Experiments on bureaucrat behaviour and public participation

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I, Annabelle Sophie Wittels, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

For my family who always support in spirit.

For my friends who always support in action.

Abstract

Public participation mechanisms, government-initiated forms of interaction that take place outside the formal electoral process, have been heralded as a potential solution to a lack of popular trust in, engagement and satisfaction with democracy. They have proliferated in their form and use over the last two decades; a development supported by a belief that they help to increase policy effectiveness and promote democratic values. Bureaucrats largely manage public participation processes and thus have ample room to influence their outcomes. It however remains unclear to what extent bureaucrats are responsive to citizen input provided through such mechanisms and what that means for the promises entailed in public participation processes. In a series of experiments, this thesis set out to test what drives bureaucratic responsiveness to citizen input, and what types of government communications can help to increase the number and diversify the composition of citizen groups who take part in public participation processes. In Chapter 2, I use a field experiment with 7,000 bureaucrats to establish to what extent bureaucrats are responsive, and whether interventions targeted at increasing their motivation to engage with citizen input can alter such responsiveness. In Chapter 3, a survey experiment tests how bureaucrats respond when the quality of citizen input varies. More specifically, it evaluates how bureaucrats respond when politicians are opposed to heeding citizen demands, and how this compares to when politicians support policy change demanded through public participation mechanisms. Finally, Chapter 4 addresses the question of input quality from the supply-side. In a field experiment targeting over twenty-nine thousand households, I test whether government communications can increase and diversify turnout for public participation processes. The evidence deriving from this research project shows (i) that motivational rather than time and task related factors drive bureaucrat responsiveness to citizen input; illustrates (ii) how conflict of citizen and political principals causes changes in the willingness of bureaucrats to implement policy and (iii) that behavioural nudges demonstrated to be effective in the Get-Out-The-Vote literature backfired in the context of non-electoral participation. The findings challenge the normative claims of public participation literature and contribute to the theory of the political control of the bureaucracy by providing causal evidence for the importance of motivational and contextual factors in determining bureaucrat behaviour.

Impact statement

This thesis contributes to the fields of participation, bureaucracy and behavioural public administration both substantially and methodologically. It also showcases how an interdisciplinary approach to research can enrich these fields as it draws on psychology, economics and political science. It contributes to the theory of the political control of the bureaucracy by empirically studying the effect of multiple principals and informal control mechanisms on bureaucrat behaviour. The thesis provides evidence on the importance of values and non-monetary rewards to the expression of public sector motivation (PSM). Further, it evaluates claims on the pluralist nature of public participation initiatives promoted by scholars on a normative basis.

Methodologically, this thesis contributes to the study of bureaucrat behaviour and public participation by the use of well-designed and adequately powered experiments. All experiments part of this thesis provide causal evidence where to date exclusively (public participation) or to a large extent (bureaucrat behaviour) only observational data exists.

In terms of practical application, this thesis tests mechanisms that can be used by governments to encourage bureaucrats to engage more with citizen input, without the need of legislation or monetary incentives. It also eliminates different approaches which could help governments to increase and diversify participation in inter-electoral forms of democracy and highlights the need for testing policies before their large scale implementation.

Acknowledgements

When the underlying idea for this project was born, I was still working in international development, advising on and delivering monitoring and evaluation (ME) for large charities and international donors. Most people I worked with were highly enthusiastic and committed to helping citizens in developing countries lead safer, healthier, longer and happier lives. Yet, their passion was often at odds with an almost equally strong concern for "donor demands", and the international and domestic politics which had to be navigated in order to sustain funding for future projects. This tension became especially evident to me when I worked on a project that used a participatory approach to data collection: beneficiaries were given video equipment to document their experiences with the programme, what they regarded as the most significant changes that it achieved and where it might have fallen behind expectations. Despite a clear commitment to allow these people to shape what was reported on the impact of the programme and thus influence future programme policy, there was considerable resistance from many NGO workers on reporting the findings as they were. Eventually they were reported bona fide, but not before many edits and counter-edits had been made. In international development the power balance between the citizen-beneficiary and the NGO-service provider is notably skewed. I wondered whether that would be different in a situation where services were delivered by the government and citizen-beneficiaries had democratic controls at their disposal to enforce greater adherence to the promise of participatory policy-making. My question could not be answered with a simple browse of what Google Scholar had to offer. Even from countries that scored high on measures of democracy and had embraced

participatory methods as part of their routine policy-making, there was little to no conclusive evidence on how the technocrats dealing with such input react to it and what that means for the fate of public participation processes.

Many hours of support from friends, colleagues, supervisors, coffee and cocoa made it possible to work on this puzzle for the last three years. Professor Peter John, my supervisor, has been a patient, kind and consistent reviewer of my work throughout, for which I am truly grateful. When Peter moved from UCL to Kings College London, Dr. Marc Esteve generously agreed to handle my affairs at UCL, even when that meant skyping in from Catalonia, with a newborn baby having recently joined the family. I further want to thank The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), and in particular Dr. Michael Sanders, who birthed the idea of a PhD programme sponsored by BIT, for making available generous research funds. These funds made it possible to pursue ambitious field and well-powered online experiments. As challenging it was to balance work commitments at BIT and those of a full-time PhD, I would not want to miss out on the driving force that BIT was in making me learn how to code with greater speed and efficiency, approach a huge variety of data sets and policy areas. The moral support of my BIT-PhD cohort, especially Eliza Kozman, Sarah Breathnach and Bibi Groot, helped me immensely in staying steadfast in balancing what often seemed an insurmountable workload. The field experiments part of this thesis would not have taken place without the trust that the government employees who I worked with had put in me. Although they remain anonymous in this thesis, I will not forget their hard work and dedication which was instrumental in fielding these experiments.

I am also thankful for my stubbornness that led me to accumulate teaching experience at Kings College London, and for Dr. Florian Foos and Dr. Adrian Blau for giving me the opportunity, despite having to squeeze teaching preparation into the small hours of the morning. With Florian I did not only gain a mentor who is an expert in field experiments and political behaviour, but an invaluable friend who showed me that there was space in academia for people like me. He introduced me to a wonderful cohort of researchers and

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Bureaucratic responsiveness has first and foremost been studied as responsiveness to politicians (Saltzstein, 1992). Classic democratic theory has no place for bureaucratic responsiveness to citizens. According to the Weberian view, bureaucrats should be isolated from citizen demands (Weber, 1978). A pluralist view sees them as one of many elite actors, balancing demands of their political principals, factual truths and technocratic considerations (Dahl, 1982). Early work on bureaucracy, extending in the 1990s, sees the discretion of bureaucrats as restricted by the personal rationality of bureaucrats, control of the bureaucracy by politicians and a critical citizenry overseeing implementation processes. However, low levels of engagement and popular disenchantment with electoral processes cast into doubt whether electoral control as posited in pluralist models is enough - to hold bureaucratic elites to account; to deliver policy which is responsive to the needs and demands of the wider public. Further, increased professionalisation, specialisation and delegation of functions of the state to bureaucratic agencies have made it more difficult for citizens to track and oversee government decision-making (Flinders, 2010).

For neopluralists these circumstances imply that there is a pressing need for more equitable participation, with an active involvement of the citizenry and less reliance on elite responsiveness to elections (Fung and Wright, 2001; McFarland, 2007). Non-electoral public

participation mechanisms, government-initiated forms of interaction that take place outside the formal electoral process (hereafter also public participation), have been heralded as a potential solution to this malaise. They have proliferated in their form and use over the last two decades; a development supported by a belief that they help to increase policy effectiveness and promote democratic values. Bureaucrats largely manage public participation processes. They condense and disseminate information deriving from them. Bureaucrats thus have ample room to influence the outcomes of public participation initiatives. At best, such influence can promote democratic values, citizen trust and accountability, by making decisions more inclusive, fostering broader societal acceptance, supporting transparency and civic education (see Michels, 2011 and my further discussion in section 1.1 for a summary of the theoretical arguments supporting the benefits of public participation).

At worst, discretion of bureaucrats can erode trust in participation processes and the institutions that use public participation mechanisms (see Gabriel, 2017 for a discussion of the role of procedural fairness on political trust). Failing to deliver more access and influence over the policy-making process, as public participation mechanisms promise, could further anti-elite sentiment and anti-intellectualism. Anti-elite sentiment has been associated with support for populist policies such as the Brexit campaign in the UK (Iakhnis et al., 2018). Anti-intellectualism, which has been on the rise in the US, has been linked to a reduction in adherence to medical advice (Motta, 2018).[1]

Yet, little is known about how bureaucrats respond to input received through public participation initiatives. There is a lack of robust evidence that tests the causal link between input and how bureaucrats respond. Existing evidence on the topic suggests that barriers to meaningful public participation are manifold (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001a; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Michels, 2011; Buckwalter, 2014). Low turnout and under-representation of large swathes of society are core to problems plaguing public participation processes. This reduces the representativeness of input

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[1]The so-called anti-vaccine movement has become a hallmark of anti-elite sentiment in the late 2010s.

derived from public participation and hitherto negatively affects its legitimacy. Solutions have been suggested (Fung, 2006; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Bryer, 2009) but largely their effectiveness has not been put to the test. What happens between citizens participating and policy decisions being made is also poorly documented. It is unclear to what extent bureaucrats actually engage with such information and consider using it. It also remains poorly understood whether politicians have control over how bureaucrats act in response to citizen input from public participation mechanisms, or whether they are largely left to bureaucratic discretion.

This thesis aims to address these concerns and to do so in a manner that provides robust, causal evidence. Before launching into how this is achieved, I first discuss questions surrounding bureaucratic responsiveness and public participation in more detail.

1.1. Public participation

Proponents of public participation herald it as a set of mechanisms that can be utilised in between and beyond elections - to "deepen democracy" (Fung and Wright, 2001, p.7). As this thesis discusses, whether such aims can be realised depends on actors involved in the process. However, before setting out the role of the bureaucracy in public participation, what amounts to non-electoral public participation needs to be defined.

1.1.1. Definition and variants of non-electoral public participation

Public participation's aims are based on theories of participatory democracy (Pateman, 2012; Fishkin, 2018; Fung and Wright, 2001). The aim of participatory processes is to increase the responsiveness and effectiveness of democratic governments and their administrations, make them more equitable, increase citizen trust, contribute to broad-based political knowledge, engagement among citizens, foster community spirit and legitimate policy choices (ibid.; Irvin and Stansbury (2004), OECD (2009): p. 13, Olken, Khan, and Khwaja (2016)). Demands

of public participation proponents are akin to those of neopluralists who see a need for more equitable participation, with an active involvement of the citizenry and less reliance on elite responsiveness to elections (McFarland, 2007).

Together with a plurality of aims, public participation arrives in a multitude of forms. It finds its reincarnation in processes with differing degrees of autonomy, power and resource intensiveness. Some of the most long-standing and widely spread types include town hall debates, focus groups with key stakeholders, surveys of citizens and clients, public comment and consultations.[2]
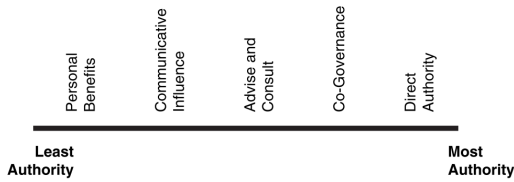
Figure 1.1: Public participation processes: authority continuum
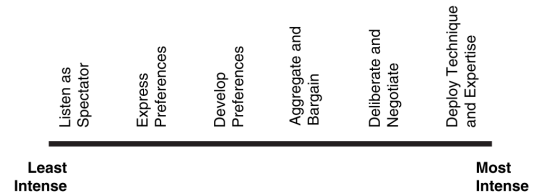
Figure 1.2: Public participation processes: time and cost intensity
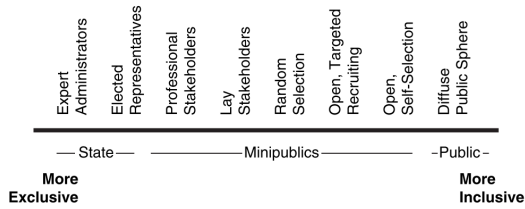
Figure 1.3: Public participation processes: exclusiveness/inclusiveness of processes

Figures 1.1-1.3.: All figures taken from Fung (2006).

Fung (2006) locates different types of public participation, on a spectrum, using three criteria: "exclusion/inclusion", "intensiveness" and "degree of authority/power" (see Figures 1.1-1.3). He distinguishes between the degree to which a mechanism excludes or includes a broad segment of the citizenry in policy decisions. He locates public participation mechanisms

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[2]The OECD (2009) claims that for its members the use of these mechanisms has become so ubiquitous that it is more of a question of *how* rather than *if* developed democracies use public participation.

using mini-publics in the middle segment of the spectrum, spanning the majority of possible engagement options, from engaging only with immediate stakeholder groups such as in face-to-face consultations, to open consultation and deliberation processes that any member of the public could theoretically access if they only wished to do so.

Fung (2006)'s use of the intensiveness spectrum might strike scholars of deliberative democracy as odd. He places forms of public participation such as public hearings among deliberative forms of participation, at the least intensive end of the spectrum, with the justification that deliberation can also involve listening. In the tradition of deliberative democracy scholars, Fung emphasises that the benefits hereby lie in citizens feeling more satisfied and involved, even though they might not substantially contribute to the debate. Such a characterisation comes surprisingly close to a Schumpeterian take on participation, which welcomes appeasing the masses, so that expert policy-making can proceed unhindered. Fung does however maintain that meaningful participation will take place even if not invited to do so - some members of the public, such as activists, will nonetheless find a way of expressing their opinion.

This assertion is rather unconvincing - it heavily relies on the assumption that these activists are equipped to enforce influence. At the same time, defining such processes as public participation is oxymoronic unless one accepts the premise that government-citizen interactions also count as public participation when citizens are given no channel to input into the policy-making process. It is thus questionable whether such processes can be subsumed under the umbrella of public participation as Fung claims.

The next element on the spectrum "expressing preferences", to the contrary, clearly falls within the realm of public participation - citizens provide input in response to government calls for such information. The subsequent three categories of "expressing preferences" appear forced and their application is of questionable use to distinguishing between types of public participation. Fung proposes that "developing preferences", "aggregating and bargaining" and "deliberating and negotiating" form three different types of intensity of deliberative pro-

cesses. They are defined by what participants of these processes decide to do - they simply inform themselves, think through and express informed preferences; a group takes over and polarised opinion emerge, each vying for dominance; or participants discuss and are open to compromise and consensus-building. These features are thus much more behaviours of participants and ensuing group dynamics than characteristics inherent to public participation processes as Fung claims. It might be possible but evokes a sense of unethical social engineering that public participation processes could be designed in such a way that they only allow for certain types of participant behaviour. As a proponent of open participation, Fung (2006) likely did not imply this with his categorisation. However, it illustrates that this typology is not fit for purpose when trying to understand different types as opposed to organic dynamics of public participation processes.

Somewhat more static as a feature and thus better suited is Fung (2006)'s last criterion - power or authority granted to citizens through the public participation process. He locates direct forms of authority at the maximum. New England town hall debates and some forms of participatory budgeting fall on this end of the spectrum. More commonly, public participation processes offer co-governing arrangements such as public (in the UK state) school boards, public hospitals and trusts.

Further down the spectrum and arguably the most common from of public participation are mechanisms that allow for citizens to take an advisory and consultative role. A mixture of co-governing and advisory types of public participation are also commonly referred to as co-production (Brandsen and Honingh, 2016).[3]

This thesis focuses on public participation processes that fall into the co-governing and advisory category. However, the definition of public participation as it is used in this thesis differs from Fung (2006)'s classification in the following ways: While Fung (2006) is not explicit about the requirement that all forms of participation must include active deliberation, the examples he provides are limited to face-to-face encounters between authorities and

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[3]Although, it should be noted that the exact cut-off for what counts as co-production and what not is still debated.

citizens. I however include forms of participation that are remote and potentially digital. This includes online comment functions for public consultations, mail and online surveys, online forums and government-initiated interactions on social media platforms. For one, these forms of information exchange between citizens and governments have become common and are likely to continue to increase in their popularity. Second, in this thesis, I do not restrict the definition of public participation to those types that involve active discussion or exchange of information between several citizens; I regard input from individual citizens as valid participation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the public participation processes studied in this thesis do not have the prime aim - to paraphrase Fung (2006) - of "deriving personal benefits of edification or fulfilling a sense of civic obligation". Instead, governments explicitly present them to citizens and bureaucrats as a means of garnering citizen opinion and information relevant to policy-making.

To recap, public participation as defined for this thesis has the following characteristics: It is a process that is (i) initiated by (local) government, (ii) largely managed by bureaucrats and (iii) has the public aim of garnering input from citizens to inform and potentially influence policy design and implementation.

1.1.2. The importance of functioning public participation mechanisms

A defining feature of public participation is that the results are subject to less strongly defined social norms and public attention which make it easier to ignore their results than those of elections. Public participation mechanisms also allow for a greater plurality of voices and nuance than elections. While this feature is often intentional, it also provides more room for misinterpretation, willful or accidental, as much as frustration and de-legitimisation of public participation. As promising public participation is, it is fraught with difficulties. Indeed, works that discuss barriers to meaningful and impactful public participation appear to be more numerous than those that herald its benefits. Some scholars even go so far as

to claim that in many situations public participation is not worth the trouble. When used under sub-optimal conditions, these authors see public participation as potentially diverting resources from more effective ways of delivering public policy and frustrating trust in the process (King, Feltey, and Susel, 1998; Cheeseman and Smith, 2001; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; OECD, 2009; Buckwalter, 2014).

Trust in procedural fairness has long been regarded as a pillar of political trust, which in turn is linked to a support for democracy, electoral participation and depending on the country, satisfaction with government (Grimes, 2017; Van Ryzin, 2011; Meer, 2017). If public participation processes are perceived as a farce or unfairly favouring some interests over others, they risk exacerbating the very problems they aim to address. Frustrating citizens beliefs in these processes can erode trust and the ability of governments to attract broad based interest in taking part. A loss in recruitment abilities can harm the claims to legitimacy that public participation processes have. Since there exist less clear norms about what counts as a legitimating level of turnout in intra-electoral forms of participation, an inability to recruit a sufficient number and diverse body of citizens can imply that the results of the process will not be accepted by decision-makers, or if they are, citizens will perceive them as guided by unrepresentative minority interests.

Equally worrying, albeit rarely discussed in the literature, there is a risk that autocratic democracies exploit public participation processes to legitimise their policies or retain a public image of legitimacy. While this study concentrates on processes taking place only in countries with strong checks and balances - the UK and the U.S. -, it is a concern that should not be discounted in favour of deliberation as an end in and of itself.

These concerns highlight the importance of arriving at a better understanding of what determines the composition and elite engagement with public participation processes. At the same time, the potential benefits that well-functioning public participation processes can add to other democratic institutions should be highlighted. If bureaucracies are open to citizen input, citizens have bargaining power and calls for public participation have a well-defined

and clearly communicated purpose, public participation has the potential to increase citizen trust, satisfaction and support bottom-up policy change. In turn, this type of change more mindful of minorities and more sustainable than politician or expert-led change (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Cheeseman and Smith, 2001; Bryer, 2009; Buckwalter, 2014). Functioning public participation processes might further help to address and counter-act a rise in anti-elite sentiment (Iakhnis et al., 2018) and ill-placed scepticism of experts (Motta, 2018).

1.1.3. Bureaucrat behaviour in public participation processes

However, there remains a lot of uncertainty surrounding the causal links between public participation processes and these outcomes. Most existing studies are purely observational, many exclusively descriptive and focused on processes only as opposed to outcomes. While these studies can describe the status quo and perceptions of actors involved in the process, the literature available to date is uninformative about casual relationships between bureaucrat behaviour and inputs derived from public participation. Two exceptions are field experiments conducted on increasing turnout in public participation initiatives:

Neblo et al. (2009) finds that U.S. citizens who are typically less likely to participate in partisan, electoral forms of democracy, are more likely to turn out for deliberative, intra-electoral initiates. Focusing on a sample that is more typically associated with high turnout - mostly white, older, male U.S. citizens - Butler and Arceneaux (2015) find that attempts to encourage more of them to sign-up for public participation initiatives backfire. At this stage, empiricial evidence does not allow to state clear relationships between the behaviour of bureaucrats and citizen input derived from public participation.

Empirics aside, the field of public participation and bureaucrat responsiveness has also seen less extensive theoretical study than other fields of participation and elite decision-making. The vast majority of studies fail to theorise why bureaucrats should be responsive to any input from citizens derived from public participation and how it relates to other theories of bureaucrat behaviour and political control. There are however some notable exceptions.

Papadopoulos (2018) theorise that forms of public participation, which rely on bureaucrats working together with a pre-defined and carefully selected group of citizens, can reduce deliberation with the public and reduce the influence of electoral controls. They test these hypotheses with an extensive qualitative analysis of Swiss governance networks for drug policy. Papadopoulos (2018) find that citizen voice is not desired by half of the networks under study, while the other half actively want to consider citizen perspectives. This does not appear to vary by network type.[4] Yet, drug users and residents living in areas affected by the establishment of new drug services were not invited to participate. This finding is reminiscent of the assertion of literature on street-level bureaucracy, most notably Lipsky (1983)'s original work, that bureaucrats use their discretion to select which citizens become the legitimate targets or users of government services. In this case, bureaucrats actively shape who will be granted access to public participation processes, based on their perception of which citizens are legitimate, relevant and conducive to the cause. However, Papadopoulos (2018) do not trace to what extent citizen input - from these selected participants - receives responsiveness on part of the bureaucrats.[5] This is a crucial question for public participation. Selection is problematic, but if the voice of those who were granted access is systematically ignored, the process of public participation becomes a farcical one. To the contrary, if the voice of the few who were selected receives responsiveness, the power of the participating citizenry over the excluded becomes the bane of public participation. McKenna (2011) dwells on this point. He suggests that it will depend on the epistemological stance and understanding of democracy of the (local) governments administering public participation processs to what extent public participation initiatives can play a meaningful role in agenda-setting, policy creation and implementation. Epistemologically, governments will have different conceptions of what constitutes a valid and representative sample of society. McKenna (2011) does not spell this out explicitly but the consequence would then be that responsiveness will be a

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[4]Or, at least, the authors do not comment on such a pattern.

[5]It also remains unclear to what extent politicians involved in these networks respond to input from citizens compared to technocratic advice.

function of the interaction of the epistemological stance of governments will interact with the chosen form of public participation. If citizen input is provided through a large-scale, statistically representative survey and governments believe that this constitutes valid information, they should be more likely to respond to it then to, for example, input derived from small focus group discussions. Governments are expected to be more open to deliberation and participation if they understand these qualities as core to a well-functioning democracy.

However, McKenna (2011) does not distinguish between bureaucrats and elected officials staffing these governments. In the context of this thesis, this is a key distinction to make as bureaucrats are expected to behave differently to elected politicians. For one, it should be expected that the concept of democracy that bureaucrats adopt will affect the political control of the bureaucracy. If bureaucrats hold a concept of democracy that regards the opinions of elected representatives as more legitimate than the input of a select group of citizens, these bureaucrats would be expected to be relatively unresponsive to citizen input unless it was explicitly supported by their political principals. Secondly, besides concepts of deliberative, participatory and representative democracy as McKenna (2011) claims, I would expect bureaucrats to apply a technocratic view to democracy. Having opted into working as technical adviser, many bureaucrats involved in public participation mechanisms might thoroughly be convinced of the advantage of rule by expertise.

Miller, Reynolds, and Singer (2017) discuss such a position thoroughly. They argue for the importance of bureaucrats as arbiters of partisan and guards against short-term interests pursued by both politicians and citizen groups. Apart from the benevolent technocracy that Miller, Reynolds, and Singer (2017) defend, it is important to consider selfish drivers. Expertise is the main power base of the bureaucracy. It would thus be unsurprising that bureaucrats try to maintain their monopoly over expertise on policy-making; one would expect them to challenge the validity of knowledge contributed by citizens. Not only from a purely rationalist account, but also in terms of psychological drivers. Since expertise is closely interwoven with the social identity of bureaucrats, one should expect them to defend

their claim on it; bureaucrats will maintain that their expertise is superior to that of citizens.

Indeed, there is empirical support for such deviance. Several qualitative accounts of public participation initiatives report that bureaucrats hold such attitudes (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Yang and Callahan, 2007; Papadopoulos, 2018). Minimising bureaucrat deviance has been the main feature of work on the political control of the bureaucracy. I therefore next turn to discuss how this strand of literature relates to influencing the degree of bureaucrat responsiveness to citizen input.

1.2. Control of the bureaucracy and bureaucratic responsiveness

The added capacity and expertise of a professionalised bureaucracy comes at an expense; the adjudication of (some) power from the electorate and their elected representatives to an unelected elite (Weber, 1978). Understandably thus the literature on bureaucrat behaviour has long been dominated by studies on how elected representatives can retain control over the bureaucracy. These studies tend to have an exclusive focus on U.S. federal agencies and mostly rely on formal models; more specifically the principal-agent model (Moe, 2006; Bertelli, 2012). The principal-agent model is also commonly used in economics of the firm, where the decisions of managers (agents) on the behalf of shareholders (principals) are studied. In the public realm, principals are elected politicians and bureaucrats are the agents. Early work on the political control over the bureaucracy is dominated by a focus on control emanating from the U.S Congress, the president and, somewhat less common, the Senate (Moe, 1985). These bodies use formal controls - legal directives, budgets, administrative procedures and monitoring mechanisms – to control the bureaucrats running specialised agencies (McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast, 1987; Banks and Weingast, 1992). Most models are aimed at estimating the trade-offs between the costs of using formal controls and providing greater discretion to bureaucrats. More discretion encourages more development of expertise but

also politicisation, which needs to be controlled (Gailmard and Patty, 2007). Costs derive from the need to negotiate, their inflexibility and costs of monitoring whether bureaucracies adhere to directives and perform to expected standards. Strikingly this body of literature largely ignores two central factors: informal institutions and the citizenry as a principal.

