the processes that may or may not associate participatory budgeting with political inclusion in the view of its participants. A grounded theory approach is also used to develop an explanation of how power dynamics and the deployment of public resources through the participatory budget might either hinder or foster political inclusion, depending on the design and implementation of the participatory budgeting process.

As secondary questions, I also examine the effect of digital tools on the political inclusion of participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Furthermore, I critically analyse the perceptions of local actors about the association of Medellín's participatory budgeting process with a peace agreement between former guerrilla group FARC-EP [3] and the Colombian

[3] This thesis uses the acronym FARC-EP to refer to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (in Spanish, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo*, FARC-EP). The FARC-EP was a communist guerrilla group founded in the early sixties (Sánchez, A., & Sánchez, G., 2004). The Colón Agreement included the basis for the creation of a political party by former members of the FARC-EP. It was founded in August 2017. This new political party is called Common Revolutionary

Government. This agreement, negotiated in Havana since 2012 and signed at the Colón Theatre in Bogotá in November, 2016 (hereafter, the Colón Agreement), includes participatory budgeting as a measure to prevent violence by fostering the political inclusion of marginalised populations (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, p.50). Hence, this secondary question allows to explore the connections of Medellín's local participatory budgeting process with a broader national peacebuilding agenda that features participatory budgeting as a local measure to deter new armed conflicts from emerging.

The remaining part of this introductory chapter is set out in six sections. *Section One* discusses the context that motivated this research. *Section Two* details the main questions explored in this dissertation and explains their relevance. In *Section Three* I summarise the literature that conceptually frames this research. Against this literature backdrop, *Section Four* presents the methodology used herein, describing the research design and the methods of data collection and analysis. In this section, I also clarify key concepts used in this thesis. Subsequently, *Section Five* explains the main arguments of this thesis. The chapter concludes with a description of the thesis' plan.

Alternative Force (in Spanish, *Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común*, FARC). The acronym FARC refers to the political party created after the Colón Agreement. *Chapter Five* provides more details about the origins of the FARC-EP.

1. JUSTIFICATION AND CONTEXT

Political exclusion from public decision-making processes is one of the main causes of conflicts worldwide (Paffenholz & Ross, 2015). I acknowledge that monocausal explanations are insufficient to explain complex phenomena such as violence. However, political exclusion at the national and local levels of government of a broad range of populations –such as minority groups and communist-oriented political parties–, often combined with the killing of political and social leaders, has been at the core of the Colombian armed conflict for decades; political exclusion has been a trigger and a consequence of Colombia's internal armed conflict (Duncan, 2015; Moncayo, 2015; Pizarro, 2015).

Since the 1980's, Colombia has carried out several reforms of its democratic system to include marginalised populations in different spheres of public decision-making, as a means to prevent conflict. This is the case of the establishment of the direct election of mayors and governors in the late 1980's and the creation of a broad range of mechanisms for participatory democracy in the Constitution of 1991, such as planning councils (Gehring et al., 2014; Mayka, 2019).[4] These reforms aimed at increasing political legitimacy through local elections and new participatory channels and enhancing the State's responsiveness and effectiveness through better knowledge of local needs and citizen oversight (Hernández, J., 2017). These changes were also part of the demobilisation agenda that was agreed with several guerrilla groups in Colombia in the early nineties (Restrepo & Barberena, 2014).

[4] In this thesis I use the words *channels* and *mechanisms* of participation, interchangeably, to refer to public instruments of participatory democracy for citizens to influence directly policy-making, as it is the case with participatory budgeting.

More recently, in 2016, the Colombian Government signed a peace deal with the FARC-EP guerrilla, that put an end to more than fifty years of conflict with this group. Participation is one of the most-used words in the Colón Agreement, which includes a broad range of participatory mechanisms aimed at preventing new conflicts (Guarín et al., 2017; OPIAF, 2018). Some of these participatory spaces constitute development programs with a territorial approach, participatory planning and budgeting processes, spaces for participation and decision-making in rural territorial planning, and community participation in the elaboration of a national program for the substitution of illicit crops. In the negotiators' reasoning, the broad range of participatory spaces contained in the accord aimed at overcoming patterns of political exclusion that triggered the internal armed conflict (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016; Interviewee 1, 2017).[5]

[5] The characterisation of Colombia as an internal armed conflict has been disputed by some political sectors (Otálora & Machado, 2012). In this thesis I use the definition of internal armed conflict adopted by the Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts. The Article 1º of the cited Protocol II, characterises a situation of violence as an internal armed conflict if it takes place in the territory of a State between its armed forces and dissident armed forces or other organised armed groups which, under responsible command, exercise control over a part of the territory as to enable them to carry out sustained and concerted military operations. According to the Colombian Constitutional Court (2007), two elements meet to classify a situation of violence as internal armed conflict: the intensity of the conflict and the level of organisation of the parties involved. When in this thesis I refer to 'violence', 'conflict' or 'armed conflict' in Colombia, I specifically denote the internal armed conflict that has taken place in this country since the mid 1960's, as I further examine in *Chapter Five*.

Similarly, in March, 2016, the Colombian Government and the ELN[6] guerrilla announced an agenda of six issues to engage in peace negotiations. The agenda emphasised citizen participation as key for peacebuilding, acknowledging political exclusion as a primary cause of the conflict. For instance, the first two points of the agenda included citizen participation in the negotiations and implementation of the agreements, and the enhancement of democracy to build peace (Gobierno de Colombia & ELN, 2016). In January, 2019, after an ELN attack against the main educational centre of the Colombian National Police in Bogotá, the Government suspended the peace talks with this group. The negotiations were not resumed since then at the time of writing of this thesis.

Despite several attempts in the Colombian recent history to foster the political inclusion of marginalised populations to reduce violence, such as the 1991 Constitution, the Colón Agreement, and the peace talks with the ELN, the influence of citizen participation on the prevention of violence in this country is not straightforward. Decades of armed disputes have broken social cohesion and heavily damaged personal and institutional trust (Sarmiento, F. & Sánchez, L., 2011; García, M., 2011; García, M., & Espinosa, 2013; Gutiérrez, F., 2015). Violence permeates the implementation of participatory mechanisms, not only affecting their preventative capacity, but in fact producing further political exclusion that fuels new conflicts. This poses many challenges on the road to building peace through participatory measures. For instance, since the signature of the Colón Agreement, the threats and offences against social leaders increased in Colombia (Comisión Colombiana Juristas, 2018). Furthermore, attacks against social

[6] The National Liberation Army, (in Spanish, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN) was founded in 1964, inspired by the Cuban revolution. It has a Marxist ideology and shares ideas about the theology of liberation.

leaders tend to increase during pre and post-electoral periods in this country (Ball et al., 2018; Guevara, 2019). Additionally, the increased implementation of a broad range of information and communication technologies (hereafter ICTs) to carry out Colombian democratic processes, raises questions about how the use of digital tools may influence political inclusion in the Colombian peacebuilding scenario, for the better or worse (Dajer, 2021). More research is needed to comprehend these difficulties.

This thesis provides an opportunity to advance the understanding of the influence of participatory democracy on political inclusion and of its effect on conflict prevention. The research explores participatory democracy processes that occur solely offline or with the assistance of online tools, amidst the implementation of the Colón Agreement. Hence, the general query that inspired this dissertation, asks about the influence of offline and online participatory mechanisms on political inclusion in Colombian peacebuilding scenario.

The participatory mechanisms in the Colón Agreement are featured in the accord as part of what the agreement calls an *Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Recurrence* (hereafter, Integral System). This system combines judicial and extrajudicial transitional justice mechanisms that, collectively, aim to end the conflict, build peace, and satisfy the rights to truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence in a comprehensive manner (Olásolo & Ramírez, 2017). In fact, the participatory mechanisms featured in the Colón Agreement are specifically framed as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence part of the Integral System, aimed to prevent the repetition of the conflict (Dajer, 2017).[7] As a result, in my research I was also interested in

[7] As Mayer-Rieckh (2017, pp.418-419) highlights, often the expressions 'non-recurrence' and 'non-repetition' are used indistinctively in the English version of different international legal documents,

exploring the perceptions of actors on the ground about the labelling of participatory mechanisms as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence and their capacity to prevent new conflicts from emerging by fostering political inclusion.

To examine these general research interests through a specific case study, in this thesis I dig deeper into the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Medellín, Colombia's second biggest city, from 2004 until 2017. Out of the extensive assortment of participatory mechanisms included in the Colón Agreement, participatory budgeting emerged as a suitable case for conducting a detailed exploration of the connections between citizen participation and political inclusion in Colombia due to five main reasons.

First, participatory budgeting is a mechanism that has already been implemented in Colombia during the last two decades, so data about it was available when the research started (Santana, 2010; Lara, 2014). Per the case of Medellín, participatory budgeting has been implemented in this city since 2004.

Second, when the study began, the implementation of participatory budgeting in Colombia was not dependant on the outcomes of the Colón Agreement, which has been uncertain since its endorsement by the Colombian Congress in November, 2016. As I further examine in

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such as the Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity, the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and the 2001 Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts. In Spanish, the expression is only translated as *no repetición*. To simplify, this thesis refers to guarantees of non-recurrence when discussing the fourth constitutive element of a comprehensive transitional justice strategy.

Chapter Nine, the Colón Agreement followed a public consultation in relation to a previous peace deal, dated August 24, 2016, referred in this thesis as the Havana Agreement given its negotiation and public announcement in Havana. The Havana Agreement was rejected by a slight majority of citizens on October 2, 2016, in a plebiscite, after a highly polarised debate about the peace talks between the FARC-EP and the Government of Colombia, since they began in October, 2012. The Colombian Congress approved a renegotiated accord that included some of the opposition's proposals. This accord, which was the one signed by the parties in Bogotá at the Colón Theatre in November, 2016, was sanctioned as a State policy to be implemented through several laws enacted in the year that followed. Still, the law that included participatory budgeting as part of the peace agreement has not been issued to date.[8] However, since the early 2010's, Colombia has issued several national laws featuring participatory budgeting, while many municipalities have also created their own local laws regulating this mechanism.[9]

Third, as I explain in *Chapter Nine*, during the course of my doctoral research two judgements were issued in Colombia encouraging national and local authorities of several municipalities to implement participatory budgeting processes as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence of the conflict (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2018, 2019). Hence, participatory budgeting emerged as a case that allowed for an empirical exploration of the influence of participation on political inclusion from a transitional justice preventative angle with promising avenues for further research and practice.

[8] When I use the expression 'to date' in this thesis, I mean the date of its final revision, in June, 2022.

[9] In *Chapters Six* and *Seven* I examine in detail these laws.

Fourth, at the outset of my research, discussions on the inclusion of digital tools in participatory budgeting processes emerged at the national and local levels, for instance in cities such as Medellín and Pasto. This allowed me to explore the influence of digital tools in the chosen case study.

Lastly, participatory budgeting has increasingly gained traction in Colombia and worldwide as a participatory mechanism to produce a broad range of outcomes, such as political inclusion – as intended in the case of the Colón Agreement –, or to increase transparency in public budget spending – as in a national consultation of 2018 that aimed, among others, to include participatory budgeting as a measure to tackle corruption in Colombia –. Hence, studying its empirical effects in a specific case study could be useful to understand better the impacts and challenges of participatory budgeting on the ground.

As a case study, the dissertation examines the participatory budgeting process of Medellín, from its launch as a city-wide policy in 2004 until its last regulatory change in 2017.[10]

[10] Regulation is a word used throughout this document, particularly to refer to the change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in 2017. It exceeds the scope of this thesis to define what regulation is, especially considering the broad range of existing definitions and theoretical perspectives to analyse this field (Lange, 2003). The meaning of regulation that I use in this document as a working definition, is the concept developed by Scott (2001, p.3): 'we can think of regulation as any process or set of processes by which norms are established, the behaviour of those subject to the norms monitored or fed-back into the regime, and for which there are mechanisms for holding the behaviour of regulated actors within the acceptable limits of the regime (whether by enforcement action or by some other mechanism). The definition of regulation can be narrowed somewhat by thinking of it is an instrument of governance which takes as its focus the deployment of authority'. When I refer in this document to the 'change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process', I discuss the reform of the legal provisions that serve as statutory instruments to set the procedures that rule the process.

Participatory mechanisms aimed at fostering political inclusion have been implemented in Medellín since the urban violence started in this city in the mid-1980's. This constitutes a strategy of resistance against the control exercised by illegal armed groups. Participatory budgeting is one of them. In fact, as I further discuss in *Chapters Four* and *Five*, participatory budgeting was introduced in Medellín in 2004, as a preventative attempt to tackle violence produced by political exclusion. However, as I previously mentioned, it has also been a source of conflict in the city, affected by broader patterns of violence that have not been oblivious to the participatory budgeting process. The positive and negative outcomes of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Medellín triggered the specific research questions examined in this dissertation, as I discuss next.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS EXAMINED IN THIS THESIS

In this thesis, I explore three questions that capture the main topics that inspired my research. First, a leading question that asks: *What is the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion in the view of its participants?*[11] This question examines, qualitatively, the relationship between participatory budgeting and political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The answer to this question sheds light on the capacity of participatory budgeting of becoming an effective instrument for deterring violence fostered by political exclusion.

[11] In *Chapter Four* I explain the process followed to define the specific research questions answered in the thesis.

The second query interrogates: *What are the effects of ICTs on this relationship in the view of the participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process?* Through this question, I wanted to explore if ICTs had any specific influence on political inclusion. The answer to this question is useful to guide the design and implementation of digital tools in participatory budgeting processes aimed at nurturing political inclusion.

Finally, the third research question that I explore in this thesis asks: *Is Medellín's participatory budgeting process considered as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence or associated with the Colón Agreement by its participants?* In this question I was particularly interested in the perceptions of local actors, on the ground of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, regarding its possible connections with the Colón Agreement or the national transitional justice policy. The answer to this question helps to understand how local actors receive and interpret transitional justice policies enacted at the national level also aimed at fostering political inclusion of marginalised populations. Furthermore, it also allows to examine the connections or ruptures between national and local peacebuilding and transitional justice policies that include participatory budgeting as a measure to tackle political exclusion.

I consider the three research questions that I examine in this research as intertwined 'wicked problems' that lack a yes or no answer (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Furthermore, the questions have a 'cascade effect' in which the answer to one research question is needed to answer the others. This interconnection means that, although the research questions address diverse issues, their answers create a nexus between apparently unrelated areas. For instance, I use the answer to the research question about the influence of Medellín's offline participatory budgeting process on the political inclusion of its participants, to analyse the effect of ICTs on this

relationship, given that an understanding of the offline dynamic is needed to grasp the impact of tech tools comprehensively. Moreover, to discuss the preventative effects of Medellín's participatory budgeting process if it were considered a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence, I first had to understand the influence of this process on political inclusion.

Furthermore, following the socio-legal perspective of this study, the three questions that I address in this dissertation are subjective rather than objective. Hence, instead of asking about normative takes on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, more aligned with a 'law in the books' approach, my research enquire the perceptions of local actors which are a part of what is understood as the 'law in action'. As per Pound (1910), in this thesis I use the expression 'law in the books' to refer to written or codified formal laws as they appear in the texts, in line with positivist legal understandings. Conversely, 'law in action', as understood by legal realism, refers to how such law in the books is interpreted and implemented in society (Llewellyn, 1930).

3. SYNOPSIS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarship on the political inclusion of marginalised populations in a broad range of contexts and fields is growing rapidly. A specific subject that is receiving increased attention in the literature is participatory budgeting. In line with my main research question, I primarily grounded my thesis in the scholarship of participatory democracy and, more specifically within this literature, participatory budgeting's influence on political inclusion.[12] In this thesis, I distinguish participatory democracy from participatory governance (Pearce, 2010) and

[12] In *Chapter Two* I explore the aforementioned participatory budgeting scholarship.

deliberative democracy (Pateman, 2012). On the one hand, participatory governance examines the inclusion of the perspectives of affected social collectives in the exercise of public decision-making processes (Schmitter, 2002, p.56). On the other, deliberative democracy studies the employment of practices that encourage deliberation between opposite views and interests in public decision-making processes (Young, 2001, p.672). In contrast, in participatory democracy citizens directly participate in public decision-making processes (Pateman, 1970, 2012).

The participatory democracy literature commonly features a tension, in which both a promise of political inclusion and a threat of exclusion can be found in participatory mechanisms (Pearce, 2010; Palacios, 2016; Koch & Sanchez, 2017; Zaremberg & Welp, 2020). In Latin America, this inclusionary-exclusionary tension is characterised by the enactment of a broad range of institutions and policies to include citizens in policymaking since the 1990's, coupled by a gap between participatory reforms on paper and in practice (Goldfrank, 2020, 2021; Kapiszewski et al., 2021b). The scholarship features diverse frameworks that analyse the conditions needed for participatory democracy to be inclusive, such as Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of citizen participation' and Fung's (2006) 'democracy cube', further discussed in *Chapter Two.*

As McNulty (2015, p.1429) notes, despite the growing literature on participatory budgeting, 'we still know very little about how inclusive these processes actually are'. Both international, national, and local scholarship show conflicting findings regarding the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in different contexts (among others, Souza, 2001; Velásquez & González, 2003; Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006; Gómez, 2007; Boulding & Wampler,

2010).[13] While some studies find a nurturing influence, others conclude the opposite. This is the case, not only with offline participatory budgeting, but also with processes assisted with ICTs and games (Cunha et al., 2011; Lerner, 2014; Spada et al., 2015; Secchi, 2017; Wampler et al., 2018; Touchton et al., 2019).

The literature attributes the different outcomes of participatory budgeting processes to a diverse set of circumstances, some of them associated with political conditions, such as the will of the elected authorities to carry out the process, and others related to considerations of public management, such as the capacity to execute the projects selected (Goldfrank, 2007; Wampler et al., 2018). Overall, the scholarship concludes that the diverse possible positive and negative effects of offline, online, and gamified participatory budgeting processes may both trigger political inclusion and exclusion, depending on the local context and how the processes and their components are designed and implemented.

More specifically for the case studied herein, there are conflicting findings concerning the influence of offline and online participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Medellín (Gómez, 2007; Urán, 2010; Gómez et al., 2012; Madariaga et al., 2014). To the best of my knowledge, none of the existing research provides a medium-level grounded framework on the pathways that may lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, nor the specific role of digital tools in this process. My research aims to contribute to filling this gap by providing a thick description of political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process

[13] In this thesis, I mean with 'international scholarship' the works that examine cases that do not include Colombia, with 'national scholarship' the research that surveys Colombia explicitly, and with 'local scholarship' the literature that discusses Medellín's case.

(Geertz, 1973). A main element of this detailed account, is to propose an actor-approach to participatory budgeting, in which I identify and characterise *who* are the actors that participate in the process and the distinctive dynamics of their interactions, along with *how* this participation may influence political inclusion (Wampler et al., 2018, pp.46–48), showcasing the 'micropolitics of encounters' in the process (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p.11).

Additionally, the scholarship on the legal design and effects of the laws that regulate participatory budgeting is rising. The literature mostly focuses on the arguments in favour and against the enactment of participatory budgeting legal rules (Velásquez & González, 2010; Lara, 2014; Dias et al., 2021), the type of laws that do so (Dias et al., 2021; McNulty & No, 2021), and the degree of implementation of national laws that mandate local participatory budgeting process (McNulty, 2019; McNulty & No, 2021). Still, there are no studies that examine how local and national laws containing participatory budgeting legal rules intertwine on the ground in Medellín. This thesis also aims to advance this literature by analysing the effects of national participatory budgeting laws in Medellín's case, as I do in *Chapters Six* and *Eight.*

The works of peacebuilding and transitional justice scholars that discuss the influence of political inclusion in participatory mechanisms to prevent violence are also relevant for my research.[14] The participation of civil society to prevent the reoccurrence of violence is

[14] This thesis shares Baker & Obradovic-Wochnik's (2016, p.281) characterisation of peacebuilding and transitional justice as discourses and practices of intervention aimed at (post)violent societies. Transitional justice is intended as a set of mechanisms aimed at confronting and dealing with human rights abuses and atrocities, whilst peacebuilding is more wide-ranging but often aimed at strengthening institutions as a means of preventing further violence. Although transitional justice and peacebuilding have spillover effects on each other (Lekha, 2007, p.585), they have been implemented in

consistently stressed as positive in peacebuilding scholarship, specially by the 'local turn' scholars. Still, additional research is needed to understand this relationship (Blattman, 2009; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Paffenholz, 2010; Zamudio, 2011; Voors et al., 2012; Gáfaro et al., 2014). More specifically, the works that examine the influence of offline and digitally assisted participatory budgeting in conflict scenarios remain scarce.

In sum, no medium-level grounded framework has been proposed, which might contribute to assessing hypotheses about the conditions under which offline and online participatory budgeting may nurture inclusion or exclusion in Colombian peacebuilding scenarios. Medellín's participatory budgeting process, both offline and assisted with ICTs, provides avenues of research grounded in empirical data to examine the influence of citizen participation in measures aimed at conflict prevention and the relative merits of digital tools in this case. Likewise, in line with the 'local turn' peacebuilding scholarship, my research's thick empirical take aims to provide a nuanced understanding of *what* the 'local' means in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, whilst analysing *who* is the local and *how* the power dynamics that underlie the interactions of local actors influence political inclusion.

parallel for decades (McAuliffe, 2017). However, the literature that examines the connections between both fields is rising (Lekha, 2007; Lambourne, 2009; Herman et al., 2012; Sharp, 2013a; Baker & Obradovic-Wochnik, 2016; Sharp, 2015; Millar & Lecy, 2016; Arnould, 2016). As Sharp (2013a, p.165) stresses, there is a 'growing sense of shared space between transitional justice and post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives'. Citizen participation in initiatives aimed at conflict prevention in both areas is one of these shared spaces. Still, more often than not, there is not a clear sense of how the different ideas from both fields interact in specific case studies (Millar & Lecy, 2016). This is the case of Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

The literature examining transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence has increased over the last decade. 'Transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence' is a concept that is continuously evolving. During the first decades of this term's development, the guarantees of non-recurrence were conceptualised as a specific component of the right to reparation. One of the main transformations of transitional justice - during what some scholars have labelled the fourth generation of the transitional justice genealogy (Sharp, 2013b; Nesiah, 2016) - is the rise of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence as an independent element of a comprehensive transitional justice strategy.

There is a consensus in the scholarship about the preventative function of the guarantees of non-recurrence (de Greiff, 2015a; Roht-Arriaza, 2016; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017; Payne et al., 2017). Nevertheless, there is still a need to ask what this prevention means both conceptually and 'on the ground' (de Greiff, 2015b; Payne et al., 2017), with some authors arguing for a contextual approach to prevention, that assesses the guarantees of non-recurrence on a case-by-case basis (Suárez et al., 2013; Roht-Arriaza, 2016; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017). An emerging element of analysis in this contextual approach is the role of civil society in conflict prevention (de Greiff & Dieng, 2018).

However, there is a limited scrutiny of participatory budgeting as a guarantee of non-recurrence in the transitional justice scholarship. Medellín's participatory budgeting process offers multiple opportunities for the empirical examination of this topic, particularly to provide an 'on the ground' approach to four issues currently discussed in the literature that I identified as relevant for my research. These issues are associated with the concept of guarantees of non-recurrence, the measures that are considered guarantees of non-recurrence, the conditions under

which they may prevent new conflicts from emerging, and the role of different levels of governance in shaping the guarantees of non-recurrence.

I grounded the research questions and answers included in this thesis in the literatures of participatory democracy, peacebuilding, and transitional justice referred to above, including the scholarship in these areas that analyse the use of online tools. While I built the questions using a grounded theory approach, the queries were also partly motivated by a systematic review of the main findings and gaps of the scholarship related with participatory democracy, peacebuilding, and transitional justice.[15] Building on this systematic review of existing scholarship, in *Chapters Two* and *Three* I use a narrative review approach to trace the scope and boundaries of the mentioned literatures that intersect in this research, using political inclusion as the thread that connects the three fields. A narrative review aims to provide an overview of a field of study through a reasonably comprehensive assessment and critical reading of the literature, in which interpretative researchers intend 'to enrich human discourse [...] by generating understanding rather than by accumulating knowledge' (Bryman, 2012, p.110). In *Chapter Ten*, I discuss how the answers to my research questions, presented in *Chapters Six*, *Seven*, *Eight* and *Nine*, interact with the works discussed in my critical literature review.

[15] Following the grounded theory approach that I use in this thesis, in *Chapter Four* I discuss how the data collected during the first stages of the research also informed the design of the research questions.

4. METHODOLOGY

This thesis aims to contribute to the relevant scholarship by using an exploratory approach based on a qualitative case study research design, that critically examines the case of Medellín's participatory budgeting process from 2004 until 2017. Corbin and Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach was used to collect and analyse the data. This section briefly explains the decisions that informed the research question, design and methods. In this section I also discuss relevant background information about Medellín and define main concepts used in this dissertation.

4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

The methodological approach of this research takes the form of a case study of Medellín's participatory budgeting process from 2004 to 2017. Surrounded by the Andean mountains, Medellín lies at the heart of the Aburrá Valley, as depicted in *Figure 1*. With a population of two and a half million (DNP, 2018), Medellín is the capital of Antioquia and the second largest city in Colombia. Over the past two decades, Medellín has had an outstanding transformation, from being one of the most violent and unequal cities in the world, to being recognised for its 'innovative city planning, design and development' (Corburn et al., 2020, p.13), often categorised as an 'urban miracle' (Humphrey & Valverde, 2017). Participatory budgeting was one of the main policies enacted in Medellín in the early 2000's to transform the city (Urán, 2009).

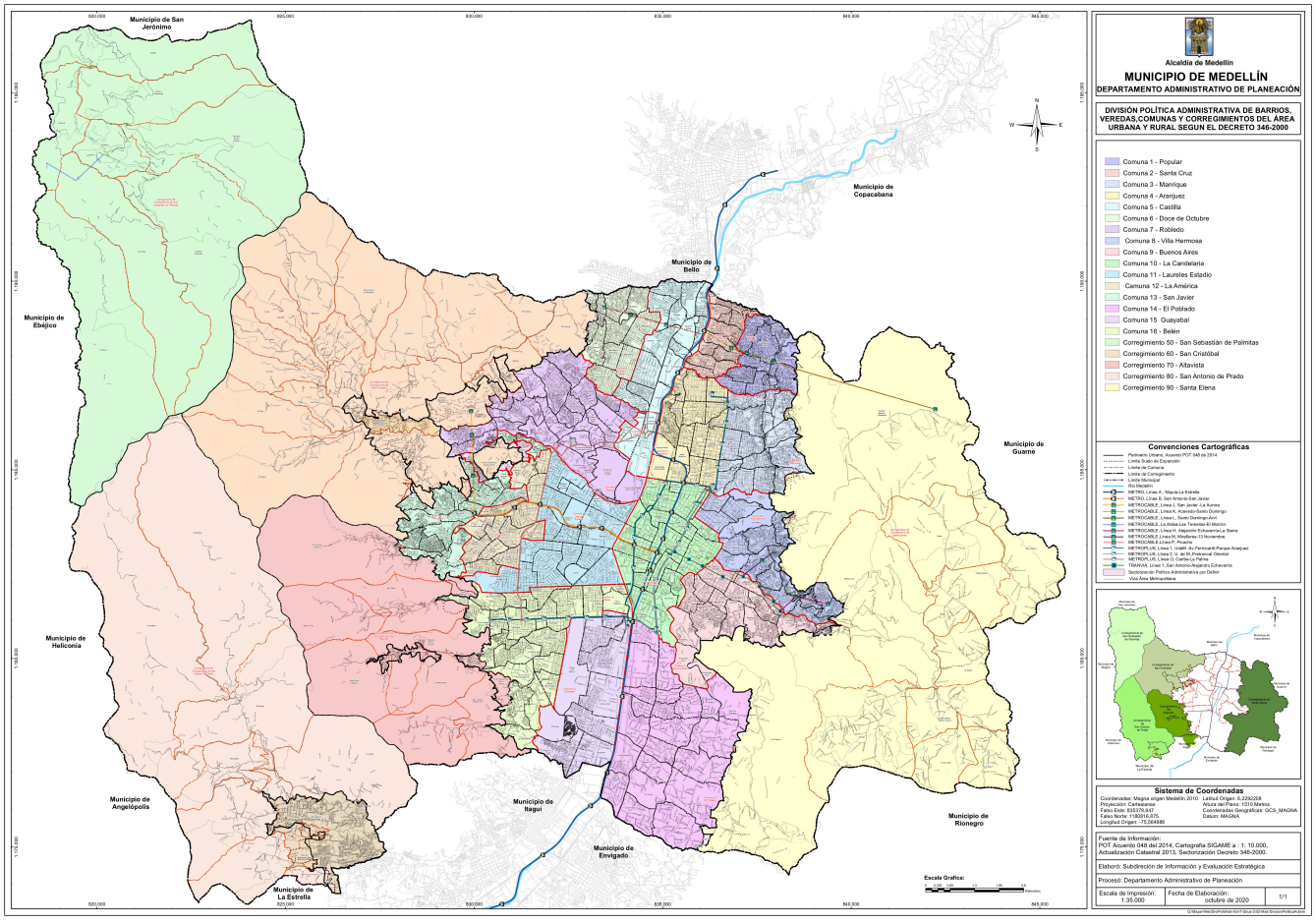
Figure 1 - Map of Colombia locating Medellín.



Source: United Nations (2016).

As depicted in *Figure 2*, Medellín is divided into sixteen *comunas*, which are urban territories of municipalities in Colombia, and five *corregimientos*, which are the rural equivalents to the *comunas*. In this thesis, I use the word localities as the plural word to refer to both *comunas* and *corregimientos*. In the examination of Medellín's participatory budgeting process that I carry out in this thesis, I use interchangeably 'national' to refer to Colombia, and 'local' to refer to Medellín. Furthermore, my study focuses in Medellín's city-wide participatory budgeting process, which includes both its sixteen *comunas* and five *corregimientos*.

Figure 2 - Territorial division of Medellín.



Source: Alcaldía de Medellín (2020).

Instead of testing pre-specified hypotheses, in my thesis I use Corbin and Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach to analyse the data and identify the processes that may or may not associate participatory budgeting with political inclusion in the view of its participants. Grounded theory is especially 'useful in new, applied areas where there is a lack of theory and concepts to describe and explain what is going on' (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.79). The aim of this approach is to produce a middle-range theory of a phenomenon, in this case participatory budgeting, derived directly from data collected in a real-world setting (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

In grounded theory, data collection, data analysis and theory development are interspersed throughout the study (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.79). My research follows this method by using an exploratory approach that employs a qualitative case-study design based on realism as an epistemological standing. In contrast to a positivist perspective, realism 'is concerned with how mechanisms produce events' (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.31).

In Corbin and Strauss' (2015) approach to grounded theory, data collection and analysis follow an iterative five-step process: theoretical sampling, data collection, coding, constant comparison and theoretical saturation. I employed qualitative empirical methods to gather data about the experiences of different actors involved in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, such as social leaders, national and local public servants, members of civil society organisations and citizens. These actors are the participants referred to in my research questions.

The unit of analysis of my research is focused on an understanding of Medellín's participatory budgeting process during the period studied herein as a *space of encounter and dispute.*

In this space, people from diverse backgrounds and with different perspectives are brought together to discuss local issues, both to build consensus or confront each other's views. The unit of analysis focuses on places, physical and digital, that acted as *spaces of encounter and dispute* in the design of the local regulation and implementation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, from 2004 until 2017, since they were the ones where political inclusion, or exclusion, was more likely to take place during the period of my case study. I analysed mainly four spaces during the period studied herein, as further discussed in *Chapter Four*. First, meetings of Medellín's urban and rural planning councils and assemblies of the participatory budgeting process. Second, discussions at the City Council and Town Hall of the regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Third, the participatory budgeting voting process. Lastly, the design and employment of digital tools in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

The grounded framework proposed in this thesis details pathways to political inclusion and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process that, rather than being static, aim to present a dynamic understanding of the phenomenon, that may change with time, and has diverse outcomes, both positive and negative. Therefore, *Chapter Eight* examines in detail different stages in the change of the local regulation of Medellín's participatory budget that provides a dynamic analysis of the process since it was first enacted as a city-wide policy in 2004, up until its last regulatory change in 2017, noting time changes. Still, references to the context of the process and peacebuilding in Medellín that takes place before 2004 are also made in the thesis, while I also include relevant data from further years.

The qualitative empirical data to study the described unit of analysis at a city-wide level was collected through 70 semi-structured interviews, 7 focus groups, 80 participant observation

exercises, and the examination of legal and policy documents, including laws, decrees, judgements and official reports about the participatory budgeting process.[16] The fieldwork was mostly conducted during July, August and November of 2016 and February, March, May, June, July, November and December of 2017. When my research started, participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process were discussing how to strategically incorporate ICTs into the process. Hence, the study also involved the design and pilot trial of a technological tool for Medellín's participatory budgeting process with the citizens and public servants of Medellín.[17] This provided data for understanding the benefits and challenges of the existing participatory offline process to foster political inclusion, and the role that ICTs could play in an online version of participatory budgeting.

[16] In *Chapter Four* I present the methodology used, the data collected and the process of data analysis.

[17] The design and pilot evaluation of the tool was financed by Build Up's Build Peace Fellows Program, which also provided technology support, training and mentoring for the project. Helena Puig, Michaela Ledesma, Jen Gaskell, Jacob Lefton and Jerry McCann, part of the original team of Build Up, provided valuable recommendations for the development of the digital tool. A team of six developers and designers that I directed, programmed and developed the tool based on paper prototypes. The technological development was carried out by Andrés Pardo, Gabriel Vasco, Héctor Alzate and Fabián Castillo, and the graphic design by Juan David Peña and Santiago Sotomayor. An initial digital prototype of the tool was built by Diego Ballesteros, Lukasz Gintowt and Alec von Barnekow, three pro-bono developers at Build Up and International Alert's #peacehack in Zürich in September of 2016. Luis Alberto Hincapié, Jasbleydy Pirazán and Dominique Khalil provided valuable assistance in the process of data collection, management and analysis for this research. Thanks to the support of the Research Accelerator Grants of the University of Oxford's Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, I licensed the tool to Medellín's Town Hall in April 2019, along with an implementation strategy, so that its use could be scaled in this city as a digital complement to the existing participatory planning and budgeting processes.

Untangling the links between participatory budgeting and political inclusion in Medellín ultimately involves interdisciplinary analysis, drawing on disciplines such as legal studies, sociology and political sciences, and long-term qualitative and quantitative research, with careful consideration of alternative explanations. Consequently, I am aware that the methodological approach of this dissertation and the framework proposed have several limitations, such as the fact that the thesis only suggests a substantive framework of Medellín's participatory budgeting process that may not be generalised to other cases.[18] Nevertheless, I hope that the empirical findings and arguments proposed herein, serve as initial steps for charting key relationships between Medellín's participatory budgeting and political inclusion, which can be further tested, for instance through quantitative data both in Medellín's and other contexts.

4.2. MAIN CONCEPTS USED IN THE THESIS

In this section I briefly delimit key concepts used throughout the thesis. The first one is participatory budgeting. The diversity of experiences and flexibility of the process make it difficult for scholars to agree on a single definition of participatory budgeting (Cabannes, 2015; Dias et al., 2019). For instance, Sintomer et al. (2013, p.10) define participatory budgeting as a mechanism of participatory democracy that 'allows the participation of non-elected citizens in the conception and/or allocation of public finances'. Conversely, Dias et al. (2019, p. 12) define participatory budgeting as a continuous and periodic process that involves a specific portion or the entire amount of an institution's budget, so that its spending is decided freely and independently by all the citizens participating in the initiative. Dias et al. (2019, p. 12) use a broader definition of participatory budgeting, including not only city-level processes, but also

[18] In *Chapter Ten* I discuss the limitations of this research.

the ones involving other levels of government and the ones developed by private, lucrative and associative organisations. Contrariwise, instead of using an operational definition and focusing on a particular set of rules, Wampler et al. (2021, pp.4–6) assert that participatory budgeting is based on common principles, including voice, vote, social inclusion, social justice, and oversight.

In turn, Article 90 of the Colombian Law nº 1757 of 2015 – which creates rules regarding citizen participation in the country, among them participatory budgeting –, provides a normative definition of this process, with specific outcomes that it should fulfil, such as strengthening the relationships between the citizens and the State. The cited Statute defines participatory budgeting in the following terms:

> The participatory budgeting process is a mechanism of effective, rational, efficient, effective and transparent allocation of public resources, that strengthens the relationships between the State and civil society. To achieve this purpose, the regional and local governments promote the development of mechanisms and strategies of participation in their budget's programming and the oversight and inspection of public resources' management.

As I further analyse in this thesis, many participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process do not view this mechanism, in practice, as transparent or conductive to enhancing trust in State's institutions, as the Colombian Law 1757 of 2015 asserts. Quite the opposite. Therefore, following Allegretti & Copello (2018), in this thesis I adopt a definition of participatory budgeting that accounts for the many experiences of political inclusion and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process found in this research, in which its

essence, compared to other mechanisms of participatory democracy, is *an equal attention to money and citizen participation.* On the one hand, in contrast with most participatory processes, where issues around funds are a 'behind-the-scenes subject', hidden until the end of negotiations among different stakeholders, in participatory budgeting the funds are at the centre of the process (Allegretti & Copello, 2018, p.35). On the other hand, the process allows citizens to directly decide the spending of the resources. This definition aligns with the substance of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, in which citizens can directly decide how to spend 5% of the annual municipal budget.

A second relevant concept used throughout this thesis is power. In the words of Streck (2014, p.64), 'The budget is a privileged place to feel (not necessarily to understand) power, since it is the hard core of public planning'. Medellín's participatory budgeting process gave citizens a quota of power to decide over public budget allocation. Hence, I understand power in Medellín's participatory budgeting process as pertaining to Weber's (1978) definition, namely, as the ability to decide and produce effects, in this case over how resources are spent, even if there is opposition. This definition of power is aligned with the concept of political inclusion used in this thesis, which is grounded in the data analysed, and pertains to *an experience of participation that gives the possibility to all citizens, especially those who are marginalised, to collaborate with and have an effect on public governance decisions regarding the participatory budget.*[19]

[19] In *Chapter Four* I depict the analytical process followed to define political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process and the data used to do so.

This view of political inclusion is closely aligned with an understanding of participation as exercise of political power. This perception was often expressed by participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in the data collected for this research (Álvarez, G., 2017; García, D., 2017a; Lopera, 2017b); in the words of Luis Fernando Lopera (2017a), a social leader, 'real participation is for us, as citizens, to have a real access to power'. In turn, political exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process used in this thesis juxtaposes inclusion, defined as a *withholding of an experience of participation that would have given a citizen the possibility to collaborate with and have an effect on public governance decisions regarding the participatory budget.*

The concept of political exclusion used herein is aligned with a recurrent perception voiced by participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process during the course of my research, categorised in this study as 'symbolic participation' (Arango, L., 2017; Palacio, 2017; Saldana, 2017; Rojas, 2017). This perception is described, for instance, in the words of City Councillor Luz María Múnera (2017f) as a situation where 'you participate and I participate but they decide.' *Figure 3* shows a graffiti in a wall of a public university in Medellín, that displays the core of political inclusion as opposed to a symbolic participation. The graffiti reads: 'We don't want the administration to control our participation'.

Figure 3 - Graffiti opposing a controlled participation, written at the University of Antioquia in Medellín.



Source: Taken by the author in March 16, 2017.

Furthermore, in this thesis I adopt the abstract definition of democracy for the contexts of transition proposed by Przeworski (1986, p.56): 'Democracy is a particular system of processing and terminating inter-group conflicts'. For Przeworski (1986, p.58), there are three crucial aspects of democracy in a process of transition: (i) the institutionalisation of continual conflicts; (ii) the capacity of particular groups to realise their interests is shaped by the specific institutional arrangements of a given system; and, (iii) unlikely outcomes can and do occur. This broad view of democracy understands transition to democracy as a process of creating specific institutions that affect the capacities of various groups to realise their interests.

Pearce (2010, p.29) warns about the 'potential discursive trap' of the participatory democracy's language. Following Pearce (2010, p.29), I clarify the meaning of political inclusion

used in this thesis in three directions. First, I differentiate participation from inclusion. As Pateman (2012, p.14) notes, more often than not participatory mechanisms are used to 'describe situations where only a section of the population is granted citizenship; the remainder, which may be a majority, are merely subjects'. Hence, the fact that the government of a city opens the door for citizens to participate in the budget's spending, does not necessarily imply that populations traditionally marginalised from policy-making will automatically be included in this public decision-making process (Pagani, 2012, p.16). A broad range of barriers could, *de facto*, prevent inclusion.

Following the work, among others, of Garay (2003, p.17), Serageldin et al. (2005), Bernal & Vallejo (2011) and Pérez (2014), in the second clarification I distinguish political from social inclusion. For instance, Bernal & Vallejo (2011, p.164) claim that political inclusion is associated with the exercise of political power, whereas social inclusion is linked with social, economic, and cultural rights. Based on original data and the results of the social exclusion perception survey of 2008 in Medellín, Bernal & Vallejo (2011, p. 164) identify a correlation between social and political exclusion, given that the populations with lower levels of income and education participated the least in mechanisms of both representative and participatory democracy in the city. In their words, 'the socially excluded are equally excluded in public decision-making processes' (Bernal & Vallejo, 2011, p. 167). The influence of participatory budgeting on social inclusion is an issue of rising interest in the scholarship (Avritzer, 2010; Boulding & Wampler, 2010; Saguin, 2018). Furthermore, social inclusion was also an emerging subject in the data analysed for this dissertation. However, due to space and time constraints, I do not address this topic in my thesis and suggest it as an area for further research.

As a third clarification, in this thesis I differentiate political inclusion from empowerment. In 1995, Rowlands argued that empowerment is a term often used but rarely defined. Empowerment is also commonly associated with agency (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). In Rowland's (1995, 1997) view, empowerment is a process connected with power, where people outside a decision-making process are brought into it. In her words, this definition emphasises,

> participation in political structures and formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere, on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making. Individuals are empowered when they are able to maximise the opportunities available to them without constraints (Rowlands, 1997, p.13).

Besides, Rowlands (1997, p. 15) clarifies that empowerment operates in three dimensions; namely, personal–developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity–, relational–developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it–, and collective –where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone–. This view of empowerment is commonly used in the participatory budgeting literature to assess the influence of a participatory budgeting process on empowerment (Alsop et al., 2005; Peláez, 2018; Hajdarowicz, 2018).

Although the definition of political inclusion that I use in this thesis is also associated with power, I use political inclusion and empowerment as different phenomena. As I mentioned, the concept of political inclusion used in this thesis is grounded in the data, and pertains to the opportunity for all citizens, especially those marginalised, to decide how to spend the participatory budget. I use political inclusion, hence, as a wider process than empowerment. In

other words, inclusion may occur in a participatory budgeting process, but that does not necessarily mean that empowerment takes place. Therefore, I use empowerment as a much more nuanced process, that surpasses a mere inclusion and has a transformational experience in the citizen, either at a personal, relational, or collective level. This use of empowerment is aligned with Baiocchi & Ganuza's (2014) critical approach to the absence of an empowerment dimension in the global expansion of participatory budgeting.

5. MAIN ARGUMENTS

To answer the three research questions proposed in this thesis, I first developed a medium-level grounded framework that explains the circumstances under which Medellín's offline and online participatory budgeting processes may or may not foster political inclusion. Subsequently, I critically examined local understandings of transitional guarantees of non-recurrence in Medellín and perceptions of local actors about the association of Medellín's participatory budgeting process with the Colón Agreement, to analyse the views of local actors regarding the association between national and local participatory budgeting processes that aim to foster political inclusion, as I explain in this section.

5.1. THE PATHWAYS OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

I refer to the medium-level grounded framework proposed herein as the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process (hereafter *the framework* or *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*). I built this framework using categories that refer to the major themes of

my study. The categories emerged from a constant comparison of codes derived from my qualitative data in the process of data analysis referred above. As I explain in *Chapter Three*, the term 'pathways' aims to encompass a diverse range of trajectories shaped by the interaction of diverse actors, institutions, and context over time, influencing inclusion in the participatory budgeting process both positively and negatively, in a variety of forms (United Nations & World Bank, 2018, p.21).

5.1.1. THE MICRO-POLITICS OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

The central research question examined in this thesis asks: *What is the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion in the view of its participants?* On the basis of the proposed *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, I argue that the influence of Medellín's participatory budget on political inclusion is moulded by the actors that interact in the process and power disputes and encounters between them. These, in turn, are also affected by how the participatory budgeting process is designed and implemented, both offline and online. Hence, in the thesis I propose a thick description of the diverse actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Furthermore, I offer a categorisation of the different disputes of power between them, as found in the data analysed.

The classification of the diverse actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, along with the categorisation of the disputes between and within them, constitutes what I call the *micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process.* The referred *micro-politics* examine power disputes and encounters found between the actors, while discussing how they influence political inclusion and exclusion when decisions are made about the participatory

budget and the process' design and implementation. The *micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process* allow detecting actors on the ground that, although not named in legal statutes, are relevant to examine political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, such as armed actors. Likewise, they serve to identify key issues influencing inclusion at the core of the actor's relationships, often neglected in the 'law in the books', such as trust, capture, and corruption in the projects' contracting process, as I detail in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight.*

Some of the actors identified belong to Medellín's representative and direct democracy, while others interact outside democracy, such as armed actors, and others don't participate at all in the participatory budgeting process. Identifying the broad range of actors interacting in Medellín's participatory budgeting process allows to make relations visible, as proposed by Abello-Colak (2015, p.5);[20] for instance, by bringing to life a perception of many actors that intervene in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, regarding a conflict between representative and participatory democracy, permeated by violence, affecting the political inclusion of citizens (Palacio, 2017; Mejía, A., 2017; Rodríguez, G., 2017a). In the words of Ómar Urán (2017a), expert in citizen participation, during an interview, 'there is a conflict between participatory and representative democracy in the participatory budgeting process, fed by an incapacity of the municipal State to satisfy citizens' needs in their localities'.

[20] In *Chapter Seven* of the dissertation, I examine in detail the different actors and the disputes between them in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

5.1.2. THE VIRTUOUS AND VICIOUS BUDGET DEPLOYMENT

The qualitative data collected for this research suggest that participatory budgeting could boost political inclusion in Medellín for some, while sometimes, even simultaneously, also reducing it for others. Although the qualitative data gathered does not allow for an overall weighting of e. g. the percentage of cases in Medellín's participatory budget that result in inclusion or exclusion, in the thesis I propose a typology to differentiate the conditions that may lead to one or the other, both in the offline and online forms of the participatory budgeting process. I consider ideal types in a typology as abstract models that can serve as a guide to enable constructing hypotheses (Doty & Glick, 1994). Thus, the simplification made in the proposed framework aims only to explain a complex phenomenon for building hypotheses that could be tested in future research.

Overall, in the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* I claim that the cases in which participatory budgeting fosters political inclusion in Medellín during the period studied herein are distinguished by a spending type of the participatory budget in a manner that I call 'virtuous deployment'. This spending is characterised by competition in the budget's allocation and transparency on how it is spent, leading to the inclusion of citizens in their locality. In contrast, the cases in which the participatory budget hinders inclusion are associated with a spending type that I call 'vicious deployment', which is distinguished by a capture of the budget and an opacity of how the resources are spent, resulting in exclusion. By deployment of the participatory budget, I mean the processes of planning, prioritising, executing, monitoring, and evaluating its expenditure. In sum, this is the implementation of the 'law in the books'.

Ultimately, inclusion and exclusion may result, correspondingly, in empowerment and disenfranchisement. By empowerment I mean a process that has a transformational experience for the citizen, either at a personal, relational, or collective level. In contrast, disenfranchisement is associated with exclusion from the participatory budgeting process, where power is withheld from an actor, using a method that falls outside the agreed proceedings and deceives expectations of the participant up to the point of a complete alienation from the process.[21] Hence, inclusion could imply a transformational empowerment experience and exclusion may result in complete disenfranchisement from the process, but this might not necessarily be always the case. Distinguishing inclusion, exclusion, empowerment and disenfranchisement in the process, allows to capture a broad range of possible outcomes, from full inclusion to full exclusion, found in the data to explain the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion during the period studied herein.

Two main elements differentiate virtuous from vicious deployment of the participatory budget. The first one is the openness of the decision-making process. While in the former there is competition among the different actors, the latter enables the capture of the budget by a few powerful actors. The capture is a process that I define as the appropriation of the participatory budget by different actors through the restriction of the freedom to participate in the process. When the process is captured, competition among the actors is reduced, decision-making is monopolised by few actors, and public resources are seized to satisfy the personal interests of certain participants *outside the law that regulates the proceedings*. In contrast, competition and open

[21] In *Chapter Eight* I examine all the different categories and concepts of the medium-level grounded *framework of inclusion and exclusion.*

participation leads to a deployment of the budget *in compliance with the legal rules for participatory budgeting*.

The openness of the process entails that a range of different actors can participate in the participatory budget process, so that the allocated budget can positively impact local community groups in accordance with their priorities.[22] Central to competition in Medellín's participatory budgeting process is the fact that, unless participatory budgeting is connected to a planning process, the main needs of the communities would not be satisfied and the process will be easier to capture. Yet, as I discuss in *Chapter Six*, a scarce participation in planning and a disconnection between local development plans and participatory budgeting in Medellín's participatory budgeting process have favoured the capture of the process.

The second element that distinguishes virtuous from vicious budget deployment is what I characterised as the opacity or transparency in the spending of public resources. Transparency allows participants to control how resources are spent thanks to open, available information, and accessible and working legal actions to denounce and prosecute breaches to the process' rules, without risks against their personal integrity. Opacity, in turn, prevents participants to control the resources' spending due to a lack of information or inability to access it, or barriers to denounce or prosecute breaches to the process, either because the legal actions are ineffective in practice or risks to the participants' security prevent them to act against violations.

[22] As I further explain in *Chapter Six*, priorities on economic and social development of Medellín and other municipalities of Colombia are encompassed in municipal and local development plans. The former has a city-level application, while the latter is specific for *comunas* and *corregimientos*. In turn the usage of land is devised via an instrument called the 'land-use plan'.

5.1.3. THE 'CYCLE OF MARGINALISATION' AND THE 'SCHOOL OF CITIZENSHIP' IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

The *pathway of exclusion* may result in what I call 'a cycle of marginalisation'. This concept acknowledges that a 'vicious deployment' produces political exclusion. Exclusion, in turn, facilitates further capture of the participatory budget by actors playing outside the rules due to the privileged position favoured by the gain. Excluded participants will find it even more difficult to trust or participate in the process again, which may ultimately lead to their disenfranchisement. Although this might result in a reoccurrence of exclusion and more concentration of power in fewer participants, the medium-level grounded framework proposed hypothesises that adding transparency and competition to the 'cycle of marginalisation' could change the pathway, triggering inclusion.

Conversely, during the *pathway of inclusion*, possible due to a 'virtuous deployment' of the budget, the implementation of the participatory budgeting process allows for an open competition over the allocation of the resources, which is made possible given deployment transparency. This facilitates control over how the resources are spent, with an overall positive impact on long-term local planning. The *pathway of inclusion* often leads to what I labelled a 'school of citizenship'. Many of the participatory budgeting's participants interviewed and observed frequently acknowledged the practice as one that has allowed people to build citizenship and learn how to participate in democracy, thus spreading the exercise of political power out among the population and other democratic mechanisms.[23] Hence, in line with specialised

[23] Among others, several interviews (Interviewee 2, 2017; Interviewee 3, 2017; Interviewee 4, 2017), interventions by a broad range of participants in the participatory budgeting process during

scholarship (for instance, Novy & Leubolt, 2005; Schugurensky, 2004; Lerner & Schugurensky, 2005; Wampler et al., 2021), the reference to a school of citizenship is made here to categorise a situation in which a citizen learns how democratic processes work, exercises effective participation and builds trust in State institutions through the participatory budgeting process. This is a transformational experience of the participatory budgeting process when empowerment takes place, either at a personal, relational, or collective level. Still, the inclusion produced by the *pathway of inclusion* is unstable and fragile, vulnerable to capture and opacity that may easily change the pathway to a 'cycle of marginalisation'.

Medellín's participatory budgeting process is not static and linear. Therefore, the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* are meant to be understood as a continuum of outcomes from exclusion to inclusion. Specific examples of trends found in the qualitative data that show diverse possible outcomes, incorporated in *Chapter Eight*, illustrate the diverse types of proposed outcomes. The qualitative data also supports the claim that the process is dynamic.

5.1.4. THE INFLUENCE OF THE PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS' LEGAL AND DIGITAL DESIGN ON POLITICAL INCLUSION

In the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*, I also discuss how the power disputes at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process have affected and are affected by its legal design, influencing inclusion and exclusion. In this case, how 'the law in the books' is designed matters

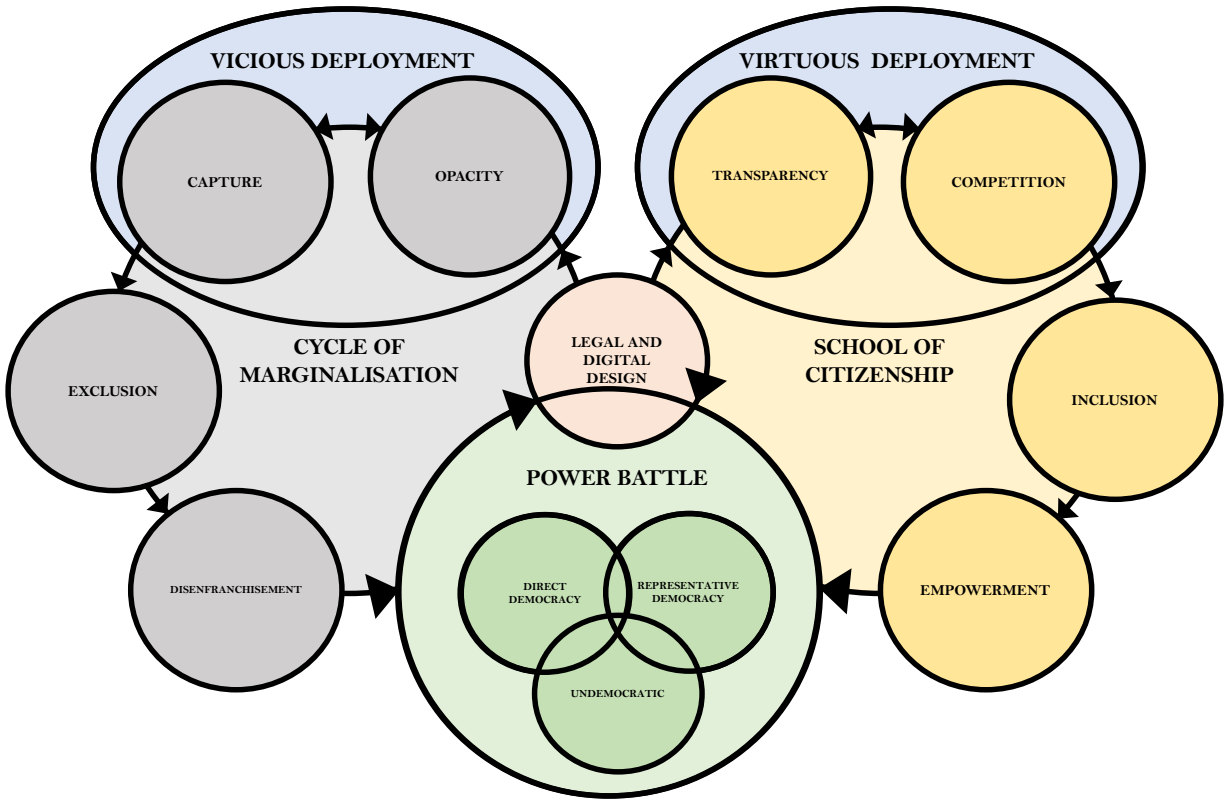
various hearings (Álvarez, B., 2017; Arango, L., 2017; Lopera, 2017b; Zapata, John, 2017), and focus groups (Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academia, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2016).

and has effects by its own merits. Power disputes between different actors throughout the years have influenced the regulation of the process. In certain cases, the pressure of some actors has triggered the inclusion of some participants; however, this has also affected other power holders who, in turn, have sparked new reforms, either in the City Council, the Town Hall or the judiciary, as I examine in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight*. Legal norms have also intended to prevent the exercise of undemocratic practices that may end in the capture of the participatory budget. Yet, difficulties in the implementation of these rules and legal uncertainty still exists in the participatory budgeting process due to the power disputes that occur at its core.

In the dissertation I also argue that ICTs can change the power dynamics in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Nevertheless, their use also has conflicting findings, leading to both inclusion and exclusion. Based on the data used to build the *framework of inclusion and exclusion*, I claim that ICTs could lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, depending on how they are designed and implemented. If their design and implementation allow for the process to be more transparent and to encourage open competition between the different actors, ICTs may lead to a 'virtuous deployment' of the participatory budget, hence favouring inclusion. If their design and implementation is opaque and allows for capture by specific participants to take place, they may encourage a 'vicious deployment' of the participatory budget, resulting in exclusion. This answers the second research question examined herein: *What are the effects of ICTs on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process in the view of its participants?*

In sum, the power battle, legal and technological design, and deployment of Medellín's participatory budget may lead to exclusion or inclusion, with the possibility of resulting in a 'school of democracy' or a 'cycle of marginalisation'. When placed together, these elements constitute the medium-level grounded *framework of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process from 2004 until 2017. The framework is depicted in *Figure 4*, which explains the influence of Medellín's offline and online participatory budgeting processes on political inclusion as perceived by its participants.

Figure 4 - A medium-level grounded *framework of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Elaborated by the author.

5.1.5. THE CONFLICTIVE CONTEXT AND PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM AFFECTING POLITICAL INCLUSION IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

Democracy does not happen in a vacuum. Therefore, I also argue that the *micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process* portrayed in this thesis are permeated by a conflictive context and a fractured participatory ecosystem in which Medellín's participatory budgeting process takes place, discussed in *Chapters Five* and *Six*. On the one hand, I claim that broader dynamics of violence in Medellín have not been oblivious to the participatory budgeting process.[24] Conflict reoccurrence has been directly connected with political exclusion as a cause and consequence of violence in Medellín. In 2004, participatory budgeting was instituted as one approach for preventing violence in this city. However, its implementation has had conflicting findings in relation to political inclusion. Amongst others, these results can be explained by broader patterns of violence in the city. The words of city councillor Jesús Aníbal Echeverri (2017a) during a public hearing about Medellín's participatory budget, briefly describe the situation: 'Participatory budgeting has brought many deaths. People have been displaced from one neighbourhood to the other'. This account shows how the interference of armed actors in the participatory budgeting process affects the political inclusion of its participants.

On the other hand, in the thesis I also claim that the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process is also affected by the broader participatory ecosystem in which it is embedded. The *participatory ecosystem* describes the political environment in which participatory budgets operate, 'where different channels of participatory tools and policies are integrated to enable

[24] In *Chapter Five* I examine the abovementioned context, by discussing the dynamics of violence in Medellín during the period studied.

shared decision-making on diverse issues of public interest' (Allegretti & Copello, 2018, p. 53). I argue that Medellín's participatory ecosystem, as portrayed in *Chapter Six*, impacts the extent of power exercised by participants in the participatory budgeting process.

Overall, the network of connections and ruptures between budgeting, planning and participation in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, also influenced by digital tools used in this system, constitutes what I call *the macro-dynamics of Medellín's participatory ecosystem.* These *macro-dynamics* describe the structural design and backdrop that underlies Medellín's participatory budgeting process, in which its participants interact and dispute power, influencing its capacity to foster political inclusion, as shown in my case study. Like Wampler et al. (2021), I identify as macro-level factors affecting Medellín's participatory budgeting process, issues pertaining to the national political context, the decentralisation of political authorities, and economic conditions that I examine in *Chapter Six.*

Although the 'law in the books' includes many connections in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, intended to include participants in the process, such as existing legal principles of planning in budgeting and participation in planning, the 'law in action' shows several ruptures and clashes that hinder such inclusion. These fissures, discussed in *Chapter Six*, comprise scarce citizen participation in planning, a disconnection between planning and budgeting, clashes between the national and local legislations, participants' discomfort with the amount of resources allocated for the participatory budget, and a difference between claimed effects of ICTs in democratic processes in the law, and perceptions and outcomes in practice. In the thesis, I claim that the ruptures found in Medellín's participatory ecosystem prevent many citizens from

surpassing a state of political exclusion in the participatory budget and feed a 'cycle of marginalisation'.

Overall, I argue that Medellín's participatory budgeting process has led to the political inclusion of new participants in public budget spending; still, this inclusion is fragile. Given the power disputes at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, political inclusion is vulnerable to the reoccurrence of exclusion. This risk is also fed by the conflict-ridden context and cracked 'participatory ecosystem' in which the participatory budget operates. Unless this broader background changes, political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process will be unstable and minor.

5.2. A DISTANCING OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS FROM THE COLÓN AGREEMENT

This thesis also examines local perceptions about the Colón Agreement during the 2017 reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The research explores the national legal framework on transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence and its implementation in Medellín, with an emphasis on the participatory budgeting processes. This enquiry is useful to answer the last sub-question of this research: *Is Medellín's participatory budgeting process considered as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence or associated with the Colón Agreement by its participants?* This examination allows to further explore the association of Medellín's participatory budgeting process with broader national peacebuilding and transitional justice policies that also feature participatory budgeting as a mechanism to foster political inclusion.

Based on the data analysed, I claim that Medellín's local participatory budgeting process was not mainly associated in practice with the Colón Agreement during the period studied herein, neither conceptualised as a guarantee of non-recurrence by the process' participants. In fact, as I discuss in *Chapter Nine*, a city-wide discussion about the connections between the Colón Agreement and Medellín's participatory budgeting process was evaded in the City Council, despite the issue being brought by several actors during the 2017 change of regulation. This shows a rupture found in my research between the 'law in the books' and the 'law in action' in Medellín's participatory ecosystem. The rupture questions the idea that a peacebuilding process is possible when local actors are not involved in the design and implementation of peace agreements and transitional justice measures. I began this research motivated by the interest of comprehending local understandings of guarantees of non-recurrence. Therefore, it was a counter-intuitive finding to discover a clear detachment on the ground between the local participatory budgeting process in Medellín and a national peace agreement that featured participatory budgeting as one measure to foster political inclusion.

6. PLAN OF THE THESIS

In addition to this introductory chapter, this thesis is divided into nine further chapters. In *Chapter Two* I discuss the literature of participatory democracy and, more specifically within this scholarship, participatory budgeting's influence on political inclusion that frames this research. Subsequently, in *Chapter Three* I examine the peacebuilding and transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence works in which I ground my analysis. Next, in *Chapter Four* I discuss the process of selection of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a case study, the development of the research question, and the research design and methodology used to gather and analyse the data.

Chapter Five is a 'scene setting' chapter, which shows that Medellín's participatory budgeting process is affected by broader patterns of violence in the city. Within this conflict, the participatory budget became a source of dispute between different actors. In *Chapter Six*, I portray and examine the *macro-dynamics of Medellín's participatory ecosystem*, that serve to understand the structural design and backdrop that underlies Medellín's participatory budgeting process, in which its participants interact and dispute power, influencing its capacity to foster political inclusion, as shown in my case study.

In *Chapter Seven*, I advance the thick description of political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, by depicting the diverse actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Furthermore, I propose a categorisation of the diverse disputes of power found between them in the data analysed. In *Chapter Eight* I describe the typology proposed in the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process*. Next, in *Chapter Nine*, I probe the conceptualisation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a guarantee of non-recurrence in the view of its participants, along with its association with the Colón Agreement. Finally, *Chapter Ten* presents the conclusions of the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RISING GLOBAL INTEREST IN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING TO ADDRESS A PERVASIVE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

INTRODUCTION

Discussing all the literature on political inclusion in democratic scenarios surpasses the aim of this thesis. Instead, in line with my primary research question, I mainly grounded this dissertation in the scholarship of participatory democracy; in the words of Pearce (2010, p.1), the 'unsuccessful twin to its triumphant sibling of "representation", the only feasible form of democracy in the modern age', but 'where hopes still reside for "real" democracy'. A rising demand for political inclusion of marginalised populations in public decision-making processes, coupled with growing scepticism about democratic representation, has increased research and practice on participatory democracy in the last three decades. For instance, Schugurensky (2016, p.2) argues that 'participatory democracy can provide a modest contribution to address the democratic deficit by generating meaningful opportunities for citizen engagement with governments', whilst Yepes et al. (2017, p.65) note that participatory budgeting emerged in Colombia during a crisis of representative democracy.

In this chapter, I briefly review the literature of participatory democracy and, more specifically within this scholarship, participatory budgeting's influence on political inclusion. I mainly claim that, although there is a growing scholarship on participatory budgeting, there are conflicting findings concerning its influence on political inclusion. Additionally, uncertainty remains about the impact of online and offline participatory budgeting processes on the political inclusion of marginalised citizens in conflict scenarios. To the best of my knowledge, none of the

existing research provides a medium-level grounded framework on the pathways that may lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, nor the specific role of digital tools in this process.

I structured the chapter into four sections. In section one, I showcase a tension between inclusion and exclusion commonly found in the participatory democracy literature, to subsequently portray the most common theoretical frameworks found in the scholarship to make sense of this dichotomy. In section two, I review the cited inclusionary-exclusionary tension with a specific focus on the participatory budgeting literature. In the third section, I discuss the literature on the use of tech tools and games to foster political inclusion in participatory budgeting processes. Finally, in section four, I examine diverse conflicting findings of the impact of participatory budgeting processes in different contexts, with a specific focus on Medellín.

1. MAKING SENSE OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY'S TENSION BETWEEN INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Building democratic polities was categorised by Cornwall & Coelho (2007, p.1) as one of the 'greatest challenges of our age'. Still, a broad range of new democratic spaces is being implemented worldwide in the form of what the cited authors label 'participatory spheres'; namely, hybrid scenarios where the State and society meet at the boundaries of institutions of formal politics, for citizens to articulate their demands (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, pp.1–2). Participatory budgeting is one of these spaces.

However, Pearce (2010, p.238) notes that this new wave of participatory democracy should be welcomed with caution and scepticism. Although representative democracy is in crisis, the argument in favour of participatory democracy is far away from won due to several challenges that this type of democracy faces, such as the risk of turning emancipatory hopes into new 'tyrannies', in which mainstream institutions appropriate its discourses and concepts without real empowerment on the ground (Pearce, 2010, p.15). In turn, Koch & Sánchez (2017, p.169) remark that citizen participation is frequently 'viewed as a panacea, overlooking the difficulties inherent in participatory processes'. In this section, I further discuss the tension between inclusion and exclusion found in participatory democracy, that permeates participatory budgeting processes, along with several frameworks available in the current scholarship to make sense of it.

1.1. THE LIMITS OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

Zaremberg & Welp (2020, pp.2–3) warn about the danger of utopian and dystopian approaches to participatory democracy. The authors claim that, more often than not, various studies found in this area have conflicting findings that have led, at times, to both idealised and demonised views of participatory democracy. In other words, at the core of participatory democracy lies a promise for citizen inclusion in decision-making processes, but also a vivid threat of exclusion disguised as openness and transparency, with calls for a horizontal and vertical inclusive democratisation (Palacios, 2016).[25]

[25] In the words of Rocha (2020, p.15), horizontal inclusion, refers to the inclusion of relevant elites across major groups, whereas the vertical one denotes both elites and broader populations within and across groups.

The inclusionary-exclusionary possible effect of participatory democracy spaces, couples with what Spada & Ryan (2017) call 'a failure to examine failures' in democratic innovation; i.e., a tendency of scholars to study participatory spaces considered as best practices, overlooking unsuccessful cases. For Latin America, Vásquez (2020, pp.8–9) notes that the literature has unnoticed a great majority of experiences in participatory democracy with limitations and obstacles; cases that show that, although citizen participation is at the core of the region's political agenda, the results run far short from the expectations. Not only the findings are conflicting in the literature, but also the sample of cases actually studied might be skewed, leading to a 'success bias'. As a mechanism of participatory democracy, participatory budgeting is not a stranger to the cited inclusion-exclusion tension (Allegretti & Copello, 2018, p.53).

Participatory budgeting emerged in Latin America during a time categorised as an 'inclusionary turn in Latin American democracies' (Kapiszewski et al., 2021a). Kapiszewski et al. (2021b, p.1) claim that, starting in the early 1990s, up until the 2000s, 'Governments across the region created institutions and policies aimed at including previously excluded groups and expanding the boundaries of citizenship'. Nevertheless, Goldfrank (2020, 2021) warns about the need to evaluate with caution and scepticism the cited reforms. In Goldfrank's (2021, p.118) words, 'despite the widespread experimentation with new or revived forms of participation and a tangible increase in access for popular sectors, the degree of meaningful inclusion remains limited, even in countries where participatory institutions are most prevalent'.

In this vein, Kapiszewski et al. (2021b, pp.30-38) note a gap between participatory reforms on paper and in practice, with the existence of what they refer to as 'three paradoxes of inclusion' that contribute to an uneven advancement of inclusionary initiatives in the region. First, a

double-edged character of democracy, in which, due to the distributional consequences of democracy, while it 'empowers popular sector actors and creates incentives for politicians to make inclusionary appeals, opponents may use the same channels to block or hinder inclusion' (Kapiszewski et al., 2021b, p.33). Second, a state weakness that both induces the adoption of and inhibits the implementation of inclusionary reforms, deceiving citizens' expectations. Lastly, a participation paradox, in which new channels for participation are usually not met with an increase in popular participation.

Per Colombia's case, Velásquez et al. (2020a, pp.17–22) claim that, in the 1990s, Colombia was also immersed in a democratic openness' process that created high hopes for the political inclusion of marginalised populations. Still, expectations were deceived a decade later due to a failed institutional design, lack of political will, the bureaucratisation of participatory spaces, and their co-optation for clientelist purposes.

