

***Youth Participatory Budgeting as a Democratic Innovation:  
Comparative Insights from Finland and Poland<sup>1</sup>***

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**Abstract:** This article examines Youth Participatory Budgeting (YPB) as a democratic innovation through a comparative case study of Espoo, Finland, and Lublin, Poland. Drawing on 29 interviews and document analysis, the study investigates the motivations, organizational structures, and outcomes of YPB initiatives in both cities. While Espoo's youth services-led ManiMiitti model integrates YPB into broader public service strategies, Lublin's school-based approach is closely tied to civic education and the European Youth Capital initiative. Both models promote youth empowerment and participation, yet face challenges such as limited inclusivity, administrative burdens, and event-driven formats that may undermine long-term civic engagement. The findings highlight the importance of embedding educational and deliberative dimensions into YPB design to avoid its instrumentalization and ensure its role as a genuine democratic innovation.

**Keywords:** Youth Participatory Budgeting, democratic innovation, local governance, youth engagement, comparative case study