1.2.1. The missing principal: bureaucrat behaviour and the citizenry

Almost without exception (Romer and Rosenthal (1979) being a prominent one), the literature on bureaucratic control in developed countries assumes that politicians represent the interests of citizens. This is reflected in a heavy reliance on the principal-agent model. This model postulates that politicians are the stakeholders and bureaucrats the day-to-day managers of state budgets. Politicians have to use control mechanisms to ensure that information asymmetries are not exploited but expertise is used in line with the demands and interests of their electorate. More precisely, the principal-agent model, as used in this field, assumes a chain of responsiveness: politicians respond to citizen demands based on their electoral mandate and the threat of losing their seat at the next elections; bureaucrats are then responsive to politicians who enact laws and monitor implementation. In other words, while citizens might be the ultimate stakeholders, these models assume that citizens give up such principality to politicians through elections. In this literature, bureaucratic responsiveness is thus first and foremost one to the political apparatus (Saltzstein, 1992; Fiorina and Noll, 1978).[6]

This contrasts with work on bureaucratic discretion in developing countries. There the focus often lies on the push-and-pull of patronage networks and corruption which permeates interactions with bureaucrats (Kopecký et al., 2016). Moreover, the adoption of new public

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[6]Some works deal with bureaucratic responsiveness to courts and judicial controls (McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast, 1987). However, they differ in that they do not see bureaucratic responsiveness to rulings as equating to responsiveness to the public. They thus make claims distinct to those made by the bulk of the literature on the political control of the bureaucracy.

management (NPM) - a form of public administration that is modelled on the private sector and encourages greater discretion for bureaucrats - means that job demands of bureaucrats changed from an expectation to be purely passive processors of such information (Hood, 2010). Citizen-centred policy implementation and performance measures related to citizen satisfaction with state services imply that bureaucrats actively consider and respond to the concerns of the citizens they serve.

Typically not discussed in conjunction yet closely related to NPM's demand for more citizen-centred policy delivery, forms of deliberative democracy provide legitimate avenues for citizens to command influence over the bureaucracy (Hood, 2010). A substantial body of work on the personal bias of bureaucrats exists within the field of street-level bureaucracy, those bureaucrats who interact frequently with and in greater proximity of the constituents they serve (Lipsky, 1983; Brodkin, 2012). Proponents of representative bureaucracy argue that hiring bureaucrats who are demographically more similar to the citizens they serve will ensure that bureaucrats are more likely to use their discretion in a manner that represents that very citizenry as opposed to elite groups (Meier and Nigro, 1976; Coleman, Gibson, and Schneeberger, 2011; Sowa and Selden, 2010). Empirical evidence, yet almost exclusively correlational, corroborates such claims (see Kennedy, 2014 and Meier, 2018 for reviews). [7]

While such positive bias might be at play, it is questionable whether a strategy of representative bureaucracy provides for equitable policy-making and implementation. As positive as representativeness bias can be, the opposite, negative prejudice can cause inequalities in service access and provision. For instance, in many instances having a predominantly ethnically white bureaucracy might be representative of the ethnic profile of the population who these bureaucrats serve. Yet, if as Einstein and Glick (2017) find in an audit experiment, these white administrators then positively discriminate for white constituents at the expense of black ones, the system has not become fairer. Much more, bureaucracies should be en-

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[7]Three notable expections which provide causal evidence are a survey experiment conducted by Riccucci, Van Ryzin, and Lavena (2014) and two audit experiments by Einstein and Glick (2017) and White, Nathan, and Faller (2015).

ticed to work according to Weberian principals and treat everyone the same, independent of congruence of their personal characteristics with those of citizens.

Achieving such an ideal is however further complicated by self-selection of bureaucrats into different types of public service. For instance, as Prendergast (2007) theorises, bureaucrats who decide to join the police force are likely to see a need for policing the public. They will be biased against presenting their pleas in a positive light. To the contrary, social workers and teachers are likely to be biased towards accommodating the interests of their clients - children, youth, vulnerable adults. Such bias is not necessarily only based on personal preference as one might conclude from Prendergast (2007)'s argumentation but also socialisation into a professional caste with values that promote certain levels of responsiveness to public demands. Situational biases are also likely at play (Keiser, 2010). Bureaucrats will likely evaluate their responsiveness to the citizens they serve and demands from politicians in light of these values, biases and professional standards. For example, a survey of state employed health care professionals Tummers and Bekkers (2014) find that alongside personal characteristics, whether bureaucrats perceived policy changes to be valuable and beneficial for their clients was strongly related to whether they were willing to implement such policy. There are clearly more factors than formal controls used by political institutions which will influence bureaucrat behaviour and their responsiveness to citizen input.

1.2.2. Informal institutions and bureaucrat behaviour

Informal, or one might want to call them behavioural, drivers of bureaucrat decision-making and action have somewhat been neglected until recently. There is a resurgence of behavioural approaches (e.g. see The Journal of Behavioural Public Administration) and the use of experiments to test causal relationships between stimuli and actions relevant to political outcomes (James, Jilke, and Ryzin, 2017; Costa, 2017; Moynihan, 2018). So far, these studies currently have concentrated on citizen and politician, not bureaucrat behaviours. For instance, some studies established how cognitive biases distort citizen evaluations of public

service performance ratings (Olsen, 2013; Olsen, 2015); others investigated how knowledge about performance ratings influences citizen opinions and voting behaviours (James and John, 2007; James, 2011; Van Ryzin, 2011; James and Moseley, 2014); some more generally look at how citizen opinion is shaped by the media and elite opinion (Arceneaux, 2012; Peisakhin and Rozenas, 2018); others investigate the biases that arise in the opinion formation of political elites (Loewen, Rubenson, and Spirling, 2012, Sheffer, 2018, also see Costa, 2017 for a review).

The systematic investigation of behavioural drivers of political outcomes has been an important step to adapt classic models of public choice and elite theory to become better predictors of political change in the modern world. The fact that bureaucrats have amassed power with a rise in the need for specialisation and a reliance on data for governance (Lee and Feeley, 2016), highlights the importance of studying behavioural drivers of the bureaucracy.

An example of such an approach is the work by Esteve and Schuster (2019). The authors create a model of bureaucrat motivation, which is based on six factors: Three of which are extrinsic and three intrinsic (Extrinsic: pro-social motivation; organizational/group identification and incentives. Intrinsic: enjoyment, related- ness and warm glow.).

Earlier work on PSM tended to emphasise individual characteristics of bureaucrats as drivers of citizen-oriented performance but empirical evidence suggests that they matter little (Esteve and Schuster, 2019, pp: 35-37.); bureaucrats are very similar to public sector employees (Esteve, Witteloostuijn, and Boyne, 2015). Later work more commonly emphasises leadership styles, trust in leadership, job satisfaction and self-efficacy as drivers of public sector motivation – factors that are more strongly supported by empirical evidence (Esteve and Schuster, 2019, p. 38). A recent survey of bureaucrats across Europe suggests that their motivation too becomes more resilient to work-life pressures when they value their work (Esteve and Schuster, 2019). Simply being reminded of public service values might also improve performance (Meyer-Sahling, Mikkelsen, and Schuster, 2018). In a similar vein, literature deriving from organisational psychology and work on care professionals -

mainly doctors, nurses and social workers, many of whom are indeed state employees – has established theoretically and empirically that seeing service users benefit from and appreciate the provided work has a positive impact on performance (Jung, 2014).

This is an important finding as citizens have little to no direct control over bureaucrats. If their interactions and reflections on bureaucrat performance however affects bureaucrat motivation and perhaps even behaviour, citizens might have informal ways of influencing bureaucrats. Formally, citizens can file complaints, give lower satisfaction ratings in customer surveys, approach the media or their political representatives. These channels for citizen power over the bureaucracy are non-negligible. However, as it has been demonstrated in literature on street-level bureaucrats, people who have face-to-face or electronically mediated but direct (e.g. via email) interactions with citizens, citizens can significantly change policy implementation and ultimately policy outcomes through interactions with bureaucrats (Scott, 1997; Bouchard and Wake-Carroll, 2008; Ellermann, 2006; Cohen, Benish, and Shamriz-Ilouz, 2016).

There is thus an acknowledgement that citizens influence bureaucrat behaviour, politicians influence citizen behaviour and citizens influence politician behaviour. Yet, these studies investigate these relationships in turn. There so far is a lack of theoretical and empirical examination of the daily reality that bureaucrats face: how to respond - consciously or less so - to inputs from both citizens and politicians.

It can be expected that bureaucrats will alter their responsiveness to citizen input depending on whether there is political pressure to act on the citizen input. Values, motivation and personal preference too should influence to what extent bureaucrats will exert efforts to engage with and overcome barriers to act upon citizen input. What is more, the perceived quality of such input should affect bureaucrat responsiveness. As discussed in an earlier section, to what extent bureaucrats regard different kinds of input as valid will partially depend on their epistemological beliefs - large, quantitative surveys might be more convincing to bureaucrats trained in natural sciences, for example. However, even if such preferences

exist, they will be affected by the factual representativeness of the sample of citizens engaged in public participation. If public participation initiatives simply replicate the biases in turnout that elections suffer, they might fail to achieve their aims. The next section therefore discusses issues of the quality of citizen input in more detail.

1.3.   Improving the quality of citizen input

Studies that discuss barriers to public participation pervasively note the skepticism and cynicism of bureaucrats tasked with managing these processes and delivering policy recommendations based on their results. Representativeness or more precisely the lack thereof is core to this skepticism. Bureaucrats note that organised interests turn out at a higher rate than minorities and "average citziens" (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Bickerstaff and Walker, 2005). Empirical work further suggests that the input that is provided from "average citizens" still comes from a narrow range of opinions and demographic backgrounds (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Shipley et al., 2004; Bickerstaff and Walker, 2005; Uyesugi and Shipley, 2005). Often citizens are simply not aware of the opportunity to participate. This is mainly due to a lack of resource mobilisation on behalf of governments (Yang and Callahan, 2007). Yet, even when citizens are aware of opportunities, there is a lack of demand for participation, which reportedly is due to a (perceived) lack of time (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Yang and Callahan, 2007), prohibitive cost (Helling, 1998) and low internal and external political efficacy (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001a; Yang and Callahan, 2007; Coleman, Gibson, and Schneeberger, 2011).

There has been little to no work published on how to get more citizens and a wider range of them to input in the first place.

1.4. Structure of this thesis

This thesis aims to address these gaps in the literature on bureaucrat behaviour and public participation through a series of randomised experiments. The following chapters each are stand-alone papers that address questions core to the overarching theme of this thesis. In Chapter 2, I establish to what extent bureaucrats in a large UK local authority provide access responsiveness to their citizens, and whether increasing their motivation to engage with citizen input can increase such responsiveness. I use a large field experiment with over 7,000 bureaucrats to answer this question and find that the status quo responsiveness is notably low. However, using a simple thank-you message and communications that stress pro-social values, I observe that access responsiveness increases substantially. Providing citizens access to bureaucrats – for their demands and suggestions to be heard – is however only a first step. Only if such concerns make it on to the policy agenda and influence policy, they are given an opportunity to be impactful and thereby meaningful. Notably, policy design is traditionally the arena of elected politicians not bureaucrats. Yet, there is evidence that bureaucrats can have substantial influence on policy design. They can thus make it more or less likely that citizen input gets acted upon. This is especially impactful when politicians on their own would not have acted upon such input.

In Chapter 3, I thus assess to what extent bureaucrats provide agenda and policy responsiveness to citizen input when politicians are opposed to heeding citizen demands, and how this compares to when politicians support policy adaptation to address such demands. Taking a behavioural perspective, one cannot ignore the impact of biases on decision outcomes. The study therefore further tests to what extent the informational framing of the citizen input affects bureaucratic responsiveness, and how this might vary in the presence of conflict with political principles. I use a survey experiment with senior bureaucrats from the UK and the U.S., and conclude that conflict makes bureaucrats less responsive and more likely to assume a policy adviser role. Informational frames have no significant effects. While

bureaucrats might not be affected by small changes in the framing of information, the overall quality of information is likely to influence how responsive they are. A lack of representative input is commonly cited as a barrier to acting on the outcomes of citizen engagement and other non-electoral forms of participation. I therefore assess whether a larger number of people and a more diverse, more representative group of people can be mobilised to take part in such activities. More specifically, I use a field experiment to test whether direct mail campaigns informed by behavioural science and targeted at around 29,000 households in a large city in the UK can increase the number of households who complete a consultation and whether the percentage of households from minority ethnic and deprived neighbourhoods can be increased. I find that overall, the behavioural treatments backfire and reduce participation rates. There is however some evidence that households from minority and deprived neighbourhoods react differently to the campaigns compared to majority and more well-off households. Campaigns appealing to external political efficacy might be better suited to mobilise such disadvantaged households. To the contrary, campaigns comprising several messages, which makes them longer and more time consuming to read, reduce response rates from such households. Clear and brief communication materials are thus a better fit for targeting disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In the final chapter, I discuss the contributions of my work to theory and practice, the limitations of this research and provide an outlook for further research.

Chapter 2

A field experiment testing behavioural interventions to increase engagement of bureaucrats with information from and about citizens

Abstract

Participatory mechanisms are now widely used by national and local governments in developed and developing countries. They rely on a professionalised bureaucracy to manage these processes and prepare outcomes in a manner that they can feed into policy-making. Political control over the bureaucracy is limited in this case. Could small changes to how citizen feedback is handled increase bureaucrats' compliance and thus provide the responsiveness that participatory mechanisms promise? This study employs a large field experiment to test (1) whether citizen input filters through to bureaucrats tasked with policy design and implementation and (2) whether bureaucrats' engagement with citizen input can be increased by using non-monetary rewards and value-based communication. It finds no meaningful engagement at the baseline but that motivational interventions can significantly increase engagement.

2.1. Introduction

Participatory initiatives demand "changes that will make our own social and political life more democratic, that will provide opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making in their everyday lives as well as in the wider political system [; it] is about democratizing democracy" (Pateman, 2012, p.7).

Most developed (OECD, 2009) and many developing countries (Speer, 2012; Cepiku and Giordano, 2014) have institutionalised the use of participatory methods as part of local and - though to a lesser extent - national policy-making. These processes are largely managed by a professionalised bureaucracy: state employees in ministries or local governments organise or contract out the organisation of participatory events, oversee them and condense their outputs, which are then circulated among other parts of the bureaucracy and the political leadership. The credibility of participatory initiatives is thus strongly dependent on the actions of bureaucrats. For meaningful engagement to occur, bureaucrats need to at least provide *access responsiveness* (Schelling, 1966), allowing the input of citizens to be heard and considered for inclusion in policy agendas and policy implementation plans.

There exists a large body of literature that qualitatively documents the development and use of participatory initiatives, particularly in South American countries that saw an early surge in their application (Canache, Mondak, and Seligson, 2001; Altschuler and Corrales, 2012; Sheely, 2015; Schneider, 1999). Another strand of literature documents the use of such initiatives in urban planning, mostly in Canada and to a lesser extent in the U.S., Australia and the UK (Font et al., 2018; Roberts, 2004; OECD, 2009). These accounts however remain largely descriptive and limited to the input collection stage of participatory approaches. The few critical accounts that exists are few but come from a variety of perspectives: public policy (Smismans, 2008), international development (Speer, 2012; Schneider, 1999), urban planning (Beaumont and Nicholls, 2008; Reddel, 2004), public administration (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Voorberg, Bekkers, and Tummers, 2014) and from more theoret-

ical perspectives (Mutz, 2006; Mansbridge, 2011).

From a theoretical perspective, Mutz (2006) emphasises that participatory democracy tends to be consensus-oriented, which necessarily implies that a common recommendation must be found. Such a process inevitably thus involves the emphasis of some and silencing of other voices. Bureaucrats have the power to do so by deciding what to ignore and who to heed attention. Mansbridge (2011) on the other hand notes how participatory approaches can be useful in retaining a trustee model of democracy, while making it more likely that issues that are important to citizens are given a forum. This is a perspective that the public policy, planning and administration literature tends to emphasise. Yet, if bureaucrats do not engage with citizen input, participatory processes run danger to achieve the opposite of what they were created to do: they might alienate citizens and reduce their trust in democratic institutions. Do bureaucrats actually engage with information from citizens provided through public participation processes? And, is there anything that we can do to make it more likely that bureaucrats engage with such information?

This paper aims to empirically answer these questions. It connects strands of literature that so far have been discussed mainly separately but are paramount to understanding the potential of and obstacles to meaningful participatory processes. Namely, theories of political control, public sector and more generally employee motivation to present and empirically test new hypotheses under which conditions bureaucrats grant access responsiveness to information deriving from public participation initiatives. Using a block randomised field experiment with 7,532 bureaucrats employed in a large local authority in the UK this study investigates the causal link between different approaches to handling participatory input on bureaucratic access responsiveness. The blocking allows to account for potential differences in responsiveness by bureaucrats' seniority, street-level versus central planning roles and involvement in citizen engagement exercises. Apart from contributions to theories on public sector motivation and responsiveness, the study tests practical strategies that could be used to increase the match between promises and realisations of public participation processes.

I find that bureaucrats are generally unresponsive. Using the established procedure for disseminating information from public participation to bureaucrats, I find that no single bureaucrat engages with the information in a level of detail, which is necessary for there to be meaningful responsiveness. Drawing on insights from the behavioural sciences, disseminating information using symbolic rewards (15% of bureaucrats compared to none) and value-based communication (14% of bureaucrats compared to none) significantly increased engagement. This study shows that despite citizen input being collected, it is not guaranteed that it finds its way on to the agenda of policy-makers or necessarily informs policy implementation. The results are however encouraging in that they illustrate that such behaviour is malleable and can be changed by simple, small changes to communication strategies.

2.1.1. Bureaucrat motivation and responsiveness

The literature on bureaucrat behaviour has long been dominated by studies on how elected representatives can retain control over the bureaucracy (Banks and Weingast, 1992; Ting, 2001; Prendergast, 2007; Moe, 2006; Moe, 2012; Bertelli, 2012). The bulk of this literature focuses on the effects of formal controls such as legislation, budget setting and monitoring on bureaucrats' motivation to comply with directives. None of these mechanisms however eliminate discretion of bureaucrats and in some areas greater discretion is actively desired (Epstein and O'Halloran, 2016; Bawn, 1995). In relation to public participation, politicians might be inclined to leave dissemination of information and incorporation of it into policy practice to the discretion of bureaucrats because of these processes tend to deal with highly specific and often technical matters. Politicians might rely on delegation also for reasons related to credit claiming and blame avoidance. While the inputting stage of participatory processes might garner public attention, how the input is translated into policy action is much more opaque. The politician will be only motivated to enforce responsiveness among the bureaucracy in a limited number of cases. For instance, they might have ideological reasons, there might be personal gain in terms of economic windfalls, reputation within their

party or other important networks or they might be pressured to do so because the input relates to a high salience issue that might affect their future electoral success. There is thus little formal control at play which enthuses the bureaucrat to provide access responsiveness to the input from participatory processes. Economics and public economy tend to focus on rational payoffs as drivers of behaviour (Bertelli, 2012). Electoral incentives however do not apply to bureaucrats and the legal use of monetary incentives to motivate bureaucrats is limited. Rewards that work on the basis of social recognition and positive self-evaluation are likely more feasible strategies to motivate bureaucrats to comply with demands for greater responsiveness. They are expected to act as informal controls that make it more likely that the bureaucrat will act in line with the promises of participatory initiatives and grant access responsiveness.

Symbolic rewards

Since no monetary awards in the form of performance bonuses are attached to engaging with citizen input, expected rewards will manifest in other ways. Symbolic rewards as the term is used in the economics literature pertains to any non-monetary payoff. A symbolic reward often implies social recognition (e.g. being regarded as a good performer by one's boss or peers).

Symbolic rewards ave been employed across settings and seen promising results. For instance, Panagopoulos (2011) used one of the simplest forms, a 'thank you' message, could increase turnout in three separate U.S. elections. Such behaviour does not appear to be limited to the electoral context. It has also been observed in employment settings, which is particular relevant to this study. For instance, Grant et al. (2007) find that employees in a fundraising body of a university receive almost three times as many donations if they are thanked by the beneficiaries of the bursaries and briefly interact with them. The effects were likely driven by increased persistence as treated employees worked for more hours and volunteered for more shifts. offering a congratulatory card, in symbolic recognition of good

performance, to students employed as data entry clerks increased performance (Kosfeld and Neckermann, 2011). In another field experiment by Bradler and Neckermann (2016), the quality and speed of data entry clerks increased when researchers sent thank-you cards to them in advance, compared to groups who did not receive such cards. Similar findings emerged from experimental studies with non-student populations. In a natural experiment with Wikipedia users, Gallus (2015) found that symbolic rewards for editing a certain number of Wikipedia pages increased the long-term retention of newcomer editors to Wikipedia. Bellé (2015) finds in a field experiment that public sector nurses perform better (number of surgical kits assembled within a limited time) when they are promised a symbolic reward (an award for performance) compared to nurses who receive no additional reward.[1]

There might however be limits to the longitudinal effects of symbolic rewards. Bovaird and Löffler (2009) find that the survival of performance-increasing effects is correlated with the public reach – how many people are aware of it – and associated reputational power of the award. On the other hand, in a field experiment in Zambia, Ashraf, Bandiera, and Jack (2014) find that symbolic rewards - star stamps for sales - outperform financial rewards in motivating hair salon owners to sell condoms to their clients. These effects persist over the course of a year. The authors find suggestive evidence that this effect is pronounced for those with high pro-social motivations, while financial rewards are only effective for those individuals for whom they represent substantial monetary gains.

Symbolic rewards in the context of asking bureaucrats to engage with citizen input from participatory activities could be motivating mainly in two ways: they could be rewarding in an of itself (the "warm, fuzzy feeling") or they could signal social recognition and potential career prospects that come with it ("co-workers or superiors believing that they did well").

They are non-monetary but clearly external to the recipient and cause a response. There might however also be intrinsic motivations that do not link to social recognition;

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[1] In another treatment arm, Bellé tests how a pay-for-performance scheme affects performance. He finds that pay-for-performance and symbolic rewards both increase performance, and that their effect does not differ significantly.

something that triggers a "warm, fuzzy feeling", which is also often referred to as "warm glow" in literature on charitable giving and reciprocity (Crumpler and Grossman, 2008; Eckel, Grossman, and Johnston, 2005; Zarghamee et al., 2017). Since there is no external reward such as social recognition, there must be something internal to the recipient to produce the warm glow. In the case of the bureaucrat these are values or social norms regarding their work and interactions at work that they have internalised.

Values

In economics values have long been recognised as factors key to understanding the behaviour of individuals and groups. Values shape other- and process-regarding behaviours alongside more classically rational, purely selfish behaviours (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1998). The literature on the role of values in the performance of public sector workers is extensive but mainly confined to the field of public administration. Research on public service motivation suggests that bureaucrats might be particularly inclined to act in the interest of the public because of certain values they hold (Perry, 2015; Ritz, 2015). For instance, bureaucrats are more likely to implement new policies when they think that they bring value to their clients (Tummers and Bekkers, 2014). Highlighting such values might motivate bureaucrats.

Such findings are reflected in research from organisational and clinical psychology, which suggest that seeing an explicit link between one's values and one's work can improve motivation and performance – a finding that holds true across industries and geographical contexts (Maricutiou, Sava, and Butta, 2016). Highlighting the link between engaging with citizen input and values that bureaucrats hold could increase their motivation.[2] However, correlational designs dominate the literature on PSM, meaning that it is also unclear to what extent public service motivation causes changes in bureaucratic behaviour. Further, not only studies of PSM, but also those investigating values held by the bureaucracy and

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[2]Highlighting the connection between a work task and a goal can increase performance (Jung, 2014). We would therefore expect that not simply due to a focus on values but also as a result of providing a clearer link between task (learning about what citizens need and want) and goal (having a positive impact on society), bureaucrats would be more likely to engage with citizen input as asked of them.

the influence of contextual factors on motivation largely rely on self-reports (Kearney and Sinha, 2012; Anderson, 2010; Moynihan and Lavertu, 2012; Moynihan and Hawes, 2012). Such reports are prone to memory bias (bureaucrats misremembering to what extent they engaged with information; Metcalfe, 2007), social desirability bias (bureaucrats reporting higher levels of motivation as they think this is what is expected of them; Rosnow and Strohmetz, 2015), and poor predictive power because of the intention-action-gap (bureaucrats saying they are motivated but failing to follow-through and engage with the information; Steel and Klingsieck, 2015). It is unclear whether bureaucrats only state that they are more motivated or whether this truly translates into behaviour (actually engaging, responding). Another gap to note is that most work on the link between citizens and bureaucrats uses samples comprised exclusively of street-level bureaucrats. These are "public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work" (Lipsky, 1983). For such types of bureaucrats it is easy and perhaps even unavoidable to grant access responsiveness as interaction with citizens is part of their job. Street-level bureaucrats such as social workers and teachers are inclined to overproduce output in favour of their clients (Prendergast, 2007; Huber and Shipan, 2002; Tummers and Bekkers, 2014). However, many bureaucrats work in planning or policy roles and do not routinely interact with citizens as part of their work and thus feel less personal or emotional pressures to respond to them. However, when political principals explicitly demand responsiveness of bureaucrats, senior bureaucrats might perceive it as their professional duty to respond. At the same time such a duty conflicts with the professional ethic of bureaucrats as advising on policy decisions based on objective facts and providing a counter-weight to political demands that are potentially harmful to society at large or vulnerable citizens more specifically (Weber, 1978; Bertelli, 2012; Miller, Reynolds, and Singer, 2017). They might even be outrightly opposed to citizen participation in between elections. In one of the few studies of senior bureaucrats, Irvin and Stansbury (2004) observe that in many instances senior administrators conclude that public participation is "not worth

the effort" because they perceive it as incompatible with representative democracy or feel that their organisations are not set up to deliver on the demands of public participation (see also McKenna, 2011 for a more extensive commentary on this issue). On the other hand, senior bureaucrats might be very responsive to citizen input when it is provided by a large number of citizens or when their demands are backed by organised groups. In such a case, concerns about the legitimacy of input are likely reduced, politicians will be more inclined to react to citizen input, and in turn put pressure on bureaucrats to engage with it.

Information overload and responsiveness

The focus so far has been on motivation and values but cognitive constraints too can be potent drivers of behaviour. It is however plausible that motivation is not the main driving force behind whether bureaucrats engage with citizen input. In the context of budget cuts to government services, less staff has to deal with a greater number and variety of requests. If bureaucrats do not have the time and cognitive resources to read through a lot of information, the effect of improving motivation will be limited at best. Instead, reducing the time and cognitive resources it takes to process information could increase the rate at which bureaucrats engage with it. Cognitive load theory predicts that while the willingness to perform the task (motivation) is crucial, it will also depend on the availability of working memory to handle the task (Moreno and Park, 2010, p.10). Based on this, it is expected that if citizen input is condensed, so that it is quicker and easier to engage with, bureaucrats will be more likely to engage with the information.