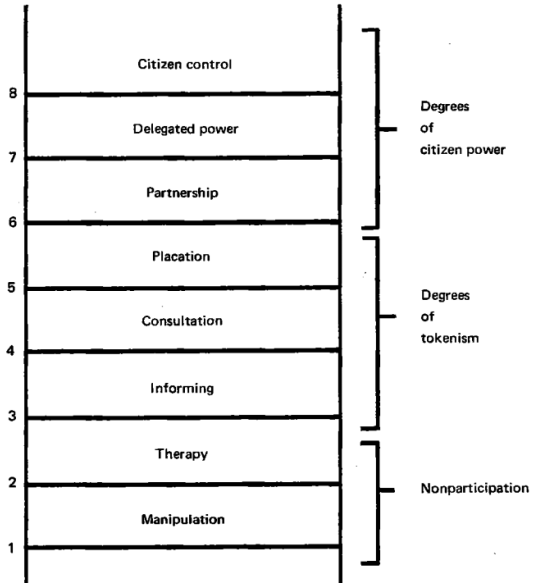
1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO ANALYSE PARTICIPATORY MECHANISMS

As Schugurensky (2009, p.61) upholds, 'participation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a healthy democracy'. Hence, diverse scholars have proposed frameworks that analyse the conditions needed for participatory democracy to be inclusive. One of the most known examples is Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of citizen participation'. Arnstein (1969) warns that at the core of participation lies a pledge for power redistribution that is not exempt from resistance. In turn, Arnstein (1969, p.216) defines citizen participation as a 'redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future'. Hence, she differentiates between what could be labelled as an 'empty

ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process' (Arnstein, 1969, p.216).

Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of participation', depicted in *Figure 5*, is a typology of eight levels of participation. At the bottom of the ladder lies manipulation and therapy. These two rungs describe mechanisms of non-participation often masked as participatory. The first one refers to public meetings with public relations purposes, whereas the second deals with group assemblies to treat marginalised populations from 'mental illnesses'. The next three steps deal with what Arnstein (1969, p.217) calls 'degrees of tokenism'; i.e., levels that allow the have-nots to have a voice and be heard. These levels are informing–a one-way flow of information between the State and the citizens with information purposes–, consultation–an invitation for citizens to provide their views without assuring that their ideas will be considered–, and placation–the possibility for citizens to advise without the option to decide–.

Figure 5 - Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation.

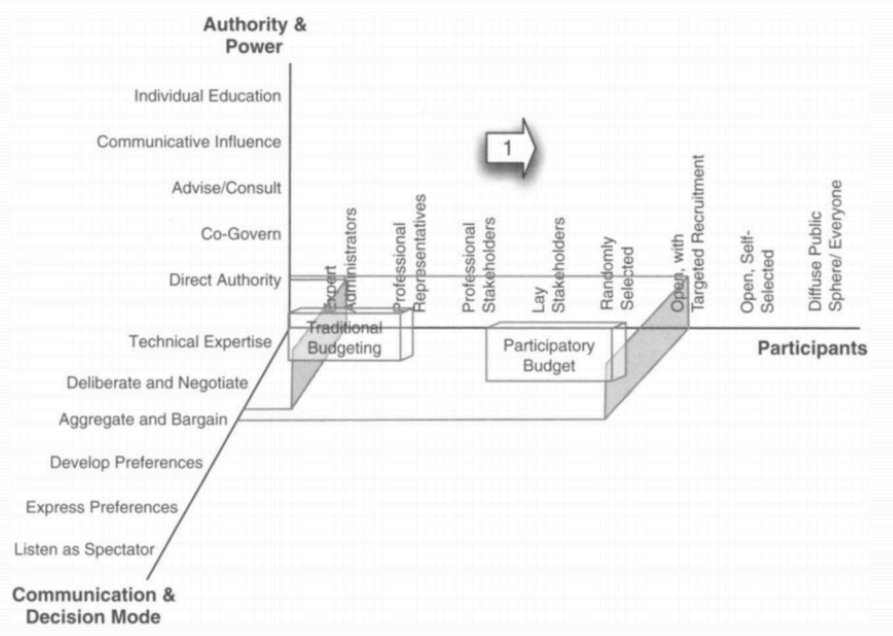


Source: Arnstein (1969, p. 217).

The final three levels of the ladder refer to grades of citizens' power, with diverse degrees of decision-making capacity (Arnstein,1969, p. 217). First, partnership, which enables citizens to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional powerholders. Next, delegated power, where citizens achieve a dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program. Lastly, citizen control, through which have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats or full managerial power. Participatory budgeting, in theory, belongs to this upper level.

A more nuanced theoretical framework to examine participatory democracy is Fung's (2006) 'democracy cube', portrayed in *Figure 6*. Fung (2006, p. 67) acknowledges the value of the 'ladder of participation' to study different modalities of participation. Still, he notes that this framework is not comprehensive as an analytical tool to explore the diverse varieties of participatory mechanisms observed in various countries. Hence, Fung (2006) proposes the 'democracy cube' as an analytical tool to examine a broad range of institutional possibilities for public participation. The cube frames a space in which any particular mechanism of participation can be located. According to Fung (2006), the diverse institutional designs across the cube's dimensions vary in their suitability to address problems of democratic governance. For instance, Fung's (2006, p.72) framework classifies participatory budgeting as a mechanism that fosters 'justice in public governance by changing the actors who are authorized to make decisions', bringing more equal opportunities for political influence. Hence, compared to a traditional budget setting, participatory budgeting, as depicted in the cube of democracy, shifts the actors that participate 'from a closed group of experts and professional politicians to open forums for direct citizen engagement' (Fung, 2006, p.72). Several scholars have used the cube of democracy to analyse participatory budgeting in diverse contexts (among others, Christensen & Grant, 2016; Gilman & Wampler, 2019; Shi, 2019).

Figure 6 - Participatory budgeting in Fung's (2006) cube of democracy.



Source: Fung (2006, p.72).

Instead of proposing theoretical frameworks to analyse participatory mechanisms, other scholars suggest requirements that the institutional design of participatory spaces need to meet to truly enable citizen participation (Fung & Wright, 2003; Cornwall & Coelho, 2007; Schugurensky, 2009; Pagani, 2012). To mention one, in their 'real utopias' model for what they call 'empowered deliberative democracy', with participatory budgeting being one of them, Fung & Wright (2003) propose three political principles, three design characteristics, and one primary background condition for participatory processes to empower citizens. First, as political principles, the mechanisms should focus on specific problems, involve bottom-up participation, and solve political problems through deliberation processes. Second, the institutional properties proposed by Fung & Wright (2003) include the devolution of public decision authority to empowered local units, the coordination between these units, and the use and generation of new State institutions to support and guide these decentred problem-solving efforts. Finally, Fung &

Wright (2003) propose rough equality of power between participants as a background enabling condition.

I did not use any of the mentioned frameworks in this dissertation to examine the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion. Although they provide a general backdrop to participatory democracy, useful to explain conditions that may lead to the inclusion or exclusion of participants, they do not capture some of the nuances within the participatory budgeting process identified in Medellín's case, especially issues related to violence. These models could be applied deductively to my case study, and throughout my thesis I refer to some of them. Nevertheless, they do not explain the diverse set of actors and clashes between them in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, nor how the interactions between actors in Medellín intersect with different institutional designs and implementations, leading to pathways for both inclusion and exclusion. Furthermore, there is a specialised literature on participatory budgeting that examines in detail its influence on political inclusion, the effects of ICTs in this process and its employment in conflict-affected scenarios. I analyse this scholarship in the following subsections.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING ON POLITICAL INCLUSION: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Participatory budgeting has expanded across the globe since its creation in Brazil at the end of the 1980s (Cabannes, 2015; Wampler & Touchton, 2017). Before the COVID-19 pandemic started, there were over 11.500 registered participatory budgeting cases in 71 countries (Dias et al., 2019, p.41). Parallel to the increase of participatory budgeting experiences, the last decades

have seen a rise of studies of participatory budgeting processes in Africa (Matovu, 2006; Fölscher, 2007; Heller, 2012), Asia (He, 2011; Wu & Wang, 2012; Sintomer, Traub-Merz, et al., 2013), Australia (Christensen & Grant, 2016; Hartz-Karp, 2020; Thompson, 2020), Europe (Sintomer et al., 2008; Sintomer, Traub-Merz, et al., 2013; Font et al., 2014), Latin America (Goldfrank, 2007; Matheus & Ribeiro, 2009; Goldfrank, 2017), and North America (Pinnington et al., 2009; Su, 2017; Lerner & Secondo, 2020). Whilst there is increased growth of practice and research of participatory budgeting processes worldwide, the literature shows conflicting findings on their influence on political inclusion, as I discuss in this section.

2.1. THE EXPANSION AND IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES WORLDWIDE

The expansion of participatory budgeting across the world has not been linear. Dias (2014) differentiates five major phases in the dynamics of the spread of participatory budgeting processes, whereas Porto de Oliveira (2017) examines the role of local, regional and global actors in the diffusion of participatory budgeting. In turn, Wampler et al. (2021, pp.17-40) identify three diffusion waves and three research phases to explain the adoption of participatory budgeting globally. Furthermore, Cabannes & Lipietz (2017, p. 69) argue that, after the first three decades of participatory budgeting expansion, different logics underpin the heterogeneity of the processes worldwide. For instance, along with the original project to 'radically democratise democracy', participatory budgeting has also been implemented to foster 'good governance' and as a 'technocratic tool'.

In 'The World Atlas of Participatory Budgeting', Dias et al. (2019) characterised the most prominent trends and shifts of participatory budgeting expansion in every continent. For the case of South America, Dias et al. (2019, pp.36–38) claim that this region comprised around 3.061 participatory budgeting processes in 2019, of which local governments promoted 97%. Likewise, 99.8% of the cases were located in imperfect democracies according to the *Democracy Index of 2018*, and 98.6% of the processes were carried out in countries categorised in the second-worst level of corruption according to the *Corruption Perception Index of 2018*. Nevertheless, the authors argue that South America is the continent with the highest transformative ambition in participatory budgeting, given that it emerged in some places as a mechanism to build democracy, fight the corruption of political elites, and achieve a fairer redistribution of public resources.

After more than 30 years of participatory budgeting experiences worldwide, a growing literature highlights both positive impacts and challenges of a broad range of participatory budgeting processes (Baiocchi et al., 2006; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014; Benton, 2016). Still, Wampler et al. (2018, p.22) assert that the research on the impact of participatory budgeting 'is at an incipient stage and underdeveloped in terms of the general range of possible impacts, such as PB's impact on participants' behavior, on citizens' well-being, on electoral politics, and on local governance'. Likewise, the authors assert that hypotheses in each cited area 'have only sporadically been tested, which means that the conventional wisdom on PB's impact has not been thoroughly evaluated' (Wampler et al., 2018, p.23). In a later work, Wampler et al. (2021, pp.10-11) account a wide range of outcomes for participatory budgeting, noting:

> Some programs work well and deliver many benefits to the local population, while others end in infighting, generate cynicism instead of trust, and undermine development efforts.

The literature depicts a broad range of challenges and constraints that could hinder the potential impact of participatory budgeting processes. Some of these risks are corruption, capture and clientelism (Velásquez & González, 2003; Pagani, 2012; Rumbul et al., 2018), poor process design and lack of political will to implement it (Goldfrank, 2007; Sintomer et al., 2008), barriers of access and instrumentalisation of participatory channels (Ganuza et al., 2014; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014; McNulty, 2015), and clashes between representative and direct democracy (Schugurensky, 2017).

Moreover, de Sousa Santos (2005, p.313) highlights that confrontation between representative and direct democracy in participatory budgeting processes often ends in legal controversies. Additionally, Cabannes (2004b, p.40) notes that a topic of recurrent discussion in participatory budgeting exercises is when and how they should be regulated, and how far to institutionalise it to preserve its dynamics.

The studies that examine the effects of participatory budgeting legal rules are rising. This literature mainly focuses on three issues. First, the arguments in favour and against the enactment of participatory budgeting legal rules (Velásquez & González, 2010; Lara, 2014; Dias et. al, 2021). At the international level, Dias et. al (2021, p.37) note two 'dichotomous narratives' in the referred debate; i.e., one that defends the adoption of legislation as a way to sustain or safeguard processes beyond the political and electoral cycles, and other that considers legislation as a mechanism that hinders innovation in the process. In Colombia, two opposing positions also exist regarding the enactment of a national legal framework for participatory budgeting and how detailed it should be. Supporters of such national regulatory framework argue that having a minimum set of rules provides clarity to the process, while securing sustainability by assuring a

legal mandate and rules for its enactment notwithstanding the political will of local authorities. Conversely, opponents claim that, since the local realities vary and differ in diverse municipalities, creating a one-size-fits-all model could exclude some participants and threaten its potential to build citizenship and adapt to local realities (Velásquez & González, 2010; Lara, 2014). The debate about the challenges that legal institutionalisation brings to participatory budgeting is also found in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, as I further discuss in *Chapter Six.*

The second main trend in the literature about the participatory budgeting legal rules are the type of laws enacted to regulate the process (McNulty & No, 2021; Dias et. al, 2021). For instance, McNulty & No (2021, p.5),

> identified four kinds of national laws that incorporate a participatory approach to budgeting, depending on their primary focus: PB-specific, financial governance, planning, and citizen participation. In addition, the majority of the laws are embedded in a broader effort to decentralize government.

As McNulty & No (2021) notes, there is a need of more research regarding how variations between different types of laws may affect their outcomes. This study aims to advance this literature, by examining how participatory budgeting legal rules enacted at the national level in efforts to decentralise government influence political inclusion at the local level, as I further discuss in *Chapters Six* and *Eight.*

The degree of implementation of national laws that mandate local participatory budgeting process is the third main trend that I identified in the scholarship that studies participatory budgeting legal rules (McNulty, 2019; McNulty & No, 2021). This thesis advances the cited literature by examining how local and national laws containing participatory budgeting legal rules intertwine on the ground in Medellín. I further discuss this issue in *Chapters Six*, *Seven* and *Eight*.

2.2. POLITICAL INCLUSION ON THE FENCE IN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES?

Political inclusion is a common alleged impact of participatory budgeting in a broad range of cases across the globe. Both international (Souza, 2001; Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006; Boulding & Wampler, 2010; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014; Bherer et al., 2016), national (Velásquez & González, 2003; Allegretti, 2007) and local (Gómez, 2007; Urán, O., 2010) specialised scholarship has shown conflicting findings regarding the influence of participatory budgeting on the political inclusion of marginalised populations in different contexts. While some studies conclude that there is a nurturing influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion (Souza, 2001; Allegretti, 2007), others note the opposite (Gómez, 2007; Boulding & Wampler, 2010; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014; Bherer et al., 2016). Pagani (2012), Nazneen & Cole (2018), and Wampler et al. (2018), also identify conflicting findings in the assessment of the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion.

To give some examples, at an international level, in a study of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte in the case of Brazil, Souza (2001, p.177) asserts that the process 'does increase the capacity of excluded groups to influence investment decisions'. However, after

analysing the case of Rio Grande do Sul, Goldfrank & Schneider (2006, p.8) conclude that 'although PB in Pelotas, Porto Alegre, and elsewhere undoubtedly is intended to promote citizen participation as a principle of democracy or good government, PB also serves partisan interests'. In turn, while studying the participatory budgeting process in Chicago's 49th Ward, Meléndez (2021, p.76) 'identified moments of systemic contradictions that either challenged or supported the inclusion and engagement of Latino participants in the PB49 process'. Furthermore, in the case of Perú, McNulty (2013) found that Perú's participatory budgeting process has included new voices in decision-making processes, such as in the case of laborers and farmers; still, this inclusion is limited, failing to engage women.

The results of studies about the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Colombia are also diverse. For example, Allegretti (2007) suggests that the use of participatory budgeting in Pasto, Colombia, has successfully strengthened the social fabric while fostering participation among excluded communities amid the conflict. Allegretti (2007) acknowledges the many difficulties of encouraging participation in Pasto. Nevertheless, he refers to this case as a 'virtuous example', given that the participatory budgeting process is not restricted to the discussion of yearly spending priorities; instead, it encourages the creation of mid-and long-term plans and projects for the communities involved (Allegretti, 2007, p.294). For Allegretti (2017, p.299), this allows citizens to nurture a culture of peaceful resolution of conflicts and better understand how Pasto's problems might be solved. As I further discuss in *Chapters Six* and *Eight*, although mid- and long-term planning is a central component of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, during the research I identified a rupture between planning and budgeting that eased the budget's capture and triggered conflicts.

In a comprehensive study about participatory mechanisms in Colombia, Velásquez & González (2003) also acknowledged Pasto's participatory budget as a process that fostered participatory planning and new leaderships. Still, they further elucidate that Pasto's participatory budgeting process, along with several participatory spaces in Colombia, is permeated by violence and clientelism; two phenomena that 'have reduced deliberation, compelled leaders to step down, introduced bias in implementing participatory processes, and created harmful loyalties' (Velásquez & González, 2003, p.30). Furthermore, the cited authors argue that clientelism in these mechanisms has a double character of inclusion and exclusion: Although it includes a certain number of people into its political networks, the referred inclusion is only partial because the citizen is included as the beneficiary of a political favour, not as a participant in the decisions about how the system operates (Velásquez & González, 2003, p.384).

In turn, while analysing participatory planning in Bogotá and Medellín, van Holstein (2018, p.39) 'shows that, while participatory planning can generate neighbourhood upgrades, limited flexibility and participation made citizens feel marginalised and dependent rather than included and empowered'. In a similar vein, Yepes et al.'s (2017) comparative study of participatory budgeting in Armenia, Cartago, Manizales and Pereira for the year 2014, found an instrumentalisation of the mechanism by local authorities, in which the decisions were presented as participatory, when in fact the design and implementation of the participatory budgeting processes fostered a representative and technocratic view of democracy.

The findings of the influence of political inclusion in Medellín are also conflicting. For instance, Urán (2009, p.183) acknowledges the presence of violence and clientelism in Medellín's participatory budget, while claiming that 'this process has also allowed to deactivate and

transform local violence by fostering local collective identities and requiring the State's intervention'. In Urán's (2009) view, at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process' capacity to nurture conflict transformation, lies a political will of the State to implement the policy and the quality of the technical proceedings. Furthermore, he argues that one of the main transformative features of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, is its capacity to give voice to citizens, even in the design of the process, which has a constructivist dynamic (Urán, 2009, p.193).

In a later work, Urán (2010) discusses some features of Medellín's participatory budgeting process that prevent political inclusion, such as violence and tensions between citizen participation and local political representation. In his view, one of the challenges of the participatory budget lies in the existence of what he calls 'community oligarchies', i.e., a small group of civic and/or political leaders, that co-opt the spaces of the participatory budgeting process. According to Urán (2010, p.142), these 'community oligarchies' are usually embedded in clientelist practices threatened by the participatory budgeting process. In his words,

> Predictably, when the spaces opened, more people participated and there were more points of view. (…) In this sense, the PB has helped to expose community oligarchies and at least enable some new voices to appear on the scene. Nonetheless, demanding accountability and quality of representation has been problematic. The old leaders often mobilised legal and other resources against efforts to make them accountable and complained of political persecution. This has generated conflictive environments in which legitimacy and representativity is disputed between the 'community oligarchy' and

emerging leaderships who are trying to change the logic of local politics and articulate it to local development (Urán, 2010, p.144-145).

Per Urán's (2010, p.141) view, when he wrote the cited article, it was 'too early to tell to assess the success' of the participatory budgeting process. This thesis, written more than ten years later, aims to provide new perspectives after the process has been implemented for over fifteen years, while discussing further how community oligarchies influence political inclusion, as I do in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight.*

In turn, Madariaga et al. (2014, p.162) conclude that Medellín's participatory budgeting process has nurtured dialogue between the State and diverse citizens. Still, the authors claim that the process has also fragmented some communities. Madariaga et al. (2014, p.162) also note that the community actors involved in disputes within the process are not uniform. In this vein, the studies of Gómez (2007) and Madariaga et al. (2014) argue that, instead of fostering the inclusion of marginalised populations, participatory budgeting in Medellín has triggered a fight over economic resources between legal and illegal groups alike. While Madariaga et al. (2014, p.162), conclude that Medellín's participatory budgeting process has nurtured the dialogue between the State and diverse citizens, Gómez (2007, p.68) claims that the participatory budgeting process has failed to transform the redistribution and management of local political power. Instead, she claims that traditional parties have used the resources of participatory budgeting to channel political promises through alliances with local leaders that participate in the process. In the words of Gómez (2007, p.69), 'this creates an open market of the social to the electoral [...] that permits a renewal of electoral flows while the politics in the neighbourhoods is depoliticised and the social demands for political inclusion are postponed.' In sum, Gómez (2007), Urán (2009, 2010), and

Madariaga et al. (2014) claim that participatory budgeting has to some degree fostered political inclusion of marginalised populations in Medellín, while also acknowledging dynamics that nurture exclusion.

In turn, Abello & Guarneros (2014, p.3279) argue that participatory budgeting in Medellín 'attracted the interest of local criminal organisations. One way in which they get involved is through intimidation and forced participation of their members into these processes'. Likewise, the cited authors claim that criminal actors also use corruption 'to reinforce their power and control over other societal groups' (Abello & Guarneros, 2014, p.3286). Specialised studies analysing political inclusion of youth at Medellín's *Comuna Thirteen* (Fierst, 2013), women at the *Comunas One* (Hajdarowicz, 2018; Peláez, 2018) and *Nine* (Hajdarowicz, 2018), and citizens of the *Comunas Ten* and *Fourteen* (Tobón, 2014), feature similar conclusions.

More recently, Velásquez et al. (2020a, p.240) noted that participatory budgeting became the primary space for citizen encounter in Medellín, allowing a broad range of actors to participate, such as victims, social leaders and LGTB members. Nevertheless, this process fails to solve inherited tensions from the clientelist and violent context in which it is embedded. Furthermore, acknowledging the evolution of participatory budgeting in Medellín, Guzmán (2017) notes that citizen participation has been at the core of community organisations in Medellín, which in many cases built their neighbourhoods without State support. In some cases, social organisations feel that participatory mechanisms are now co-opted by public administration, sparking dissatisfaction instead of inclusion. In fact, Velásquez et al. (2020a, p.159) note that legal institutions that regulate citizen participation in Colombia have been a 'permanent battlefield in Colombia'. Law has been used to tame social movements by enacting

new participatory spaces; still, since the mechanisms created have limited impact and inclusion, citizens activate social mobilisation to pressure their claims.

In this vein, Carvajal's (2019) study on trajectories and milestones of citizen participation in Medellín, concludes that the institutionalisation and enactment of a legal framework for citizen participation in Medellín have, in cases, tamed the creation of social and political movements due to the formal requirements it adds to participation. However, Carvajal (2019, p.14) adds that the institutionalisation of participation in Medellín allowed new actors and groups to participate. This process was not exempt from tensions and conflicts between old and new democratic players which, in many cases, has triggered many participants to 'have hopeless views and positions about participation in the city' (Carvajal, 2019, p.55). In turn, Pimienta & Carvajal (2018, p.8) assert that the institutionalisation of participatory processes in Medellín has not necessarily transformed the political culture; on the contrary, 'new participatory mechanisms are combined with old anti-democratic practices, such as clientelism and corruption'.

Discussing the broad range of results of participatory budgeting, Goldfrank (2021, p.133) notes that the 'variation in PB outcomes as it diffused underscores the importance of paying attention to local context and of not assuming democratizing or inclusionary effects of participatory institutions'. In this vein, Gómez (2007, p.74) explicitly highlights a gap in the literature that requires more research in Medellín: 'What exactly can the participatory budgeting process achieve in terms of inclusion or how much does it add to exclusion?'. In an attempt to contribute to filling this gap, in this thesis I build on the work of the cited authors and the primary and secondary data that I have collected for my research, to propose a medium-level qualitative grounded framework that explains the pathways that may lead to inclusion and exclusion in

Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Furthermore, I also analyse the influence of digital tools on the political inclusion of marginalised populations in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. I discuss the literature on this topic in the next section.

3. INNOVATION WITHIN DEMOCRATIC INNOVATION: USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND GAMES IN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES

Participatory budgeting is often labelled as a 'democratic innovation' (Roecke, 2009; Coleman & Sampaio, 2017; Lüchmann, 2017); i.e., an institution 'specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process' (Smith, 2009, p.1). According to Smith (2009, p.1), democratic innovations are 'innovative' because they depart from traditional institutional architectures of competitive elections in democratic processes. In the past fifteen years, traditional deliberation and voting procedures within participatory budgeting processes worldwide have also featured innovative tools within their proceedings, such as online voting platforms and games (Matheus et al., 2010; Sampaio & Peixoto, 2014).

3.1. E-PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES

The practice of using ICTs in democratic processes, such as participatory budgeting, is commonly known as electronic democracy or eDemocracy (Peixoto, 2009, p.2). This strand of the literature has examined the effects of digital tools in participatory budgeting processes in countries such as Argentina (Matheus et al., 2010), Brazil (Barros & Sampaio, 2016), Germany (Pieper & Pieper, 2015), Italy (Stortone & De Cindio, 2015), and the United States (Smith, 2015).

However, this area is still at a developing phase (Matheus & Ribeiro, 2009). Hence, despite the increasing use of ICTs in participatory budgeting processes, 'to date these technologies have not been fully utilized or understood' (Wampler et al., 2018, p.31).

At its origins, the literature in this area enquired about the potential of technological tools to enhance democratic processes. However, as Sintomer et al. (2013, pp.12–13) stress, using digital tools in participatory budgeting processes takes a broad range of forms, such as supporting the collection of proposals, informing, engaging and mobilising citizens, assisting the discussion and interaction among citizens, and enabling online voting, monitoring and overview of the participatory budget development. Therefore, Sampaio & Peixoto (2014, pp.413-414) suggest that a more relevant question is how different designs of online tools and various forms of use and ownership interact in diverse contexts towards a final result.

In the words of Sampaio & Peixoto (2014, p.414), 'the design of digital tools and online participatory processes carries values and interests of the agents that offer them, impacting and being impacted by these processes themselves'. The referred question acknowledges that technological tools are not neutral. I call this query the *agent-technology-process-influence question*, since it asks about the agent's influence in the technology design and use. I discuss this question in *Chapter Ten*, to analyse the influence of digital tools in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

Cunha et al. (2011) claim that the inclusion of digital tools in participatory budgeting processes can take different forms. In some cases, they can be used in a *subordinate manner*, within well-defined limits, as tools to provide information or monitor the implementation phase of the

projects. In other cases, they can be used in a *coordinated manner*, to support the processes of political decision making, for instance, facilitating online voting. Wampler et al. (2018, p. 33) also note two routes in using ICTs in participatory budgeting processes. The first one, similar to the subordinated category, provides information that gives transparency to the process. The second route, equivalent to the coordinated category, includes ICTs intended to increase, enhance, and facilitate user participation, such as online deliberation and voting tools.

The digital tools used in participatory budgeting processes take various forms, ranging from social media accounts and webpages informing about the process, to web-based platforms to collect ideas and applications for online voting (Democratic Society, 2016; Parra et al., 2017). The use of this assortment of tools in participatory budgeting processes can have different results, posing both strengths and challenges (Cunha et al., 2011; Allegretti, 2012). For instance, while Sampaio et al. (2011, p.1) conclude that 'the internet can effectively provide environments to enhance a qualified discursive exchange', Lim & Oh (2016, p.676) assert that 'offline participation channels are more effective than online channels because of their high levels of representativeness and deliberativeness'.

The specialised literature often notes as positive effects of technology use in participatory budgeting processes that they may increase the information and participation for citizens (Matheus et al., 2010), and could reduce participation costs, while providing the public sector with valuable aggregated and cost-effective information about the participants' preferences (Wampler et al., 2018). In contrast, the most common challenge is the inclusion of some populations in the process at the expense of others that may not necessarily participate online due to barriers of access, in a phenomenon called the digital divide; i.e., the difference in access,

information and understanding of digital tools between the haves and the have-nots, especially in rural and poor areas (Matheus et al., 2010; Aguirre, 2014; Democratic Society, 2016; Wampler et al., 2018).

To give a few examples, after analysing the results of an online referendum to decide spending priorities in Rio Grande do Sul, Spada et al. (2015) document an 8.2% increase in total turn-out with the introduction of an online voting option. Nevertheless, the authors also find that 'youth, male gender, income, education and social media usage are significant predictors of being online-only voters', which challenges the redistributive impact of the process (Spada et al., 2015, pp.20-21). In turn, examining online political conversations in the Digital Participatory Budget of Belo Horizonte, Sampaio et al. (2011) showed that reciprocity and reflexivity among interlocutors are rare; still, there are gains concerning social learning among the participants. Furthermore, Cunha et al. (2011) note that sometimes technology can also encourage participation and inclusion of people who live far from where budgeting takes place or are excluded in practice from the process due to various factors, such as illness, work or restricted mobility. In this context, online tools can help overcome some of the challenges of offline participatory budgeting.

According to Cunha et al. (2011) and Allegretti (2012), several factors explain why most countries favour participatory budgeting spaces that offer direct contact between citizens and amongst them and the administration. For example, electronic technologies may seem impersonal and technocratic in some contexts. For this reason, the authors recommend complementing digital interaction with face-to-face meetings and the use of technology already

appropriated by the population, such as radio and television. Therefore, some processes have hybrid designs that favour,

> a multi-channel participatory-deliberative system [...] that has multiple inputs and participation opportunities that are adapted to different participant profiles, considering their conditions (e.g. time, effort) to take part in such processes, and in this way have online and offline phases that complement each other throughout the process (Sampaio & Peixoto, 2014, p.425).

Still, Touchton et al. (2019, p.156) argue that,

> scholars and practitioners lack evidence surrounding these hybrid innovations' impact. This gap undermines democratic theory and policy because we simply do not know the extent to which some democratic combinations may generate desirable outcomes, or privilege certain outcomes over others.

Nevertheless, Wampler et al. (2021, p.77) hypothesise that digital participatory budgeting processes 'would generate some changes in accountability, but we do not expect to see many meaningful changes in civil society or well- being'.

There is a growing interest in Colombia in the use of online tools to support participatory budgeting processes. However, the scant national literature about this topic usually examines it from a normative perspective, discussing the potential positive and negative effects of adding technological components to offline participatory budgeting processes. For instance, Ángel

(2015, p.21), Viva La Ciudadanía (2016, p.31) and Guarín et al. (2017, p.21) highlight that digital tools could incentivise citizen participation, but warn about some limits, such as the need of institutional transformation to provide an adequate response to citizens' participation through online tools, and a high digital divide that might hinder access to part of the population. Likewise, Viva la Ciudadanía (2017, p.31) suggests using ICTs in diverse stages of local participatory budgeting processes in Colombia, to foster their transparency, interaction and visibility.

Per the case of Medellín, in a documental review of policy documents, webpages, and local regulation of the participatory budgeting process, Cabezas (2019) concludes that the Town Hall of Medellín created new digital channels for citizen oversight that allow for stricter control of resource spending. Yet, assessing the 2017 change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, Montes (2020, p.14) finds 'mixed views on the use of tech tools in the process'. Although there are participants who see technology as an ally to attract new audiences, others consider that technology is turning citizen participation into an impersonal exercise that does not allow social encounters, whilst there is mistrust regarding the legitimacy of electronic voting.

In sum, as Touchton et al. (2019, p.156) note, 'there is no consensus on the value of e-participation for deepening democracy'. Given the many nuances in the approximations to eDemocracy, there is a growing agreement in the literature for abandoning a 'revolutionary approach' that prevailed among the early scholars, by which ICTs were expected to be a radical game-changer in the enhancement of democracy (Fung et al., 2013; Sampaio & Peixoto, 2014, p.413; Fung et al., 2015). For instance, after noting an optimistic and a negativistic standing in the analysis of the potential of the Internet to dramatically increase the quality of democracy, Fung et al. (2013) develop six models of how digital technologies might affect democratic politics.

Based on the political incentives and institutional constraints, the cited authors argue that models favouring technology's incremental contributions to democracy are more likely to occur than those more revolutionary and transformative.

The negative and positive potential effects of online tools in participatory budgeting processes pose questions about the influence of digital technologies on marginalised populations' political inclusion. In the words of Touchton et al. (2019, p.160), adding online tools to participatory budgeting could take,

> the program farther away from its radical democratic roots and other political rationales for incorporating the poor into policymaking, even as it adds new discourses and expands participation among other groups.

Cunha et al. (2011, p.155) noted that, in these cases, the 'challenges posed by the introduction of new technologies directed towards expanding the formal spaces of political intervention' may be added to already complex and challenging offline processes, augmenting their tensions. Nevertheless, the potential positive effects could also help reduce some of the existing offline conflicts. This should be analysed on a case-by-case basis, examining, amongst other factors, the context, goal, and participants (Sampaio & Peixoto, 2014, p.424). I adopt this approach in this thesis.

I build on these findings in the literature to address the second question of my thesis in *Chapter Eight*. This question inquiries about the influence of online tools on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Following Lim & Oh (2016), I analyse this question

after answering the main one, which studies Medellín's offline participatory budgeting process on political inclusion, to then have a comprehensive view of the combination of offline and online means to conduct Medellín's participatory budgeting process. However, in line with Peixoto (2009, p.6) and Sampaio & Peixoto (2014, p.420), I am aware of the artificial differentiation and false dilemma of contrasting online and offline participatory budgeting processes. Per the case of Medellín, the participatory budgeting process is not either 'online' or 'offline': It is a hybrid process with both analogue and digital elements. Hence, I distinguish between both to note the differences amongst the online and offline components regarding their influence on political inclusion, so I can later assess the whole process holistically after disaggregating it into parts.

3.2. GAMIFYING PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES

One of the digital tools that emerged in this research during the focus groups for Medellín's participatory budgeting process was a digital game. The use of online or offline games in participatory mechanisms is known as gamified participation, i.e., introducing 'game elements in the (institutional) design of a democratic innovation' (Secchi, 2017, p.6). In the words of Meloni et al. (2018, p.568), 'gamification aims at creating a common space for an enjoyable user experience, expanding his or her commitment into something conceived for more than solely entertainment purposes'.

The interest in gamified participation in public budgeting processes is rising in both practice and scholarship (Glenn, 2012, p.1). For instance, games involving role-playing in virtual participatory budgeting processes or online simulations of budget spending to help the users understand technical issues of budgeting proceedings, are increasingly being used in diverse

settings. However, the research on the effects of games in participatory budgeting, especially as they are played in real situations, is still limited (Gordon et al., 2016, p.270).

Lerner (2014, pp.16–17) argues that democracy and games have several parallels, both involving participation and decision-making by design. Likewise, he notes that games' design, similar to what happens in democracy and online tools, is not neutral (Lerner, 2014, pp.21). As a result, it is not surprising that the literature on gamified participatory budgeting processes notes both constraints and challenges, mainly depending on the game's design (Lerner, 2014; Secchi, 2017).

Amongst the positive effects of games' use in participatory budgeting processes, scholars highlight their capacity to include populations challenging to engage (Sechi, 2017), the possibility for games to enable empowerment (Lerner, 2014), and the competence of games to foster empathy and openness to new ideas in the players (Gordon et al., 2016). The literature also warns about risks of adding games in participatory budgeting processes, such as the potential manipulation of the citizens by conditioning their behaviour (Lerner, 2014; Secchi, 2017), the possibility of reducing participation to tokenism (Meloni et al., 2018), and the danger of fostering violent and excessive competition (Lerner, 2014; Secchi, 2017).

In sum, the diverse possible positive and negative effects of offline, online and gamified participatory budgeting processes may trigger political inclusion and exclusion of marginalised populations, depending on how the processes and their components are designed and implemented. It is hard to conjecture hypotheses of possible results in the abstract. The grounded framework that I propose in this thesis intends to contribute to the literature by critically

examining the complex relationships in the case studied. *Chapter Ten* traces possible connections between the framework that I inductively developed from the empirical data and the participatory budgeting scholarship that explains the diversity of outcomes in participatory budgeting processes. This literature is critically reviewed next.

4. CONFLICTING FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING ON POLITICAL INCLUSION

The specialised literature attributes the differing and conflicting outcomes of participatory budgeting processes to a varying set of circumstances, some of them associated with political conditions, such as the will of the elected authorities to carry out the process, and others related to considerations of public management, such as the capacity to execute the projects selected (Goldfrank, 2007; Wampler et al., 2018). In Schugurensky's (2009, p.50) words, 'appropriate institutional arrangements are indeed crucial. Citizen participation and good democratic processes cannot occur in a vacuum'. To give one example, Núñez (2018) asserts that the suspension in 2017 of Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting process, after 28 years since it emerged as the first participatory budgeting process and model in the world, was the result of changes in the political will to conduct the process since 2005, tensions of representative dynamics within the process, and problems in the institutional design, such as the lack of institutionalised mechanisms of transparency.

4.1. EXPLANATIONS OF THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESSES

Goldfrank (2007) warns that participatory budgeting is not a neutral technical mechanism; its success depends on factors such as the political will of executive and legislative powers, and the institutionalisation of the parties in opposition to the process. Furthermore, Goldfrank (2007, p.98) argues that 'most scholars agree that political will, sufficient resources, and political decentralization are necessary for successful participatory budgeting; many believe that preexisting societal organization is also necessary'. Additionally, the cited author identifies bureaucratic competence, a process of small size, a legal foundation, deliberation, centralised supervision and accessible information as features of a participatory budget institutional design with less consensus in the literature regarding their effects on the process' impact (Goldfrank, 2007, pp.98-99).

Goldfrank (2007, p.99) also concludes that there are conflicting findings in the literature on whether a process that focuses on immediate planning stimulates more participation than one that focuses on the long-term, while also noting contradictory results, such as that some scholars argue in favour of an informal structure for the process, while others claim that the process should be regulated by law. More recently, while analysing the rise of participatory institutions in Latin America, Goldfrank (2021, p.128) highlights 'the importance of both leftist political projects and international actors in the creation, diffusion, and implementation of participatory institutions', while emphasising 'that, even when participatory institutions make the leap from parchment to practice, and even when they seem ideally suited to maximize inclusion, how they are designed and implemented by those fearful of losing power can inhibit the effective practice of citizenship'.

In turn, Wampler et al. (2018, p.6) conclude that some of the factors that may explain variations in the outcomes of participatory budgeting processes are the government's ideology, civil society mobilisation, the government's electoral incentives, State capacity, the level of local resources, and institutional rules. Overall, the cited authors identify 'three general areas of consensus in terms of when PB has its greatest, most beneficial impact: when it has strong government support, available resources, and where an organized civil society exists' (Wampler et al., 2018, p.22).[26]

In a further work, Wampler et al. (2021, p.11) 'develop an analytical framework that shows how program design and conditions at the macro- and meso- level strongly influence the outcomes that PB programs generate'. The framework, presented as a theory of change that describes potential social and political outcomes associated with participatory budgeting, depicts how variation occurs at the individual level –for instance, among citizen participants, civil servants, and elected officials– to then portray that change also may occur at the community-level in the areas of accountability, civil society, and well- being. Likewise, the framework also identifies meso and macro factors that condition these outcomes, such as government support, the configuration of civil society, and State capacity in the former and the broader political context, the extent of decentralisation, and local economic conditions in the later (Wampler et al., 2021, pp.52-80).

[26] In a previous work, Wampler (2007, p.24) also listed the three cited areas as determinant of participatory budgeting's impact, while also adding 'a generally supportive political environment that insulates participatory budgeting from legislators'.

Conversely, Puentes (2019) distinguishes between contextual variables–among them, electoral time, urban violence, number of proposals, and deliberative quality–, and variables pertaining to the proposals–such as their content, economic cost, and political cost–, to explain the potential impacts of participatory budgeting. Amongst all the authors that explicitly categorise the variables that may affect the outcomes of participatory budgeting processes, Puentes (2019, p.121) is the only one that distinguishes violence as a relevant factor. He does so, building on the work of Pearce (2007) and Urán (2010). However, Puentes (2009) does not specify how the different variables may interact with each other and lead either to political inclusion or exclusion in a participatory budgeting process.

For the specific case of Medellín, Urán (2009, p.192) argues that the political will of the Town Hall, combined with a robust social movement that preceded the creation of the participatory budgeting process and a flexible institutional design discussed with the participants but grounded in legal foundations, has assured the transforming potential of the process throughout the years, despite its challenges. In turn, while analysing the quantitative effects of public investment on the criminality index in Medellín, Restrepo (2020) found that there is a statistical correlation only between participatory budgeting and security perception, indicating that citizens that feel more insecure in their neighbourhoods tend to request investment in security in the participatory budgeting process.

In short, if not well-designed and carefully implemented, participatory budgeting processes can 'reinforce power dynamics instead of challenging them' (Nazneen & Cole, 2018, p.41). Hence, as Goldfrank (2007, p.98) notices, usually scholars propose a long list of potentially relevant design features and enabling conditions to explain the success and failure of different

participatory budgeting experiments. Nonetheless, to the best of my knowledge, none of the existing research provides a medium-level grounded framework that makes sense of the pathways that may lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, nor the specific role of digital tools in these pathways.

4.2. AN ACTOR-ORIENTED APPROACH OF THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING ON POLITICAL INCLUSION

In this thesis, I offer a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of how different factors and elements that interact with each other on the ground, may lead either to inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process during the period studied herein. This thick explanation identifies the diverse actors participating in the process and the distinctive dynamics of their interactions influencing political inclusion, while also analysing their context. As Cornwall & Coelho (2007, p.24) highlight, the challenge of expanding democracy 'may be less the extent to which democratic institutions can bring about change than *which* changes in *whom* and in *whose* interests'. Nevertheless, Wampler et al. (2018, pp.46-48) note that one specific issue understudied in participatory budgeting, connected with its influence on inclusion, is *who* participates in the process, and *how* this participation impacts the outcomes. More specifically, the authors note conflicting findings in this matter, that can be traceable to the wide range of rules and settings in which participatory budgeting operates.

Some areas of rising attention to this topic include the effects of participatory budgeting on actor's interactions relevant to changing power relations between local governments and citizens (Wampler, 2008; Urán, 2012; Cabannes, 2014; Bherer et al., 2016), conflicts between old protagonists of local participation and new citizens invited to participate (Ganuza et al., 2014),

partisan competition (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006), the strengthening of community organisations (Giraldo et al., 2010; Cabannes, 2014), and the influence of participatory budgeting on individual and collective agency (Álvarez & González, 2014; Vasquez, 2014; Hajdarowicz, 2018).

In a further work, Wampler et al. (2021, p.53) note that 'Participants and public officials may change their attitudes and behaviors as they gain access to information, engage in new forms of deliberation, exercise their vote, and monitor implementation'. Therefore, in their theory of change to describe potential outcomes associated with participatory budgeting, they identify changes in three main actors in the process: citizen-participants, elected officials, and civil servants.

An actor-approach to participatory budgeting also features an emerging strand in the literature that studies gender dynamics. For instance, Sánchez & Bou (2014) claim that the gender gap in conventional politics is often mirrored in participatory mechanisms; nonetheless, they clarify that this reality has changed in the last years through affirmative actions on gender issues. Still, Allegretti & Falanga (2016) stress that gender has not been at the forefront of the participatory budgeting debate. In turn, analysing the case of Perú, McNulty (2015) discusses several barriers that prevent women from being included in the participatory budgeting process, such as the fact that they are usually expected to take on most domestic duties. In *Chapter Eight*, I analyse the gender dynamics in Medellín's participatory budgeting found in my research.

Per the case of Medellín, Urán (2010) argues that, when the participatory budgeting process started in Medellín, conflict between old and new participants triggered the decision to

institutionalise the process through municipal laws. In turn, Carvajal (2019, p.41) asserts that participatory budgeting created new leaderships in Medellín, that in many cases clashed with other actors. Furthermore, while analysing the perceptions of public servants about Medellín's participatory budgeting process, Posada & Valle (2019, p.59) note a divergence between the institutional objective of the participatory budgeting process acknowledged by the public servants and the views they have about its ultimate effect. While the former perceives the participatory budgeting process as a space to strengthen democracy and participation, the latter sees the process as a space with scarce citizen dialogue, guided by clientelist dynamics and particular interests.

Following Ganuza et al. (2014) and Bherer et al. (2016), in this thesis I am particularly interested in the conflicts between the different actors that interact in the participatory budgeting process, old and new, to examine the conditions that may lead the actors to surpass frictions and, hence, foster the political inclusion of excluded actors, compared to the dynamics that may enhance the clashes and boost their political exclusion. This perspective 'highlights the micropolitics of encounters in participatory arenas' (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p.11), a concept at the core of my unit of analysis, as I explain in *Chapter Four*, while I discuss in detail the methodological decision that informed this approach. Moreover, in *Chapters Six*, *Seven* and *Eight*, I analyse the different actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, their clashes and the pathways proposed in this research as typologies that may lead to their political inclusion or exclusion.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I examined the participatory democracy literature that studies the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion. After portraying a tension between inclusion and exclusion of marginalised populations in the specialised scholarship, I analysed the most common theoretical frameworks that make sense of this dichotomy. Subsequently, I discussed the referred inclusionary-exclusionary tension on the literature of participatory democracy, both in offline, online, hybrid and gamified processes, to then refer to the specific set of conditions referred in the literature to explain the differing and conflicting outcomes of participatory budgeting processes. My thesis aims to add to the existing literature by proposing a medium-level grounded framework on the pathways that may lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process and the specific role of digital tools in this process.

As I further discuss in *Chapter Five*, for Medellín's participatory budgeting process, a particular context-specific condition is the conflictive scenario in which it takes place, connected with national peacebuilding and transitional justice processes with paramilitary and guerrilla groups since the early 2000s. The literature that discusses the effects of participatory budgeting in violent contexts is scant. This led me to adopt a holistic approach in my research; i.e., to not only address the investigation from the perspective of participatory democracy, but also delve into peacebuilding and transitional justice relevant works. I examine this scholarship in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING ON POLITICAL INCLUSION IN PEACEBUILDING AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE SCENARIOS

INTRODUCTION

Along with the literature on participatory democracy discussed in *Chapter Two*, the works of peacebuilding and transitional justice scholars that examine the influence of political inclusion in participatory mechanisms to prevent violence are also relevant for my research. Participatory budgeting was introduced in Medellín in 2004 to prevent violence by fostering the political inclusion of marginalised populations in public decision-making amid peacebuilding and transitional justice processes with paramilitary groups. Likewise, under the umbrella of guarantees of non-recurrence, featured in the Colón Agreement, participatory budgeting in Colombia was later on categorised in 2016 as a transitional justice measure (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016), while recent judgements by judicial chambers operating within the Colombian transitional justice framework have encouraged local authorities of several municipalities to implement participatory budgeting processes as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2018; 2019).

Nevertheless, I argue that there is scant critical analysis in the academic peacebuilding literature of the circumstances under which offline and online participatory budgeting may or may not hinder new violence from occurring. There is also limited examination of participatory budgeting as a guarantee of non-recurrence in specialised transitional justice works. In this chapter I examine the peacebuilding and transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence literature in which I ground my analysis. I mainly discuss the scholarship that analyses the

influence of political inclusion on conflict prevention, emphasising the relevant studies that analyse participatory budgeting as a mechanism to deter violence. I further argue that Medellín's participatory budgeting process is a case that offers interesting avenues for the exploration of the research gaps identified above using a qualitative empirical approach.

A detailed review of the literature about what peacebuilding and transitional justice are exceeds the scope and terms of this thesis. Instead, this chapter analyses, in parallel, the main works relevant to critically examine the influence of offline and online participatory budgeting on political inclusion in a conflict scenario and probe its conceptualisation as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence. I do so by drawing on academic literature, public policy documents, and grey literature, since my thesis also aims to provide a critical gloss to policy-oriented frameworks.

The chapter is set out in two sections. In *Section One*, I discuss the peacebuilding literature that deals with the contribution of offline and online citizen participation measures to violence prevention in peacebuilding studies. I argue that the current studies on participatory budgeting in peacebuilding scenarios do not yet specify hypotheses about the conditions under which participatory budgeting may promote inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's peacebuilding scenario. Next, in *Section Two*, I examine the growing scholarship that discusses what the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence are and assess their preventative and transformative capacities with a specific focus on participatory budgeting, including the works that examine the use of technology in transitional justice scenarios. In this section, I argue that the current literature has not studied participatory budgeting as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence in Medellín. Likewise, I identify four main queries based on my critical review

of the transitional justice literature, relevant to my examination of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence.

1. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AS A MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION IN THE PEACEBUILDING LITERATURE

Galtung (1976) first coined the term peacebuilding as one component of a conflict resolution strategy, together with peacekeeping and peacemaking. Yet, peacebuilding became a popular concept only in 1992, after appearing in *An Agenda for Peace*, a document of the United Nations (Ryan, 2013, p.26). The Secretary-General (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, par.21) used peacebuilding in the cited report 'to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict'.

However, as Paffenholz & Spurk (2006, p.15) note, the scope and timeframe of peacebuilding are usually ambiguous. Still, Pugh (2013) categorises the approaches to peacebuilding in two: Problem-solving and critical paradigms. While the former aims to improve the effectiveness of the peacebuilding world, the latter casts doubt about the assumptions that underlie mainstream peacebuilding practices. One of the critical scholars' main questions deals with the so-called 'local-turn' in the peacebuilding scholarship (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015; Paffenholz, 2015; Randazzo, 2016). The central peacebuilding works relevant to my research questions deal with this issue, which I discuss in the following subsection.

1.1. THE LOCAL TURN IN CRITICAL PEACEBUILDING STUDIES: LOCAL ACTORS AND POWER DYNAMICS

The 'local' is a word with no agreed definition in peacebuilding studies (Bräuchler & Naucke, 2017, p.432). It is elastic and malleable, both geographically and conceptually (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p.770). Nevertheless, the 'local turn' is a common expression in peacebuilding, that refers to a critical shift in peace studies from the liberal peacebuilding project based on external international interventions, to an agenda that places the local actors' agency at the centre of peace endeavours (Paffenholz, 2015, p.857). Following Mac Ginty & Richmond (2013, p.769), in this thesis I use 'local' to describe,

> the range of locally based agencies present within a conflict and post-conflict environment, some of which are aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace, perhaps with or without international help.

As Paffenholz (2015, p.857-861) notes, two local turns can be identified in peacebuilding studies. An initial 'local turn' led by Lederach (1997) followed the works of conflict management scholars of the early 1990s, intending to prioritise and empower local peace projects over externally driven interventions. In contrast, the second 'local turn' opposes internationally-driven peace interventions, adopting a critical approach to liberal peacebuilding, grounded on post-structuralist and postcolonial theoretical frameworks.

The peacebuilding literature on the political inclusion of marginalised populations is primarily discussed in the works of the 'local turn' scholars. Three main issues addressed in this scholarship are relevant to my research. First, in line with Paffenholz (2015), my thesis opposes a binary understanding of the local and the international often common in peacebuilding scholarship. More specifically, following McAuliffe (2017), in *Chapters Five*, *Six*, *Seven* and *Eight*, I disaggregate the local of my case study 'into the national, the subnational and the micro-local, all of which have different, and often conflicting, interests'. Moreover, I analyse the power dynamics of micro-local actors and how they influence political inclusion and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Hence, my research's thick empirical take provides a nuanced understanding of what the 'local' means in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, whilst analysing *who* is the local.

In this vein, the second significant topic deals with the notion of civil society as a primary actor of local peacebuilding processes. Definitions of civil society can be easily criticized and are often context-dependent (Cohen & Arato, 1994). Paffenholz & Spurk (2006, p. 3) study the notion of civil participation in peacebuilding contexts, and often use,

> the term civil society when referring to the general concept or to activities of groups, organizations, associations and movements, and civic engagement when referring to the activities of individuals or non-organized groupings.

In Colombia, a recent study led by the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative (2019) found no unified perception of civil society for peacebuilding in Colombia. In contrast, there are many civic movements, often unorganised and with competing interests, that also work along

with what the study calls 'unorganised civil society'; i.e., social actors that belong to civic society but are not part of social organisations that actively work in peacebuilding initiatives (Extituto & Policéntrico, 2019). Still, there is a gap in the scholarship on the interactions between different local organised and unorganised actors in Colombian participatory spaces and their effects on conflict prevention.

The last issue relevant to the 'local turn' scholarship that I examine in this thesis is the power dynamics that underlie the interactions of local actors and their influence on political inclusion (Salas, 2019, p.150). Following Mac Ginty & Richmond (2013, p. 763), the 'local turn has implications for the nature and location of power in peacebuilding'. Thus, from the perspective of a critical agenda for peace, the cited authors ask about the connections between power and peace (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p. 780-781). I analyse these connections in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight*, discussing actors' power dynamics on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

Another relevant issue for my thesis regarding the interaction of local actors is their influence on conflict transformation, as defined by Lederach (2015, p.16):

> Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.

Conflict transformation views conflict as evolving and producing changes in several dimensions, such as human relations (Lederach, 2015). Peacebuilding theories oriented towards conflict transformation 'build on an understanding that conflict is a normal social occurrence and, therefore, focus on the transformation of the violent *conduct* into a peaceful one' (Paffenholz, 2014b, p.13). As I further discuss in *Chapter Ten*, the medium-level grounded *framework of inclusion and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process* that I propose in this thesis, could be useful to identify pathways that may evolve into processes of conflict transformation.

1.2. DOES POLITICAL INCLUSION PREVENT CONFLICT?

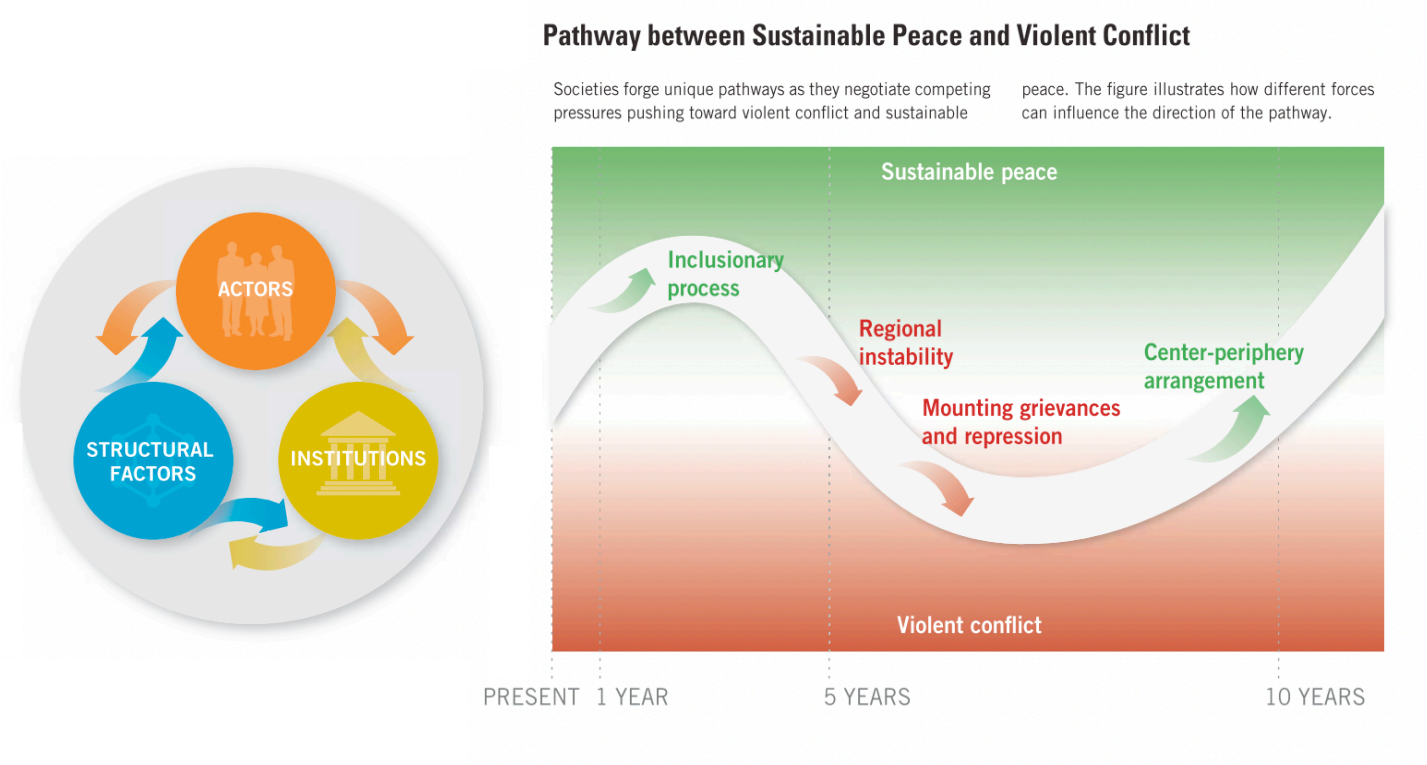
A growing scholarship in the 'local turn' literature claims that political exclusion, along with other variables, is at the core of violence. For instance, Paffenholz & Ross (2015, p.28) note that 'one of the principal reasons groups resort to violence and protest is to contest their exclusion from social, political or economic power.' A link between political exclusion and violence is also found in specialised national literature. In Duncan's (2015) words, the political exclusion and social marginalisation of vulnerable populations, combined with criminality, constitute prompts for the Colombian conflict.

Still, several authors consistently highlight that more research is needed to understand the role of citizen participation in conflict transformation processes (Blattman, 2009; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Paffenholz, 2010; Zamudio, 2011; Voors et al., 2012; Gáfaro et al., 2014). Still, the scholarship that examines the political inclusion of marginalised populations in peacebuilding is increasing (Paffenholz, 2014a; Paffenholz & Ross, 2015; United Nations & World Bank, 2018).

In turn, the United Nations & the World Bank (2018, p.77) claim that, 'Inclusive decision making is fundamental to sustaining peace at all levels'. Hence, the authors propose a *Pathways for Peace Framework*, shown in *Figure 7*, 'to illustrate how the risk of violence and the opportunities for peace emerge and change over time' (United Nations & World Bank, 2018, p.77). In the cited model, three elements of society meet over time in constant processes that shape 'pathways toward different outcomes as they manage the forces pushing for peace or violence' (United Nations & World Bank, 2018, p.77). The elements that converge in the pathways are the *actors*–the individuals and groups that make decisions that ultimately define the pathway a society takes–, *institutions*–which shape the incentives for peace or violence, influencing the society's overall capacity to mitigate conflict–, and *structural factors*–foundational elements of a society that define its organisation and constitute the overall environment in which actors make decisions–.

In the framework, the word pathway refers to a trajectory that a society shapes through the dynamic interaction of its actors, institutions, and structural factors over time (United Nations & World Bank, 2018, p.21). Hence, according to the United Nations & the World Bank (2018, p. 100), in the *Pathways for Peace Framework*, prevention is a process where actors are more likely to choose peaceful pathways, by taking advantage of favourable structural factors or mitigating the impacts of unfavourable ones, building incentives that encourage peace. Most of the underlying risks in the framework, that lead to violent pathways, are associated with particular groups' political and social exclusion (United Nations & World Bank, 2018, p.96).

Figure 7 - The *Pathways for Peace Framework.*



Source: United Nations & World Bank (2018, p.78-80).

As discussed in *Chapters One* and *Two*, one of the main empirical findings of my thesis is the role that actors play in shaping the paths that lead either to inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Similarly, in the *Pathways for Peace Framework*, the United Nations & the World Bank (2018, p.85) claim that actors' decisions 'ultimately determine the pathways societies take. Actors can shape structural factors and influence the way institutions are built and reformed'. The *Pathways for Peace Framework* does not profoundly discuss *how* specific actors interact with institutions of participatory democracy. Still, the *Pathways for Peace Framework* refers to elements such as the significance of institutions, time and actors, and the definition of pathway, which also emerged in my grounded analysis, as I further discuss in *Chapters Six*, *Seven* and *Eight.*

Paffenholz (2014a) also explores the functions of civil society actors in peacebuilding scenarios. However, in her work, Paffenholz (2014a) notes that, until relatively recently, civil society played a limited role in the peace negotiations and peacebuilding literature, with the focus generally resting on the various arguments for civil society inclusion or exclusion. To overcome this dichotomy, she categorised and developed different models of civil society inclusion in peacebuilding processes, to describe the full range of options for their involvement, from the most to the least direct forms of participation.

In Colombia, the previously referred study by the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative (2019) gathered several civil society organisations to examine the application of Paffenholz's (2014a) framework in Colombia. In this vein, CINEP (2019) used their database Datapaz, which registers actions for peace in Colombia since 1978, to categorise the diverse functions of citizen mobilisation endeavours for peacebuilding from 2010 until 2018.

The categorisation proposed by CINEP (2019) advances an understanding of the diverse methods through which citizens participate in the Colombian peacebuilding scenario. However, CINEP (2019) does not discuss the role of participatory budgeting or specific participatory democracy mechanisms in the actions identified, nor the effects of particular strategies to prevent violence. My thesis builds on and seeks to advance the work of Paffenholz (2014a) and CINEP (2019), by explicitly analysing the influence on political inclusion of one specific participatory mechanism in a peacebuilding scenario; namely, participatory budgeting in Medellín from 2004 until 2017. Although, as I discuss below, there is some scholarship at the national and local levels in Colombia that analyses this issue, it is still unclear if and how the findings of different scholars

that study the role of citizen participation in the Colombian peacebuilding scenario apply to Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

For instance, Arjona (2014), McGee & Flórez (2016), Vásquez (2015, 2018) and Rincón (2018), amongst others, show that there exist many vibrant and diverse civil society movements at the local level in Colombia. In fact, Gáfaro et al. (2014) noted that the presence of armed groups raises overall participation in local organisations; yet, the population do not engage effectively in decision-making processes (Gáfaro et al., 2014). What is more, Gáfaro et al. (2014) found that increased individual participation could be associated with coercion exercised by armed groups and not with a vibrant civil society.

In this vein, Núñez & Montoya (2016, p.140) affirm that understanding the types of relationships at the local level in Colombia between civil society and illegal armed groups is key to identifying the normative changes that need to be implemented in a post-conflict scenario. Accordingly, they identify four types of interaction: free or forced support due to the proximity with the group, clientelistic functional support, a rejection that resists cooperation, and indifference (Núñez & Montoya, 2016, p. 168-169).

In addition, Velasco (2006), Arjona (2014) and García & Espinosa (2013) demonstrate that the institutional capacity of municipalities affected by the conflict is deficient and, in many cases, has proven unable to satisfy citizens' demands for further political inclusion. For instance, Barrera (2015, p. 75) asserts that a lack of institutional response to social needs, such as fundamental rights, land, housing and public services, has led to the fact that, between 1975 and 2013, 60% of social mobilisation activities in Colombia were directed against the government at

both sub-national and national levels. The remaining 40% protested against armed groups and international actors.

In Barrera's (2015, p. 76) view, given that the 40% of protests not explicitly directed against the State were related to issues that required the intervention of institutional authorities –for example, the protection of rights, social services and labour issues–, the State thus held indirect responsibility for these disputes. Ultimately, a lack of institutional response to demands increases distrust within civil society towards the State (Barrera, 2015). To strengthen trust, citizen participation and institutional capacity at the local level in Colombia, López (2016) suggests the implementation of participatory budgeting in the municipalities most affected by the conflict.

In sum, although the participation of civil society is currently stressed as pivotal to conflict prevention in peacebuilding scholarship, more research is needed to understand this relationship. Medellín's participatory budgeting process provides avenues of research grounded in empirical data to examine the influence of citizen participation in measures aimed at conflict prevention. The following section discusses the main literature that examines participatory budgeting in a peacebuilding scenario.

1.3. EXPLORING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND PEACEBUILDING

Despite the richness of the available participatory budgeting and peacebuilding scholarships, the works that examine the influence of participatory budgeting in conflict scenarios remains scarce. Although the literature provides various insights regarding the use of participatory budgeting to prevent violence, a more profound theoretical examination is needed.

To discuss a few examples, Bland (2011) studied US-led participatory budgeting efforts in El Salvador to advance local government development projects after the conflict. Bland (2011) assessed the sustainability of the participatory budgeting process at the local level nearly five years after its external promotion, as an indicator of the project's success at fostering democratic practices. In his view, the fact that around 60% of the municipalities that initially started the process introduced by external donors were still either engaged with or interested in it, shows that the participatory budget, while limited in applicability, nurtured democratic practices (Bland, 2011).

Conversely, in a normative analysis of financing mechanisms in peace operations, Wade (2017, p.167-168) proposed using participatory budgeting to manage donor funds and donations intended to prevent violence in conflict transformation processes. In Wade's (2017) view, participatory budgeting may foster democratic norms of political engagement and consensus-building in conflict scenarios, by devolving and broadening decision-making processes to the community level.

Furthermore, studies by Cabannes (2004a) and Yeh & Lin (2019) have reviewed, respectively, the influence of participatory budgeting on issues closely pertaining to peace, understood both in its negative and positive meanings.[27] For instance, Cabannes (2004a) explored the possible contribution of participatory budgeting to urban security, a notion associated with the absence of violence, concluding that participatory budgeting fosters urban safety by contributing to a non-violent resolution of conflicts, a culture of peace, the improvement of the quality of policing, and the reduction of violence against women. In turn, Yeh & Lin (2019) scrutinised the impact of participatory budgeting on collective memory in Taiwan, finding that deliberation in participatory budgeting processes can serve as a means to build and shape collective memories in a bottom-up way.

In contrast, Puentes (2019) analysed different contextual variables found in the literature, that may affect the implementation of participatory budgeting processes, violence being one of them. Building on the work of Pearce (2007), Puentes (2019, p.123) noted that violence and participation often have a twofold effect: Violence may both foster and inhibit participation. In this vein, as I discussed in *Chapter Two*, in Colombia, and more specifically in the case of Medellín, studies by Gómez (2007), Urán (2010), Gómez et al. (2012), Madariaga et al. (2014), and Viva La Ciudadanía (2016) show conflicting findings for the effects of participatory budgeting on the prevention of violence. However, no medium-level grounded framework has been proposed, which might contribute to assessing hypotheses about the conditions under which participatory budgeting may nurture inclusion or exclusion in Colombian peacebuilding scenarios.

[27] While *negative peace* refers to the absence of violence or fear of violence, *positive peace* examines the conditions that allow for social justice, restore social relations, and tackle situations of structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 2011).

In this thesis, I contribute to the literature exploring the implementation of participatory budgeting in peacebuilding scenarios, by empirically examining Medellín's case. While doing so, I add a further specific layer of analysis that is absent in the scholarship: *What is the influence on inclusion, if any, of using information and communication technologies to assist participatory budgeting processes in conflict scenarios?* In *Chapter Two*, I examined the literature on the use of ICTs in participatory budgeting processes. Still, the analysis of that chapter did not explore the scholarship on the employment of such technologies to foster peacebuilding aims. I do this in the next section.

1.4. THE INFLUENCE OF ICTS ON POLITICAL INCLUSION IN PEACEBUILDING SCENARIOS

In peacebuilding studies, a growing area of research and practice called 'peacetech' examines the effects of the strategic use of old and new digital tools to achieve peacebuilding aims (Gaskell et al., 2016; Gaskell, 2017). Peacetech is a subarea of the peacebuilding literature that emerged as a space of practice over the last decade. Therefore, only recently researchers have started to conceptualise and define the use of technology for peacebuilding in a broad range of countries and cases (Welch et al., 2015; Gaskell et al., 2016). In fact, Firchow & Martin-Shields (2017, p.5) note that peacetech can be categorised as in a condition of liminality, 'a temporary state when roles and boundaries are being negotiated'.

Three main issues discussed in the peacetech literature inform my research questions and findings.[28] The first one examines *peacetech terminology*. Peacetech merges peacebuilding and technology, a compound frequently employed to refer to the strategic use of technology to build peace. At the core of peacetech's definition, lies a differentiation 'between non-strategic and strategic uses of technology in the peacebuilding context', since it intends to 'distinguish peacebuilding actors and activities that use technology as part of their general organisational management [...] from those that use technology with the strategic aim to build peace' (Build Up, 2016, p.6). As per Gaskell et al. (2016, p.4), in this thesis I understand technology as 'the different types of hardware, software or systems that enable people to access, generate and share information'.

However, technology is commonly viewed as a double-edged sword in peacetech studies, both with the capacity of influencing peacebuilding interventions positively and negatively. For instance, for the case of Colombia, social media technologies, such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, were used during the campaign that preceded the plebiscite to endorse or reject the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and FARC-EP guerrilla, to help increase citizen information about the Havana Agreement, but also to share misinformation about it (Dajer, 2021).

[28] I further discuss these issues in a piece written during my DPhil studies, reflecting on the expansion of peacetech worldwide (Dajer, 2018). The text is called *Cracking the code of tech for peace: International perspectives of peacetech research and practice*. It was published by the end of 2018 as an essay commissioned by the British Council in the publication *Peace and Beyond: Reflections on building inclusive and sustainable peace*, issued to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. I use in this thesis some of the literature review findings that I published in the cited document, to enrich the analysis that I carry out in this section on the peacetech scholarship and how I use it in my thesis.

More often than not, the positive and negative consequences of technology in peacebuilding scenarios are context-specific and depend on the conflict situation and how the technology is designed and implemented. For the case of participatory budgeting processes, the effects of ICTs on political inclusion when participatory budgeting is implemented in peacebuilding scenarios remains underexplored in the academic literature. Thus, my thesis aims to enrich the current scholarship by analysing the effects of technology in Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion. In line with Gaskell (2019), this thesis' perspective opposes technological determinism, questioning how technology use influences political inclusion in the field.

