

Measuring Citizens' Preferences for Participatory Budgeting: Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment

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The project examines what kind of institutional designs citizens prefer for participatory budgeting (PB). It seeks to add to two bodies of literature. On the one hand, it connects to the debate in the legitimacy literature regarding the question what drives citizens' evaluations of political institutions and decision-making (e.g. Arnesen, 2017; Esaiasson, Gilljam, & Persson, 2017; Esaiasson et al., 2016; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). On the other hand, it connects to the literature on democratic innovations (DIs) which studies how the institutional design of DIs relates to citizens' evaluations and willingness to participate (Fung, 2006; Smith, 2009). Previous research in both strands of literature shows that various design features may matter for how citizens evaluate political institutions in general and democratic innovations in specific (e.g. de Sousa Santos, 1998; Lerner, 2014; Neblo et al., 2010; Strebel et al., 2018). Yet, we still know relatively little about how citizens weigh these design features and which ones matter most to them in the case of DIs (for a notable exception see Neblo et al., 2010). This project seeks to fill this gap in the literature by conducting a population-based survey experiment (Mutz, 2011) on the topic of neighborhood budgets (wijkbudgetten) among Dutch citizens living in large cities. We rely on the general notion that citizens' evaluations are based to varying degrees on the input (Who participates? What is at stake?), throughput (What is going on during the process?), and output features of a neighborhood budget (What is the outcome? How efficient is the process?) (cf. Papadopoulos & Warin, 2007). We want to examine to what extent these different features matter for citizens' preferences regarding neighborhood budgets.