2.1.2. Hypotheses

I expect all treatments to lead to higher levels of access responsiveness than the control. Since a shorter message should be more easily digestible, I expect the shortened treatment to perform marginally better than the control. However, I maintain that changes in responsiveness are more driven by changes in motivation than reductions in cognitive load. Therefore,

I expect the behavioural treatments - the symbolic reward and value-based communications - to lead to higher rates of responsiveness than the shortened treatment.

Hypothesis 1 *The shortened treatment will lead to greater responsiveness than the control.*

Based on promising results from experiments using symbolic rewards, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 2 *Input containing and explicit "thank you", acknowledging their effort, (symbolic reward) will lead to (H1a) greater responsiveness than the control email and (H1b) the shortened and simplified input.*

In line with evidence on value-congruence, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 3 *Input stressing core values of public service – caring for the opinions of the citizens one serves – will lead to (H2a) greater responsive than the control email and (H2b) the shortened communication material.*

2.2. Research design

The study was pre-registered on AsPredicted, a pre-registration platform run by University of Pennsylvania, and ethics approval was obtained from the UCL Research Ethics Committee. Unless otherwise stated, all reported analyses are conducted as pre-registered.

2.2.1. Recruitment

County councils in the UK are responsible for the provision of a wide range of government services including education, transport, fire and public safety, social care (welfare), libraries, waste management and the regulation of local trading standards. County councils employ a large number of staff, with a central planning unit. Front-line services and heads of frontline services report into this central structure. This allows me to test hypotheses both on more commonly studied street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1983) and less studied senior bureaucrats with planning roles.

Recruitment emails were sent to all county councils in the UK. The recruitment emails offered them the opportunity to test different approaches to increase staff responsiveness to input from citizen engagement exercises.

A total of seven authorities responded to the call (24% of all existing county councils). The authorities were all located in England but of varying size, political leadership, population characteristics and legal statue. I evaluated the suitability based on available sample size and time frames. With one local authority, only a pilot trial was possible due to the limited amount of bureaucrats for whom the citizen input would have been actionable. Four other county councils faced budget and time constraints that made participation within the period of the research grant unfeasible.

I then assessed whether the local authority had any on-going citizen engagement exercises that were suitable for the study. Ideally, the engagement exercise should produce results that are relevant for a maximum number of staff and should be high-profile, so that it was less likely that the treatment would be crowded out by other staff communication. Based on the characteristics, one large authority in the South of England was selected.

2.2.2. Study setting

The study took place in fall 2018. The participating local authority has been a strong-hold of the UK's Conservative Party since the Second World War. Its population is ethnically more homogeneous and affluent than the England average.

The local authority comprised several organisations and a wide range of services, which is typical for large UK local authorities.

The local authority (LA) had undergone a change in leadership in the spring of the same year and – like all other local authorities in England and Wales – was focused on re-designing services to cope with pressures brought on by substantial cuts in central government funding. Over the summer of 2018 the LA engaged in a large-scale effort to collect input for a strategy to renew and deliver services over the next decade. The en-

gagement exercise comprised of online surveys, town hall meetings, vox pop interviews and focus group discussions. The authority's engagement team collected the information in conjunction with a marketing agency that was hired for the purpose. The internal engagement team condensed the information, while the LA's communications team edited the report and compiled messages for internal communication of the results. The final product was planned to be disseminated via emails to all relevant staff. I exploited this as an opportunity for a randomised, field experiment.

A few months before the citizen engagement exercise took place, an internal staff consultation on the current state of affairs and pending changes had concluded. Staff could feed back via an anonymous online survey which consisted of open-ended questions and several multiple choice questions, asking staff to rate different aspects of the local authority as a work place. The local authority shared these results with me. The results revealed that staff was highly cynical about previous and impending organisational change, frustrated with - allegedly - high demands and low reward and an insular style of working. Barriers for engagement with citizen input, which directly related to new organisational changes, were thus high.

The LA had planned to inform all of its staff of the results of the citizen engagement exercise via an organisation-wide email campaign. The date for dissemination was picked, so that council leaders had the chance to view draft summaries first, but the information had not been spread beyond the engagement team and a few members of the executive. This meant that the information was new to almost all of the bureaucrats employed by the LA and there was scope for them to engage and react to this information.

2.2.3. Interventions

I compare all interventions against existing ways of disseminating citizen input, which acts as a control. The status-quo way of disseminating citizen input in the local authority, in which the experiment takes place, is typical for the UK and most authorities in developed countries.

Typically, input is collected and condensed by a central strategy or citizen outreach team. This output is reviewed and signed off by senior bureaucratic and political leadership. It then is sent to relevant bureaucrats via email, which often include links to more detailed information.

With the help of an email management system and bespoke website analytics, I track the behaviour of bureaucrats in response to such emails. All emails contain a summary of the main findings and a link to an intranet page that contains more detail on the findings, broken down by area of work to highlight relevance (e.g. Children's Social Care, Transport and Planning). The summary highlights key findings from a citizen engagement exercise that the local authority ran in the summer leading up to the trial. Between 3,000 and 4,000 citizens fed in via online surveys, street interviews, town hall debates and meetings co-organised with community groups. The engagement exercise focused on citizen's needs, wishes and ideas for an overhaul of the local government's strategy that was to be implemented within the next 10 years.

Based on the reviewed literature, symbolic rewards and value-based communication are two interventions that could increase bureaucrat motivation. Importantly, they are also a particularly good fit for the context of this field experiment. For instance, norm-based interventions, which have been popular in several behaviourally informed experiments (Gerber, Green, and Larimer, 2008; Dolan and Metcalfe, 2015; Hallsworth et al., 2016), would likely not increase motivations in this setting. Judging from staff feedback, bureaucrats employed at the participating local authority had very low levels of motivation and were skeptical of any attempts by the leadership to change their work practices. There was thus no prescriptive norm that could be used to encourage behaviour change among staff (e.g. "most of your colleagues put a lot of effort into finding out what their service users think"). Using an injunctive norm - e.g. "you should read the results of citizen engagement exercises carefully as this is part of your job" - could backfire as weary staff would likely identify it as overbearing. To the contrary, using symbolic rewards meant expressing gratitude and appreciation. Such

positive sentiment seemed more fit to win over skeptical staff members and make them more open to suggestions for changing their work habits. Similarly, stressing values with which staff identify is more likely to make them feel that there is a genuine interest in their effort and opinions; that their agency in engaging and responding to citizen input is appreciated.

To test the alternative hypothesis – that low engagement is related to a lack of time and cognitive resource rather than motivation – I shortened and simplified the control message, created by the LA's communications team.

2.2.4. Outcomes

Primary outcome measures (individual - behavioural)

The study measures access responsiveness of bureaucrats. Bureaucrats reading and engaging with information from citizens is the necessary first step to be responsive to them. As discussed earlier, most studies looking into motivation of bureaucrats rely on self-reports. This study improves on that by using a behavioural measure that is free of such biases. The pre-registered primary outcome is a binary variable that is one when a person clicked on the link contained within the email to read and engage with the citizen input and zero when they did not click on it.

$$Y_i \in [0, 1] \text{ , where } Y_i = 1 \text{ when link clicked, } Y_i = 0 \tag{2.1}$$

For the secondary outcome, a more granular distinction is used. A scale variable is created, which is zero when the person did not even open the email, one when they opened it, two when they also clicked on the link and three when they spent more than one minute exploring the information on the webpages. Browsing time is recorded as active browsing for ≥ 1 minute since this provides for a time window that is (i) long enough to distinguish it from simply accidentally clicking on a tab or opening a page and (ii) long enough to

navigate to relevant areas and process keywords relevant to one's area of work. While more granular measures of browsing time might have added to the analysis, this was not technically possible at this time. The outcome measure implies the logic that the more steps a bureaucrat completes to engage with the information at a deeper level, the more access responsiveness is given. Since every step requires additional effort, it is also implied that the more steps a bureaucrat completes, the more motivated they are.

$$Y_i \in [0, 1, 2, 3] \text{ , where} \tag{2.2}$$

$Y_i = 0$ when E-Mail *not* opened,

$Y_i = 1$ when opened,

$Y_i = 2$ when opened & link clicked

$Y_i = 3$ when opened & link clicked & report read

Since using a scale means that distances on the scale are chosen somewhat arbitrary, I also convert the scale to Z-score as a robustness check & improved interpretability in the analysis. I find no difference in results.

Budget allocation measures (organisational - behavioural)

The outcomes observed immediately by this experiment regard access responsiveness: whether bureaucrats actually look at and read the information provided by citizens. A pressing question is however to what extent such access responsiveness will translate into substantive changes to policy-making. Literature on bureaucratic agencies typically looks at budget allocation as a measure of discretion and independence from political mandate (Ting, 2001). Those that investigate the influence of citizens on budgets only find very limited effects (Boulding and Wampler, 2010; Guo and Neshkova, 2012; Cohen, Benish, and Shamriz-Ilouz, 2016). Decision-making in bureaucracies is collective and involves difficult trade-offs between technical and political considerations. Hierarchies result in some groups of bureaucrats hav-

ing substantially more power over decisions at the organisational level than others. How much power individual bureaucrats yield over budgets is thus likely highly limited. What is more local government such as the one under study face the added difficulty that part of their budget is centrally determined and earmarked for certain purposes. While they can lobby for changes based on local needs, this is a long-term process and changes following citizen input are likely to be delayed and conflated with results achieved through electing politicians into central government who vouch for the same changes. Bureaucrats can however build internal pressure by supporting (or opposing) alignment with citizen input and dissenting through their service delivery and design within the remit of existing budgets. Therefore, to gain a tentative understanding how an increase in bureaucrats knowing about the preferences of their citizen-stakeholders might affect budget allocation, I look at two variables: changes in budget per key service area and whether these changes converged towards preferences expressed by the citizen input.

Budget change is defined as

$$\Delta B_{si} = B_{sit+1} - B_{sit} \tag{2.3}$$

s is the key service areas within directorate k in which bureaucrat i works

t is the time period in which the experiment takes place and input is disseminated to bureaucrat i

$t+1$ is the next budget period, which follows after the experiment

Since citizen input in this trial always requested *more* funding for certain areas, budget convergence is defined as: a binary variable defined as zero when budget in a key service area (s) decreases between 2018/19 (t) and 2019/20 (t+1) when the area was identified as priority area; or when budget increased and the area was *not* defined as a priority area. Budget convergence is set as one when the budget increases for an area (s) that was identified

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as a priority area.

$$C_{si} \in [0, 1] \tag{2.4}$$

$$C_{si}(0)|B_{sit+1} \leq B_{sit}, s(1) \vee B_{sit+1} > B_{sit}, s(0) \tag{2.5}$$

$$C_{si}(1)|B_{sit+1} > B_{sit}, s(1) \tag{2.6}$$

C_{si} denotes the presence/absence of convergence in key service area

s, in which bureaucrat i works s is the key service area to which

a sub-budget is allocated by the local government,

and which citizens can identify as a priority area $s(1)$ or not $s(0)$

Arguably, convergence could also be present when budgets get cut for areas that were not identified as priorities in the citizen input. However, there were no clear calls for cuts and a shift towards priorities would only take place when the budget cut elsewhere would be shifted to priority areas. Therefore, I only set convergence as present when budget increases for priority areas. As a robustness check, I run additional analyses with convergence set to one also when non-priority areas experience cuts. Later sections will demonstrate that this does not change conclusions.

Survey measures (individual - reported)

As this is the first study known to the author, which assesses the motivational drivers of bureaucrat behaviour to engage with citizen input in a causal way, a follow-up survey was conducted two months after exposure to the treatment. The purpose of this survey was to (i) test whether bureaucrats recalled the information correctly, (ii) whether they used the information for policy design or implementation and (iv) to identify facilitating factors and barriers to using citizen input. The survey consisted of 12 questions: two recall questions, two questions on using the citizen input, three questions on motivation, three on barriers and

two questions on demographic information.

2.2.5. Analysis approach

As pre-registered, I use an OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks and heteroscedasticity-consistent (HC2) standard errors to estimate the average treatment effects and repeat the same analysis using a logit model.

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 T_i + \Gamma A_i + \varepsilon_i \tag{2.7}$$

Y_i is the response of bureaucrat i.

T_i is a vector of binary variables that indicate which treatment the bureaucrat i has been assigned to. The control is always set to zero.

A_i is a vector of binary blocking variables for bureaucrat i based on their area of work, previous involvement in the participation exercise and managerial level.

ε is the error term for bureaucrat i.

Analysis of budgets

Budget figures are obtained from the local government website. They show the amount of budget located to each directorate and so-called key services that fall under the directorate. Using an instrumental variable (IV) approach, I test whether reading the citizen input $Y_i(3)$ has an effect on budget changes and budget convergence, as defined above. Since directorates employee vastly different numbers of people, I expect that directorates with more employees participating in the trial have a greater chance of change because more people could have seen the information and lobbied for greater allocations to the area. Unrelated to this, it is also possible that directorates who employee people experience different year-to-year changes in budgets than smaller ones. As mentioned before, local governments are also restricted

in their ability to shift budgets because some grants they receive from central government are ear-marked for specific purposes. This typically happens at the directorate level, so that local governments can still change allocations within the directorate. Yet, they might feel greater or less lease to make adjustments based on citizen input when the money comes from local taxes as opposed to central government funds. Analyses should therefore also account for the amount of central government funding available for each directorate. The following two-stage least squares model will be used to estimate the effect of reading citizen input on budget allocation. Note that the first step (creation of the instrument) is the same for both outcome variables and will only be reported once below.

First stage:

$$\hat{Y}_i = \alpha 0 + \alpha 1 T_i + \Gamma A_{ki} + \varepsilon_i \tag{2.8}$$

Second stage (budget change):

$$B_{si} = \beta 0 + \beta 1 \hat{Y}_i + \gamma 0 \log n_{kt} + \gamma 1 P_s + \delta M_{k_t+1} + \varepsilon_i \tag{2.9}$$

Since it is plausible that only bureaucrats who have read the citizen input *and* who work in a priority area will feel compelled to act on it, I will in addition test a second model, where I interact the instrument with the presence/absence of a priority.

Second stage (budget change - with interaction):

$$B_{si} = \beta 0 + \beta 1 \hat{Y}_i + \gamma 0 \log n_{kt} + \gamma 1 P_s + \gamma 2 P_s \times \hat{Y}_i + \delta M_{k_{t+1}} + \varepsilon_i \qquad (2.10)$$

This is not necessary when looking at convergence since the variable is defined

Second stage (budget convergence): $\qquad\qquad\qquad$ (2.11)

$$C_{si} = \beta 0 + \beta 1 \hat{Y}_i + \gamma \log n_{kt} + \delta M_{k_{t+1}} + \varepsilon_i \qquad\qquad (2.12)$$

$\hat{Y}_i$ is the predicted response of bureaucrat i based on treatment assignment T_i

T_i is a vector of binary variables that indicate which treatment the bureaucrat i has been assigned to. The control is always set to zero.

A_i is a vector of binary blocking variables for bureaucrat i based on their area of work, previous involvement in the participation exercise and managerial level.

n_{kt} is the number of employees in directorate k, in year t when decisions are made about budgets in year

P_s is a binary variable which is one when the key service area s was identified as a priority area through c

M_k is the amount available via central government funding for directorate k in year t+1.ε is the error ter

Since it is possible that

2.2.6. Participants and randomisation strategy

Participants of the field experiment were staff employed by the local authority. A total of 16,013 individuals are registered in the local authority's HR database. The study aimed to target bureaucrats who are – albeit to varying degrees – involved in the design and planning of local policies. This meant that 3,498 staff were removed from lists as they worked in

unrelated functions – e.g. drivers, cleaning and catering services – and did not use email on a regular basis for their work. Another 4,988 were on short-term, probationary or casual contracts, meaning that they were less likely to be involved in planning activities: either because they had joined only recently (probationary contracts) or were hired to complete already pre-specified tasks (short-term and casual contracts). Such contract-types also had a higher likelihood of having out-of-date email addresses. Therefore, these contacts were removed from the list before randomisation. Four contacts of senior executives were added as they had not been included in the original email list obtained from HR. The final list of employees eligible for participation in the trial thus consisted of 7,532 employees.

The study used blocked (stratified) randomised assignment. The list of 7,532 eligible bureaucrats was randomised into four arms with three stratification variables (blocks) of two levels each: (i) managerial level (manager, no manager), (ii) central planning vs. street-level function and (iii) previous exposure to the citizen engagement effort (previously exposed, not exposed). The stratification variables were chosen based on the expectation that they would influence treatment effects.

It is possible that managers will react differently to the intervention compared to people with non-managerial roles. Managers are tasked with designing team strategies to achieve organisational goals; they might therefore face greater pressures to incorporate citizen input than persons who are less involved in planning activities.

However, pay grades did not necessarily respond to the degree of responsibility that is awarded to a person. Following discussions with the authority's HR team, I determined that role descriptors provided a better proxy for managerial responsibilities. People were classified as having a managerial role if their role descriptors included any of the following words or abbreviations: "manager", "senior", "snr" and – unless it was paired with "assistant – the words "executive" and "exec". The dataset was manually checked for other abbreviations, in order to assure that these captured all markers of managerial level and seniority. A total of 2,194 persons were of managerial rank (29% of the eligible contacts).

It is also expected that people employed in more local and frontline services (street-level bureaucrats) might react differently to input from citizens compared to those working in more centralised design and planning functions. They might be more inclined to engage because they are more exposed to citizens in their everyday work and therefore perceive citizen opinion to be more relevant to their work. On the other hand, they might be less inclined to explore such information because they already feel they are informed enough through face-to-face interactions.

People were classified into working for central functions or more peripheral/frontline functions based on their registered location of work. The local authority's strategy, budgeting, planning and other central functions at the time of the trial were all located in the county hall. A total of 1,491 people (20% of the sample) worked in this central location while 6,073 worked in other functions across the local government area.

Most local governments manage citizen engagement exercises internally. This was also the case with the local authority taking part in the experiment. It is therefore expected that several people will have preliminary information about the citizen engagement exercise. Since they were involved early on, they might be more invested in the cause and thus more likely to respond to the treatment. To the contrary, they might be less likely to engage with further input, because they feel already informed enough. A total of 54 persons had been exposed to information pertaining to the citizen engagement exercise before the trial (0.71% of the sample). Table 2.1 shows the number of observations allocated to each condition by block. For the full randomisation code, please refer to section 2.5.

2.2.7. Implementation

The interventions were all distributed via emails using an email distribution client regularly used for internal communications across the authority. The sender for all of these emails was an executive director. All emails were sent on the same day, at the same time. Open and click activity was recorded through HTML and java script code embedded in the emails, and

Table 2.1: Balance table for blocked (stratified) randomisation

			Control	Shortened	Value	Symbolic
previous exposure	not exposed	percentage	25%	25%	25%	25%
		N	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,878
	exposed	percentage	25%	25%	25%	25%
		N	14	14	13	13
job level	not managerial	percentage	25%	25%	25%	25%
		N	1,343	1,343	1,342	1,342
	managerial	percentage	25%	25%	25%	25%
		N	549	549	549	547
job location	not central	percentage	25%	25%	25%	25%
		N	1,519	1,519	1,518	1,517
	central	percentage	25%	25%	25%	25%
		N	373	373	373	372

automatically registered by the email client. Website activity was recorded through website analytics already in place for all intranet pages of the local authority. A special parameter was added to the URLs of relevant intranet pages, which meant that the unique ID of each of the emails was recorded. This made it possible to track whether an individual bureaucrat (i) opened the email, (ii) clicked on the link and (iii) to what extent they browsed the relevant intranet pages.

Firewall and email settings can block the java script code included in the experimental emails, meaning that opens and clicks are not tracked. However, the unique ID embedded in the URL can still be registered by the website analytics of the intranet pages. As the intranet pages cannot be accessed without this URL, one can safely assume that someone who was registered visiting the intranet page must have also opened the email and clicked on the link. This means that for observations, were opens and clicks failed to be recorded but activity on the intranet pages was recorded, opens and clicks can be set to one. This was the case for 292 participants (3.87% of the sample).

Emails can bounce due to out-of-date email addresses or technical issues. The

email client used for this study captures such bounces. There was one-sided non-compliance: 1% of participants were never-takers because the emails bounced. The analysis will therefore be presented as an estimation of the Intention-to-Treat (ITT) effect first.[3] Because of the low non-compliance rate, I will not estimate the complier average causal effect (CACE). [4] In the first week of December, two months after the treatment was administered, all participants received an email that contained a link to a short survey and their anonymised ID, which was the same as in the experiment. Survey participation was incentivised with a lottery. Respondents could win £200 credit that they could give to a charity of their choice. Before entering the survey they were asked for their ID. The initial survey invitation was sent on a Tuesday, a reminder was sent on the Friday of the same week and another reminder on the Wednesday of the following week. Bureaucrats were given two weeks to respond.

2.2.8. Deviations from the original protocol

Recent methodological advances illustrate that creating a weighted sum of difference-in-means for each block, in each treatment leads to less biased treatment estimates than using fixed effects for blocks (Coppock et al., February 1 2018). These findings were published after the pre-registration of the trial. Therefore, the analysis will show estimates using both approaches – fixed effects, as pre-registered, and the recommended difference-in-means approach.

It was unclear at pre-registration whether budget figures could be included in the analyses. These were therefore not pre-registered. They are treated as aids to understand the context and potentially diffused effects. Only pre-registered outcomes are discussed as direct outcomes of the trial.

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[3]The estimation of treatment effects uses the potential outcome framework (Rubin, 1974; Rubin, 1986), under which the effect of the treatment is the average difference between scores (binary: participated or did not engage) of bureaucrats (unit of randomisation) that have been randomised to be treated and scores of bureaucrats who have been randomised into the control group. Under the assumption of independence of observation, excludability (the effects are due to the treatment and nothing else) and non-interference (the treatment assignment of one household does not affect that of other households in the trial), this difference will provide an unbiased estimate of the true Intention-to-Treat effect (Gerber, 2012; Imbens, 2015).

[4]The CACE amounts to the Intention-to-Treat effect for all randomised units, weighted by the Intention-to-Treat effect for the bureaucrats who were successfully contacted (Gerber, 2012)

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i ATE_i \tag{2.13}$$

As it will be shown, estimates of average treatment effects do not differ substantially from those derived from ordinary least squares regression with fixed effects for blocks. There were no other deviations from the original protocol.

2.3. Results

2.3.1. Descriptives

All stratification variables used in this trial were categorical. Chi-squared tests were performed to test whether their distribution across treatment conditions was significantly different from chance (Table 2.2, Table 2.3). Randomisation was blocked by managerial level, central vs. peripheral work location and previous exposure. Gender was not included in the blocked randomisation but as chi-squared tests illustrate, there was no significant difference between the proportion of women and men allocated to each of the treatment arms. In terms

Table 2.2: Balance checks: main treatments

	Control	Treatment 1 (Shortened)	Treatment 2 (Symbolic)	Treatment 3 (Value)	p-value
Manager	29.03%	28.96%	28.96%	28.96%	1.000
Central	19.67%	19.75%	19.74%	19.73%	0.999
Prev. exposed	0.74%	0.69%	0.74%	0.69%	0.995
Gender					
Male	30.41%	29.01%	30.37%	30.41%	0.731
Female	69.59%	70.99 %	69.63 %	69.59 %	

of participant characteristics, working in the central planning unit of the local authority and being a manager is associated with an increased likelihood that a bureaucrat engages with the input. Those who were involved in the data collection process also engage more.

However, the proportion of participants who were exposed to these processes prior to the trial is very small, meaning that estimates are likely to be imprecise and should therefore be interpreted with caution. What areas bureaucrats work in was also related to their likelihood to engage with input. People working in child and school services were the least likely to engage and people working on strategic functions - service planning, digital government and the transformation programme (corporate restructuring, strategy and budget cuts) were the most likely to engage. People working in finance and other planning-heavy departments such as highways and environment were also more likely to engage with input than people working in departments related to schools and child care.

Figure 2.1: Outcome by bureaucrat characteristics
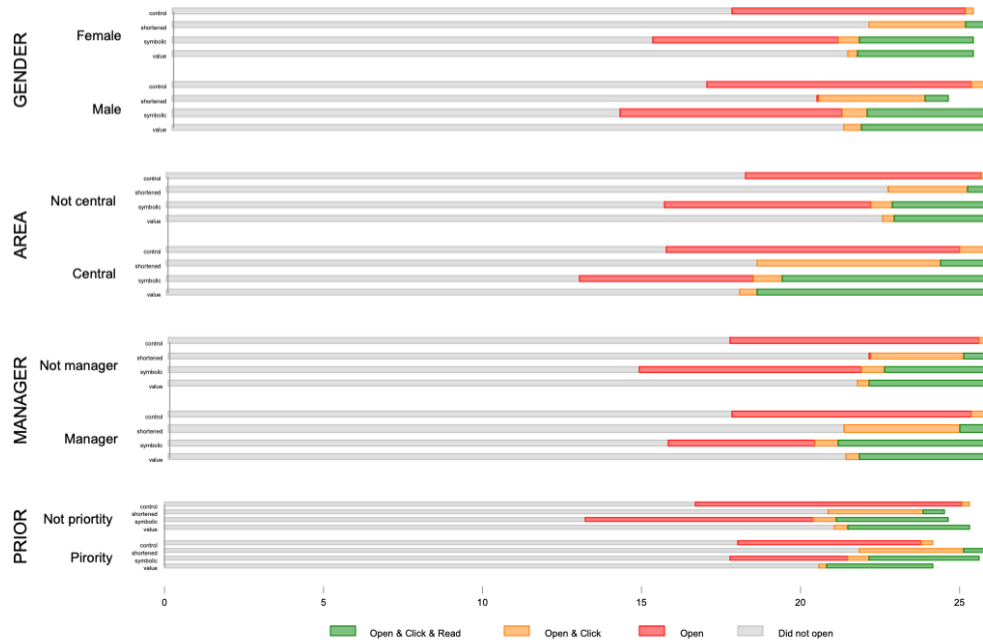
Outcome by characteristics of bureaucrats, area of work, whether their area of work is a priority area mentioned in the citizen feedback and treatment groups. When groups are perfectly balanced, each treatment group amounts to 25% of the sub-sample. As per legend, the graph colouring uses a traffic light system. The parts shaded in green are the desired outcome: bureaucrats read the information. The parts in orange signal the proportion of bureaucrats who took a step towards that desired outcome: they opened the email and clicked on the link. Red bits stand for the proportion of bureaucrats who opened the email but did not click on the link to read the information. Areas shaded in grey signify the proportion of bureaucrats who never opened the email.