A second strand of the peacetech literature relevant for my thesis deals with the *different ICTs used in peacetech interventions*. The examples of technological tools abound and evolve with the quick technological changes that our world experiences every day. For instance, the tools used in peacetech range from participatory video and photography to bring new voices to peace processes, platforms to tackle fake news, applications to create and share narratives about conflict and peace, SMS to fight extremist violence, and games to promote social cohesion between different groups (Build Up & Policéntrico, 2017).

As I explained in *Chapter Two*, a broad range of technological tools are used to support participatory budgeting processes in different contexts. In Medellín, part of the study that I carried out during my thesis, involved the discussion with various participants about what technological tools could better support the political inclusion of marginalised populations in the process, and the design of one specific tool, called *Nuestro Desarrollo*. I analyse these results in *Chapter Eight*.

The third strand in the peacetech literature that intersects with my research, discusses the *design and implementation of peacetech interventions*. As per the participatory budgeting literature, a relevant area in peacetech research is the process and methodology used to design and implement interventions (Mancini, 2013; Gaskell et al., 2016; Puig & Kahl, 2013). Puig & Kahl (2013) assert that technologies are not neutral; hence, they propose using a Do No Harm framework as a guide to assess the risks of introducing digital tools in peacebuilding projects. Some issues of this framework include bearing in mind the connectivity bias, designing specifically for empowerment, and identifying and addressing ethics, privacy, and security issues.

Rogerson (2009) and Tellidis & Kappler (2016) discuss ethical concerns in designing peacebuilding interventions that use digital tools, warning about their effects on power dynamics. In this vein, Mancini & O'Reilly (2013) emphasise the need of understanding the context in peacetech projects, addressing, for instance, the socioeconomic setting, technology penetration and demographics. In turn, Build Up & Policéntrico (2018, p.58) highlight the role of citizen participation in the design and implementation of peacetech projects, 'as technology without participation can exclude rather than empower communities most in need'. I analyse these issues in the case of Medellín in *Chapters Eight* and *Ten*. In the next section, I examine the literature on transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence relevant to my research, including the works that explore the use of technology in transitional justice scenarios.

2. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN THE LITERATURE ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE

Peacebuilding and transitional justice intertwine in my thesis. Medellín's participatory budgeting process was implemented in a peacebuilding scenario during my case study, in which participatory budgeting was part of a broader policy agenda to tackle violence in Medellín. At the same time, a transitional justice process with paramilitary groups took place in the country, later followed by a peace agreement with FARC-EP guerrilla, in which participatory budgeting was categorised as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence at the national level, as I discuss in *Chapter Nine*.

Hence, due to the relevance of the transitional justice context in my research, in my thesis I not only ask about the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion in a peacebuilding scenario, but also probe the labelling of participatory budgeting in Medellín as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence. In this section I discuss the works of the scholars that have examined transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence, and review the main findings and gaps relevant to exploring participatory budgeting as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence.

To do so, I first examine how the guarantees of non-recurrence became a transitional justice mechanism in the academic literature and policy and legal documents at the international level, to then discuss four main queries based on my critical review of the transitional justice literature, relevant to examine Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence. These questions are associated with the concept of

guarantees of non-recurrence, the measures that are considered guarantees of non-recurrence, the conditions under which they may prevent new conflicts from emerging, and the role of different levels of governance in shaping the guarantees of non-recurrence.

2.1. THE RISE OF THE TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE AS AN INDEPENDENT ELEMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

After being regarded for years as part of measures for reparation in international law, the past decade has seen the emergence and rapid development of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence as a transitional justice mechanism in its own right. So far, however, there has been little discussion in the academic works about participatory budgeting as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence. In this thesis, I acknowledge that transitional justice is a concept in continuous development, shaped by the context in which it is applied. As such, de Greiff (2017a, par.25) asserts that one of the main contributions of transitional justice during the past years 'has been, quite simply, its unpacking of the concept of justice into constituent and mutually reinforcing elements: truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence'. Still, not more than a decade ago, the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence were not recognised as an autonomous element of a transitional justice strategy. How did this change occur?

The progression of transitional justice over the last three decades, that is, since it emerged as a field, has been influenced by transitions to democracy in post-authoritarian and post-conflict scenarios (Elster, 1998; Arthur, 2009; Teitel, 2014). While Arthur (2009) notes that the term transitional justice emerged in the mid-1990s, Elster (1998) traces transitional justice examples to Ancient Greece, and Teitel (2003; 2014) locates the origins of transitional justice in World

War I and distinguishes three phases within the field, from early development to expansion and normalisation.

Teitel (2014) categorises phase I as *Post-War Transitional Justice*. This stage starts with World War I and continues into World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is characterised by efforts to prosecute international crimes in scenarios such as the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals. According to Teitel (2014, p.50), this phase 'reflects the triumph of transitional justice within the scheme of international law.' Phase II, or *Post-Cold War Transitional Justice*, addresses the democratic transitions witnessed in Latin America and Eastern Europe from the late 1980s onwards. This phase is associated with the emergence of multiple conceptions of justice that respond to a broad range of political realities. Furthermore, it introduces a discourse that juxtaposes justice aims for the goal of peace alongside a jurisprudence of forgiveness and reconciliation (Teitel, 2014, p.58). Phase III, or *Steady-State Transitional Justice*, emerged at the end of the twentieth century with the expansion and normalisation of the transitional justice discourse as it moved from being an exception to becoming the norm. In the words of Teitel (2014, p.64), this normalisation 'takes the form of the expansion of the law of war, as illustrated by the rise of humanitarian law.' During this time, the transitional justice discourse became a paradigm of the rule of law, with the International Criminal Court becoming its main symbol (Teitel, 2014 p.63).

A fourth phase of transitional justice has been distinguished within the last decade, with a range of authors discussing the possible transformative role of transitional justice (Sharp, 2013b; Sandoval, 2017). Sharp (2013b) argues that this new stage deals with the underlying politics, local ownership and the place of economic violence and economic justice in transitional

justice processes. Some of these themes were already present in the academic debates held in previous phases; yet, this new stage sees them being more thoroughly addressed. In the words of Sharp (2013b, p.152), this new phase,

> would likely involve a greater embrace of participatory and community-level approaches to justice rooted in local norms and traditions, as well as a more holistic approach to the scope of justice issues addressed in transition, including questions of economic justice.

I argue that one of the primary transformations that has taken place in the field of transitional justice during this period – which some scholars have labelled the fourth generation of the transitional justice genealogy (Sharp, 2013b; Nesiah, 2016) – is the rise of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence as an independent element of a comprehensive transitional justice strategy (de Greiff, 2017a). During the first two decades of this field's development, the guarantees of non-recurrence were conceptualised as a specific component of the right to reparation (Van Boven, 1993; Joinet, 1997; Orentlicher, 2005). For instance, the *Transitional Justice Encyclopaedia* lacks an entry on guarantees of non-recurrence (Stan & Nedelsky, 2013). Furthermore, it only mentions this particular mechanism when commenting on measures of reparation (Nedelsky, 2013, p.85). In McEvoy's (2018, p.190) words, the theory and practice of non-recurrence is a theme that 'has been somewhat neglected in the respectabilisation of transitional justice'.

As de Greiff (2015b, par.15) points out, the first time that the term 'guarantees of non-recurrence' was used in a United Nations Report, was in a study presented in 1993 by Special Rapporteur Theo van Boven, known as the *van Boven Principles*, on the right of restitution,

compensation and rehabilitation of the victims of flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The report refers to the second series of draft articles on State responsibility prepared by the International Law Commission in 1985, in which explicit reference was already made to the need for a State responsible of an internationally wrongful act, to offer guarantees of non-recurrence to the injured party (van Boven, 1993, par.48).

The van Boven report (1993) included the guarantees of non-recurrence as a component of the right to full reparation for victims of serious human rights violations. Moreover, the *van Boven Principles* served as a background for the approval by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005, of the *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law*. These Principles explicitly state that the guarantees of non-recurrence are an element of the right to reparation for victims of human rights violations.

In parallel, in 1997 the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the question of impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations, Louis Joinet, also published a report referring to the guarantees of non-recurrence, this time about the impunity of human rights violations. Joinet (1997) proposed a set of principles for protecting and promoting human rights in the fight against impunity, known as the *Joinet Principles*. Although these principles do not state explicitly that the guarantees of non-recurrence are part of the right to reparation for victims, principles 37 to 42, set out measures intended to guarantee the non-recurrence of violations.

The *Joinet Principles* served as the basis for the approval in 2005 by the United Nations Human Rights Commission, of the *Updated Set of Principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity*. In these principles, the guarantees of non-recurrence have similar guidelines to those initially suggested by the *Joinet Principles*; still, they were adjusted in the 2005 version, to reflect the realities of several countries at that time, particularly in Latin America, in terms of restoring democracy and building peace or transition towards these ends (Orentlicher, 2005, p.64).

During the last decade, the discussion surrounding the guarantees of non-recurrence in the transitional justice arena has significantly increased. Repeated statements by the United Nations recognise guarantees of non-recurrence as an independent element of a transitional justice strategy, along with the rights to truth, justice and reparation for victims. To give one example, the Resolution 18/7 of 2011 of the Human Rights Council appointed Pablo de Greiff as the first *Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence*, while acknowledging in the title of the mandate that the guarantees of non-recurrence form an independent component of a transitional justice approach (Human Rights Council, 2011; Davidovic, 2021).

Since then, the Special Rapporteur has launched various reports addressing the development of transitional justice worldwide, recognising and discussing the autonomous status of the guarantees of non-recurrence (de Greiff, 2015a; 2015b; 2017a; 2017b; de Greiff & Dieng, 2018; Salvioli, 2018a; 2018b).[29] Still, as I further discuss in *Chapter Nine*, the transitional justice

[29] On May 1st of 2018, Pablo de Greiff was succeeded by Fabián Salvioli as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

guarantees of non-recurrence only acquired independence in the Colombian transitional justice framework with a specific set of national norms. Likewise, in cases such as Medellín's participatory budgeting process, in which peacebuilding measures are implemented in parallel with transitional justice mechanisms, there is a lack of clarity of what constitutes a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence.

However, at the time of writing, there is a consensus in the scholarship about the preventative function of the guarantees of non-recurrence (de Greiff, 2015a; Roht-Arriaza, 2016; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017); i.e., the guarantees of non-recurrence are part of a broader conversation on conflict deterrence, both in the transitional justice and peacebuilding fields. Nevertheless, there is still a need to ask what this prevention means both conceptually and 'on the ground', with some authors arguing for a contextual approach to prevention, that assesses the guarantees of non-recurrence on a case-by-case basis (Suárez et al., 2013; Roht-Arriaza, 2016; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017). An emerging element of analysis in this contextual approach is the role of civil society in conflict prevention (de Greiff & Dieng, 2018). Medellín's participatory budgeting process offers multiple opportunities for the empirical examination of this topic, as I discuss next.

2.2. QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE

As set out above, the scholarship concerning the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence has significantly increased over the last five years. Based on my critical review of the transitional justice literature, I identified four main queries relevant to examining Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence. I discuss the literature

on these questions in the following subsections, to later contrast, in *Chapters Nine* and *Ten*, the literature with the empirical findings of my case study.

2.2.1. WHAT IS A TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE GUARANTEE OF NON-RECURRENCE?

An initial discussion revolves around the conceptualisation of the guarantees of non-recurrence. In a founding report on the issue, de Greiff (2015a, par.20) claims that conceptual clarity needs to be provided for the guarantees of non-recurrence in the transitional justice field. He argues that, when discussing the concept of guarantees of non-recurrence, it is necessary to carefully analyse what is meant by a guarantee, who are its beneficiaries, who are the duty-bearers, and what the purpose and thus scope of a guarantee of non-recurrence is, given that it has been widened to include a broad range of crimes committed during armed conflicts.

In this vein, de Greiff (2015a, par.23) asserts that the core function of the guarantees of non-recurrence is preventative. This purpose can be met through various measures, such as institutional reform or the dismantling of unofficial armed groups. Correspondingly, de Greiff (2015a, pars.38-102) suggests that the guarantees of non-recurrence can be framed in three different areas of intervention: institutional, societal, as well as cultural and individual spheres. In a later report, de Greiff (2017a, par.26) presents these areas of intervention as elements of a framework approach to prevention, that intends to be a tool for devising the range of issues that effective prevention would call for and the relevant interconnections among them. Likewise, he acknowledges the limitations that the framework might entail, such as remaining silent about the specific measures that could be implemented in a particular context (de Greiff, 2017a, par.25). Nevertheless, de Greiff (2017a, par.4) asserts that, given the disaggregation of knowledge

surrounding prevention, a comprehensive framework approach might contribute to breaking 'existing silos of knowledge and expertise, which hamper effective preventive work.'

Both the Human Rights Commission (2005) and the General Assembly (2005) of the United Nations, as well as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2006a; 2006b; 2010), have also stressed the relevance of guarantees of non-recurrence in preventing new violations of human rights. Yet, restricting the scope of the guarantees of non-recurrence in a transitional justice strategy, de Greiff (2015a, par.25) states that their specific object within these contexts,

> is not the prevention of isolated violations, but of gross human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law. Such violations presuppose systemic abuses of (State) power that have a specific pattern and rest on a degree of organizational set-up.

In a similar vein, Payne et al. (2017, p.22) use conflict non-recurrence 'to emphasize any rearming, and not only repeated iterations of armed conflict'.

Overall, as I mentioned before, there exists a general consensus in the specialised literature regarding the aforementioned preventative nature of guarantees of non-recurrence in transitional justice scenarios (Suárez et al., 2013; Roht-Arriaza, 2016; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017). In particular, Mayer-Rieckh (2017, p.430) explains that,

> preventing recurrence constitutes an obligation that is distinct from other obligations that states should fulfil in the aftermath of serious violations [...]. More than prosecution,

truth-telling and reparation is needed to do justice in the aftermath of serious human rights violations. This 'more' is the terrain of guarantees of non-recurrence.[30]

Nevertheless, Roht-Arriaza (2016) and Mayer-Rieckh (2017) argue that the all-encompassing feature of guarantees of non-recurrence risks vagueness and abstraction. They are, therefore, in favour of a contextual approach to prevention and maintain that such measures should address and respond to the specific root causes of a particular conflict. Suárez et al. (2013) also endorse this contextual approach, proposing three issues that should be assessed to determine specific guarantees of non-recurrence on a case-by-case basis: The needs of the victims, the scenario in which the measures will be applied, and the power or authority of the institution in charge of designing and implementing the guarantees. In turn, Sandoval (2017, p.185) claims that a transformative potential of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence will be 'partly determined by the context in which it happens'.

The scholarship on the conceptualisation of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence principally aims to frame and systematise existing knowledge. For instance, Roht-Arriaza (2016, p.30) warns that the guarantees of non-recurrence have usually been a catch-all category, conceptualised over time as akin to cessation, satisfaction or reparations. Still, she claims that the guarantees of non-recurrence can act as a staple of the transitional justice discourse, which 'can help navigate between the insufficiency of current measures and the risks of overexpansion and continued overpromising that accompany a transformative agenda' (Roht-Arriaza, 2016, p.4).

[30] In the cited text, Mayer-Rieckh (2017) describes prevention as an international obligation of the States; however, this task could also be a role accomplished by, for instance, civil society.

However, more research is needed into the specific guarantees of non-recurrence within particular contexts, to examine the conceptualisation of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence on the ground. One question that I pursue in the empirical context of Medellín, is whether local actors think of participatory budgeting as a 'guarantee of non-recurrence', and if so, how this might be relevant to how they approach participatory budgeting. Likewise, if they don't think of participatory budgeting as a 'guarantee of non-recurrence', why is this so? Do the Town Hall officials use the 'guarantee of non-recurrence' language when dealing with participatory budgeting? Why not if the Colón Agreement classifies participatory budgeting as a guarantee of non-recurrence? These questions are addressed in *Chapters Nine* and *Ten*, while probing the conceptualisation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a guarantee of non-recurrence.

2.2.2. WHAT MEASURES SHOULD BE CLASSIFIED AS TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE?

Given that the guarantees of non-recurrence might take on various forms, a second recurrent query in the literature about this topic addresses the specific measures that may or may not constitute guarantees of non-recurrence. More specifically, and significantly since they have acquired standing as an independent transitional justice mechanism, the guarantees of non-recurrence have expanded from security and justice measures, to mechanisms that address broader institutional and economic issues (Salvioli, 2018a, par.15). For instance, Roht-Arriaza (2016, p.5) notes that transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence,

have taken three main forms: demobilization and dissolution of armed groups, vetting, and institutional reforms focused on the security and justice sectors.

Still, many issues remain to be explored in the literature that tackles this query. Does every measure that aims to foster conflict prevention within a transitional justice scenario constitutes a guarantee of non-recurrence? What would happen if the mechanism did not foster prevention but, on the contrary, nurture new conflicts? If new preventive measures are introduced within a transitional justice context under the heading of guarantees of non-recurrence, would that be enough for those measures to be considered as such? What is more, authors such as Waldorf (2017, p.54) problematise the expansion of the notion of guarantees of non-recurrence proposed by de Greiff (2015a), arguing that the 'guarantees of nonrecurrence should remain focused on where transitional justice can add value to institutional reform—that is, with vetting to the justice and security sectors'.

Regarding participatory budgeting, Szoke-Burke (2015) suggests mechanisms that could be implemented as part of a transitional justice strategy to address violations against social, economic and cultural rights during conflicts. In this vein, she asserts that participatory budgeting could be a measure that might foster positive economic and social change. Nevertheless, discussing Szoke-Burke's (2015) proposal, Anupindi (2015) warns that expanding transitional justice measures to mechanisms intended to address social, economic and cultural rights might distort the limits of transitional justice.

At the core of how broad are the measures classified as guarantees of non-recurrence, lies a distinction between a liberal paradigm of transitional justice, based on an approach to negative peace, in opposition to a concept more in line with a positive peace paradigm that addresses questions of economic violence (Sharp, 2013b, p.149). For instance, Sandoval (2017, p.191) notes that the opponents of amplifying the scope of the guarantees of non-recurrence, in line with transformative approaches to transitional justice, argue that this 'would enlarge the field of transitional in a way that blurs its normative boundaries'. However, she also notes that some guarantees of non-recurrence could take years to materialise their preventative potential, so they should be implemented not only by 'state institutions engaged in the transition' (Sandoval, 2017, p.191).

Still, in line with Sandoval (2017), Roht-Arriaza (2016) also suggests the need of framing the transformative justice agenda in terms of non-recurrence. Nevertheless, Bell (2009) warns on transitional justice often being a cloak that hides ambiguities and the actual state of the area as a non-field, that uses transitional justice as a label to provide an appearance of coherence. In *Chapter Ten*, I engage in detail in this discussion grounded on my case study of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. This is relevant given the expansion of guarantees of non-recurrence in Colombia, without a sound empirical exploration of their actual effects on the ground, as I analyse next.

2.2.3. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE?

Questions surrounding the effects and conditions of conflict prevention constitute a third main query about the guarantees of non-recurrence at the core of my empirical case study of Medellin. In the words of Payne et al. (2017, p.10), there is debate about the value of transitional justice 'in reducing conflict reoccurrence.' A growing number of quantitative and qualitative studies evaluate measures for non-recurrence at both the international (Nash, 2009; Londoño, 2014; Payne et al., 2017) and national (Chavarría, 2012; Navarro et al., 2013; Villarraga, 2015b) levels. However, there have been consistent calls in the literature to augment empirical research into transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence within a broader range of contexts and cases (de Greiff, 2015a; Roht-Arriaza, 2016; Payne et al., 2017; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017). These calls are part of a wider appeal for evidence and context-based transitional justice measures (de Greiff, 2020). As Gready (2019, p.7) puts it, 'Theories of change in transitional justice remain largely implicit, linear, and normative, rather than explicit, multi- directional, and empirically rooted'.

An emerging element of analysis within the contextual approach to prevention to understand the effects of the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence, is the role of civil society in conflict prevention (de Greiff, 2015a; de Greiff, 2017b). For instance, de Greiff & Dieng (2018, par. 59) highlight the role that civil society can play in preventing atrocity crimes by 'providing checks and balances in societies, holding governments accountable and advocating for the fulfilment of rights.' Hence, the authors argue in favour of measures to strengthen civil society, along with traditional security measures, to address the root causes of violence and deter atrocious crimes (de Greiff & Dieng, 2018, pars.94-96). In the words of de Greiff (2017a, par.75),

'successful transitional justice experiences have depended upon the contributions of a thriving civil society'.

However, both international (Taylor, 2014) and national (García, J., et al., 2015) transitional justice studies note that research into citizen involvement in transitional justice mechanisms is often limited to victim participation during the implementation of the relevant measures. Although victim participation in such mechanisms is not recent (Bonacker, 2010), it has increased over the last decade; victims have seen their role evolve from a passive to an active one, including via forms of indirect and direct participation, such as in the case of direct decision-making (Bonacker, 2010; Taylor, 2014; García, J., et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the cited authors stress that, although the benefits of victim participation in transitional justice mechanisms are frequently presented as positive *per se*, scant research has been done to understand its implications across a broad range of issues, such as victim empowerment, healing, and an increased sense of justice (Bonacker, 2010; Taylor, 2014; García, J., et al., 2015). More research is needed regarding the effects of the participation of civil society actors in transitional justice measures. This perspective is provided in my thesis, by examining the power dynamics of diverse actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

As I previously highlighted, an emerging element of analysis on the effects of transitional justice measures is the influence of technological tools in transitional justice mechanisms. As it happens with peacetech, both positive and negative effects of technology use in transitional justice mechanisms have been identified (Pham & Aronson, 2019). However, scarce literature can be found in this area (Pham & Aronson, 2019). In the words of Pham & Aronson (2019, p.5),

'although technologies have the potential to dramatically alter the balance of power between perpetrators and those pursuing transitional justice, this has not yet occurred'.

So far, the literature covers the analysis of case studies that primarily deal with the use of technological tools in processes of truth and reparations, among others, in Chile (Bernasconi et al., 2019), Colombia (Chenou et al., 2019), Guatemala (Guberek et al., 2019), Northern Ireland (Anderson, 2019) and Sri Lanka (Gavshon & Gorur, 2019). The cases portrayed focus mostly on crimes committed in the past. It has not yet analysed in profundity the use of ICTs to prevent new violence from emerging.

To summarise, although the participation of civil society and victims is currently stressed as pivotal to the contextual approach to prevention of conflict both worldwide and in Colombia, more research is needed regarding the influence of citizen participation in local government budgets on conflict prevention and the relative merits of ICTs in transitional justice scenarios. Exploring participatory budgeting in Colombia through a transitional justice prism advances this research agenda. The levels of governance are also relevant in assessing the effects of guarantees of non-recurrence, as I discuss next.

2.2.4. How do links between the national and local levels of governance affect guarantees of non-recurrence?

Similar to the peacebuilding field, queries surrounding transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence are raised at the local, national and international levels of governance. This means that these three levels of governance intersect in many of the debates (Sharp, 2013b; 2014). The

most accurate term for labelling these connections is, perhaps, *glocal*. This word describes phenomena in which 'the global and the local intertwine [...]. As the "local" engages with international discourses, institutions and actors, transitional justice takes on different dimensions and produces unexpected outcomes' (Lundy, 2011, p.93). In Medellín's participatory budgeting process, the national is a middle dimension between the international and the local.

What are the effects of the links between different levels of governance on the guarantees of non-recurrence? What, in turn, is the influence of these links on the prevention of new conflicts? A discussion of these questions connects with increasing calls in the literature to bridge the gap between top-down and bottom-up transitional justice initiatives, to foster local ownership (Gready, 2005; Lundy & McGovern, 2008; Sharp, 2014). As Salvioli (2018a, par.16) notes, 'in many contexts [...] institution-centred transitional justice and peacebuilding initiatives — on their own — have hardly ever reached the grass-roots level to the extent required to significantly contribute to processes of achieving increased social cohesion'.

Nevertheless, more research is needed to understand how different levels of governance interlock in specific measures for non-recurrence, such as participatory budgeting. In the words of Kochanski (2020, pp.42), although the transitional justice field has taken a turn to the local, the literature on local transitional justice 'remains idealistic and rests on mostly unsupported presumptions about its impact'. Some areas for further research suggested by this author include how widespread and influential local transitional justice is within countries and their relationship with state-level transitional justice mechanisms (Kochanski, 2020, pp.43–44).

Medellín's participatory budgeting process provides avenues of research to examine the four aforementioned issues concerning transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence, grounded in empirical data. This specific case study allows to critically assess what is a guarantee of non-recurrence in Medellín's transitional justice scenario, if Medellín's participatory budgeting process is grasped as a guarantee of non-recurrence by local actors, its effects on conflict prevention, and its contrast with the national level. Therefore, exploring the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Medellín may contribute to a greater understanding of the conceptualisation of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence in Colombia, their nature, aims and limitations.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the literature on peacebuilding and transitional justice reviewed so far contain two main gaps that this thesis aims to reduce. First, I aspire to expand the academic work on the peacebuilding 'local turn', exploring the conditions under which participatory budgeting may nurture political inclusion or exclusion of marginalised groups in Medellín's peacebuilding scenario, including debates about the relative merits of ICTs in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. In parallel, and with the aim of ultimately critically examining the influence of participatory budgeting on conflict prevention, I also seek to probe the conceptualisation of Medellín's participatory budgeting as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence, and the circumstances under which it may or may not hinder new conflicts from occurring, with an emphasis on its influence on political inclusion.

Medellín's participatory budgeting process is a case study that offers promising avenues for research to address the gaps identified above using a qualitative empirical approach. In the next chapter, I discuss the process of selection of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a case study, the development of the research question, and the research design and methodology used to gather and analyse the data. In the following chapters, I will revisit some of the literature examined so far in *Chapters Two* and *Three*, to place my empirical findings in the light of the scholarship discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, DESIGN, METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Instead of testing pre-specified hypotheses in my dissertation, I used a grounded theory approach to collect and analyse the data and develop and answer my three research questions: What is the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion in the view of its participants? What are the effects of ICTs on this relationship in the view of the participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process? Is Medellín's participatory budgeting process considered as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence or associated with the Colón Agreement by its participants?

Grounded theory is especially 'useful in new, applied areas where there is a lack of theory and concepts to describe and explain what is going on' (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.79). This method aims to produce a middle-range theory of a phenomenon, in this case participatory budgeting, derived directly from data collected in a real-world setting (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In my thesis, I contribute to the relevant scholarship examined in *Chapters Two* and *Three*, by using an exploratory approach based on a qualitative case study research design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process since its introduction in 2004 as a city-wide policy, up until the last regulatory change in the process in 2017, relying on a grounded theory approach to collect and analyse my data. I used this procedure to refine and answer the research questions that I propose in my thesis.

Since my research was exploratory, the process that I used to mature my research questions, select my research design and choose my methods for data gathering and analysis, is as significant as the answers to them that I hereby present. Hence, in this chapter I discuss and explain the decisions that informed the development of my research questions, research design, methods, and data analysis. Furthermore, I also reflect on how and why I chose the methodology that informed my research, as well as challenges to my data analysis.

The chapter is structured in two sections. In *Section One*, I explain and discuss the reasons for and how I planned my research design. I also detail the research methods that I followed to collect my data. This includes an account of the different data sources that informed my research. Subsequently, in *Section Two*, I expand on how I used a grounded theory approach to select my case study, build my research questions and define my unit of analysis. Likewise, in this section I discuss the process of data analysis that I followed in my thesis to answer my research questions, while explaining, as one example, how I used a grounded theory approach to build the definition of political inclusion that I use in this thesis.[31]

[31] In *Chapters Six*, *Seven* and *Eight*, while explaining the main components of the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, that I propose in this thesis, I discuss in detail how my process of data analysis led to the diverse categories that comprise this framework, with political inclusion at its core.

1. A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH TO GUIDE MY CASE STUDY SELECTION, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Out of the extensive assortment of research design options for my study, I adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative methods facilitate grasping social processes and meanings (Silverman, 2013) in a way pertinent to answering the puzzle that inspired my research during its early stages. As Maxwell (2008, p.221) notes, qualitative studies are especially useful to understand the meaning of events for participants and the situations and actions they are involved in, generating new theories about them, and analysing the processes by which events and actions take place.

When my research started, the Colombian Government was still negotiating a peace deal with the FARC-EP. Likewise, my fieldwork took place under the uncertainty of the Colón Agreement's implementation after the Havana Agreement was rejected in the plebiscite's voting ballots, and amid structural continuing regulatory changes in Medellín's participatory budgeting process that were being discussed in Medellín's City Council. Therefore, due to the evolving nature of my study, and the ambiguity that surrounded it, my research strategy adopted an exploratory standpoint, that emphasises discovery and stresses 'the need to approach investigations without being blinkered by the concepts and theories of previous research' (Denscombe, 2010, p.110). In this exploratory approach, I used grounded theory to identify the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion as the main focus of my research, which was not clear when my study started; thus, I followed an iterative process of data gathering and analysis throughout my study to refine and answer my research questions.

Following this exploratory approach, I started my research using a broadly framed question that served 'as a basis for initial and emerging sub-questions' (Agee, 2009, p.434); i.e., *what is the influence of offline and online participatory mechanisms, such as participatory planning and budgeting processes or victim's participation in truth commissions or transitional justice courts, on peace in the Colombian transitional justice scenario*? This initial question evolved during my study, giving shape, direction and focus to my analysis as the data was collected and examined. I then further refined the scope of my research to focus on participatory budgeting, defined my case study and arrived at the three research questions that I answer in this thesis, with a focus on political inclusion as a specific requirement for achieving peace through conflict prevention in Medellín's context. In the next paragraphs, I discuss the process that informed my research design, specifying the grounded theory approach that I used, explaining the research methods that I employed to collect my data, and describing the data sources that I analysed to answer the research questions that I examine in this dissertation.

1.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Specialised scholarship on qualitative research includes extensive debates as to whether or not qualitative methods can be used to answer research questions that aim to understand the association between two variables (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; King et al., 1994; Tacq, 2011). Nevertheless, it is recognised that when research questions focus on processes, qualitative methods can provide insightful perspectives (Maxwell, 2004; Anderson & Scott, 2012; Donmoyer, 2012).

This process-oriented approach stands in contrast to a positivist theory of causation and is founded on realistic philosophical perspectives (Salmon, 1984; Maxwell, 2004; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Thus, this thesis is anchored in a realist epistemological understanding. In contrast to a positivist perspective, realism 'is concerned with how mechanisms produce events' (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.31). In my research, this means that, adopting a realist philosophical standing, I retain an ontological perspective in which I acknowledge that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories, and constructions. In my dissertation, this is Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

Still, I accept a form of epistemological constructivism, in which our understanding of this world is inevitably a construction shaped also by our own perspectives and standpoints (Maxwell, 2012, p.5). In my thesis, this refers to the answers that I provide to my research questions, in which I acknowledge that both the research participants and I, as a researcher, influence their construction. This is why I tried my best to be very careful in my thesis in providing specific details of the data that I gathered and how I interpreted it, so as to render transparency on how I built the answers, and the role that the participants and myself played in their construction. Likewise, as I further discuss in this chapter, I was especially cautious in adopting techniques to ensure the quality of my research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.367).

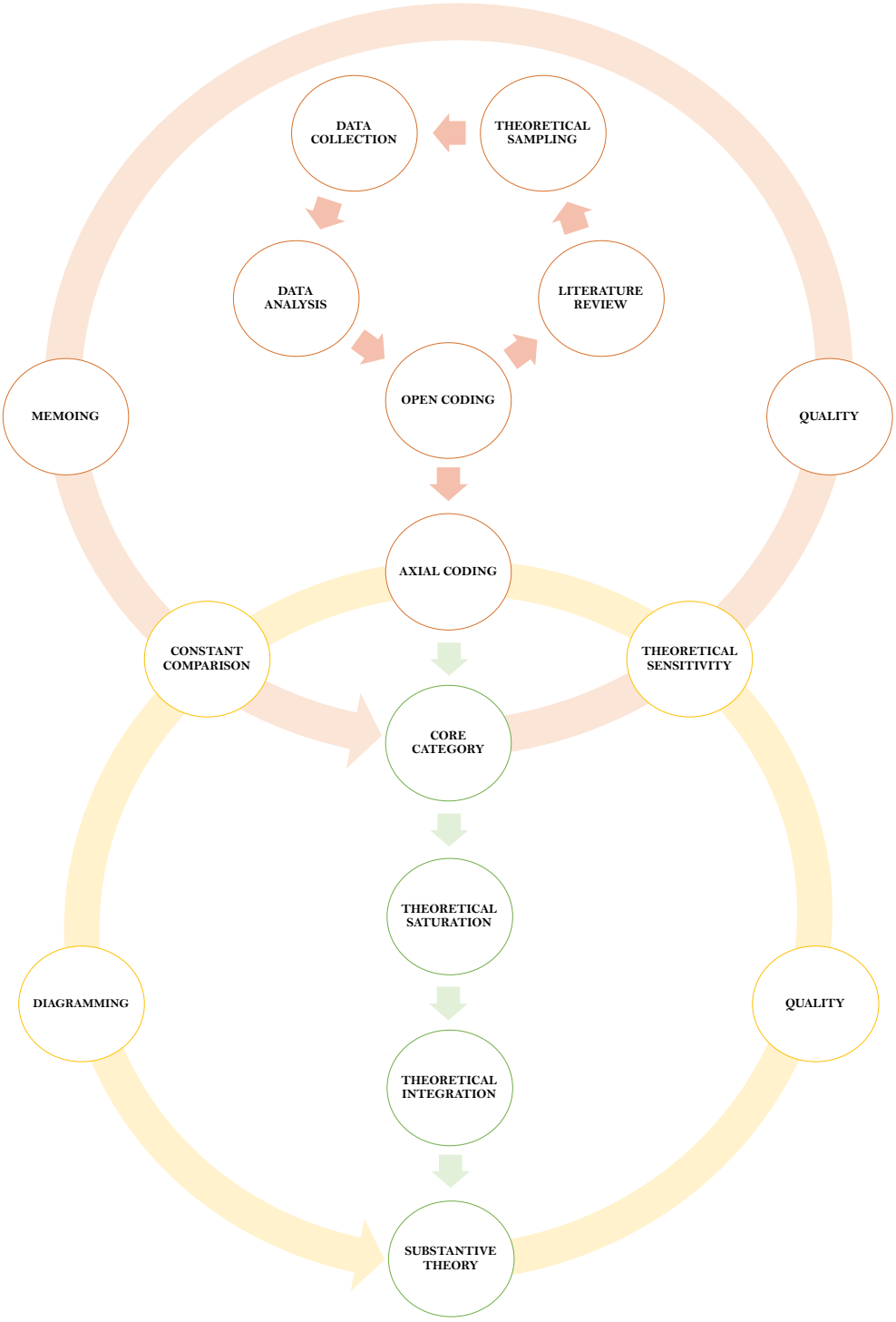
1.2. THE GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH ADOPTED IN THIS STUDY

As I previously noted, my data collection and analysis followed a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which entails to construct a medium-range theory grounded in data. According to Denscombe (2010, p.108), in grounded theory,

> concepts and theories are developed out of the data through a persistent process of comparing the ideas with existing data, and improving the emerging concepts and theories by checking them against new data collected specifically for the purpose.

Amongst the different approaches to grounded theory (Kelle, 2010; Urquhart, 2012), I followed Corbin & Strauss' (2015) method, because it offers systematic and clear steps for data collection and analysis, suitable for an exploratory research, while providing rigorous conditions to assess the quality of the research throughout the process, as I detail in this section. More specifically, in Corbin & Strauss' (2015) approach, data collection and analysis follow an iterative process that integrates the following stages cyclically: *theoretical sampling*, *coding*, *constant comparison*, *core categories*, *theoretical saturation*, *theoretical integration*, and *substantive theory*. Likewise, this approach is enriched with the use of tools such as *memoing*, *diagramming*, and *theoretical sensitivity*, along with strategies to enhance the *quality* of the research, as depicted in *Figure 8*. In the next subsections, I detail how applied these processes and tools in my research.

Figure 8 - Corbin & Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach.



Source: Created by the author based on Pryor et al. (2009), Hoda et al. (2012), Corbin & Strauss (2015) and Roman et al. (2017).

1.2.1. APPLICATION OF CORBIN & STRAUSS' GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH IN THE RESEARCH

In Corbin & Strauss' (2015) method, grounded theory starts with *theoretical sampling*, a technique of data collection based on concepts derived from data gathered from places, people, and events that will maximise opportunities to develop concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.167). In other words, it is the 'disciplined search for patterns and variations' in the data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p.12). In grounded theory, data collection usually follows a preliminary literature review. However, the method advises against starting the study with preconceived concepts and ideas. Instead, the researcher should focus the data gathering as the analysis evolves, by coding and categorising it.

Therefore, in grounded theory, sampling is driven by the developing theory, which implies that the sampling strategy changes throughout the study and is not predetermined (Oktay, 2012, p.16). Likewise, in the words of Oktay (2012, p.16), in grounded theory,

> The sample used to generate the theory is not 'representative' in the same way that it is in a quantitative study. In quantitative research, the characteristics of the sample focused on are often demographic. In a grounded theory study, however, demographic characteristics may be irrelevant to the theory. The aim instead is a sample that allows thorough exploration of the relevant concepts.

As I explain in detail in the next subsection, once I selected the topic of my study, I started gathering my data at the national level in Colombia, mainly employing documental analysis of laws, decrees, judgements, official reports and policy documents of the peace process and participatory mechanisms in Colombia, until I chose Medellín's participatory budgeting process as my case study. Once I focused my research, I continued applying *theoretical sampling*, gathering data using mainly interviews, focus groups and participant observation in different *comunas* and *corregimientos* of the city and with a broad range of actors, until the emerging concepts reached the point of *theoretical saturation.*

In Corbin & Strauss' (2015, p.167) grounded theory approach, *theoretical saturation* is a stage when no new concepts or variations emerge from the data. This phase is achieved with the cyclical use of *theoretical sensitivity*, namely the ability of the researcher to be analytic (Oktay, 2012, p.16). Likewise, in grounded theory, coding is the process of analysing the data (Walker & Myrick, 2006, p.550). More specifically, coding refers to the creation of a list of codes to help denote concepts that stand for meaning. In this vein, a concept is 'an idea that is generally abstract and universal rather than concrete and specific [...] a basic building block that captures the essence of a thing' (Denscombe, 2010, p.322).

In grounded theory, the process of building concepts out of the data analysis involves going from open to axial coding, using memos as written records of analysis of a process called *constant comparison* (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.93). *Constant comparison* is a practice by which 'data are broken down into manageable pieces with each piece compared for similarities and differences' (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.30). This method allows the researcher to form core categories that describe 'in a few words what the researcher identifies as the major theme of the study. Taken

together, the core category and other categories provide the structure of the theory' (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.93). Furthermore, once core categories achieve a stage of *theoretical saturation*, the researcher moves to a phase called *theoretical integration*, in which different categories are linked around a central or core category to form a theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.198).

In summary, as Corbin & Strauss (2015, p.35-36) put it, in grounded theory 'the researcher does not begin the research with a pre-identified list of concepts. Concepts are derived from data during analysis'. This analysis begins with the collection of the first pieces of data and, subsequently, the analysis of this data guides the collection of further data using *theoretical sampling*, until the researcher constructs a well-integrated and dense theory up to the point of *theoretical saturation.*

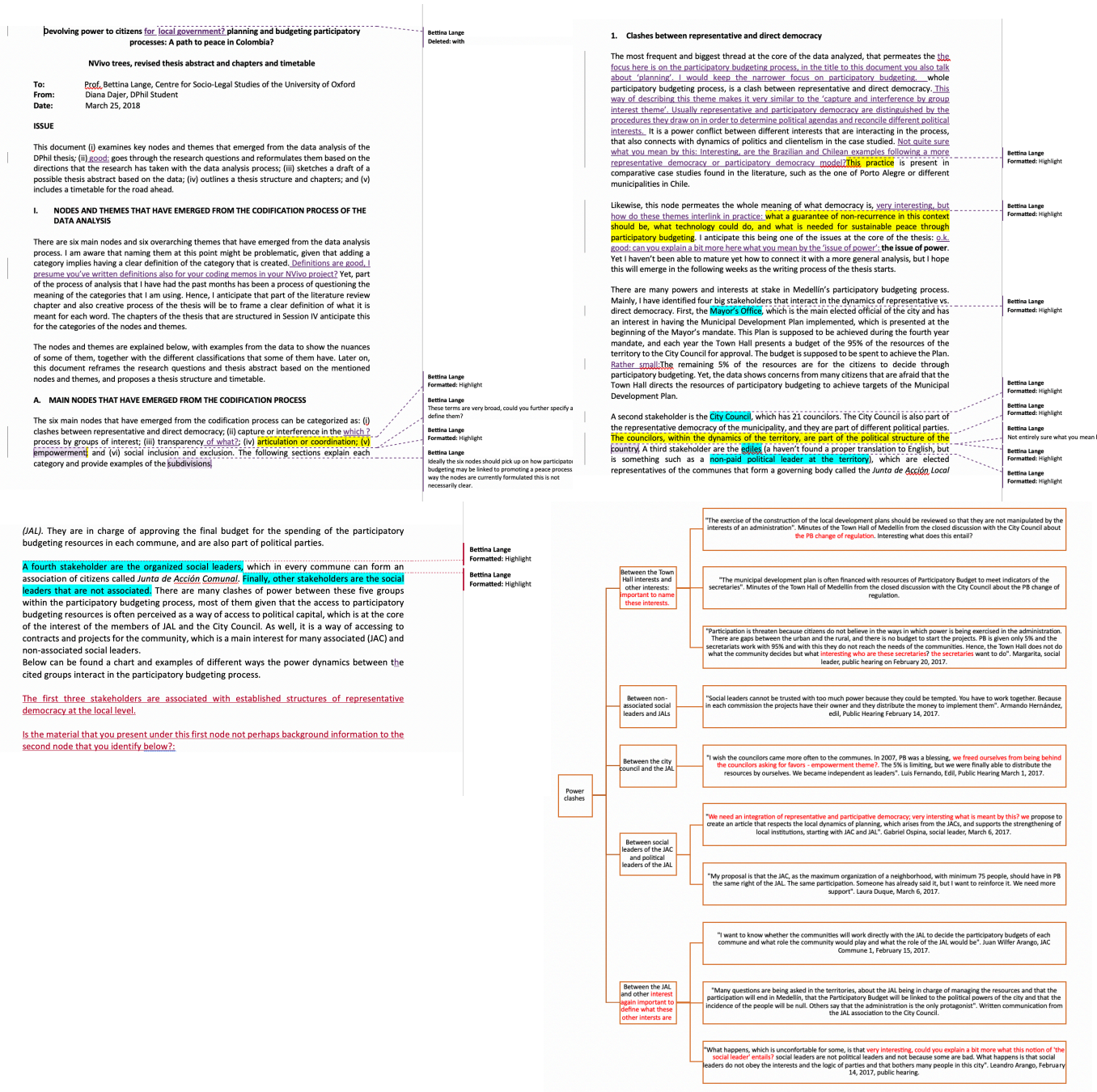
Using political inclusion as an example, in *Section Two* I detail how, once I started gathering my data, I used open coding to start building concepts out of it, employing constant comparison as a tool to contrast the emerging blocks of analysis, which helped me to direct the research gathering more data using *theoretical sampling*, moving from open to axial coding until I reached the point of *theoretical saturation.* This was an iterative and non-linear process that lasted two years. Once I finished this stage, I carried out a thorough literature review, which I subsequently contrasted with my emerging theory. This thesis captures both the process of creating my substantive theory, the literature review, and the critical analysis that I carried out after contrasting the substantive theory and the literature review as the main two building blocks of my dissertation.

1.2.2. MEMOING, DIAGRAMMING AND QUALITY

Three main tools are used in Corbin & Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach to enhance *theoretical sensitivity*. First, *memoing*, which is a method of recording in writing the reflections of the researcher as the data analysis evolves. In the words of Corbin & Strauss (2015, p.78), analysis 'refers to both the concept and the thought processes that go behind assigning meaning to data. [...] The thought process is recorded in a memo. This makes analysis a dynamic and evolving process'.

I used memos throughout all my data analysis process and shared my notes regularly with my DPhil supervisor, Associate Prof. Dr. Bettina Lange, who helped me make sense of where the data was leading my analysis and the next steps to enhance the theory as it evolved. As Lempert (2007, p.262) puts it, 'continuous memo writing, re-reading and rewriting, leads to progressively more abstract levels of theorizing'. In *Figure 9* I show an example of one of my memos, that includes both my data analysis at that stage and the comments made by my supervisor before one of our meetings.

Figure 9 - Example of a memo that I produced during my data analysis.



Source: Created by the author during the data analysis process and reviewed by her DPhil supervisor, Associate Prof. Dr. Bettina Lange.

When I wrote the memo in *Figure 9*, I was in the process of analysing the data and moving from open to axial coding, creating core categories until theoretical saturation was reached. At the time, I had identified power as a key element of my thesis, along with the key role of a broad range of actors in the participatory budgeting process. Yet, by that time I was still in the process of discovering political inclusion as the central theme of my thesis, and hence I was slowly progressing towards the final development of my research questions. Likewise, in that memo I also reflected on the puzzling relationship that I found between participatory budgeting in Medellín and the Colón Agreement, given the refusal by local actors of connecting Medellín's reform of their participatory budgeting process with the peace process with FARC-EP.

The data analysis process was the most challenging part of my thesis. Having worked in transitional justice at the national level for a while, I found it very hard at first to detach myself from the preconceived normative ideas of transitional justice, and carry out an analysis that relied solely on the data at hand. Hence, my first memos where rather normative than empirical, which posed difficulties for my process of theoretical sampling. Another obstacle that I had to surpass during this process was to recognise and disregard preconceived ideas that I had about the peace process with FARC-EP and learn about the use of technology to enhance citizen participation. Likewise, I had to learn how to build theory out of the data using grounded theory.

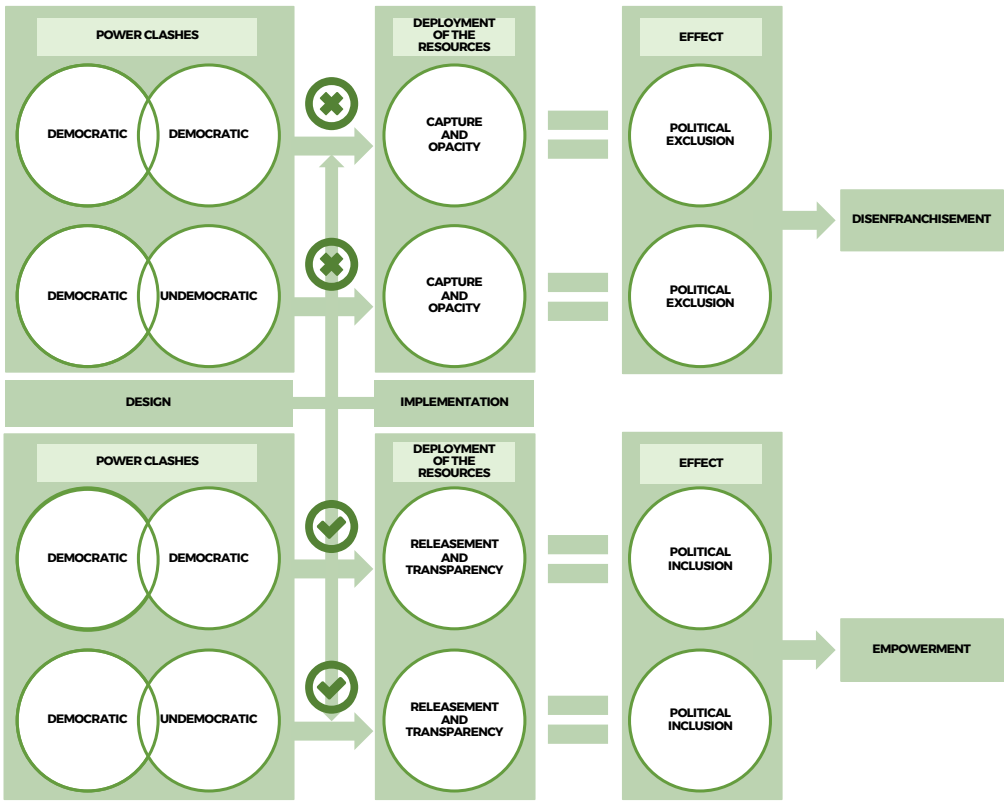
I must confess that, when I started the research, it was extremely hard for me to contrast my own views on the Colón Agreement, with perceptions that were against it. Likewise, I found that, on the ground, many citizens were sceptical about the use of technology in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. These, for me, were counterintuitive findings that pushed me to

go beyond my own beliefs in my data analysis, until I was able to take a critical standpoint that allowed me to go deeper in my scrutiny.

A second tool offered by Corbin & Strauss' (2015, p.127) grounded theory approach to enhance *theoretical sensitivity* is the use of *diagrams*, which are 'visual devices that depict relationships between analytic concepts'. In grounded theory, diagrams give 'motion to the data', given that they show 'events happening in relation to other events' (Lempert, 2007, p.252). *Diagramming* is a useful tool for data analysis in grounded theory, that helps to trace the relationship between different categories and integrate them into a substantial theory.

I used this tool throughout my research process to give a sense of motion and process to my data analysis. The end result is the diagram to depict the *pathways to inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, that I propose in this thesis. However, I must note that this is the end result of a continuous process of sketching and resketching my data analysis. For instance, in *Figure 10*, I present one of the first attempts that I made to diagram my theory.

Figure 10 - Example of a diagram that I created during my data analysis.



Source: Created by the author during the data analysis process.

The last tool of Corbin & Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach to enhance *theoretical sensitivity* that was crucial during my research were the strategies to enhance its *quality*. As Corbin & Strauss (2015, pp.362-367) note, the literature on qualitative methodology includes a broad range of criteria to evaluate qualitative research, such as validity, reliability, credibility, truthfulness, rigour and applicability; however, Corbin & Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach do not use the terms validity and reliability due to their quantitative implications. In contrast, this method proposes its own set of judging criteria for studies that use it, captured in the word *quality*.

This standpoint to assess the rigour of the method was another reason for me to choose Corbin & Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach in my dissertation. Corbin & Strauss' (2015, pp-367-372) judging criteria to foster quality assert, among others, that the researcher needs to have methodological consistency, clarity of purpose, and self-awareness, follow training in how to conduct qualitative research, show sensitivity to participants and data, and have a willingness to work hard, ability to connect with the creative self, methodological awareness, and a strong desire to do research. In *Figure 11*, I discuss how I applied these criteria in my research.

Figure 11 - Application in my thesis of Corbin & Strauss' (2015) conditions to foster quality research.

CONDITIONS THAT FOSTER QUALITY RESEARCH	APPLICATION IN MY THESIS
METHODOLOGICAL CONSISTENCY	As I mentioned in Section 1.2.1, I was particularly careful in using Corbin & Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach in all my research process, starting with the data collection employing theoretical sampling, using coding for my data analysis and exercising constant comparison until theoretical saturation was reached to produce my substantive theory. As I explain in *Section Two*, the core category that integrates my research is political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, which emerged as the main theme of my study.
CLARITY OF PURPOSE	My study mainly aimed to build a substantive theory of the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion, based on the data that I gathered and analysed for the research.
SELF-AWARENESS	I tried my best to be upfront about my biases and minimise them in the study and framework built. This helped me shift the main focus of my study from transitional justice to political inclusion, and develop a critical standing on the use of technology in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. For instance, self-awareness helped me avoid asking leading questions in my interviews and engage in a continuous process of reflexivity during my process of constant comparison, to avoid descriptive explanations until I was able to build my substantive framework.
TRAINING IN HOW TO CONDUCT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	Before conducting my research, I was trained, among others, on the use of qualitative methods for Socio-Legal Studies, and preparation for safe and effective fieldwork. I also engaged in several trainings on participatory budgeting in Colombia and worldwide and was part of Build Up's Build

	Peace Fellows Program, which provided technology support, training and mentoring for my research.
SENSITIVITY TO PARTICIPANTS AND DATA	During my research, I organised several meetings to present my thesis to key participants and receive their feedback. Furthermore, I attended tens of hearings and meeting with a broad range of participants, which allowed me to enhance my theoretical sensitivity. This was a challenging task for me because, due to the conflictive context in Colombia, connecting with the context at an emotional level required me to build character and strength to cope with the scenario.
WILLINGNESS TO WORK HARD	I acknowledge that doing my research has not been an easy process. It involved doing fieldwork for over two years, analysing my data for an equal amount of time and surpassing the challenges involved in writing my thesis for over two years as well, confronting my weaknesses, learning on the way and trying to do my best to present quality work. Although I am aware it has not been a perfect process, I did not give up and have been committed to it until the end.
ABILITY TO CONNECT WITH THE CREATIVE SELF	Memoing and diagramming were two useful tools for me to develop creativity during the process of data analysis.
METHODOLOGICAL AWARENESS	As I further discuss in *Chapter Ten*, I am aware of the limits of my research.
STRONG DESIRE TO DO RESEARCH	This desire helped me surpass every challenge found throughout my research process, from transcending the initial anxiety I felt about the uncertainty of peacebuilding in Colombia when the Havana Agreement was rejected, until writing the final chapters of my thesis amidst the COVID-19's pandemic.

Source: Created by the author based on Corbin & Strauss (2015, pp-367-372).

A special measure that I took during the research related with the sensitivity with the participants and the data were actions to address ethical issues related with my research. More specifically, I applied to the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) for approval of my research and took measures to secure the protection of my participants. Furthermore, I complied with the ethical standards of the University of Oxford's guidelines to obtain informed consent, the professional guidelines of the SLSA's Statement of Principles of Ethical Research Practice, the CUREC's Best Practice Guidance for Internet-Based

Research, the BPS's Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research, and the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. The CUREC approval number is R48743 / RE001.

During the course of my research I mainly faced three ethical issues. The first one involved data protection and confidentiality. Since I had to deal with sensitive data, such as views regarding the political situation by the participants, this could create risks for them. To mitigate this risk, I tried to avoid undue intrusion, obtain informed consent, protect the interests of the participants, maintain confidentiality of records, and prevent the disclosure of identities in the thesis. The second ethical issue involved my own safety and security. To avoid risks, I followed a risk assessment and mitigation guideline that I portrayed in my CUREC application.

A final ethical issue that emerged was about the expectations that I could create with the online tool that was designed during the research, and possible conflicts of interest that could emerge from this situation. To prevent a conflict of interest from emerging, and to lower the expectations of participants, I particularly strived during the design process of the research and the process of securing funding, to guarantee the full independence and liberty of the research. This implies, for instance, that the data was only stored and used by the researcher, and no particular result was expected to be produced for the funding organisations of the research, besides the findings that would naturally emerge from the DPhil thesis and tool's design.

1.2.3. DEFINING THEORY IN GROUNDED THEORY

A grounded theory approach aims to build a substantive medium-range theory using the data collected and analysed in the research. Still, theory 'can mean very different things to different people' (Robson & McCartan, 2015, p.65). Following Corbin & Strauss (2015, p.46), I use theory in my dissertation to refer to the 'skeleton or framework that explains why things happen'. More specifically, as Maxwell (2008, p.223) notes, theory is 'a simplification of the world, but a simplification aimed at clarifying and explaining some aspect of how it works'.

My dissertation uses a grounded theory approach to explain how the power dynamics and the deployment of the resources within Medellín's offline and online participatory budgeting process could either hinder or foster political inclusion, depending on how the process is designed and implemented. I built this explanation using categories that describe the major themes of the study. As I previously explained, the categories emerged during a process of constant comparison of the codes that arose while analysing the data gathered. More specifically, they are based on the data collected from the interviews, participant observation, focus groups and documentary analysis. The categories are used to build a framework that differentiates the conditions that may lead to political inclusion from the ones that produce exclusion. I termed this framework 'the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process'.

According to de Greiff (2010, 2012), the theorisation of transitional justice, and in particular for my thesis guarantees of non-recurrence, serves the purpose of clarifying the relationship between its constituent elements and the nature and the full extent of its normative commitments. In his words, 'in addition to clarifying *what* we commit ourselves to in adopting

the notion, theorizing helps us articulate *why* we are so committed. That understanding can make a crucial difference to *how* we act" (de Greiff, 2012, p. 33). In turn, Corradetti et al (2015) comprehend the theorisation of transitional justice 'in action' as the provision of systematic conceptualisation of its nature, aims and limitations. Hence, probing the conceptualisation of Medellín's participatory budgeting as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence by its participants is useful to understand its boundaries and implementation in an empirical case study.

As Denscombe (2010, p.118) notes, there are two kinds of theories that usually derive from grounded theory. The first one, known as *substantive theory*, is a fairly localised theory closely linked with the empirical situation. The second, named *formal theory*, is more general and applies to circumstances broader than a particular context. In my dissertation, I build a substantive framework based on the case study analysed; i.e., the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Hopefully, with the analysis of more settings, in the future, this thesis could contribute to the creation of a broader formal theory that surpasses the specific case studied.

So far, I have explained the research strategy of my study, that is, the 'aims and design principles that shape the overall investigation' (Denscombe, 2010, p.326). In the next subsection, I detail the research methods that I employed; i.e., the tools that I used to collect empirical data.

1.3. RESEARCH METHODS

Using theoretical sampling, I employed qualitative empirical methods in my research to gather data about the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion, the role of technology on this process, and its categorisation as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence by Medellín's actors. Following Corbin & Strauss' (2015) grounded theory approach, my fieldwork involved an iterative process conducted mainly during July, August and November of 2016 and February, March, May, June, July, November and December of 2017.

The qualitative empirical data was collected using semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and the examination of documentary data such as legal and policy documents and official reports on the process. Likewise, the data involved the gathering of views of different actors involved in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, such as social leaders, national and local public servants, members of civil society organisations and citizens. I codified the data gathered in the research using NVivo 12. *Figure 12* includes a list of the data collected, a brief description, the type of participants involved, and the type of record employed.

Figure 12 - Summary of the main data collected for the research.

TYPE OF DATA	DATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF RECORD	USE OF THE DATA
INTERVIEWS	20/07/16 - 30/08/16	34 semi-structured interviews with citizens, delegates in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, community leaders, staff of Medellín's Town Hall and the National Planning Office, academics, members of NGO's, and public servants at the national level in Colombia.	Interviews' transcripts.	These initial exploratory interviews were helpful as a starting point to understand how Medellín's participatory budgeting process works, and its history, benefits, challenges and relationship with peacebuilding in the city. These interviews guided my case selection process, writing of the research proposal, and an initial understanding of the role of political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The interviews also helped me to understand the strategy of Medellín's Town Hall to reform the participatory budgeting process and introduce online tools, to plan the next stages of my fieldwork.
	03/17 - 07/17	36 semi-structured interviews with public officials at the national and local level in Colombia, citizen delegates in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, academics and NGO and civil society organisations' members.		These interviews were carried out after my research proposal was approved. Some interviews were mainly exploratory, to understand better the implementation of the Colón Agreement in Medellín, the perceptions of key players in Medellín's participatory budgeting about the reform, to receive feedback on the technological tool that was being designed as part of the research, and to understand how the guarantees of non-recurrence were being implemented at a national and local level. Other interviews were mostly about specific aspects of the participatory budgeting process in Medellín and the perceptions of key players about political inclusion in the process, and the change of regulation.
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	20/07/16 - 24/07/16	Observation of urban and rural participatory budgeting assemblies in several *comunas*	Personal notes and pictures.	This data was helpful as a first live immersion in Medellín's participatory budgeting voting exercise. In the observation, I was able to understand better and

		and *corregimientos* and the voting process of Medellín's 2016 participatory budgeting process.		see first-hand many of the challenges and positive experiences of the participatory budgeting process.
	27/07/16 - 29/07/16	Internal workshop of Medellín's Town Hall to assess and discuss the results of the 2016 participatory budgeting process.	Personal notes and pictures.	This observation exercise was relevant to understand the internal approach of Medellín's Town Hall towards the different challenges and benefits of the participatory budgeting process.
	17/11/16 - 19/11/16	Meeting of the 2016 National Network of Participatory Planning and Budgeting in Colombia.	Official minutes, personal notes and pictures.	The meeting was held in Medellín. The participants discussed the relationship between peacebuilding and participatory budgeting featured in the Colón Agreement. Hence, it provided useful insights for the thesis from both a national and local perspective.
	01/17- 02/17	Internal meetings for the draft regulation of Medellín's new System of municipal planning and participatory budgeting process with members of Medellín's City Council and Medellín's Town Hall.	Official minutes, personal notes and pictures.	These meetings were useful to understand the approach of the Town Hall and the City Council to the change of regulation of participatory planning and budgeting in Medellín.
	19/01/17- 22/04/17	Medellín's City Council's socialisation of the draft regulation of Medellín's new System of Municipal Planning and participatory budgeting process with different stakeholders.	Official minutes, personal notes, video recording, and pictures (33 hearings with 413 interventions and proposals and 33 official written minutes).	The interventions include a broad range of views and perceptions of many relevant actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process about political inclusion and exclusion. Key quotes, representative of the discussions, were used in the thesis, after a thorough codification of the data.

	26/05/17 - 21/06/17	Medellín's Town Hall's socialisation of the draft decree to regulate the participatory budgeting process with different populations in all the c*omunas* and *corregimientos* of Medellín.	Official minutes, personal notes and pictures of 40 socialisation hearings.	These meetings were useful to understand the perceptions of the citizens towards the new regulation of participatory budgeting in Medellín. Overall, they showed clashes between representative and direct democracy, and many concerns that civic leaders had about the new regulation, the coordination between planning and budgeting, and the inclusion of technological tools in the process.
	1/2/17	Public discussion in Bogotá about the harmonisation between the Justice and Peace Law with the transitional justice mechanisms included in the Colón Agreement, with high-level officials and experts such as the President and the Ombudsman.	Personal notes and pictures.	This data allowed me to understand better how the transitional justice process in Colombia was being shaped and implemented in Medellín and at a national level after the Colón Agreement was signed, and the main challenges and opportunities regarding political inclusion and the guarantees of non-recurrence included in the agreement. Key topics discussed in these seminars were the history of the Colombian transitional justice regulation, the transitional justice system included in the Colón Agreement, citizen participation in the Colón Agreement, and the guarantees on non-recurrence in the Colón Agreement.
	9/3/17	Seminar on transitional justice in the Colón Agreement with national and international experts on transitional justice at the University of Antioquia in Medellín.		
	15/3/2017	Seminar on transitional justice in the Colón Agreement with national experts on transitional justice at EAFIT University in Medellín.		
	16/06/17	Seminar in Bogotá with national and local experts, on the challenges of participatory planning and budgeting in the Colón Agreement.	Official minutes, personal notes and pictures.	This data provides an assessment of experts on participatory planning and budgeting in the country, and its relationship with the Colón Agreement. The experts discussed the connections of participatory planning and budgeting for peacebuilding at a national level with the risks and opportunities

				identified at the local level. This data was useful for triangulation purposes and making connections between different levels of government.
	11/17	Observation of the voting process of Medellín's 2017 participatory budgeting process.	Personal notes and pictures.	This observation exercise was helpful as a comparative live immersion in Medellín's participatory budgeting voting exercise after the new regulation was issued. This voting experience had much less participants than the previous year and included an online voting process.
FOCUS GROUPS	17/08/16	Focus group with 40 academics and representatives of Medellín's Town Hall, to identify the perceptions of peace, the challenges of the participatory budgeting process, and the use of technology to tackle those challenges.	Minutes, evaluation of the focus groups by the participants, materials filled by the participants during the focus groups, and pictures.	These focus groups allowed me to have an in-depth understanding of the opportunities and challenges of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, and the role that technology could play within this process. Five main issues of the focus groups were useful for my dissertation: 1. Individual and collective answers of the participants about what participation and peace means in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. 2. Individual and collective answers of the participants about the positive and negative aspects of the participatory budgeting process. 3. Discussion about the challenges and opportunities of using technology in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. 4. Survey data on technology use among the participants. 5. Survey data on participatory budgeting to foster peacebuilding and use of technology to support Medellín's participatory budgeting process.
	23/08/16	Focus group with 24 stakeholders of Medellín's *Comuna One*, to identify the perceptions of peace, the challenges of the participatory budgeting process, and the use of technology to tackle those challenges.		
	24/08/16	Focus group with 25 stakeholders of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, to identify the perceptions of peace, the challenges of the participatory budgeting process, and the use of technology to tackle those challenges.		

	17/3/2017	Workshop on innovation in Medellín's participatory planning and budgeting processes led by the Town Hall.	Minutes and pictures.	This workshop, led by the Town Hall, discussed the challenges, needs, and ideas for technological innovation in Medellín's participatory planning and budgeting processes.
	22/06/17	Focus group to present, test and evaluate the tech tool developed in the research with 12 members of Medellín's Town Hall.	Minutes, pre-test and post-test evaluations, materials filled by the participants during the workshop, digital data and pictures.	These focus groups were relevant to assess the relationship between Medellín's participatory budgeting process and some perceptions of peace identified during the data analysis, such as political inclusion. Likewise, the data gathered allowed me to analyse the opportunities and challenges of Medellín's participatory budgeting process to foster those peace perspectives, and the role of technology to tackle or increase some of the challenges. Two main aspects of these focus groups were valuable for the thesis: 1. Individual and collective answers of the participants about Medellín's participatory budgeting process capacity to foster political inclusion, and the challenges to achieving this outcome. 2. Individual and collective answers of the participants regarding the tech tool designed during the fieldwork.
	23/06/17	Focus group to present, test and evaluate the tech tool developed in the research with 12 academics and representatives of Medellín's Town Hall.		
	29/06/17	Focus group to present, test and evaluate the tech tool developed in the research with 21 stakeholders of Medellín's *Comuna One.*		
	30/06/17	Focus group to present, test and evaluate the tech tool developed in the research with 13 stakeholders of Medellín's *Comuna Seven.*		
DOCUMENTARY DATA	Documents of peace processes in Colombia, mainly from 2005 onwards	Legal and policy documents about peace processes with paramilitary and guerrilla groups in Colombia.	Laws, judgements, official statements, peace deals and official reports.	I used this data to understand how the peacebuilding and transitional justice processes in Colombia were legally framed, and their implementation in Medellín and at a national level.

	until mid-2020.			
	09/15	Survey about guarantees of non-recurrence in Medellín, commissioned by the Town Hall's Agency of Victims.	Official Report.	This survey and study commissioned by Medellín's Town Hall to Fundación Región, was relevant to understand the causes of the conflict in Medellín, and the measures to prevent new conflicts from emerging.
	09/15 - 12/19	Legal and policy documents addressing Medellín's transitional justice guarantees of non-repetition.	Decrees, City Council Accords, and policy documents.	I used this data to understand the strategy of Medellín's Town Hall to address the causes of the conflict in Medellín, and the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence to tackle them.
	Documents since Medellín's participatory budgeting process started in 2004, until mid-2019.	Legal and policy documents about Medellín's Municipal Planning System, including the participatory budgeting process, especially documents about the change of regulation in the process.	Laws, decrees and Accords, official minutes, transcriptions of oral and written interventions, concepts of several institutions about the bills discussed, and official Town Hall's answers to the interventions.	I used these documents to understand the regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, and the debates about political inclusion in this process. These documents were helpful for three exercises that are part of the thesis: 1. To trace the legal framework and changes of participatory budgeting in Medellín. 2. To triangulate with other data sources the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion and the role of technology in this process. 3. To identify the absence of a peace and transitional justice discourse at the local regulation on participatory budgeting.

Source: Created by the author.

To summarise, in total, I conducted 70 semi-structured interviews. I also engaged in more than 80 participant observation exercises, including meetings, workshops, hearings and assemblies about three different issues: (i) the regulation of Medellín's System of Municipal Planning and its participatory budgeting process; (ii) the development of the voting procedures in Medellín's 2016 and 2017 participatory budgeting processes; and (iii) national and local discussions involving a broad range of actors and seminars about the implementation of the Colón Agreement and transitional justice in Colombia and their relationship with participatory budgeting. Medellín is divided into sixteen *comunas* and five *corregimientos*. The data gathered included information that covered all the city.

The data collection process also involved carrying out seven focus groups, which I organised, with a total of 149 participants, among them public servants, civic leaders, academics, policy-makers and politicians. These were designed to identify the perceptions of peace among participants, the benefits and challenges of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, and its influence on political inclusion, including the potential effects of ICTs.

When my research started, Medellín's participants were discussing how to strategically incorporate ICTs into the participatory budgeting process. Hence, the study also involved the design and pilot trial of a technological tool for Medellín's participatory budgeting process with the citizens and public servants of Medellín. This provided original data for understanding the benefits and challenges of the existing participatory offline process to foster political inclusion, and the role that ICTs could play in it.

The design and pilot evaluation of the tool was financed by Build Up's Build Peace Fellows Program, which also provided technology support, training and mentoring for the project. Helena Puig, Michaela Ledesma, Jen Gaskell, Jacob Lefton and Jerry McCann, part of the original team of Build Up, provided valuable recommendations for the development of the digital tool. A team of six developers and designers that I directed, programmed and developed the tool based on paper prototypes developed during the course of the research. The technological development was carried out by Andrés Pardo, Gabriel Vasco, Héctor Alzate and Fabián Castillo, and the graphic design by Juan David Peña and Santiago Sotomayor. An initial prototype of the tool was built by Diego Ballesteros, Lukasz Gintowt and Alec von Barnekow, three pro-bono developers at Build Up and International Alert's #peacehack in Zürich in 2016. Luis Alberto Hincapié, Jasblleidy Pirazán, Sarah Muñoz and Dominique Khalil provided valuable assistance in the process of data collection, management, and analysis for this research. Thanks to the support of the Research Accelerator Grants of the University of Oxford's Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, I licensed the tool to Medellín's Town Hall in April 2019, along with an implementation strategy, so that its use could be scaled up in this city as a digital complement to the existing participatory planning and budgeting processes. Further information about this tool is given in *Chapter Eight.*

The language of most of the data collected is Spanish. Hence, in many cases I translated to English data referred in the thesis, so it could reflect the meaning of the words in the most accurate way. The usual caveats apply. Having explained the diverse sources of the data that I gathered for this research, the next section examines in more detail the process followed for the selection of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a case study, and the development of my research questions.