While gender was not recorded in staff data, titles ("Mr", "Mrs", "Ms" and "Miss") were used to infer gender. Only for four cases the title – "Dr" – had no clear gender. Trial partner staff therefore identified whether the first name was male or female. Based on their first names, these cases were classified as female. The sample was also balanced on gender.

Using MailChimp's recording system for "hard bounces" – failed attempts of delivery after seven trials –, we can assess whether emails were successfully delivered at the same rate across experimental groups. Failed deliveries made up a very small proportion of the sample. However, the proportions differed significantly between conditions. The complier average treatment effect will therefore be estimated separately from the average effect on the intended to treated (ITT) population.

Table 2.3: Compliance checks

Compliance	Treatment				Sig.
	Control	Shortened	Symbolic	Value	p-value
delivered (no)	99.95%	98.09%	98.99%	97.62%	0.001
bounced (yes)	0.05%	1.91%	1.01%	2.38%	0.001

Percentages for recorded actions by treatment are summarised below in Table 2.4 and Figure 2.2. It is immediately evident that the two behaviourally informed treatments observe a large increase in website visits and browsing. While more people who received the shortened email text clicked on the link than in the control, almost none of them spent time on the website. This suggests that low levels of engagement are unlikely solely due to information overload. Inferential analyses in the next section will unpack this further.

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Table 2.4: Outcomes by experimental group

	Control	Treatment 1 (shortened)	Treatment 2 (symbolic)	Treatment 3 (value)
Opened	31.52%	15.25%	27.88%	16.29%
Clicked	1.27%	15.19%	15.45%	16.29%
Visited web-page & browsed info	0.00%	2.96%	14.18%	14.75%
N	1,891	1,889	1,890	1,891

2.3.2. Intention-to-treat effect

In line with the pre-registered analysis plan, I present estimates of treatment effects and significance levels using ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions with fixed effects for blocks. As discussed, difference-in-means estimation with randomisation inference introduces less bias (Coppock et al., February 1 2018). I present results using this approach in Table 2.7 and show that estimates are comparable and conclusions are not sensitive to the choice of modelling technique.

Looking at engagement as a binary variable first – whether bureaucrats clicked on the link to learn more or not – , all treatments performed significantly better than the control. These differences are significant at $p<0.001$. Differences between treatments are however not significant (Table 2.5, Table 2.6). Next, looking at engagement as a scale - from no engagement (0) to actively browsing the information (4) –, I find that the symbolic and value treatments cause higher levels of engagement. Both the value and the symbolic treatment perform significantly better than the shortened version of the email (Table 2.5). The symbolic treatment leads to slightly more engagement than the value treatment (Table 2.6).

Table 2.5: Primary analysis - OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks estimating the treatment effect on engagement (binary)

	(1)
	Engagement (binary)
	b/se
Shortened	0.139**
	(0.009)
Symbolic	0.157**
	(0.009)
Value	0.150**
	(0.009)
Manager	0.023**
	(0.008)
Central	0.122**
	(0.011)
Prev. exposure	0.100+
	(0.058)
Constant	-0.019**
	(0.004)
Observations	7,561

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Figure 2.2: Percentages of bureaucrats in each treatment group and their observed behaviour
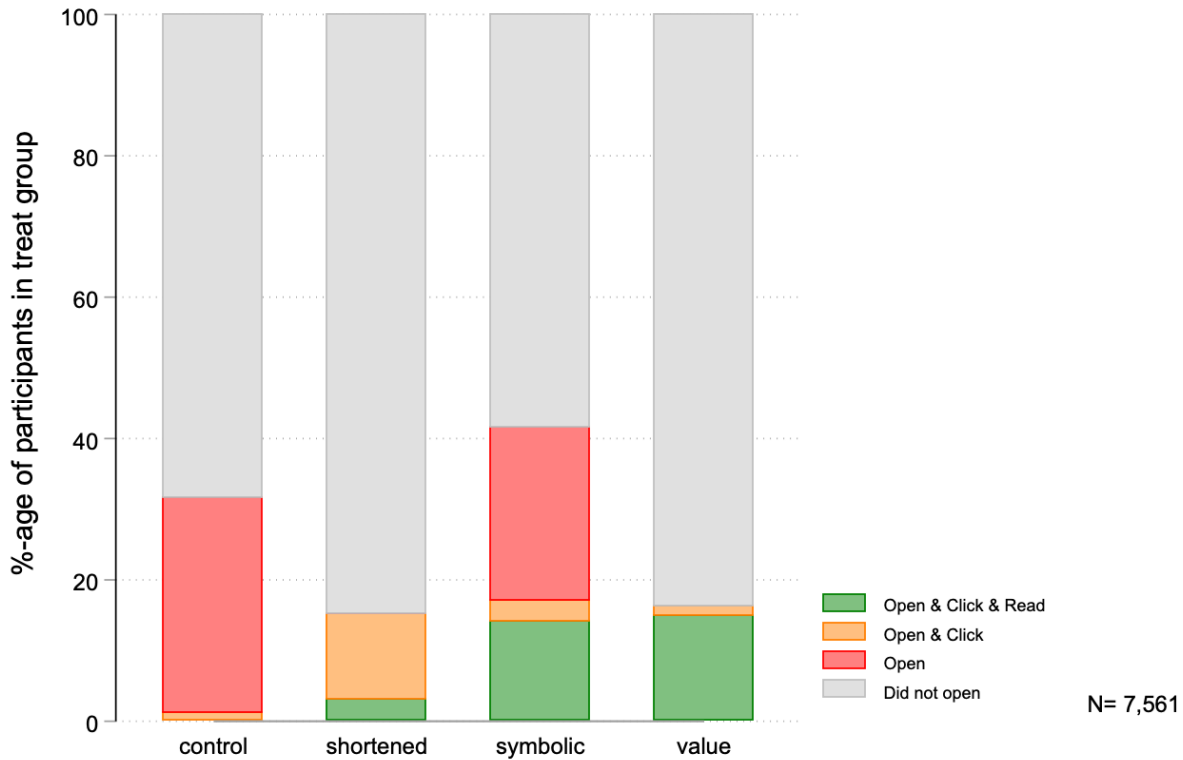
2.3.3. Primary analyses: Additional robustness checks

Based on conversations with local government staff and the internal staff consultation, the stronger dose version of the symbolic reward treatment offered staff to participate in a workshop because this was seen as a way that people commonly signalled value and status to others. In other organisational settings such an invitation might however be perceived differently. It might not be the symbolic reward but the expectation that one needs to demonstrate that one has read the results at the workshop which causes bureaucrats to follow through. In an additional robustness check, I demonstrate that the effect of the symbolic reward remains large and significant if I omit the sub-sample who received the extra dose (Tables 2.3.3 and 2.3.3).

Table 2.6: Secondary analysis - OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks estimating the treatment effect on engagement (scale)

	(1)
	Engagement (scale)
	b/se
Shortened	0.007
	(0.022)
Symbolic	0.399**
	(0.027)
Value	0.146**
	(0.027)
Manager	0.033
	(0.023)
Central	0.334**
	(0.030)
Prev. exposure	0.363*
	(0.162)
Constant	0.249**
	(0.014)
Observations	7,561

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

2.3.4. Results of budget decisions

In line with the planned budget cuts, the local government budget shrank from 2018/19 to 2019/20. Citizen input highlighted six areas that required greater government investment: highways and transport, environmental programmes, local economic growth programmes, schools and programmes targeted at vulnerable families and children. If there was responsiveness to these demands, one would expect (i) budget changes differ for these areas compared to others, (ii) budgets are increased for these areas (budget convergence) and that this is especially true for (iii) directorates in which a larger number of staff engaged with citizen input (see Table 2.3.4). Of the six priority areas only two registered budget increases: eco-

Table 2.7: Robustness check - OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks - excluding sample treated with "workshop message"

	(1)
	engagement (scale)
	b/se
control	-0.139**
	(0.009)
symbolic	0.021
	(0.015)
value	0.011
	(0.012)
manager=1	0.020*
	(0.009)
area=1	0.121**
	(0.012)
exposed=1	0.068
	(0.059)
Constant	0.122**
	(0.008)
Observations	6,616

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 2.8: Robustness check - engagement (scale)

	(1)
	OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks: engagment (scale)
	b/se
control	-0.007
	(0.022)
symbolic	0.394**
	(0.039)
value	0.139**
	(0.030)
manager=1	0.025
	(0.024)
area=1	0.329**
	(0.032)
exposed=1	0.294+
	(0.164)
Constant	0.260**
	(0.019)
R^2	0.05
Observations	6616

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Figure 2.3: Coefficient plot of average treatment effects, estimated using OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks
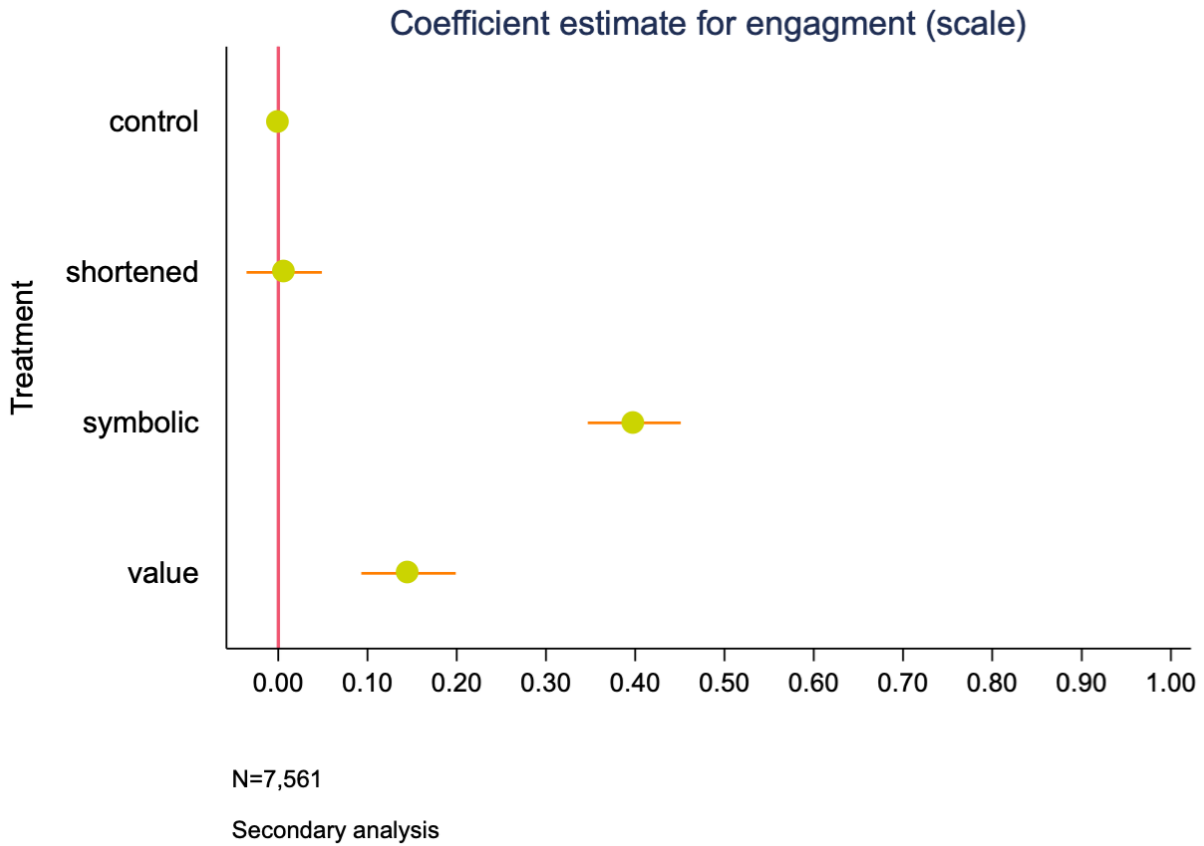
nomic growth and environmental programmes. Across directorates, the largest proportion of staff within the Customer, Digital and Transformation directorate looked at the information (18%). For the two priority areas where budgets converged in line with citizen preferences expressed in the input, only 8% looked at the information (Economy, Growth Commercial; Highways, Transport & Environment). Next, I use treatment assignment as an instrument for the effect of having read the citizen input. The Cragg-Donald Wald F statistic is greater than the critical value (F=366.39 > F=16.38; as according to Stock and Yogo (2005)). Yet, I find no significant relation. This is true both for budget changes (Table 2.3.4 and budget convergence (Table 2.3.4) in its original and alternative specification[5] (Table 2.3.4. As Model

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[5]See outcome section: I also test for budget convergence defined as increases for priorities *or* decreases for non-priorities.

Figure 2.4: Coefficient plot of average treatment effects for the secondary outcome, estimated using OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks
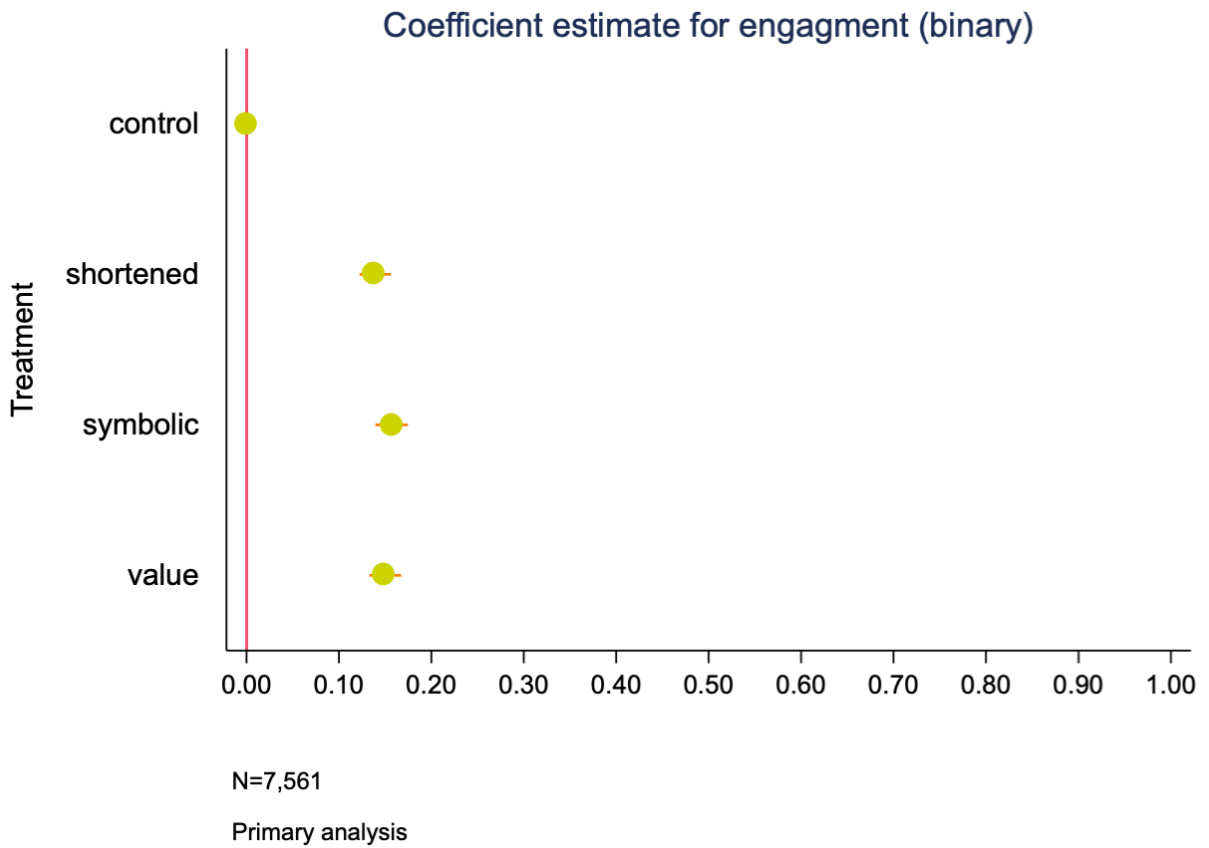
3 for each outcome shows, the changes are almost completely explained by the amount of central government funding that was available for services. Where a larger grant or less central government cuts were in place, more funds were spent. This suggests that local responsiveness to local citizen preferences was insignificant.

Budget convergence	Change in budget	Service	Citizen priority yes/no	Directorate	Proportion of staff who looked at info	Value - looked	Symbolic - looked	Shortened - looked
no	-281000	Education Lifelong Learning & Culture	yes					
n/a	-6300	Quality Assurance	no					
no	-44300	Family Resilience	yes	Children, Learning, Families & Culture Children	4.8%~	9.0%	9.1%~	1.3%~
n/a	-95000	Corporate Parenting	no					
n/a	n/a	Delegated Schools	no					
n/a	-13000	Commissioning	no					
n/a	-1000	Cross County Transformational Savings	no					
n/a	700	Joint Operating Budget ORBIS	no					
n/a	140	Customer Services	no					
n/a	-200	Communications	no					
n/a	70	Information Technology & Digital	no	Customer, Digital & Transformation~	17.5%	31.8%~	32.2%~	10.1%~
n/a	170	Coroner	no					
n/a	-60	Strategy & Performance	no					
n/a	600	Strategic Leadership	no					
n/a	90	Human Resources & Organisational Development	no					
n/a	300	Property	no					
n/a	n/a	Procurement	no					
n/a	30	Business Operations	no	Economy, Growth & Commercial~	7.6%~	13.7%~	13.6%~	3.1%~
n/a	30	Legal Services	no					
n/a	30	Democratic Services	no					
yes	10	Economic growth	yes					
n/a	-2000	Corporate expenditure	no	Finance & Corporate	12.4%	24.5%	19.3%	4.6%
no	-6000	Adults Social Care	yes	Health, Wellbeing & Adult Social Care~	6.5%	9.3%	13.9%	2.8%
n/a	0	Public Health	no		6.5%	9.3%	13.9%	2.8%
n/a	10	Trading Standards	no					
no	-6000	Highways & Transport	yes					
n/a	n/a	Directorate-wide savings	no					
n/a	-10	Emergency Management	no	Highways, Transport & Environment~	7.8%~	15.4%~	13.8%~	2.4%~
n/a	1000	Fire & Rescue Service	no					
yes	1100	Environment	yes					
n/a	-100	Communities Support function	no					
n/a	0	Transformation Programme	no	Customer, Digital & Transformation	17.5%	31.8%	32.2%	10.1%

Table 2.9: Instrumental variable analysis - creating the instrument

	(1)
	Treatment assignment predicting reading of citizen input
	b/se
shortened	0.030**
	(0.004)
symbolic	0.142**
	(0.008)
value	0.148**
	(0.008)
manager=1	0.014*
	(0.007)
area=1	0.081**
	(0.009)
exposed=1	0.107*
	(0.054)
Constant	-0.021**
	(0.003)
Observations	7560

+ $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

Table 2.10: Instrumental variable analysis (2SLS) - effect of reading input on budget changes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Diff: 2018/19 to 2019/20)	Diff: 2018/19 to 2019/20)	Diff: 2018/19 to 2019/20)	iv_change_4
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Reading citizen input (instrumented)	9175.551**	7525.851**	-2339.483+	292.550
	(1356.083)	(1372.420)	(1211.246)	(1109.839)
Priority area = yes		5020.329**	7647.294**	183.220
		(255.343)	(225.155)	(1938.058)
Log of employees in directorate			-7904.073**	-331.364
			(130.867)	(2537.845)
Size of the gov. grant avail. for the budget area				0.024**
				(0.005)
Constant	-4631.162**	-6002.288**	57578.306**	2225.383
	(172.086)	(134.719)	(1045.850)	(19324.148)
Observations	7557	7557	7557	7180

+ $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

Table 2.11: Instrumental variable analysis (2SLS) - effect of reading input on budget convergence

	(1) Budget convergence b/se	(2) Budget convergence b/se	(3) Budget convergence b/se
Reading citizen input (instrumented)	0.008	0.001	0.003
	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Log of employees in directorate		0.987+	1.316**
		(0.547)	(0.442)
Size of the gov. grant avail. for the budget area			0.000**
			(0.000)
Constant	0.995**	-7.169	-9.886**
	(0.002)	(4.520)	(3.656)
Observations	2266	2266	2266

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 2.12: Robustness check (2SLS) - effect of reading input on budget convergence (alt. spec.)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Budget convergence (alt. spec.)	Budget convergence (alt. spec.)	Budget convergence (alt. spec.)
	b/se	b/se	b/se
Reading citizen input (instrumented)	0.001	0.001	0.002
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Log of employees in directorate		0.001	-0.001
		(0.001)	(0.002)
Size of the gov. grant available for the budget area			-0.000
			(0.000)
Constant	0.999**	0.992**	1.009**
	(0.001)	(0.010)	(0.020)
Observations	6751	6751	6751

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

2.3.5. Survey results

A total of 339 bureaucrats completed the survey. Of those who completed the survey, 334 provided a valid ID. Importantly for causal inferences, I find no association between treatment assignment and completion of the survey or provision of a valid ID. I present results based on these 334 responses. I find that treatment effects persist in a similar ordering and magnitude to the beahvioural responses measured through email and website analytics. Asked about whether they used the input from citizens for policy planning and/or changes to service delivery, 20% in the control reported using it, 21% In the shortened email, 32% in the value (sig. at p<0.01) and 39% in the symbolic (sig. at p<0.05) treatment group. Bureaucrats who had received behaviourally informed communications did not only engage at a higher rate, but also used it at a higher rate. This suggests that using behaviourally informed communication tactics could increase the influence that citizens have over bureaucrat decision-making. Full results are reported in Appendix V.

2.4. Discussion

Most developed countries now routinely use participatory mechanisms to gather the views and opinions of their citizens (OECD, 2009). However, it is unclear whether the information gathered is taken on board by the very bureaucrats who are tasked to create and implement policies affecting these citizens. Is even the base level of responsiveness - access responsiveness (Schumaker, 1975) - provided? And, could it be improved?

This field experiment illustrated that given the default situation, only a small number of bureaucrats engage with input from citizens. It demonstrated that elite (access) responsiveness is not a necessary outcome of conducting participatory exercises. Even governments that dutifully engage in such exercises should be aware of bottlenecks between information input and use of such information for policy design and implementation.

Further, this study provided new evidence for the importance of values in bureau-

crat motivation. Working in the public sector is still connected to strong social norms of doing good for society. As studies on private sector workers have suggested (Maricutiou, Sava, and Butta, 2016; Jung, 2014), it might also benefit the public sector when bureaucrats can see who and how their work benefits citizen groups.

On the other hand, this field experiment has also illustrated that extrinsic rewards are important for bureaucrat motivation and that they can provide beneficial avenues for increasing agency compliance. Simple acknowledgements of bureaucrats' efforts could help to boost morale and output. That noted, such action will require genuine follow-up. A simple "thank-you" and even more elaborate symbolic rewards such as employee recognition schemes are likely to quickly lose their credibility if they are not backed up by actions.

For the public, this study's findings suggest that citizen groups who want to gain greater access to policy-making, could leverage behavioural biases to increase responsiveness. The findings of this experiment illustrate that by highlighting the human nature of bureaucrats – their motivations, values but also behavioural biases – we can find ways of re-designing participation processes that make it more likely that citizen input is taken seriously.

That said, since citizen participation is more common at the local government level, it is important to note that efforts might fail to impact budget allocations necessary to implement requested changes - simply because the local authorities do not possess the necessary legislative and administrative powers. Therefore, for routine citizen participation exercises to fulfill their democratic potential, it will require that they are used "further up the food chain" - they should be provided an opportunity to influence policy-making at the central government level.

As all experiments, while this study provides causal evidence on what increases access responsivness of bureaucrats to citizen input, it cannot assess how bureaucrats might react across different contexts. Testing how tweaking non-electoral participation processes and the handling of citizen input could affect decision-making of parliamentary commissions, U.S. Federal Advisory Committees or surpreme courts could further shine a light on the

potential of citizen engagement throughout the policy process and help to identify where elite biases might distort responsiveness to majority preferences. Removing obstacles to meaningful citizen participation is key; especially times of skepticism about expert policy-making and reduced trust in democracy.

2.5. Appendix I: Analysis of dosage effects

As noted earlier, symbolic rewards vary greatly in their form and intensity – from low effort "thank you" messages to involved awards and ceremonies. At the time of writing there is no good evidence on potential dosage effects for symbolic rewards. Therefore, an explorative hypothesis was added. The symbolic reward treatment was therefore split between a low and a higher dosage version. The low dosage involved only a "thank you", while the higher dosage communication invited bureaucrats to a workshop with one of the most senior ranking bureaucrats. It is expected that:

Hypothesis 4 *Input that offers a reward which is more time and cost intensive will lead to greater engagement than a simple "thank-you".*

After this main randomisation, individuals allocated to the symbolic treatment were randomised into a low or a high dosage condition. This was again stratified by the three variables identified above (managerial level, location and previous exposure).

To test for dosage effects, half of the symbolic reward emails included an additional sentence which invited them to a workshop to discuss their ideas while the other half did not.

The same balance checks as described in the main text were repeated to assess balance across the two different dosage conditions as part of the symbolic workshop. Gender was also balanced for these (Table 2.13).

Analyses suggest that the additional symbolic reward – an invitation – increases engagement significantly (Table 2.14). This suggests that there are dosage effects.

Table 2.13: Balance checks - dosage

	Treatment 2 (Symbolic – no workshop)	Treatment 2 (Symbolic – workshop)	
			p-value
Manager	28.99%	28.99%	1.000
Central	19.68%	19.79%	0.954
Prev. exposed	0.63%	0.85%	0.592
Gender			
Male	30.79%	29.95%	0.699
Female	69.21%	70.05%	

Table 2.14: OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks - effects of dosage on engagement

Explorative analysis

	(1) Engagement (binary) b/se	(2) Engagement (scale) b/se
Higher dosage	0.025	0.299**
	(0.016)	(0.048)
Manager	0.048	0.129
	(0.019)	(0.055)
Central	0.137**	0.400**
	(0.025)	(0.070)
Prev. exposed	0.073	0.165
	(0.129)	(0.368)
Constant	0.100**	0.308**
	(0.012)	(0.036)
Observations	1,890	1,890

+ p<.008, * p<.004, ** p<.001

2.6.   Appendix II: Materials

2.6.1.   CONTROL

Subject line: Results of resident and partner engagement on [local authority] Vision [future year]

Dear *Test Name*,

As you are aware we have recently concluded an engagement exercise with residents, partners and staff to get their views on a new vision for [local authority] [future year]. This is the most systematic and extensive engagement exercise among residents and partners we have ever done with over [number >2,000] partners and residents sharing their views. I wanted to update you on the feedback.