2. CASE STUDY SELECTION, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Following the grounded theory approach embraced in this study, after selecting Colombia as the initial site of my research based on the relevance for the topic, I used theoretical sampling to select my case study and refine my research questions. As I mentioned before, my research started with a broad question, namely, *what is the influence of offline and online participatory mechanisms, such as participatory planning and budgeting processes or victim's participation in truth commissions or transitional justice courts, on peace in the Colombian transitional justice scenario*? One of the main decisions that I made to refine my study was to select participatory budgeting as the main focus of the analysis. Subsequently, I chose Medellín's participatory budgeting as the case study and political inclusion as a specific requirement for achieving peace through conflict prevention in Medellín's context. This section details the process that I followed to select my case study, build my research questions, and define my unit of analysis.

2.1. CHOOSING PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AS THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

The Colón Agreement includes a broad range of participatory mechanisms aimed at preventing new conflicts from emerging (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016). Some of these participatory spaces constitute development programs with a territorial approach, participatory planning and budgeting mechanisms, spaces for participation and decision-making in rural territorial planning, and community participation in the elaboration of a comprehensive national program for the substitution of illicit crops.

In fact, depending on the definition of participatory mechanisms used, their number in the Colón Agreement varies. For instance, Guarín et al. (2017, p.8) identify 67 mechanisms described as 'institutional spaces through which citizens are linked to governmental management processes by influencing matters of public interest'. In contrast, the OPIAF (2018, p.9) recognises 114 mechanisms that they call 'participatory tasks' and which are defined as 'participatory actions that aim to implement the different themes of the Agreement'.

As I discussed in the previous chapters, despite the reliance of the Colón Agreement on participatory mechanisms to foster peace, the influence of citizen participation on conflict prevention in Colombia is not straightforward. Hence, the interest in understanding the influence of participation on peace, specifically through the prism of political inclusion, amidst a flourishing variety of participatory mechanisms in the Colón Agreement, motivated my research. Still, I could not study all the participatory mechanisms included in the peace deal with FARC-EP to dig deeper into my main research interest. I needed to settle on one to examine profoundly.

However, many of the participatory mechanisms included in the Colón Agreement were not being implemented at the time, while others were at a preliminary stage, with uncertainty about their future (Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz, 2018; OPIAF, 2018). Out of the extensive assortment of participatory mechanisms included in the Colón Agreement, participatory budgeting emerged as a suitable example for a detailed exploration of the connections between citizen participation and political inclusion given the reasons discussed in *Chapter One*, including available data, relevance of the subject and independence of the process from the outcomes of the Colón Agreement.

2.2. SELECTION OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS AS A CASE STUDY

As I mentioned in *Section One*, adopting a qualitative approach to the research, this study follows a case-study design with a grounded theory approach. In the view of Yin (2009, p.18), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, relying on multiple sources of evidence. Given that this study was exploratory in nature, and intended to develop theory from the data instead of testing and confirming hypotheses, choosing an in-depth case study was ideal for exploring my preliminary research question in detail. In this section I describe the process of selection of Medellín as such case study.

The first experiences of participatory budgeting in Colombia emerged in Pasto in 1996 (Lara, 2014). Since then, over 280 of the 1,122 Colombian municipalities have implemented participatory budgeting processes, many of them in territories where the armed conflict has taken place (Jaramillo, R., 2019). Of all the Colombian municipalities that have implemented a participatory budgeting process, Medellín was chosen as the case study for this research using the criteria of intrinsic importance, within-case evidence and logistics. According to these criteria, cases are selected based on their theoretical or practical significance, the suitability of the case-based evidence, and the accessibility of the evidence (Gerring, 2017,p.41). In the next lines I explain how these criteria apply to the case of Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

As I mentioned before, when my research began, the Colón Agreement was still being negotiated and its outcomes were unknown. Thus, it was not possible to explore my preliminary research question in a municipality that was only just starting to conduct a participatory

budgeting process after the signature of the Colón Agreement and as a result of it. In contrast, Medellín's participatory budgeting process began in 2004, twelve years before the Colón Agreement was signed, when another peace process was underway with paramilitary groups in Colombia (Concejo de Medellín, 2004; Personería de Medellín, 2004; Restrepo, J.D., 2010). Many of the demobilised combatants settled in Medellín's *comunas*, where conflict between old and new criminal groups over the control of the territory and economic resources had an impact on the participatory budgeting process (Urán, O., 2010; Restrepo, J.D., 2010; Tubb, 2013). Hence, questions of political inclusion and exclusion amidst violence were particularly sharply raised.

As de Greiff & Dieng (2018, par.15) note, although 'doctrinally, guarantees of non-recurrence may be the least developed pillar of transitional justice, practically, in particular from the perspective of prevention, there are vast amounts of knowledge and expertise on the topic, albeit fragmented, institutionally and otherwise.' This is the case for Medellín's participatory budgeting process which, as I discovered though this research and further analyse in *Chapter Nine*, is not acknowledged as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence by local actors in Medellín. Nevertheless, fostering political inclusion through participatory planning and budgeting processes has been a strategy to prevent violence used by governmental authorities in Medellín since the early 1990s (Foronda, 2009; Giraldo et al., 2010).

For instance, as I further discuss in *Chapter Five*, in 1996 the City Council issued the System of Municipal Planning of Medellín with the Accord nº 043, giving citizens the possibility to create their own development plans, known as zonal plans, for their *comunas* and *corregimientos*. These plans aimed to prevent violence. In the words of Urán, O., (2017b), an expert in citizen participation, during a public hearing about Medellín's participatory budgeting process,

> Democracy and violence are in a confrontation in Medellín. In fact, participatory planning in this city was born to defy violence and tackle the gangs that controlled poor neighbourhoods at that time in the city. The zonal plans were at some point named 'peacebuilding plans', because they allowed people to sit and dialogue about what they wanted for the city. People discussed what was happening with the gangs and that gave some space to resolve some issues.

In 2004, when Medellín's participatory budgeting process started, the Town Hall introduced participatory budgeting to Medellín's 2004 to 2007 Municipal Development Plan, with the aim of continuing the aforementioned peacebuilding process using participatory mechanisms (Concejo de Medellín, 2004). The origins of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a policy to prevent violence, along with the parallel settlement of demobilised combatants in several Medellín's *comunas* at the same time with direct participation in the participatory budgeting process, allowed for a thorough exploration of the overarching query that guided the research, in comparison to the study of other municipalities that had also implemented participatory budgeting in Colombia before the signature and endorsement of the Colón Agreement, such as Pasto, Samaniego, Ocaña, Barranquilla, Barrancabermeja and Risaralda (Santana, 2010).

Moreover, the institutionalisation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process during more than ten years through local laws, and the rich data available as a result, made it possible to examine the research question from an empirical socio-legal perspective. When the fieldwork started in 2016, a wide public discussion was underway in Medellín, regarding the challenges and opportunities of participatory budgeting, including a change of regulation for the city's

planning system that involved the legal provisions that regulated participatory budgeting. This public discussion featured debates between Medellín's City Council, the city's Town Hall, social leaders, politicians and academics about the project in all *comunas* and *corregimientos*.

During the eight months that these discussions lasted, which I observed as part of my fieldwork from November 2016 until June 2017, the debates featured insightful perspectives from a broad range of participants regarding the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion, and how the design and implementation of its regulation may affect this association, for a city-wide level. This provided valuable and up-to-date data for my study, and ensured that people in the localities were interested in the issues.

2.3. THE MAIN GROUNDED RESEARCH QUESTIONS EXAMINED IN THE THESIS

A specific question that arose in my data analysis once I selected Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a case study was: What does peace – as the ultimate goal of transitional justice mechanisms in Colombia – mean to the participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting processes? Peace is a contested word in Colombia's polarised peacebuilding scenario. The debate about the meaning of peace in the participatory budgeting process is particularly relevant for Medellín. In fact, this municipality had one of the biggest turnouts against the Havana Agreement in the 2016 plebiscite held to approve or disapprove it: 62% of the citizens voted against.

More specifically, as a city with a participatory budgeting process that had its origins in a policy aimed to prevent violence, Medellín is one of the cities where the concept of peace within

a participatory budgeting process is most interesting to be explored, since the majority of voters in the city voted against an agreement that explicitly links participatory budgeting to peacebuilding. Therefore, the case of participatory budgeting in Medellin is somehow counter-intuitive and extreme because it highlights that it cannot be automatically assumed that citizens link participatory budgeting to a peacebuilding process, even if a peace agreement mentions it. Given the contested nature of the word peace in Medellín's context, I used the grounded approach adopted herein, to refine the scope of the main research question of the thesis, such that the data structured 'the research question, and not vice versa' (Oktay, 2012, p.49). This analysis explored the views of peace of the participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. *Figure 13* shows some pictures of the data collection process. Political inclusion emerged as a pivotal perception of peace within Medellín's participatory budgeting process, as I further examine in *Chapter Five.*

Figure 13 - Pictures of the data collection process to identify the meanings of peace and participation in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Red Nacional de PLyPP (2016); Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academia (2016); Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven* (2016); Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One* (2016).

As I discuss in further detail in *Chapter Seven*, several key actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, shed further light on the notion of political inclusion in Medellín's context. Among these are social leaders (Daza, J., 2017; Marmolejo, 2017; Mejía, R., 2017), members of the City Council (Echeverri, 2017a; Múnera, L. M., 2017a), public officials of Medellín's Town Hall (Aguirre, 2017b; Bedoya, 2017b; Montoya, A., 2017b), and academics (Franco, L., 2017; Rodríguez, 2017b; Urán, O., 2017b). As I mentioned in *Chapter One*, based on the data gathered, per this thesis, I define political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process as *an experience of participation that gives the possibility to all citizens, especially those who are marginalised, to collaborate with and have an effect on public governance decisions regarding the participatory budget.*

The words of Urán, O. (2017b) lucidly describe political inclusion as a perception of peace at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process:

> There are two pivotal issues at the genesis, the genetics, the DNA of participatory budgeting in Medellín. One, local development. Second, the real participation of social organisations and the subjects that comprise them. That DNA always comes out in these discussions, because it is not a matter of technique or technicalities, but there is a real question of how citizens in communities, in their *comunas* and *corregimientos*, maintain a quota of power that allows them to influence issues of their daily life, of their practical life.

In a similar vein, a social leader of the *Comuna One*, asserted in an interview (Interviewee 4, 2017):

> There are many types of peace and many types of violence. Medellín has an invisible violence fostered by social inequality. The best way to solve it is for people to participate. For instance, at the *Comuna One* people do not believe in the State and there is social segregation. Participation is one of the best tools to close social gaps.

To summarise, in my data analysis *political inclusion* arose as a major perception of peace within Medellín's offline and online participatory budgeting process, whereas the participatory budget was featured as a preventative measure to tackle political exclusion as one of the main causes of the conflict in this city. I further examine this issue in *Chapter Five*.

Having refined the scope of my study, I categorised my data analysis into a triad of research questions, that capture three perspectives at the core of my research, as discussed in *Chapter One*. On the one hand, a leading question, that asks: *What is the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion in the view of its participants?* This question aims to shed light, qualitatively, on the relationship between participatory budgeting and political inclusion as the primary perception of peace in Medellín's participatory budgeting process that I identified in my study. On the other, a query that interrogates: *What are the effects of ICTs on this relationship in the view of the participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process?* In this question, I wanted to explore if ICTs had any specific influence on political inclusion on Medellín's participatory budgeting process that does not occur in an offline process.

These two questions, although true to my data analysis, do not ask about transitional justice, which was the starting point of my exploratory research. In fact, as I further discuss in *Chapter Nine*, one of the main findings of my research is that, despite the significance of the Colón Agreement at the national level for peacebuilding in Colombia at the time of my fieldwork, and the inclusion of participatory budgeting in this peace deal as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence, the Colón Agreement was not mainly associated by local actors with Medellín's participatory budget in the regulatory reform of the process that took place during the course of my research. The third research question that I explore in this thesis is based on this finding and asks: *Is Medellín's participatory budgeting process considered as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence or associated with the Colón Agreement by its participants?* After detailing the grounded research questions that I analyse in this thesis, in the next subsection I discuss my unit of analysis.

2.4. THE 'SPACES OF ENCOUNTER AND DISPUTE' AS UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Participatory budgeting often acts as a *space of encounter* for different perspectives. In the words of Velásquez & González (2003, p.66), participatory spaces are 'opportunities for diverse voices to meet and build consensus about their wellbeing'. This does not mean that people that meet in theses spaces always agree with each other, or that the encounters are, more often than not, conciliatory. These spaces in many cases are also confrontational.

The unit of analysis of my research is closely connected with this notion of participatory budgeting as a *space of encounter and dispute*. Hence, it focused on places, physical and digital, that acted as spaces of encounter and dispute in the design of the regulation and implementation of

Medellín's participatory budgeting process, from 2004 until 2017, since they were the ones where political inclusion, or exclusion, were more likely to take place during the period of my case study.

More specifically, in this thesis I focused on four different *spaces of encounter and dispute* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process as unit of analysis. First, meetings of Medellín's urban and rural planning councils and assemblies. As I discuss further in *Chapters Six* and *Seven*, the former is a *space of encounter and dispute* of publicly elected representatives from all 21 localities, chosen to work together with local administrative boards, the Town Hall and members of direct democracy such as representatives of community action boards, to discuss, approve and monitor the execution of projects prioritised by citizens through the participatory budget in the councils. The latter is a meeting place for the inhabitants and neighbours of each *comuna* and *corregimiento* in Medellín, convened every year to discuss their views about the development of their locales and prioritise projects to be financed by the participatory budget and elect delegates for the Urban and Rural Councils. The second space where the public discussions at the City Council and Town Hall, of the regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. A third space of encounter analysed was the participatory budgeting voting process. Lastly, digital tools in Medellín's participatory budgeting process were also studied as part of the unit of analysis. In *Figure 13*, I detailed the diverse data sources collected in the research to analyse the referred spaces of encounter as part of the unit of analysis of this research.

A difficulty that I had to surpass about the chosen unit of analysis is the timeframe of my study. The time scope is relevant for my analysis, due to the changes through time in the process, in the conflict dynamics of the city, and in the perceptions of citizens towards the process. This is why my grounded framework details pathways to political inclusion and exclusion in

Medellín's participatory budgeting process that, rather than static, aim to present a dynamic understanding of the phenomenon, that may change with time, and has diverse outcomes, both positive and negative. Hence, in line with Wallerstein (1999, p.235), in this thesis I contest a view of social processes as timeless. The timeframe of the study is bounded by the introduction of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a city-wide policy in 2004, up until the last regulatory change in the process in 2017. Still, references to the context of the process and peacebuilding in Medellín that takes place before 2004 are also made in the thesis, while I also include relevant data from further years.

In this vein, in my thesis I analyse the perceptions of inclusion and exclusion of the diverse actors that interact at diverse *spaces of encounter and dispute* created by Medellín's participatory budgeting process from 2004 until 2017. This scope of my unit of analysis as the *spaces of encounter and dispute* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process allowed me to explore the trajectories of diverse actors in the referred spaces, and understand better the different kind of participants that interact in the process and their perceptions of inclusion and exclusion, giving a rich understanding of their views throughout my research. This view of my unit of analysis as the *spaces of encounter and dispute* adheres to Pearce (2010, p.34), who claims that 'Participation is not just about democracy. It is also about how we relate to each other in all our spaces of encounter'.

CONCLUSION

In sum, as I explained in this chapter, in my thesis I employ an exploratory approach based on a qualitative case study research design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process since 2004 as until 2017. Furthermore, I rely on a grounded theory approach to collect and analyse my data to build a medium-range level framework of the influence of the participatory budgeting process on political inclusion in the view of its participants, the effects of digital tools in this relationship, and to probe the conceptualisation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence according to local actors. To do so, I studied the perceptions of participants that interact in the *spaces of encounter and dispute* of Medellín's participatory budgeting previously referred as unit of analysis. In the remaining chapters of this thesis, I present the results that emerged from my data analysis to answer the research questions of this research. Next, *Chapter Five* sets the scene for these answers, by examining how the conflict led to political exclusion in Medellín.

CHAPTER FIVE

SETTING THE SCENE:

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN THE MIDST OF MEDELLÍN'S CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION

'Illegality in politics in Medellín are part of a broader context that pervades participatory budgeting,' said David García (2017a), an active participant in the participatory budgeting process, during a public hearing. A civil servant expert in security issues interviewed for this research confirmed this view, adding that one of the most significant difficulties for participatory budgeting in Medellín, is that 'criminal groups have also tried to exercise control over the spending of those resources' (Interviewee 5, 2017).

Accordingly, a grounded research of the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion needs to address the wider background of violence in Medellín. Hence, this is a 'scene setting' chapter, which shows that Medellín's participatory budgeting process is affected by broader patterns of violence in the city. Within this conflict, the budget became a source of dispute between different actors.

The chapter consists of two sections. In *Section One*, I discuss the main features of the Colombian conflict in terms of its origins, causes, actors and effects. Using the armed conflict in Colombia as a backdrop, in *Section Two* I review the particular dynamics of violence in Medellín, to emphasise conflict reoccurrence in the city and its relation to political exclusion as a cause and consequence of violence. In the chapter, I distinguish between the national and local levels of governance, since the conflict dynamics vary in different places of Colombia. Nevertheless, the

national context of violence is relevant to understanding the origins of the conflict in Medellín, given that violence in this city was influenced by armed groups that arose in other areas of the country.

1. NATIONAL DYNAMICS OF WAR AND PEACE IN COLOMBIA

The Colombian conflict is so difficult to characterise, and its origins so disputed, that Gutiérrez & Sánchez (2006) call it 'a war with no name' (Pizarro, 2015, pp.43). Consequently, a plurality of visions exists surrounding the origins, actors, causes, victims and impact of violence (Restrepo, J., & Aponte, D., 2009; Moncayo, 2015; Pécaut, 2015; Pizarro, 2015). This diversity of views is even found in judicial rulings issued within Colombian transitional justice framework, in which the understanding of the conflict is not uniform amongst different judges (Verdad Abierta, 2017).

Despite the different standings, two features have characterised the construction of the Colombian State since its independence from Spain in 1810: Violence and democracy (Waldmann, 2007). The country has seen several national and regional armed conflicts. Nevertheless, it has also experienced periods of relative calm and democratic stability with civil governments and democratically elected representatives (Camacho et al., 2019). Still, political exclusion has been a consistent trigger of violence.

1.1. POLITICAL EXCLUSION AT THE HEART OF A MULTIFACETED CONFLICT

The Colombian national conflict's origins are an issue of debate among experts.[32] As Pizarro acknowledges (2015, pp.7-43), while historians such as Vega (2015) and Wills (2015) trace its roots to the nineteenth century, namely to the various conflicts that emerged during Colombia's consolidation as a State, others favour a more contemporary view and place its beginnings in the twentieth century. This latter view comprises three main trends (Pizarro, 2015). First, Fajardo (2015), Molano (2015), de Zubiría (2015) and Giraldo (2015) claim that the conflict originated from calls for an agrarian reform in Colombia during the 1920s, given disputes over the ownership of land.

Second, Pécaut (2015) traces its origins to the period known as 'The Violence', characterised by a fierce struggle between the Conservative and Liberal parties over power from 1946 to 1964, although the precise period is also debated. Lastly, Gutiérrez (2015), Duncan (2015) and Torrijos (2015) sustain that the current conflict began in the 1960s after the creation in 1958 of the National Front (in Spanish, *Frente Nacional*), which lasted until 1974. During these

[32] In 2014, the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP created an *ad hoc* committee called the Historical Commission of the Conflict and its Victims (in Spanish, *Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas*), comprising experts and rapporteurs selected by both parties, to discuss the conflict's origins, causes, actors and effects. Each expert produced a report. In turn, the rapporteurs synthesised the agreements, disagreements, and experts' plurality of visions. The rapporteurs created two final reports instead of one, due to the great number of voices contained in the narratives (Moncayo, 2015; Pizarro, 2015). Given a methodological decision to provide a broad overview of the conflict in this background chapter, this section acknowledges different perspectives about the conflict included in the referred reports and final briefings of the rapporteurs.

years, the Conservative and Liberal parties created a coalition and alternated power every four years (Palacios, 2003).

This most recent period can be further divided into two main historical phases (Pizarro, 2015). First, from 1964 until the 1980s, when communist-oriented guerrilla groups, such as the FARC-EP (Pécaut, 2008) and the ELN (Arenas, 1971), emerged after the Cuban revolution. Afterwards, a second period began when existing guerrilla groups grew in strength, and new guerrillas also arose, along with drug trafficking and paramilitary groups (Pizarro, 2015). Within this broader picture, this dissertation traces the roots of the contemporary conflict back to the 1960s, when the first guerrillas emerged.

The main actors of the conflict have changed depending on the historical moment. During the first phase, two main actors were the protagonists: The first guerrilla groups and the Colombian Military Forces. From the eighties onwards, mainly due to the emergence of drug dealing gangs and paramilitary groups, these new actors also became leading players in the conflict (Pizarro, 2015).

As I referred in *Chapter One*, a structural cause at the roots of the Colombian conflict is the political exclusion of a broad range of populations –such as minority groups and communist-oriented political parties–, often combined with the killing of political and social leaders (Moncayo, 2015; Duncan, 2015; Pizarro, 2015). This can be added to other triggers of violence, such as inequality in land distribution (Giraldo, 2015; Molano, 2015; Gutiérrez, 2015), clientelism and corruption (Gutiérrez, 2015), illegal drug dealing (Pécaut, 2015; Molano, 2015; Duncan, 2015), extortion and kidnapping (Gutiérrez, 2015; Duncan, 2015), and disputes over the control

of legal and illegal markets such as of gold and cocaine (Rettberg et al., 2018). In the view of Duncan (2015, p.248), in the sixties, political exclusion was added to existing economic exclusion in Colombia to justify violence, given that it was seen by some as 'the only alternative to demand social change due to the restrictions to democracy created by the National Front'.

By June 2020, 9'031,048 individuals were registered in Colombia as victims of conflict-related crimes since 1985, on the Victims' Registry created by the Victims and Land Restitution Law.[33] A particularly large number of these crimes, a total of 1,817,759, took place in Antioquia, the department of which Medellín is the capital (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, 2020). The offences committed include forced displacement, homicide, kidnapping, forced disappearance, sexual assault, torture, personal injuries and attacks with landmines.

Political exclusion has been not only a cause of violence, but also a consequence, given that many crimes have been committed against civic leaders to gain control over the population. For instance, de Zubiría (2015) contends that the conflict has created a process of collective victimisation among participatory movements and political projects. According to Gutiérrez (2015), this impact has, in turn, weakened the legitimacy of law and increased the transactional economic costs of participation. More recently, Gutiérrez (2019) contended that the relationship of armed groups with the military forces in Colombia created negative impacts on democracy that are still present today; amongst them, a loss of capacity of social organisations and political movements, and a legitimisation of violence against political and social leaders with the excuse that they belong to illegal armed groups.

[33] *Chapter Nine* discusses the Victims and Land Restitution Law of 2012.

1.2. REOCCURRENCE OF VIOLENCE AMID RECURRENT NATIONAL PEACE DEALS

Since the eighties, Colombia has experienced several peace negotiations to end the armed conflict with different guerrilla and paramilitary groups (García, 2004; Bouvier, 2014; Villarraga, 2015a). Likewise, three failed talks with the FARC-EP preceded the process that ended with the Colón Agreement (González, 2004). The peace process with FARC-EP is not the first in Colombian history to acknowledge political inclusion as a critical element in violence prevention.

In fact, the current Constitution, which followed a peace process with several guerrillas in the country, created numerous spaces for political and citizen participation and participatory rights (Velásquez, 2011). Jaime Castro (1991, p.9), one of the elected constituents of the Constitutional Assembly that created the Constitution of 1991, explains why these new spaces for participation were critical to contain violence at the time:

> We have a restricted democratic system. [...] It is necessary to create spaces and channels that allow people and organisations to participate validly in public life [...]. Only if we distribute equally the political opportunities [...], no one would have to express themselves through arms.

A particular issue at the core of these new political spaces was the redistribution of power between central and local authorities and from the latter to the citizens to decide the main issues affecting the territory and its people. In the 1980s, a critical juncture pressured political leaders to change the prevalent centralised regime. Until then, the governors and mayors were directly appointed in Colombia by the president. Furthermore, due to the National Front regime

previously referred to, power alternated every four years between the Liberal and Conservative parties, leaving no space for other political expressions. As a result of increased violence and turmoil triggered by political exclusion, at the time the country implemented a series of changes in its political system including, among others, the election of mayors and governors and the creation of a broad range of mechanisms for participatory democracy in the Constitution of 1991 (Restrepo & Berberena, 2014; Mayka, 2019).

More specifically, differing from the centralised system of the Colombian Constitution of 1886, Article 1º of the 1991 Constitutional Charter declared the country as a decentralised but unitary republic, with an autonomy of its territorial entities, founded, among others, on democratic principles. Likewise, Article 3º establishes that 'sovereignty resides exclusively in the people from whom public power emanates. The people exercise it in direct form or through their representatives, within the limits established by the Constitution'.

These changes gave citizens new options for political inclusion, creating a normative shift from a centralised and restricted system to a decentralised and participatory one. Furthermore, the municipality started to be a main political actor, responsible for democratic processes that were, until then, decided by the central State (Velásquez & González, 2003). According to Velásquez et al. (2020a, pp.229), the reform of the Colombian State that started in the mid-1980s not only transferred power to the local governments, giving them autonomy, control and resources to solve their local problems, but also empowered citizens to participate in policy decisions.

Compared with previous efforts to foster political inclusion in Colombia, in the view of its negotiators, the Colón Agreement aimed to add political will to materialise already existing participatory mechanisms (de la Calle, 2013).

Still, the first peace process in Colombia to explicitly use a transitional justice framework was the Justice and Peace Process between the Colombian Government and paramilitary groups (Ambos, 2010). This process, which started in 2002, principally aimed to demobilise combatants who agreed to give up arms under the conditions of Law nº975 of 2005, known as the Justice and Peace Law, which I further discuss in *Chapter Nine*. Many of the demobilised members started their new civilian life in some of Medellín's *comunas*.

Despite advances in recent decades to end the armed conflict, Colombia still faces several challenges in preventing new conflicts from emerging, among them the rise of new armed groups. For instance, during the Justice and Peace process, some former paramilitary combatants created new illegal armed groups (Pérez & Montoya, 2013). These gangs are known as emergent criminal bands or *bacrim* (in Spanish, *bandas criminales emergentes*) (Valencia, 2016). In *Chapter Eight*, I analyse how this issue impacted Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Likewise, since 2015, other demobilised paramilitary combatants have taken to arms once again, in reaction to the peace process with the FARC-EP (Molano, 2016).

In addition, not all former combatants of the FARC-EP effectively demobilised after the Colón Agreement was signed, while others retook arms shortly after their demobilisation. Although the number varies with time, Álvarez et al. (2018) estimated that the number of dissident FARC-EP combatants could be around 1,400 for April 2018. Furthermore, an

investigation by Álvarez et al. (2018, p.4) into organised crime and other expressions of criminality in Colombia after the Colón Agreement was signed concludes that, among other factors,

> after the FARC-EP's dismantling, another type of armed saboteur has persisted or is emerging. Challenging to characterise, it can coerce and place in danger the stability of the transition amid the implementation of the peace agreement.

In the words of Barrera (2015, p.67), the different peace processes carried out in Colombia so far can be seen as parts of an 'incomplete peace', that features concrete peacebuilding actions that have shaped the behaviour of the armed groups by transforming some structural elements at the core of violence, without deactivating it. This element of analysis is relevant in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight*, while examining the role of armed actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

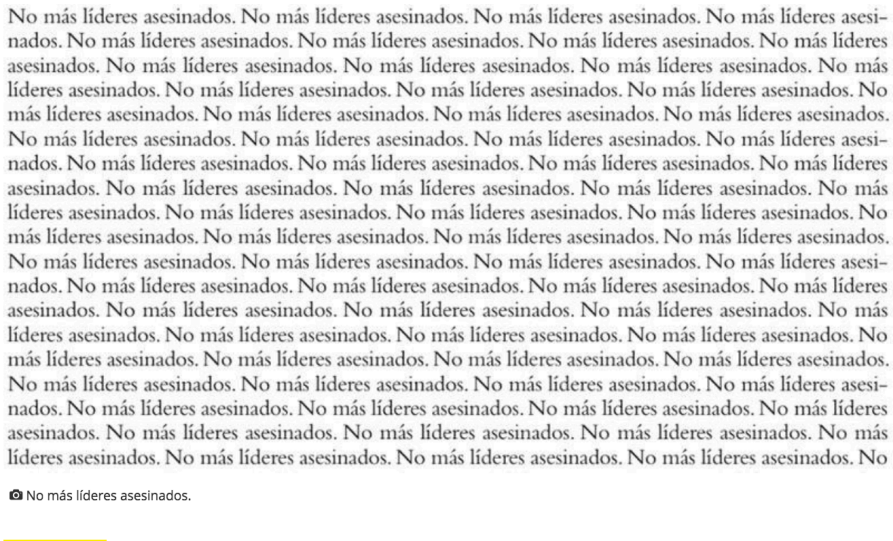
One of the main effects of reoccurring violence in Colombia has been political exclusion, given among others increased crimes against social leaders. In most recent cases, these violations are a consequence of disputes between new criminal groups over the control of territories left by the FARC-EP (Ball et al., 2018; Comisión Colombiana Juristas, 2018; Guevara, 2019). Killing leaders is a way of exercising control over the whole community. Between January 2016 and March 2017, 156 homicides against social, community and human rights defenders were documented in Colombia (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2018). In fact, since the signature of the Colón Agreement, the menaces and offences against these individuals have increased, given territorial,

economic and power disputes between different gangs that want to control the areas left with a vacuum of power by the demobilised combatants.

Given a broad range of difficulties in data gathering, there are differences in the existing databases regarding the exact number of leaders threatened, attacked and murdered in Colombia. However, the studies agree that the threats and attacks against leaders increase during pre and post-electoral periods (Ball et al., 2018; Comisión Colombiana Juristas, 2018; Guevara, 2019). This has been the case, for instance, of the electoral year starting in October 2018, and running up to the local elections of mayors, governors, councillors and other regional electoral positions on October 27, 2019 (MOE, 2019).

Figure 14 shows the editorial of the May, 2019, edition of the Colombian magazine *Arcadia*, written in protest against the murder of social leaders. The editorial simply repeats the phrase: 'End the killing of social leaders'. It illustrates the pervasive violence against community leaders, which fuels political exclusion. In *Chapter Eight*, I discuss how the threats and killing of social leaders have also been a practice in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

Figure 14 - *Arcadia's* editorial protest against the killing of social leaders in Colombia.


No más líderes asesinados. No más líderes asesinados. No más líderes asesinados.

2. POLITICAL EXCLUSION AS PART OF THE INVISIBLE FRONTIERS OF MEDELLÍN'S CONFLICT

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Medellín has been increasingly inhabited by industrial traders, merchants and peasants migrating from rural areas to look for work. Likewise, it has been the recipient of several waves of internally displaced populations from neighbouring municipalities affected by violence (Fierst, 2013; Tubb, 2013). These victimisations have led some such groups into a more profound exclusion, given that they arrived in Medellín in a situation of forced displacement, with many of their fundamental rights being neglected (Echeverría, 2004).

The conflict in Medellín has fluctuated in intensity over time. Violence often deepens in the presence of waves of armed groups fighting over the control of certain territories and activities. In these areas, the distinctions between peace and conflict, legality and illegality are blurred; a phenomenon known as *invisible frontiers* (Ruíz & Vélez, 2004; Nieto et al., 2013; González et al., 2015). An area might seem peaceful and uneventful at first sight, when in reality it is highly disputed by several criminal groups recognisable by local inhabitants. Since the eighties, within these hidden borders, Medellín has been the stage of battles between many illegal groups, with disputes relating to drug dealing, guerrilla fighting, paramilitary control, criminality and self-defence (Martin, 2014; Patiño et al., 2015).

Participatory budgeting was introduced to this broader context of legality and illegality without being oblivious to it. As I further discuss in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight*, violence has permeated the participatory budget which, in turn, has also influenced violent dynamics in the city. This subsection shows the specific dynamics of violence characteristic of Medellín, emphasising political exclusion. This context of Medellín's conflict sets the scene for the *pathways*

of inclusion and exclusion that I propose in this thesis, and further discuss in *Chapter Eight*, to explain the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion as a measure intended to prevent further violence.

2.1. THE DYNAMICS OF MEDELLÍN'S URBAN VIOLENCE: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, EXCLUSION AND REBELLION

During most of the twentieth century, violence in Colombia was rural. In the early eighties, three events converged to set up a new phase of urban violence, with Medellín as one of its main stages (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2016; 2019). First, a profound economic transformation in the city saw drug dealing expand while the population grew due to waves of forced displacement from rural areas, especially in marginalised zones of the city, such as neighbourhoods from the *Comunas* 1, 2, 7 and 13 (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2016).

Gangs boosted by exclusion started to emerge, committing crimes such as homicide, kidnapping and extortion throughout the city, typically in alliance with drug dealers (Duncan, 2015; Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a). This phase was coupled with a strengthening of the guerrillas, especially the FARC-EP and the ELN, creating urban forces called militias to support the rebellion against the State (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2016).

These violent urban dynamics in Medellín, mark the beginning of the phase of Medellín's armed conflict relevant to this research. In the words of the Justice and Peace Chamber of the Superior Court of Medellín (2019, p.135), created by the Justice and Peace Law to judge the

crimes committed by demobilised paramilitary combatants (henceforth, the Justice and Peace Chamber of Medellín),[34]

> The expression 'urban violence' emerged in Colombia in a particular year: 1981. In this year, the well-known kidnapping of Martha Nieves Ochoa Vásquez occurred. She was one of the Ochoa sisters, a family that belonged to the Medellín Cartel. This triggered the creation of the group *Muerte a los Secuestradores* (MAS) [Death to kidnappers], and the drug dealer Pablo Escobar, known as 'El Patron', formally declared war against the Colombian State (1985 and 1991).

The first wave of conflict characterised by urban violence in Medellín took place from 1982 to 1994 and featured the Medellín Cartel, led by Pablo Escobar, as one of its leading actors (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2014). Simultaneously, armed guerrilla militias, State military forces and criminal gangs disputed control over the territory (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2015b; 2016; 2019).

In 1995, Carlos Castaño, leader of the paramilitary groups that operated in Córdoba and Urabá, created the *Bloque Metro* to combat guerrilla groups in Medellín and control the territory. Castaño put Carlos Mauricio García Fernández, better known as 'Rodrigo Doble Cero', in charge

[34] The Justice and Peace Law of 2005, which I further discuss in *Chapter Nine*, created various judicial chambers to judge the crimes committed by demobilised combatants in all the country. These chambers are called the Justice and Peace Chambers (in Spanish *Salas de Conocimiento de Justicia y Paz*) and are based in the Superior Courts of Medellín, Bogotá and Barranquilla. Given the diverse narratives of Medellín's conflict, I use judicial rulings issued by the Justice and Peace Chamber of Medellín as the primary source for discussing Medellín's conflict.

of the *Bloque Metro* to combat the guerrilla groups in the city and gain control of the territory. This was the first paramilitary group explicitly formed to tackle urban guerrilla militias in Medellín. Until 2005, with the demobilisation of paramilitary groups, Medellín was the main geographical and logistical centre of the conflict in Antioquia; consequently, the city became a primary target of military disputes between different armed groups (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2019, p.143).

During its early years, the *Bloque Metro* gained power over some parts of Medellín's *comunas* and *corregimientos* previously disputed by militias of the FARC-EP and ELN guerrillas (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2016). However, criminal gangs under the command of the *Oficina de Envigado* controlled most criminal activities in the city. The *Oficina de Envigado* is a criminal organisation founded in 1982 by Pablo Escobar to manage, control and enforce crime, extortion and drug dealing in Medellín and other Antioquia municipalities (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2016; 2019). After the death of Escobar, the *Oficina* was mainly led by Diego Murillo, known as 'Don Berna'. Under his rule, it expanded its territorial control, unifying the gangs of Medellín, Envigado, Bello, Sabaneta, Itagüí and La Estrella, to both control criminal activities and fight militias (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2019).

'Don Berna' also founded the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara*, another branch of the paramilitary groups in Medellín. The *Bloque Cacique Nutibara* confronted the *Bloque Metro*, who challenged the engagement of the former in drug dealing activities, given that it went against the ideology of the group and the legitimacy of their fight against guerrilla groups. The *Bloque Metro* also opposed peace negotiations without a previous demobilisation of guerrillas and to the participation of drug dealers such as 'Don Berna' in the Justice and Peace process (Verdad

Abierta, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). These disagreements led to the *Bloque Metro's* downfall. While some of the combatants that survived joined the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara*, others joined the paramilitary group *Bloque Héroes de Granada*, which was created in 2003 in the east of Antioquia. This group effectively demobilised in 2005.

All these groups are relevant to analyse the influence of participatory budgeting in Medellín, because they shape the context in which the participatory budget was designed and implemented during the time studied herein, creating micro-politics affecting its inclusionary-exclusionary power. For instance, as I further discuss in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight*, amongst the actors at play in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, are demobilised paramilitary members from the previously referred groups, some of which used violence to coerce citizens to vote for certain projects. Besides, they show that the illegal armed groups in Medellín are highly diverse.

The variety of armed actors also adds complexity to the analysis of power dynamics between different participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, especially given allegations that, in some cases, paramilitary groups were allies of State forces to fight guerrilla groups. This is the case, for instance, of what is known as *Operation Orión*, a military intervention at Medellín's *Comuna Thirteen* in October 2002, to allegedly fight guerrilla militias in that area (Noreña, 2007; Aricapa, 2017). Reports given in October 2018 by victims of the Operation to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace created by the Colón Agreement, denounce more than 80 people killed by both military and paramilitary members and the displacement of hundreds of people. More often than not, paramilitary groups targeted citizens of Medellín that they considered were

associated with guerrilla's militias, stigmatising certain groups, and excluding them from the political arena, as I explain next.

2.2. THE EFFECTS OF MEDELLÍN'S URBAN VIOLENCE ON POLITICAL POWER

According to criminal convictions of the Justice and Peace Chamber of Medellín against members of the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara* (2015a), urban militias of the ELN (2015b; 2016) and the *Bloque Héroes de Granada* (2019), the most frequent crimes committed in Medellín during the conflict have been forced intra-urban displacement, homicide, forced disappearance, forced recruitment of child combatants, torture, kidnapping and extortion. Many crimes were directed against citizens who did not comply with the guidelines of the armed groups, for instance, members of the LGBT community. Most of the people killed were social leaders and members of vulnerable populations and minorities made victims in acts that the armed groups referred to as 'social cleansing' (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2019). These crimes caused both an individual damage to the victims and a collective damage to the social fabric of Medellín (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2016), as I discuss in detail in *Chapter Nine*. In the Colombian transitional justice scenario, collective damages refer to,

> negative effects produced by the armed conflict in the social, community or cultural context against communities, groups or organisations. These negative effects are associated with perceptions of suffering, loss or the harmful transformation of lives, and the erosion of the social fabric or resources to face the future or to build the project that the community had before the violent events (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, 2014, p.16).

The collective damage boosted already existing political exclusions within the population from decisions made in the city (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a; 2016). For example, in a judgement against members of the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara*, the Justice and Peace Chamber of Medellín (2015a, pp.374-375) highlighted that the crimes,

> harmed not only the individual rights of the people affected, but also the collective rights of the population to participate in the formation and exercise of political power and in the decisions that affect them.

In other words, in line with the argument in this dissertation, political exclusion was at the core of Medellín's conflict and was also one of its consequences, which further exacerbated existing exclusion. The exclusion of political actors opposed to illegal armed groups was necessary for the criminal gangs to gain and maintain power. For instance, Bernal & Vallejo (2011, p.163) label this situation as a 'colonisation' of social and community organisations, characterised by an infiltration of local political spaces that weakened further the political inclusion of marginalised populations. When introduced into the described context of illegality and disputes over territorial control between diverse criminal actors, participatory budgeting also became a source of conflict in Medellín. This is discussed in the following subsection.

2.3. A REOCCURRING POWER STRUGGLE AT THE CORE OF POLITICAL EXCLUSION IN MEDELLÍN

In the early 2000s, after peace negotiations with the paramilitary groups of Medellín, some former members of these factions created criminal gangs to control the business of drug dealing and other criminal activities that were left with a vacuum of power (Pérez & Montoya, 2013). These disputes increased violence in 2007 and the following years until 2011, when some of the groups' leaders were imprisoned (Personería de Medellín, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; Restrepo, 2010).

In the words of Wienand & Tremaria (2017), the gangs that succeeded paramilitary groups in Medellín, adopted 'mechanisms of territorial, economic, and social control, as well as the particular manifestations of violence related to these mechanisms'. In fact, in a 2005 report, Medellín's Ombudsman's Office noted,

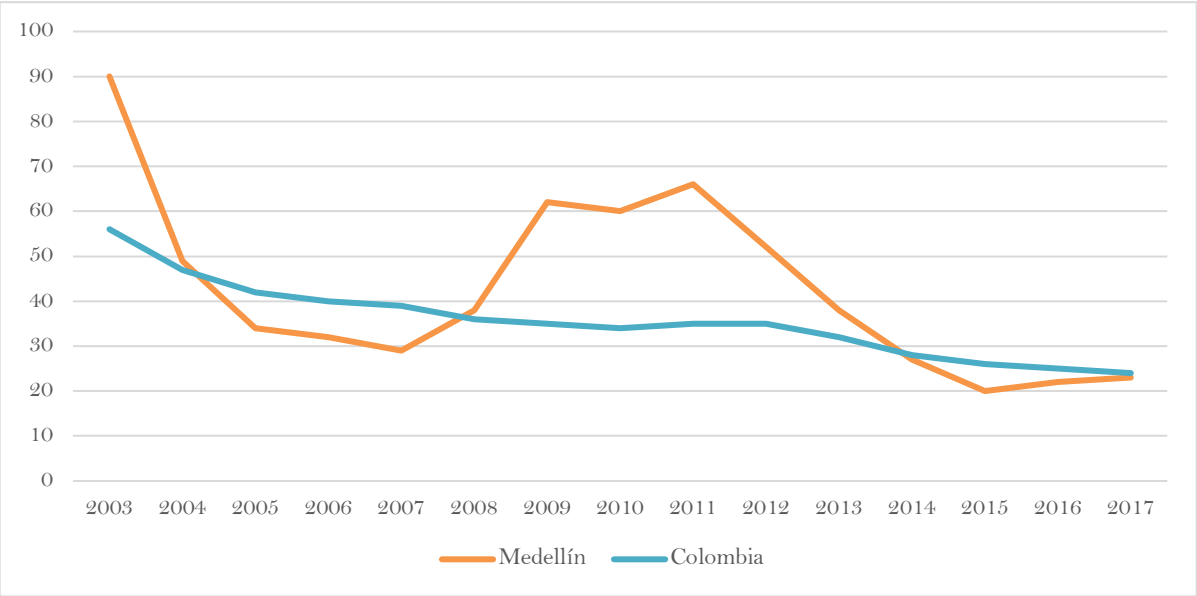
> a worrying illegal control in territories formerly dominated by paramilitary groups. The control is now different, without massacres or a high number of homicides, although violent and authoritarian practices of social control are still present [...]. In many areas, demobilised combatants are engaged in alleged citizen security activities, which should not happen in a sovereign State. It is worrying that this control happens in some areas under the passive observation of State authorities or, what worries most, in open coexistence (Personería de Medellín, 2005, p.18)

Five years later, by 2010, Medellín's Ombudsman's Office reported an indiscriminate and generalised violence in Medellín, characterised by two violent conflicts:

> One is between gangs for the territorial control of neighbourhoods and populations, and the other is triggered by a struggle between structures derived from paramilitary groups and drug trafficking to control illicit resources in the city and other regions. The first has been present for decades, with periods of greater or lesser intensity and is led by illegal armed groups, many of which have existed for several years, seeking to defend and expand their territories of influence and the number of their illicit profits. The second conflict began in mid-2007, when the power of the *Oficina de Envigado* fractured into two sides and gave rise to a gradual dispersion into multiple opposing groups (Personería de Medellín, 2010, p.7).

Figure 15 depicts the rate of violent homicides in Colombia and Medellín from 2003 to 2017 per 100,000 inhabitants, showing the increased rate of homicides from 2007 to 2011. During this period, power struggles arose between different illegal groups in the fight over the control formerly exercised by paramilitary groups (Restrepo, 2010; Aricapa, 2017). In *Chapter Seven*, I examine how the increment in violent homicides in Medellín influenced participation in the participatory budgeting process.

Figure 15 - Rate of violent homicides in Colombia and Medellín from 2003 until 2017 for every 100.000 inhabitants.



Source: Elaborated by the author by comparing data about violent homicides in Medellín (2003-2017) included in Ciudatos (2018) and data about violent homicides in Colombia (2003-2017) from the World Bank (2018) and Insight Crime (2018).

Currently, and in areas where invisible frontiers are still present, Medellín faces confrontations between various criminal groups over territorial control and the dominance of licit and illicit economic activities, as well as parallel dynamics of extortion among the civilian population (Patiño et al., 2015; Concejo de Medellín, 2016; Bedoya, J., 2017). There are variations of violence and armed group presence amongst the diverse Medellín's *comunas* and *corregimientos* (Jaramillo & González, 2012). For instance, according to Medellín's Ombudsman's Office, by 2018 the victims in Medellín settled mainly in peripheral neighbourhoods of the *Comunas One*,

Four, *Seven*, *Eight*, and *Thirteen* which, in turn, overlap with those sectors that, in addition to harbouring a poor population, traditionally have been affected the most by local violence and where criminal groups are mostly present, which makes them, in turn, expellers and receivers of victims (Personería de Medellín, 2018, p.15). As I further discuss in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight*, the scope of this thesis did not allow me to identify what areas of Medellín feature the most influence of criminal groups on the participatory budgeting process during the period studied herein. Still, the dissertation gives a city-level analysis that could be further used to study differences between diverse localities.

2.4. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AS A STRATEGY FOR POLITICAL INCLUSION IN A CONTINUING CONFLICT

Participatory mechanisms aimed at nurturing political inclusion have been implemented in Medellín since the urban violence started; this constitutes a strategy of resistance against the control exercised by illegal armed groups. Participatory budgeting is one of them. As I discussed in *Chapter Four*, in 1996 the City Council issued the System of Municipal Planning of Medellín, which allowed citizens to create their own development plans, called zonal plans, for their *comunas* or *corregimientos*. Moreover, the citizens were allowed to seek resources to help them implement the projects in the zonal plans. These plans were part of a broader development agenda of various actors on the ground, who mobilised to participate in the decision-making processes of their *comunas* and *corregimientos* through them. Participatory budgeting was later added to the plans, so citizens could directly decide investment priorities based on the development programmes they designed for each locality. In the words of Medellín's Municipal Development Plan of 2012,

> The development plans of the *comunas* and *corregimientos* have their origins in the participatory processes that mobilised in Medellín during the 90s. In 2004 the administration gave them a new force while implementing the participatory budget. These participatory planning processes were revitalised then as a political gamble of social leaders and community organisations, who have built their own local development agendas through participation (Concejo de Medellín, 2012, p.442).

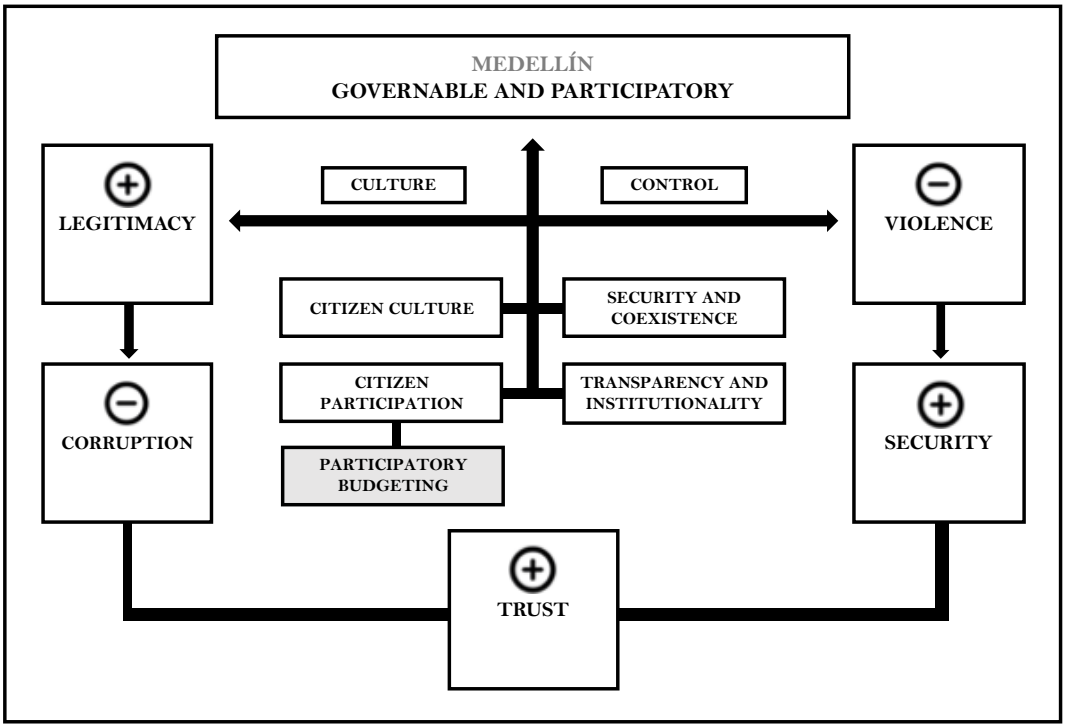
Hence, by 2004, when the period of the case study of this dissertation started, the Town Hall of Medellín introduced participatory budgeting as a city-wide policy, to continue the process mentioned earlier of peacebuilding using participatory mechanisms (Concejo de Medellín, 2004). Participatory budgeting was institutionalised as a city-level policy in Medellín's development plan of 2004-2007. In the Town Hall's diagnostic to back the implementation of participatory budgeting, the development plan declared that Medellín was having a crisis of governance, with high levels of poverty, increased inequality, an obsolete economic and social structure, and a deficient integration with the rest of the country and world.

One of the main approaches to tackle these challenges was to foster citizen participation. More specifically, the Town Hall created a strategic policy entitled 'Medellín: Governable and participatory', to reduce violence and augment State legitimacy. One of the pillars of this approach was to open spaces for political inclusion of citizens creating participatory mechanisms such as participatory budgeting. In the words of the Town Hall, the overall aim of this strategy was to:

Guarantee the exercise of citizen organisation and participation, the reconstruction of the social fabric, citizen control of public management, and the recovery of trust in the State to achieve the full exercise of participation and the development of participatory democracy in a complementary manner to representative democracy (Concejo de Medellín, 2004, p.35).

Figure 16 shows the theory of change explained by the Town Hall to combat violence and the low legitimacy of the State with the strategic line 'Medellín: Governable and participatory', as explained above.

Figure 16 - Strategic line 'Medellín: Governable and participatory', included in Medellín's development plan of 2004-2007.



Source: Elaborated by the author based on the Diagram II.1.1 included in Concejo de Medellín (2004).

As can be noticed from the figure, participatory budgeting emerged as a policy in Medellín as part of a comprehensive strategy that aimed to nurture the legitimacy of the State's institutions and security of the population in opposition to corruption and violence. Overall, two approaches emerged in the strategy: to boost civic culture and the control of the population by the legal authorities. One of the measures intended to produce these outcomes was participatory budgeting.

Hence, overall, the insertion of participatory budgeting as a city-wide policy in Medellín intended to foster the political inclusion of marginalised populations, while former paramilitary combatants were demobilising in the city amid violence. However, the data collected in this research consistently shows that the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion has conflicting findings that are affected, amongst others, by broader patterns of violence in Medellín.[35] In the words of a social leader in Medellín (Interviewee 2, 2017), who oversees the expenditure of participatory budgeting resources:

> Participatory budgeting created a negative process where some people, instead of being empowered, took over the resources. Citizen participation was distorted. It became a struggle and even led to deaths. One person in *Comuna Six* was killed for engaging in

[35] The data includes, among others, several interviews (Interviewee 2, 2017; Interviewee 4, 2017; Interviewee 5, 2017; Palacio, 2017; Rodríguez, 2017a; Interviewee 6, 2017; Urán, 2017), interventions of a broad range of participants in the participatory budgeting process during various hearings (Álvarez, G., 2017; Echeverri, 2017a; García, D., 2017a; Rodríguez, 2017b; Vesga, 2017), focus groups (Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academia, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2016), and newspaper articles (La Silla Vacía, 2010; Sandoval, 2015; Gaviria, 2017). I further analyse this data in chapters *Six*, *Seven* and *Eight*.

> oversight activities. Some armed actors captured these resources [...]. Despite the challenges, participatory budgeting has also been an important pilot for citizen participation. We have won with this process because we have learned how immature we are in participatory issues.

As can be noted, the introduction of participatory budgeting to Medellín in 2004 did not automatically lead to a political inclusion capable of preventing new conflicts from emerging. In fact, three years after the policy started in 2004, violence augmented in the city and was followed by a subsequent decrease in 2011, as I previously discussed. According to Doyle (2018), two narratives explain these described patterns of violence. First, she outlines the 'orthodox explanation', which focuses on the positive impact of social urbanism policies in the city since 2004 (such as the participatory budgeting process) to raise welfare levels and increase political inclusion among the poor and marginalised populations. This is what some scholars and policy-makers label as the 'Medellín Model' (Abello-Colak & Pearce, 2015, p.151); i.e., 'a multipurpose approach to secure the city which relied on a combination of strategies and tactics to deal with violence and insecurity', such as urban transformation, participatory mechanisms and security provision. Second, Doyle (2018, p.12) proposes an 'alternative explanation' in which 'homicide patterns in the city can be widely explained by conflicts, and agreements, between the major criminal actors.'

In turn, Abello-Colack & Guarneros (2014), Abello-Colak (2015) and Abello-Colak & Pearce (2015) also provide a critical approach to the study of urban security in Medellín. These authors claim that some mechanisms used by the State to provide security, such as participatory budgeting, despite positive outcomes like access to fundamental rights, in turn also allowed

violent actors to deepen their influence on the communities, now forced to navigate complex structures where legal and illegal actors exercise authority. Hence, de facto, participatory mechanisms intended to foster political inclusion of marginalised citizens, in some cases were actually used by criminals to benefit and exercise power on already vulnerable communities, feeding on them to gain territorial and economic control. A power battle hid in the 'invisible frontiers' between the legal and illegal actors in Medellín.

Furthermore, Abello-Colack & Guarneros (2014, pp.3268-3269) portray three strategies used by criminal groups in Medellín, that have allowed them 'to benefit from governance arrangements, originally created to promote participatory democracy and urban development', reproducing violence and exclusion. The strategies include involvement in service provision at the community level, involvement in local governance arrangements, such as participatory budgeting, and acting as beneficiaries and interlocutors of State programmes.

In a similar vein, Humphrey & Valverde (2017, p.163) contrast what they refer to as the 'urban miracle map' and the 'humanitarian crisis map' of security in Medellín, noting conflicting records in both:

> One imagines the city as a unified whole evenly administered and regulated by national law and local state institutions; the other is the map of the violent *comunas* still controlled by gangs and criminal organizations imposing their own violent authoritarian regime with a limited presence of the local state. The former downplays the current violence and its victims in favor of the optimism engendered by discursive planning of 'social urbanism' expressed in iconic architecture and urban infrastructure; the latter confronts the reality

of chronic precariousness and vulnerability to violent intra-urban displacement and an urban periphery still ruled by non-state armed power holders.

In *Chapters Seven*, *Eight* and *Ten* of this thesis, I suggest insights into the influence of participatory budgeting on political exclusion as one of the triggers and consequences of violence in Medellín, that could further add to the referred critical approaches to security in this city. In this account, I argue that a power battle lies at the heart of participatory budgeting; this clash might hinder or foster political inclusion, depending on the design and implementation of the participatory budgeting process, which is affected and affects broader patterns of violence. When the process nurtures inclusion, it accomplishes the preventative purpose at the core of its origins. Nevertheless, when it feeds exclusion, a new cycle of conflict reoccurrence begins. Although these insights do not show a link to homicide rates, they provide a qualitative account into the mechanisms affecting the 'orthodox explanation', involvement of criminal groups in local governance arrangements, and 'humanitarian crisis map' of security in Medellín, specifically for Medellín's participatory budgeting process, which advances the current literature, as explained in *Chapters Two* and *Three*.

CONCLUSION

In this scene-setting chapter, I discussed the broader national and local dynamics of violence that affect and are affected by Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Despite the many accounts on the main origins, causes, actors and effects of violence at a national level, political exclusion has been at the core of the conflict. This has also been the case for Medellín. Conflict reoccurrence has been directly connected with political exclusion as a cause and consequence of violence in this

city. In 2004, participatory budgeting was instituted as one approach for preventing violence in Medellín. However, its implementation has had conflicting findings in relation to political inclusion. Amongst others, these results can be explained by broader patterns of violence in the city that have not been oblivious to the participatory budgeting process. In the next chapter, I shed further light on the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion, by examining the 'participatory ecosystem' in which it operates.

CHAPTER SIX

MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

One of Medellín's most distinctive features is the *Metrocable*, a gondola lift system that navigates the city. Contrary to a subway, this metro's aerial design, depicted in *Figure 17*, allows passengers to move and see Medellín from above, from wealthy neighbourhoods and fancy buildings to improvised houses of cardboard and tin plates at the outskirts of the mountains that surround the city (Brand & Dávila, 2011). The cables of this machinery are synchronised and intertwined, creating passageways that enable citizens to move from one side to another.

Figure 17 - View of a cable railway of Medellín's *Metrocable* at the *Comuna Seven*.



Source: Taken by the author in 2017 at Medellín's *Comuna Seven*.

Medellín's *Metrocable* helps to illustrate this city's *participatory ecosystem*, a term used by Allegretti & Copello (2018, p. 53) to describe the political environment in which participatory budgets operate, 'where different channels of participatory tools and policies are integrated to enable shared decision-making on diverse issues of public interest'. Similarly, in this thesis I claim that Medellín's participatory budgeting is part of a wider participatory ecosystem. Namely, a broader framework of entwined planning, budgeting and participatory channels with several representative and direct democracy mechanisms to facilitate public decision-making processes at the national and subnational levels, where different actors interact –just like each cabin of Medellín's *Metrocable* is embedded in a complex interconnected system that crosscuts the city allowing citizens to move–.[36]

I argue that the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion can only be fully understood in light of the participatory ecosystem in which it is embedded, given that it impacts the extent of power actually exercised by participants in the participatory budgeting process, and allows to trace *who* the actors are, *how* and *where* they interact, and the systemic connections and ruptures between different participatory channels, preventing or facilitating their political inclusion. Still, I maintain that, contrary to the organised and coordinated paths of the *Metrocable*, Medellín's participatory ecosystem is fractured, with chasms in many of its channels, such as conflicts between national and local legislation that influence power disputes between different actors. This prevents many citizens from surpassing a state of political exclusion in the participatory budget and feeds a cycle of marginalisation.

[36] As I mentioned in *Chapter One*, in this thesis I use the words *channels* and *mechanisms* of participation, interchangeably, to refer to public instruments that citizens can use to influence policy-making.

Using the grounded theory approach that I employed for my data collection and analysis, I identified three public decision-making channels as main pillars to understand the participatory ecosystem of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, affecting political inclusion: Planning, budgeting and participation. Planning, as the route to trace the course of actions to achieve public objectives. Budgeting, as the allocation of public resources needed to attain the designed plans. Participation, as the process to involve citizens in planning and budgeting decisions. In the words of María Eugenia Román (2017), citizen of the *corregimieto* San Antonio de Prado, during a public hearing:

> A real dialogue about participatory budgeting must encompass three different perspectives: Planning, budgeting and participation.[37]

The Colombian administrative legal system has detailed regulated nationwide procedures for public authorities at all levels of government, to create the plans to execute their governmental policies, to allocate the resources needed for their implementation, and to involve citizens in planning and budgeting decisions. As a general rule, public budgetary decisions are made by elected authorities at the national, departmental, and municipal levels of government (Sánchez, 2009). Per Article 260 of the Constitution, at the national level the president, vice-president, senators and delegates to the house of representatives are elected authorities, subject to the regulated procedures referred above. In contrast, the governors and deputies to the departmental assembly are chosen by the citizens at the departmental level. The mayors and

[37] Some of the data sources that I used to trace Medellín's participatory ecosystem include several interviews (Interviewee 2, 2017; Interviewee 3, 2017; Palacio, 2017), and interventions of a broad range of participants in the participatory budgeting process during various hearings (de Vivero, 2017b; Hernández, C., 2017; Aguirre, M.L., 2017b).

councillors of the city council are publicly elected at the municipal level. At the local level, each *comuna* and *corregimiento* has representative delegates called *ediles*, selected by the citizens every four years to form the local administrative boards (in Spanish, *juntas administradoras locales*, hereinafter LABs).[38] All these democratically elected representatives interact across every level of government to make all the planning and budgetary decisions needed for the State to function (Jaramillo, 2019, p.23).

Colombian public law also includes various spaces for citizen participation, so that people can intervene in planning and budgeting decision-making processes, such as expressing their views on spending priorities, and controlling the execution of public resources. Still, the later mechanisms often have a consultative instead of a binding value. Participatory budgeting is, in a certain way, an exception, since the decision of investment priorities is decided directly by the citizens, instead of the elected representatives.

Medellín's participatory ecosystem, as traced in this chapter, is a complex legal system in which representative and direct democracy intersect in a broad range of national, departmental, municipal and local planning and budgeting processes, among them participatory budgeting (Posada & Valle, 2019, p.9). Furthermore, the chapter discusses the role of ICTs in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, as crosscutting tools that can serve different purposes in budgeting, planning and participation channels, both with the capacity of fostering and hindering inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

[38] The word *edil* in Spanish does not have an equivalent translation in English.

Overall, the network of connexions and ruptures between budgeting, planning and participation in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, also influenced by the use of digital tools in this system, that I found during my research, constitutes what I call *the macro-dynamics of Medellín's participatory ecosystem.* As it is commonly referred, democracy does not happen in a vacuum. The macro-dynamics of Medellín's participatory ecosystem serve to understand the structural design and backdrop that underlies Medellín's participatory budgeting process, in which its participants interact and dispute power, influencing its capacity to foster political inclusion, as shown in my case study.

As I discussed in *Chapter Five*, broader patterns of violence in the city and disputes over territorial, economic, political and social control between diverse actors, including criminal ones, also influence this participatory ecosystem. When participatory budgeting was introduced to Medellín's participatory ecosystem, it did not rule out already existing tensions between different actors to influence policy, either through democratic or undemocratic ways. Instead, the participatory budgeting process became part of an already fragmented system where diverse actors disputed control, affecting the influence of the participatory budgeting on political inclusion. Charting the broader participatory, planning and budgeting channels in which the participatory budgeting process operates, part of the macro-dynamics of Medellín's participatory ecosystem, as I do in this chapter, allows me to explain and advance this argument, central to answering this research's main question; i.e., *what is the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion in the view of its participants?*

Therefore, in this chapter I examine the macro-dynamics of participation in planning and budgeting at the core of Medellín's participatory ecosystem identified in my research, along with the digital tools influencing the inclusion and exclusion of the participants in the participatory budgeting process. Although the 'law in the books' features many connections between them, intended to include participants in the process, such as existing legal principles of planning in budgeting and participation in planning, the 'law in action' shows several ruptures and clashes that hinder such inclusion. These fissures comprise scarce citizen participation in planning, a rupture between planning and budgeting, clashes between the national and local legislations, participants' discomfort with the amount of resources allocated for the participatory budget, and a difference between claimed effects of ICTs in democratic processes in the law, and perceptions and outcomes in practice. The chapter is divided into three sections. In section one, I examine the macro-dynamics of participation in planning in Medellín's participatory ecosystem. In section two, I analyse such dynamics regarding participation in budgeting. Lastly, I trace the use of digital tools in Medellín's participatory ecosystem. In all sections, I discuss the main links and fissures in the channels found.

As I explained in *Chapter Four*, my data collection and analysis used Corbin & Strauss (2015) grounded theory approach, through which I construct a middle-range grounded framework to explain the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion in the view of its participants. This chapter describes some of the results of the process of theoretical sampling, coding, constant comparison, creating core categories, achieving theoretical saturation, reaching theoretical integration, and building a middle-range substantive framework through my empirical research. The core categories were combined using theoretical integration, to create the substantive framework presented in this thesis, in which I argue that a

power battle between different actors of Medellín's participatory budgeting, affected by broader power disputes and ruptures at the heart of the participatory ecosystem in which it operates and wider patterns of violence, as explained in the previous chapter, influences political inclusion in the process.[39]

1. THE MACRO-DYNAMICS OF PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM

In Colombia no public budget can be authorised if it does not correspond to a policy in a public plan. In fact, Article 356 of the Constitution and Article 13 of the Decree nº 111 of 1996, assert as a legal principle that the public budget, at all levels of government, must match the national, departmental, municipal and local development plans, which are mid and long-term policies that encompass both the economic and social development of the country, department, city and locality, respectively. In my thesis, I named the *macro-dynamics of participation in planning in Medellín's participatory ecosystem*, to a set of rules that frame participation in planning in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, along with the ruptures found in them influencing political inclusion in the participatory budgeting process, as I explain in this subsection. To do so, I first examine participation in planning in Medellín's participatory ecosystem in the 'law in the books'. Afterwards, I analyse two main fissures at its core in Medellín's participatory budgeting process that emerged during my data analysis; i. e, scarce participation of citizens in the planning

[39] I used as data sources the documentary data, interviews, participant observation, and focus groups identified in *Chapter Four*, which I also triangulated during the process of data analysis. As needed, I quote specific data sources throughout the different sections of this chapter. Due to space constrains, I usually reference only three data sources that I triangulated to reach a conclusion.

processes that precede the voting of projects to be financed with the participatory budget, and a lack of harmonisation between planning and budgeting.

1.1. THE 'LAW IN THE BOOKS' OF PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

Planning is at the core of the programmes that elected authorities propose to citizens when they run for office. Law nº 131 of 1994, which regulates programmatic vote in Colombia, establishes that, when the representatives are elected, these programmes are the basis for creating compulsory development plans at every level of government.[40] They are the foundation of the authorities' policies during their mandates (Rey, 2015). Likewise, the referred law asserts that, to secure coordination in policy between the different levels of government, the development plans must be harmonised, with the local adhering to the guidelines of the municipal which, in turn, must follow the department and national ones.

The Colombian legal system has a process to create these plans, in which the elected President, Governor or Mayor at the national, departmental and municipal levels, correspondingly, presents a plan for its approval by the Congress, Departmental Assembly or City Council, respectively. This is mainly regulated in the Law nº 152 of 1994, on development plans.

[40] Article 259 of the Colombian Constitution enacts the programmatic vote in the country, asserting that the electors impose to their representatives the governmental programmes presented by the latter during the elections. In turn, Article 1º of the Law nº 131 of 1994 defines as programmatic vote 'the participation mechanism through which the citizens who vote to elect governors and mayors impose a mandate to the elected representatives to accomplish the governmental program presented during their inscription as candidates'.

Public planning was only introduced in the Colombian administrative system in the mid-1940s (Perry, 1973). Furthermore, during most of the Twentieth century, it was viewed as a technical and centralised process led by a few specialised professionals in charge of devising development plans, with little to no citizen participation (Velásquez & González, 2010, p.7). In contrast, in the 1991 Constitution, the planning process is not only considered technical, but also and foremost a political and participatory instrument for citizens to collectively build and shape public policies (Garzón, 2014). In fact, the previously referred Laws nº 131 and 152 of 1994 were issued to foster citizen participation in policy-making at every government level through participatory planning processes (Zapata, 2020). Thus, participation was enacted as a principle of public planning in Article 3º of Law 152 of 1994.

To materialise citizen participation in planning, the Colombian legal system has in place several mechanisms for citizens to contribute to creating development plans. The most relevant ones for Medellín's participatory budgeting process are consultative national, departmental and municipal planning councils featured in Articles 340-344 of the Constitution and in the Law nº 152 of 1994. The councils are usually comprised of several members of society selected by the President, Governor or Mayor, depending on the case, from lists given by representatives of different sectors, such as the economic, cultural, social and educational ones. The selected participants interact in the councils with public authorities to pronounce on the plan initially proposed by the elected authority (López, 2015). Additionally, the planning councils at the national, departmental and municipal levels are part, correspondingly, of the Systems of National, Departmental and Municipal Planning, which are a set of proceedings, authorities, actors and legal norms, to foster the participation of citizens in planning decision-making processes.

Medellín's participatory budgeting process starts with the creation of local development plans for all Medellín's localities. In theory, the cited plans are created by citizens within urban and rural planning councils, for every *comuna* and *corregimiento*, respectively, together with the local administrative boards.[41] These plans, which shall be in harmony with the Municipal Development Plan, are then financed with the participatory budget in a yearly prioritisation of projects.