We will use these insights to shape a more efficient [local authority] that uses its resources wisely to meet the needs of residents.

In brief, the things that people value about [local authority] are:

1. Advantages offered by its location

2. Mix of urban and rural life, in particular green spaces and the countryside

3. Low levels of crime

4. Access to good quality public services

5. Strong sense of community spirit fostered by caring, supportive and friendly people

6. Strength of the economy, with low unemployment and thriving independent local businesses

However, there are things that need to be improved. Residents and partners both agree that the focus areas for the future are housing, infrastructure – including transport - sustainability of public services / cuts and ensuring no one gets left behind. Additionally

residents also identified environment and crime as focus areas whilst partners would like earlier intervention / prevention and better quality partnerships.

A full report of the findings including experiences and ideas from residents and partners is available on [intranet name] here:

[LINK]

What this means for us as a council?

1. To help deliver this we need to be a well-run and stable council with a focus on improving the lives of people who can't look after themselves and who could otherwise be left behind.

2. We will work alongside others to enable residents and businesses to be as successful as possible and for people to live fulfilled and healthy lives.

3. With less income and more demand, we will need to transform our way of working and do better for less. We will do fewer things and we will do them better. In the coming weeks we will be sharing a new vision based on the feedback and how we can all work together better to deliver a sustainable council and county for all. Do look out for updates on [intranet name] and Jive[local authority].

[senior signature]
Executive Director for Customers, Digital and Transformation

2.6.2. SHORTENED

Subject line: Results of resident and partner engagement on [local authority] Vision [future year]

Dear *Test Name*,

We want to share the results of an engagement exercise on the [local authority] Vision [future year] with you.

Over the summer of 2018, [the local authority] carried out the most systematic and extensive engagement exercise of residents and partners it has ever done to get their views on a new vision for [local authority] to [future year]. In total more than [number >2,000] people have provided their views.

Some of the things they said they valued were safety, green spaces and easy commutes. They also told us that they are worried about housing and the sustainability of quality care.

We would like to encourage you to learn more about what residents and partners thought here on [intranet name]:

[LINK]

We would like you to think about how you could use these insights for your work, to shape a [local authority] that uses its resources wisely to meet the needs of residents.

[senior signature]

Executive Director for Customers, Digital and Transformation

2.6.3. VALUE

Subject: Views from the people you care about – [local authority] Vision [future year]

Dear *Test Name*,

We know you care deeply about the people you serve through your work every day. We want to share with you what they value about [local authority] and what they would like to change.

Over the summer of 2018, [the local authority] carried out the most systematic and extensive engagement exercise of residents and partners it has ever done to get their views on a new vision for [local authority] to [future year]. In total more than [numer >2,000] people have provided their views.

Some of the things they said they valued were safety, green spaces and easy commutes. They also told us that they are worried about housing and the sustainability of quality care.

We would like to encourage you to learn more about what people thought here on the [intranet name]:

[LINK]

We would like you to think about how you could use these insights for your work, to shape a [local authority] that uses its resources wisely to meet the needs of residents.

[senior signature]

Executive Director for Customers, Digital and Transformation

2.6.4. SYMBOLIC REWARDS

Subject Line: Thank you for your effort in making LocalGovName a great place - LocalGovName Vision YEAR

Dear *Test Name*,

We would like to thank you for the effort you have put in to make LocalGovName a great place to live. We want to share with you what they value about LocalGovName and what they would like to change.

Over the summer of 2018, LocalGovName County Council carried out the most systematic and extensive engagement exercise of residents and partners it has ever done to get their views on a

new vision for LocalGovName to YEAR. In total more than 2,300 people have provided their views.

Some of the things they said they valued were safety, green spaces and easy commutes. They also told us that they are worried about housing and the sustainability of quality care.

We would like to encourage you to learn more about what people thought here on the s-net:

[LINK]

We would like you to think about how you could use these insights for your work, to shape a LocalGovName that uses its resources wisely to meet the needs of residents.

[senior signature]

Executive Director for Customers, Digital and Transformation

2.7. Appendix III: Additional tables – randomisation inference

Table 2.15: Results from difference-in-means by block and randomisation inference

Estimates for treatment effects on engagements							
Estimation technique	Treatment		binary			scale	
		Effect	SE	p-value	Effect	SE	p-value
Weighted OLS and p-values from RI	Shortened	.1387	.0087	0.0000	0.0056	0.0217	.9499
	Symbolic	.1413	.0087	0.0000	0.2467	0.0217	.0042
	Value	.1496	.0087	0.0000	0.1449	0.0217	.0892
Mean difference and p-values from RI	Shortened	.1387	.0087	0.0000	0.0056	0.0217	.9523
	Symbolic	.1413	.0087	0.0000	0.2467	0.0217	.0035
	Value	.1496	.0087	0.0000	0.1449	0.0217	.0897

2.8.   Appendix IV: Additional tables – pairwise comparisons and z-scores

Table 2.16: Pairwise comparison - Compared against "shortened" treatment

	(1)
	Engagement (binary)
	b/se
Control	-0.150**
	(0.009)
Shortened	-0.011
	(0.012)
Symbolic	0.007
	(0.012)
Manager	0.023+
	(0.008)
Central	0.122**
	(0.011)
Prev. exposure	0.100
	(0.058)
Constant	0.132**
	(0.009)
Observations	7,561

+ p<.033, * p<.017, ** p<.003

Table 2.17: Pairwise comparison - Compared against "value" treatment

	(1) Engagement (binary) b/se
Control	-0.150**
	(0.009)
Shortened	-0.011
	(0.012)
Symbolic	-0.008
	(0.012)
Manager	0.022+
	(0.008)
Central	0.122**
	(0.011)
Prev. exposure	0.104
	(0.058)
Constant	0.132**
	(0.009)
Observations	7,561

+ p<.011, * p<.006, ** p<.001

Table 2.18: Pairwise comparison - Compared against "symbolic" treatment

	(1)
	Engagement (binary)
	b/se
Control	-0.150**
	(0.009)
Shortened	-0.011
	(0.012)
Symbolic	-0.008
	(0.012)
Manager	0.022*
	(0.008)
Central	0.122**
	(0.011)
Prev. exposure	0.104
	(0.058)
Constant	0.132**
	(0.009)
R^2	0.06
Observations	7,561

+ p<.017, * p<.008, ** p<.003

Table 2.19: Pairwise comparison - Compared against "shortened" treatment

	(1)
	Engagement (scale)
	b/se
Control	-0.006
	(0.022)
Symbolic	0.241**
	(0.030)
Value	0.139**
	(0.030)
Manager	0.050+
	(0.023)
Central	0.340**
	(0.030)
Prev. exposure	0.363+
	(0.164)
Constant	0.250**
	(0.019)
Observations	7,561

+ p<.033, * p<.017, ** p<.003

Table 2.20: Pairwise comparison - Compared against "value" treatment

	(1)
	Engagement (scale)
	b/se
Control	-0.146**
	(0.027)
Shortened	-0.139**
	(0.030)
Symbolic	0.253**
	(0.034)
Manager	0.033
	(0.023)
Central	0.334**
	(0.030)
Prev. exposure	0.363
	(0.162)
Constant	0.395**
	(0.025)
Observations	7,561

+ p<.011, * p<.006, ** p<.001

Table 2.21: Pairwise comparison - Compared against "symbolic" treatment

	(1)
	Engagement (scale)
	b/se
Control	-0.146**
	(0.027)
Shortened	-0.139**
	(0.030)
Symbolic	0.253**
	(0.034)
Manager	0.033
	(0.023)
Central	0.334**
	(0.030)
Prev. exposure	0.363
	(0.162)
Constant	0.395**
	(0.025)
Observations	7,561

+ p<.017, * p<.008, ** p<.003

2.8.1. Engagement (scale) using z-scores

Table 2.22: Robustness check: engagement (scale) as z-score

	(1)
	OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks: engagment (scale)
	b/se
control	-0.008
	(0.025)
symbolic	0.451**
	(0.044)
value	0.159**
	(0.035)
manager=1	0.028
	(0.027)
area=1	0.376**
	(0.036)
exposed=1	0.337+
	(0.187)
Constant	-0.192**
	(0.022)
Observations	6616

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 2.23: Robustness check: engagment (scale)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Main model	Compared against 'shortened' treatment	Compared against 'symbolic' treatment
	b/se	b/se	b/se
control	-0.008	-0.458**	-0.167**
	(0.025)	(0.041)	(0.031)
symbolic	0.451**		0.292**
	(0.044)		(0.048)
value	0.159**	-0.292**	
	(0.035)	(0.048)	
manager=1	0.028	0.028	0.028
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
area=1	0.376**	0.376**	0.376**
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
exposed=1	0.337+	0.337+	0.337+
	(0.187)	(0.187)	(0.187)
shortened		-0.451**	-0.159**
		(0.044)	(0.035)
Constant	-0.192**	0.258**	-0.033
	(0.022)	(0.039)	(0.028)
R^2	0.05	0.05	0.05
Observations	6616	6616	6616

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 2.24: Pairwise comparison: engagment (scale)

| | (1) Compared against 'shortened' treatment |
	b/se
control	-0.458**
	(0.041)
shortened	-0.451**
	(0.044)
value	-0.292**
	(0.048)
manager=1	0.028
	(0.027)
area=1	0.376**
	(0.036)
exposed=1	0.337
	(0.187)
Constant	0.258**
	(0.039)
R^2	0.05
Observations	6616

+ p<.033, * p<.017, ** p<.003

Table 2.25: Pairwise comparison: engagment (scale))

	(1)
	Compared against 'symbolic' treatment
	b/se
control	-0.167**
	(0.031)
shortened	-0.159**
	(0.035)
symbolic	0.292**
	(0.048)
manager=1	0.028
	(0.027)
area=1	0.376**
	(0.036)
exposed=1	0.337
	(0.187)
Constant	-0.033
	(0.028)
R^2	0.05
Observations	6616

+ p<.017, * p<.008, ** p<.003

2.9. Appendix V - Survey: methods and results

As this is the first study known to the author, which assesses the motivational drivers of bureaucrat behaviour to engage with citizen input in a causal way, a follow-up survey was conducted two months after exposure to the treatment. The purpose of this survey was to (i) test whether bureaucrats recalled the information correctly, (ii) whether they used the information for policy design or implementation and (iv) to identify facilitating factors and barriers to using citizen input.

In the first week of December, two months after the treatment was administered, all participants received an email that contained a link to a short survey and their anonymised ID, which was the same as in the experiment. Survey participation was incentivised with a lottery. Respondents could win £200 credit that they could give to a charity of their choice. Before entering the survey they were asked for their ID. The initial survey invitation was sent on a Tuesday, a reminder was sent on the Friday of the same week and another reminder on the Wednesday of the following week. Bureaucrats were given two weeks to respond.

2.9.1. Results

A total of 339 bureaucrats completed the survey. Of them, 334 provided a valid ID. Data for these 334 is analysed. Based on feedback from the local government's HR team, the survey was largely representative in terms of the departmental affiliation and tenure of the respondents. However, turnout was surprisingly low. Despite incentivisation only 5% of those contacted completed the survey. These low response rates might be linked to survey fatigue as a large scale staff consultation took place about six to nine months before this survey was launched.

Once merged with data from the experiment, I found that only 134 of them had opened the initial emails within the experimental period (it is possible that they went back through their unopened emails at the time of the survey). Treatment changed the propensity of opening emails. However, the proportion of respondents who had opened the emails and responded to the survey did not differ between treatment groups. This means that people who had originally received the control email and opened it were over-represented in the survey compared to other groups. Since

Table 2.26: Logit model of the effect of treatment assignment on survey completion

| Completion of survey (binary) | |
b/se	
Shortened	0.012
	-0.155
Symbolic	-0.142
-0.161	
Value	-0.048
-0.157	
Constant	-3.032**
	-0.11
Observations	7563

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

the invitation email to the survey was the same for all treatment groups, it is plausible that we observe self-selection into the survey based on personal preference, which – due to randomisation – is equally distributed across treatment groups. Survey response thus is likely independent of whether the initial treatment email was opened. A logit regression that shows no significant association between treatment assignment and completion provides support for this hypothesis (Table 12).

Only 20% of respondents who had received the control email reported that they had used the information. This compares to 31% (symbolic) and 38% (value) for the behavioural treatment groups. For those who had opened the email during the experimental period, 20% in the control reported using it, 20% In the shortened email, 30% in the value and 30% in the symbolic treatment groups. Despite there being no association between treatment assignment and completion of the survey, we still see effects of (self-reported) use. Bureaucrats did not only engage at a higher rate with citizen input, but also used it at a higher rate. This suggests that using behaviourally informed communication tactics could increase the influence that citizens have over bureaucrat decision-making.

Respondents who had received the value treatment email and opened it also showed lower ratings of feeling overburdened (p<0.01). Those who had received the thank-you email and opened it, reported that they felt more capable of implementing changes that citizens wanted (p<0.01).

There were no other significant differences in scores between conditions.

Chapter 3

The effect of politician-constituent conflict on bureaucratic responsiveness under varying information frames

Abstract

Public participation in rulemaking has long been regarded as an integral part of a functioning democracy. It is however unclear how governments and administrations influence the throughput of public participation, and on a micro-level the decisions of bureaucrats tasked with acting upon such input. In representative democracies the policy positions of elected politicians can divert from public opinion. In addition, public participation initiatives do not commonly attract a fully representative set of society. Thereby demands from the participating public and political principals can diverge. Bureaucrats are then faced with conflicting input. Given bureaucrats discretion to manage public participation processes and their outputs, how can we expect them to act? Will they act according to the wishes of their political principal, will they side with the public or choose to divert. I use a survey experiment with 720 senior bureaucrats in the US and the UK to test this. Further, I assess whether information frames alter such behaviour and whether this varies with the presence of citizen-politician conflict. I find that conflict leads bureaucrats to adopt more of an adviser role, but that information frames have no significant effect.

3.1. Introduction

In a quest for democratic engagement, many countries have institutionalised mechanisms for citizens to express their preferences and needs in the period between elections. Public participation in rulemaking (hereafter public participation) varies in in its form and purpose. The defining feature of public participation mechanisms is that they are top-down forms of participation; state actors initiate contact and set the parameters for engagement. Mechanisms can be formal, like so-called "consultations" in Westminster systems and most European countries, "public comment" in the United States. They can be more informal, testing sentiment through conversations with key stakeholders, town hall debates, ad-hoc focus groups or surveys of citizen groups. They also vary to what degree they offer opportunity for deliberation. While these processes claim to reinvigorate and support democracy, they also purposely leave room for discretion about how to handle the output from public engagement processes. Officials can ignore, cherry-pick and reframe what citizens propose. Invitations to citizens to participate might be motivated by a firm belief held by those in power that citizen participation can provide substantive input into the policy-decision process. In other instances, public participation mechanisms are used to legitimise but not change policy choices. Worse, the aim might simply be to provide an illusion of legitimacy to critics of the policy or policy actors. There clearly exists potential for conflict between demands voiced through public participation processes and what policy choices political representatives want to make. That noted, conflict is not necessarily a product of lacking goodwill or cynicism. Conflict can also arise simply because politicians tend to act as representatives, not delegates - they can and do moderate the demands of citizens (Sheffer, 2018; Ryan et al., 2018; Meier and Nigro, 1976).

This posits a tricky situation for the bureaucracy who is largely responsible for managing public participation processes and how their output is translated into policy implementation. Bureaucrats are typically tasked with helping to process the information resulting from public participation initiatives, feeding them into policy or organisational reform programmes. This makes bureaucrats a funnel and filter for information; bureaucrats have the power to moderate the influence of citizen input derived through public participation mechanisms. In this function, they can face a situation in which citizens provided input on policy through legitimate ways, but political

principals are opposed to implementing such input.

Bureaucrats have contradictory responsibilities in such scenarios, which they need to negotiate carefully. They have a duty to serve the government in power but are also meant to be experts who guide against technically "wrong" decisions and those in violation of democratic principles. Bureaucrats need to balance democratic principles and the legitimacy of public participation processes with more practical concerns, such as the political and technical feasibility of being responsive to citizens demands. We currently know little about how bureaucrats navigate such complex scenarios, what it means for the theory of political control of the bureaucracy and for the ability of public participation processes to deliver on their promise of offering more direct ways for citizens to influence policy-making (on the promise of public participation processes in the UK see Parry, 1972, Burns, 1994 and McKenna, 2011; for the US Fung and Wright, 2001, Guo and Neshkova, 2012, Hafer and Ran, 2016). Using a survey experiment, I set out to address this gap in the literature. I test how senior bureaucrats respond to citizen input when the demands of citizens conflict with those of political principals. Further, I investigate whether the quality of input - specifically, the framing of demands - alters the responsiveness of bureaucrats to citizen demands. This study is one of the few studies to provide causal evidence on the relationship between bureaucrats' behaviour and public participation. What is more, it tests a relationship that is understudied yet crucial for forming a thorough understanding of the political control of the bureaucracy: how bureaucrats behave when they have discretion but face conflicting input from citizens and political principals. It also contributes to the literature on framing effects by testing whether how information from public participation processes is presented affects responsiveness.

3.1.1. Relations between politicians, bureaucrats and citizens and their influence on policy-making

A bureaucrat of the Weberian ideal would act with "neutral competence" – they acquire the expert knowledge necessary to manage policy processes but interfere in neither the choice nor the design of policies. Only when politicians demand something that is at odds with laws, rules or regulations, would the Weberian bureaucrat would resist. It is of course clear that this ideal type does not

exist. First, the impossibility of creating laws in a manner that specifies every detail about their implementation means that bureaucrats are obliged to take policy-relevant decisions (Huber and Shipan, 2002, pp.1-77). Even more so, changes in governance structures of modern democracies have brought about greater discretion and a desire for bureaucrats to take a more pro-active, responsive role in policy-making (Aberbach and Rockman, 1994; Marsh, Smith, and Richards, 2000; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011; Whitford, 2010; Gains and John, 2010; Andersen and Moynihan, 2016). This is not only true for front-line, or street-level bureaucrats who interact directly with citizens Lipsky (1983). Bureaucrats in central planning and senior roles from European as well as US administrations have reported that their daily work can veer into the political (Alford et al., 2017) and that neutrality is aspired to but rarely enforced in practice (Adolph, 2013; Hustedt and Salomonsen, 2014). The political influence of bureaucrats becomes especially salient when politicians diverge from public opinion, or in the context of this study, from the opinions brought forward by public participation processes. Politicians have been shown to be generally responsive to their constituents (Fox and Shotts, 2009; Rottinghaus, 2015; Costa, 2017), yet not on all issues nor for all constituent groups (Newman and Griffin, 2005; Costa, 2017; Ahler and Broockman, 2018; Emeriau, 2019).

There is room for bureaucrats to influence politicians to shift their position closer to that of the citizenry or divert from it. Results of inter-electoral public participation mechanisms are not legally binding in most countries and contexts. For example, in the US, the government and most agencies have a legal duty to circulate new orders for public comment before they are adopted and to issue a response. Yet, there are no prescriptions on how they have to respond to them. Similarly, in the UK, it is left to the discretion of the government and agencies to determine whether and how to respond. Bureaucrats are meant to provide technical advice and can act as an important counterweight to the short-term thinking encouraged by electoral politics (Miller, Reynolds, and Singer, 2017). However, bureaucrats are neither necessarily neutral nor free from bias. Their decisions can have distributional consequences. For instance, in an audit experiment Einstein and Glick (2017) find that ethnically white bureaucrats systematically discriminate against black constituents. White, Nathan, and Faller (2015) find the same pattern with a different set of bureaucrats in response to Latino voters. Bias might also be aggregated and exacerbated at the agency level due to social sorting.

For instance, social workers might find poor people more deserving of help than people who did not opt into social work; police will be more likely to see punishment and incarceration as appropriate responses to minor crimes (Prendergast, 2007). The same logic applies to bureaucrats in central and planning roles. Lepers (2018), for example, observes that the alma mater of the members of the US Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), the monetary policy-making body of the US Federal Reserve, predicts how these bureaucrats vote on ideologically charged issues tabled for committee meetings. When bureaucrats use or abuse such discretion, it is often assumed that it goes against the interest of citizens (White, Nathan, and Faller, 2015; Einstein and Glick, 2017; Nicholson-Crotty, Grissom, and Nicholson-Crotty, 2011). However, in a scenario where political principals and the consulted public disagree, bureaucrats can actively move policy-relevant choices towards or away from public opinion. To date, what bureaucrats do in such a scenario has not been thoroughly theorised nor empirically tested. Would they continue to behave as usual? Or, would they adjust their behaviour and exert more discretion? If they exert more discretion, will they side with citizens or undermine their claims on influence?

Information frames and the bias of bureaucrats

Career bureaucrats are a professional class, socialised into using technocratic criteria for evaluating options for policy design and implementation. Yet, even if they are determined to decide "objectively", how citizen input is presented - its information frame - might activate bias. The effect of information frames is one of the most widely studied biases in policy-relevant decision-making (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984; Chong and Druckman, 2007; Arceneaux, 2012). In the now famous framing study conducted by Kahneman and Tversky (1984), people's policy choice changed when the options were framed as losses rather than gains. Most political science literature on framing studies its effect on vote choices and public opinion (Lau and Schlesinger, 2005; Druckman and McDermott, 2008; Olsen, 2013; Olsen, 2015). Few studies look at the effect of information frames on the decision-making of bureaucrats. After Herbert Simon pioneered the study of non-rational behaviour in the realm of politics, agency and firm behaviour (see Bendor, 2003 for a commentary on Simon's work and influence on the field of political science), the field reverted back mostly to principal-agent models that were dominated by rational or quasi-rational actors. Exemptions are

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few but generally support the idea that bureaucrats are subject to framing effects just as much as other individuals.

Banuri, Dercon, and Gauri (2018), illustrate this in a survey experiment with staff from the World Bank and DFID, the UK's department for international development. They find that ideologically and emotionally loaded words change how accurately bureaucrats evaluate evidence. Bureaucrats are more likely to accept or dismiss a scientific claim when it is ideologically loaded than when it is not. Belardinelli et al. (2018) replicate framing effects used in Olsen (2015) with a sample of Italian bureaucrats. The bureaucrats are asked to evaluate the performance of contractors based on satisfaction ratings provided by citizens. When the same ratings are presented with a negative frame, bureaucrats are more likely to provide lower performance scores than when a positive frame is used. Despite the existence and significant impact of framing effects having been empirically verified across many contexts and employing a variation of research designs, it is important to note that in real life situations the effect size of frames will likely be smaller than in laboratory and survey experiments. Druckman (2004) finds some evidence in support of this in a randomised control experiment (albeit confined to the laboratory). He tests the effect of counter arguments and deliberation, which introduces competing frames and thus is more akin to real life situations. Receiving counter claims and engaging in discussion with people who received other information frames leads to smaller effects and null effects compared to when participants are exposed to only one frame or homogeneous group discussions. Literature on street-level, compared to office- and more senior bureaucracy, has seen a greater proliferation of work on framing in particular and behavioural biases affecting bureaucrat decision making more generally. [1] This literature provides many real life case studies of the behaviour and bias of bureaucrats.

Street-level bureaucrats use mental shortcuts such as stereotypes Lipsky (1983) and signals, which suggest differing degrees of need and deservingness (Raaphorst and Van de Walle, 2017), to define and sort citizens they interact with into different policy-relevant groups. Andersen and Moynihan (2016) test the causal relationship between frames - professional values, citizen-centred policy and empirical research - and the decisions of bureaucrats in an experiment with state-employed

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[1]Literature on street-level bureaucrats tends to portray them as actors with power, motivation and a mission, but riddled with biases and emotion - a view very different to the homo economicus dominant in principal-agent models.

teachers (street-level bureaucrats) in the US and Denmark. Across three experiments, they find that using frames that emphasise professional norms significantly change the policy choices of bureaucrats. However, the case that Andersen and Moynihan (2016) study is a peculiar one: they test whether making a policy appear as beneficial to the clients (students) of bureaucrats (teachers) makes the bureaucrats (teachers) more likely to support adoption of such a policy. The authors regard the behavioural patterns observed in this experiment as indicative of the behaviour of bureaucrats.

Role conceptions, norms and professionalisation influencing the behaviour of bureaucrats

Yet, as Prendergast (2007) discusses at length, different types of bureaucrats will have different baseline levels of bias in favour or against providing services to citizens. It is unsurprising that teachers would support something that supposedly benefits students, especially when - as the authors find - this claim is backed up by a reputable university. It is unconvincing that such a pattern would generalise to all street-level bureaucrats, let alone bureaucrats who work in more removed, planning and policy roles. For instance, police men and social workers are unlikely to respond to the same value frames (Prendergast, 2007). Scott (1997) shows in a - albeit underpowered - randomised experiment with social workers in the U.S that they are more likely to approve an applicant for benefits when the applicant's profile includes compassionate words. It is less clear that a bureaucrat in a planning role would show the same bias in response to compassionate language. As a case in point, Emeriau (2019) finds in a large scale study of French bureaucrats processing asylum requests that they - quite rationally - adjust their behaviour to process claims more equitably once their beliefs about the likelihood of prosecution have been updated. Thus, an evaluation of bureaucrat reactions to differing information frames should take into account whether this differs between frontline and more centrally employed bureaucrats. Another important consideration is how national contexts will influence the processing of information. Individual policy preferences and the ideology of bureaucrats influence policy outputs Clinton et al. (2012).