There are positive experiences of citizen participation in the creation of development plans in the planning councils, such as an exercise called 'Trocha ciudadana', implemented in the mid-1990s at the national level to create development plans from the ground up (Velásquez & González, 2003; Velásquez et al., 2020a, p.209). Nevertheless, the referred councils are often criticised for not having a binding character and usually comprising low participation given co-optation by groups of interest (Velásquez & González, 2010; Garzón, 2014; Hernández, J., 2017; Mayka, 2019; Zapata, 2020). In the words of Ricardo Villamarín (2017), member of the System of National Planning, during a public event on the challenges of participatory planning in Colombia:

> A mayor will always say that their municipal plan was done with citizen's participation. Often public servants arrive at the communities to ask people what they want, but then they disappear to design the plans. This has led to a great paradox in participation. The people who formulate the plan, usually contractors, are different from those who approve

[41] In *Chapter Seven*, I further discuss the urban and rural planning councils in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

it, the city councillors, and the ones who implement it, who are government officials that do not even know the plan. Nobody controls.

Similarly, as I analyse next, in the data analysed for this research I identified several challenges of participatory planning in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, affecting the political inclusion of participants in the participatory budgeting process.

1.2. THE 'LAW IN ACTION' OF PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

Although the 'law in the books' in Medellín's participatory ecosystem has several rules in place intended to favour the participation of citizens in participatory planning, during the course of my research I identified two breaches affecting the political inclusion of participants in the participatory budgeting process, i.e., low participation in participatory planning, along with a rupture between participatory planning and participatory budgeting. I examine both issues in this subsection.

1.2.1. SCARCE PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM

In the grounded data analysis process that I carried out for this research, scarce participation of citizens in the planning processes that precede the participatory budget, emerged as a central fissure in Medellín's participatory ecosystem. Augusto Edal (2017), a former member of the Municipal Council of Participatory Budgeting, described this issue during a public hearing,

The Constitution says that planning must be done 'from the ground up'. Who is on the ground? The people. Yet, this does not happen. Not in the municipality, nor in the

> department, and neither in the Nation. The statutes usually arise first from the Administrator, who brings them to the council and then go to 'citizens', in quotation marks, for participation. However, true participation should come first from the people. The projects should be technically built depending on the citizens' proposals, something that not only this Administration has not done, but neither all the previous ones.

The words of City Councillor Jaime Cuartas (2017), during a City Council meeting, also warn about the referred fissure:

> We need to revise how the local development plans are designed in the *comunas* and *corregimientos*. The feeling of the citizens is that they do not participate. Usually, the city hires a technical team to devise the plan without consulting the inhabitants.

This view was shared by a broad range of participants (among others, Rivera, Y., 2017; Rojas, 2017; Román, 2017). For instance, Benoni Jiménez (2017), a citizen from the *Comuna Four*, mentioned during a public hearing, 'We don't recognise the local development plan of this *comuna* because it was made behind closed doors'. In turn, Alejandro Palacio (2017), Advisor of Medellín's Ombudsman's Office, noted during an interview,

> Participation is a tool in many cases used to justify and legitimise processes of the administration, which is problematic because policies are merely socialised instead of opening a dialogue to receive proposals. Participatory budgeting would be a great tool if the institutions were really able to design with citizens short, mid and long-term plans, to make participatory planning a reality.

As I examined in *Chapters Four* and *Five*, participatory planning was at the origins of participatory budgeting in Medellín. Medellín's System of Municipal Planning was established by the City Council's Accord nº 043 of 1996, which first created its Council of Municipal Planning while allowing citizens to create their own development plans, known as zonal plans, for their *comunas* and *corregimientos.*[42] As discussed in the referred chapters, these plans aimed to prevent violence and precede Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

Later on, Medellín's participatory budgeting process was first regulated in Medellín in the Accord nº 43 of 2007, which reformed the System of Municipal Planning of Medellín by adding the *local planning and participatory budgeting process.* In this mechanism, participatory planning in Medellín's localities was supposed to be financed with the participatory budget. Still, the capture of the procedure by some groups of interest deviated the plans' purpose, affecting participants' inclusion in the participatory budgeting process, as I further analyse in *Chapter Eight.* A member of a Community Action Board of the *Comuna Eleven* depicted this situation in an interview (Interviewee 3, 2017):

> Participatory budgeting has good and bad things. It's good that it gives money to communities to satisfy common needs. It's bad that it transformed into a shopping list where people focus on the money instead of planning what the community needs. It became a war of interests between the local administrative boards, the community action boards and social organisations, fighting for how much money each will have. There's also a set of problems related to the politicians. Since there are elected delegates in the

[42] In turn, Medellín is part of Antioquia's System of Departmental Planning, enacted in the Order nº 34 of 2006 of Antioquia's Assembly.

process, there are also fights about who gives what, up to the point that people are brought from other neighbourhoods to vote for projects and delegates.

Scarce participation in planning in Medellín's participatory budgeting process is also associated in the data with time constraints and differences between urban and rural areas (among others, Hernández, C., 2017; Maturana, 2017a; Álvarez, B., 2017). On the one hand, Municipal Development Plans have a timeframe of 4 years, whereas the Local Development Plans are usually longer, and the projects to implement participatory budgeting are yearly. Nevertheless, the implementation of the projects is often very short due to administrative proceedings. As Luz Estela Morales (2017), member of a community action board, noted during a public hearing,

> I find extremely difficult the execution of many projects, given their short amount of time. Almost a semester is spent hiring and contracting, even though a timeframe was supposed to be included in the projects for a speedy contracting process. In the end, all the projects are executed very closely, affecting their quality.

On the other hand, some participants from the *corregimientos*, which are the rural areas of Medellín, complained about a lack of representation on how the participatory budgeting process is designed and implemented, prevailing the urban over the rural components (among others, Álvarez, B., 2017; Atehortua, 2017; David, 2017). In the words of Henry Herrera (2017), member of the Municipal Council of Participatory Budgeting,

> The *corregimientos* occupy large portions of land. Equally are the needs of their inhabitants. We have slums as big as the ones in the city [...]. The *corregimientos* cannot be equated to the other *comunas* of Medellín, because each one has a different dynamic. [...] I represent peasants that live very far away from the city centre. Our capacity to participate is different because the transportation, money, and time makes it very difficult.

In turn, the perceived scarce participation of citizens in the local development plans, both urban and rural, fed a rupture in Medellín's participatory ecosystem between participatory planning and participatory budgeting during the period studied herein. As I discuss next, this fissure sparked an excessive focus on the participatory budget, disregarding planning, deviating its purpose and easing its capture.

1.2.2. A RUPTURE BETWEEN PLANNING AND BUDGETING IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

The participatory budget is supposed to be the primary source of finance for Medellín's local development plans. In the words of Carlos Jaramillo (2017), a member of Medellín's Observatory of Public Policy, during a public hearing, 'Participatory budgeting serving local development plans is a perfect marriage'. Furthermore, Alejandro Osorio (2017), Secretary of Planning of Medellín, refers to planning as 'the vertebral column of participatory budgeting', whereas a technical concept of Medellín's Council of Municipal Planning highlights that 'participatory budgeting needs to be the financial instrument for funding the local development plans' (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016, p.31).

This connection between participatory planning and participatory budgeting aims to prevent the participatory budget from satisfying personal needs and its use for clientelist purposes. Yet, in my research I found that, one of the main challenges preventing political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process during the case study, was a rupture between the local development plans and the participatory budget, with the effect of the budget being used for private gain, excluding many participants (among others, Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016; Palacio, 2017; Restrepo, S., 2017). The Observatory of Public Policy of Medellín's City Council (2018, pp.8–9) describes vividly this situation:

> There is a conflictive relationship between [...] the local development plans and participatory budgeting [...]. It is evident that, in many cases, the relationship between participatory budgeting and the local development plans is broken; in other words, the opportunity to promote participatory budgeting as a financing instrument for local development is lost through its incorrect use, aimed at satisfying clientelist or personal benefits.

As I further analyse in *Chapter Eight*, the broken relationship between planning and budgeting in Medellín's participatory budgeting process has allowed a capture of the participatory budget by some participants while, in turn, excluding others, feeding a cycle of disenfranchisement. In the words of Luis Fernando Franco (2017), member of an oversight organisation, during a public hearing: 'Some leaders have been handling the resources in the same way for over 15 years. We need new leaders'.

As I mentioned in previous chapters, Medellín's participatory budgeting process' influence on political inclusion is at the fence. Although, in some cases, the rupture between planning and budgeting has triggered exclusion and deviated the resources from satisfying communities' problems, the less than perfect broken participatory budget has also boosted the inclusion of many participants, helping them fulfil their collective needs. In the words of Ariey Macias (2017), member of the Medellín's Council of Participatory Budgeting, during a public hearing,

> In many scenarios, it is argued that the participatory budget has been distorted, strengthening corrupt organisations, leaders and citizens, illegal groups and initiatives without impact. I do not share this view because the participatory budget has solved many unsatisfied basic needs, to the point of being the most important scenario for the leaders and for the Municipal Administration to comply with its institutional offer.

I analyse this duality in *Chapter Eight*, while examining the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, which I trace and develop in this dissertation as a medium-level grounded framework of the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion. However, despite the diverse views regarding the capacity of the participatory budget to satisfy community needs, at the core of the identified rupture between planning and budgeting in Medellín's participatory budgeting process lies an incapacity of the process, during the period analysed –i.e., from 2004 until 2017–, to structurally empower excluded citizens through a transparent and open democratic process. In the words of Stella Restrepo (2017), representative of women's organisations, at the core of the participatory budgeting process 'lies an institutional weakness that hinders the dialogue and construction of a

democratic pact to solve social problems and expand local democracy'. This dialogue is supposed to take place in the planning processes of Medellín's *comunas* and *corregimientos*.

So far, I have examined the macro-dynamics of participation in planning at the core of Medellín's participatory ecosystem identified in my research, influencing the inclusion and exclusion of the participants in the process, such as rules intended to include citizens in participatory planning and harmonise planning with budgeting, that contrast with scarce participation in planning and a rupture between planning and budgeting. Still, in theory, once a public plan is issued in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, its implementation is dependent on the resources allocated for its execution. These resources are assigned through public budgeting processes. As I examine next, participation in budgeting is at the core of Medellín's participatory ecosystem traced in this research, both with connections and ruptures affecting the political inclusion of participants in the process.

2. THE MACRO-DYNAMICS OF PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETING IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM

The public budget is the main instrument to finance public services and goods at all levels of government. Furthermore, the budget quantifies the State's objectives (Jaramillo, 2019, p.22). Given its central importance, the national, departmental and municipal budgets in Colombia are usually decided yearly by elected authorities. In my thesis, I call the *macro-dynamics of participation in budgeting in Medellín's participatory ecosystem*, to a set of rules that frame participation in budgeting in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, along with the ruptures found in them influencing political inclusion in the participatory budgeting process. I explain them in this

section, by depicting the broader dynamics of participation in budgeting in Medellín's participatory ecosystem in the 'law in the books'. Subsequently, I analyse two main fissures at its core in the participatory budgeting process found during my research. First, a conflict between the national and local law that regulates the process, feeding power disputes between different actors. Second, a discomfort by many participants on the amount of resources allocated for the participatory budget–i.e., 5% of Medellín's public budget–, limiting the influence of the process on political inclusion.

2.1. THE 'LAW IN THE BOOKS' OF PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETING IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM

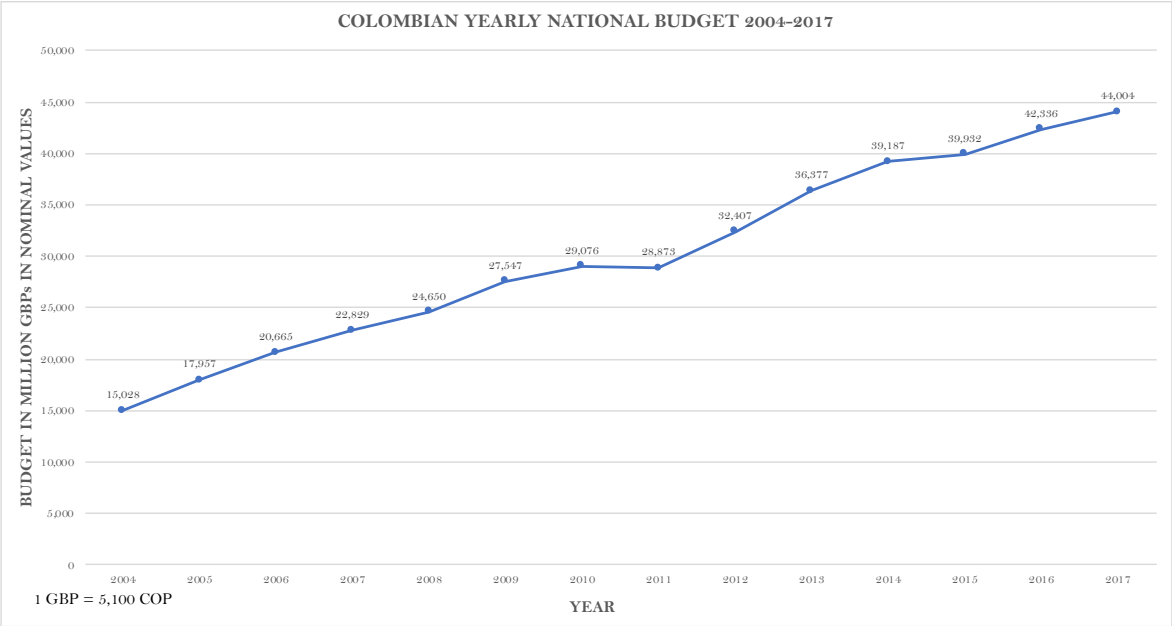
Two independent budget systems comprise the Colombian public budget, each with its own principles, characteristics, rules and procedures. On the one hand, the 'General Budget of the Nation' (in Spanish, *Presupuesto General de la Nación*), established in Chapter III of Title XII of the Political Constitution and developed by the Laws nº 38 of 1989, 179 of 1994 and 225 of 1995, compiled in the Decree 111 of 1996, better known as the Budget Statute. On the other, the 'General System of Royalties' (in Spanish, *Sistema General de Regalías*), featured in Article 361 of the Constitution and developed by the Law nº 1530 of 2012. The latter is a parallel budget comprising oil revenues for investment projects.

At the national level, Articles 346-357 of the Constitution and the Decree nº 111 of 1996, establish that the 'General Budget of the Nation' shall be created yearly through a two-tier process consisting of a first stage in which the President presents a budget proposal to the Congress, who ought to then discuss, review and approve it. If the Congress fails to do so, the

Government's bid would be enacted.[43] The 'General Budget of the Nation' includes all the incomes and expenses of the State at the national level, such as countrywide taxes and expenditures for national-level State agencies. Likewise, Articles 356 and 357 of the Constitution determine that this budget shall also feature the resources that the national level will transfer to the departments and municipalities. *Figure 18* shows the yearly 'General Budget of the Nation' approved by the Colombian Congress from 2004 until 2017, which comprises my case study period.

[43] The national budget's approval is not exempt from political bargains and power clashes in Colombia. For instance, Rubiano & López (2004) show that, from 1990 until 2003, individual bargaining between congressmen and the Government in Colombia pushed by legislators to guarantee more spending in their budget priorities affect the budget approved. Likewise, Tribin (2020) uses a data set of promises made by the Colombian President from 2002 until 2010 and effective cash transfers, to argue that the government budget was used as a portfolio for electoral investment, targeting voters at core and swing municipalities.

Figure 18 - 'General Budget of the Nation' approved by the Colombian Congress from 2004 until 2017.



Source: Created by the author based on the Laws nº 848 of 2003, 921 of 2004, 998 of 2005, 1110 of 2006, 1169 of 2007, 1260 of 2008, 1365 of 2009, 1420 of 2010, 1485 of 2011, 193 of 2012, 1687 of 2013, 1737 of 2014, 1769 of 2015, and 1815 of 2016.

At the subnational level, Articles 297-318 of the Constitution, the Decree nº 1222 of 1986, and the Laws nº 136 of 1994 and 1551 of 2012, also create a twofold process to decide the budgets of the departments and municipalities, which include both their incomes and expenses. In the departments, the elected governors shall present annually to the Assembly the budget proposal for the next fiscal year, who must discuss and approve it. At the municipal level, this process is carried out by the mayor, who presents the bill to the City Council for approval. In Medellín, the process is regulated by the Decree nº 006 of 1998. At the local level, local administrative boards at each *comuna* and *corregimiento* have the power, among others, of distributing the municipal budget allocated yearly for each locality by the City Council.

The referred proceedings to create the public budget at different levels of government, aims to allow elected officials to participate in a checks and balances process, in which the Congress, the Assembly and the City Council, as legislative representatives of citizens, can control the proposal of the executive and oversight the expenditure of the resources throughout the year. In the *comunas* and *corregimientos*, the LABs represent the citizens in the issues that affect each locality. Nevertheless, the cited process does not allow a direct participation of people in the budget decision-making process. Two main mechanisms exist in Colombia to enable citizen involvement in public budgeting: Public hearings and participatory budgeting.[44]

The public hearings are a participatory mechanism created by the Statute for the Opposition featured in the Colón Agreement, enacted in the Law nº 1909 of 2018. Article 22 of this law establishes these hearings as a space for citizens to oversight and control the multiyear investment plans at the national, departmental and municipal levels, by ordering national and local governments to carry out public hearings for citizens to get informed about these plans before they are enacted and make proposals to prioritise resources. Although these hearings aim to foster citizen participation in budget decision-making processes, citizens' views during the hearings are not binding for public officials.

[44] The 'General Budget of the Nation' also includes the resources for the transitional justice and peacebuilding frameworks in Colombia, such as the implementation of the Colón Agreement, the Victims' Law and attention to displaced people. As García et al. (2017) note, these resources are decided by the aforementioned mechanisms of representative democracy, with a few exceptions, such as in the case of the decision of collective reparations for victims.

On the contrary, the decisions taken by citizens during participatory budgeting processes are binding upon public officials' decision-making. As I referred to in *Chapter Four*, Pasto was the first Colombian municipality to use this instrument in the early 1990s, using a participatory mechanism called *cabildo abierto* (in English, open house), featured in the Colombian 1991 Constitution. In the 1990s and 2000s, several Colombian municipalities implemented participatory budgeting processes by creating specific local decrees based on the participatory norms of Colombia's Constitution, to set the regulation for this process. This is Medellín's case. Still, other places, such as Risaralda and Barrancabermeja, implemented participatory budgeting without a specific legal basis, whereas municipalities like Ocaña and Barrancabermeja had as a normative foundation its inclusion as a policy in municipal development plans (Velásquez & González, 2010, pp.68–95).

As I discuss next, in the 2010s, national laws regulating participatory budgeting were issued in Colombia, becoming part of Medellín's participatory ecosystem. However, at the same time, fissures were created in the participatory ecosystem between the national and local legislation on participatory budgeting, feeding power disputes between different participants. This, in turn, influences their political inclusion in the process.

2.2. THE 'LAW IN ACTION' OF PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETING IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM

As it was the case with the 'law in the books' that favour the participation of citizens in participatory planning, during the course of my research I also identified fissures in the rules that regulate participation in budgeting in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, influencing the

inclusion of participants. These comprise clashes between the national and local law that regulates the process, and discomfort on the amount of resources allocated for the participatory budget.

2.2.1. CLASHES BETWEEN THE NATIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEGISLATIONS IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

During the 1990s and 2000s, the design and implementation of local participatory budgeting processes in Colombia did not have a national law setting up rules for this process. It was not until 2011 that participatory budgeting was featured for the first time in a countrywide legislation, given its inclusion as part of a State policy to foster citizen participation, comprised in Article 231 of the Law nº 1450 of 2011, which enacted the National Development Plan of president Juan Manual Santos, from 2010 to 2014. In parallel, Law nº 1438 of 2011 featured a reform to the social security system in Colombia that included participatory budgeting for health matters.

Still, these laws did not have actionable provisions to implement participatory budgeting. Shortly afterwards, Law nº 1551 of 2012, which reformed the administrative structure of the municipalities in Colombia, formally allowed City Councils to implement participatory budgeting processes at the municipal level. This gave more clarity to the design of the process, by issuing in Article 40 that participatory budgeting should enable citizens to deliberate and decide a percentage of the budget for the locality, which shall follow the national and municipal rules for local planning, budgeting and public contracting, in coordination with municipal development plans.

Furthermore, Law nº 1551 of 2012 states that the participatory budgeting should be decided 'through the Local Administrative Boards'. As explained by congresswomen Adriana Franco (2011, p.44) in one of the bill's debates, this law aimed for 'participatory budgeting to be a mechanism that gives more muscle to the *ediles*, who are often neglected in administrative processes'. As I mentioned before, and further discuss in *Chapter Seven*, the *ediles* are elected delegates at each *comuna* and *corregimiento*, selected every four years to form the local administrative boards. The LABs have the power, among others, of distributing the municipal budget allocated yearly by the City Council for each locality.

Throughout the debates in the Congress of the Law nº 1551 of 2012, there were attempts to qualify the power of the LABs over civil society organisations. This is why, in the second debate of the bill, a clause was added to the original proposal, in which priority should be given to the investment proposals made by participatory planning councils in each locality (Pereira et al., 2011). As I previously explained and further discuss in *Chapter Seven*, these councils are participatory mechanisms that allow citizens to participate in public planning processes. Still, the Law nº 1551 of 2012 favours the LABs over associations of direct democracy at the local level. During the first debate of the law's bill at the House of Representatives, Representative Rubén Rodríguez (2011, p.570) regretted that the project did not reinforce the role of organisations of direct democracy in participatory budgeting processes.

The Law nº 1551 of 2012 boosted already existing disputes between *ediles*, citizens and civil society organisations in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, that I analyse in detail in *Chapter Seven*. Overall, since participatory budgeting started in Medellín in 2004, many *ediles* complained that the participatory budgeting process was hampering their powers to decide local

budgets (among others, Sánchez, R., 2010, 2014; Velásquez, 2014). In the words of Ramiro Sánchez (2017), former *edil* of the *Comuna Thirteen*, during a public hearing: 'The design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process has been wrong since it first started, because the administration disavowed the powers of the LABs'. Furthermore, as Madariaga et al. (2014, p.58) assert for Medellín's case, 'in 2005, the institutionalisation of participatory budgeting led to the opposition of some sectors of the City Council, who felt it disregarded the essence of representative democracy'.

At the core of the dispute about the power of the LABs in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, I identify a debate common to Colombia and other contexts, discussed in *Chapter Two*, on the challenges that institutionalisation brings to participatory budgeting when representative authorities define the rules of this process (Velásquez & González, 2010; Lara, 2014; Dias et. al, 2021). This debate permeates Medellín's participatory budgeting process. For instance, Émber Higuita (2017), an *edil* of the *Comuna Eight*, claimed during a public hearing to change the regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process:

> This reform is unconstitutional because it damages the political control of the LABs. The accord only puts the City Council as political control and disavows the LABs. Where are our Constitutional functions? The administration's accords and decrees always want to take us out and impose over the local administrative boards. They want to eliminate us.

In contrast, while discussing the referred reform with the Town Hall, several civic leaders of Medellín's *Comuna Seven* (2017) mentioned that the project made the LABs 'unbeatable', because 'it gave too much power to the LABs'. In turn, a social leader of the *Comuna One*,

explained during an interview: 'Everyone participates, but the Town Hall and the LABs have the final word' (Interviewee 7, 2017). This is an example of how the macro-dynamics of participation in budgeting, discussed in this section, and the power disputes found in it, influence political inclusion in the process.[45]

As I examine in *Chapter Eight*, there have been numerous lawsuits against the local legislation in Medellín that regulates the participatory budgeting process, arguing that it opposes the powers given by national legislation to the LABs. These lawsuits prompted legal uncertainty about the process (Guevara, 2017; Sánchez, R., 2017; Zuluaga, 2017).[46] In the words of Medellín's Ombudsman's Office (2016, p.155), due to a broad range of legal actions claiming that Medellín's participatory budgeting process opposes the national legislation, 'its regulation and reform face uncertainty'.

In an attempt to provide more clarity to the national legal framework on participatory budgeting and create incentives to foster this mechanism, in 2015 the Colombian Congress enacted the Statutory Law nº 1757 to promote and protect participatory rights. Overall, this law creates a strong link between public planning processes and participatory budgeting. Likewise, it fosters and encourages participatory budgeting without making it a compulsory policy for local

[45] In *Chapter Eight*, I examine variations in the powers of the LABs' in Medellín's local legislation regulating the participatory budgeting process during the period studied herein.

[46] The local regulation of other municipalities has also been challenged in courts, claiming its opposition to national legislation granting the LABs the power to solely decide on the budget for each locality. This is the case, for instance, of Itagüí, a municipality in Antioquia. Three *ediles* sued the City Council Accord nº 11 of 2008, arguing the LABs shall solely decide the budget of each locality. This argument prevailed in the State Council, which withdraw the Accord (Consejo de Estado, 2020).

authorities, for instance with incentives to carry out the process, such as prizes. However, the law does not specify how the process should be implemented, nor the competences of different actors of representative democracy to regulate it at the local level or intervene in it. Only in Article 93, the cited law states that the departmental assemblies, city councils and LABs, respectively, shall include the agreements reached through the participatory budgeting process in the corresponding public budget. As stated by the Colombian Constitutional Court (2015, parr.6.47.1), the Law nº 1757 of 2015 'includes general regulatory orientations, but lacks the required precision to characterise how participatory budgeting should be institutionalised and function'.

Therefore, despite the new provisions of this law, one of the main discussions during the 2017 change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, was that adjusting the rules of the procedure to the Statutory Law nº 1757 of 2015, could imply a 'regression in the right of participation for citizens' (Arcila, 2017). By 2015, Medellín had already a detailed regulated participatory budgeting process. Some participants were afraid that, since the Statutory Law did not stipulate the power of the LABs in the process, nor the specific competence of the Town Hall and City Council to be the ones regulating it, changing the local rules to adjust them to Law nº 1757 of 2015 could create greater uncertainty and disregard the history of the process in the city. In the words of María Franco (2017), member of the technical team of the City Council,

> This city has made a significant advancement in participatory planning, compared to national legislation. Medellín goes further than the Law 1757. We are worried that, if Medellín adjusts to the law, we will be going back in what we have progressed.

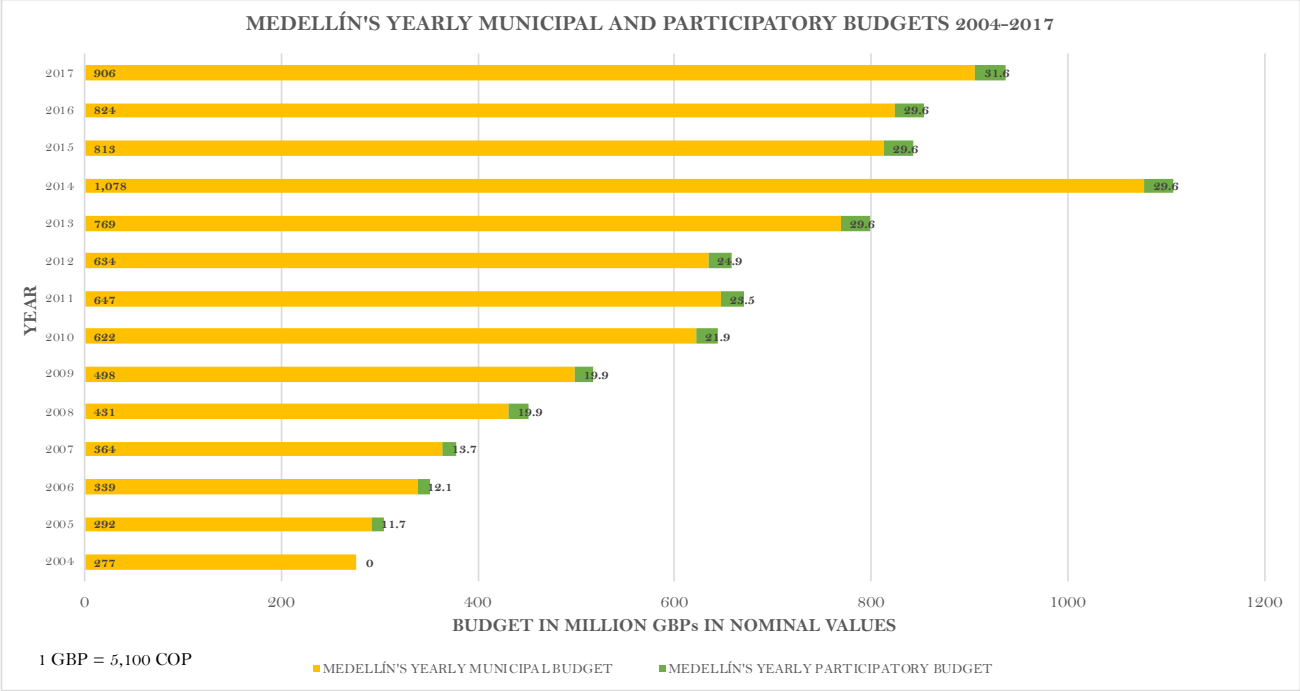
This discussion shows further how the national regulation on participatory budgeting, part of its participatory ecosystem, influences the local process, affecting the political inclusion of participants. In the words of Fernando Fernández (2017), citizen of Medellín, during a public hearing, 'participatory budgeting has had many problems since it was first created in Medellín, just like the Colombian law at the national level has many gaps'. As I further examine in *Chapter Nine*, I also encountered the referred clash between national and local legislation in Medellín's participatory budgeting process in the implementation of the Colón Agreement. In this case, despite the significance of the Colón Agreement at the national level in Colombia, Medellín's local participatory budgeting process was not associated in practice by local actors with the Colón Agreement during the period studied herein, given the legal uncertainty for its implementation at the local level.

In sum, although Medellín's participatory budgeting process has specific dynamics that shape power relationships between local actors, it is also highly influenced by laws created at the national level, part of the macro-dynamics of participation in budgeting in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, that expose a dispute between participatory and representative democracy at its core. This, in some cases, has prompted and augmented power disputes between different actors, such as ediles and organisations of direct democracy, as I further show in *Chapter Seven*. Likewise, it has also triggered legal uncertainty. In turn, the referred rupture between national and municipal legislation regarding Medellín's participatory budgeting process affects political inclusion by design, given that at the national level participatory budgeting is designed as a process where the LABs have the final word, excluding other participants. A further fissure found in these macro-dynamics during my research, which I analyse next, is a dispute on the budget that citizens actually decide in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

2.2.2. A POLITICAL INCLUSION LIMITED TO 5% OF THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET

The power exercised by citizens in the participatory budget is limited to 5% of the public resources. In other words, the political inclusion of citizens in budgetary decisions through this process is bounded to the referred amount, decided by the City Council in the Accords nº 043 of 2007 and 028 of 2017. The participatory budget is annually distributed among all the sixteen *comunas* and five *corregimientos* of Medellín, depending on the number of inhabitants and the quality of life index (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2015a). The Mayor and City Council decide yearly the other 95%, using the process of public budgeting described above, in which the Town Hall presents a bill to the City Council for discussion and approval, including the budget's incomes and expenses. *Figure 19* shows Medellín's municipal and participatory budgets from 2004 until 2017, which comprise the period studied herein.

Figure 19 - Medellín's yearly municipal and participatory budgets 2004-2017.



Source: Created by the author based on Alcaldía de Medellín (2015) and Medellín's City Council Accords nº 56 of 2003, 38 of 2004, 59 of 2005, 87 of 2006, 47 of 2007, 51 of 2008, 68 of 2009, 70 of 2010, 49 of 2011, 65 of 2012, 74 of 2013, 34 of 2014, 34 of 2015, and 16 of 2016.

The amount of money decided through the participatory budgeting process is an issue of dispute in Medellín, identified in my data analysis as relevant to understanding the participants' perceptions of inclusion in the process. On the one hand, during my research several participants manifested that they were upset about the amount of the participatory budget given that, in their view, it is not enough to satisfy the needs of the community (among others, Álvarez, L., 2017; Balaguera, 2017; Urrego, 2017). For instance, Dairo Urán (2017), citizen of the *Comuna Eight*, stated during a public hearing: 'The participatory budget is not enough. The sports court in my neighbourhood is damaged. The Institute of Sports of Medellín told me to fix it using the

participatory budget, but there was not enough money'. In a similar vein, Adiela Álvarez (2017), citizen of Medellín, declared during another public hearing: '5% is too low. In the voting process many citizens and projects are ruled out'.

On the other hand, some participants denounce that the conflicts over the participatory budget have blindsided them on trying to intervene on how the remaining 95% of the budget is spent, where many actors claim that they have no participation at all, while citizen participation is also needed in that broader budgeting process. In the words of María Balaguera (2017), member of the organisation *Red Constituyente de Belén* from the *Comuna Sixteen*,

> The debate about participatory budgeting in the city is slanted. We are only discussing our participation in 5% of the city's budget. There is no debate at all about the other 95% that is beyond the participatory budget and where we have never participated on how it is distributed.

Correspondingly, Wilmar Martínez (2017), an *edil*, claimed: 'We have been so worried about the 5% of the budget, that we have forgotten the other 95%. When the City Council debates the municipal Budget, there are no citizens in the room'. In turn, Jonathan Rojas (2017) argued during a public hearing: 'We need to be very careful. The administration is making us fight over 5% of the budget, while we forget to impact the other 95%, which is where we should be focused'. These perceptions reflect a fear from some participants, common to peacebuilding contexts, on the use of inclusion, in this case through participatory budgeting, to '"tame" social and political movements' (Paffenholz, 2018, p.2). In this vein, Émber Higuita (2017) called the participatory budget a 'lollipop handed to citizens to distract them'.

As a result, although some participants assert that the participatory budget has emancipated many civic leaders and citizens from having to ask city councillors to include their needs in the municipal budget, they also advocate for an increase in the participatory budget and incidence on how the municipal budget is decided, beyond the participatory budgeting process (among others, Edal, 2017; García, D., 2017b; Urrego, 2017). Furthermore, other participants claim that the participatory budgeting is not really decided by the community, but by the Town Hall, making the participatory budget a mock (among others, Múnera, J., 2017; Urán, D., 2017; Zuleta, 2017). In the words of Múnera, J., (2017), citizen of the *Comuna Eleven*, 'the public servants direct the projects to be executed with the participatory budget. People do not really choose'.

On the contrary, in the view of the Town Hall, the administration has given a broad range of spaces for citizens to participate in the design of the Municipal Development Plan, approved every four years by the City Council, which is financed with the 95% of the municipal budget, as public law in Colombia determines. Some City Council members have a similar view. For instance, during a public hearing, City Councillor Fabio Rivera (2017a) asserted that '83% of the city's budget has a specific destination, whereas the other should implement the Municipal Development Plan'.

The discomfort of many participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process regarding the limit of the participatory budget to 5% of the public budget, is relevant to analyse the perceptions of inclusion in the process. In many cases, participants feel that the budget is not enough, while claiming that genuine participation will imply also being able to contribute more

effectively in the decision-making process of the remaining 95% of the budget.[47] In the words of Luis Fernando Lopera (2017b), member of a Community Action Board of the *Comuna Eleven*, during a public hearing,

> We want real participation, not participation in disguise. We are called here and say we are participating, but that is it. We do not participate in deliberating, in the delegation of power or in citizen control. [...] The municipality should foster an open government process, not only in the participatory budget, but also in the remaining 95% of the budget.

At the core of the discomfort on the amount of the participatory budget, lies the previously referred dispute between participatory and representative democracy, given that the Mayor and City Council, democratically elected, retain the competence to decide how the majority of the resources are spent. As Goldfrank (2021, p.120) notes, 'Not surprisingly, incumbents prefer to retain decision-making authority over the lion's share of resources and important policies to help them stay in power'. Wampler et al. (2021, p.9), call 'particiwashing' the practices in which participatory budgeting is used to hide business-as-usual practices or to funnel activists into spaces actually controlled by the government, noting that they lead to 'participation fatigue'. In these cases, participatory budgeting could, in fact, 'co- opt citizens to prevent them from making more radical demands for systemic change' (Wampler et al., 2021, p.17). In *Chapter Eight*, I further analyse how the discussed complaints on the low amount of the participatory budget, influence the inclusion and exclusion of participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process during the period studied herein.

[47] As I further analyse in *Chapter Ten*, a possible avenue for future research based on this thesis is the influence of the public hearings created by the Statute for the Opposition in 2018 on political inclusion.

More recently, Medellín started to include ICTs in its participatory budgeting process, shaped by national policies and laws on the use of digital tools to foster democratic participation. I also depict these tools as part of Medellín's participatory ecosystem, as I discuss in the next section, showing a dissociation between the claimed effects of ICTs in democratic processes in the law, and perceptions and outcomes in practice.

3. THE USE OF ICTS IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY ECOSYSTEM

At its origins, Medellín's participatory budgeting process took place solely offline. The assemblies, meeting and elections were all held in physical spaces throughout the city. Only since 2017, online tools have been added to the process. A set of policies at the national and local levels permeate the use of digital tools in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. I trace them in this section as part of Medellín's participatory ecosystem, relevant to answer my research question on the effect of ICTs on political inclusion in this city's participatory budgeting process.

I categorise ICTs in Medellín's 'participatory ecosystem' as *crosscutting tools* that can serve different purposes in budgeting, planning and participation channels, both with the capacity of fostering and hindering inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, depending on how they are designed and implemented, as I discuss further in *Chapter Eight*. In this section, I analyse the broader policies that shape the use of digital tools in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, while discussing a divergence found in my data analysis, between claimed effects of ICTs in democratic processes in the law and perceptions and outcomes in practice in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

3.1. COLOMBIAN POLICIES TO DIGITALISE DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

The use of digital tools in Colombian democratic processes can be tracked back to 2003, when a Constitutional reform was issued, allowing electronic voting in elections (Cepeda, 2003). The bill stated, in Article 258, that this kind of voting was allowed 'to foster transparency and agility in democratic processes'. After the constitutional reform, Law nº 892 of 2004 was issued, including in Article 3º a duty for the national electoral authorities to implement a mechanism for digital voting in five years.

Due to a lack of implementation of the referred law, in 2011 the Congress issued the Law nº 1475, creating an obligation for the national elections of 2014 to be carried out digitally. This law also created an advisory commission to implement ICTs in electoral processes. Although the commission has lead pilot projects for electronic voting, and advised on providers, contracting and other issues related with the process of electronic voting in Colombia, the 2014 goal was not achieved. The use of digital tools in democratic elections has been a difficult process in Colombia, in many cases due to a perception of a lack of transparency and citizen distrust (Padrón, 2019). One of the biggest lessons of the pilot projects, is that the use of ICTs in democratic elections goes beyond the replacement of a physical ballot with a digital one: It covers all the stages of the process (Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2012). Hence, the National Electoral Agency of Colombia has explored different options for ICTs to be included in elections, in diverse stages, such as the citizens and candidate registration, the selection of juries, the voting process, and the publication of the results (Barrios, et al., 2014).

So far, there have been some advancements in Colombia to include ICTs in electoral stages, such as the publication of the results through smartphone applications. These innovations have also been part of a national policy to boost public digitalisation and transparency in government. This policy has been set up in diverse legal statutes, such as Law nº 1341 of 2009, on the principles and concepts for internet and information society, Law nº 1712 of 2014, on transparency and access to information, Law nº 1757 of 2015, including the use of diverse digital tools to boost citizen participation, the Decree nº 1008 of 2018, which creates the policy on digital government in Colombia, and Law nº 1978 of 2019, which modernises the ICTs' sector. Likewise, the Colón Agreement restates the Constitutional normative association between transparency in elections and technology, by including the use of digital tools as a commitment of the State to foster transparency in democratic processes (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, p.52).

The cited regulation has supported the creation of digital platforms for citizens to oversight public contracting and budgeting spending (Velásquez et. al, 2020a, p. 84), and a broad range of ICTs for the government to publish information and create channels of communication with citizens (Velásquez et al., 2020c, p.123). Although some of these mechanisms have been criticised for having a quantitative approach that fosters clicktivism, they have also created a broad range of opportunities for citizens and civil society organisations to lead open government initiatives and mobilise using ICTs, both at the national and local levels (Velásquez et. al., 2020c, pp.123-162). However, queries about citizen trust, transparency, manipulation of the system, and technology security in elections are frequent (Barrios, et al., 2014), as it happens with digital voting in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, and I explain next.

3.2. ICTs AS CROSSCUTTING TOOLS IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

The cautious and slow advancement of digital tools' use for representative elections in Colombia, contrasts with an enthusiastic and rapid increase of ICTs to support participatory budgeting processes in many Colombian municipalities since the mid 2010s. For instance, in 2017 the government of Nariño launched the webpage *Gana Control*, to provide information to citizens about participatory budgeting processes. Shortly afterwards, it started the program *Gana Municipales*, a hybrid participatory budgeting process, involving both offline and online participation through a digital platform (Gobierno de Nariño, 2017). The change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in 2017 also included the use of digital tools to support the process.

Besides the aforementioned legislation, there is no national law that regulates the use of digital tools in Colombian participatory budgeting processes. Still, given its increased use, in 2017 the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (henceforward, Ministry of ICTs) published a document with guidelines for the use of digital tools in participatory budgeting processes (Cabezas, 2019, p.55). The purpose of the document, built using as a standard the process design of Medellín, and the rules for participatory budgeting processes featured in the aforementioned laws nº 1551 of 2012, 1712 of 2014 and 1757 of 2015, provides recommendations for the inclusion of ICTs in participatory budgeting processes, distinguishing their possible use in diverse stages (Álvarez et al., 2017).

The referred document shares the view of the National Electoral Agency, that digital tools in democratic processes surpass electronic voting and can fulfil different purposes,

depending on the stage they operate at. For instance, the guide proposes the use of social media channels, institutional webpages and instant messaging applications to inform citizens about the process. Likewise, it also suggests using online surveys and mechanisms for electronic voting to select representatives in the process and prioritise projects (Álvarez et al., 2017).

The national framework on ICTs in Colombian democratic processes that I trace in this subsection has influenced Medellín's participatory budgeting process. In 2013, Medellín's City Council issued the Accord nº 98 of 2013 creating a policy to foster the use of digital tools in governmental processes. Since then, Medellín has implemented several digital tools to foster participation in public decision-making processes, such as the webpage *Mi Medellín*, a platform for citizens to propose solutions to their cities' problems. Furthermore, the Municipal Development Plan for 2016-2019, included several projects to use ICTs in democratic processes, such as participatory budgeting.

For instance, it featured a project to develop physical and digital infrastructure for citizen participation, and a strategy to nurture online and open government tools, explicitly announcing that it was 'aligned with the national government online policy' (Concejo de Medellín, 2016, pp.126-141). This plan was later implemented in local statutes, such as the Accord nº 37 of 2017, which created the plan 'ViaTICMedellín', to encourage the use of digital tools in the local government. For the participatory budgeting process, the Article 53 of the Decree nº 0697 of 2017, which regulates Medellín's participatory budgeting process, states that 'the process can include ICTs used frequently by the population–such as webpages, smartphone applications, social networks and digital games–, to enhance information, participation, decision-making,

collaboration and transparency in participatory budgeting', whereas Article 5 allows to carry out both offline and online voting processes.

As it is the case with the recommendations of the National Electoral Agency on digital tools for democratic processes, and the guidelines of the Ministry of ICTs on online participatory budgeting processes, Medellín's approach to ICTs on its process surpasses online voting and includes these tools in different stages and for diverse needs. During the course of my research, I found that this multifaceted approach encourages a nuanced response to the question on the influence of ICTs on the political inclusion of the participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. For instance, as I further analyse in *Chapter Eight*, the use of digital tools for online voting sparked concerns about security, access and deliberation in many participants (Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academia, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2016).

To name a few examples, during an observation of the voting process of Medellín's participatory budget in November, 2017, several participants of the *Comuna One* denounced that some people bought sim card numbers to have several online votes, whereas others couldn't access the digital voting tool. However, other people mentioned that online voting gave them more opportunities to vote. This is the case, for instance, of citizens interviewed during an online voting exercise fostered by Medellín's Town Hall in 2017, in which a bus was adapted with computers and travelled throughout the city to teach people how to vote online and give them opportunities to do so. This is portrayed in *Figure 20*.

Figure 20 - Medellín's bus to foster online voting in the participatory budgeting elections of 2017.

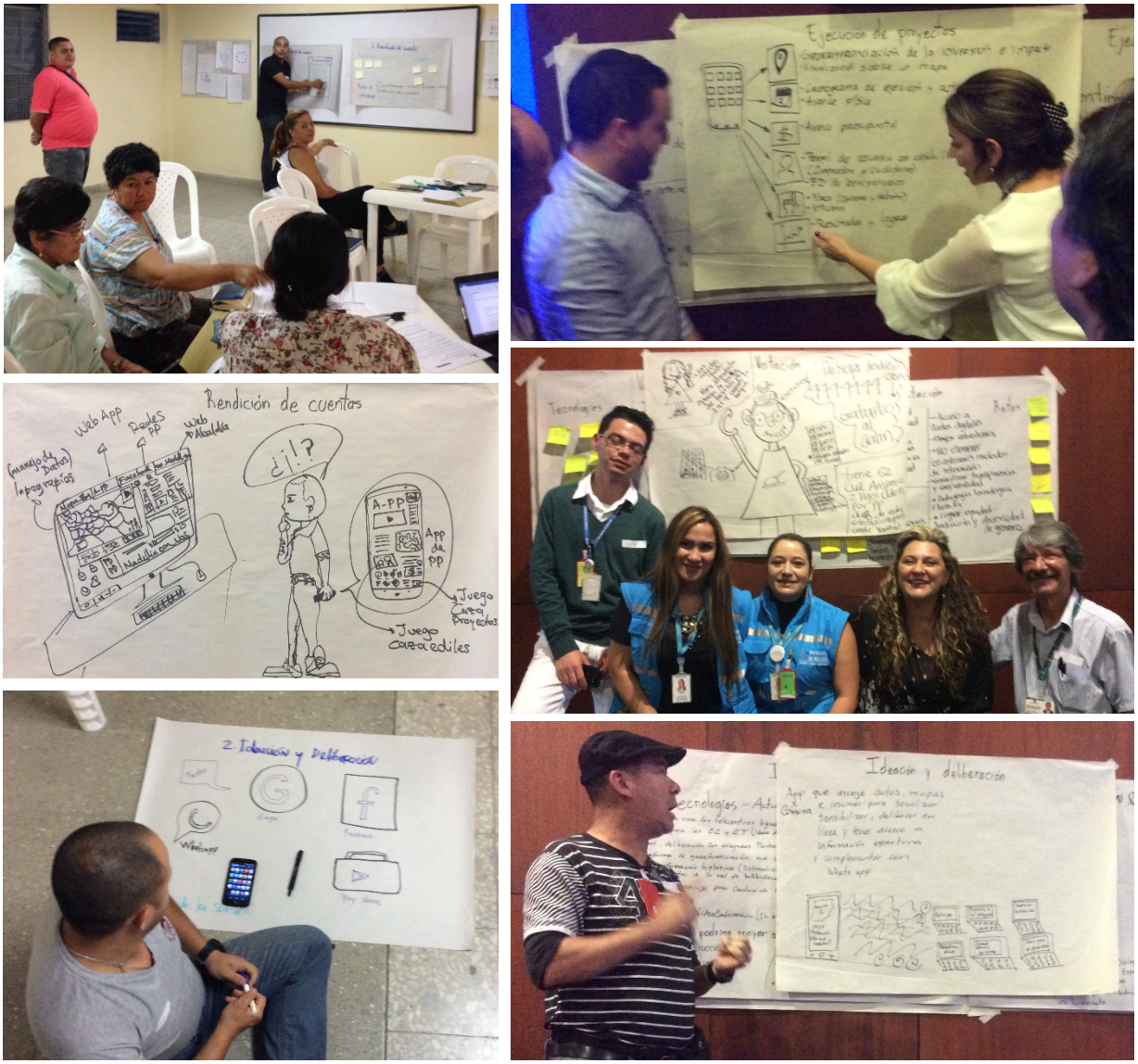


Source: Taken by the author on November, 2017.

Likewise, during the focus groups to explore the use of ICTs in Medellín's participatory budgeting process conducted in the course of this research, participants agreed that digital tools could be used for a broad range of purposes in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. For instance, many participants perceived that there were not enough channels of information about the process, which resulted in the exclusion of many citizens. Hence, they suggested the need of using a broad range of digital tools, such as webpages, online bots and smartphone applications, to inform the citizens about resources' spending, how the process works and opportunities to

participate, as it is shown in *Figure 21*. In *Chapter Eight* I explore in depth these tools and their influence on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, as perceived by the participants during the research.

Figure 21 - Digital tools proposed by Medellín's participants to foster inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Taken by the author on July and August, 2016.

Analysing the policy that acts as a legal backdrop for the use of ICTs in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, a rupture is found between the 'law in the books' and the 'law in action' in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. While the former presumes that technology use in democratic processes will bring transparency, accessibility and security, in the latter technology does not necessarily equate to a more transparent, open and secure participatory budgeting process. As I further discuss in *Chapter Eight*, digital tools in Medellín's participatory budgeting process are not neutral. Their design and implementation affect its influence on political inclusion, both with the capacity of producing inclusion and exclusion.

In sum, in this section I examined a broad set of policies at the national and local levels influencing the use of ICTs in Medellín's participatory ecosystem. The data shows many applications and perceptions towards digital tools in this city's participatory budgeting process that contrast with an optimistic approach to the use of digital tools found in the law, relevant to examine their influence on political inclusion, as I do in *Chapter Eight*. This analysis complements the *macro-dynamics of Medellín's participatory ecosystem* depicted in *Sections One* and *Two*, to portray the budgeting, planning, and participatory channels that meet in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, along with their connections and ruptures influencing political inclusion.

CONCLUSION

Using the grounded theory approach employed throughout my research, in this chapter I depicted and critically analysed the diverse channels of Medellín's participatory ecosystem traced in my grounded research, while reflecting on the connections and ruptures between them that underlie the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process,

explored in *Chapter Eight*. In the chapter, I claimed that Medellín's participatory budgeting process is part of a wider participatory ecosystem. The ruptures and connections in the budgeting, planning and participatory channels that meet in this system, along with ICTs as crosscutting tools, influence political inclusion. Some of the connections include links between planning and budgeting and mechanisms for citizens to participate in both. Nevertheless, ruptures found during the research often prevent these associations, such as clashes between national and local legislation, a perception that the participatory budget is not enough for citizens to be included in public-decision-making processes, scarce citizen participation in planning, a breach between planning and budgeting, and a dissociation between the claimed effects of ICTs in democratic processes in the law, and the perceptions and outcomes in practice.

In the medium-level grounded *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process proposed in this thesis, I argue that the influence of Medellín's participatory budget on political inclusion is also shaped by its actors, who intervene in the aforementioned participatory ecosystem, battling for power. In turn, the interactions and power disputes between the actors are affected by the broader participatory ecosystem in which the participatory budgeting process is embedded. In the next chapter, I examine the diverse actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. This analysis allows me to classify and discuss the power tensions found between them, while exploring how they influence political inclusion and exclusion when decisions are made about the participatory budget and the process' design and implementation and, correspondingly, how they are influenced by the participatory ecosystem analysed in this chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MICRO-POLITICS OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

'My leadership emerged with participatory budgeting. Yet, participatory budgeting is full of contradictions and fights between representative and participatory democracy,' said Alexis Mejía (2017), a leader from Medellín, in an interview about Medellín's participatory budgeting process. 'For more leaders to rise, we need to strengthen participatory democracy. This has a political cost because the everyday citizen will be empowered,' added Mejía, A., (2017). Mejía's statement describes a dispute of power between diverse actors found at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process during my research, affecting its influence on political inclusion for better or worse (Gómez, 2007; Madariaga et al., 2014).

Participatory budgeting is the only mechanism in Medellín that allows a direct and compulsory decision of citizens over budget concerning issues that affect them, which explains its popularity, but also disputes of power found underneath the surface. The central research question examined in this thesis asks: What is the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion in the view of its participants? Disputes of power, as previously described in Mejía's (2017) words, are central to answering this question. More specifically, in this thesis I claim that the influence of Medellín's participatory budget on political inclusion is moulded by the actors and power disputes between them in this process. These, in turn, are also affected by how the participatory budgeting process is designed and implemented, both offline and online. In this chapter, I argue that the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting

process on political inclusion is shaped by a dispute of power between different actors interacting in the process during the period studied herein.

As I discussed in *Chapters Two* and *Three*, in this thesis I provide a thick description of political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. A main element of this detailed account, is to provide an actor-approach to participatory budgeting, in which I identify and characterise *who* are the actors that participate in the process and the distinctive dynamics of their interactions, along with *how* this participation may influence political inclusion, showcasing the 'micropolitics of encounters' in the process (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p.11). In this chapter I advance in this thick description, by depicting the diverse actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Furthermore, I propose a categorisation of the diverse disputes of power found between them in the data analysed.

This classification, that I call an account of the *micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process*, examines power disputes found between the actors, while discussing how they influence political inclusion and exclusion when decisions are made about the participatory budget and the process' design and implementation. The *micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process* allow detecting actors on the ground that, although not named in legal statutes, are relevant to examine political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, such as armed actors. Likewise, they serve to identify main issues influencing inclusion at the core of the actor's relationships, often neglected in the 'law in the books', like trust, capture, and corruption in the projects' contracting process, as I detail in this chapter.

In *Chapter Five*, I argued that broader dynamics of violence in Medellín have not been oblivious to the participatory budgeting process. In turn, in *Chapter Six* I claimed that the ruptures and connections in the budgeting, planning and participatory channels that meet in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, such as clashes between national and local legislation, along with ICTs as crosscutting tools, influence political inclusion. The *micropolitics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process* portrayed in this chapter are permeated by the participatory ecosystem and the conflictive context in which the participatory budgeting process takes place, discussed in the referred chapters.

This chapter has two sections. In *Section One*, I portray the diverse actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Given the conflict between different participants to control the budget, permeated by violence, at the core of Medellín's participatory budget, identifying the actors that intervene in the process allows to understand how and why they influence political inclusion and exclusion. Some of these actors belong to Medellín's representative and direct democracy, while others interact outside democracy, such as armed actors, and others don't participate at all in the participatory budgeting process. All these actors share the participatory budget as a political space previously monopolised by members of representative democracy, devolved to citizens to decide directly how to spend local resources.

In *Section Two*, I classify and discuss the disputes of power between the diverse actors found during my research. Although Medellín's participatory budgeting process was initially devised as a space to bring actors together to discuss common goals, it also made visible conflicts between different actors (Urán, 2010, p.150). Hence, this section examines disputes of power between and within the diverse actors participating in the participatory budgeting process in the

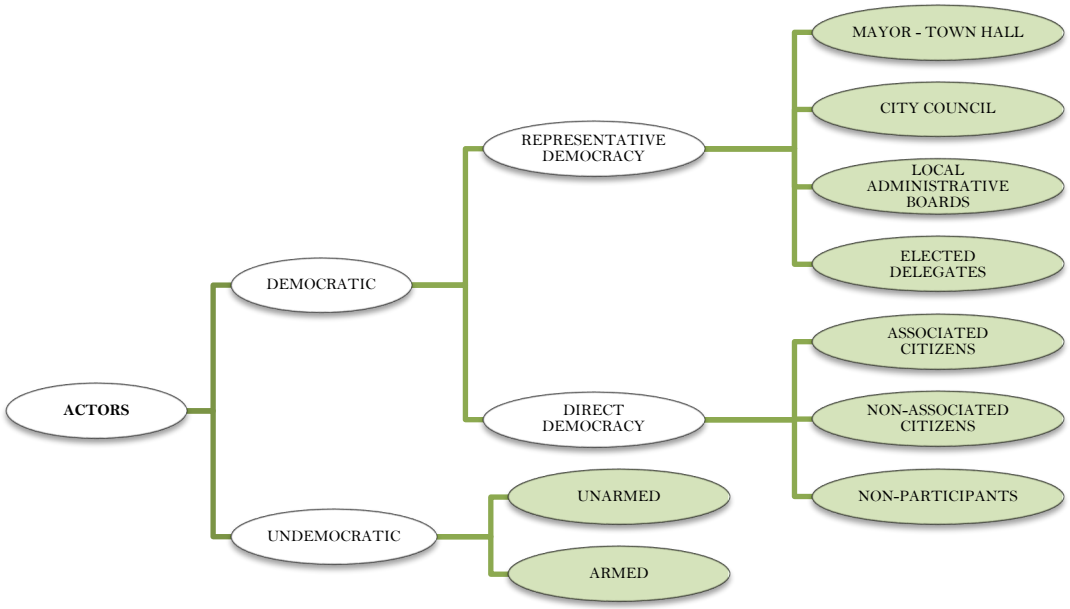
participatory budgeting process as a *space of encounter and dispute*, while discussing how they influence political inclusion and exclusion.

As it is the case with the other chapters of my thesis, I followed Corbin & Strauss (2015) grounded theory approach for my data collection and analysis. I relied on triangulated data sources, such as the legal statutes, documentary data, interviews, participant observation, and focus groups referred to in *Chapter Four*. Due to space constrains, I usually reference only three data sources that I triangulated to reach a conclusion. I refer to this data throughout the chapter.

1. THE ACTORS VYING FOR POWER IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

Many actors intervene in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Using the grounded theory approach explained in *Chapter Four*, I identified and classified these actors in nine groups, as shaded in green in *Figure 22*. I explain the categorisation and labelling in the next lines. A contrast emerged in my data between formally recognised actors in the process in national and local legislation, and other actors found on the ground. Both are depicted in this section. However, the classification of actors proposed herein is dynamic, serving only conceptual purposes that require an inevitable degree of simplification of a complex reality.

Figure 22 - The actors disputing power in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Created by the author.

1.1. DEMOCRATIC ACTORS

1.1.1. REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

The first category of actors classified in my research encompasses four players that belong to Medellín's representative democracy. They are elected by the citizens of Medellín to make policy and administrative decisions in the city, as explained in the previous chapter, and are recognised in local and national laws, as discussed in this chapter. Most of them could be equated to what Ganuza et. al. (2014, p.2274) call the 'old protagonists of local participation'. In the participatory budget, they share a political space previously monopolised by them, now devolved to other actors. However, as I analyse in the next section, frictions in Medellín's participatory budgeting process are not only between old and new actors, but also between and within all of them.

1.1.1.1. THE MAYOR AND THE TOWN HALL

A first category of actors encompasses the mayor's office and Town Hall, who is the main authority in the municipality. The mayor is elected every four years to direct the Town Hall, which has several offices, such as the department of planning and the secretary of participation, responsible of conducting the main phases of the participatory budgeting process. The Town Hall is usually referred as the 'public administration' in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

As I mentioned in *Chapter Six*, at the start of the government, Medellín's mayor presents a Municipal Development Plan for four years to be discussed and approved by the City Council. Likewise, every year the mayor presents a bill to be debated and sanctioned by the City Council regarding how to spend 95% of the investment budget. Medellín's participatory budgeting process was an initiative of the mayor Sergio Fajardo, who held office from 2004 until 2007. During my period of study, Medellín also had as mayors Alonso Salazar (2008-2011), Aníbal Gaviria (2012-2015), and Federico Gutiérrez (2016-2019). All of them were elected by Medellín's citizens. The legal rules enacted by the mayor are called decrees.

1.1.1.2. THE CITY COUNCIL

The next elected democratic actor is the City Council, which issues local rules, called accords, among others, about the budget, urban development and planning at the municipal level. Medellín's City Council has twenty-one councillors elected from diverse political parties; this explains the councillors' diverse views and political agendas. For instance, Urán (2010, p.133) notes that, when the participatory budgeting process started in Medellín, 'the political movement of the mayor was a minority with only 3 representatives out of 21'. Therefore, initially the majority of the City Council was reluctant towards the participatory budgeting process, until it started to gain citizen support.

During the 2017 change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, different political views towards the reform were also held in the City Council. For instance, Councillor Luz María Múnera criticised the Mayor's proposal in several occasions and voted against the project, given that among others, in her view, it left to the mayor's discretion the regulation of the process's details through a decree and did not consider the provisions on citizen participation included in the Colón Agreement, as I further examine in *Chapters Eight* and *Nine*. Councillor Múnera was elected as a representative of the leftist party *Polo Democrático*, in opposition to the mayor. Her concerns were addressed by some members of Congress of her party, who questioned the Mayor Federico Gutiérrez in a petition of information to exercise political control over the change of the regulation asking, for instance, if the Colón Agreement was considered in the reform's proposal (Navas et al., 2017).

1.1.1.3. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS

A third category of actors of representative democracy comprises the *ediles*, who, as I previously discussed in *Chapter Six*, are elected every four years for all the *comunas* and *corregimientos*. In every locality, they form public local governing bodies known as Local Administrative Boards, one in each of Medellín's localities. In Medellín, urban LABs have seven elected members each, whereas the rural ones have five members each. I classify them as members of representative democracy because they are elected by citizens and also represent different political parties.

The LABs are an expression of decentralisation in Colombia, originally created by a Constitutional reform of 1968 (Choachí et al., 2020, p.10). They are regulated at the national level by the Law nº 136 of 1994 and at the local level by the City Council Accord nº 25 of 1991. In Medellín, their role was traditionally vague and unclear, in constant clash with the City Council, until the first regulation of the participatory budget was issued in the Agreement nº 043 of 2007, which gave the LABs a leading role in the process (Tamayo, 2017, p.33).

However, as I further examine in the next section, many disputes of power between actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process take place with and within the Local Administrative Boards. On the one hand, as I argued in *Chapter Six*, despite their leading role, many *ediles* feel that their power as representative delegates is neglected in the participatory budgeting process. On the other hand, in some cases the LABs have low legitimacy amongst some of Medellín's citizens (Tamayo, 2017, p.5; Madariaga et al., 2014, p.83). The fact that the *ediles'* work was *ad honorem* until 2021, while they represent political parties that they collaborate with obtaining votes in a broad range of elections, such as for the City Council and Town Hall,

muddles the power disputes of the LABs in the participatory budgeting process, sometimes perceived as clientelist actors (Madariaga el. al, 2014, p.83).[48] In the words of Jerson González (2017), youth leader, during a public hearing,

> The City Council and the Town Hall cannot accuse the participatory budgeting process of corruption, whilst they won the elections thanks to *ediles* that campaigned and secured votes saying that they will provide food, glasses and dental prostheses to the voters, which are the projects given through the participatory budgeting process. I do not want to mention any names, but one of the youngest *ediles* of the *Comuna One* attained his seat by promising young people that he would give them scholarships to study in universities using the participatory budgeting process.

As Medellín's Municipal Planning Council asserted in a concept regarding the 2017 change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, despite some critiques against the LABs, in many cases they are close to the citizens and represent their needs; therefore, their role in the process requires further clarity (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016, p.6).

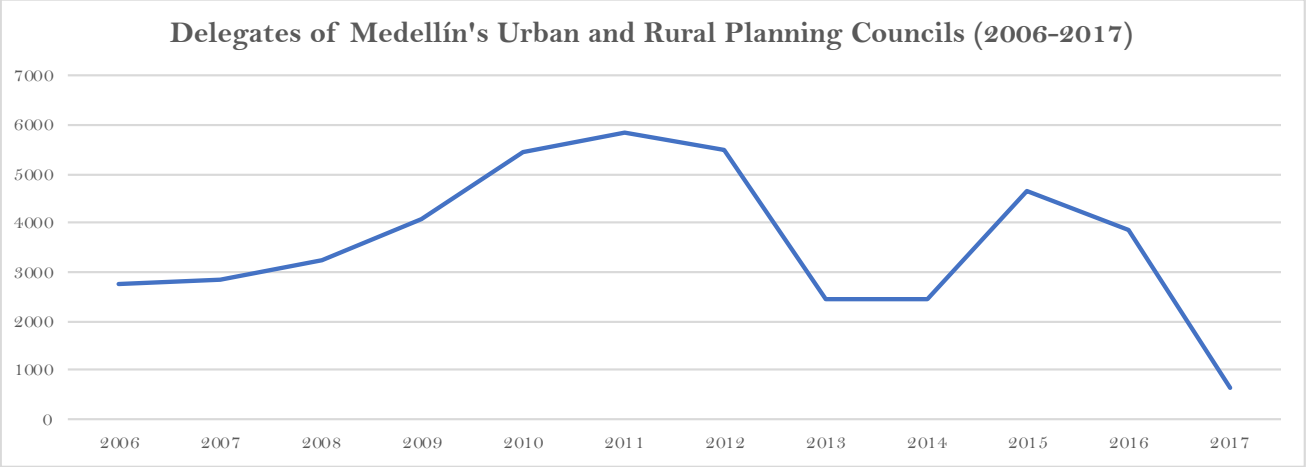
1.1.1.4. DELEGATES AT THE URBAN AND RURAL PLANNING COUNCILS

The last democratic actors of representative democracy are the elected delegates of Medellín's Urban and Rural Planning Councils (in Spanish, *Consejos Comunales y Corregimentales*). Until the 2017 reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, they were publicly elected

[48] The Law nº 2086 of 2021 authorised to pay a fee to the *ediles*. The City Council of Medellín adopted the measure through the City Council Accord nº 031 of 2021.

representatives from all twenty-one localities, chosen to work together with the LABs, the Town Hall and members of direct democracy such as representatives of Community Action Boards, to discuss, approve and monitor the execution of projects prioritised by citizens through the participatory budget in the councils. *Figure 23* shows the number of delegates in Medellín from 2006 until 2017.

Figure 23 - Delegates of Medellín's Urban and Rural Planning Councils (2006-2017).



Source: Alcaldía de Medellín (2018b).

In the 2017 reform of the participatory budgeting process, although the councils continue and still have the presence of the LABs and the Community Action Boards, they no longer include as members the cited elected representatives. Instead, they feature a delegate from every recognised group of associations and minorities with a presence in the locality acknowledged in a stakeholder mapping exercise implemented by the Town Hall. These representatives are then selected to be part of the council for a four-years' period by the organisations they represent

(Alcaldía de Medellín, 2017; Concejo de Medellín, 2007, 2017). This explains the decrease in numbers in 2017.

The Urban and Rural Planning Councils were tacitly created at the national level by the Article 40 of the Law nº 1551 of 2012 (Choachí, et.al., p.135). As I discussed in *Chapter Six*, the cited norm moderates the role of the LABs in the process, by asserting that the investment proposals of the councils have priority in the creation of local development plans. The councils have been one of the main spaces of conflict with the LABs in the participatory budgeting process, given that some *ediles* claim that Medellín's City Council lacked the power to create and regulate the councils at the local level. As I discuss in detail in *Chapter Eight*, this view was brought to the judiciary system by an *edil* of the *Comuna Thirteen.*

Nevertheless, the 2017 regulation of the participatory budgeting process still includes these councils, which are both in charge of creating the local development plans of every locality every twelve years and formulating yearly the projects that citizens will vote in the participatory budgeting process, based on the local development plans. After the citizens' vote, the results are called the 'participatory agreements', and go to the LABs for their countersignature before the City Council adds them to the public budget execution of the next year. Still, before and after the reform, the LABs chair the councils. This process gives plenty opportunities for power disputes between the LABs and members of the council that are part of both representative and direct democracy, as I analyse in *Section Two* of this chapter.

1.1.2. DIRECT DEMOCRACY

A second category of democratic actors identified in this research are members of direct democracy. They are characterised as such because they are entitled to participate in the participatory budgeting process without an intermediary.

1.1.2.1. ASSOCIATED CITIZENS

The first kind of actors of direct democracy comprises associated citizens, which can form an association called Community Action Boards (in Spanish, *Juntas de Acción Comunal*, hereafter CABs) in every *comuna* or *corregimiento*, or can belong to an association or organisation of affiliates, for instance of a sector they belong to, such as associations of victims, women or indigenous populations. The CABs 'were first established as a means of defusing conflict in the countryside in the wake of La Violencia' (Mayka, 2019, p.81). Today, they are legally recognised in Colombia, among others, in the Law nº 743 of 2002. Since 1956 until 2017, there were 514 CABs registered in Medellín, including associations of CABs and community housing boards (DAP, 2017).

Usually, the CABs emerge in a neighbourhood as an expression of direct democracy, due to the need of the community members of working together to satisfy community needs. This is the case, for instance, of the CAB of San Joaquín Bolivariana, created in 1997 in the *Comuna Eleven*, depicted in *Figure 24*. One of its members, explained during an interview the process of creation of this CAB,

Many community members got together to satisfy common needs, such as more security for the neighbourhood. However, creating the CAB was difficult, because in the middle-income neighbourhood where it operates, the CABs were originally perceived as associations of citizens from lower income neighbourhoods, that needed to get together for the State to satisfy their needs (Interviewee 3, 2017).

Figure 24 - Pictures of the CAB of San Joaquín Bolivariana at the *Comuna Eleven*.



Source: Taken by the author on June, 2017.

Many disputes in the participatory budgeting process take place between the LABs and the CABs, as I discuss in *Section Two* below. While the LABs represent political parties and are elected at a locality level, the CABs represent citizen's interests at the neighbourhood level without a partisan affiliation. In the words of Gloria Cifuentes (2017), member of the Association of CABs of the *Comuna Nine*, during a public hearing, 'the CABs have a leading role at the neighbourhood level'.

The associated citizens are not always part of a CAB. As I mentioned before, they can belong to other groups of citizens, such as in the form of a youth organisation. The Accord nº 25 of 2015 creates a policy to strengthen civil society organisations in Medellín. Article 4º defines them as 'a legally recognised group of people that work together for common good, forming a territorial, populational or thematic community, that share common purposes or necessities forming a collective identity'. Given the participation of these organisations in the planning councils, there are also tensions between them and the CABs and LABs members. I also address these power disputes in *Section Two*.

1.1.2.2. NON-ASSOCIATED CITIZENS

The second kind of actors of direct democracy is non-associated citizens. These are citizens that do not belong to an association. Before the 2017 legal reform of the participatory budgeting process, non-associated citizens participated in the process via Urban and Rural Assemblies (in Spanish, *Asambleas Barriales y Veredales*). These assemblies provided a meeting place for the inhabitants and neighbours of each *comuna* and *corregimiento* in Medellín to discuss their views about the development of their locales.

The assemblies were convened every year by the Local Administrative Boards and the Town Hall to prioritise projects to be financed by the participatory budget and elect delegates for the Urban and Rural Councils. *Figures 25* and *26* show pictures of an urban and a rural participatory budgeting assembly conducted in July 2016.

Figure 25 – Picture of an urban participatory budgeting assembly in *Comuna One*.



Source: Taken by the author on July, 2016.

Figure 26 – Picture of citizens voting in a rural participatory budgeting assembly in the *Corregimiento Santa Elena*.



Source: Taken by the author on July, 2016.

1.1.2.3. THE NON-PARTICIPANTS

A last subcategory of direct democracy comprises the non-participants, which are citizens of Medellín that do not participate in the participatory budgeting process. *Figure 27* shows the voter turnout in the participatory budget from 2006 until 2018,[49] compared with Medellín's and Colombia's electoral census for the 2011, 2015 and 2019 local elections, along with the number of voters for mayor, City Council and LABs during these voting processes.[50] Voter turnout for Medellín's local elections was around 50%, 46% and 50% for the 2011, 2015 and 2019 mayor's elections, respectively, with a slightly lower turnout for City Council and LABs elections, whereas the national average voter turnout for the mayor's elections was 57%, 59% and 60% for 2011, 2015 and 2019, respectively, also with a lower turnout for the City Council's elections.

[49] There is no data for the voting turnout of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in 2014 because that year the elections did not take place.

[50] The voter turnout for the LABs voting process nationally is not included, because not all Colombian municipalities have LABs.

Figure 27 - Voting turnout for local elections in Colombia and Medellín and Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Created by the author based on Alcaldía de Medellín (2018a) and Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil (2011, 2015, 2019).

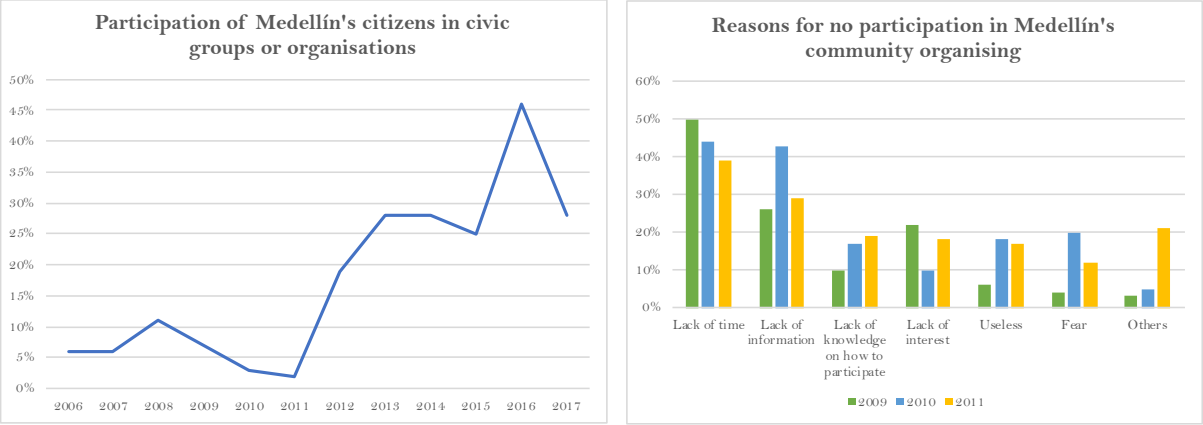
Contrary to the electoral census for the local elections in Medellín, which has a four years' span, citizens can be included every year in Medellín's census for the participatory budgeting process, even during the day of the elections. Likewise, although the legal voting age for representative elections in Colombia is 18 years, Medellín's participatory budgeting process has a legal age of 14 years to participate in the process. In other words, the electoral census for Medellín's participatory budgeting process changes every year and includes more participants than the ones for local elections.

Therefore, although the electoral census for this process is not public and has been questioned due to its lack of transparency (MOE, 2013), it can be concluded that its higher than the census for local elections. Nevertheless, the voter turnout for this process is extremely low, even compared with the turnout for local elections, with an 8%, 10% and 5% of the voter turnout for the electoral census of the local elections of Medellín for 2011, 2015 and 2019, respectively. This means that the number of non-participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process is very high.

This mirrors an overall low participation in participatory democracy in Medellín. For instance, the *Survey of Citizen Perception* of *Medellín Cómo Vamos* from 2006 until 2017, shows an average of 17% participation of citizens in groups or organisations of direct democracy from 2006 until 2017, as it is shown in *Figure 28*. In turn, the Medellín's *Citizen Participation Index* for 2019 states that 80,5% of Medellín's citizens did not participate in participatory democracy mechanisms in the last 24 months (Pimienta, 2019), whereas the *Citizen Participation Index* of 2017 asserts that the populations that participate the most are women, the youth and the elderly (Pimienta and Montoya, 2017), as I further discuss in *Chapter Eight*.

Specialised surveys portray a broad range of reasons to explain low participation turnout. For instance, the survey of citizen perception of *Medellín Cómo Vamos* (2009, 2010, 2011), hints to a lack of time, lack of information, lack of knowledge on how to participate, lack of interest, perception that participating is useless and fear, as shown in *Figure 28*.

Figure 28 - Participation of Medellín's citizens in civic groups or organisations and reasons for not participating.



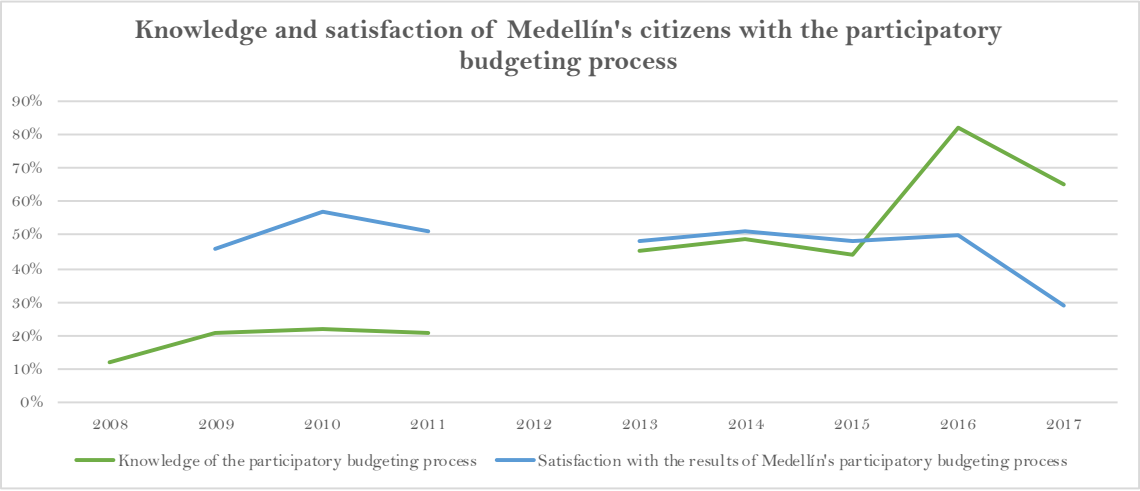
Source: Created by the author based on the information in the survey of citizen perception of *Medellín Cómo Vamos* (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

In turn, Medellín's *Citizen Participation Index* for 2017 shows that, for that year, 72% of citizens lacked the necessary time for participating, whereas 40% did not have the money needed for transportation or food during participatory activities (Pimienta & Montoya, 2017). Furthermore, the Index for 2019 asserts that 54% of non-participants lacked the information needed for participation, 50% did not have the money needed to participate, and 49% lacked the

time required (Pimienta, 2019). Likewise, the 2017 and 2019 Index show that 19% and 13% of citizens, respectively, mentioned they have received threats for participating.

Specifically, for Medellín's participatory budgeting process, *Figure 29* shows the results of the *Survey of Citizen Perception* of *Medellín Cómo Vamos* from 2008 until 2017, regarding the knowledge and satisfaction of Medellín's citizens with the participatory budgeting process. A correlation of these results with the voting turnout of the process shows that, nor the knowledge of the process, nor the satisfaction with its results, seem to affect voting turnout.

Figure 29 - Knowledge and satisfaction of Medellín's citizens with the participatory budgeting process (2008-2017).



Source: Created by the author based on the information in the *Survey of Citizen Perception* of *Medellín Cómo Vamos* (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

Overall, the low citizen participation in Medellín's participatory budgeting process seems to correspond with the 'paradox of participation' proposed by Kapiszewski et. al. (2021b), as one of the three paradoxes of inclusion discussed in *Chapter Two*. In this puzzle, opening 'new channels for participation does not guarantee an increase in popular participation' (Kapiszewski et. al., 2021b, p.37). Although my research questions query about the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion, as perceived by its participants, who are the focus of my research, it is also tangentially relevant, but not part of my research questions, to understand the reasons why non-participants do not participate in the process. This is a new avenue for research that could be further explored using this thesis as starting point, as I further discuss in *Chapter Ten*. Still, understanding how the process influences exclusion helps to identify barriers that might be preventing political inclusion in the process, hindering many participants from participating, while quantifying the non-participants is useful to appreciate its magnitude. The *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* proposed in this thesis as a medium-level grounded framework of the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion, aim to help discerning the reasons that may underlie the exclusion of many non-participants, paving the way for further research.

1.2. UNDEMOCRATIC ACTORS

As I explained in *Chapter One*, in this thesis I adopt the abstract definition of democracy for the contexts of transition proposed by Przeworski (1986, p.56), in which conflicts are institutionalised and the capacity of particular groups to realise their interests is shaped by institutional arrangements. Therefore, when I classify an actor as 'democratic', it means that they

act according to the agreed institutional arrangements, whereas an 'undemocratic' actor breaches said agreements.

The actors of representative and direct democracy depicted so far can be classified as 'democratic', because they interact in the participatory budgeting process following public rules to exercise their decision-making capacity on how the resources are spent. This category opposes the last one, classified in this dissertation as undemocratic, since they interact in the process outside of institutional rules, as I explain in this subsection. Given that undemocratic actors often also belong to democratic groups or insert their practices into democratic processes, the differentiation between democratic and undemocratic actors is usually blurred.

1.2.1. ARMED ACTORS

I classified the group of undemocratic actors in two. The first category is that of actors that employ armed violence to access resources. This group is part of the conflictual context of the city examined in *Chapter Five*. These actors influence how the budget is deployed, capturing it either through extortion, threats, violence to force citizens to vote for specific projects, for them or to give them resources from the participatory budget (Echeverri, 2017a; Franco, L. F., 2017; Interviewee 8, 2017). The yearly human rights report of Medellín's Ombudsman's Office has consistently reported these abuses since 2005 (Personería de Medellín, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2013, 2014, 2015). For instance, in the 2005 report, the Ombudsman's Office asserts (Personería de Medellín, 2005, p.16),

> There are serious claims denouncing intimidation actions against nongovernmental organisations and community organisations that have confronted organisations influenced by demobilised groups in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The actions used are rumours, misrepresentations and defamations, as well as threats and intimidation to the leaders who work in these organizations. [...] A Community Action Board leader was murdered. It is claimed he was killed because he did not agree with assigning public resources to the group of demobilised people in the area through a public contract. [...] There are complaints on intimidation actions against organisations and social leaders in a northeast neighbourhood of Medellín, in order to take control of the Community Action Board. [...] A group of social leaders from the north-eastern area of Medellín denounced having been forced to register their identity cards at specific voting polls in the sector by members of demobilised groups, in order, according to them, to 'control' whom they are going to vote for in the next elections.

Ten years later, in the 2015 annual human rights report, the Ombudsman's Office noted: 'The year 2015 was especially violent and hard for community leaders. All the homicides allegedly had a common denominator: the participatory budget' (Personería de Medellín, 2015, p.70).

Sometimes, actors that belong to a democratic categorisation are co-opted by undemocratic actors, giving the impression of rule compliance but in fact breaching the norms (Madariaga et. al., 2014, p.60). This is the case, for instance, of an association of former demobilised combatants called *Corporación Democracia*, created in 2003 after the demobilisation of the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara*. This organisation contracted projects with the Town Hall of

Medellín that were financed by the participatory budget. According to the testimonies of former paramilitary members and several denouncers, members of the organisation threatened citizens using arms to support the projects they proposed in the participatory budgeting process, so they could later benefit from them (Personería de Medellín, 2005; Fallón et al., 2010; Observatorio de Procesos de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración, 2010; Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2011; Abello & Guarneros, 2014; Ortiz, 2015). I further discuss this case in *Chapter Eight*.

As I analysed in *Chapter Five*, there is a broad range of armed actors in Medellín's conflict. The armed groups interacting in the city depend on the timespan. The type of armed actor that emerged in the data during my period of study as interacting in the participatory budgeting process is usually referred to as a member of a violent group called in Spanish *combo*, *banda* or *grupo*. These are armed groups associated with organised crime in diverse sectors of the city (Doyle, 2021). As Wienand & Tremaria (2017, p.41) assert, in many areas of Medellín, these groups 'play a key role as providers of social order and punishers of behaviours considered to be disturbing to the community'. Likewise, in many cases they act as an alternative law enforcement agency, solving conflicts between citizens, while providing physical security in the areas they control, in exchange of what is often referred to as a '*vacuna'*, a forced payment to secure safety (Wienand & Tremaria, 2017, p.41). The word *vacuna* in English means vaccine; in this context, it refers to a payment made to armed groups to acquire immunisation from their actions.

Given the invisible frontiers that operate in the city, it is not easy for an outsider to know which *combo* controls what area of the territory, nor who is a member of a gang. Nevertheless, in the participatory budgeting process the members of the community know who they are and when they operate. For instance, during the course of my research there were several occasions in

which locals warned me of not taking pictures in certain zones or ask too many questions, given the control of specific groups. Other times, members of the gangs explicitly participated in assemblies and meetings that I was observing. In these cases, often someone in the community warned me in a low voice that 'they were members of a *group'*.

Still, as I mentioned in *Chapter Five*, the presence of the gangs is not generalised to all the city. In fact, an issue of concern shown both in several of the public hearings attended (Arango, L., 2017; Moreno, 2017; Poveda, 2017; Restrepo, S., 2017) and in some of the interviews conducted (Interviewee 4, 2017; Interviewee 9, 2017; Interviewee 10, 2017), is the stigmatisation that the presence of armed groups has caused in some communities. For instance, in reply to claims regarding armed groups' interference in the participatory budget, one citizen reacted at a public hearing (Peter, 2017):

> Every time I see councillor Jesús Aníbal he says that 70% of the participatory budgeting resources remain in the hands of illegal groups. That is not the case of the *Comuna Four*. I don't know if that happens in the *Comunas One, Two* or *Three,* but armed groups do not mess with us in *Comuna Four*. They don't mess with the participatory budget and they don't pressure us to give them participatory budgeting resources.

Likewise, Stella Restrepo (2017, p.37), representative of women's groups, warned during a public hearing that the claims against the participation of illegal armed groups in the process 'need to be specific, because generalisation stigmatises participation'. As I discuss in *Chapter Ten*, a further study could examine what factors explain the presence of armed groups in the

participatory budgeting process in some *comunas* and not in others. In the 2013 human rights report, Medellín's Ombudsman office noted (Personería de Medellín, 2013),

> In the participatory budgeting process, where representatives of a committee are elected and decide with the community how public resources should be used, these representatives have been coerced into handing over part of these resources or being sentenced to forced displacement or to death. Cases like these have been evidenced this year by Medellín's Ombudsman in visits to the territories in the *Comunas Seven* (Robledo), *Six* (October 12), *Three* (Manrique) and *One* (Popular), but it is not ruled out that it is a generalised practice in the rest of the city.

Although it is still unknown if the presence of armed groups in the participatory budgeting process occurs in all the city, and its quantification was not part of this research, the data previously referred is enough to conclude that armed actors exclude participants, directly and indirectly. For instance, in the *Survey of Citizen Perception* of *Medellín Cómo Vamos* (2009, 2010, 2011), shown in *Figure 28* above, fear augmented from 4% to 20% in 2010 as a reason to explain why citizens don't participate. This correlates with the years in which homicides increased in the city, as shown in *Chapter Five*. In turn, Medellín's *Citizen Participation Index* for 2017 asserts that 19% of citizens received threats to prevent their involvement in participatory processes, whereas around 12% know people in their locality that have stopped participating due to direct threats (Pimienta & Montoya, 2017).

Armed groups' activities in Medellín are complex. Despite the reduction of violence in the last decades, the State has been unable to control some areas and provide citizens with security and basic services (Doyle, 2021). Therefore, as Doyle (2021) asserts, in these areas the gangs are perceived by some citizens as more legitimate and reliable than the State, providing services and security, despite also the existence of ambivalent feelings towards them due to the violence they exercise. Additionally, in line with Abello & Guarneros (2014), as discussed in *Chapter Five*, illegal armed groups deploy different strategies to benefit from public policies originally intended to foster democracy and development, such as the participatory budgeting process.

Nevertheless, as Medellín's Ombudsman Office claims, in many cases the local authorities seem to 'ignore this phenomenon', even after several reports made by journalists, councillors, the Secretary of Government and the Ombudsman Office, amongst others (Personería de Medellín, 2013, p.59). As I further analyse in *Chapter Eight*, the lack of State control against the actions of armed actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process fosters exclusion.

1.2.2. UNARMED ACTORS

A second kind of undemocratic actors that I found during the research are categorised in this thesis as unarmed actors that try to access resources by breaching the rules of the process – for instance, buying votes –; still, they do not resort to armed violence (González, L., 2017; Interviewee 11, 2017; Interviewee 12, 2017). A common practice of these actors is the promise of goods or money in exchange for votes in the participatory budgeting process or in other elections, a practice that some undemocratic but unarmed actors exercise to secure support for

their political candidates or projects (Franco, L. F., 2017; Monsalve, 2017; Montoya, S., 2017). These actors sometimes belong to representative or direct democracy, such as a LAB or a CAB, but have a vested interest in the projects being voted on, given that they might act as contractors or use them to secure electoral support in the future.

As I discussed in *Chapter Two*, Urán (2009, 2010), refers to leaders from the LABs and the CABs that carry out patronage behaviours in the participatory budgeting process as 'community oligarchies'; i.e., leaders few in number with high knowledge of the bureaucratic proceedings, with the capacity of capturing the budget, and whose power is often reinforced by clientelism or a close relationship with the public administration, given their privileged knowledge and position. The term 'oligarchic elites' is used by Pearce (2018) in Latin America, 'to analyse both the failure to invest in the rule of law and also the elite preference for a fragmented security state whose permeability facilitates influence trafficking'. In this vein, Madariaga et. al. (2014, p.77) stress the need of forming and educating new leaders.

In a self-reflective statement, Uberney Zabala (2017) member of the CAB of the neighbourhood Pablo Escobar, at the *Comuna Nine*, discussed the capture of the process by some leaders during a public hearing,

> Those of us who became part of the participatory budgeting process 12 years ago, are the ones who are still there. We have created mafia commissions, in which the newcomers cannot participate. Either they join us, or their project is blocked. That is the reality. I have also been part of that conglomerate because you have to do it that way, unfortunately. Democracy forces you to do it [...]. The problems are inside the leaders.

> [...] For instance, there are contracts with a name, because there are leaders that literally live from the participatory budget. They are not leaders; they are businessmen and businesswomen.

In fact, a relevant subcategory of associated and non-associated citizens, that in theory should play inside institutional arrangements but sometimes play outside them, is that of the contractors of the projects financed by the participatory budget. These are commercial actors that directly execute selected projects. Still, in some cases they also participate in the decision-making processes of budget expenditure, for instance as elected delegates in the councils or members of the CABs. A source of financing for many participants in the *comunas* and *corregimientos*, the contracts for the projects funded by the participatory budget often produce an additional source of conflict, given that some participants perceive that the prioritisation of projects to be financed with the participatory budget is influenced by the private interest of the contractors and not the community's needs (Daza, J., 2017; Zabala, 2017; Zapata, Javier, 2017). This causes further disputes that I explain in *Section Two*.

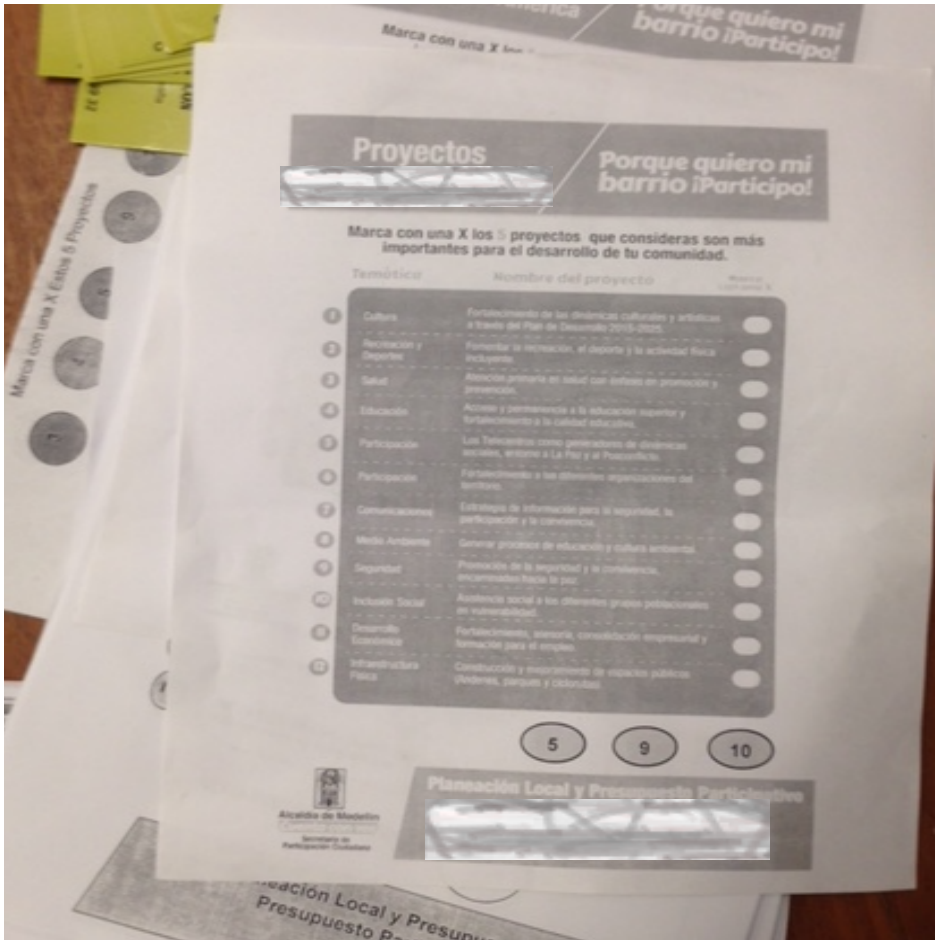
In the words of Luis Fernando Franco (2017), member of an oversight association, 'there are organisations that profit from the participatory budget, transforming it into a contracting's carousel for their own benefit'. Although the rules of public contracting in Colombia apply to Medellín's participatory budgeting process, this subcategory of contractors as relevant actors is not one recognized specifically in the law. However, some participants in the process tie the conflicts with process' contracts with the lack of economic opportunities in Medellín. For instance, Giovanni Álvarez (2017) stressed during a public hearing,

> We need to evaluate the process bearing in mind this city's history. In the eighties, all the industry was dismantled. The socioeconomic conditions were precarious. Today, many citizens do not have a job. There is massive poverty in many communities. This transformed citizen participation into a competition to obtain resources, where many people go to find work or to obtain resources for their organisations [...] Many professionals in Medellín can only aim to be a public servant or create an organisation. Those people who build these corporations go to the participatory budgeting process to fight for a budget.

Figure 30 illustrates a common practice to secure votes employed by unarmed democratic actors. It consists of taking citizens to the polls and directing their votes using a paper with the number of the projects they should vote for. I took the picture at a voting poll during the 2016 elections for Medellín's participatory budget. The picture shows what is called a *pastelito*, a small paper showing the numbers of the projects that should be selected. This *pastelito* was found in the headquarters of a voting poll.

This finding is consistent with several claims by citizens (González, L., 2017; Monsalve, 2017; Zabala, 2017) and organisations that oversee the process (MOE, 2013; Observatorio de Políticas Públicas del Concejo de Medellín, 2018; Veeduría Ciudadana al Plan Estratégico de la Comuna 6, 2017), who have denounced some participants for directing citizen votes towards projects that they later use for contracting purposes or to gain electoral support. The participatory budgeting elections are supposed to be free, with the decisions of the citizens being informed by their preferences and deliberation, and without interference and propaganda at the voting polls. Instead, the *pastelito* tells the citizen what to vote for.

Figure 30 - A *pastelito* found during the 2016 elections of Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Taken by the author on 24th July 2016. The name of the *comuna* is anonymised for security reasons.

As in the case of armed actors' interference in the process, participants complained about the lack of State action against breaches to the rules of the participatory budgeting process by unarmed democratic actors. For instance, Beatriz Monsalve (2017), member of the CAB of the neighbourhood *Las Playas*, claimed during a public hearing,

> The CAB of Belén Las Playas has denounced since 2012 several irregularities [...]. We have all the evidence of our claims in the Office of the General Prosecutor, the Ombudsmen's Office and the Secretary of Citizen Participation [...]. The day of the elections people from other places were brought in cars to vote. We have them in videos. [...] That is *transhumance* [an electoral criminal offence]. We denounced it and nothing happened.

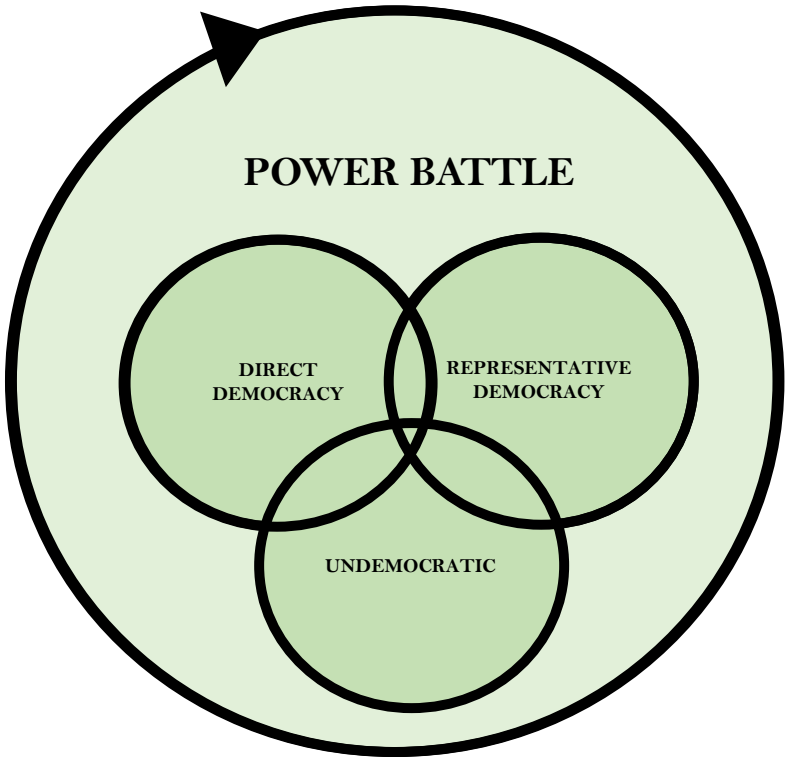
Monsalve's (2017) statement shows that the lack of State oversight and control in the participatory budgeting process fosters political exclusion, a topic I further discuss in *Chapter Eight*. As I mentioned before, several disputes of power in the participatory budgeting process can be identified between and within the different actors classified so far in this chapter. I explain them in the next section.

2. POWER DISPUTES IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

A power battle lies at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Participatory budgeting is often perceived as a way of accessing political capital, contracts and projects. This produces numerous disputes between and within the different actors that interact in the participatory budgeting process when deciding its design, and how resources should be spent. This is why such disputes are described as a power battle. As a member of an oversight organisation asserted during an interview, 'there is a big gap between the few who hold power and the many have nots' (Interviewee 2, 2017). However, bridging the gap between the have and the have nots disrupts power dynamics, in many cases producing conflicts that sometimes are confronted with violence (United Nations & World Bank, 2018, p.144).

Figure 31 shows an abstract representation of diverse kinds of disputes between different actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process identified in this research. Please note that power disputes can also be found within democratic and undemocratic actors; likewise, the simplification made in this section aims only to explain a complex phenomenon, with the intention of building the medium-level grounded *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* proposed in this thesis. In this section I discuss the main categories of disputes identified during my data analysis. In the next chapter, I further discuss how these disputes guided the design and implementation of the participatory budget in Medellín during the period studied herein, influencing political inclusion.

Figure 31 – Power disputes between the actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Elaborated by the author.

2.1. DISPUTES BETWEEN ACTORS OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

A first type of disputes found is related to disagreements between actors of direct democracy and representatives of indirect democracy; for instance, between an *edil* and an organised social leader, such as a member of a CAB. The words of Leandro Arango (2017), spoken during a public hearing, explain the perception that some associated citizens have of the *ediles* in the participatory budgeting process*:*

> Social leaders are not political leaders [...]. They do not obey the interests and the logic of parties. This bothers many people in Medellín.

Given that the *ediles* are elected, the perception behind Arango's words – common to numerous social leaders (Agudelo, L., 2017; Arango, L., 2017; González, J., 2017) –, is that *ediles* cannot be trusted to decide matters in accordance with the needs of the community, because they reason according to political affiliation; their actions will ultimately trigger citizens to vote for them and the party they represent in the elections to choose the LABs, Mayor, City Council, Congress and President. This perception of some members of direct democracy towards members of representative democracy is also found in views about the City Council and the Town Hall (Monsalve, 2017; Múnera, J., 2017; Zuleta, 2017). For instance, during another public hearing, Margarita Román (2017), a social leader, described a disagreement with the Town Hall:

> We are discouraged to participate [...]. The budget [...] was not implemented fully by the end of 2016, and many of the decisions that were made at that time were changed by the Town Hall.

John William Múnera (2017), described a similar experience during another public hearing,

> The communities are willing to participate, as long as the administration let us. Why shall we participate in the participatory budgeting process, if almost always the officials fight between them, and they prompt us to fight between us?

In turn, there are also disputes between community leaders and the City Council. For instance, during the 2017 public hearings to discuss the change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, the City Council decided to stop carrying out the discussions in venues at diverse Medellín's localities and, instead, for them to take place at the City Council's headquarters, due to verbal confrontations of some community members against some City Councillors during a hearing. Overall, Medellín's *Citizen Participation Index* for 2019 shows that 78,8% citizens have experienced conflicts between the municipal administration and associations of citizens (Pimienta, 2019).

As I mentioned in *Section One*, many disputes in the participatory budgeting process occur between the LABs and the CABs. The words of Jonathan Rojas (2017), a leader from the *Comuna One*, expose some of these confrontations,

> I am concerned that the LABs fight with the CABs [...]. The new regulation gives the LABs superpowers, in addition to those they already have at the *Comuna One*.

Rojas' words object the powers of the LABs in the participatory budgeting process. These tensions are also fed by the lack of clarity in the national legislation regarding the powers of the LABs, discussed in *Chapter Six*, further showing how Medellín's participatory ecosystem influences political inclusion in the participatory budgeting process.

Many disputes in the participatory budgeting process occur within the urban and rural planning councils. For instance, in the 2017 participatory budget elections the process halted in the *Comunas Six*, *Eight* and *Ten*, due to disagreements between the Town Hall, the LABs and other planning councils' members in these *comunas* about the new design of the participatory budgeting process. Hence, during that year's voting process, the Town Hall asserted that the offline and online elections in those *comunas* would take place in a further occasion, due to 'particular dynamics in those territories', as it is showcased in *Figure 32* and was announced during the online voting process in November, 2017.

Figure 32 - Image showcased in the online voting of the participatory budget of 2017 in the *Comunas 6, 8* and *10.*



Source: Official webpage of the 2017 online voting process of Medellín's participatory budgeting process at www.medellin.gov.co.[51]

Urán (2010, pp.142-143), also documents the referred disputes within the councils. In his words, the 'dual origin of the representatives became a source of continuous tensions around the implementation and decision-making processes of the PB'. Still, he argues that the tensions gave dynamism to the process, compelling deliberation and discussions for decisions to take place. During the course of my research, I also found that, in many cases, this deliberative potential of

[51] The text says: 'If you are a citizen of this *comuna*, due to particular dynamics in this territory the participatory budgeting elections is not taking place. Please fill this form, and we will let you know when the voting process will take place'.

the participatory budgeting process did not materialise, and in fact excluded participants, given capture by some actors that hindered dialogue and debate, as I further discuss in the next chapter. In a similar vein, Madariaga et. al. (2014, p.89.91) concludes that clashes and tensions in the participatory budgeting process, foster some participants to pull out.

To give an example, during an interview with a representative of a victims' movement, she described the councils as a 'mechanism for manipulation', while narrating how some members of the council she was at did not let her participate. Likewise, she mentioned that a member of the Town Hall advised her to be careful because 'that was how the process was managed and there was no way of changing it'. A few months after her participation in the council, she received death threats and had to move to a different *comuna* (Interviewee 8, 2017).

Given the challenges to deliberation in the offline participatory budgeting process, during the course of my research many participants showed resistance to adding digital tools because they could tamper dialogue even more. For instance, Jonathan Rojas (2017), mentioned during a public hearing,

> I am worried that the administration wants to tame us with a technological tool. That would be a regression. We would be moving from deliberation to consultation.

Another tension with the elected delegates is triggered by accusations from members of the LABs, that some delegates use participatory budgeting to benefit their personal interests. For instance, the *edil* Sebastián Montoya (2017), claimed during a public hearing,

> Many delegates work for their communities, but many others work for the benefit of their closed circle and family. This needs to stop. The delegates cannot execute the projects approved in participatory budgeting. We need to be more responsible. The prioritisation for our benefit is corruption and needs to be excluded from the process.

A reason frequently found for the implementation of participatory budgeting processes in Colombia, is the need to build trust between citizens and public officials. Yet, as the above examples illustrate, the data consistently show difficulties in fostering trust. An issue that affects trust is the deceived expectations of participants (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016; Bedoya, 2017d; González, C., 2017). Inés Sánchez (2017), a social leader, commented at a public hearing: 'The problem is not the community but the administration. The *comuna* does not believe in the public administration.' The distrust between the actors fuels the disputes among them.

The words of some actors of representative democracy also evidence disputes fuelled by distrust towards some members of direct democracy (Carvalho, 2017; Jaramillo, Antonio, 2017). This is usually expressed in the process by saying that the delegates go to the councils with 'a project under their arm'. For instance, during a public hearing Armando Hernández (2017), an *edil*, explained:

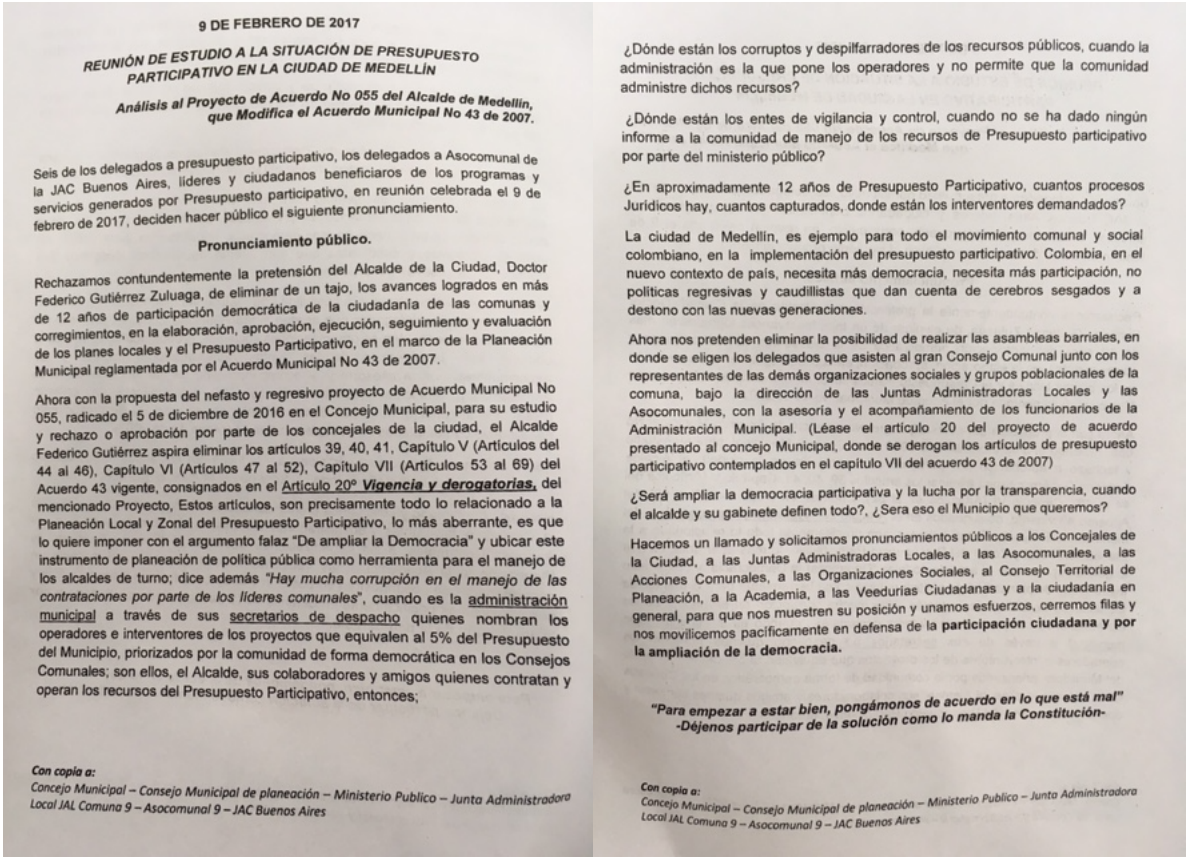
> Citizen delegates in the participatory budgeting process cannot be trusted with too much power because, unfortunately, every project in the participatory budgeting process has an owner.

Hernández, A., (2017) thus infers that all citizens that participate in the process as delegates in the Urban and Rural Councils have a project they want to execute due to personal interests. The words of the *edil* Óscar León (2017) during a public hearing also exemplify this situation: 'The community is tied, linked to partisan and electoral processes.' In turn, Antonio Jaramillo (2017), participant of the participatory budgeting process, describes distrust towards direct democracy as a 'fear to the people [...] that is built from distrust against everything that smells to real intervention from the population'.

Community leaders, in turn, reject accusations, generalisations and stigmatisations against them. For instance, Augusto Betancur (2017), director of the Youth Cultural Network, claimed during a public hearing, 'There is a negative generalisation that some contracts have been issued illegally in the city. We want clarity'. In a similar vein, Carmen Aguirre (2017) asserted during another hearing, 'I have been a delegate in the process for over four years and have never received money. [...] Yet, it is now a shame to be a delegate because, apparently, we are all bandits. I demand respect'. Additionally, City Councillor Luz María Múnera (2017d), warned that the general claims of illegal behaviour against community organisations 'could end in serious security problems for some leaders'.

Figure 33 shows a public pamphlet issued by non-associated citizens, members of CABs and delegates of the Urban Council of Medellín's *Comuna Nine*, in which they protest against the 2017 reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The document rejects claims of corruption against social leaders. Likewise, it blames the Town Hall for the problems in the process, thus further exemplifying some of the disputes discussed in this subsection.

Figure 33 - Pamphlet against the 2017 reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



9 DE FEBRERO DE 2017

REUNIÓN DE ESTUDIO A LA SITUACIÓN DE PRESUPUESTO PARTICIPATIVO EN LA CIUDAD DE MEDELLÍN

Análisis al Proyecto de Acuerdo No 055 del Alcalde de Medellín, que Modifica el Acuerdo Municipal No 43 de 2007.

Seis de los delegados a presupuesto participativo, los delegados a Asocomunal de la JAC Buenos Aires, líderes y ciudadanos beneficiaros de los programas y servicios generados por Presupuesto participativo, en reunión celebrada el 9 de febrero de 2017, deciden hacer público el siguiente pronunciamiento.

Pronunciamiento público.

Rechazamos contundentemente la pretensión del Alcalde de la Ciudad, Doctor Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga, de eliminar de un tajo, los avances logrados en más de 12 años de participación democrática de la ciudadanía de las comunas y corregimientos, en la elaboración, aprobación, ejecución, seguimiento y evaluación de los planes locales y el Presupuesto Participativo, en el marco de la Planeación Municipal reglamentada por el Acuerdo Municipal No 43 de 2007.

Ahora con la propuesta del nefasto y regresivo proyecto de Acuerdo Municipal No 055, radicado el 5 de diciembre de 2016 en el Concejo Municipal, para su estudio y rechazo o aprobación por parte de los concejales de la ciudad, el Alcalde Federico Gutiérrez aspira eliminar los artículos 39, 40, 41, Capítulo V (Artículos del 44 al 46), Capítulo VI (Artículos 47 al 52), Capítulo VII (Artículos 53 al 69) del Acuerdo 43 vigente, consignados en el Artículo 20º ***Vigencia y derogatorias,*** del mencionado Proyecto, Estos artículos, son precisamente todo lo relacionado a la Planeación Local y Zonal del Presupuesto Participativo, lo más aberrante, es que lo quiere imponer con el argumento falaz "De ampliar la Democracia" y ubicar este instrumento de planeación de política pública como herramienta para el manejo de los alcaldes de turno; dice además *"Hay mucha corrupción en el manejo de las contrataciones por parte de los líderes comunales"*, cuando es la administración municipal a través de sus secretarios de despacho quienes nombran los operadores e interventores de los proyectos que equivalen al 5% del Presupuesto del Municipio, priorizados por la comunidad de forma democrática en los Consejos Comunales; son ellos, el Alcalde, sus colaboradores y amigos quienes contratan y operan los recursos del Presupuesto Participativo, entonces;

Con copia a:
Concejo Municipal – Consejo Municipal de planeación – Ministerio Publico – Junta Administradora Local JAL Comuna 9 – Asocomunal 9 – JAC Buenos Aires

¿Dónde están los corruptos y despilfarradores de los recursos públicos, cuando la administración es la que pone los operadores y no permite que la comunidad administre dichos recursos?

¿Dónde están los entes de vigilancia y control, cuando no se ha dado ningún informe a la comunidad de manejo de los recursos de Presupuesto participativo por parte del ministerio público?

¿En aproximadamente 12 años de Presupuesto Participativo, cuantos procesos Jurídicos hay, cuantos capturados, donde están los interventores demandados?

La ciudad de Medellín, es ejemplo para todo el movimiento comunal y social colombiano, en la implementación del presupuesto participativo. Colombia, en el nuevo contexto de país, necesita más democracia, necesita más participación, no políticas regresivas y caudillistas que dan cuenta de cerebros sesgados y a destono con las nuevas generaciones.

Ahora nos pretenden eliminar la posibilidad de realizar las asambleas barriales, en donde se eligen los delegados que asisten al gran Consejo Comunal junto con los representantes de las demás organizaciones sociales y grupos poblacionales de la comuna, bajo la dirección de las Juntas Administradoras Locales y las Asocomunales, con la asesoría y el acompañamiento de los funcionarios de la Administración Municipal. (Léase el artículo 20 del proyecto de acuerdo presentado al concejo Municipal, donde se derogan los artículos de presupuesto participativo contemplados en el capítulo VII del acuerdo 43 de 2007)

¿Será ampliar la democracia participativa y la lucha por la transparencia, cuando el alcalde y su gabinete definen todo?, ¿Sera eso el Municipio que queremos?

Hacemos un llamado y solicitamos pronunciamientos públicos a los Concejales de la Ciudad, a las Juntas Administradoras Locales, a las Asocomunales, a las Acciones Comunales, a las Organizaciones Sociales, al Consejo Territorial de Planeación, a la Academia, a las Veedurías Ciudadanas y a la ciudadanía en general, para que nos muestren su posición y unamos esfuerzos, cerremos filas y nos movilicemos pacíficamente en defensa de la **participación ciudadana y por la ampliación de la democracia.**

"Para empezar a estar bien, pongámonos de acuerdo en lo que está mal"
-Déjenos participar de la solución como lo manda la Constitución-

Con copia a:
Concejo Municipal – Consejo Municipal de planeación – Ministerio Publico – Junta Administradora Local JAL Comuna 9 – Asocomunal 9 – JAC Buenos Aires

Source: Social leaders and delegates at the Urban Council of Medellín's *Comuna Nine* (2017). Amongst others, the document rejects claims of corruption in the contracting process by social leaders, arguing that the Town Hall is the one in charge of hiring the contractors.

2.2. DISPUTES BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC AND UNDEMOCRATIC ACTORS

A second type of dispute occurs between democratic and undemocratic actors, both armed and unarmed. As highlighted in *Chapter Five*, the armed conflict is the background against which Medellín's participatory budgeting is implemented. As I referred in *Chapter Five*, David García (2017a), member of a Community Action Board, eloquently summarises how this context affects the participatory budget:

> Illegality and politics in Medellín are part of the historic culture of political relationships in the territory: i.e., illegality permeates politics and goes beyond participatory budgeting.

The relationship between democratic and undemocratic armed actors in the participatory budgeting process is reciprocal, generating changes in both spheres. In the localities the process seems to have produced political inclusion in some cases, accordingly reducing violence. Still, in others violence has not only been persistent, but also augmented. In the words of Juan Manuel Vesga (2017):

> Since 2005, participatory budgeting has triggered a process of structural and social changes in the *comunas*, with productive changes that have been permeated by violence.

While not the case in all of Medellín, one challenge that the participatory budgeting process has had to face in some *comunas* relates to participation in the process by civic organisations created by former combatants of demobilised paramilitary groups. As previously mentioned, public claims have been made against some of these organisations of pressuring

citizens with threats and arms to vote and support projects favoured by supposedly demobilised combatants (Personería de Medellín, 2008). Another form of pressure is to compel citizens to pay armed groups in exchange of security. In the words of City Councillor Jesús Aníbal Echeverri (2017b), 'part of the culture in Medellín now is to pay a *vacuna* for any type of construction, inside and outside participatory budgeting'.

However, as Urán (2009, p.184) claims, in some occasions the fair participation of former combatants in the participatory budgeting process has also fostered democratic behaviours in them, learning how to deliberate and break with the vertical military proceedings they were used to. Still, as the Medellín's *Citizen Participation Index* for 2019 shows, 31% of Medellín's citizens qualify the leadership in their communities as authoritarian, in which decisions are usually taken by one person or the power is not distributed horizontally between participants (Pimienta, 2019).

Due to the disapproval that former combatants may have in the community, in some cases they do not disclose their former affiliation with an armed group when participating in the participatory budgeting process. This is the case, for instance, of a former guerrilla group member, who demobilised in the 2010's and was participating to be elected as a delegate of a *corregimiento* in Medellín in the 2016 elections. In an interview with him during an observation process of the elections, he mentioned he was demobilised but the community did not know. He did not disclose this information to the community because he did not want them to reject him (Interviewee 13, 2016).

In some cases, the disputes between democratic and undemocratic actors are channelled through the judicial system or watchdog agencies. Nevertheless, as I previously discussed, there

is a perception of impunity in many participants regarding illegal actions in the process, both armed and unarmed. For instance, during a hearing about the participatory budgeting process with several watchdog agencies, City Councillor Jesús Aníbal Echeverri (2017b) claimed,

> How many formal complaints does the participatory budgeting process have? They were not presented today. No wonder why some leaders get angry. I go to the Comptroller's Office, the General Attorney's Office, and the Ombudsman's Office, and nothing happens. I have been to the Office of the General Prosecutor three times reporting this and nothing happens.

In turn, Víctor Hugo Quintero (2017a), member of an oversight organisation, asserted during the same hearing that, during the five years they have carried out social control of the process, 'they have not had enough support from the watchdog agencies'.

2.3. DISPUTES WITHIN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF ACTORS

A final kind of dispute found in the data revolves around conflicts within members of direct democracy, representative democracy and undemocratic actors. For example, in a self-reflective statement during a dialogue with the Town Hall observed for this research, a member of a Community Action Board of the *Comuna Seven* discussed some tensions between different participants from direct democracy that disputed the budget,

> Around 500 of us killed the goose that laid the golden eggs. For the participatory budget to be really participatory we need to open the space for other citizens. But, who is going to get off the bus so others can ride?

Disputes within actors of representative democracy are also frequent. For instance, it is common to find statements from *ediles* about how some members of the City Council don't like participatory budgeting because it gives independence to the communities; the latter no longer have to ask them directly to develop certain projects in their territories because they are now implemented via the participatory budget (Álvarez, L., 2017). Likewise, other *ediles* frequently mention that the final decision for the participatory budget was made by the Town Hall, disregarding the popular vote (Peter, 2017). As I mentioned before and detail in the next chapter, in many cases the disputes between the *ediles*, the Town Hall and the City Council are channelled in the judiciary through legal claims of *ediles* against local decrees and accords that regulate the process.

Finally, as I examined in *Chapter Five*, disputes between diverse criminal groups are also frequent in Medellín. Often, these are battles over territorial or resource control. For instance, between a gang that has traditionally extorted a neighbourhood and another gang that disputes this control. It is common in Medellín that after the leader of a group has been imprisoned or murdered, members of the same gang or other gangs dispute the vacuum of power left behind. More often than not, these disputes increase violence in the city.

2.4. MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS AS A SPACE OF BOTH ENCOUNTER AND DISPUTE

Despite the diverse disputes found between and within the different actors depicted so far, that portray Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a space of dispute and disagreement, this process is also described by many participants as a space of democratic encounter for different sectors of society to meet and decide over common objectives. In the words of City Councillor, Fabio Humberto Rivera, during a public hearing (2017c),

> Participation goes beyond the 21 councillors and the 140 *ediles*. I say this to avoid seeing the process as a confrontation with the LABs, and instead for all of us to understand the exercise. Participation is also the CABs. Participation also includes the social organisations in the neighbourhoods, the *comunas* and the *corregimientos*, who have carried out participatory exercises for years in their communities. Organisations of all kinds, such as on gender, culture, sports, and for the elderly. They all should have a voice and a vote when deciding over their territories.

In a similar vein, diverse actors acknowledge the transformative potential of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, despite the power disputes at its core. To name one case, Leandro Arango (2017), citizen from the *Comuna Fifteen*, asserted during a public hearing,

> The participatory budgeting process must be evaluated and transformed. Still, the experience of the last 10 years cannot be labelled as a mistake. It would be unfair with the communities and even with the municipal administration itself. There are too many

beautiful community and state building experiences, transparent and effective that should be valued.

Furthermore, in addition to the experiences of transformation in the process, there are cases of alliances and agreements between different actors (Madariaga et. al. 2014). For instance, during the course of the 2017 public debates to reform the participatory budgeting process, several *ediles* issued a public statement calling for an agreed reform. Among others, the declaration claimed (Asoediles, 2017),

> This is not a power struggle. At least that is not how the councillors and the local administrative boards of this city are looking at it. We also understand that the Municipal Council builds, debates and approves agreements with the aim of improving participation and building guarantees for the exercise of the democratisation of the State, to bring it closer to a true process of administrative decentralisation.

I propose in this thesis the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*, as a medium-level grounded framework that explains how the encounters and disputes between and within diverse actors may result both in inclusion, and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, depending on its design and implementation, as I explain in the next Chapter.

CONCLUSION

I argue that the influence of Medellín's participatory budget on political inclusion is shaped by the actors and power disputes in this process. In this chapter, I discussed the relevant actors and the power disputes between and within them found in my data analysis, in order to examine the power dynamics central to what I named a power battle over the participatory budget. As I found during the research, in Medellín's participatory budgeting process the central State's devolved power is in dispute between diverse actors, from both representative and direct democracy, and even ones playing outside democracy, such as illegal armed groups, influencing political inclusion and exclusion in the process. These *micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process* take place in Medellín's 'participatory ecosystem' depicted in *Chapter Six*, while they are influenced by broader patterns of violence that take place in the city, as analysed in *Chapter Five.* The medium-level grounded framework proposed herein also suggests that power dynamics are, in turn, affected by the legal design and implementation of the process, leading either to the inclusion or exclusion of actors. Therefore, the next chapter analyses how power dynamics have affected and are affected by the legal design and implementation of the participatory budgeting process, for the better or worst.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PATHWAYS OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

'I know that participatory budgeting has many bad things, and some people have used it badly, but there are many who have used it well. The communities now have many things they did not have before', said Ómar Cano (2017), a citizen of the corregimiento of San Antonio de Prado, during a public hearing. His words noted the capacity of the process to boost political inclusion in Medellín, while sometimes, even simultaneously, also reducing it. In this thesis, I argue that participatory budgeting has led to the political inclusion of new participants in public decision-making procedures regarding the public budget spending in Medellín during the period studied herein; yet, this inclusion is fragile.

Although the qualitative data gathered in this thesis does not allow for an overall weighting of e. g. the percentage of cases in Medellín's participatory budget that result in inclusion or exclusion, in this chapter I propose a typology to differentiate the conditions that may lead to one or the other, both in the offline and online forms of the participatory budgeting process. I named this framework the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

Overall, in the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* I claim that the cases in which participatory budgeting fosters political inclusion in Medellín are distinguished by a spending of the participatory budget in a manner that I call 'virtuous deployment'. This spending is

characterised by competition and transparency leading to the inclusion of citizens in their locality. In contrast, the cases in which the participatory budget hinders inclusion are associated with a spending type that I call 'vicious deployment', which is distinguished by a capture and an opacity that results in disenfranchisement. By deployment of the participatory budget, I mean the processes of planning, prioritising, executing, monitoring and evaluating its expenditure. In sum, this is the implementation of its legal design. In the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*, I also discuss how the power disputes at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process have affected and are affected by its legal design, influencing inclusion and exclusion. *The pathway of exclusion* may result in what I call 'a cycle of marginalisation', whereas the *pathway of inclusion* may lead to what I have labelled a 'school of citizenship'.

In the dissertation, I also argue that ICTs can change the power dynamics in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Nevertheless, their use also has conflicting findings, leading to both disenfranchisement and empowerment. In the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* that I propose, I claim that ICTs could lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, depending on how their design and implementation affects transparency and competition.

This chapter consists of four sections that explain the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*. In section one, I review and categorise three stages in the legal design and implementation of Medellín's participatory budget from 2004 to 2017, and depict how the power disputes in the process, discussed in *Chapter Seven*, have influenced political inclusion during these stages. In section two, I detail the typology of virtuous and vicious deployment of the budget and their different categories. Subsequently, in section three I analyse how ICTs in Medellín's

participatory budgeting process influence both the virtuous and the vicious deployment of the budget. Finally, in section four I portray the characteristics of the 'cycle of marginalisation' and the 'school of citizenship' in Medellín's participatory budget, the ultimate results of the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* identified in the typology proposed herein.

1. THE INFLUENCE OF THE LEGAL DESIGN OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS ON POLITICAL INCLUSION

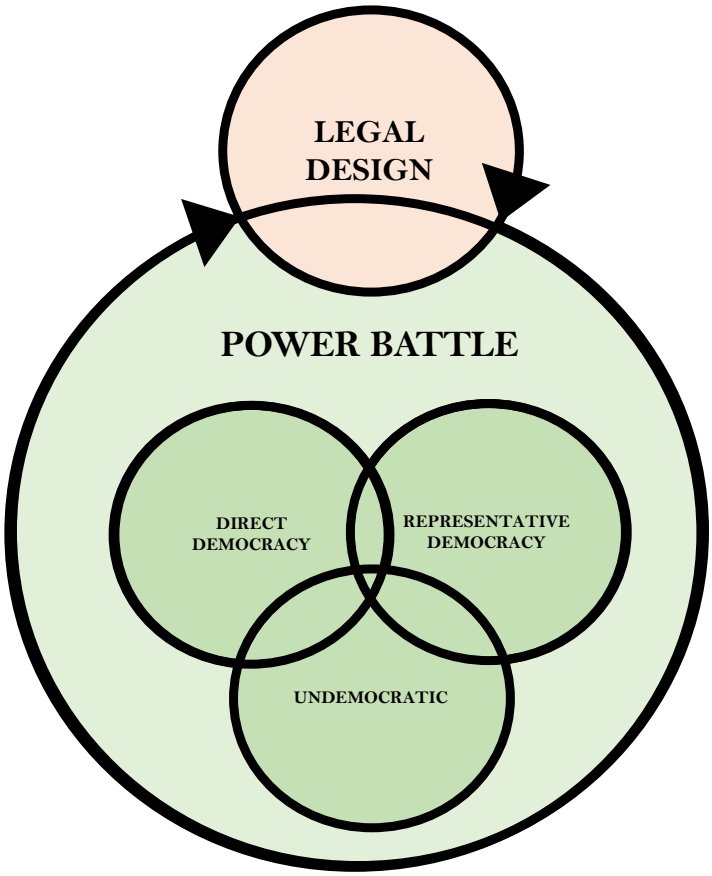
'I have heard the standings of *ediles*, social organisations, community action boards and oversight organisations. Everyone has a different view. We need to find a common ground towards participation, a topic in which we all feel identified', said Andrés Bedoya (2017d), Medellín's Secretary of Citizen Participation, during a public hearing. His words noted the diverse range of views about the rules of the process, while capturing the difficulties to agree on power redistribution in participatory and representative democracy when diverse actors participate.

As I analyse in this section, the failure to reach an agreement about the rules applicable to Medellín's participatory budgeting process, has been persistent since its origins. Power disputes between different actors throughout the years have influenced the regulation of the process. In some cases, the pressure of some actors has triggered the inclusion of some participants, such as non-associated citizens; however, this has also affected other power holders such as *ediles* who, in turn, have sparked new reforms, either in the City Council, the Town Hall or the judiciary. Legal norms have also intended to prevent the exercise of undemocratic practices that may end in the capture of the participatory budget. Yet, difficulties in the implementation of

these rules and a level of legal uncertainty still exists in the participatory budgeting process due to the power disputes at its core.

With reference to the notion of *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* proposed in this thesis, I argue that a reciprocal relationship exists between the micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, discussed in *Chapter Seven*, and its legal design and implementation. By reciprocity, I mean that the power disputes in the participatory budgeting process both influence and are influenced by its legal design and implementation, ultimately leading to the inclusion or exclusion of actors. *Figure 34* depicts this two-sided relationship.

Figure 34 - Reciprocity in the legal design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Elaborated by the author.

The legal design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process has not been static and linear through time. In this section I categorise three phases relevant to the examination of the referred reciprocity. First, an embryonic stage in which the process started and the first rules were issued, not without disputes between diverse actors. Second, a first reform of the process, by which the initial norms were changed due to legal controversies and challenges in the implementation of the process. Lastly, there was a systemic reform characterised by a second change of rules triggered by the same issues that motivated the first reform, this time restructuring the whole System of Municipal Planning within which participatory budgeting is embedded.

1.1. SHAPING THE RULES: THE INITIAL DESIGN OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

The initial legal design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process evolved from 2004 until 2010, during what I have labelled as an 'embryonic stage'. When participatory budgeting was introduced to Medellín in 2004, a pilot project was first launched in the *Comuna One* (Sánchez, L., 2011). In parallel, a discussion emerged at the City Council regarding the creation of a comprehensive legal framework for designing the participatory budgeting process for the entire city of Medellín (Madariaga et al., 2014). Debates at the City Council demonstrated the reciprocal relationship between power disputes in the process and its legal design. Such disputes made it difficult for the initial rules to be approved, while also influencing the norms that were issued, as I discuss in the following lines.

The approved rules tried to balance the power between the City Council and the LABs as elected representatives, and the power of new actors called to participate and be included in this novel political participatory process in the newly established Urban and Rural Planning Councils and Assemblies, such as associated and non-associated citizens (Observatorio de Políticas Públicas del Concejo de Medellín, 2011). During this first stage, the new regulation fostered a dynamic process of political inclusion of new participants in the process of setting the participatory budget priorities, but at the same time prompted disputes between different actors.

As I referred to in *Chapter Seven*, initially some City Councillors and the LABs opposed the first participatory budgeting bill debated in Medellín in 2005. They argued that it contradicted the essence of a representative democracy (Madariaga et al., 2014). These disagreements ended in the rejection of the participatory budgeting legal proposal. A year later, in 2006, a new bill was submitted for debate, this time proposing a subsystem for local planning and participatory budgeting within the broader System for Municipal Planning of Medellín included in the local Accord nº043 of 1996, discussed in *Chapter Six*. This bill was passed in 2007, but it was still opposed by some members of the City Council and Local Administrative Boards. The latter only supported the bill if they were to act as mediators between the citizens and the local authorities, and if they had the final approval of the budget (Madariaga et al., 2014). The endorsed bill became the Accord nº43 of 2007.

The Accord nº043 of 2007 gave the LABs the power to chair the Urban and Rural Councils and endorse the decisions of the Urban and Rural Assemblies regarding the projects to be financed by the participatory budget. Therefore, although the first legal design included new actors in public decision-making processes of direct democracy, the LABs were able to control,

de facto, the decisions of the elected delegates and the actors of direct democracy in the process. The dominance of the LABs over the process caused new tensions that encouraged the Town Hall to issue the Decree nº1073 of 2009, which included a more detailed set of rules for implementing the participatory budgeting process based on the overarching framework established in the Accord nº043 of 2007.

Some of these rules intended to solve the difficulties raised by power disputes between the different actors, while others tried to include new participants in the process, such as younger populations starting from 14 years old.[52] For instance, the decree emphasised the need to inform and educate citizens about the process, created a set of responsibilities and ethical guidelines for the delegates of the Urban and Rural Councils, and added criteria for losing the right to be a delegate, such as having being declared guilty in a criminal proceeding for belonging or supporting an illegal armed group. Likewise, the decree created thematic commissions for discussing projects within the Urban and Rural Councils and rules for decision-making within them. Nevertheless, power disputes in the process persisted, triggering a new phase of legal changes, this time characterised by tensions between the national legislation about direct democracy and Medellín's local rules about the participatory budgeting process, as I examine next.

[52] Additionally, to encourage the participation of younger populations in the participatory budgeting process, the Accord nº046 of 2010 created a participatory budget for youngsters.

1.2. NEW RULES, SAME STORY: FIRST CHANGE IN THE DESIGN OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

Bringing into harmony the national and local laws that regulate participatory budgeting in Colombia has been challenging in Medellín's case. The second phase of Medellín's participatory budget legal design is characterised by the influence of national laws in shaping the municipal legal design of the process, ultimately affecting the political inclusion and exclusion of some participants. National laws are vague about how direct and representative democratic powers should interact at the local level and have evolved at a slower pace than the local norms in Medellín; this has sparked a conflict between the national and local laws, feeding power disputes between different actors.

More specifically, many debates about the areas of influence for each group of actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process have ended up in lawsuits involving the national and local legislations. In 2010, numerous articles of the Accord nº43 of 2007 were challenged in a legal action put forward by a member of the LAB of *Comuna Thirteen*, arguing that the City Council and the Mayor lacked the legislative power to regulate the participatory budgeting process and to create the Urban and Rural Planning Councils and Assemblies within the process. In the view of the petitioner, only the LABs could make investment decisions for the *comunas* and *corregimientos* (Sánchez, R., 2010). He also argued that the norms that regulate mechanisms aimed at fostering citizen participation could only be issued by the National Congress using statutory laws, which in the Colombian legal system are laws with a stricter process of approval than ordinary ones, given that they enact rules regarding fundamental human rights, such as the right to citizen and political participation (Sánchez, R., 2010).

In turn, the City Council and the Town Hall claimed that the Accord did not rule out the powers of the LABs, given that they were in charge of approving the final plans and budgets, whereas the Urban and Rural Planning Councils and Assemblies are an expression of participatory democracy that do not substitute the powers given to the LABs. Likewise, they claimed that the Accord tries to overcome weaknesses of the national laws that regulate local and municipal planning, developing the principles of decentralisation and participatory democracy comprised in the Constitution, that the City Council is called to materialise (Consejo de Estado, 2019, pp.6-14). In 2013, Antioquia's Administrative Tribunal favoured the claims of the plaintiff (Tribunal Administrativo de Antioquia, 2013). The Town Hall appealed the decision, but in 2019 the original ruling was upheld by the State Council, Colombia's supreme administrative court, favouring the applicant's view (Consejo de Estado, 2019).

In the meantime, the Congress issued the Law nº 1551 of 2012 which, as I referred in *Chapter Six*, created a set of legal rules regarding the powers of the City Council, the Town Hall and the LABs in local participatory budgeting processes. For instance, Articles 18 and 40 establish that city councils have the authority to issue legal rules about the annual budget of the municipality in accordance with the project presented by the mayors, among them guidelines for the distribution of the participatory budget. Still, the cited articles lack clarity about the power of the City Council and the Town Hall to create the rules that guide the procedure for participatory budgeting. However, the law does highlight that local participatory budgeting processes should allow citizens to decide how to distribute part of the budget of the municipality with the support of the Local Administrative Boards within processes of local development planning. Moreover, it clarifies that the participatory budgeting process should be implemented by the Town Hall, while the LABs have the power to endorse decisions that have been taken as

a result of the participatory budgeting process within the participatory budgeting process. Nevertheless, as I discussed in *Chapter Six*, the national law left gaps for local interpretation in Medellín about the boundaries of the LAB's powers.

In 2013, Medellín's Town Hall issued the Decree nº1205, to cope with the regulatory changes issued by the Congress at the national level and the previously referred lawsuit against the Accord nº 43 of 2007. The Decree nº1205 of 2013 established new rules for the design and implementation of the participatory budgeting process while the State Council, ruled over the legality of the Accord nº43 of 2007 (Escobar, 2017). The decree acknowledged the Mayor as the main authority in the municipality for implementing the processes of participatory budgeting and planning, while preserving the leading role of the LABs in the Urban and Rural Councils and Assemblies. However, despite the attempts to solve the power tensions that triggered the second phase of the legal design of Medellín's participatory budget, disputes between the various actors persisted. These new conflicts activated a third phase with structural regulatory changes.

1.3. A SYSTEMIC REFORM OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

Shortly after the Decree nº1205 of 2013 was issued, a new legal action was filed by members of a LAB, to void the application of the decree and suspend its effects while the claim was decided (Sánchez, R., 2013). The opponents to the Decree nº1205 of 2013 asserted that it was illegal to implement the participatory budgeting process in Medellín given the absence of a statutory national law allowing it (Madariaga et al., 2014; Escobar, 2017; Sánchez, R., 2017). The implementation of the decree was provisionally adjourned in 2014 (Juzgado 12 Administrativo Oral de Medellín, 2014) and voided in 2016 (Juzgado 33 Administrativo Oral de Medellín, 2016).

The Town Hall appealed both decisions, with no final judgement at the time of writing of this thesis.

These legal actions, triggered by power disputes between different actors, caused uncertainty in the process regarding the rules that should be applied. In the words of City Councillor Carlos Zuluaga (2017): 'The legal actions against participatory budgeting fractured and paralysed the process.' Therefore, in 2016, when the judgement voiding the Decree nº1205 of 2013 was published, the Town Hall decided to start a new reform of the participatory budgeting process. These changes were part of the Municipal Development Plan of the mayor Federico Gutiérrez. In the Plan, the Town Hall claimed that 'the participatory budgeting process needed to be "resignified" and transformed, both in its methodology and on its substance and purpose', having clear legal rules, coherent with the national law, which could create a stronger bond between local planning and participatory budgeting (Concejo de Medellín, 2016).

The language of a *resignification* of the participatory budgeting process was adopted by the Town Hall and other actors, such as City Councillors, the Municipal Planning Council and citizens throughout all the reform's process, to denote the need of giving a new meaning to the process (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016; Bedoya, 2017e; Maturana, 2017b). Nevertheless, during the reform's debates, it was not clear what does a *resignification* of the process really meant for all the actors involved. For instance, Benoni Jiménez (2017), president of the association of CABs, mentioned in a public hearing,

> Let's resignify the participatory budgeting process. We have to do it. Let's resignify the Agreement, let's resignify participation, but with respect, with participation, with democracy [...], not imposing new regulations.

In his words, Jiménez (2017) showed that he viewed parts of the first bill discussed in Medellín in 2017, to reform the participatory budgeting process, as an imposition about the meaning of the resignification of the participatory budgeting process. The conflicting views about what a resignification meant, were also shown by the Municipal Planning Council. In their view, the first bill of the new regulation did not 'clarify the resignification proposal' (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016, p.36). This shows the difficulties in the process to have an agreement between the different actors about the change of rules that influence political inclusion.

The 2017 reform was also influenced by the Statutory Law nº1757 of 2015, which included general guidelines for the municipalities to implement a participatory budgeting process. However, as I discussed in *Chapter Six*, similar to Law nº 1551 of 2012, this Statutory Law did not clarify boundaries for the intervention of specific local authorities within the participatory budgeting process, that is, the powers and limits of the Mayor, the City Council and the Local Administrative Boards. In the words of a member of the legal team of the Town Hall (Escobar, 2017):

> The Law nº1757 of 2015 gives some clarity to participatory budgeting at the local level, but the State Council will need to further clarify who has the specific authority over its regulation.