It is however less clear how institutionalised, regional or national norms affect bureaucratic decision-making. For instance, welfare and social care spending in the UK and US differ substantially (Burkitt et al., 2018). While in the UK public provision of health services is closely tied to a sense

of national pride, in the US freedom of choice and client orientation play a much larger role (Cream and Robertson, 2018). The thresholds of need and deservingness that need to be met in the eyes of British and US bureaucrats could thus differ. The design of this study addresses this concern by randomising bureaucrats into survey conditions at equal rates for each of the survey countries (UK and US). The current picture on bureaucrat-politician-citizen interactions is an incomplete one. It remains unclear how relations and information frames interact to affect bureaucrat behaviour, and how this in turn changes the odds for public participation processes to increase citizen influence over policy. So far, to my knowledge, only Butler (2010) has investigated the link between bureaucrat behaviour and public participation initiatives using a causal framework. In a field experiment Butler and Arceneaux (2015) tests the effect of 'fire alarm' threats, the suggestion that bureaucrats might be audited, on compliance with their role in helping students to register for civic participation initiatives. He finds no significant effects. When bureaucrats decide to side with or against the demands of the consulted public, they will likely need to support or challenge concepts central to the legitimacy, relevance and adequacy of input provided.

Self-report and post-hoc rationalisation: Markers of legitimacy, relevance and adequacy of citizen input

As the literature on motivated reasoning shows, voters (Redlawsk, 2002; Donovan et al., 2019; Már and Gastil, 2019), politicians (Walgrave et al., 2018) and bureaucrats (Baekgaard et al., 2019) all alike might provide sound explanations why they prefer certain policies over others, yet their evaluations are biased by other factors such as social identity and information frames. Gaining a better understanding of what factors bureaucrats. Based on the expectations attached to public participation processes and the demands put on bureaucrats - objectivity and expertise markedly - I expect that bureaucrats will rationalise their choices by paying particular attention to markers of legitimacy, relevance and adequacy of citizen input.

Fishkin (2018) stresses the importance of representativeness in the justification for involving the publicIn the case of Fishkin (2018)'s work, so-called mini-publics, randomly drawn samples of the public who are invited to deliberate on policy choices.. Such representativeness goes beyond statistical considerations of sample size and demographic spread. It also requires what Fishkin

(2018, p. 73) calls "attitudinal representativeness". This is especially important in election contexts, where issue positions are better predictors of party choice than other demographic markers (e.g. gun control and abortion in the US). Input from citizens can be relevant because of its content or simply because of the power that the citizen groups wield. Generally, input is dominated by organised interests - industry organisations, charities and advocacy groups (Kantor, 1976; Grant et al., 2007; Wälti, Kübler, and Papadopoulos, 2004; Papadopoulos and Warin, 2007; Panagopoulos, 2011; Klüver, 2012). While organisation should provide for greater influence, this is not necessarily guaranteed and might be more akin to consensus-building than exercising direct influence (Kantor, 1976; Dür and Bièvre, 2007). What is more, where governments actively recruit input from unorganised interested parties [2], it is questionable whether their input will weigh as heavily as that of organised interest groups. For one, there is less political pressure to implement any changes suggested by unorganised interests. On the other hand, the very fact that these individuals lack a representative body might make them appear to be a more genuine and trustworthy source. Bureaucrats might thus assign greater weight to output from public participation that is not reliant on organised interests. Considering that bureaucracies encourage decisions based on techno- and meritocratic criteria, the content of input and its perceived adequacy for policy decisions will also factor into bureaucrats' decision-making process. Gailmard and Patty (2007) predict that government will grant more discretion to bureaucrats to make decisions based on their expertise as long as the policy preferences of bureaucrats do not diverge too far from those of the legislature. Bureaucrats are expected to be motivated by this power to shape policy. This is also referred to as the "bureau-shaping hypothesis". While Gailmard and Patty (2007) focuses on the US, qualitative (Marsh, Smith, and Richards, 2000) and quantitative (Gains and John, 2010) suggests that the same applies for bureaucrats in the UK. Career bureaucrats managing public participation processes can thus be expected to evaluate citizen input against technical criteria, but potentially weighing this information depending on their own policy preferences (Banuri, Dercon, and Gauri, 2018).

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[2]For example, the inhabitants of a residential unit, people aged 55+ who use public transport or other stakeholders who are clearly affected by planned policy changes but not represented by any association or body

3.1.2. Hypotheses

Bureaucrat behaviour under conflict

The risk of sanction, prominently covered in the classical literature on political control, should motivate bureaucrats to comply. The magnitude in response is likely to vary with the bureaucrat's risk preferences, but bureaucrats can be expected to generally perceive the threat of sanction to be larger when acting counter to the demands of politicians than when acting against those of citizens. This can be expected for a number of reasons: For one, politicians can sanction bureaucrats more directly and immediately than citizens. They can create and close agencies, set budgets, change salary levels, contractual terms and powers that agencies are granted. Politicians can thus affect the number, security and attractiveness of public sector jobs. In country contexts where patronage prevails, the careers of bureaucrats can be affected even more directly (Cruz and Keefer, 2015; Enikolopov, 2014; Meyer-Sahling, Mikkelsen, and Schuster, 2018). Citizens too can sanction bureaucrats' behaviour but need to rely largely on mobilising the legislature or judiciary to act on their behalf. For instance, Bertelli and John (2010) show that citizens' performance ratings of local government services affect their budgets in the subsequent period as central government responds to these performance ratings. This implies that bureaucrats should perceive there to be a greater risk of immediate sanction from their political compared to citizen principals. The expectation thus is that bureaucrats will yield more to politicians when demands are conflicting because negating politicians' demands comes at a greater cost than ignoring citizen input.

Apart from evaluations of risk, norms and social identity shape behaviour. Bureaucrats have a professional duty to facilitate policy-making regardless of the party-affiliation of their political principal. It is thus possible that if such norms are strong, they override the effects of conflict. In such a case, there would be no observable difference between how bureaucrats choose when political and citizen principals agree compared to when they are in conflict. Following theories on political elites, it is also possible that bureaucrats perceive themselves to be of the same group as politicians – the elite, governing – while citizens are perceived as the 'other' (Gains and John, 2010).

The exact opposite socialisation might be at play, especially for street-level bureaucrats as compared to those working in more central government functions, removed from daily interactions

with citizens. As socialised professionals bureaucrats might attach more weight to citizens because they perceive them as their client group and key stakeholders. For example, teachers or social workers might perceive a strong norm that their profession needs to respond to clients first and foremost. In either case, if the effect of such a social identification is stronger than that of the tensions introduced by conflict, bureaucrats would not change their decisions but always side with suggestions made by their political principals.

Bureaucrats are however often also expected to be and socialised into becoming a highly professionalised class, acting as a bulwark against overly short-term and politicised decision-making in the favour of technocratic considerations (Miller, Reynolds, and Singer, 2017). Bureaucrats might therefore always try to maximise their discretion and prioritise their own knowledge over that of politicians and citizens. However, to what extent they feel the license to do so is expected to vary with the presence of conflict. If there is conflict, bureaucrats should feel more pressured to take a side to facilitate choosing one option over the other. Whereas when politicians and citizens' input align, they can take a role as adviser and based on their expertise offer alternative strategies for consideration.

Hypothesis 5 *When feedback is conflicting, bureaucrats will yield more to the demands of politicians than citizens.*

Emotional cues vs the effects of information frames using statistics

Based on existing research, I further anticipate that information frames will affect the decisions of bureaucrats (Chong and Druckman, 2007; Druckman and McDermott, 2008). As discussed in earlier sections, how bureaucrats will evaluate certain information frames might correlate strongly with their professional identities and the norms they have adopted through professional socialisation. There are however two types of information frames which are widely prevalent across professions and highly relevant for the ability of public participation processes to influence policy choices:

Information from public participation processes is either summarised in a qualitative manner or relies on larger scale data collection efforts that aim for statistical representativeness. While the former claims legitimacy through claims about selecting the relevant and righteous group of

stakeholders, the latter does so through strength in numbers. Depending on their ontological outlook, bureaucrats might be more convinced by either a qualitative or a quantitative frame. On top of ontological considerations, qualitative evidence provides for greater use of emotional cues. An ample body of literature that has shown that information frames containing emotional cues are more persuasive than evidence presented without such cues (Small and Lerner, 2008; Druckman and McDermott, 2008; Arceneaux, 2012; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay, 2008; Nuñez et al., 2015; Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead, 2004; Bas and Grabe, 2016; Lau and Schlesinger, 2005). Emotive language should make citizens' demands more persuasive and thus increase responsiveness towards citizens in general. Moreover, information that is high in affect leads to different, more risk-hungry behaviour than the same information that is low in affect (Rottenstreich and Hsee, 2001; Petrova, Van der Pligt, and Garcia-Retamero, 2014). Qualitative information might therefore render bureaucrats more responsive to citizens' demands, especially when risk matters – in a conflict scenario. I thus expect a hierarchy of effects:

Hypothesis 6 *When the information is presented in a qualitative way, using emotional words, bureaucrats will be more responsive to citizens than if it is described in a quantitative way, lacking emotional words.*

If input is emotional-qualitative, bureaucrats will discount risks and be more willing to respond to citizen input.

$$Y_{NoConflict}^{Quali} > Y_{NoConflict}^{Quant} > Y_{Conflict}^{Quali} > Y_{Conflict}^{Quant} \tag{3.1}$$

While information frames are expected to shift responses, considerations of risk and power entailed in facing conflicting input from political and citizen principals is expected to have greater influence on bureaucrat behaviour.

Hypothesis 7 *Framing effects will be smaller than the effects of conflict, so that bureaucrats are always less responsive in conflict scenarios than when there is no conflict.*

3.2.   Research design

I use a randomised survey experiment to assess the causal effect of conflict between politician and citizens' demands on the behaviour of bureaucrats, and how information frames moderate their behaviour. The study was pre-registered at EGAP. [3] The design and analysis described below follows this pre-registered plan unless stated otherwise. The survey experiment has a 2x2 factorial design. Conflict is randomised within subjects - half of bureaucrats are randomly allocated to receive the conflict scenario first, while the other half receives it as the second scenario. Information frames are randomised between subjects - half of bureaucrats receive both scenarios using quantitative information only, while the other half is exposed to scenarios that use an emotional-qualitative frame. The emotional-qualitative information frame is modelled on qualitative methods typically used to aggregate the results of public participation processes, while the quantitative frame is akin to results from email or online surveys, which are another popular mechanism used for inter-electoral public participation processes. The frames tested in this experiment are thus what Druckman called equivalency or valence frames as opposed to value or issue frames (Druckman, 2001). More conscientious or risk-averse bureaucrats might react very differently to conflict compared to more daring, less conscientious ones. Each bureaucrat receives one conflict and one no-conflict scenario; the order is randomised and thus they act as their own control. Framing effects, to the contrary, have been replicated across many settings and population groups (Druckman, 2001). It is less likely that responses to information frames are heterogeneous. Apart from the experimentally manipulated factors, conflict and information frame, one would also expect the topic and the source of information to influence bureaucrats' decisions (Hartman and Weber, 2009). Since bureaucrats act as their own control, topic choice should not matter much. The topic is chosen in such a manner that it is broadly relevant for any bureaucrat, regardless of their area of work (more detail on this in the section on interventions). Ideally, content of input is kept constant across the conflict and non-conflict situations to isolate effects. However, showing bureaucrats the same scenario twice, once with a conflict and once without, is obtrusively artificial. I therefore use two different scenarios but

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[3]EGAP registration number: 20171013AA. The pre-analysis plan is available for download at http://egap.org/registration/2884.

Table 3.1: OLS regression: treatment effect on client-value conflict

Experimental conditions			
		Scenario	
		Conflict	**No conflict**
Information frame	**Emotional/qualitative frame**	Emotional - Conflict	Emotional - No conflict
	Quantitative frame	Qant - Conflict	Quant - No conflict

randomly assign the matching and order of the scenarios. Thereby, the effect of conflict remains uncorrelated with the type of scenario. One other important factor to consider is that disagreement is directional: X disagrees with Y. There is a judge (J) and an opinion-provider (O). Holding the scenario and status of the demands constant (conflict or no conflict), responsiveness might be a function mainly of the norms that bureaucrats hold (N), interaction between source - politician (P) or citizen (C) - and their role in the communication - judge (J) or opinion provider (O):

$$Responsiveness \approx f(Norm[N], Source[P, C], Role[J, O]) \tag{3.2}$$

For this reason, whether the politician or the citizen is the judge (the disagreeing party) is also randomised. It is not feasible to analyse the effect of these randomised factors on behaviour since the sample size required to measure them with adequate power exceeds the scope of this study. However, I report on the balance of covariates for these factors. Further, I measure the responsiveness to suggestions made by politicians and citizens separately (see section 3.2.2 for more details). This further allows me to parcel out the effect by information source.

3.2.1. Experiment materials

Before the experiment, I conducted a pilot with 120 participants who work in the public sector, recruited via MTurk. I tested 12 vignettes to pick those that were well understood and showed clear response patterns. More information on the design and results of the pilot are available in 3.6. Bureaucrats likely evaluate the vignettes with reference to their own area of work and experiences. I therefore tested vignettes that describing situations that were relevant for all types of bureaucrats; communication strategies and policies regarding responses to enquiries made by citizens. While not

all bureaucrats would be tasked personally with the implementation of such policies, they will exist in one form or another for their agency, service or department. Qualitative responses to two open-ended questions at the end of the survey suggest that participants were able to make this connection and translate the scenario to their particular work context. The results of the open-ended questions are discussed in more detail in the results section and in the Appendix.

Of the 12 tested vignettes, I selected two that performed well and adapted them further to provide the best fit to test them on both US and UK bureaucrats. Further, I adapted the language of the survey response options for the area of work and terms for political principles for each of the contexts. The equivalence and recognisability of terms was discussed and adjusted with the help of 15 former UK and US bureaucrats. A list of these terms is available in 3.7 After having consented to take part, bureaucrats each received two vignettes. The order of presentation was randomised. One vignette portrayed their political principal and the citizen group to be in agreement. The other vignette depicted them to be in conflict. In the conflict scenarios, who disagrees with whom was randomised. This was done for two reasons: First, source bias is a well-documented phenomenon, which predicts that people will react differently to a claim depending on who made the claim (Hartman and Weber, 2009). For instance, if the political principal makes a suggestion and the citizenry disagrees, this might be interpreted differently than when the citizenry suggests something and politicians disagree. The second reasons, pertains to English grammar - disagreement implies agency. If A disagrees with B, A might be perceived as the aggressor and B as more passive. Therefore 50% of respondents receive a conflict scenario stating that the politician disagrees with the demands put forward by citizens, whereas the other 50% receives the opposite phrasing.

Table 3.2: Overview of treatment messages

Experimental condition & scenario	Text in bold varies between scenarios and conditions.
Quantitative– Scenario 1	The results show that **80%** of citizens say that they are dissatisfied with what your organisation is doing. But **50%** of all respondents also state that they would be more convinced that your organisation is doing a good job if it would inform them about how it responds to their queries in real time (e.g. via text message).
Quantitative– Scenario 2	The results show that **80%** of citizens say that they are dissatisfied when they interact with your organisation. But **50%** of all respondents also state that they would be more convinced your organisation is doing a good job if staff would listen to them and respond flexibly. They would like to be given a choice in how their concerns are dealt with, supported by the advice of your staff.
Qualitative - Scenario 1	The results show that **many** citizens say that they are somewhat sad about what the local authority is doing. But **several** also state that they would happier if your organisation is doing a good job if it would inform them about how it responds to their queries in real time (e.g. via text message).
Qualitative - Scenario 2	The results show that **many** citizens say that they are somewhat sad when they interact with your organisation. But **several** also state that they would be happier if staff would listen to them and respond flexibly. They would like to be given a choice in how their concerns are dealt with, supported by the advice of your staff.

Table 3.3: Variation in treatment text

Scenario	Type of response	Response text, where source is either "the citizen group" or "the group of councillors/the minister". Text in bold varies between scenarios and conditions.
1	NO CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 1	**[Source]** studied the results of this survey thoroughly. **[Source]** advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should address citizens' needs and start texting citizens about the progress and status of their enquiries.
1	NO CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 2	**[Source]** studied the results of this survey thoroughly. **[Source]** also advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should address citizens' needs and start texting citizens about the progress and status of their enquiries.
1	CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 1	**[Source]** studied the results of this survey thoroughly. **[Source]** advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should address citizens' needs and start texting citizens about the progress and status of their enquiries.
1	CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 2	**[Source]** studied the results of this representative survey thoroughly. [Source] advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should not text citizens, as only **[50%/several]** of them endorse this. They think that the money could be used to support them in other ways.
2	NO CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 1	[Source] studied the results of this survey thoroughly. **[Source]** advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should address citizens' needs and start offering a menu of choices when responding to citizen queries.
2	NO CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 2	**[Source]** studied the results of this survey thoroughly. **[Source]** also advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should address citizens' needs and start offering a menu of choices to citizens.
2	CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 1	**[Source]** studied the results of this survey thoroughly. **[Source]** advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should address citizens' needs and start offering a menu of choices when responding to citizen queries.
2	CONFLICT: Feedback by Source 2	**[Source]** studied the results of this representative survey thoroughly. **[Source]** advocates that **[local government/ministry name]** should not start offering a menu of choices to citizens, as only **[50% / several]** of them endorse this. They think that the money could be used to support them in other ways.

3.2.2.   Outcomes and covariates

The main outcome is willingness to respond. It is a proxy of how motivated and persistent a bureaucrat will be in their pursuit of adopting or preventing suggested policy changes. Bureaucrats are asked to rank their willingness on a seven-point scale. The scale was validated by Tummers, Bekkers, and Steijn (2009).

$$W_{i,s} \in [1, 7]]$$ (3.3)

To assess relative responsiveness to citizen demands compared to politician demands, I calculate the ratio of willingness to respond to citizens' demands to the willingness to respond to politicians' demands.

$$Y_{i,s} = \frac{W_{i,s}^{citizen}}{W_{i,s}^{politician}}$$ (3.4)

where i stands for the observation of participant iand s denotes the scenario (one or two)

If the ratio is 1, then willingness is equal. If the ratio is less than 1, then willingness is greater for responding to the citizen. As a secondary measure, I look at the chosen plan of action. While bureaucrats might be sympathetic towards citizen concerns, when they are confronted with a choice and the consequences that such a choice will entail - e.g. it might negatively reflect on their career -, they will support whatever their political principal supports. In the conflict scenario, bureaucrats are asked whether they would support what the citizens or what their political principal proposed, or whether they would choose to openly disagree with both. In scenarios without conflict, bureaucrats are asked to choose whether they will adapt the suggestions made by the citizens and the political principal or whether they choose to object to them. Bureaucrats can thus choose one of three options in the conflict scenario and one of two in the non-conflict scenario.

$$P_i^{Conflict} \in [0, 1, 2]$$ (3.5)

$$P_i^{Noconflict} \in [0, 1]$$ (3.6)

This introduces asymmetry but approximates real life scenarios more closely. The presence of conflict will change the number of parties a bureaucrat can align themselves with. To compare responses across scenarios, I convert the responses into z-scores.

Personal characteristics are expected to affect responses. For instance, women tend to be more positive in their responses in surveys (Moors, Kieruj, and Vermunt, 2014). Those who work in pro-social front-line services such as teachers or social workers will likely be more responsive than bureaucrats whose clients consist of less vulnerable populations. Since they face different risks, more senior staff and those on higher salaries might also react somewhat differently. Those with higher education attainments are more likely to be comfortable with using statistics and might therefore respond somewhat more consistently to the numeric framing than those with lower numeracy. I therefore account for the area of work, seniority and gender, education and income of bureaucrats by including them as pre-treatment covariates in the estimation of the average treatment effect. Professional values and how suggestions made by citizens and politicians reflect on them should further affect responses. I therefore include scales on client-policy and client-value conflicts developed by Tummers, Bekkers, and Steijn (2009). To manage trade-offs between the number of items included and the robustness of instruments, I pick the three elements of the scale that had the highest factor loadings as indicated by data from the pilot.

1. Working with the policy clashes with the wishes of many clients

2. My clients experience the policy as a breach of their privacy

3. Working with the policy conflicts with my values and norms as a professional

Pilot data indicated that the adapted items had high inter-item correlations (0.84 between the two professional-value conflict measures, and 0.65 and 0.66 for the professional-value conflict measures and the professional-client measures see section 3.2.2). At the very end of the survey, I included two free text fields, which asked bureaucrats to comment on (i) what they perceive to be barriers to more effective citizen engagement and (ii) to explain why they chose as they did in the experiment. All survey questions are included in 3.6.

3.2.3. Estimation of treatment effects

I use an OLS regression to estimate the average treatment effect, with the following specification.

$$Y_{i,s} = \alpha + \beta_1 T_{i,s} + \beta_2 S_i + \beta_3 T_{i,s} \times S_i + \gamma_1 X_{i,s} + \epsilon_{is} \tag{3.7}$$

$Y_{i,s}$ is the outcome of interest, observed for participant i in scenario s

$T_{i,s}$ is a binary variable which is zero when participant i

was randomised into the numeric condition and one if they were randomised into

the emotional condition

S_i is a binary variable for which zero is the conflict scenario

and one the no conflict scenario observed by participant i

$X_{i,s}$ is a vector of covariates as specified in the section above

Note that there is only one observation of demographic covariates and for the value of

citizen feedback for participant i but there are two observations for perceived conflict,

one for each scenario.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ are the coefficients of interest.

ϵ_i is an error term clustered for participant i in scenario s

3.2.4. Recruitment and randomisation

I recruited the bulk of the sample using Prolific.ac (Prolific hereafter). Prolific is a professional panel provider with roots in academia. According to recent tests, Prolific provides good quality of responses. Peer et al. (2017) tested the reliability indices of several scales across Prolific, Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) - the most commonly used online recruitment platform in academia to date -, and a handful of other platforms. The results from Prolific were statistically indistinguishable

from those obtained from MTurk, apart from scores on attention and those of a quality test. On this test, participants recruited via Prolific performed better than those recruited on MTurk. Significantly more respondents passed the attention test on Prolific than on MTurk. Apart from these encouraging findings, for this study Prolific was a more suitable platform than MTurk and alternative recruitment platforms. Predictiv contrary to others offered a large pool of bureaucrats based in the UK as well as the US. Further, Prolific makes it more difficult to prevaricate on screening characteristics than MTurk (Palan and Schitter, 2018), providing further confidence that participants truly were who they presented to be. Similar to other platforms, participant IDs on Prolific are unique and can be tracked across studies. Researchers can screen participants via their IDs; for instance, only allowing previous participants into a new study or excluding them from further studies.

While online panel providers offer many advantages compared to offline recruitment, such as reduced experimenter demands, lower cost and more demographically diverse panels, online panels struggle to attract higher income individuals. Consequently, they are less likely to attract bureaucrats who have more senior roles - i.e. those bureaucrats who have managerial responsibilities and are involved in organisational strategy and agenda-setting. To reach such bureaucrats, I advertised the study at events and meetings targeted at senior bureaucrats. In the US, I distributed the link to the survey with an explanation about its purpose via the Slack channel of the US What Works Cities networkSlack is a collaboration tool with a chat function at its core. Many government and quasi-governmental organisations in the US and UK now use it to collaborate across teams, departments and agencies.. In the UK, senior bureaucrats at the UK's Civil Service Live conference were asked to complete the experiment in their waiting time before a talk started. Civil Service Live is the UK's largest conference for public servants and takes place annually. Three talks, each on a different day, with a different speaker and spread across two venues, were used for recruitment purposes. The survey link was also provided to attendees at a meeting of the senior bureaucrats running a large local government in the UK and a cross-authority government meeting group. Through these offline efforts, I successfully recruited a total of 93 senior bureaucrats. The survey was only available to Prolific sample participants who had indicated on their profiles that they had managerial responsibilities. At the end of the survey, they were asked to specify their job level. To provide a more bespoke classification, I used distinctions used in the UK public sector and their US equivalents:

officer, junior management, senior management and executive.

Bureaucrats recruited offline make up 40% of the sample of senior and executive bureaucrats, but only 12% of the entire sample. While one might suspect that they will act differently to bureaucrats recruited via the online platforms, I will illustrate in the results section that this is not the case.

3.2.5.   Divergence from the pre-analysis plan

When the pre-analysis plan was written, it was unclear that policy value and policy-client conflict could be measured only as a post-treatment variable. If it were included in the regression as pre-specified it would likely bias estimates (Nyhan and Reifler, 2010). I therefore instead analyse these two variables as additional, exploratory outcomes and mark analyses as such. Besides, the pre-registered robustness checks, I perform additional checks that address specific properties of the data.

3.3.   Results

3.3.1.   Description of data

I find no significant association between assignment to treatment and attrition (Table 3.4). There is no attrition check for bureaucrats recruited at the local government executive meeting because all 15 attendees completed the experiment.

Blocked (stratified) randomisation was infeasible due to logistical constraints.Due to the rarity of the target sample, senior bureaucrats, the recruitment period spanned several months. It was impossible to know which type of bureaucrat would decide to participate at which point in the recruitment period. Quotas could therefore not be set ex-ante. A rolling blocked randomisation would have required continuous checks against the existing databases. This was not possible with the technical set-up available. However, as Table 3.5 illustrates, the sample is balanced on all observable demographic characteristics. I do however find an imbalance in terms of recruitment source. Bureaucrats recruited offline were assigned at a higher rate to receive the conflict scenario

Table 3.4: Attrition checks

Sub-sample	Variable	Coef.	SE	p-value (unadj.)
Prolific USA	Numeric/emotional	-.025	.026	.34
Prolific USA	Conflict first/second	-.016	.025	.51
Prolific USA	Type of no-conflict scenario	.036	.025	.15
Prolific USA	Type of conflict scenario	-.036	.025	.15
What Works USA	Numeric/emotional	-.212	.336	.54
What Works USA	Conflict first/second	-.292	.278	.32
What Works USA	Type of no-conflict scenario	.156	.297	.61
What Works USA	Type of conflict scenario	-.156	.297	.61
CSL UK	Numeric/emotional	-.094	.064	.14
CSL UK	Conflict first/second	.113	.065	.08
CSL UK	Type of no-conflict scenario	.013	.065	.84
CSL UK	Type of conflict scenario	-.013	.065	.84
Cross-auth network	Numeric/emotional	.021	.151	.89
Cross-auth network	Conflict first/second	.079	.153	.61
Cross-auth network	Type of no-conflict scenario	.108	.146	.46
Cross-auth network	Type of conflict scenario	-.108	.146	.46
Prolific UK	Numeric/emotional	.013	.02	.50
Prolific UK	Conflict first/second	.003	.02	.88
Prolific UK	Type of no-conflict scenario	-.01	.02	.62
Prolific UK	Type of conflict scenario	.01	.02	.62

first (66% vs 50%, p<0.01). I therefore provide an additional robustness check, which compares responses from bureaucrats recruited offline with those recruited online. As pre-specified for the other balance checks, I use OLS regressions with robust standard errors and covariate adjustment to regress offline recruitment (binary) on the key outcomes. I find that bureaucrats who were recruited offline do not differ in terms of willingness from those recruited online (p=0.31), nor when they make a choice in the conflict scenario (p=0.90). They are about 9 percentage points more likely to accept a suggestion rather than suggest something else in the no conflict scenario, but this is only significant at p<0.1. [4] I therefore provide an additional robustness check for every analysis,

[4]This is the p-value before adjusting for multiple comparisons.