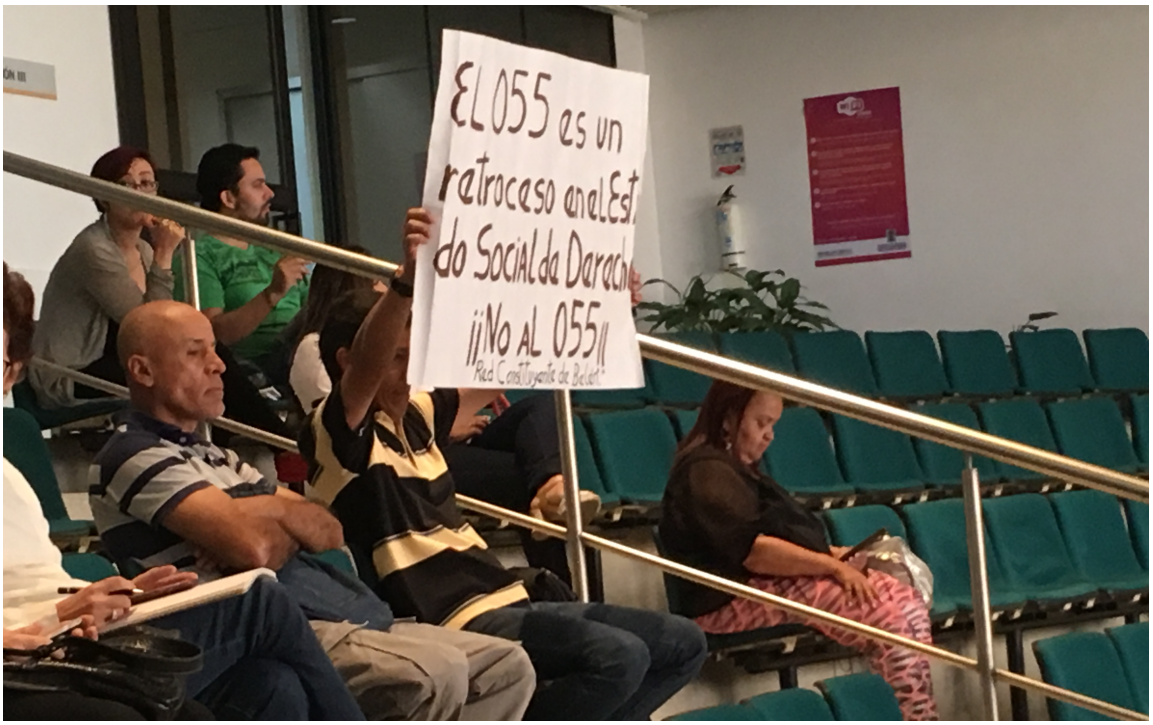
This lack of clarity fuelled the existing tensions between different actors during debates about the new reform. For instance, throughout the eight months of debates that preceded the new regulation, one recurrent issue that emerged at every public hearing was related to whether the participatory budgeting process should be regulated by the City Council through an accord or by the Mayor in a decree. This affected the power clashes in the process given that a regulation by decree gave more power to the Town Hall and made the process more susceptible to changes without a broad public discussion.

One City Councillor (Múnera, L.M., 2017f), some members of Medellín's Local Administrative Boards (Arango, I., 2017; Jiménez, B., 2017), and specific participants in the process (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016; Posada, 2017; Quintero, 2017b) favoured a view in which the whole process should be established in an accord, given that this would provide more legal certainty to the norms. In the words of the *edil* Ignacio Arango (2017), member of the LAB of the *Comuna Eight*: 'If the process is established in a decree, any mayor could change it without political control.'

The Town Hall (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2017b; de Vivero, 2017a; Montoya, A., 2017a) and the majority of the City Council (Concejo de Medellín, 2017h) claimed that the City Council should enact an accord that issued a structural reform of the Municipal Planning System, including general guidelines about participatory budgeting, whereas in a decree the Mayor could enact the specific rules to carry out the process based on the accord. This could give dynamism to the process and allow it to adapt to different realities through time. This view prevailed in the Accord nº028 of 2017, the bill approved in the City Council to reform the participatory budgeting process.

Other participants favoured a more active role for the LABs over decisions in the process. For instance, according to Émber Higuita (2017), member of a LAB: 'Both in the accords and in the decrees, the members of the Local Administrative Boards are always left out'. *Figure 35* depicts some citizens opposing the Bill nº055 of 2016, the draft proposal that the City Council discussed to reform the System of Municipal Planning. The translation of the sign in English reads: 'The 055 reverses the welfare State. Do not approve the 055!' Some protestors argued that the bill opposed the constitutional rights included in the Colombian Constitution, by denying the rights of the LABs as elected representatives (Interviewee 14, 2017; Interviewee 15, 2017). On the contrary, other protestors argued that the bill gave too much power to the LABs (Interviewee 16, 2017; Interviewee 17, 2017). The demonstrations, thus, disclosed persistent tensions between representative and direct democracy at the core of Medellín's participatory budget.

Figure 35 - Opponents to the reform of Medellín's System of Municipal Planning.



Source: Taken by the author on 15th February 2017 at Medellín's City Council.

After more than seventy public debates led by the City Council and the Town Hall with different participants in the process across all *comunas* and *corregimientos*, in 2017 the City Council enacted the Accord nº028. This accord reformed the whole System of Municipal Planning of Medellín, including the subsystem of local planning and participatory budgeting, to amend structural fissures in Medellín's 'participatory ecosystem', such as the rupture between planning and budgeting discussed in *Chapter Six*. Shortly afterwards, the Mayor sanctioned the Decree nº0697, which featured specific rules for this subsystem based on the general framework established in the Accord nº028 of 2017. The decree was also created after a process of consultation with different actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

The new accord featured several changes in the System of Municipal Planning originally created by the Accords nº043 of 1996 and nº043 of 2007. For the participatory budget, the reform categorised this process as an instrument by which to finance local development plans agreed by citizens in every *comuna* and *corregimiento* in a process of active participation that ended with the formal approval of the LABs. The latter could oppose the plans before the approval, but amendments would only be made if the citizens agreed.

Likewise, the new accord removed the division between the Urban and Rural Assemblies and the Urban and Rural Councils. Instead, it created Urban and Rural Planning Councils (in Spanish, *Consejos Comunales y Corregimentales de Planeación*) for every *comuna* and *corregimiento*, with the participation of the LABs and representatives of all the sectors of the locales, selected by each sector for a period of four years in accordance with a stakeholder mapping executed by the Town Hall, as I explained in *Chapter Six*. These new councils tried to restore the original aim of participatory budgeting, i.e., financing local development projects agreed by all citizens in every *comuna* and *corregimiento*. Furthermore, as a main reform within the new regulation – in comparison with previous norms –, monitoring, evaluation and oversight of the participatory budgeting process was clearly defined, with specific rules for its implementation. In turn, as I mentioned earlier, the reform specifically allowed the use of ICTs in the participatory budgeting process, including online voting.

Although this new reform was based on the Statutory Law nº1757 of 2015, disputes between direct and representative democracy in the process persist, influenced by the national legal framework. For instance, in 2018 a legal claim was filed by members of some LABs against the Accord nº48 of 2017 (Marín et al., 2018). Similar to previous lawsuits, the plaintiffs argued

that the City Council had no authority to regulate the participatory budgeting process. It is uncertain how this lawsuit will affect the design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in the coming years. Nevertheless, this new legal claim, along with the diverse stages of the participatory budget in Medellín discussed in this section, shows the process' dynamism over time, influenced by power disputes between its diverse actors. As it is claimed by Urán (2009, p.193), Medellín's participatory budgeting process was originally envisioned with a constructivist approach, in which its design is in constant change and never fully finished, given its permanent democratic discussion.

This section has shown that frictions between different actors and the national and the local legal frameworks have influenced the design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, providing a pivotal element of reciprocity between power disputes and legal design. Overall, the different legal reforms have affected the power held by some actors in the process, such as the influence of the LABs over the process. In turn, the legal reforms have intended to provide stricter rules to control the implementation of the process, to prevent the exercise of undemocratic practices that may end in the capture of the participatory budget. Nevertheless, a level of legal uncertainty still exists in the participatory budgeting process due to the power disputes at its core and broader ruptures in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, such as a clash between national and local laws. The next section discusses how the implementation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process has influenced both the inclusion and exclusion of participants.

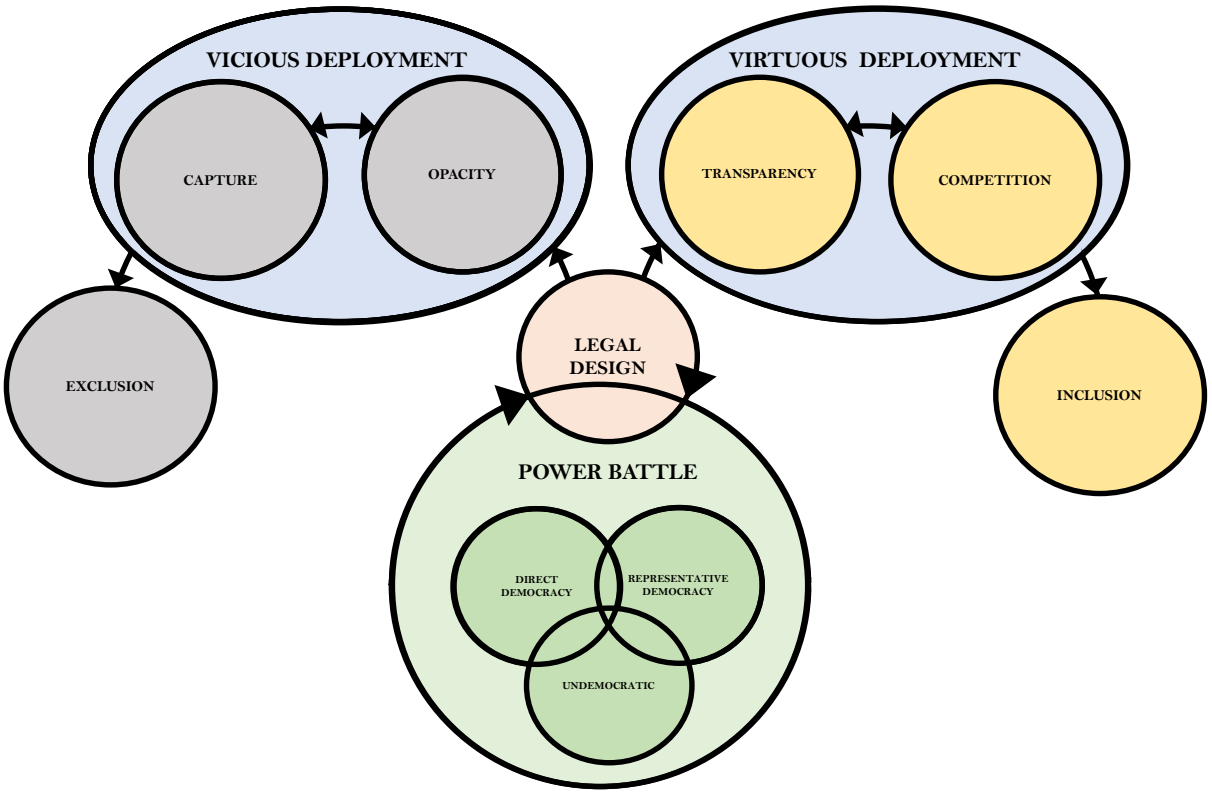
2. THE VIRTUOUS AND THE VICIOUS BUDGET DEPLOYMENT IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

Political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budget is not only influenced by power disputes that affect the legal design of the process. Power disputes between and within the different actors during the implementation of the participatory budgeting process also influence political inclusion, with the capacity to both encourage or discourage the participation of marginalised participants. While it isn't possible to provide an overall percentage of cases with the data available of the participants actually included and excluded in the process, as part of the medium-level grounded *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* suggested herein, I propose a typology of conditions that may lead to one or the other. This section examines the suggested typology, by explaining two competing trends found in the data: 'virtuous deployment' and 'vicious deployment'.

I codified two overall categories of budget deployment in the data collected for this research, as pathways that may lead to inclusion or exclusion: opacity and capture, in opposition to transparency and competition. As I discuss in this section, the pathway of opacity and capture that lead to exclusion is named in this thesis 'vicious deployment' of the participatory budget, whereas the pathway of transparency and competition leading to inclusion is called 'virtuous deployment'. As referred earlier, by deployment I mean the process of planning, prioritising, executing, monitoring and evaluating the expenditure of the participatory budget. In sum, the implementation of its legal design.

Figure 36 shows the connections between the different categories of budget deployment outlined above, along with their links with the power battle and legal design of the process discussed in the previous section. The following subsections define, describe and exemplify the vicious and virtuous deployments and the categories of budget deployment in both processes.

Figure 36 – The pathways of the virtuous and vicious deployment of the budget in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Elaborated by the author.

2.1. OPENNESS OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: CAPTURE VERSUS COMPETITION

The first element that differentiates virtuous from vicious deployment of the participatory budget is the openness of the decision-making process. While the former has competition between the different participants, the latter enables capture of the budget by undemocratic actors. This element of my proposed framework shows a trend in the process that affects the possibility for the participatory budget to positively influence political inclusion. Capture challenges competition; it is a process that I define as the appropriation of the participatory budget by different actors, in which it is seized to satisfy the personal interests of certain participants *outside the law that regulates the proceedings*. In contrast, competition leads to a deployment of the budget *in compliance with the legal rules for participatory budgeting*, between a whole range of different actors to propose a particular distribution of the participatory budget, so that the allocated budget can affect a variety of different local community groups.

2.1.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CAPTURE-COMPETITION DICHOTOMY

Capture runs counter to competition. Competition means that different stakeholders compete *within* the rules of the process to finance projects that, although also advancing their interests, are actually aligned with the long-term vision for the benefit of the whole community agreed in the local development plans of the *comunas* and *corregimientos*, as the law rules (Aguirre, M. L., 2017a; Jaramillo, C., 2017; Macías, 2017; Palacio, 2017).

In line with the definition of democracy used in this thesis, understood as a process of creating specific institutions that affect the capacities of various groups to realise their interests

(Przeworski, 1986), in the case of competition, if an actor participates in the process and their preferences are not prioritised, they will in any case benefit as part of a community. This is part of the institutional agreed arrangements: They will be complying with specific democratic rules in which both winning and losing are possibilities since they enter the process, as long as the game is played in accordance with the legal proceedings. In contrast, capture deceives the expectations of the participants, since it allows gains by breaching the agreed rules.

There is not one unique form of capture. In fact, references abound in the data collected for this study, of capture by members of representative democracy,[53] direct democracy,[54] contractors,[55] and illegal armed groups.[56] As explained in *Chapter Seven*, in these cases the actors

[53] To name a few cases, María Eugenia Román (2017), social leader of the *corregimiento San Antonio de Prado*, denounced the use of the participatory budget by some politicians to gain electoral support: 'The community needs to understand that the money that goes to participatory budgeting are public resources and not political rewards.' In turn, John Múnera (2017), leader of *Comuna Nine*, accused the Town Hall of deciding how the participatory budget was spent: 'The officials direct the projects that will be executed with the participatory budget. People do not choose.'

[54] In the words of Luis Fernando Franco (2017), a citizen that oversees the process: 'There are leaders who have captured the process for over 10 years. We invite the administration to open spaces for other leaders.'

[55] For example, Mary Agudelo (2017), social leader of the *Comuna Eleven*, mentioned: 'What worries me the most about the process is the relationship with contractors. I find poorly qualified contractors in our communities; however, the administration hires them again, even if they continue to do things wrong. They are even rewarded and are sent to more *comunas* to work. This makes me distrust the process'.

[56] According to City Councilor Fabio Humberto Rivera (2017b): 'We must escort the social leaders to prevent the social organisations from being penetrated, forced, and extorted by gangs.'

breach the established rules, even if they are classified as democratic; hence, behaving as undemocratic ones. Additionally, capture can be explained by different reasons, some of which are related to the power disputes discussed in *Chapter Seven*, whereas others are economically driven and associated with a struggle for resources (Álvarez, G., 2017; Betancur, S., 2017; Hernández, A., 2017).

2.1.2. Ruptures in Medellín's 'participatory ecosystem' that enable the capture of the participatory budget

Central to competition in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, is the fact that, unless participatory budgeting is connected to a planning process, the main needs of the communities would not be satisfied and the process will be easy to capture (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, 2016; Osorio, 2017; Zapata, Jairo, 2017). For instance, Juan Velásquez (2017), member of the *Comuna Thirteen*, asserted during a public hearing that, due to financial interests of many members, the participatory budgeting process focused in who are the contractors of the projects, disregarding their connection with planning, enabling the budget's capture by interested contractors:

> We have to learn to plan without thinking about contracting. Let's plan the city, let's plan the *comunas*, let's organise the local development plans, but let's take the issue of contracting out of our heads, because that has infected the planning exercises in Medellín.

Yet, as it was discussed in *Chapter Six*, a scarce participation in planning and a disconnection between the local development plans and participatory budgeting are structural ruptures in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, that have favoured the capture of the process by a broad range of actors. Before the 2017 regulatory reform, there was not a clear connection in practice between the needs of the communities, which should be reflected in the local development plans of the *comunas* and *corregimientos*, and the projects prioritised in the participatory budget.

A recurrent example found in the data showing a rupture between local planning and participatory budgeting, is a case usually referred by participants as *'los lentes, las cajas de dientes y los paseos'* (in English, 'the glasses, the dentures and the recreational trips'). Colombia's public healthcare system does not cover glasses and dentures, which are costly but basic for many citizens, especially the elderly. Therefore, these items are highly popular when it comes to the participatory budgeting voting process. Likewise, another project commonly prioritised in many localities are trips for the leisure of specific social groups, like the elderly or children.

However, many participants complained that these projects do not really solve the core needs of the communities, and are a waste of resources that should be spent on basic problems of the locality. In the words of City Councillor Fabio Humberto Rivera (2017a), during a public hearing,

> If a community identified in its local development plan that the main problem is environmental, that the second one is unemployment, and that the third one is malnutrition of children and the elderly, but then they approve a big budget for

recreational trips, that community is not realising its development plan, nor using wisely the State resources, which are the taxes that we all pay.

Additionally, some interviewees claimed that sometimes these items are promised to citizens in exchange of their votes in the participatory budgeting process, but also in other democratic processes, such as the LABs, City Council and mayor elections (Interviewee 7, 2017; Interviewee 10, 2017). Furthermore, due to their recurrent prioritisation, in many cases the items are selected and contracted by the State, but never claimed by citizens. For instance, 17 localities prioritised lenses as projects to finance with the participatory budget in 2017. Still, in 2018 the Town Hall asserted that they had over a thousand lenses waiting for beneficiaries to claim them; these items were at risk to be lost, given a lack of interest of the community (Cifuentes, 2018).

A rupture between planning and budgeting is also criticised by many participants that feel that this situation neglects the history of participatory movements in the city, whose struggles to attain cultural and economic rights for their localities are at the origins of the participatory budgeting process in Medellín, as I discussed in *Chapters Four* and *Five*. Guillermo Rodríguez (2017a), social leader, explained this concern at a public hearing,

> There are human needs disregarded by the Municipal Development Plan. We fought for them over twenty years ago [...] fostering citizen participation [...]. We wanted an instrument developed from the ground, that would identify the micro-territorial community needs [...]. This exercise was included in the annual investment plan of the mayor Juan Gómez, allowing the communities to participate creating the projects that would really solve the main community needs [...]. Those plans were positive because

> people did not fight over who was going to be hired, they fought to represent and identify their needs: The bridge that would connect two neighbourhoods, the paved roads, school improvement, and more scholarships for education. Things that within the municipal development plan may seem small, but that in the felt needs of the community are of high value [...]. But when that was taken to the participatory budget [...] it unfortunately became a fight to distribute the resources and see who contracted them, and it became petty cash for proselytism, handing over the execution of the resources to leaders who manage a proselytising fortress. For me this is not negative, the negative part is when the participatory budget becomes exclusively a payment of proselytising quotas and stops solving social and political problems in our neighbourhoods.

The rupture between local planning and participatory budgeting in Medellín was allegedly amended by the 2017 reform, which creates a mandate of harmonisation between both, establishing that the projects prioritised in the participatory budgeting process should be selected from the local development plans (Observatorio de Políticas Públicas del Concejo de Medellín, 2018). Nevertheless, projects such as the lenses, dentures and recreational trips are highly popular, and many participants were afraid that the change of regulation would end them. Medellín's Secretary of Planning, Alejandro Osorio (2017), explained that these and other projects could continue, as long as they were included in the local development plan of the locality,

> If the lenses, dentils and recreational trips are included in the projects comprised in the local development plans, because they solve a problem of the community, then they will

continue. But, because they will be part of a project, we want them to have a bigger impact in the community, measurable, that contributes to solve a problem at the locality.

It is relevant to point out, however, that for some of the interviewed participants this could move the capture of the process not only to the voting and execution phases, but also to the design of the local development plans (Interviewee 11, 2017; Interviewee 12, 2017).[57] As I discussed in *Chapter Six*, a challenge identified in the creation of the local development plans is a scarce citizen participation.

2.1.3. VULNERABLE COMPETITION: THE FRAGILE POLITICAL INCLUSION OF THE YOUTH, WOMEN AND ELDERLY

Despite the examples of capture found in the data, there are also cases of competition that had allowed new participants to be included in the participatory budgeting process. As I mentioned in the introduction, and happens with capture, these situations are dynamic and vary with time and the participant's experiences. Nevertheless, as Carvajal (2019, pp.36-37) asserts, the inclusion of three groups of people in participatory budgeting was particularly nurtured during the first ten years of the process' implementation: the youth, women and elderly. In turn, Medellín's *Citizen Participation Index* of 2017 asserts that these populations are the ones that participate the most in the city, because they have benefited from participatory spaces in Medellín, such as

[57] Citizen participation in the creation of the local development plans and the harmonisation of the latter with the participatory budget after the 2017 reform, emerge as further avenues of research from this study.

participatory budgeting, allowing their agendas to influence policy-making (Pimienta & Montoya, 2017).

For the case of the youth, both the creation of a participatory budgeting process in Medellín solely for youngsters in the Municipal Accord nº 46 of 2010, and the possibility of adolescents from 14 to 18 years old to vote in the general participatory budgeting process, when the legal age for voting in representative democracy in Colombia is 18 years old, have favoured their inclusion in the process (Velásquez et al, 2020a, p.239). David Betancur (2017), director of the Youth Cultural Network *Comunidad Underground* in Medellín, described during a public hearing how they implemented their first project thanks to the support of the participatory budget,

> Our first project, financed with the participatory budget, costed only eight million COP [around 1520 GBP]. This made the project unfeasible. No entity of the municipality or operator would contract a public event for that amount. Still, with eight million we gathered five thousand people. We are now strengthened and have fortified our processes with a capacity we have installed, which has increased our impact.

In a similar vein, during a public hearing Juan Pablo Torres (2017), representative of the *Mesa de Jóvenes* of the *Comuna Fourteen*, a youth association, noted how that organisation was created thanks to the participatory budgeting process,

> The *Mesa de Jóvenes* was born from the union of seven young people who met at the participatory budgeting process and who did not know each other, but who got there

> because they had the same question, why did the youth in *El Poblado* [the *Comuna Fourteen*] do not participate as much as in other *comunas*? We concluded that we needed a space where we could meet, beyond the school or the mall. Thus, we created this space in the participatory budgeting process. To date, around 80 young people have contributed to the *comuna* from this space.

However, many youngsters in Medellín feel excluded from the process because elder leaders capture the budget and do not allow for their proposals to be included. The words of Santiago Betancur (2017), youth leader, depicted this situation during a public hearing, 'As youth, we are worried that the local development plans do not include us'. Additionally, in the participant observation data collected for this research, there are many perceptions from young participants, claiming that the participatory budgeting process for youngsters lost its force (among others, Arango, L., 2017; Monsalve, 2017; Rojas, 2017). For instance, Wilmar Martínez (2017) claimed during a public hearing,

> The participatory budget for the youth has existed for years. This program must be recovered and strengthened, so that new actors enter to the participatory budgeting process.

As a result, even though the data shows that there is some level of competition in the participatory budget that has fostered the political inclusion of some young participants in the process, capture is a pervasive threat that makes such inclusion fragile and unstable.

This is also the case of women and the elderly. There are many examples in the qualitative data collected for this research, that show a trend of political inclusion of these groups in the participatory budgeting process (among others, Interviewee 10; Interviewee 11; Interviewee 12, 2017). For instance, during a public hearing, Gloria Cifuentes (2017), member of a CAB at the *Comuna Nine*, mentioned that she was a housewife who had learned about participatory planning thanks to the participatory budgeting process, adding:

> There are many women who have qualified their knowledge thanks to the participatory budgeting process. Today we are empowered to say what we think, to demand our rights and to guarantee that other women, youth and children have better opportunities.

Nevertheless, there is also a heartfelt complaint by many participants from these groups, denouncing exclusion. For instance, Sonia Vásquez (2017), member of the Municipal Planning Council, denounced during a public hearing that 'although many women attend the meetings and go to all the assemblies, the ones that take the decisions are the men'. In turn, Martha Meneses (2017) claimed during another hearing, 'women are almost invisible in the participatory budgeting process. Women from Medellín use to say that we work but we are not seen'. In a similar vein, several studies of women participation in Medellín, have shown that structural barriers prevent many women from participating on equal terms to as men (Pimienta & Montoya, 2017; Hajdarowicz, 2018). For the case of the elderly, Nevardo Mesa (2017) asserted in another hearing 'as elderly we want better treatment. We have been excluded in the commissions'. In sum, although there are several examples of political inclusion of youth, women and the elderly in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, fostered by competition, more often than not they are permeated and influenced by capture, making such inclusion in the process fragile.

2.2. CONTROL OVER THE RESOURCES' SPENDING: OPACITY VERSUS TRANSPARENCY

What might differentiate a deployment of a participatory budgeting process that ends in capture from one that leads to competition? An element frequently found in the data to be a gamechanger is what I characterised as the opacity or transparency in the spending of resources, allowing to control their deployment. During the course of the research, many participants claimed that the biggest problem in the participatory budget is a lack of control; i.e., more control over how the resources are actually deployed decreases capture (among others, Observatorio de Políticas Públicas del Concejo de Medellín, 2011; Castañeda, 2017; Zapata, Jairo, 2017). In the words of Medellín's Ombudsman's Office (Personería de Medellín, 2008, p.13),

> There needs to be more control and monitoring to the projects financed with the participatory budget [...], because many cases of threats and murder of social leaders are associated with the dominion over the public budget.

Transparency allows participants to control how resources are spent thanks to open, available information, and accessible and working legal actions to denounce and prosecute breaches to the process' rules, without risks against their personal integrity, as I discuss further below. Opacity, in turn, prevents participants to control the resources' spending due to a lack of information or inability to access it or barriers to denounce or prosecute breaches to the process, either because the legal actions are ineffective in practice or risks to the participants' security prevents them to act against violations, as I explain next.

2.2.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OPACITY-TRANSPARENCY DICHOTOMY

The opacity-transparency dichotomy is characterised by the available information about how the resources are spent, data about the impact of the process, and the prosecution of the cases that transgress the rules. These three elements, which enable control over the resources' spending, consistently emerged in the data collected for this research as pivotal to prevent capture (among others, García, S., 2017; Restrepo, J.C., 2017; Saldarriaga, 2017).

On the one hand, scant control about the budget spending is first explained by poor information about how the resources are spent. The words of Alejandro Jaramillo (2017), delegate in the participatory budgeting process, explain how a lack of information influences the decision-making process,

> When we were deciding projects to be financed with the participatory budget [...], we had no graphs, no statistics that could help us compare the populations that the projects aimed to impact. We did not know if they were children or youth or their social strata. We did not even have historic information of projects implemented in the community [...]. We need that information, tools that allow us to contrast with previous years and other populations. We need these statistics to know what is happening, to analyse the previous year and understand how we can correct any mistake.

Although information is pivotal to control resource spending, one of the biggest problems of Medellín's participatory budgeting process during the period studied in this research, is a lack of data about budget implementation (Tobón, 2014). As Carlos Jaramillo (2017), director of the OPPCM, highlights,

> What is not measured cannot be administered; still, after 12 years since the first implementation of participatory budgeting, there is not yet a system for monitoring, evaluation and control.

In turn, the lack of formal data about the participatory budgeting process influences participation. As Sebastián García (2017), student representative at the Municipal Planning Council, put it during a public hearing,

> Information is pivotal because we need it to communicate with civil society so citizens can truly participate [...] but I have looked for a place where I could find information, for instance, about the *Comuna Nine* and the cities' processes, but it does not exist.

A second element identified in the data contributing to the control over the resources is information about the process' impact. As Sebastián Montoya (2017), member of a LAB, asserted, 'we do not know what the impact of the participatory budgeting process is, nor which communities it has benefited'. In a similar vein, City Councillor Fabio Humberto Rivera (2017a), explained during a public hearing how the impact evaluation of the projects allows to measure their influence on the core needs of the communities, beyond the amount of goods contracted,

> It is not enough to buy 300.000 lunches for children [...]. Are these lunches fighting malnutrition? Are these children growing healthy? Are we breaking starvation dropout? Budgeting for results goes beyond hiring a number of things.

This is why, Andrés Bedoya (2017f), Secretary of Citizen Participation, highlighted during a public hearing that 'the Town Hall cannot continue having new projects year to year without knowing how they are impacting the localities'. Hence, as I asserted in *Section One*, one of the main features of the 2017's reform, was adding a system to monitor, evaluate and facilitate oversight and control of the participatory budgeting process.[58]

Opacity in the way the resources are spent seems to be convenient for some interests, given that it facilitates capture. Therefore, once information is known about breaches of the process' rules, it is not surprising to find several claims from a broad range of participants, denouncing a lack of sanctions against rule-breakers (among others, Castañeda, 2017; Urán, D., 2017; Zapata, Jairo, 2017). This explains why, in an analysis about citizen's proposals to the change of regulation of the participatory budgeting process, the Town Hall of Medellín (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2017b, p.18) notes that 'the suggestions emphasise the accountability of the proposals and a social control with teeth, i.e., with consequences'. Nevertheless, in many occasions the watchdog agencies assert that the community has not denounced cases of breaches against the law (Jaramillo, C., 2017). Thus, the opportunities for capturing the participatory budget without consequences abounded, as I discuss in the next subsection.

[58] A possible avenue of research that also emerges from this thesis, is the influence on political inclusion of the system to monitor, evaluate and facilitate oversight and control of the participatory budgeting process created in the 2017 reform.

2.2.2. OPACITY ENABLING CAPTURE AND TRANSPARENCY LEADING TO COMPETITION: THE CASES OF *CORPORACIÓN DEMOCRACIA* AND THE *VEEDURÍA DE LA COMUNA SIX*

An extreme example of how opacity enables capture in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, is the case of the rise and fall of *Corporación Democracia*, an organisation of demobilised members of the *Bloque Cacique Natubara* of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, created in Medellín in 2004, as a space of permanent connection of paramilitary leaders with former combatants (Jaramillo & Gil, 2014). This was one of several such organisations created in Antioquia, from 2003 until 2006 (Observatorio de Procesos de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración, 2009). In fact, *Corporación Democracia* was featured in the peace agreement between the Government and the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara*, as the NGO that represented the demobilised combatants from that group, to maintain dialogue with the State and participate in the design and monitoring of reincorporation and reconciliation projects. In 2005, demobilised members from the *Bloque Héroes de Granada* also joined this organisation (Jaramillo & Gil, 2014, pp.171-172).

One of the main goals of *Corporación Democracia* was to participate in local democratic processes and leadership organising, such as including their members in LABs and CABs of Medellín. Thus, shortly after it was constituted, *Corporación Democracia* built a wide network of demobilised combatants in all the city, which helped them elect 35 of its 50 candidates to LABs in Medellín (Jaramillo & González, 2012, p.70). As part of this system, members of *Corporación Democracia* also created other associated corporations, such as the *Corporación La Sierra con Futuro* and the *Cooperativa de Trabajo Asociado Omega*, and participated in local CABs, to partake as contractors in public projects, such as the ones financed with the participatory budget (Verdad

Abierta, 2010; Jaramillo & González, 2012, pp.69–70). Yet, the success of this process was due to a harmful combination of social and military work that helped it function for more than five years in the city, carrying out both legal and illegal activities without the interference of the formal authorities (Observatorio de Procesos de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración, 2009, p.10; Verdad Abierta, 2010; Jaramillo & González, 2012).

During these years, diverse denounces from community leaders, watchdog agencies and organisations claimed that members of *Corporación Democracia* committed crimes such as murder and forced displacement, against civil population to achieve their goals, amongst others to secure resources from the participatory budget, but that also included extorsion and drug dealing in alliance with the *Oficina de Envigado* (Observatorio de Procesos de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración, 2009, p.10; Verdad Abierta, 2010; Jaramillo & González, 2012). For instance, one of the crimes included the murder of Alexander Pulgarín in December of 2009, a community leader member of the civic organisation *Corpades*, which in several occasions denounced members of *Corporación Democracia* (Quijano, 2009; Verdad Abierta, 2010).

Nevertheless, formal authorities such as the Town Hall through the Secretary of Government, continuously denied claims against *Corporación Democracia* and former paramilitary combatants pertaining to this association, accusing them of committing criminal activities in Medellín (IPC, 2009; Quijano, 2009). On the contrary, the accused demobilised paramilitary members were portrayed by local authorities as examples of reintegration to society. As a result, the work of social leaders and community organisations was threatened for years by former paramilitary members that continued carrying out illegal activities, now competing with social

organisations unprotected by a State incapable of combating criminal groups (Abello-Colak, 2015, pp.243–245).

Given the association of its members with criminal activities, since the creation of *Corporación Democracia*, many of them were murdered in confrontations with other gangs and the State (Observatorio de Procesos de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración, 2009; Verdad Abierta, 2010; Jaramillo & González, 2012). In February of 2010, after the organisation was already weakened due to the referred hostilities, several of the remaining associates were finally detained and put on trial due to the illegal activities committed since their demobilisation, amongst others, while pertaining to the *Corporación Democracia* and affiliate organisations (Verdad Abierta, 2010).

The most renown cases are the ones of Julio Perdomo (legal representative of the *Cooperativa de Trabajo Asociado Omega* and member of *Corporación Democracia*) and Edwin Tapias (former president of the CAB of *La Sierra* and legal representative of the *Corporación La Sierra con Futuro*, member organisation of *Corporación Democracia*). For years, they were both featured as community leaders with good relationships with the State (Cárdenas, 2010). Thanks to this, just to cite a few examples, in 2004 and 2005, Tapias secured several contracts with the Town Hall, in projects inside and outside the participatory budget, while simultaneously being accused of menaces and crimes against community leaders, such as the murder of Augusto Henao, president of the CAB at *Las Mirlas* in 2005 (Verdad Abierta, 2010; Cárdenas, 2010). In turn, Perdomo offered as contractor, amongst others, security and cleaning services to public educational centres, while demobilised members of the organisation extorted the directors of these institutions (Cárdenas, 2010; IPC, 2009).

The case of *Corporación Democracia* is an extreme example of exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, showing how opacity, operating in a broader context of violence, led to a capture of resources by undemocratic actors functioning through apparent legal organisations, as a result of a lack of control given an absence of sanctions against rule-breakers. When Perdomo and Tapias were finally captured and put on trial in 2010, more than five years passed since they first committed the crimes that were frequently denounced by several citizens, even though their illegal activities were an open secret in Medellín (IPC, 2009). However, the persistence of organisations such as *Corpades* and Medellín's Ombudsman's Office denouncing the crimes notwithstanding the risks that it implied, even despite the inaction of State institutions, show the value of community oversight to foster transparency and, hence, competition, in the participatory budget.

In fact, despite the difficulties to control the resources' spending, it was frequently found in the data that, in many cases leading to competition, a strongly organised community of citizens created civic organisations to oversee the spending of resources (Fernández, 2017; Quintero, 2017a; Rojas, 2017). One of such cases is exemplified by the *Veeduría Ciudadana al Plan Estratégico de la Comuna Six*, in short, the *Veeduría de la Comuna Six*. This is an oversight organisation created to monitor the execution of the local development plan of the *Comuna Six*.

Development planning started in the *Comuna Six* in the mid-1990's. However, it was not until 2006, that a plan for the years 2006-2015 was officially created for the locality due to strong community organising of local organisations and citizens; since 2009, the plan started to be financed with the participatory budget (Jaramillo et al., 2012, pp.63–64). Due to the lack of a system to monitor and evaluate the execution of the plan, in 2011 several citizens with diverse

backgrounds and ages got together, with the assistance of the local organisation *Corporación Región*, to create the *Veeduría de la Comuna Six*. This work was encouraged, amongst others, by previous oversight projects to foster social control in the participatory budgeting process at this *comuna* (Jaramillo et al., 2012, p.63-64).

Since it was launched, the *Veeduría de la Comuna Six* has persistently exercised social control and oversight to public budget spending in this locality, denouncing irregularities in the process while also proposing a system for information, monitoring and evaluation to local development planning in the *Comuna Six* (Echavarría et al., 2016). In the words of Víctor Hugo Quintero (2017a), member of this oversight organisation, during a public hearing,

> In 2013, after many inquiries [...] we realised that the strategic plan of the *Comuna Six* did not have an information system. [...] We cannot do social control or exercise citizen participation if we do not have information.

The *Veeduría de la Comuna Six* also used the knowledge and experience acquired doing oversight to local development planning at the *Comuna Six*, to make proposals during the 2017 change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process (Valencia, 2017). Nevertheless, the *Veeduría de la Comuna Six* claimed that the watchdog agencies in many cases disregard their charges and alerts against presumptive acts of lawbreaking in the participatory budgeting process (Quintero, 2017b).

The two cases discussed in this subsection show that, even though Medellín's participatory budgeting process did not have a system to monitor, evaluate and control the resources' spending during more than a decade, in the absence of State control, community organising has played a pivotal role to oversight budget spending, favouring transparency and, hence, competition. Through time, these cases have created a virtuous cycle in the city, prompting other citizens to survey budget spending (Urán, 2012). As Rubén Velásquez (2017), delegate in the participatory budgeting process, claimed during a public hearing,

> 'What is not measured, cannot be controlled', is a phrase constantly repeated by City Councillor Jesús Anibal Echeverri. I want to go back to this phrase today to highlight the work of oversight organisations. We must strengthen them [...]. They exercise control and surveillance.

Overall, in this section I have shown how power clashes between and within diverse actors in Medellín's participatory budget can both result in inclusion and exclusion, in two competing processes, termed in this thesis 'virtuous deployment' and 'vicious deployment' of the participatory budget. While the former is characterised by transparency and competition leading to inclusion, the latter leads to exclusion through its opacity and capture. Finally, a mutually reinforcing influence can be found between opacity and capture, and transparency and competition. This means that in a 'virtuous deployment' more competition seems to produce more transparency and vice versa, whereas in a 'vicious deployment' opacity leads to capture and the other way around. In the next section, I discuss how ICTs influence the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process examined so far.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF ICTS ON POLITICAL INCLUSION IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

The main research question that I analyse in this thesis asks about the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion from the perspective of its participants. To answer this question, I have developed out of the qualitative data a medium-level grounded framework that I call the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The proposed framework features a typology to differentiate the conditions that may lead to inclusion or exclusion in the process within the broader participatory ecosystem and conflictive context in which it operates; i.e., competition and transparency in opposition to capture and opacity.

A secondary question that emerged in my grounded research, examines the influence of ICTs on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process in the view of its participants. In relation to this question, I explore if digital tools have a specific influence on political inclusion on Medellín's participatory budgeting process, that would not occur if it operates solely offline. I answer this question in this section, arguing that ICTs can change the power dynamics in Medellín's participatory budgeting process; nevertheless, as it happens with the offline process, their use also has conflicting findings, leading to both inclusion and exclusion, depending on how they are designed and implemented. In line with the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* proposed in this thesis, if their design and implementation allow for the process to be more transparent and to encourage open competition between the different actors, ICTs may lead to a 'virtuous deployment'. If their design and implementation is opaque and allows for capture by specific participants to take place, they may encourage a 'vicious deployment'. This

claim opposes the optimistic approach to the use of digital tools found in the 'law in the books' of Medellín's participatory ecosystem, that I discussed in *Chapter Six*, by which technology use in democratic processes is presumed to bring transparency, accessibility and security.

3.1. INFLUENCE OF ICTS ON THE OPENNESS OF THE PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS: CAPTURE VERSUS COMPETITION

A first distinct effect of ICTs on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, identified in the data, regards its capacity to influence the openness of the participatory budgeting decision-making process, either nurturing competition or fostering capture. One of the main possible positive features of the use of digital tools in Medellín's participatory budgeting process identified in the observation process, focus groups, interviews and surveys conducted for this research, was its potential capacity to make the process more open to participants, increasing participation.

For instance, discussing the main opportunities of tech tools in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, one participant answered in a survey:

> Technology may augment the number of citizens that participate in the participatory budgeting elections, reducing the concentration of power in the same leaders (Survey Participant 1, 2016).

Another participant replied: 'Technology allows to reach more people, enhancing inclusion in the process' (Survey Participant 2, 2016). In a similar vein, Medellín's Subsecretary

of Local Planning and Participatory Budgeting, Ana Lucía Montoya (2017c), mentioned during a meeting at the City Council: 'Technology and social media [...] need to be implemented to open the space for citizen participation'.

As I discussed in *Chapter Seven*, the level of participation in Medellín's participatory budgeting process is very low. Hence, some participants in the research considered that creating a new digital channel for engagement in the process, accessible to all citizens, could enhance participation. Thus, the use of ICTs to make the process more open would, in this vein, nurture competition and prevent capture. In the words of a survey participant (Survey Participant 1, 2017),

> Using a tech tool could eliminate harmful leaderships that, using political manoeuvring, form closed groups to perpetuate in power.

Nevertheless, during the course of the research, it emerged from the data analysis that not all technology design and implementation could achieve a positive impact to bring more participants to the process. In the words of a survey participant, the influence of technology in the participatory budgeting process 'depends on the ethical and political aims of the tool. The tool itself would not change anything' (Survey Participant 2, 2017).

Per the case of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, although many participants answered in a survey conducted in four focus groups carried out in the course of this research, that digital tools could contribute to foster participation, the explanatory answers provided also draw attention to many situations that might actually deepen marginalisation by facilitating

capture (Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2017; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2017; Participants of Medellín's Town Hall, 2017; Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academics, 2017).

To mention some of them, some participants were concerned about the digital divide, and how in practice designing technological tools without bearing in mind socioeconomic issues could actually bring exclusion. Hence, they were afraid that the use of online tools could exclude populations that are not acquainted with the use of certain technologies or that do not have access to them, such as the elderly. Additionally, other participants were also worried about the lack of deliberation and the automation of the process if digitals tools were included, and they mentioned that it was difficult to trust in a technology designed and controlled by authorities that they did not trust in. These concerns were also addressed by some participants during the participant observation process carried out in this research. To give an example, during an internal discussion, City Councillor Luz María Múnera (2017g) claimed,

> Participation through the internet, in which we just open a computer and vote, denies our human nature. We are not automats. The political exercise of participation is mainly physical.

What is more, some participants expressed concerns about the tech tools replacing offline meetings, that the process could be limited to what the tool did, or security issues about their privacy. Precisely due to this, the data shows that ICTs within Medellín's participatory budgeting process are seen both as tools that could help foster inclusion through a more open process, but also as instruments that could nurture capture and, thus, increase exclusion. As I

discussed in *Chapter Six*, similar claims, both in favour and against tech tools to favour the openness of Medellín's participatory budget, were found in the observation of the 2017 voting process.

3.2. INFLUENCE OF ICTS ON THE CONTROL OVER THE SPENDING OF THE BUDGET: OPACITY VERSUS TRANSPARENCY

A second main effect of ICTs on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, identified in the data, is its capacity to influence the control over the resources' spending, either enhancing transparency or augmenting opacity. More specifically, it was identified in the data that some digital tools could enable an easier access to information about the participatory budget to a broad range of participants, facilitating community oversight and, hence, social control.

For instance, one participant in the previously referred survey, conducted during the course of this research, mentioned that ICTs could help 'inform citizens about the real impact of the investment of resources in the participatory budgeting process' (Survey Participant 3, 2017). In turn, another participant mentioned that 'ICTs could enable a broader dissemination of information about the participatory budgeting process in the community, with permanent citizen feedback' (Survey Participant 4, 2017).

As I discussed in *Section Two*, one of the main challenges affecting the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion, identified in the research, is that the everyday citizen lacks accurate and non-technical information about the process. This affects the level of citizen participation and eases the possibility of people interested in having

their personal interests being benefited through the process to be able to capture the budget, enhancing exclusion. In the words of a survey participant, part of Medellín's Town Hall, 'there is a group of citizens that we have been unable to reach because they do not know about the process. With technology we could reach them' (Survey Participant 5, 2017). In this vein, another participant mentioned in the survey (Survey Participant 6, 2017),

> As long as the participatory budgeting process lacks a real strategy for communications, participation will be low and the opportunity to see more and new positive and innovative leaderships will be lost.

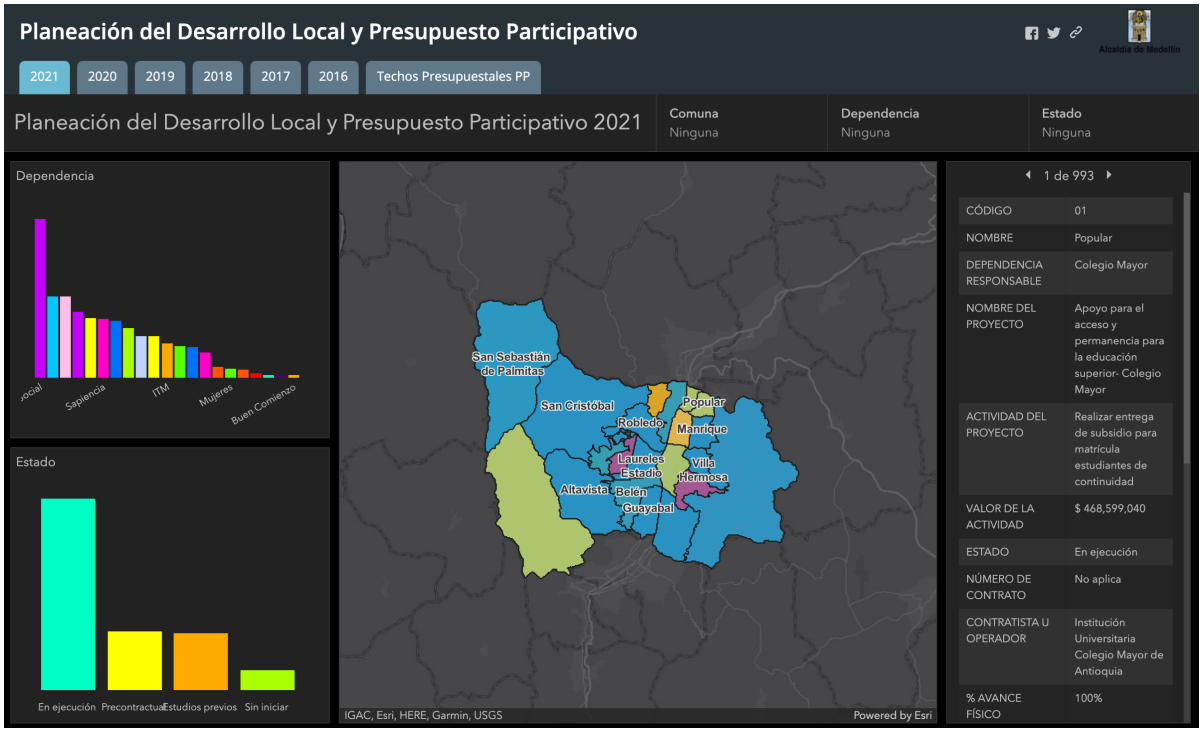
In four focus groups conducted during the course of this research, many participants highlighted a broad range of information about the participatory budgeting process that could be shared in a digital tool, including basic data about what the participatory budget is and how it works, what are the local development plans of each locality, the opportunities and dates to participate in the process, the impact of the projects, and news about their execution (Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2017; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2017; Participants of Medellín's Town Hall, 2017; Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academics, 2017). Furthermore, in the 2017 public hearings about the change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, the need to use digital tools to share data about the spending of the resources was also stressed. For instance, César Augusto Hernández (2017), director of Medellín's Department of Planning, asserted in a public hearing,

> All the information about the participatory budget needs to be in a platform that allows to share georeferenced information. This is a debt of the municipality [...]. I have today

a team documenting more than 478 investment projects to provide accurate information of their finances.

This map is now publicly available on the webpage of Medellín's Town Hall since 2018, allowing any citizen to consult the information about resources' spending online. A picture of this information platform is depicted in *Figure 37*.

Figure 37 - Information platform that shows the spending of Medellín's participatory budget.



Source: Alcaldía de Medellín (2021c).

However, as it happens with the influence of ICTs on the openness of the participatory budgeting process, during the course of the research the data showed that some digital tools could foster opacity instead of transparency. In this case, many participants featured the access to the tools as a gamechanger for it to really be able to enhance transparency. In the words of a

participant in a survey, 'the tool by itself is not enough, there is a need for participants to know how to use it and secure their access where they are' (Survey Participant 7, 2017). In turn, another participant mentioned in a survey that a technological tool 'could reduce a knowledge gap that could help have more symmetrical power relationships, as long as there is an access to the tools, which cannot be guaranteed in many places' (Survey Participant 8, 2017). More often than not, participants referred to a lack of internet connection, devices to connect, and knowledge about how to use some ICTs, as main barriers of access.

3.3. DESIGNING FOR EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION: THE CASE OF *NUESTRO DESARROLLO*

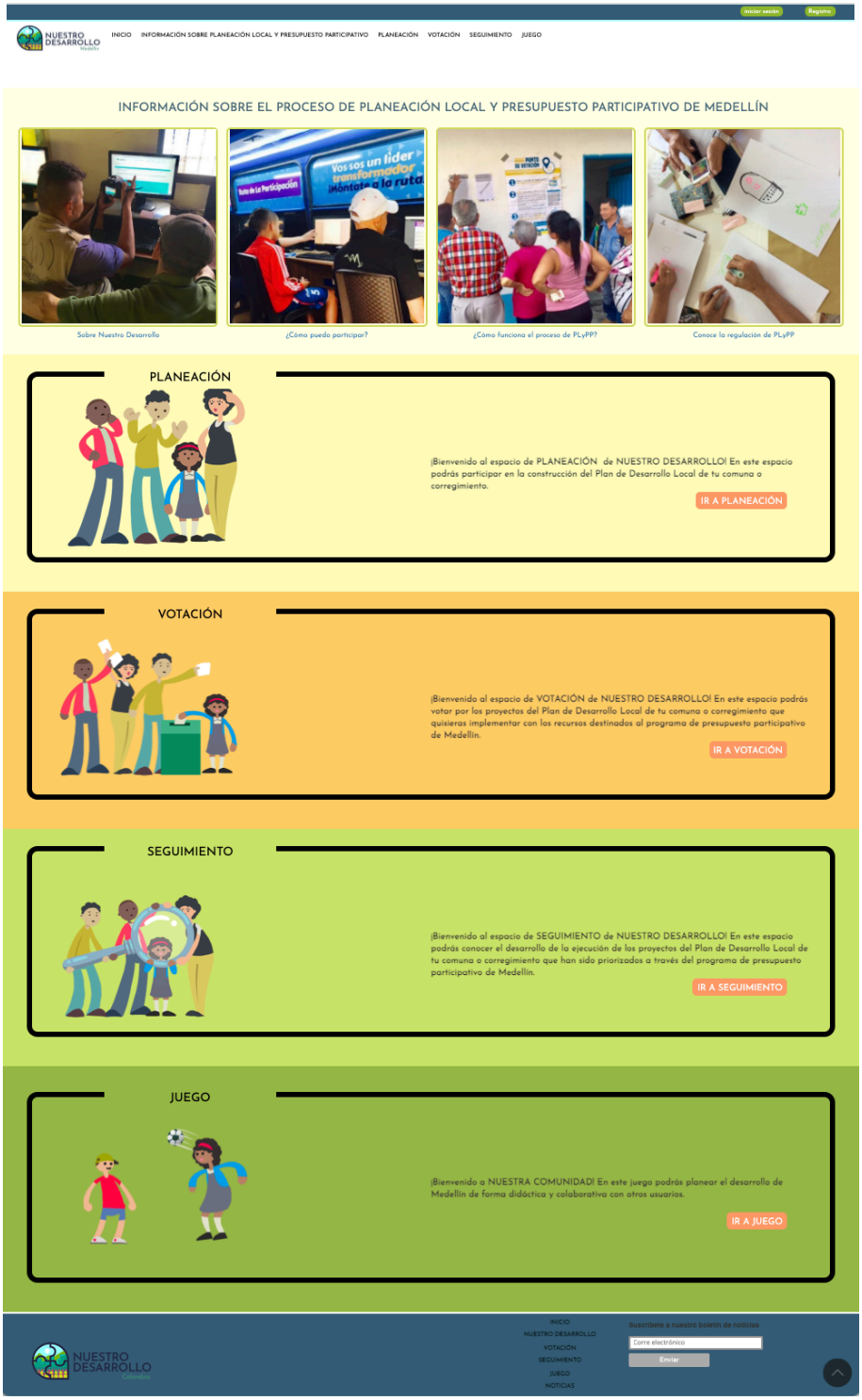
One example of how the design of a tech tool for Medellín's participatory budgeting process may affect inclusion, emerged during the process of collaborative design with participants of Medellín of a trial technological tool during the course of this research, as I referred in *Chapter Four*. When the research started, in 2016, a first prototype proposed for a digital tool in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, was an application that people could easily download on their smartphones. This application originally mirrored the existing offline process and was mainly focused on online voting.

Yet, after discussing the idea with participants in focus groups, three main problems of the initial design were identified, that could actually foster exclusion instead of inclusion (Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academia, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2016). First, many participants were sceptic of downloading governmental apps in their phones; they did not trust in them, and the apps took away valuable memory space in their phones that they prefer to use in other apps, videos or

pictures. This created a barrier of access to the tool. Second, many participants claimed that a majority of citizens did not really know how the participatory budgeting process worked or, if they did, they did not trust in it. Hence, before making a tool to open a new avenue of access to the process, it was needed to create one that facilitated learning, information-sharing and trust-building. Lastly, it consistently emerged in the data that a tech tool that focused mostly on voting, could intensify the rupture between planning and budgeting that existed in the process, nurturing capture. In the words of a survey participant 'citizens need to understand the collective purpose of the budget; identify collective instead of individual problems' (Survey Participant 9, 2017).

As a result, after discussing the original idea with a broad range of participants, the design of the tool that finally emerged in the research changed completely from the initial one. The tool embraced the multifaceted approach to the adoption of ICTs in the participatory budgeting process discussed in *Chapter Six*, and included diverse features, trying to minimise the risks of exclusion identified by participants. The tech tool that emerged from the collective design, called *Nuestro Desarrollo* (Our Development, in English), consisted of a web-based application that did not need to be downloaded and could be accessed in a broad range of devices such as smartphones, tables and computers, enabling citizens to carry out four main functions. First, the Town Hall could inform the citizens about the process. Second, the citizens could identify the main needs of their territories and make proposals of projects to solve those needs through a collective creation of local development plans. Third, citizens could prioritise projects to finance with the participatory budget with a digital voting feature. Lastly, citizens could monitor and oversight the implementation of projects financed with the participatory budget. The landing page of the platform is portrayed in *Figure 38*.

Figure 38 - Landing page of the web-based application *Nuestro Desarrollo*, created during the course of the research, as discussed in *Chapter Four*.



Source: Created in a collaborative process with several participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, as detailed in *Chapter Four*.

Likewise, the tool included a digital game, called *Nuestra Comunidad* (Our Community, in English) that taught citizens how the connection between local planning and participatory budgeting works, enabling them to make changes in their neighbourhoods to solve collective needs with points earned in the game. *Figure 39* depicts the landing page and some features of *Nuestra Comunidad*. Once participants logged into the game, they could choose amongst different categories of their interest, such as sports, infrastructure, social inclusion, culture and environment, to play an earn points that they could later use to solve a problem at their communities within the game.

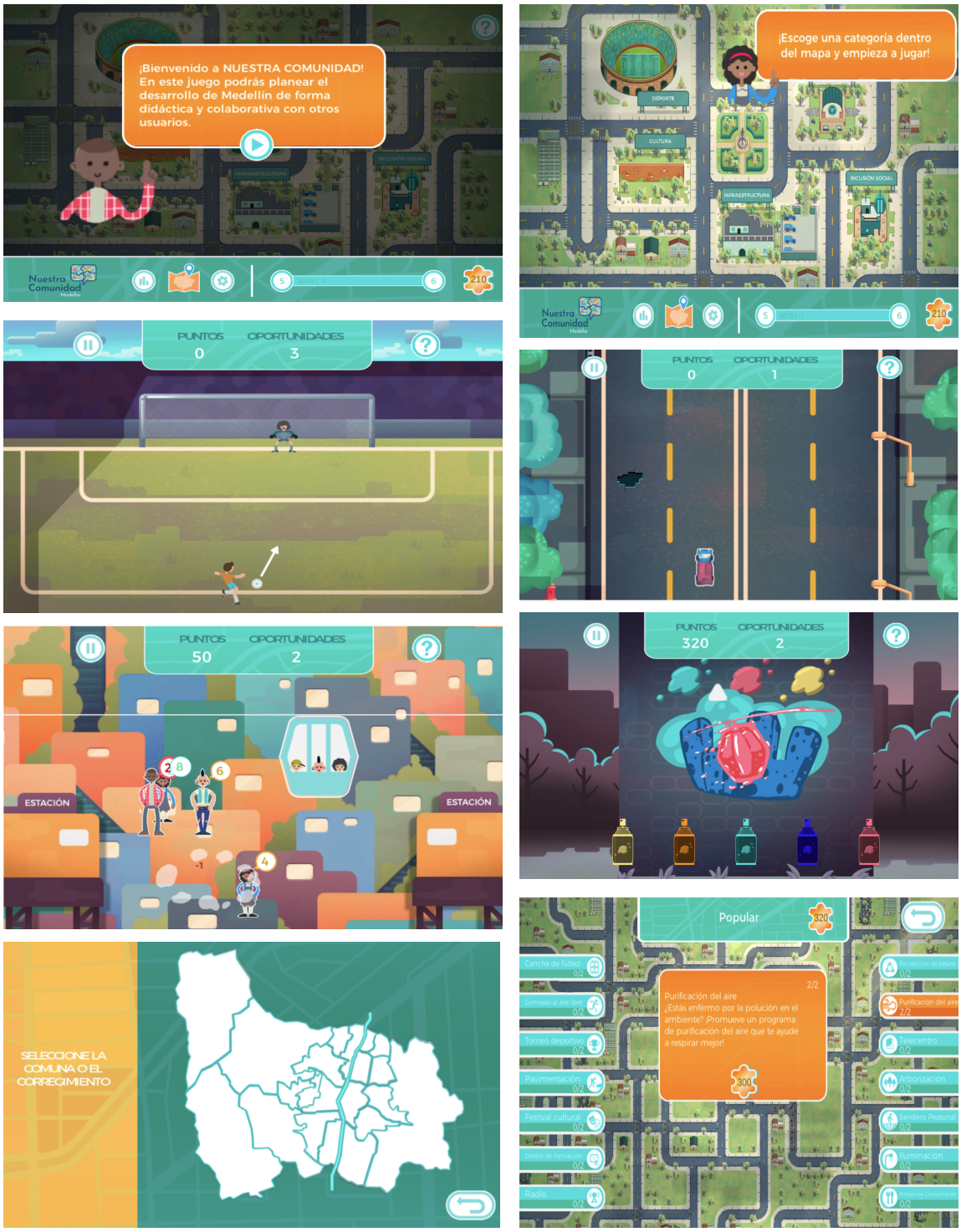
An educational and gamified approach to participatory budgeting emerged on several occasions during the design process of the tech tool (Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academia, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2016). For instance, a participant mentioned in a survey:

> There is a need to foster education for citizen participation. A digital tool could create new channels for interaction, but by itself it won't make an impact if it does not go along with learning (Survey Participant 10, 2017).

In turn, another participant highlighted that education for collective learning could change the existing political culture in the participatory budget:

> The change of the political culture requires information, pedagogy and encouraging collective practices of planning and participation, not only in a physical, but also in a digital space (Survey Participant 11, 2017).

Figure 39 – Landing page and features of the web-based game *Nuestra Comunidad*, created during the course of the research.



Source: Created in a collaborative process with several participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, as detailed in *Chapter Four*.

The tech tool that emerged in this study throughout a collaborative and participatory research with various participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, is just one of many possible digital tools that could be used in the process. It was created with the purpose of learning the possible uses of technology in the process to foster political inclusion, along with the risks and opportunities of technology use in the participatory budget, assessing diverse technology designs with a broad range of participants of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. The project was carried out during a two-year span that mainly involved the tool design and trial of its basic features in controlled focus groups, surveys and semi-structured interviews, using a design thinking approach.

Although the tool was licensed to the Town Hall of Medellín in 2019, who later adapted it to include some of the features in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, its implementation in a real-life setting has not been evaluated, and has changed with time as the Town Hall adapted it to its internal and existing processes. Nevertheless, the process of collaborative design of a digital tool for Medellín's participatory budgeting process during this research, resulted in valuable data, such as the participants' views shared during the surveys, interviews and focus groups, used in this chapter to explore the influence of ICTs on political inclusion on Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

More specifically, besides showing how diverse technology designs could foster either opacity or transparency and capture and competition, the process of creating the referred tool, taught three main valuable lessons about the design of ICTs to foster inclusion in the participatory budgeting process. First, it emerged as a priority the need to include a broad range of participants in the technology design, to minimise risks of unintended consequences, such as

preventing access. This stakeholder engagement, not only in the implementation, but first and foremost in the design of the digital tool, may not only nurture inclusion, but also foster trust in the technology and local authorities in a context of mistrust and scepticism.

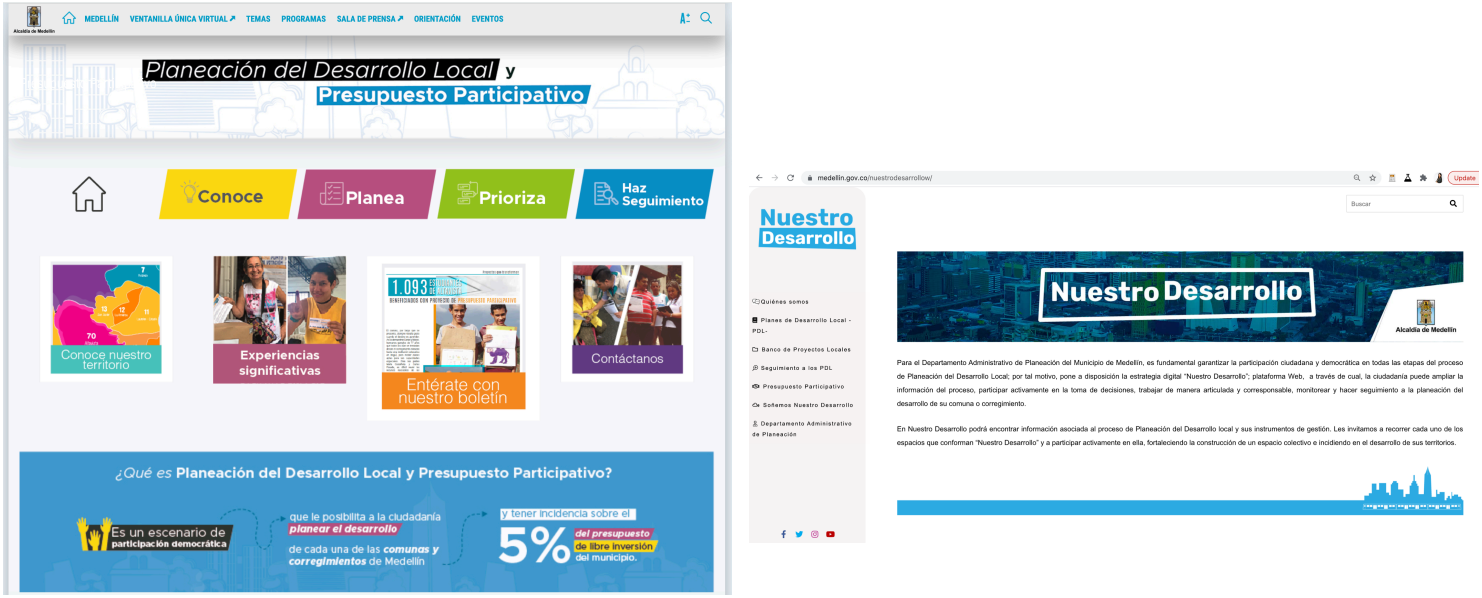
The second lesson has to do with the previously referred divergence found in this research, between the 'law in the books' and the 'law in action'. As I discussed in *Chapter Six*, although the 'law in the books' on technology use in participatory processes in Medellín's participatory ecosystem presumes that digital tools could instantly augment participation and transparency in the process, the 'law in action' shows that not this is not a given result. How the tech tools are designed and implemented matters to favour inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

A final lesson involves the divergence between the fast pace in which technology evolves, versus how slow change can be in practice when applying technological tools in democratic processes. Information and communication technologies are not an automatic game changer of power dynamics, and can in fact alter them for exclusion, even when the best intentions exist. Therefore, their design and implementation in Medellín's participatory budgeting process needs to be carefully monitored through time, with patience about the final results.

For instance, in 2019, after two years of the implementation of online voting to prioritise Medellín's participatory budget, and supporting digital tools such as a site to inform citizens about the process, in a focus group carried out in the course of this research, members of Medellín's Town Hall highlighted both benefits and challenges of using online tools in the process. As positive features, participants noted that the digital tools have increased citizen

participation and allowed citizens to have more information about the process. Still, the participants acknowledged that there is still a lack of pedagogy of the process and that there are some citizens who find it difficult to access or use technological tools. In this sense, they stressed that, among the challenges of implementation, problems in connectivity stand out, while there is a need to educate more older populations on how digital tools function. *Figure 40* shows an image of Medellín's Town Hall's webpage of the participatory budgeting process, along with an image of the adaptation made in the Town Hall in 2019 of the tool *Nuestro Desarrollo*, part of this research (Members of Medellín's Town Hall, 2019).

Figure 40 - Medellín's Town Hall's webpage of the participatory budgeting process and the tool Nuestro Desarrollo.



Source: Alcaldía de Medellín (2021b, 2021a)

So far, in this thesis I have claimed that the micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, legal design and deployment of the participatory budget, interacting in a broader ruptured 'participatory ecosystem' and conflictive context, may lead to exclusion or inclusion, depending on the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* that a participant may face. ICTs could lead to both political inclusion or exclusion in this framework, depending on how they are designed and implemented. Inclusion and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process may ultimately result in a 'cycle of marginalisation' or a 'school of democracy', as I discuss next.

4. THE 'CYCLE OF MARGINALISATION' AND THE 'SCHOOL OF CITIZENSHIP' IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

In the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process proposed in this thesis, the inclusion and exclusion produced by the virtuous and vicious deployment of the budget may result in two competing effects: empowerment and disenfranchisement. Disenfranchisement is associated with exclusion from the process, where power withheld from an actor, using a method that falls outside the agreed proceedings, deceives expectations of the participant up to the point of an alienation from the process (Montes, 2017; Múnera, J., 2017; Yauripoma, 2017). The words of Jonathan Rojas (2017), social leader of *Comuna One*, illustrate the process of disenfranchisement:

> In some *comunas* participatory budgeting is used to finance issues that are not related to the quality of life in the territories. For example, in some places that money ends up in

> the hands of bandits, in others the ones that really decide are the contractors, and in others the citizens do not know how to participate.

In contrast, empowerment advances political inclusion in the participatory budget; in this case, the actors that did not have any power gain access to processes of real decision-making for the spending of resources within the legal framework (Arango, L., 2017; Múnera, L.M., 2017a; Restrepo, S., 2017). Stella Restrepo (2017) a representative of an association of women, described the process of empowerment during a public hearing:

> In the last decade citizens saw important advances with participatory budgeting in terms of the inclusion of populations that could express themselves, propose and participate. They were able to decide from their own contexts.

The definition of empowerment proposed is aligned with Rowlands' conceptualisation of empowerment (1995, 1997), discussed in *Chapter One*, where people outside a decision-making process are brought into it. Hence, by empowerment I mean a process that has a transformational experience in the citizen, either at a personal, relational or collective level. Although in the data analysed this view of empowerment was aligned with a transformational experience for the participant, the thorough examination of the empowerment produced in the personal, relational or collective dimensions exceeds the scope of this research and is suggested as a further avenue of research in *Chapter Ten.*

Although the legal design and power battles are the same in both situations, during the *pathway of exclusion*, produced by a 'vicious deployment', the implementation of the participatory budgeting process allows for capture of the resources, as made possible by the opacity in their deployment. This challenges the control over how the budget is spent. Ultimately, capture leads to tensions between the participatory budget and the public interest, having a negative influence on the latter, which is shadowed by the personal gain of the actor exercising capture; a personal gain favoured by a breach of the rules.

The *pathway of exclusion* often results in what I call a 'cycle of marginalisation'. This concept acknowledges that exclusion, in turn, facilitates further capture of the participatory budget by actors playing outside the rules due to the privileged position favoured by the gain. Excluded participants will find it even more difficult to trust in the process again, up to the point of disenfranchisement. Although this might lead to a reoccurrence of exclusion, the medium-level grounded framework proposed hypothesises that adding transparency and competition to the 'cycle of marginalisation' could change the pathway, triggering inclusion.

Conversely, during the *pathway of inclusion*, possible due to a 'virtuous deployment', the implementation of the participatory budgeting process allows for an open competition over the allocation of the resources, which is made possible due to deployment transparency. This facilitates control over how the resources are spent, with an overall positive impact on political inclusion and long-term local planning. The *pathway of inclusion* often leads to what I have labelled a 'school of citizenship'. There are several examples in specialised national (Santana, 2010; Álvarez & González, 2014) and international (Lerner & Schugurensky, 2007; Pontual, 2014; Wampler et al., 2018; Wampler et al., 2021) participatory budgeting scholarship, in which

the participatory budgeting process is called a school of citizenship or a school of democracy. For instance, according with Wampler et al. (2018, p.6), participatory budgeting can often act as a school 'whereby citizens learn to deliberate, learn about government functioning, and begin to engage in democratic practices.'

The qualitative data used for this study suggests that power dynamics are also shaped by participatory budgeting. For instance, many of the participatory budgeting's participants interviewed and observed frequently acknowledged the practice as one that has also allowed people to build citizenship and learn how to participate in democracy, thus spreading the exercise of political power out among the population.[59]

Hence, the reference to a school of citizenship is made here to categorise a situation in which a citizen learns how democratic processes work, exercises effective participation and builds trust in State institutions through the participatory budgeting process. The school of citizenship mirrors affirmations constantly found in the data, such as, 'Participatory budgeting is an exercise of social leadership construction' (Arango, L., 2017). To describe this situation, some participants use the expression 'you only learn how to participate while participating,' coined by the Colombian philosopher Estanislao Zuleta (Interviewee 9, 2017; Balaguera, 2017).

[59] Among others, several interviews (Interviewee 2, 2017; Interviewee 3, 2017; Interviewee 4, 2017), interventions by a broad range of participants in the participatory budgeting process during various hearings (Álvarez, B., 2017; Arango, L., 2017; Lopera, 2017b; Zapata, John, 2017), and focus groups (Participants of Medellín's Town Hall and academia, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna Seven*, 2016; Participants of Medellín's *Comuna One*, 2016).

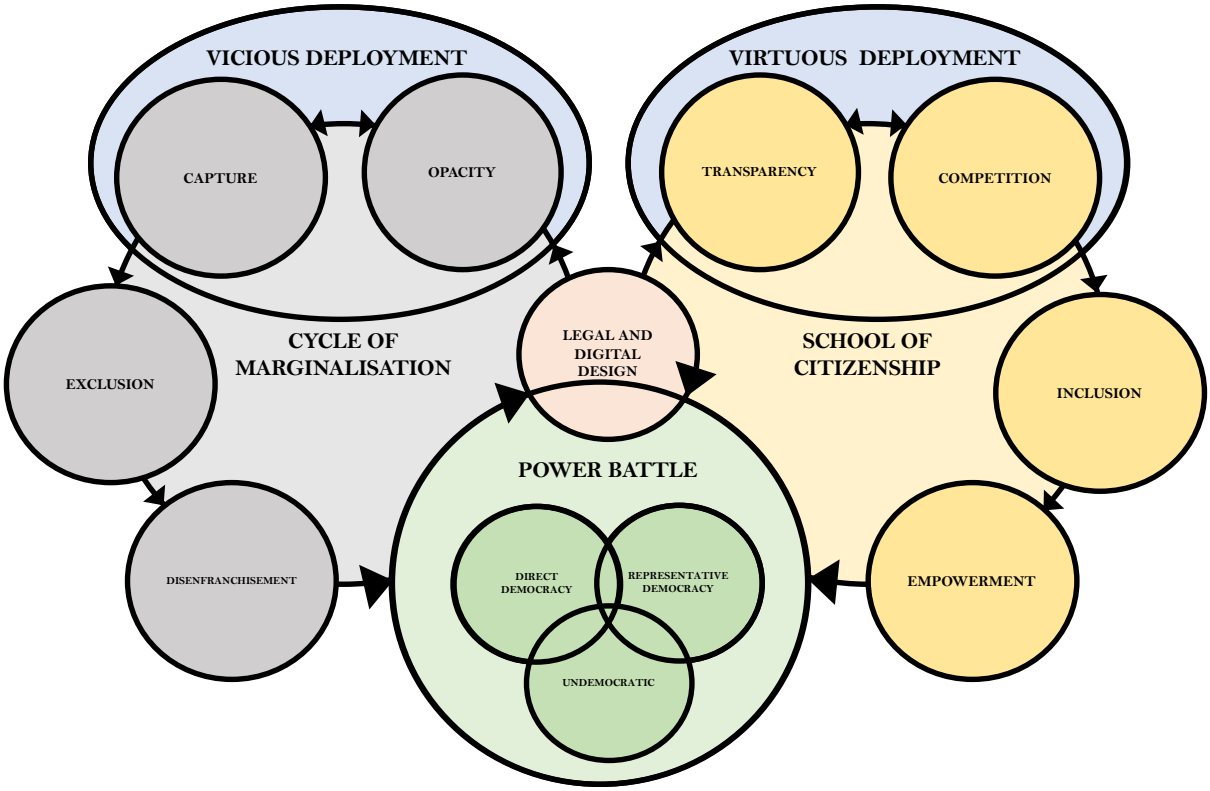
A school of citizenship may lead to enhanced political inclusion in Medellín. Still, this inclusion is unstable and fragile, vulnerable to capture and opacity that may change the pathway to a 'cycle of marginalisation', as I previously discussed for the case of the youth, women and elderly.

Finally, not all power disputes always end up in inclusion or exclusion. Only disputes where decision-making power is kept from an actor outside the agreed legal rules is prone to producing exclusion, while clashes that end up with an effective gain of power for an actor breaching the legal rules does not produce the inclusion discussed in the proposed framework.

CONCLUSION

In sum, as I discussed in this chapter, the power battle, legal and technological design, and deployment of Medellín's participatory budget may lead to exclusion or inclusion, depending on the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*, ultimately resulting in a 'school of democracy' or a 'cycle of marginalisation'. ICTs can change the power dynamics in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, leading to both disenfranchisement and empowerment, depending on their capacity to nurture opacity and capture in contrast to transparency and competition. When placed together, these elements constitute the medium-level grounded *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*, depicted in *Figure 41*, which explains the influence of Medellín's hybrid participatory budgeting process on political inclusion as perceived by its participants.

Figure 41 - A medium-level *grounded framework of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.



Source: Elaborated by the author.

The next chapter analyses the third research question of this thesis; i.e. the conceptualisation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence and association with the Colón Agreement in the view of its participants.

CHAPTER NINE

MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS AS A TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE GUARANTEE OF NON-RECURRENCE?

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, while discussions about a reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process were starting to take place in the city, Colombia as a whole provided the setting for a more ambitious nationwide transformation. On November 24, after four years of negotiations, the country witnessed a historical event that for decades seemed impossible, namely, the signing of a peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP guerrilla. All the Colón Agreement, in general, and the participatory mechanisms included in it, in particular, such as participatory budgeting, are framed as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence in the accord, itself an unusual feature in a peace agreement (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, p.188). As I further explain in this chapter, since the enactment of the Colón Agreement, participatory budgeting has also been ordered as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence of the conflict in criminal convictions against former paramilitary combatants in various Colombian municipalities (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2018; 2019).

The insertion of participatory budgeting as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence in the Colón Agreement, along with its inclusion in judicial rulings against paramilitary combatants, sparks a broad range of questions about the legal and conceptual nature of participatory budgeting in Colombia. For instance, should all participatory budgeting processes be regarded as transitional justice mechanisms in Colombia, or only those that

explicitly are labelled as such or refer to the Colón Agreement? Can participatory budgeting processes implemented in Colombia before the Colón Agreement be regarded as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence? What difference does it make to classify a participatory budgeting process as a guarantee of non-recurrence?

Given the preventative nature of participatory budgeting in the Colón Agreement as a mechanism to tackle the political exclusion at the core of Colombia's conflict, I was interested in this research in exploring the perceptions of actors on the ground about the connection of Medellín's participatory budget with the broader peace process that was taking place in Colombia. Therefore, the third question that I inquired in this research, which I answer in this chapter, asks: *Is Medellín's participatory budgeting process considered as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence or associated with the Colón Agreement by its participants?* To answer this question, I relied on triangulated data sources, such as the legal statutes, case law, academic texts,[60] documentary data, interviews, participant observation, and focus groups discussed in *Chapter Four*. I refer to this data throughout the chapter.

Based on the data collected during my research, in this chapter I claim that, despite the significance of the Colón Agreement for peacebuilding in Colombia at the national level, Medellín's local participatory budgeting process was not mainly associated in practice by local actors with the Colón Agreement during the period studied herein. Likewise, even though there were questions about the harmonisation of Medellín's participatory budget with the Colón

[60] The Colombian legal system follows a civil law tradition. Article 230 of the Colombian Constitution establishes that legal doctrine (i.e., specialised literature) is an auxiliary criterion of legal interpretation.

Agreement during the 2017 change of regulation of the process, its nature as a transitional justice mechanism was not raised. This shows a further rupture in Medellín's participatory ecosystem between the 'law in the books' at the national level –i.e., the formal transitional justice laws in Colombia, which includes the legal implementation of the Colón Agreement–, and the 'law in action' at the subnational level in Medellín –i.e., how local actors in Medellín interpreted and applied the Colón Agreement in the specific case of Medellín's participatory budgeting process during its latest reform–. Ambiguity at the national level about the implementation of the Colón Agreement contributed to a context of legal uncertainty in Medellín. This fuzzy background, part of Medellín's participatory ecosystem, as I noted in *Chapter Six*, permeated the reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in 2017, up to the point that the discussion on how the Colón Agreement might affect the local participatory budgeting process was almost non-existent. This finding questions a peacebuilding process in which local actors are not involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of transitional justice measures.

The chapter consists of two sections. In *Section One*, I examine the legal framework for transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence in Colombia. Although there has been an increase in the guarantees of non-recurrence issued in the country over the last fifteen years, their application amid the conflict and legal uncertainty permeates and hinders their implementation at the local level, as it happens with Medellín's participatory budgeting process. In *Section Two*, I use the legal framework for transitional justice's guarantees of non-recurrence in Colombia set out in *Section One*, as a backdrop to examine its implementation in Medellín, while suggesting that Medellín's participatory budgeting was not associated in practice with the Colón Agreement, nor conceptualised as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence by local actors during the period studied herein.

In the chapter, I differentiate two levels of governance of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence, i. e., it is broader and more general at the national level, but has distinctive dynamics at the local level, depending on the specific causes of the conflict. As I argued in *Chapter Three* when examining current debates surrounding transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence, this shows that the level of governance is relevant for how actors interpret, shape, and define transitional justice measures.

1. THE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE IN THE NATIONAL TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

'A guarantee of non-recurrence is that the killing of social leaders ends,' was Alejandro Aponte's (2017) reply to a question asked during a seminar about transitional justice in Medellín. A Colombian expert in transitional justice, he was answering a query about what the guarantees of non-recurrence are. In his answer, Aponte, A., (2017) pointed out the need to address the structural causes of war to achieve prevention. Although violence against social leaders is still pervasive in Colombia, a broad range of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence have been issued in the country since 2005, in an attempt to prevent the repetition of violence, including threats against social leaders, as it has happened in Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

This section examines the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence issued in Colombia over the past fifteen years, to portray how these measures have evolved at a national level, as a backdrop to further explain their implementation in Medellín. In the section, I argue that transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence have experienced a shift in the Colombian

transitional justice legal framework, from being classified as reparative measures, to be perceived as a transitional justice mechanism in its own right. Still, the implementation of these guarantees over the years has faced the same structural challenge: Their enactment amid conflict, which has affected their capacity to prevent further violence. This raises questions about the value of their application until violence ceases. Moreover, the polarisation between opponents and supporters of the peace process with the FARC-EP guerrilla and legal uncertainty that permeated the enactment of the Colón Agreement during the period studied herein, made the implementation of participatory measures featured in the accord as guarantees of non-recurrence, among them participatory budgeting, more difficult.

1.1. A GRADUAL SHIFT TOWARDS THE INDEPENDENT NATURE OF THE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE IN THE NATIONAL LEGAL SYSTEM

Some authors describe Colombia as a case of 'transitional justice without transition' (Uprimny et al., 2006; Uprimny & Saffón, 2008). Others depict it as a *sui generis* case of transitional justice (Aponte, A., 2008; Ciurlizza, 2012), namely, although some illegal armed groups still operate in parts of the country, in others the rule of law is in place, and the country itself has developed a rich legal framework for transitional justice over the last fifteen years. Four core transitional justice instruments have emerged amid the conflict in this context during the period studied herein: The Justice and Peace Law of 2005, the Victims and Land Restitution Law of 2011, the Legal Framework for Peace of 2012, and the laws implementing the Colón Agreement. These legal instruments include different complementary transitional justice measures to end violence, comprising a broad range of guarantees of non-recurrence to prevent new conflicts from emerging.

As has been the case at the international level, and as I discussed in *Chapter Three*, the guarantees of non-recurrence have changed in character within the Colombian national legal system. In the first years of the Colombian transitional justice legal framework, guarantees of non-recurrence were legally categorised as a component of the victims' right to reparation.[61] Gradually, they acquired an independent nature and were characterised as an autonomous mechanism within a comprehensive transitional justice strategy, affecting their conceptualisation and normative commitments, as I explore in the next lines.[62]

[61] The guarantees of non-recurrence are also a component of the victims' right to reparation in the Inter-American Human Rights System, to which Colombia is part. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has issued judgements ordering more than 160 guarantees of non-recurrence to States party to the American Convention on Human Rights, among them Colombia (Londoño, 2014). These orders imply 'the revision of structures, institutions, legislation, policies and practices of the American States that allegedly do not correspond to international standards on human rights' (Londoño, 2014, p.143). In the judgement nº C-694 of 2014, the Colombian Constitutional Court discussed the classification of the guarantees of non-recurrence as part of the right to reparation in the Inter-American Human Rights System. In the words of the Constitutional Court, 'the guarantees of non-recurrence are autonomous. They do not necessarily correspond to a form of reparation although the Inter-American Court has historically developed it in that way. Recognising this difference in no way diminishes the legal effects that arise from the obligation, at the head of the State, to ensure the non-repetition of human rights violations' (Corte Constitucional, 2014, par.5.6).

[62] I further analyse the guarantees of non-recurrence in the Colombian legal framework in a special edition of the Journal *Cuadernos de Estrategia* of the Ministry of Defense of Spain, about the peace agreement in Colombia between the Government and FARC guerrilla (Dajer, 2017). The issue included contributions of different national and international scholars, such as Shlomo Ben Ami and Alejandro Aponte Cardona.

1.1.1. THE JUSTICE AND PEACE LAW

The Justice and Peace Law was the first transitional justice instrument featured as such in Colombia's domestic legislation (Velásquez, 2018). Its purpose was to demobilise paramilitary groups, although some former combatants from guerrilla groups also demobilised later on under the conditions specified in this law. This primary legislation offered combatants the possibility of reducing their sentences to a period of five to eight years, in exchange for confessions, reparation to victims and their demobilisation (Ambos, 2010; Aponte, A., et al., 2011b).[63]

The Justice and Peace Law explicitly includes guarantees of non-recurrence to prevent the emergence of new conflicts as a particular element of the right to reparation. Some of such measures incorporated in this law include the demobilisation and dismantling of illegal armed groups and attendance at training courses on human rights for those responsible of violations. However, the Justice and Peace Law does not include provisions for harmonising the cited guarantees with broader State public policies, such as those intended to end the conflict with guerrilla groups or strategically with other elements of a transitional justice strategy, such as truth-seeking measures.

[63] The first attempt of the national legal system to define transitional justice occurs in the Constitutional Court's Judgement nºC-370 of 2006, which assessed the accordance of the Justice and Peace Law with the Constitution. The definition provided in this ruling asserts that transitional justice is: 'A concept of justice that addresses the need to achieve the effectiveness of the right to peace in societies in a situation of conflict, but at the same time to provide truth, justice and reparation to the victims of the crimes committed' (Corte Constitucional, 2006, par.4.2.4.).

Consequently, most of the orders implementing the Justice and Peace Law's guarantees of non-recurrence have been the consequence of non-compulsory requests issued by the Justice and Peace Chambers in charge of deciding the criminal proceedings against demobilised combatants (Aponte, A., et al., 2011a). As I previously noted, two judgements issued by the Justice and Peace Chambers have encouraged national and local authorities to implement participatory budgeting processes as guarantees of non-recurrence of the conflict (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2018; 2019).

The first of these rulings was issued in 2018 by the Chamber of Justice and Peace of Medellín. In the decision, the Chamber judged a leader of the *Bloque Mineros* called Ramiro Vanoy Murillo, who operated in several municipalities close to Medellín, in a region known as the *Bajo Cauca Antioqueño* (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2018). In this case, the Chamber ordered participatory budgeting and other measures intended to foster citizen participation in policy-making as a non-compulsory request, called exhort. The order was requested by the Office of the General Attorney, as a measure to repair the collective damage caused in the community by the *Bloque Mineros*, which created a rupture in their social fabric (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2018, pp.2345-2351). In the words of the Justice and Peace Chamber,

> the murder of community members that threatened paramilitary rules affected the behaviour of community leaders, who withdrew their participation in public decision-making processes and political power (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2018, p.2348).

Another judicial ruling in Colombia encouraging the implementation of participatory budgeting as a guarantee of non-recurrence was issued in 2019 against twelve members of the

Bloque Héroes de Granada. In this judgement, the Justice and Peace Chamber of Medellín addressed the collective damages caused by the cited paramilitary group in San Carlos and San Rafael, two Antioquia municipalities close to Medellín. In this case, the Chamber declared that, in both municipalities, the 'processes of cultural and community integration were drastically affected' by the crimes of the paramilitary group (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2019, p.1832). Among the guarantees of non-recurrence issued to nurture political inclusion, for the case of San Rafael the Chamber exhorted the authorities to,

> create programmes intended to foster the active participation of citizens in policy-making, such as development plans, land use plans and participatory budgeting processes (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2019, p.1845).[64]

1.1.2. THE VICTIMS AND LAND RESTITUTION LAW

A few years after enacting the Justice and Peace Law, Law nº1448 of 2011, better known as the Victims and Land Restitution Law, was sanctioned within the Colombian transitional justice legal framework. Unlike the Justice and Peace Law, this Primary Act was approved without negotiations with an illegal armed group. Hence, it did not require criminal proceedings to implement the transitional justice measures featured in the law, such as a program for the administrative reparation of victims and a process of land restitution (Pfeiffer, 2015).

[64] The analysis of the powers of the Justice and Peace judges to issue non-compulsory orders commanding participatory budgeting as guarantees of non-recurrence, surpasses the extent of this research. Hence, I suggest this issue as a possible avenue of further research in the next chapter.

As it happened with the Justice and Peace Law, the Victims and Land Restitution Law categorises the guarantees of non-recurrence as a component of the right to reparation for victims. In turn, this law explicitly includes more than fifteen guarantees of non-recurrence of the conflict; to name a few, the demobilisation and dismantling of illegal armed groups and the strengthening of victim participation in programs intended to repair the collective damages produced as a consequence of the armed conflict.

The Agency for Victims, created by the aforementioned Law to coordinate the measures to repair and attend the conflict's victims, made several efforts to implement guarantees of non-recurrence during the period of time studied herein, i.e. from 2004 until 2017. For example, the Agency's Group of Guarantees for Non-Recurrence designed guidelines for the formulation of guarantees of non-recurrence in plans for collective reparation that must be implemented in several municipalities to repair collective damages (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, 2015). These plans aim to have both a reparative and preventative character. However, the provisions of the Victims and Land Restitution Law were intended to be implemented while the conflict was still in place; this has affected their preventative capacity and created many challenges for the path to non-recurrence (Vélez, 2013).

Among the difficulties faced are threats to victims' safety, a lack of institutional coordination between local and national institutions that must aid victims, and the limited powers of the agencies created by the law to design and execute broad public policies for guarantees of non-recurrence (Summers, 2012; Martínez, 2013; Pham et al., 2016). Discussing the relationship between guarantees of non-recurrence and citizen participation, Vargas (2014, p.167) asserts that, even though the Victims and Land Restitution Law introduced inclusive processes for the

participation of victims, the State's inability to guarantee the safety of victims and social leaders at the local level limited their victims' incidence in decision-making scenarios. This not only affects the preventative capacity of guarantees of non-recurrence, but also creates new violence that questions the value of implementing such measures while the conflict is still in place.

1.1.3. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE

Both the Justice and Peace Law and the Victims and Land Restitution Law explicitly include guarantees of non-recurrence to prevent new conflicts from emerging as reparative measures. Their categorisation as a distinctive component of a transitional justice strategy in Colombia only began to advance with the Legislative Act nº1 of 2012, better known as the Legal Framework for Peace of 2012. This constitutional reform, enacted in the transitory articles 66 and 67 of the Colombian Constitution, introduced at a constitutional level, for the first time, the foundations for a comprehensive transitional justice strategy, later featured in the Colón Agreement. The Legal Framework for Peace authorised the creation of exceptional transitional justice instruments to facilitate peace agreements with armed groups, while guaranteeing the rights to truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence (Suárez & Jaramillo, 2014).[65]

[65] When the Legal Framework for Peace was issued, the implementation of the Justice and Peace Law experienced several limitations related to the guarantee of victims' rights in a scenario in which the armed conflict persisted. To solve some of these difficulties and harmonise the Justice and Peace Law with the aforementioned legal provisions, the Congress amended some of its articles through the Law nº 1592 of 2012. This reform did not change the measures to guarantee the non-recurrence of the conflict included in the Justice and Peace Law. Nevertheless, since its enactment, the Justice and Peace chambers have expanded the guarantees of non-recurrence issued in their judgements, to include a broader repertoire, depending on the individual and collective damages caused by the combatants being judged.

Conflict prevention inspired the design of the Legal Framework for Peace (Congreso de la República, 2012). In the Report for the First Debate in the Senate of the Bill for the Legislative Act nº1 of 2012, the speakers pointed out that one of the most severe risks in the country was the impossibility of guaranteeing the repetition of violence (Congreso de la República, 2012). Even though the Legislative Act included specific guidelines to prevent conflict reoccurrence, for future development in national laws such as the ones intended to implement the Colón Agreement, victims have repeatedly expressed their concern about the lack of effective guarantees of non-recurrence, given the emergence of new organised criminal groups (Díaz, 2014).

The difference in the guarantees of non-recurrence since they acquired independent status in the Colombian transitional justice legal framework is that, while measures for truth, justice and reparation look to the past, guarantees of non-recurrence focus on the future. In particular, they aim to prevent new conflicts from emerging by tackling the structural causes of the conflict. With the guarantees of non-recurrence now functioning as autonomous legal rights, they are intended to be the armour that prevents the resurgence of violence. However, some of these measures are still regarded as reparative, since the laws that classify them as such currently apply. Nevertheless, the biggest threat to the success of these preventative measures is their implementation amid the conflict. As I analyse next, the Colón Agreement includes a broad range of guarantees of non-recurrence aimed at tackling the root causes of violence, one of these being political exclusion.

1.2. A NEW WAVE OF GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE WITH POLITICAL INCLUSION AT THEIR HEART

More recently, the Colón Agreement also contributed to an understanding of guarantees of non-recurrence as a distinctive component of a transitional justice strategy in Colombia. A highly polarised peace process that lasted more than four years preceded the signing of the agreement. The agenda for the negotiations incorporated six issues to be discussed by the spokespersons of the Government and the FARC-EP; these topics addressed the origins, development and end of the armed conflict with this guerrilla group: (i) comprehensive agrarian development; (ii) political and citizen participation; (iii) the conditions to end the conflict; (iv) the solution to the problem of illicit drugs; (v) the guaranteeing of victims' rights; and (vi) the implementation, monitoring and endorsement of the agreement (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2012). The final agreement includes a preamble, an introduction, six specific accords that address the parties' commitments towards each of the specific issues negotiated, and a series of protocols and annexes regarding the cease of fire and amnesties.

1.2.1. THE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE IN THE COLÓN AGREEMENT

The accord on victim's rights on the Colón Agreement features a transitional justice strategy called the *Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Recurrence* (the Integral System). This system combines judicial and extrajudicial transitional justice mechanisms that, collectively and holistically, aim to end the conflict, build peace, and satisfy the victims' rights to truth, justice,

reparation and non-recurrence in a comprehensive manner (Olásolo & Ramírez, 2017).[66] More specifically, the mechanisms are: (i) the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence, which aims to satisfy the right to truth; (ii) the Agency to Search for People Disappeared in the Context of and During the Armed Conflict, also designed as a measure for truth; (iii) the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and complementary judicial measures, included to satisfy the victim's right to justice; (iv) comprehensive reparation measures, featured as tools to address the reparation of individual and collective victims; and (v) guarantees of non-recurrence of the conflict (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016).

The Colón Agreement includes a broad range of guarantees of non-recurrence. In the words of the Agreement:

> In sum, the guarantees of non-recurrence will be the result, on the one hand, of the implementation of all the measures and mechanisms [included in the Integral System], as well as in general of all the points of the Final Agreement. On the other hand, they will result from implementing additional measures agreed within the framework of Point 3 of the Agreement's Agenda, about the end of the conflict (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, p.188).

[66] As stated in articles 11 and 12 of the Law of Victims and Land Restitution of Colombia, the various mechanisms of a transitional justice strategy should have external and internal coherence, in such a way that all the instruments to guarantee truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence are harmonious and complementary. This systemic approach was also adopted in the Integral System created by the Colón Agreement, later introduced as national law by the Legislative Act nº 1 of 2017.

Hence, the Colón Agreement asserts that the guarantees of non-recurrence will emerge from implementing three complementary measures that, collectively, amount to the totality of the peace deal. First, the previously referred other four elements of the Integral System. Second, the execution of the measures included in the Agreement about the end of the conflict. Third, the other points of the Agreement not pertaining to the guarantee of victims' rights, among them the provisions on political and citizen participation that feature participatory budgeting as part of the accord (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, pp.186–188). As such, the Colón Agreement, in general, and the participatory mechanisms included in it, in particular, are understood as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence in the Agreement itself.

In the negotiators' reasoning, the broad range of participatory spaces included in the accord as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence, aims to overcome the patterns of political exclusion that triggered the conflict (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016; Interviewee 18, 2017). In fact, given its pivotal connexion with conflict prevention in Colombia, the Colón Agreement explicitly defines political inclusion:

> By 'political inclusion' we mean the highest possible participation of citizens in public affairs, within the framework of strengthening democracy, and not political propaganda or proselytism (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, p.46).

Ambrosi et al. (2019, pp.39–45) note that the Government and FARC-EP agreed to negotiate the rules to end the conflict and a series of transformations to prevent violence from emerging. However, they had diverse views regarding the relationship between the causes of violence and the armed conflict. On the one hand, the FARC-EP asserted that structural causes

triggered violence and justified the use of arms, such as agrarian problems. On the other, the Government maintained that there were no structural problems that justified violence, but conditions that allowed the conflict to spread through time. This was addressed in the Agreement:

> Non-recurrence of the conflict requires implementing all the agreements reached. The Government holds that these agreements contribute to reversing the conflict's effects and changing the conditions that facilitated the persistence of violence in the territory, while the FARC-EP holds that they contribute to solving the historical causes of the conflict. Hence, they are a fundamental guarantee for non-recurrence (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, p.188).

Since exclusion is one of the main triggers of violence in Colombia, the negotiators created a variety of participatory measures to foster the political inclusion of marginalised populations and, hence, contribute to conflict prevention (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016; García, J., 2017; Interviewee 18, 2017). This is why the agenda for the peace talks included one issue solely about citizen and political participation, aimed to address political exclusion as one of the primary triggers of the conflict. In the words of the text,

> Citizen participation is the foundation of all the agreements that constitute the Final Agreement. Participation of society, in general, in peacebuilding, and participation, particularly, in planning, executing and monitoring the plans and programs in the territories (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, p.7).

The peace process with FARC-EP is not the first in Colombian history to acknowledge political inclusion as a critical element in violence prevention. As I discussed in *Chapter Five*, the current Constitution, which followed a peace process with several guerrillas, also created numerous spaces for political and citizen participation and participatory rights (Velásquez, 2011). Compared with previous efforts to foster political inclusion in Colombia, the Colón Agreement aims to add State political will, so as to materialise these participatory mechanisms (de la Calle, 2013). More importantly, the agreement aimed to break, once and for all, a pervasive link between politics and arms in the country, which for long has permeated institution-building (Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz, 2018). However, with violence and polarisation about the Colón Agreement still present, the implementation of the participatory spaces included in it is a contested issue (García, J., 2017; Interviewee 18, 2017).

1.2.2. LEGAL UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COLÓN AGREEMENT

Besides recurrent violence, especially against social leaders, one issue contributing to uncertainty about the materialisation of the agreements on political and citizen participation included in the Colón Agreement, is the lack of implementation of a provision included in the accord, that committed the Colombian Government to present a bill to the Congress to regulate the guarantees and mechanisms of citizen participation, including participatory budgeting. This bill needed to be created by the national Government, along with the participation of different sectors of civil society, such as associations of traditionally marginalised groups (Gobierno de Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, pp.42-45).

Since the Colón Agreement's endorsement, various workshops, meetings and public debates have been held at the national and local levels in Colombia to discuss this bill. Nevertheless, due to a lack of consensus between the Government and the representatives of civil society organisations, and delays in the peace agreement's implementation given its renegotiation after the plebiscite, the aforementioned bill has not been filed for discussion in the Congress to date (Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz, 2018; OPIAF, 2018).

In the meantime, due to an uncertainty on the legal status of some provisions of the Colón Agreement, questions arise about the legal nature of participatory budgeting in the accord. The Havana Agreement, voted in the plebiscite held in October of 2016, was signed in Cartagena on September 26, 2016, as a special agreement per common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions; thus, acquiring an international legal nature as such. Still, this did not clarify the legal nature of the Havana agreement at the national level.

In fact, when the Colombian Constitutional Court studied the law that authorised the plebiscite to endorse the agreement, in exercise of its constitutional functions, the Court maintained that the decision of the people had a political instead of a legal nature; i.e., the citizen's endorsement of the agreement was not equivalent to the incorporation of a norm to the legal framework, but rather the approval or rejection of a public policy only binding for the president (Corte Constitucional, 2016, par.107).

Thus, before the plebiscite was held, the Colombian Congress enacted the Legislative Act nº 1 of 2016, reforming the Constitution by giving the Havana Agreement the legal nature of a constitutional norm, part of what is called in the national legal framework the *bloque de*

constitutionalidad; namely, laws and legal principles that, although not formally part of the Constitution, are regarded as such for normative implementation and interpretation (Congreso de Colombia, 2016, art.4). Furthermore, the Legislative Act nº 1 of 2016, declared that the Havana Agreement shall be enacted as an internal norm using a special proceeding to secure a speedy endorsement, featured in the Legislative Act. Nevertheless, the provisions of the Legislative Act nº 1 of 2016 were conditional upon the popular endorsement of the Havana Agreement (Corte Constitucional, 2017).

Once the Havana Agreement was rejected in the plebiscite by a slight majority of citizens, one of the issues renegotiated was the legal nature of a renegotiated agreement. Politically, the new text was now adopted as a policy by the Colombian Congress, who endorsed it after discussing it at the Senate and the House of Representatives on November 29 and 30, 2016, respectively. To determine its legal nature, the parties opted for a hybrid solution (Ramelli, 2020). On the one hand, the Colón Agreement was still classified by the parties as a special agreement per common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, acquiring international legal nature as such. Still, on the other, the agreement was not incorporated anymore as an internal law using the speedy mechanism of the Legislative Act nº 1 of 2016 (Corte Constitucional, 2017).

Instead, the Congress issued the Legislative Act nº 2 of 2017, reforming the Constitution to determine that the content of the Colón Agreement regarding international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights will be a parameter of interpretation and a referent to implement the peace accord, always dependant to the hierarchy of Constitutional norms. This meant that the Colón Agreement was not going to be part of the *bloque de constitutionalidad*, while its incorporation in the internal legal system was going to be made through several laws to be

enacted during the year that followed the agreement's signature, one of them being the law on citizen participation previously referred (Corte Constitucional, 2017). In addition, the Legislative Act nº 2 of 2017 obliged State authorities and institutions to implement the agreement in good faith, making it a State policy for the three presidential periods after the agreement's signature.

One of the first laws enacted in Colombia to implement the Colón Agreement, was the Legislative Act nº 1 of 2017, which included in the Colombian Constitution the *Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Recurrence*. Article 2 of the Legislative Act nº 1 of 2017 asserted that, as guarantees of non-recurrence, the Colombian State shall assure the prevention of the conflict. To that end, the cited Article 2 proclaims that the State must 'implement the measures referred in the peace agreement as guarantees of non-recurrence'. As I previously noted, the agreement classifies a broad range of measures as guarantees of non-recurrence. Hence, questions emerge about whether there is a need to enact laws explicitly implementing the agreement for these measures to be legally binding, further contributing to their legal uncertainty. As Amaya & Guzmán (2017, p.58) argue, 'the debate on the legal certainty of the peace agreement seems to be played now more in the political than the legal domain'.

This section examined the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence issued in Colombia over the past fifteen years. They were classified as reparative measures during the early years, but later they acquired independence in the national transitional justice strategy. The implementation of these guarantees faced the same structural challenge during the period studied herein: Their success amid violence, which has affected their capacity to tackle the root causes of the conflict, including political exclusion. Furthermore, whilst questions emerge about the conceptualisation of some of its measures as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence,

the uncertainty about the legal nature of some of the Colón Agreement's provisions challenge their implementation.

As I analyse in the next subsection, for the case of participatory budgeting, the ambiguity at the national level about the bill on citizen participation featured in the agreement, contributed to a context of legal uncertainty in Medellín. This fuzzy background, part of Medellín's participatory ecosystem, as I noted in *Chapter Six*, permeated the reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in 2017, up to the point that the discussion on how the Colón Agreement might affect the local participatory budgeting process was almost non-existent.

2. THE GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE IN PRACTICE IN MEDELLÍN

During the period studied herein, Medellín implemented transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence enacted at the national level. However, the Colón Agreement was put into effect in a context of legal uncertainty in this city. This ambiguity was evident during the change of regulation of Medellín's participatory budgeting, in which a discussion about its association with the peace accord was avoided in the debates at the City Council, whilst its nature as a transitional justice mechanism was not raised. Based on this rupture between the 'law in the books' at the national level, and the 'law in action' in Medellín, in this section I claim that, during the period studied herein, although Medellín's participatory budgeting process was implemented within a peacebuilding context, also characterised by the persistence of violence, it was not linked in practice with the Colón Agreement, nor conceptualised as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence by local actors.

The section examines two features of the implementation of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence in Medellín found in this research, relevant to examining Medellín's participatory budgeting process as a guarantee of non-recurrence in the local transitional justice scenario. First, many guarantees of non-recurrence issued in Medellín aim to tackle political exclusion both as a cause and consequence of the conflict. These guarantees of non-recurrence – often included in criminal convictions of the Justice and Peace Chamber of Medellín against demobilised combatants –, feature a broad range of participatory processes to foster inclusion as both reparative and preventative measures. Second, during the time studied herein, transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence were implemented in a context of legal uncertainty in Medellín regarding the implementation of the Colón Agreement and the persistence of violence. This context triggered a distancing of Medellín's participatory budgeting process from the Colón Agreement during its 2017 reform.

2.1. POLITICAL INCLUSION AS A REPARATIVE AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURE

As I discussed in *Chapter Five*, political exclusion has been at the core of violence in Medellín. Hence, it is not surprising that many guarantees of non-recurrence implemented in this city address political exclusion as both reparative and preventative measures; this means that the differentiation between reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence as distinctive components of a transitional justice strategy is often blurred. These guarantees of non-recurrence have mainly been ordered by the Justice and Peace Chamber of the Superior Court of Medellín, and serve to contextualise how transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence that address political exclusion as a cause of the conflict have been implemented in Medellín.

For instance, in the first of these decisions, which judged seven *Bloque Cacique Nutibara* combatants, the Chamber determined that this group triggered a fragmenting of the social fabric and stigmatised participation, thus fostering political exclusion (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a). In the view of the Chamber, the damages caused by the combatants had a collective impact given that the population,

> was forced to live under an illegal and authoritarian order that altered ties and social relations, rules prevailing in society, trust in the institutions and the possibility of enjoying opportunities for citizen participation and community development (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a, p. 375).

As measures to repair these collective damages, the Chamber issued guarantees of non-recurrence in the form of exhortations to local and national authorities, instructing them to implement participatory processes with affected and vulnerable populations on mechanisms of social control and citizen oversight of State institutions. The Chamber also encouraged the authorities to implement programmes to foster citizenship construction with children, adolescents, adults and older persons (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015a). These measures aimed to nurture citizen participation and political inclusion in public decisions affecting marginalised and stigmatised communities in Medellín. The measures were explicitly framed as a subcomponent of reparatory mechanisms labelled as 'guarantees of non-recurrence', which meant they had the twofold character of reparation and conflict prevention.

Likewise, in a 2016 ruling against a member of the *Comandos Armados del Pueblo* – a group of militias affiliated with the ELN that operated in *Comunas Thirteen* and *Seven* of Medellín – the Justice and Peace Chamber also focused on the collective damage to political inclusion caused by this group. Similar to the judgement against the *Bloque Cacique Nutibara*, in this decision the Chamber determined that,

> They harmed the individual rights of the people affected and the collective rights of the population. They murdered the community members that opposed the militias and targeted community leaders as enemies, inhibiting the participation of citizens in the configuration of political power and other community decisions (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2016, p.507).

As guarantees of non-recurrence for the crimes judged, the Chamber exhorted local and national authorities to foster participatory measures to restore social trust, and recover public spaces stigmatised by the illegal groups (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2016).

In 2015, before the Colón Agreement was signed, Medellín's Town Hall designed a strategy of guarantees of non-recurrence. The policy was issued using data gathered from the population to examine the causes of violence in the different *comunas* and *corregimientos*, the damage caused by the conflict, and the guarantees of non-recurrence that might prevent the reoccurrence of violence (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2015c).

The research results, commissioned by the Town Hall to Corporación Región (2015), showed that Medellín's violence is multi-causal, and political exclusion is amongst the primary roots and consequences of violence highlighted in the diagnosis. In the words of Corporación Region (2015, p.53),

> The political damages identified are based on the existence of an exclusionary city project, but also on fears to trust in others caused by a rupture of the social fabric.

Therefore, the strategy included specific measures to tackle the political damages and causes of the conflict, such as strengthening civic organisations. Some of these specific guarantees of non-recurrence were later added to Medellín's 2016-19 Municipal Development Plan, explicitly as both preventive and reparative measures aimed at fostering security in the city (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2015a; Concejo de Medellín, 2016; Interviewee 5, 2017; Interviewee 18, 2017). The measures do not include participatory budgeting nor discuss this programme as a guarantee of non-recurrence. The guarantees were added in a programme named 'Post-agreement and guarantees of non-recurrence', which does not include participatory budgeting as one of such guarantees. A former advisor on guarantees for non-recurrence at the Town Hall of Medellín interviewed for this research highlighted that,

> The measures were intended to be implemented independent of the Colón Agreement; still, the main risk is that their successful implementation requires the coordination of several local agencies during the conflict in a complex political scenario (Interviewee 18, 2017).

Official Town Hall documents acknowledge the difficulties of this policy, such as the challenges of boosting non-recurrence whilst a conflict is still in place (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2015c, p.72). This view is also shared by the Justice and Peace Chamber of Medellín. In a ruling against twenty former members of an ELN militia, the Chamber addressed the 'risks of the creation of new illegal armed groups in Medellín' (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015b, p.2438). Thus, as guarantees of non-recurrence, the demobilised combatants had to participate in a public act promising that they would not commit new crimes. The Chamber also advised the agency in charge of the process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration to increase the offer of programmes that support the reintegration into society of demobilised combatants (Sala de Justicia y Paz, 2015b).

2.2. NON-RECURRENCE AMID CONFLICT AND LEGAL UNCERTAINTY IN MEDELLÍN

Two main challenges that have affected the implementation of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence featured in the Colón Agreement in Medellín, emerged in the data analysis of my research: legal uncertainty and the persistence of violence. On the one hand, once the Colón Agreement was signed, few guidelines were in place for its implementation at the local level (Personería de Medellín, 2017b). Furthermore, as I previously discussed, the law intended to enact the provisions on citizen participation in the Colón Agreement, including participatory budgeting, has not been issued to date. The context of a countrywide discussion about a peace agreement without specific implementation instructions and provisions at the municipal level in Medellín was called by Medellín's Ombudsman's Office 'an imminent national agreement with the absence of a local agreement' (Personería de Medellín, 2017b, p.29). Consequently, 'there are

few guidelines from the central level to implement the agreement in Medellín' (Personería de Medellín, 2017b, p.29).

In the view of the Ombudsman's Office, part of the climate of legal uncertainty at the local level can be explained by the 'political events that have shaped the materialisation of the agreement' (Personería de Medellín, 2017b, p.29). These political events include a polarised political scenario that challenges the validity of a peace agreement with the FARC-EP guerrilla. This polarisation, per the case of Medellín, includes the rejection of the Havana Agreement by 62% of the citizens in the 2016 plebiscite, making it one of the municipalities with the biggest turnouts against the accord.

On the other hand, although the Colón Agreement ended the conflict with the FARC-EP, there are still other illegal armed groups that dispute territorial control in the country, including former members of FARC-EP that retook arms (Centro de Análisis Político, 2015; Insuasty et al., 2016; Valencia et al., 2018). This adds complexity to previous experiences of violence recurrence in Medellín despite peace processes, such as the case of *Corporación Democracia*, discussed in *Chapter Eight*.

As mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, this complex political background permeated the reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process in 2017, up to the point that the discussion as to how the Colón Agreement might affect the local participatory budgeting process was almost non-existent, as I show next.

2.3. A DISTANCING OF MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS FROM THE COLÓN AGREEMENT DURING THE 2017 REFORM

'This proposal is inconvenient,' affirmed city councillor Luz María Múnera on 22 April 2017, during a plenary session of Medellín's City Council, which had been called to discuss and approve reforms to the city's participatory budgeting process (Múnera, L.M., 2017f). 'It is inconvenient because Colombia, fortunately, is experiencing a peacebuilding process that will deeply change all the legislation on citizen participation,' she continued (Múnera, L.M., 2017f). Councillor Múnera was referring to the provision included in the Colón Agreement that committed the Colombian Government to present a bill to the Congress to regulate the guarantees and mechanisms of citizen participation.

From the moment the City Council started the study for the reform of the city's System of Municipal Planning, councillor Múnera was persistent about the need to wait until the bill on citizen participation was approved in the Congress, before discussing regulatory changes in Medellín's participatory budgeting process (Múnera, L.M., 2017b; 2017c; 2017d; 2017e). Besides councillor Múnera, among others, another city councillor (Zuluaga, 2017), and the municipal Ombudsman's Office (Personería de Medellín, 2017a) also expressed concerns about how or whether the implementation of the Colón Agreement might affect the changes approved by the City Council. Stella Restrepo (2017), representative of women at the Territorial Planning Council, claimed during a public hearing,

> The second point of the peace agreement [on citizen and political participation] is important [to reform the participatory budgeting process], but it is not included in the proposal.

Nevertheless, the Town Hall defended the need to reform Medellín's participatory budgeting process, notwithstanding the results of the implementation of the Colón Agreement (Bedoya, 2017a; Hernández, C., 2017). In an intervention about this issue, the Secretary of Citizen Participation of Medellín's Town Hall, Andrés Bedoya (2017a) asserted:

> The analysis of how the agreement negotiated in Havana could affect citizen participation and participatory budgeting in Medellín is important [...]. However, the law currently in place at the national level, and hence the one the Town Hall is obliged to follow, is Statutory Law nº1757 of 2015.

Likewise, in other intervention, the Town Hall maintained that, in a consultation with the national government, the Ministry of Interior mentioned that the Government would not present the bill on citizen participation reforming participatory budgeting during that legislative period (Bedoya, 2017c). This meant that the city could not wait until the citizen participation law was enacted at the national level, to change the regulation of participatory budgeting at the local level. The absence of a discussion about the implementation of the Colón Agreement at the local level was made clear by Councillor Múnera, L.M., (2017e) in another intervention at the City Council,

> This city has not dealt with the problem of peace. Not only the problem of peace for Medellín in terms of agreements with the FARC-EP, but also the city's need to sit down with all armed groups to build collective peace in the city.

Similarly, during an interview with an expert on guarantees of non-recurrence who worked at Medellín's Town Hall, she asserted that, given the uncertain context and polarisation surrounding the peace process with the FARC-EP guerrilla, since 2013 the Town Hall decided to create a local preventative strategy for guarantees of non-recurrence, notwithstanding the results of the Colón Agreement (Interviewee 18, 2017).

In sum, despite the significance of the Colón Agreement at the national level in Colombia, its implementation was not associated with Medellín's local participatory budgeting process during the 2017 reform. Participatory budgeting was initially implemented in Medellín in a peacebuilding context characterised by the demobilisation of paramilitary combatants. In this scenario, as I discussed in *Chapter Five*, the inclusion of participatory budgeting as a city-wide policy in the municipal development plan of 2004, explicitly aimed to foster the political inclusion of marginalised populations, in an attempt to prevent violence fostered by exclusion.

On the contrary, during the 2017 reform, although participatory budgeting was already featured in the Colón Agreement as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence, the persistence of violence, polarised political scenario and legal uncertainty that characterised the implementation of the Colón Agreement at the time, hindered a profound discussion amongst local actors on the implicit or explicit association of the participatory budgeting process with the peace accord or its nature as a guarantee of non-recurrence. Nevertheless, it remains as a

contentious issue, given the disagreement of some actors about the lack of discussion in the 2017 reform on how Medellín's participatory budgeting process links with a broader national peacebuilding agenda.

Instead of being steered 'top down' with the automatic application of the Colon Agreement, per the case of Medellín's participatory budgeting, guarantees of non-recurrence were significantly framed by the local actors' policy decisions. This shows a further rupture found in my research between the 'law in the books' and the 'law in action' in Medellín's participatory ecosystem. Participatory budgeting processes implemented in Medellín before the Colón Agreement cannot be automatically regarded as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence nor associated with the Colón Agreement. This finding questions a peacebuilding process in which local actors are not involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of transitional justice measures. Political inclusion starts with the involvement of main actors in the policies aimed to tackle decades of marginalisation.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I examined the last sub-question of this research; i.e., *Is Medellín's participatory budgeting process considered as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence or associated with the Colón Agreement by its participants?* To do so, I studied the national legal framework on transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence and its implementation in Medellín, while examining local perceptions about the Colón Agreement during the 2017 reform of Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Based on the data analysed, I claimed that Medellín's local participatory budgeting process was not mainly associated in practice with the Colón Agreement during the

period studied herein, neither conceptualised as a guarantee of non-recurrence. In fact, a city-wide discussion about the connections between the Colón Agreement and Medellín's participatory budgeting process was evaded in the City Council, despite the issue being brought by several actors. This shows a rupture found in my research between the 'law in the books' and the 'law in action' in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, that questions a peacebuilding process in which local actors are not involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of transitional justice measures.

Many questions remain open about how the Colón Agreement may or may not influence Medellín's participatory budgeting process. In the words of Jaramillo, R., (2017, p.5), 'the relationships between the implementation of the peace agreement, territorial peacebuilding and local planning, and participatory budgeting have yet to be built.' In my thesis, I argue that transitional justice is another area yet to be built on the relationship between the implementation of the Colón agreement, local peacebuilding and participatory budgeting. The next and concluding chapter, sheds further light on this study's contributions to the literature, its limitations and suggestion for future research.

CHAPTER TEN

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF EXCLUSION IN MEDELLÍN'S PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS

> We live in an imperfect world, one that will always be imperfect and therefore always harbor injustice. But we are far from helpless before this reality. We can make the world less unjust; we can make it more beautiful; we can increase our cognition of it. We need but to construct it, and in order to construct it we need but to reason with each other and struggle to obtain from each other the special knowledge that each of us has been able to seize. We can labor in the vineyards and bring forth fruit, if only we try.
>
> **Immanuel Wallerstein (1999b, p.250).**

INTRODUCTION

The main contribution of my thesis is to provide a thick description and an analysis of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, in which I develop a medium-level grounded framework that proposes two opposite pathways in which Medellín's hybrid participatory budgeting process leads to inclusion or exclusion; i.e., the *pathways of inclusion and exclusion*, developed in *Chapter Eight*. These two trajectories explain the influence of Medellín's hybrid participatory budgeting process on political inclusion, as perceived by its participants. Furthermore, the pathways proposed illustrate how power dynamics at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, as shown in *Chapter Seven*, are affected by and affect the legal design and implementation of the process, leading either to the inclusion or exclusion of participants. In turn, the interactions between these actors in the participatory budgeting process are also shaped by the context of enduring conflict and fractured participatory ecosystem in which the process is embedded, as I argued in *Chapters Five* and *Six*. Unless this background changes, political inclusion in Medellín's

participatory budgeting process will be unstable and minor, because participants will be at constant risk of exclusion and there will be less participants overall.

Participatory budgeting, both offline and online, could have a transformative potential in the context in which it operates, through the *pathway of inclusion*, until a 'school of democracy' is firmly established. In this case, people learn how to participate in democracy, thus spreading the exercise of political power out among the population. Yet, this pathway is fragile, vulnerable to capture and opacity that may change the course to a *pathway of exclusion* leading to a 'cycle of marginalisation', where excluded participants will find it even more difficult to participate in the process.

My thesis also examines the broader peacebuilding and transitional justice contexts of the Colón Agreement implementation in which Medellín's participatory budgeting process took place since 2016, by examining its association with the Colón Agreement and probing its conceptualisation as a transitional justice mechanism by local actors. In this vein, as I claimed in *Chapter Nine*, Medellín's local participatory budgeting process was not mainly associated in practice with the Colón Agreement during the period studied herein, neither conceptualised as a guarantee of non-recurrence by the process' participants.

Overall, the findings of my research show a gap between the 'law in the books' and the 'law in action' in Medellín's participatory ecosystem, in which national participatory budgeting, peacebuilding and transitional justice policies are questioned by local actors. These national policies fall short to meet expectations and needs on the ground and foster uncertainty and disputes when applied by local actors, enhancing existing power disputes. This account is not

superficial. During the course of my research I found that, at the core of many fissures preventing political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budget lies a structural fracture: A tension between different actors, as described in *Chapter Seven*, often neglected and even boosted by formal legislation at the national level, that intersects the design and societal local implementation of the participatory budgeting process, preventing the inclusion of many participants. As Hernández, J. A., (2017, p.68) points out, 'there is a difference between *what the reality is* and *what it should be* in the design and the actual implementation of participatory mechanisms'. I found this divergence in my case study.

Based on the findings of this dissertation, in this chapter I discuss the contributions of the research to the related works on participatory democracy, peacebuilding and transitional justice discussed in *Chapters Two* and *Three*. Furthermore, I draw out the policy implications of the findings, discuss the limits of the research, and suggest new studies that may emerge from my results.

1. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LITERATURE

This thesis adds to the literature on political inclusion in participatory democracy discussed in *Chapter Two*. Ellen van Holstein (2018, p.41) notes that 'approaches to studying participation tend to accept the formal participatory mechanisms with which residents are provided as given, and fail to recognise how people experience or challenge these'. In this thesis I challenged presumed inclusionary effects of participatory budgeting (Goldfrank, 2021), to explore perceptions on the ground regarding the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process

on political inclusion. In this exploratory research, I found that participatory budgeting could boost political inclusion in Medellín, while sometimes, even simultaneously, also reducing it.

The findings align with Kapiszewski et al.'s (2021b, pp.30-38) three paradoxes of inclusion in participatory mechanisms. First, a double-edged character of democracy, in which, while it empowers some actors, opponents may use the same channels to block or hinder inclusion, as it happened with the legal actions against norms that regulate Medellín's participatory budgeting process discussed in *Chapter Seven*. Second, a State weakness that induces the adoption of and inhibits the implementation of inclusionary reforms, deceiving citizens' expectations, for instance as it is shown by the lack of prosecution of participants that breached the rules of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, as examined in *Chapter Eight*. Lastly, a participation paradox, in which new channels for participation are usually not met with an increase in popular participation, as I analysed in *Chapter Six*, while discussing the high number of non-participants in the process.

In this vein, similar to Nazneen & Cole (2018, p.41), I showed that the design and implementation of Medellín's hybrid participatory budgeting process could either reinforce power dynamics or challenge them. Therefore, this thesis adds to the existing knowledge about design features and enabling conditions that currently explain the success and failure of participatory budgeting processes worldwide (Goldfrank, 2007, p.98), by suggesting a medium-level grounded framework that makes sense of the pathways that may lead to political inclusion or exclusion in Medellín's hybrid participatory budgeting process. More specifically, the thesis argues that transparency and competition in the participatory budgeting process are two major

features that favour a virtuous deployment of the budget, leading to inclusion, in opposition to capture and opacity.

Similar to, among others, Gómez (2007), Urán (2009) and Madariaga et al. (2014), this thesis finds that corruption and violence have affected Medellín's participatory budgeting process; yet, the thesis advances the literature by creating a grounded framework that features a typology that distinguishes virtuous from vicious deployment in the conflictive context of Medellín, providing a thick description of Medellín's participatory budgeting process, in which the actors on the ground are classified and their disputes categorised. This, in turn, sheds light on how they influence political inclusion in the design and implementation of Medellín's participatory budgeting process.

Likewise, in line with Carvajal's (2019) and Velásquez et al. (2020a), the thesis claims that the process of law-making in relation to Medellín's participatory budgeting process is a place where power is disputed. Still, the thesis advances knowledge by showing how clashes between national and local laws regulating participatory budgeting influence power dynamics on the ground. It also provides an analysis that identifies three stages in the legal design of Medellín's participatory budgeting process that show how the norms that resulted influenced inclusion, as discussed in *Chapter Eight*.

Similarly to, among others, Novy & Leubolt (2005), Schugurensky (2004) and Wampler et al. (2021), I found that participatory budgeting in Medellín may act as a 'school of democracy', in which citizens learn how to participate in democracy, with spillover effects to other participatory mechanisms and policy-making processes. This may have a transformational

capacity in Medellín through the pathway of political inclusion, fostering a virtuous circle in which local democracies nurture 'citizenship and political learning, and citizenship learning nurtures healthier local democracies', as it was asserted by Schugurensky (2004, p.607) discussing other cases of participatory budgeting in Latin America. Still, in line with Montambeault (2016), I also found multiple trajectories of citizenship in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, some of them deviating from a school of democracy and actually pertaining to increased marginalisation, such as in cases in which participants were threatened with violence if they continued participating in the process.

Following Sampaio & Peixoto (2014), instead of enquiring about the potential of technological tools to enhance democratic processes, this thesis asks how different designs of online tools and various forms of use and ownership interact in diverse contexts towards a final result. Hence, exploring the influence of digital tools on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, I argued that the technology design and implementation are not neutral and can, in fact, change power dynamics for the better or worse. Hence, I claimed that a participatory design of online tools could foster inclusion by incorporating the views of diverse participants, thus minimising risks of unintended consequences, such as preventing access. This finding aligns with the *agent-technology-process-influence question* proposed by Sampaio & Peixoto (2014, p.414), that asks about the agent's influence in the technology design and use.

Likewise, in line with, among others, Bardall (2013), Shapiro & Siegel (2015), and Tellidis & Kappler (2016), this thesis shows that technology can both influence positively and negatively political inclusion in peacebuilding contexts. Therefore, as per Gaskell (2019), this thesis does not support standings of technological determinism. Hence, the thesis adds to the literature on

eDemocracy by depicting a disparity between the 'law in the books' and the 'law in action' regarding the use of online tools in Colombian democratic processes, and Medellin in particular. Contrary to normative assumptions, 'on the ground' perceptions of online participatory budgeting do not necessarily consider it as transparent or inclusionary.

Therefore, this study of Medellín's hybrid participatory budgeting process shows that technology is not neutral and an automatic positive game-changer in power dynamics in conflictive contexts. Close attention should be paid to its design and implementation for it to fulfil the desired effects. Hence, digital tools can take a variety of forms in Medellín participatory budgeting process that shape their effects on political inclusion. Their context-specific and participatory design is pivotal to foster inclusion, as claimed for other peacebuilding scenarios by, among others, Puig & Kahl (2013), Mancini & O'Reilly (2013), and Gaskell et al. (2016). This evidence favours incremental technology contributions to Medellín's participatory budgeting process (Fung et al., 2013), in which ICTs are not expected to be a radical game-changer in the enhancement of democracy (Fung et al., 2013; Sampaio and Peixoto, 2014, p.413; Fung et al., 2015). Furthermore, the thesis adds to the literature on the use of games in participatory budgeting processes, by exploring perceptions on the ground regarding educational uses of games to counter opacity and capture in Medellín.

The thesis also enriches the literature about peacebuilding and transitional justice which examines the influence of political inclusion achieved by participatory mechanisms to prevent violence, discussed in *Chapter Three*. In line with Gómez (2007), Urán (2010), Gómez et al. (2012), Madariaga et al. (2014), Viva La Ciudadanía (2016) and Puentes (2019), I found conflicting findings for the effects of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Medellín's conflictive

scenario. Still, I add to the cited works by providing a thick description and analysis of how armed actors interact with other participants in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, influencing political inclusion negatively, for instance by threatening or attacking social leaders. However, I also showed how oversight organisations, such as the *Veeduría de la Comuna Six* and *Corpades*, and social leaders on the ground, despite the risk of violence and surpassing many threats, persisted in denouncing illegal actions in the participatory budgeting process for years, until State control over the process through criminal convictions was achieved in some cases, despite violence still occurring.

Furthermore, the actor-oriented approach of this research aligns with studies of the 'local turn' developed by peacebuilding scholars who place local actors' agency at the centre of peace endeavours (Paffenholz, 2015, p.857). Hence, per McAuliffe (2017), I provided a nuanced understanding of what the 'local' means in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. In this vein, I showed that micro-politics on the ground are determinant of Medellín's participatory budgeting on political inclusion. Moreover, my characterisation of the actors that interact in Medellín's participatory budgeting process reveals that civil society is not a cohesive and unified mass of people in Medellín's participatory budgeting. The actors who interact in the process are diverse and cannot be classified in one catch-all category. The distinct categories of actors and the categorisation of their disputes proposed herein, helps to understand the range of participants, and how they interact with each other on the ground. They encounter each other when planning the development of the neighbourhoods they live in or when disputing power.

My thesis also concludes that Medellín's participatory budgeting was detached from the Colón Agreement during the 2017 reform and participants did not deem participatory budgeting as a transitional justice guarantee of non-recurrence. These findings contribute to the literature on transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence discussed in *Chapter Tree*. More specifically, the findings contribute to four issues that I identified in the transitional justice literature as relevant for this research; i.e., what is a guarantee of non-recurrence, what measures constitute guarantees of non-recurrence, their influence on conflict prevention, and the intersection between national and local levels of governance.

As I argued in *Chapter Three*, two main discussions in the literature on guarantees of non-recurrence revolve around their conceptualisation and what measures should be regarded as such. Authors agree on the preventative nature of guarantees of non-recurrence in transitional justice scenarios, while favouring a contextual approach to prevention, as explained in *Chapter Three* (Suárez et al., 2013; de Greiff, 2015a, 2017a; Roht-Arriaza, 2016; Payne et al., 2017; Mayer-Rieckh, 2017). Still, more research is needed into the specific guarantees of non-recurrence within particular contexts, to examine their conceptualisation on the ground. Local actor's detachment from the Colón Agreement shows that both national and local contexts are relevant and could be conflictive when examining the conceptualisation of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence on the ground. Furthermore, the perceptions of local actors matter when probing the categorisation of preventative measures as guarantees of non-recurrence. It might be the case, as it happened in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, that 'on the ground' views of transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence do not match national policies.

Another central question about the transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence in the scholarship asks about their effects. Medellín's case provides three elements of analysis for this question given the preventative function to deter violence though political inclusion, assigned to the participatory budgeting process when it was first enacted as a policy in 2004. First, Medellín's participatory budgeting shows that it cannot be assumed that this process will automatically lead to a political inclusion capable of preventing new violence to emerge. As I discussed in the previous chapters, the violent context that permeated participatory budgeting in Medellín, the ruptures in the participatory ecosystem, the clashes between the local actors, and the design and implementation of the process may influence a scenario in which the participatory budget leads to either inclusion or exclusion. In many cases, it can actually lead to a cycle of marginalisation that perpetuates disenfranchisement and fosters more violence. This is what happened, for instance in the case of *Corporación Democracia* explained in *Chapter Eight*

The second element of analysis is how persistent violence in Medellín influences participatory budgeting and vice versa. Violence permeated Medellín's participatory budget and is part of the broader context in which it operates. Nevertheless, in line with Urán (2009, 2010), although with many difficulties, participatory budgeting may also transform the conflictive context, by creating shared spaces of conflict resolution and dialogue. These spaces may foster trust between the State and the community, allowing the local institutions to exercise authority in areas previously co-opted by criminal groups. Still, this process takes time and the conditions for a transparent and competitive deployment of the budget to be in place. It may be a limited process happening over several years to materialise; this is why it is a pathway.

Furthermore, the case of Medellín shows the critical role of community and oversight organisations in fostering political inclusion. As I previously discussed, civil society cannot be generalised in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. In fact, there is a broad range of local actors influencing the process, both positively and negatively, in all the categories of actors identified. Nevertheless, during the course of this research, it was clear that the vibrant contribution of community and oversight organisations has been determinant to the creation of the participatory budgeting process and its antecedent local development planning in Medellín, and to monitor and drive a virtuous deployment of the budget. This confirms the claims of authors such as de Greiff (2015a; 2017b), about the beneficial effects of a thriving civil society on transitional justice.

However, as a last element of analysis, the qualitative data of this study does show that, in some cases, the process can lead to victimisation and re-victimisation, not only failing to prevent violence, but actually deepening it. This is the case, for instance, in relation to the many deaths of social leaders, as a result of their participation in the process, as I discussed in Chapters *Five, Seven* and *Eight*, and as set out by a member of a victims' collective interviewed for this research, referred to in *Chapter Six*, who was displaced for the second time after receiving threats for her involvement in the participatory budgeting process.

Lastly, the findings of this thesis also shed light on how the relationship between local and national levels of governance influences political inclusion in the process. On the one hand, national laws affected the power clashes between diverse actors in Medellín's participatory budgeting process during the period studied, as discussed in *Chapter Seven.* On the other hand, legal uncertainty at the national level towards the implementation of the Colón Agreement

contributed to the distancing of Medellín's participatory budgeting process from the peace accord during the 2017 change of regulation. In both cases, the policy decisions in Medellín showed a rupture between the national and local levels of governance in the participatory budgeting process. A distinction between the national and local levels of governance is also the case for Medellín's policy on transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence which, although based on national laws, is distinct for the city. Hence, as I previously argued, this shows that the level of governance affects how actors interpret, shape, and define transitional justice mechanisms, including participatory budgeting. Overall, these findings show the need for greater coordination and communication between local and national authorities in participatory budgeting, peacebuilding and transitional justice policies, as I further discuss in the next section when examining the policy implications of this research.

2. SO, WHAT?

The main purpose of this thesis was to understand the influence of Medellín's hybrid participatory budgeting on political inclusion in the Colombian peacebuilding scenario. The *pathways of inclusion and exclusion* in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, proposed in this thesis, show that it is not enough to issue a law enacting participatory budgeting and giving it explicit aims, for this process to attain the desired results. Quite the opposite. The 'law in action' examined in this dissertation demonstrates that more is needed for participatory budgeting to foster political inclusion in Medellín's context, so as to break the cycle of exclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process referred to in *Chapter One*. This 'more' has at least four policy implications based on the theory proposed herein. I discuss them in this section.

The first policy implication deals with the *micro-politics of Medellín's participatory budgeting process*. As I discussed in this thesis, both national and local participatory budgeting legal norms overlook and *de facto* deepen the power struggle at the core of Medellín's participatory budgeting process between members of the LABs and actors of direct democracy. If the participatory budgeting process aims to truly devolve power to citizens for them to directly decide expenditure priorities, the control of the LABs over the participatory budget should be withdrawn, while creating a budget solely for the LABs to decide over spending priorities of the *comunas* and *corregimientos*, in accordance with their legal functions. This problem has led to the participants' call for more budget to be decided outside the Town Hall and the City Council, discussed in *Chapter Six*.

The second policy implication deals with the conditions needed for a participatory budget deployment to change pathways from exclusion to inclusion, i.e., the openness of the decision-making process and the control over budget spending. On the one hand, the *pathways to inclusion and exclusion* show the need to nurture participation in local development planning and its link with the participatory budget to avoid capture. Nevertheless, as many participants in the process cited in this research mentioned, the budget's voting process induces citizens to focus on the money and overlook planning. A way of shifting priorities could be through education, as it was proposed by many participants who suggested to add games that taught citizens how to plan and the connection between planning and budgeting in the tech tool designed for this research.

On the other hand, control over budget spending in the form of transparency needs to be secured, by providing open and up to date information about how the resources are spent, data about the impact of the process, and prosecuting the cases that transgress the rules. This last

issue is maybe the biggest one that needs to be in place to deter capture of the budget, as it was shown by the case of *Corporación Democracia* discussed in *Chapter Eight*. Still, the *pathways to inclusion and exclusion* show that valuable control over the resources is not only the one exerted by the State; oversight organisations, such as the *Veeduría de la Comuna Six*, are pivotal to making the process more transparent and to secure a virtuous budget deployment. Hence, citizen oversight in the process should be nurtured.

Third, the *pathways to inclusion and exclusion* reveal that inclusion and exclusion in Medellín's participatory budget is also influenced by the broader participatory ecosystem and conflictive context in which the process takes place. Hence, the question about political inclusion in the process should be seen from a holistic perspective, in which factors such as clashes between national and local norms and illegal armed groups operating in the city are not overlooked, but addressed with other type of interventions, such as designing and implementing reforms that embrace realities on the ground or fostering the participation of local actors in national peace processes. This is the case, not only for the participatory budgeting process, but also for the Colón Agreement, in which municipalities were not at the forefront of the negotiations and got caught in the uncertainty of the accord's implementation, as discussed in *Chapter Nine*. Hence, there is a need for more coordination and synchronised policy-making from local and national authorities, while local actors should be active participants in the negotiation of peace deals to secure their further implementation and acceptance at the subnational level.

Lastly, the *pathways to inclusion and exclusion* also show that legal and technological design matters to shift power dynamics. Hence, designs that favour participatory approaches may decrease unintended consequences and exclusion by design. How the implementation of diverse

legal and technological designs in hybrid participatory budgeting processes influence political inclusion through time is a promising further avenue for research that emerges from this study, as I discuss next.

3. LIMITS OF THE RESEARCH AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

As I previously mentioned, I am aware that this thesis' findings have several limitations, such as the fact that they may not be generalised to other cases. However, they could provide valuable insights about the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in similar contexts. I hope that this research could act as a basis for further testing, for instance in multiple cases, that may allow them to be generalised, disproved or complemented, so as to continue charting relationships between participatory budgeting and political inclusion in other peacebuilding scenarios. This section portrays three sets of limits of the findings and suggestions for further avenues of research that may emerge from this study.

A first set of limits and suggestions for further research pertain to the methodology chosen. As I explained in *Chapter Four*, during the course of my research I was careful in following the criteria proposed by Corbin & Strauss (2015, pp.362-367) to foster quality in grounded theory, so as to ensure the rigour of the findings. In this vein, I tried my best to capture the nuances on the ground of the perceptions of a broad range of participants regarding the influence of Medellín's participatory budgeting process on political inclusion. Nevertheless, I was not able to capture the perceptions of undemocratic actors, such as members of armed groups, as categorised in this research, due to difficulty of access. Furthermore, although the sample of my data is sufficient from the standpoint of grounded theory – i.e., it is a sample that allows a

thorough exploration of the relevant concepts –, the sample is not representative from a quantitative perspective – that is, from a demographic standpoint – Oktay (2012, p.16). Therefore, this both limits the framework proposed, while also opening new avenues for further research, such as the application of quantitative methodologies to explore the relation between participatory budgeting and political inclusion, based on the exploratory findings proposed herein. Likewise, it may allow for future systematic comparisons between different cases.

A second set of limits and suggestions for further study have to do with the scope and boundaries of the case study examined. This thesis only proposes a substantive framework for political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, closely grounded on the data analysed and not necessarily generalisable for other cases. Moreover, due to space, time and methodological constraints, some issues related with the case study that were found during the data analysis were not closely examined in this dissertation. As I noted throughout the dissertation, some of these topics include the reasons that explain why non-participants do not participate in the process, political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting for the youth, gender dynamics in Medellín's participatory budgeting process and why the participatory budgeting process is co-opted by armed actors in some localities and not in others. Likewise, another area for further research that was not analysed in detail in the thesis pertains to empowerment experiences in Medellín's participatory budgeting process, either at the personal, relational or collective levels. Another issue that emerged from the data but I was not able to examine in detail, pertains to the influence of participants' affiliations to political parties on political inclusion in Medellín's participatory budgeting process. Lastly, the findings of this thesis could also be useful to continue exploring the influence of digital tools in Medellín's participatory

budgeting process, such as in its 2020 version which was solely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A last area of both limits and suggestions for further research that derive from this thesis concerns similar and related situations that derive from the case analysed. This has to do with situations associated with the topic analysed, similar or comparative cases or new events related to the case studied. Some of these issues include the influence of social inclusion on Medellín's participatory budgeting process, the influence of the public hearings created by the Statute for the Opposition in 2018 on political inclusion, the influence on political inclusion of the system to monitor, evaluate and facilitate oversight and control of the participatory budgeting process created in the 2017 reform, and the implementation on the ground of judicial rulings ordering participatory budgeting to be implemented as transitional justice guarantees of non-recurrence in diverse municipalities of Colombia, such as the ones discussed in *Chapter Nine*. Furthermore, another possible study could focus on citizen participation in the creation of the local development plans and the harmonisation of the latter with Medellín's participatory budget after the 2017 reform.

In line with the grounded theory approach that I followed in this research, discussed in *Chapter Four*, the substantive findings of my thesis are fairly localised, closely linked with the empirical situation examined in my case study. Still, I strived to surpass normatively oriented explanations of the possible effects, challenges and relevant design features of Medellín's participatory budgeting processes' influence on political inclusion, to provide a thick and holistic conceptual framework of how different factors and elements that interact with each other on the ground may lead either to inclusion or exclusion in the case studied. Hopefully, with the analysis

of more settings, in the future, this thesis could contribute to the creation of a broader formal theory that surpasses the specific case studied, so as to further advance the understanding of how participatory mechanisms influence political inclusion in the Colombian peacebuilding scenario.

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