Table 3.5: Balance checks (post-treatment)

Covar.	Coef.	SE	p-value (unadj.)
Gender	.007	.038	.86
Age cat.	.002	.081	.98
Gov. sector	.05	.062	.42
Seniority level	-.02	.06	.74
Order of within-subj. treatment	-.053	.037	.15
Scenario used - Conflict	.02	.037	.59
Scenario used - No conflict	-.022	.051	.67
Country	-.006	.037	.88

in which I add a dummy variable for recruitment tactic. None of the conclusions change following the addition of this dummy. In terms of demographic characteristics, the final sample comprised of slightly more female than male bureaucrats (60% vs 40%, Figure 3.1). Notably, many front-line public services - schools, social work, health care and street-level administrative services - are female dominated. Given the composition of the sample, the gender bias is thus not surprising but more a reflection of the equivalent bias existent in the public sector workforce. Regarding age, the sample had a typical range for professions that require university/college education, but almost 80% of the sample were below the age of 45 (Figure 3.2). It is likely that this is due to Prolific being an online platform, which attracts younger people at a higher rate than older individuals. In terms of government sector, the distribution is very similar to that of the UK and US public workforce: most people are employed in front-line services or in local government (Figure 3.3). The same applies for the seniority of participating bureaucrats. There are more people at lower levels of management than higher ones (Figure 3.4). In terms of work location, 51% of participants were recruited from the UK and 49% from the US (Figure 3.5).
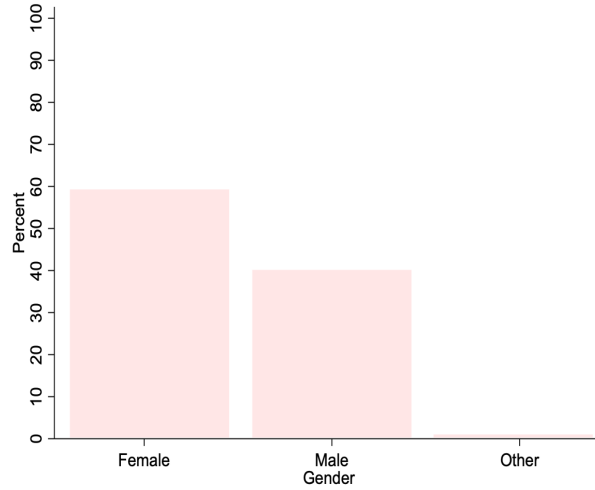
Figure 3.1: Gender composition of sample
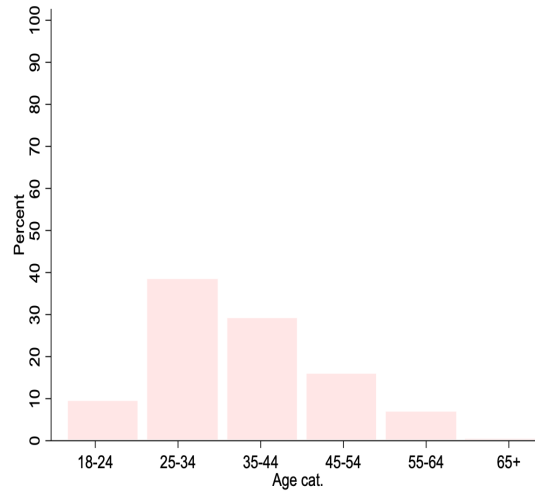
Figure 3.2: Age composition of sample

3.3.2.   Primary analyses: willingness to respond

The primary outcome was the stated willingness of a bureaucrat to respond to citizen demands relative to politician demands. If the value is above one, the bureaucrat is more willing to respond to the citizen compared to the politician.

Looking at the distribution of answers by conflict, it is already evident that there is a greater spread of responses in the conflict scenario than under "no conflict", where answers cluster more around one (Figure 3.7). Under agreement bureaucrats are similarly willing to respond to
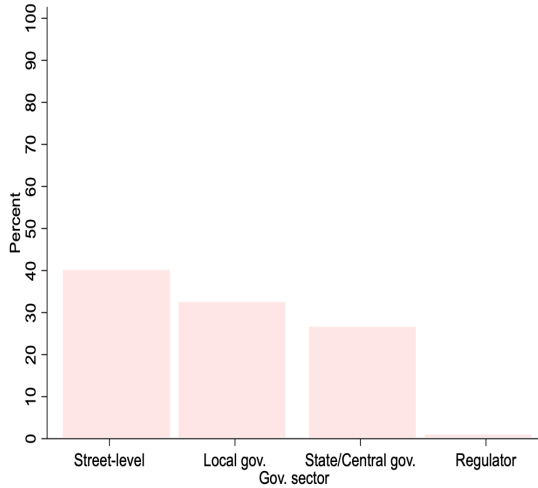
Figure 3.3: Government sector of employment of sample
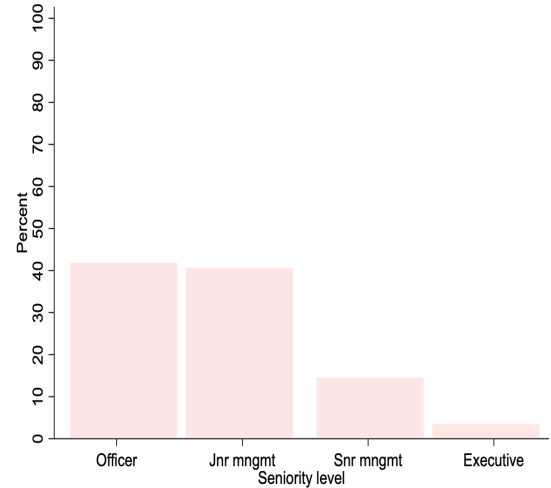
Figure 3.4: Job level of sample

citizens and politicians but under conflict they are more responsive to citizens than politicians (Table 3.6). Under conflict bureaucrats become less willing to respond to both citizens and politicians (Figure 3.6, Figure 3.8). However, they reduce responsiveness at a higher rate for politicians, making them relatively more open to citizen suggestions. Information frames had no significant effect (Table 3.6). Bureaucrats rate their willingness to respond to citizens (Figure 3.9, Figure 3.10) and politicians (Figure 3.11, Figure3.12) similarly, regardless of whether the information used emotional-qualitative words or a purely quantitative frame.
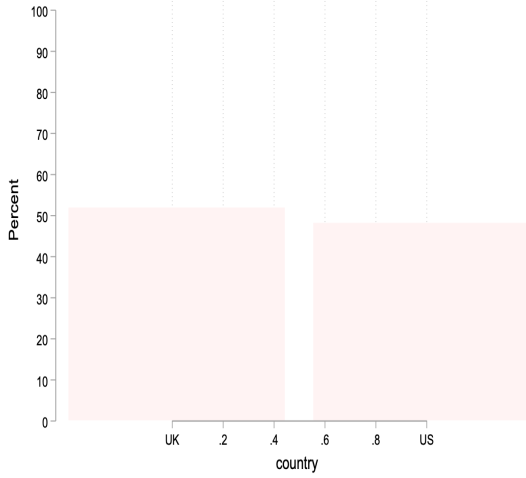
Figure 3.5: Country of work of sample

Table 3.6: Primary analysis: OLS regression estimating treatment effects on willingness in response to demands

	(1)	(2)
	Willingness	Willingness - with demogs added
	b/se	b/se
Emotional	0.025	0.024
	(0.019)	(0.020)
Conflict	0.245**	0.245**
	(0.050)	(0.050)
Emotional × Conflict	0.085	0.085
	(0.077)	(0.077)
Constant	1.015**	1.020**
	(0.013)	(0.065)
R^2	0.04	0.05
Covariates added	No	Yes
Observations	1440	1440

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01
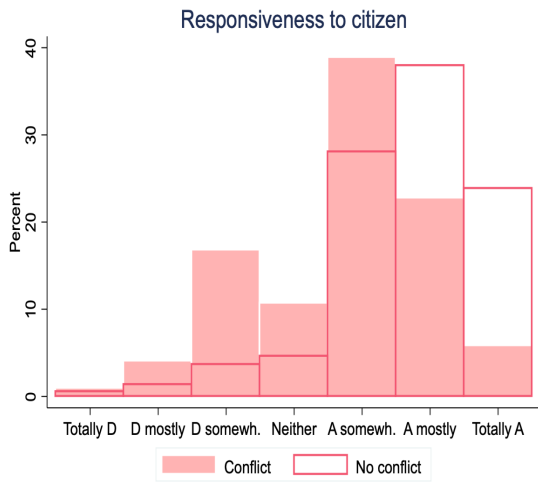
Figure 3.6: Willingness to follow citizen suggestions under no conflict
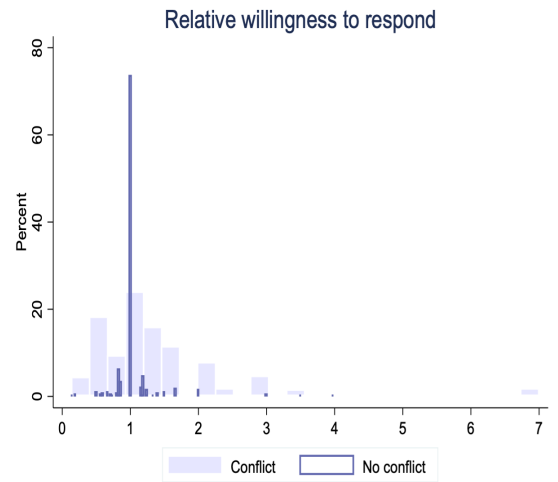
Figure 3.7: Willingness to follow citizen suggestions under no conflict
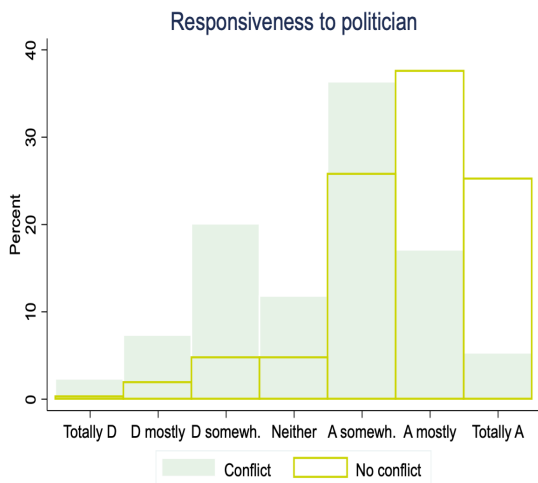
Figure 3.8: Willingness to follow citizen suggestions under no conflict

Table 3.7: OLS regression estimating treatment effects on willingness in response to citizen and politician demands

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Willingness - Citizen	Willingness - Citizen	Willingness - Citizen	Willingness - Politician	Willingness - Politician	Willingness - Politician
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Emotional	0.092	0.093	0.092	0.004	0.001	-0.002
	(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.088)	(0.088)	(0.088)
Conflict	-0.883**	-0.883**	-0.883**	-1.153**	-1.153**	-1.153**
	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Emotional × Conflict	-0.093	-0.093	-0.093	-0.122	-0.122	-0.122
	(0.116)	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.136)	(0.137)	(0.137)
offline=1			0.074			0.172
			(0.138)			(0.122)
Constant	5.626**	5.836**	5.831**	5.665**	5.557**	5.547**
	(0.063)	(0.173)	(0.172)	(0.065)	(0.146)	(0.145)
Covariates added	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.18	0.21	0.21
Observations	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440

+ $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$
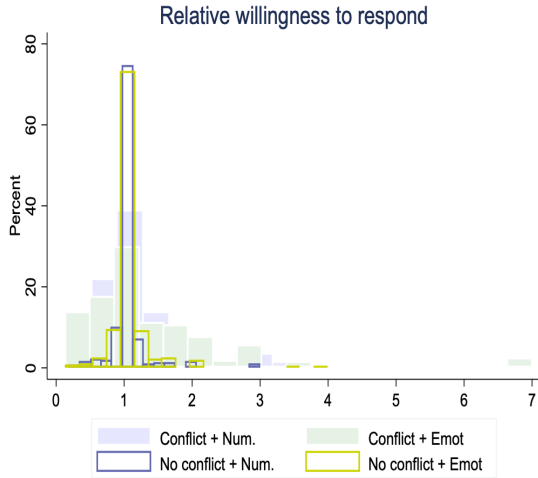
Figure 3.9: Willingness to follow citizen suggestions under no conflict and under conflict
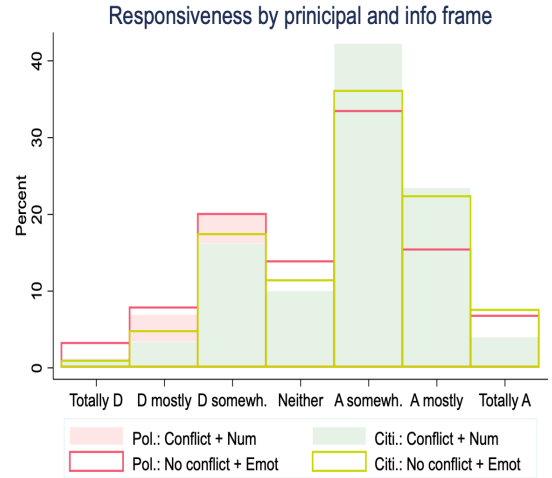
Figure 3.10: Willingness to follow citizen / politican suggestions, by information frame
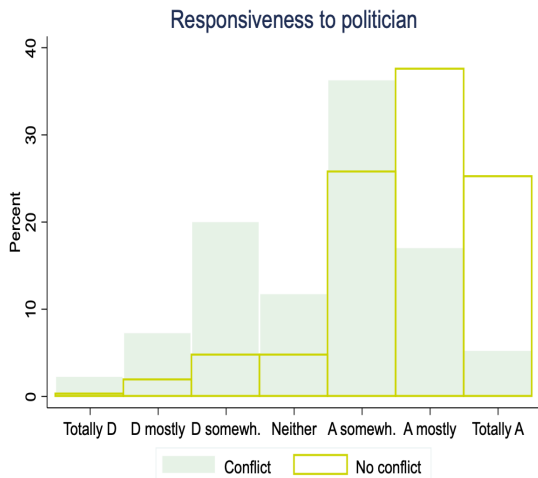
Figure 3.11: Willingness to follow politician suggestions
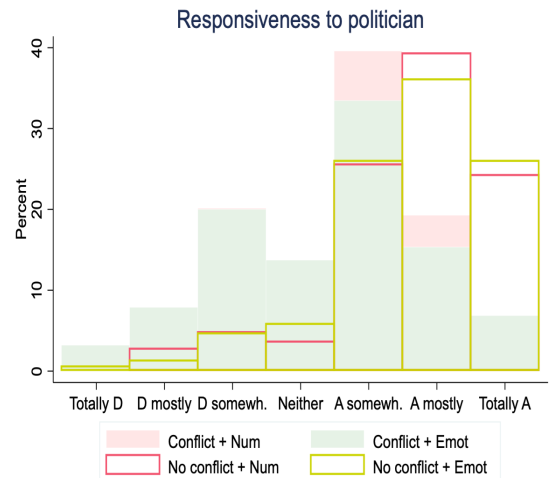
Figure 3.12: Willingness to follow politician suggestions, emotional/qualitative frame

3.3.3. Secondary analyses: choice of action

The secondary outcome was choice of action. I find something surprising: Bureaucrats tend to reject demands regardless of framing and conflict (Table 3.8). Notably, rejection rates are high (Figure 3.13, Figure 3.14). In the no conflict scenario 90% of bureaucrats reject the suggestion made by the politician and citizen, albeit the two parties agree. This is considerably lower in the conflict

scenario, where 44% of bureaucrats reject both suggestions. However, bureaucrats accept politician

and citizen suggestions at a near equal rate (27% and 29%).

Table 3.8: Secondary analysis: OLS regression to estimate the effect of treatment on chosen
plan of action

	(1)	(2)
	Choice	Choice - with demogs added
	b/se	b/se
Emotional	0.061	0.063
	(0.074)	(0.075)
Conflict	0.046	0.046
	(0.073)	(0.073)
Emotional $\times$ Conflict	-0.085	-0.085
	(0.101)	(0.102)
Constant	-0.033	-0.181
	(0.052)	(0.123)
R^2	0.00	0.01
Covariates added	No	Yes
Observations	1440	1440

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

The information frames have no significant effect on responses (Table 3.8), but a trend

towards being more accepting of citizen suggestions under the emotional-qualitative frame is observ-

able (Figure 3.15, Table 3.8).

3.3.4.   Testing potential mechanisms

There might be different underlying reasons as to why conflict elicits the observed response. As

hypothesised, shifts could be driven by the perceived risk of sanction and the differences between

sanctions expected from politicians and citizens. Social identity and role concepts might be at

play. Or the presence of conflict might alter how bureaucrats evaluate the legitimacy, relevance and

adequacy of provided input.

Street-level bureaucrats are expected to be more responsive to citizens because of their

proximity to them and the client orientation that many of these professions promote (e.g. teachers or

public library staff). Since street-level bureaucrats dominate the sample in terms of numbers, I assess

whether they drive the shift towards responsiveness to citizens (Figure 3.16, Figure 3.17), using a non-parametric test (a Chi-squared for choice and a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test for willingness).

When there is no conflict, street-level and centrally employed bureaucrats do not differ ($X2(1)=0.01$, p=0.92). Under conflict however street-level bureaucrats accept citizen suggestions at a lower rate than centrally employed bureaucrats ($X2(1)=11.76$, p=0.003). In terms of stated willingness to respond, street-level bureaucrats are consistently less willing to respond to citizen suggestions than more centrally employed bureaucrats, both when there is no conflict ($z=3.28$, p=0.001) and when there is conflict ($z=2.75$, p=0.006).

Next, I look at the effect of conflicting input on perceived client-value and professional-value conflict. If client orientations are underlying a shift towards responsiveness to citizens, perceived client-value conflict too would increase. If socialisation and professional identities are at play, perceptions of professional-value conflict should increase. Indeed, disagreement between politician and citizen demands makes bureaucrats experience significantly more client-value and professional-value conflict (Table 3.9). This holds up even after adjusting the p-value for multiple comparisons using the very conservative Bonferoni correction. The unadjusted p-value is 0.05. In each of the eight regressions, three comparisons are made, which sums to a total of 24 comparisons. Following the Bonferroni formula, the adjusted p-value is 0.002.

Findings on the effects of the informational frames are more mixed and only significant at $p<0.1$, without adjusting for multiple comparisons. Directionally, values however shift as expected: Perceived conflict in response to citizen demands is attenuated by the informational frame, especially when citizens and politicians disagree ($p<0.1$ for each of the tested interactions). On the contrary, perceived conflict in response to politician demands is not influenced by the information frame ($p>0.6$ for each of the comparisons).

To better understand how bureaucrats evaluate their choices, I next turn to results of the open-text responses.
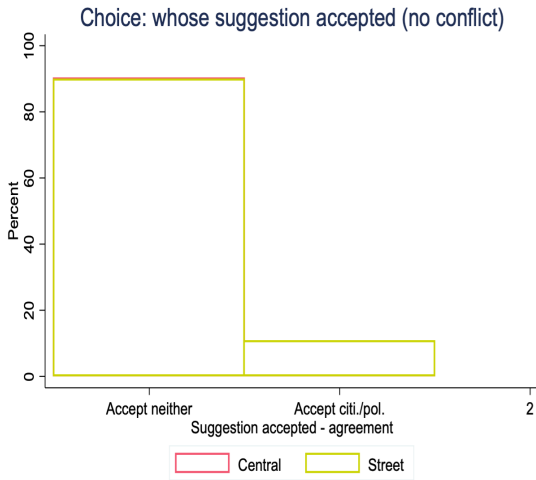
Figure 3.13: Choice to accept or reject proposals under no conflict
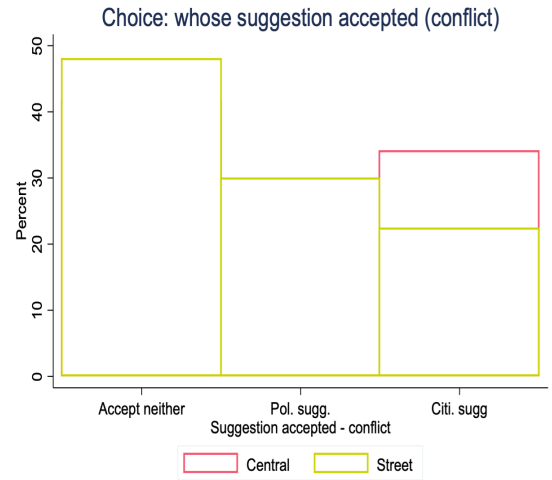
Figure 3.14: Choice to accept or reject proposals under conflict
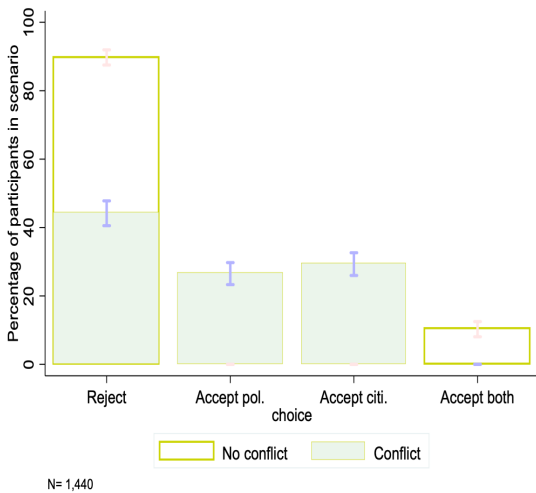
Figure 3.15: Choice to accept or reject proposals, under conflict and without conflict
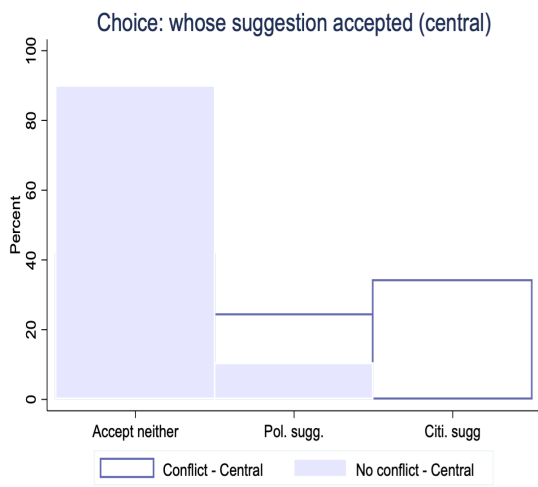
Figure 3.16: Choice to accept or reject proposals under no conflict of street-level bureaucrats
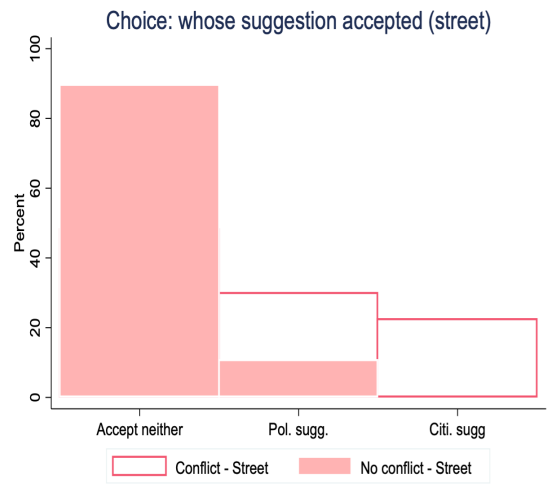
Figure 3.17: Choice to accept or reject proposals under no conflict of bureaucrats employed in non-street-level roles

Table 3.9: Exploratory analysis: OLS regression estimating treatment effects on client-value and professiona-value conflict in response to demands from citizens and politicians

	(1) Client-Value: Pol.	(2) Client-Value: Pol.	(3) Client-Value: Citi.	(4) Client-Value: Citi.	(5) Prof.-Value: Pol.	(6) Prof.-Value: Pol.	(7) Prof.-Value: Citi.	(8) Prof.-Value: Citi.
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Emotional	0.007	0.019	-0.040	-0.035	-0.032	-0.023	-0.181+	-0.175+
	(0.108)	(0.105)	(0.101)	(0.099)	(0.109)	(0.107)	(0.102)	(0.102)
Conflict	1.722**	1.722**	0.954**	0.954**	0.802**	0.802**	0.370**	0.370**
	(0.100)	(0.101)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.077)	(0.078)
Emotional × Conflict	0.139	0.139	-0.197+	-0.197+	0.080	0.080	0.195+	0.195+
	(0.147)	(0.148)	(0.109)	(0.110)	(0.135)	(0.135)	(0.105)	(0.105)
Constant	2.765**	3.043**	2.681**	2.776**	3.024**	3.380**	2.937**	3.139**
	(0.077)	(0.141)	(0.073)	(0.180)	(0.080)	(0.169)	(0.077)	(0.184)
Covariates added	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
R^2	0.31	0.33	0.10	0.14	0.08	0.12	0.03	0.05
Observations	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440

+ $p<0.1$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

Qualitative responses: reasoning and rationalisation of choices

At the end of the survey experiment, bureaucrats were asked two open-ended questions. They were asked to explain what they considered when they made a decision in response to the presented scenarios, and second, what they thought to be barriers to responding to citizen input. About 87% of respondents answered both open-ended questions; 90% answered at least one of the two. I find no significant association between observable demographic characteristics nor treatment conditions and completion of open-ended questions apart from age. Bureaucrats aged 65+ completed the open-ended questions at a lower rate than other age groups. However, there were only four bureaucrats in the sample who were aged 65+. Once I control for multiple comparisons, this difference is no longer be statistically significant. Therefore, this difference is likely not meaningful.

For analysis of the text responses, I randomly sample 300 responses. I then used thematic analysis to hand-code the first 300 submissions. As one would expect from successful randomisation, these 300 submissions do not differ significantly in terms of demographic characteristics from the overall sample; they should thus act as a representative sub-sample of all demographic groups included in this survey. A second coder independently and blind to treatment conditions recoded the same 300 submissions. The percentage of codes that overlapped between coders was 91%. The non-overlapping codes were harmonised following discussions with the second coder.

The ten most common themes on choice are summarised in Table 3.10 and for the question on perceived barriers to acting upon citizen input results are summarised in Table 3.11. In addition, to manual coding, I use the tm package in R to preprocess open-ended answers and map out key terms used in the answers against topics. Figure 3.18 summarises the most common words per code for the question on choice and Figure 3.19 for the question on barriers.

To gain a better understanding of whether these themes are systematically related to demographics or choices of the participant, I created dummy variables for the presence/absence of each theme. I then created a correlation matrix of dummies for themes, demographic characteristics, the primary (willingness) and secondary outcomes (choice). Since there are more than 60 comparisons and the likelihood of false positives is high, I report only correlations that are significant at $p<0.001$ or have a correlation coefficient that can be considered as moderate (rho>=0.3). Associations with

Table 3.10: Most common codes: choice

Code	Freq.	%-age of sample
Own opinion	30	10.0%
Budget / cost	24	8.0%
Feasibility concerns	23	7.7%
Compromise between parties	20	6.7%
Performance / targets / work experience	20	6.7%
Big picture / wider society	19	6.3%
Representativeness of input	14	4.7%
Quality of input	9	3.0%
Whatever citizens demand	6	2.0%
Own expertise	6	2.0%

demographics were only weak and none was significant at $p<0.001$. The only meaningful association is that those bureaucrats who take an organisational view - their bureaucratic agency's views comes first and foremost - are less willing to support the politician's decision in a conflict scenario than bureaucrats who gave other reasons (rho=-0.27, $p<0.001$).

The lack of correlation between action and reported reasons is in line with the literature on motivated reasoning. Most commonly, bureaucrats relied on their own opinion, their experiences, the values they held and the perceived need to work towards a compromise between citizen and politician demands. A substantial number of bureaucrats stated that they would put citizen opinion first when they chose a plan of action during the experiment. However, most responded with the caveat that while they put citizens' voice first they thought there were barriers that meant they could not feasibly support citizen suggestions. Indeed, 34 out of 43 (79%) bureaucrats who said that they cared above all about citizens' voice, did not chose to support citizen suggestions in the conflict scenario. Instead, they made an alternative suggestion. One respondent, for instance, rationalised this by saying:

"I looked at what would best be in line with the desires of the citizens who are my clients."

This suggests that while views were taken into account, bureaucrats might have felt that they should alter the suggestions of citizens somewhat; perhaps to make them more palatable to politicians or to protect citizens from what they saw as ill-advised suggestions. Many also doubted the representativeness of the input; whether it would speak for their entire client base or society at

large. This is striking as the scenario stressed that the input was representative of the citizen group that bureaucrats served. Budget, feasibility and performance were other common considerations. Bureaucrats were concerned that citizen demands cannot be accommodated within available budgets, or are not feasible within given time and resources. Several were worried about the impact of the suggested changes on performance. Bureaucrats were concerned about how implementing suggested changes will affect their own work loads, how they can deliver on targets or overall service quality:

"Whether or not implementing the changes would work, really even matter, or affect me or the job I'm doing."

Many stressed that they felt that they sought alternative strategies because they had to keep the big picture in mind: how society at large would be affected, how changes would affect longer-term issues and how they would be perceived by political actors other than their principal.

Figure 3.18: This figure summarises the three most important (stemmed) words for each theme related to the choice made by the bureaucrat. Where there are ties between the importance of words, more than three are represented.
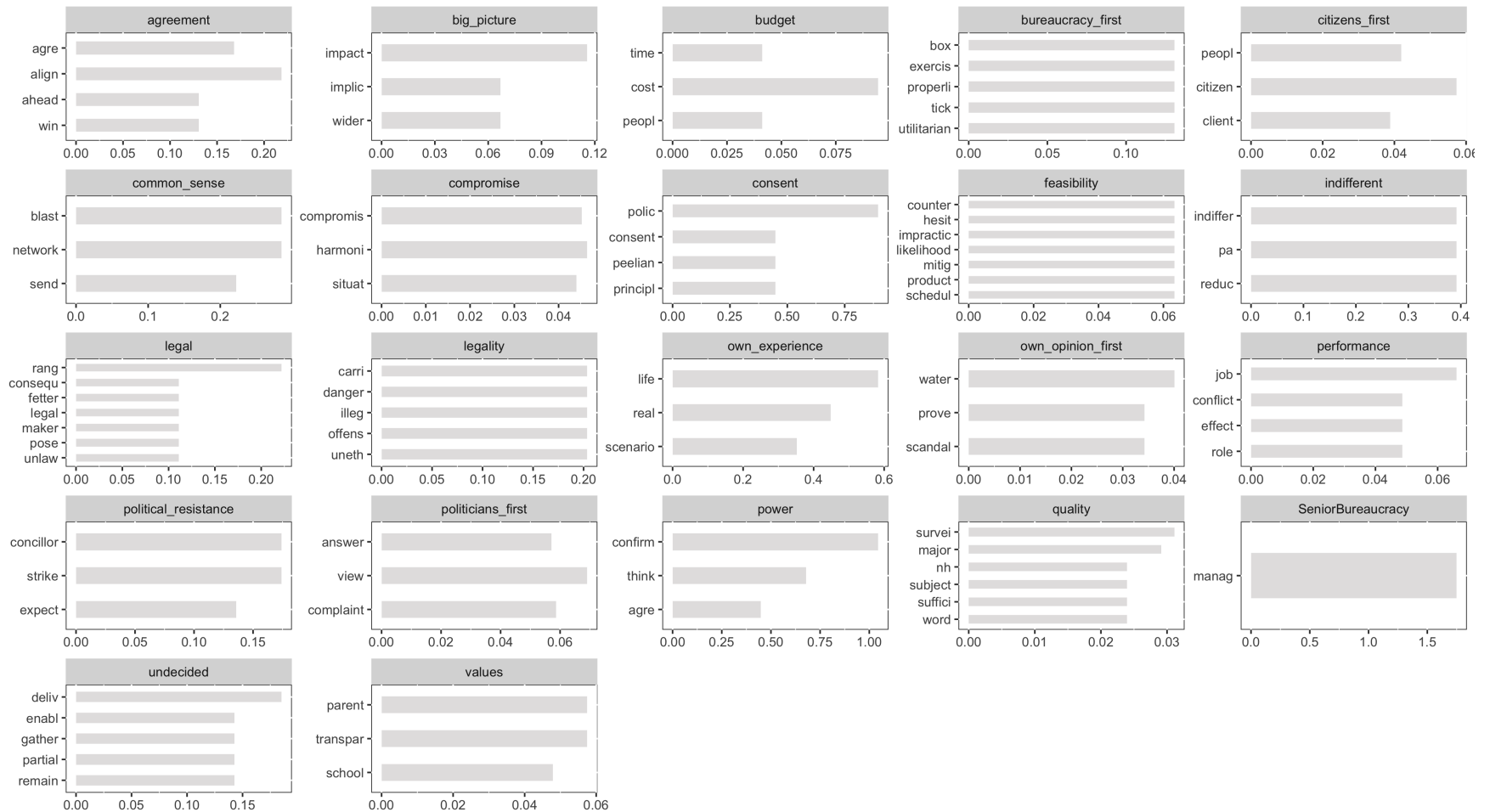
Together with budget, an underlying scepticism about the validity of citizen input was perceived as a significant barrier to acting upon citizen input. Many bureaucrats doubted whether citizen suggestions can be taken at face-value. They insisted that citizens do not have the expertise or circumspection to suggest changes that are feasible, for their own good or for the good of society at large. For example, one bureaucrat laments:

"Citizens view our work from the outside, and only look at immediate consequences and effects. They don't always consider the practicality of some ideas. Just because government salaries are paid by taxpayers doesn't mean that the taxpayers' opinions will always be well-developed and well-researched."

Many bureaucrats thus took a paternalistic view: they cannot act upon citizen input because citizens do not know what is best for them and what is feasible. Those bureaucrats that were somewhat more enthusiastic located barriers among the net of other stakeholders involved in policy changes. These bureaucrats pointed out that often demands from citizens, politicians and pressure groups are conflicting. Finally, a tranche of bureaucrats found that it is mostly red tape, bureaucratic processes, inertia and political resistance that impede them from acting upon citizen input.

Table 3.11: Most common codes: barriers

Code	Freq.	%-age of sample
Lack of expertise / unqualified	43	14%
Budget / money	41	14%
Conflicting demands	31	10%
Feasibility concerns	28	9%
Time constraints	21	7%
Lack of representativeness	18	6%
Red tape	16	5%
Senior bureaucracy	15	5%
Political resistance	14	5%
Inertia	12	4%

Figure 3.19: This figure shows the three most important (stemmed) words from answers on the perceived barriers of responding to citizen input. Where there are ties between the importance of words, more than three are represented.
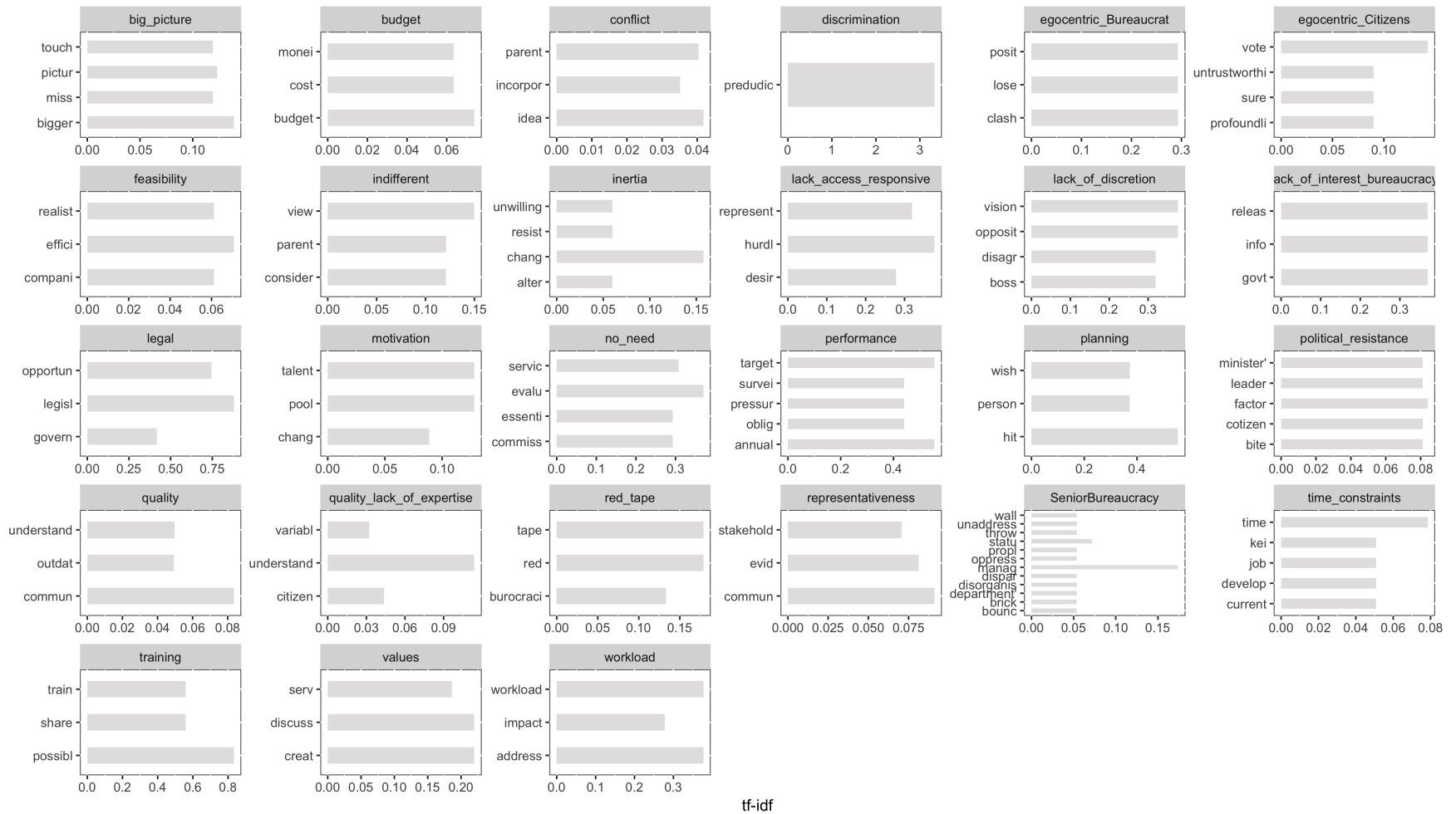
3.4. Discussion

Bureaucrats have always been "partial agents" of various governmental principals, "without being under the complete authority of any one in particular, and without any common understanding of how authority is legitimately divided among the competing principals" (Moe, 1985, pp.768-769). Adding to this confusion, bureaucrats now need to negotiate the demands of citizens supplied through government-led yet not pervasively sanctioned public participation mechanisms.

This experiment set out to test empirically how bureaucrats react to the competing demands of political principals and citizens. I further tested whether this behaviour is malleable to information frames, in order to gain a better understanding of how the mode of citizen input might affect the influence that citizens can yield over bureaucrat decisions.

Results show that bureaucrats resist. When citizens and politicians are in agreement, almost 90% of bureaucrats shirk responding to demands and opt to provide their own advice. The rate of resistance decreases somewhat under conflict, in favour of the citizen group. Counter to what a risk-based model of bureaucrat behaviour would expect, on average, bureaucrats do not yield to politicians at a higher rate in the conflict scenario. Rather, conflict seems to activate considerations related to client orientation and professional values. Bureaucrats side with someone at a higher rate during conflict.

Notably, this goes counter to the idea of bureaucrats as arbiters (Miller, Reynolds, and Singer, 2017; Whitford, 2010) but stresses their importance as political actors in their own right. Instead, it is more in line with the bureau-shaping hypothesis, according to which bureaucrats will choose policy roles over those of pure managers and implementers (Gains and John, 2010).

In terms of heterogeneity, if responsiveness is influenced by professional norms and experience, one would expect bureaucrats who are used to working on policy issues to choose an advising role (non-street-level bureaucrats) at a greater rate than those who have a service delivery role (street-level bureaucrats). Indeed that's what the data suggests: street-level bureaucrats provide their own advice at a lower rate than bureaucrats employed in state and central government. Notably however, willingness to respond is high across all bureaucrat groups.

In line with predictions, the effect of conflict was larger than that of information frames.

The proportion of bureaucrats who yielded to citizen demands when receiving a qualitative frame was directionally higher yet statistically not distinguishable from the quantitative frame. The small effect size could be an encouraging sign for public participation. Given that governments dictate what form participation takes, it is re-assuring that the mode of citizen input does not have large effects on the responsiveness of the bureaucracy. This finding could also point towards bureaucrats having developed a habit of filtering or counter-acting biases that are introduced by qualitative / emotional frames compared to purely quantitative information. This might be because of different experiences with citizen consultations. For instance, many central and local governments struggle to recruit broad-based, representative samples of citizens to comment on their policy proposals. Although the intervention materials in this experiment specified that the input was indeed representative, it is plausible that real life experience dominated such knowledge.

While I found no strong heterogeneity in responses to the scenarios, it is plausible that some types of bureaucrats found some suggestions more relevant than others. The number of bureaucrats who chose not to side with either principal could thus be inflated. However, the presence of conflict still shifted behaviour. This would not be the case when bureaucrats simply dismissed the suggestions as irrelevant to their work setting. Further, qualitative responses suggested that they considered how the scenario would translate into their work context and responses were largely homogeneous.

Bureaucrats reduce their responsiveness to citizens at a lower rate than do politicians. Thus, when citizen groups voice demands in public participation processes that are at odds with those of politicians, citizens might be able to exploit the effects such a conflict has on bureaucrats to their advantage.

Some other patterns uncovered in this experiment invite further development of models and data collection. Replications could test whether the salience and type of public input changes responses. For instance, do bureaucrats react differently to referendum results compared to those from public comment or consultations? Future models could incorporate noisy signals from political principals or citizens without the need to include third players, which severely complicates the ability to find closed models. Audit experiments could assess how different directives - such as politicians' memos - affect behavioural measures of responsiveness, such as the speed at which bureaucrats process requests. They could also test the effect of aggregate versus individualised input. For

example, does it matter whether bureaucrats are confronted with citizen input in an aggregate manner as opposed to when they evaluate single cases such as in Scott (1997) where information frames did have significant effects?

Going forward, bureaucrat behaviour should also be studied at the group level. Bureaucracies are not only hierarchical but also marked by collective decision-making. Several bureaucrats in this experiment noted that they believe senior bureaucrats are an obstacle to responding to citizen input in a meaningful way. It remains an empirical question whether influence truly acts in such a top-down manner and why senior bureaucrats might act in such a way. Finally, motivations can be further unpacked. For instance, do bureaucrats obstruct to alleviate the need for politicians to heed to citizen demands between elections or do they do so for their own benefit, to retain greater control over the policy process?

3.5. Appendix I: Survey questions

A few questions on the above...

1. To what extent are you willing or unwilling to support changes suggested by your [political principal]?

    [7] Absolutely willing

    [6] Very much willing

    [5] Somewhat willing

    [4] Neither willing nor unwilling

    [3] Somewhat unwilling

    [2] Very much unwilling

    [1] Absolutely unwilling

2. To what extent are you willing or unwilling to support changes suggested by your citizen group ?

    [7] Absolutely willing

    [6] Very much willing

    [5] Somewhat willing

    [4] Neither willing nor unwilling

    [3] Somewhat unwilling

    [2] Very much unwilling

    [1] Absolutely unwilling

3. Imagine you are now asked by the head of your team to choose a strategy based on the two opinions presented. Which one would you choose ?

    In a conflict scenario

    [1] I would suggest to implement what the citizen group put forward.

[2] I would suggest to implement what [political principal] put forward.

[3] I would accept neither of their suggestions but suggest something else.

In a non-conflict scenario

[1] I would suggest to implement what the citizen group and [political principal] put forward.

[2] I would accept neither of their suggestions but suggest something else.

Now, we would like to ask a few questions about how you feel about the suggestions made by the [political principal]. [Professional-value conflict: item 1]

4. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *The changes suggested by the [political principal] conflict with my values and norms as a professional* [7] Totally agree

   [6] Agree mostly

   [5] Agree somewhat

   [4] Neither agree nor disagree

   [3] Disagree somewhat

   [2] Disagree mostly

   [1] Totally disagree

5. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *The changes suggested by the [political principal] would negatively affect my professional autonomy*

   [7] Totally agree

   [6] Agree mostly

   [5] Agree somewhat

   [4] Neither agree nor disagree

   [3] Disagree somewhat

   [2] Disagree mostly

[1] Totally disagree

6. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *The changes suggested by the [political principal] would clash with the wishes of many of my clients (citizens affected by my work)*

[7] Totally agree

[6] Agree mostly

[5] Agree somewhat

[4] Neither agree nor disagree

[3] Disagree somewhat

[2] Disagree mostly

[1] Totally disagree

7. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *My clients (citizens affected by my work) would perceive the changes suggested by the [political principal] as wasteful*

[7] Totally agree

[6] Agree mostly

[5] Agree somewhat

[4] Neither agree nor disagree

[3] Disagree somewhat

[2] Disagree mostly

[1] Totally disagree

Next, could you tell us next how you feel about the suggestions made by the citizen group?

8. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *The changes suggested by the citizen group conflict with my values and norms as a professional*

[7] Totally agree

[6] Agree mostly

[5] Agree somewhat

[4] Neither agree nor disagree

[3] Disagree somewhat

[2] Disagree mostly

[1] Totally disagree

9. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *The changes suggested by the citizen group would negatively affect my professional autonomy*

[7] Totally agree

[6] Agree mostly

[5] Agree somewhat

[4] Neither agree nor disagree

[3] Disagree somewhat

[2] Disagree mostly

[1] Totally disagree

10. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *The changes suggested by the citizen group would clash with the wishes of many clients (citizens affected by my work)*

[7] Totally agree

[6] Agree mostly

[5] Agree somewhat

[4] Neither agree nor disagree

[3] Disagree somewhat

[2] Disagree mostly

[1] Totally disagree

11. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement *My clients (citizens affected by my work) would perceive the changes suggested by the citizen group as wasteful*

[7] Totally agree

[6] Agree mostly

[5] Agree somewhat

[4] Neither agree nor disagree

[3] Disagree somewhat

[2] Disagree mostly

[1] Totally disagree

3.6. Appendix II - Pilot: additional information

Each participant received 6 vignettes: (a) positively phrased and quantitative information, (b) negatively phrased and quantitative information, (c) positively phrased and emotive/qualitative information, (d) positively phrased and emotive/qualitative information, (e) a mix of quantitative and emotive information and positive phrasing, (f) a mix of quantitative and emotive information and negative phrasing.

3.7. Appendix III: Overview of terms and contexts

Table 3.12: Terms used to refer to government and public sector organisations

US term	UK term
Local government (e.g. county, town, city, municipality)	Local government authority
State government	Government department
Federal government / Federal agency	
Regulator	Regulator
State owned or run services (e.g. public schools, parks, Amtrak)	Front line services (e.g. NHS, education, police, TfL)

Chapter 4

A field experiment testing behavioural interventions to increase turnout in non-electoral public participation

Abstract

Non-electoral public participation initiatives are regarded as the gold standard for good governance - encouraging and sustaining democratic engagement. Most countries use these mechanisms, to inform their policy-making between elections. Yet, participation rates are low and often unrepresentative of the diversity of their stakeholders. A large body of evidence suggests that communication campaigns can increase turnout in elections. However, the evidence base for non-electoral participation is scarce and in many aspects completely lacking. This paper tests the causal relationship between government communication efforts and a non-electoral public participation initiative. I use a large-scale, randomised experiment with 29,008 households in a large city in the UK to test the effect of different direct mail messages on participation. I find that all changes to communication materials have similar effect sizes to those of the literature. But they all backfire - all interventions significantly reduce participation rates.

4.1. Introduction

"*A core idea of democratic institutions is that they should be responsive to what the people want.*" (Fishkin, 2018, p.1).

The ideal of responsive institutions and an engaged public that shapes policy agendas is a persistent theme in debates of democratic theory (Pateman, 2012; Fishkin, 2018; Fung and Wright, 2001), governance (Altschuler and Corrales, 2012) and international development (Speer, 2012). Imagined emodiments of the ideal of responsive institutions and an engaged public are manifold - spanning radical transformations of society (Pateman, 2012), changes within existing systems such as the use of large citizen assemblies that deliberate on policy issues (Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell, 2002; Fung and Wright, 2001), to the least invasive, small-scale governance interventions. The latter are the focus of this paper. These small participatory interventions are based in the same logic as other initiatives deriving from theories of participatory democracy, but they differ in that they offer less opportunities for deliberation (Fung, 2006). At the same time, they are less time intensive and costly, and perhaps for the same reasons, they are the most commonly used forms of participatory initiatives in the OECD (OECD, 2009) as well as developing countries (Speer, 2012). Notably, these mechanisms differ from deliberative fora. Still, they use the same logic as more deliberative processes. Given that these small-scale, non-deliberative interventions are the most prevalent form of non-electoral public participation processes, whether they deliver on the promise of citizen involvement and more broad-based democratic engagement merits closer investigation.

Particularly troubling, despite their prevalent use, these methods suffer from low participation rates and persistent under-representation of large swathes of society (Moro, 2005). The use of these public participation mechanisms is recommended as best practice for more inclusive policy-making, with a view to encouraging and sustaining broad-based political engagement (Rodrigo and Amo, N.D.; Speer, 2012). However, it is unclear whether these initatives deliver in practice what they promise. If these mechanisms fail to deliver on their promise of broadening and deepening democracy, they risk causing the opposite of what they were intended to achieve: they will likely reduce the perceived efficacy of participatory processes and decrease long-term interest in participation. There is a real danger that the failure of participatory processes can seed mistrust in the

willingness of political elites to meaningfully consult and incorporate citizen views (Motta, 2018). Apart from its potentially deleterious effects on political trust, relying on politicians and bureaucrats to infer "what the people want" risks perpetuating elite biases in policy-making. For instance, in the US, Broockman and Skovron (2017) documented that Republican legislators consistently over-estimated public support for conservative policies. Bureaucrats advising on such policies too were found to display partisan biases on a host of salient policy issues (Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenberger, and Stokes, 2019). It is unlikely that the availability of public opinion data on specific policy issues alone will lead to greater congruence between issue positions of the political elite and the general public. However, increasing the representativeness of public participation can increase the legitimacy of public input for policy, which in turn can heighten the pressure for elected officials to take demands made through these forums more seriously.

The more frequently and readily credible information on citizen preferences is available, the less likely it is that politicians can superimpose their view of "what the public wants" onto the policy agenda. This is for instance illustrated by Simonovits, Guess, and Nagler (2019). They find that in US states with more direct forms of democracy, implemented policies end up being closer to what the majority of citizens would support. A significant obstacle for non-electoral public participation initiatives to have the democratising effect that they strive for is their unrepresentativeness - often in numbers but even more so in terms of what types of citizens participate.

Academic literature on voter turnout has shown that there are tactics that can be used to increase (Gerber and Green, 2000; Nickerson, Friedrichs, and King, 2006; Nickerson, 2007; Nickerson, 2008; Gerber, Green, and Larimer, 2008; Nickerson and Rogers, 2010; Foos and Rooij, 2017) and potentially diversify participation rates for elections (Michelson, 2005; Pons and Liegey, 2018; Enos, Fowler, and Vavreck, 2014; Miller, Reynolds, and Singer, 2017). Much less is known about non-electoral public participation processes. Could changes to how citizens are informed about these citizen consultations increase participation rates, and perhaps even diversify the pool of participants?

This paper tests the causal relationship between government communication efforts for a non-deliberative public participation initiative. I use a large-scale, randomised and pre-registered experiment with 29,008 households to estimate the effect of different direct mail messages on participation in this city-wide consultation. The city boasts a disproportionately large British Black

population compared to other cities in the UK. In the year before this field experiment took place, the same consultation attracted about 3,500 responses. Of these, 6% had a black and minority ethnic background (BME) while 13% of the city's population falls into this category. BME citizens were thus substantially under-represented in the consultation.

This is not unusual. Similar patterns can be observed for voter registration and turnout at elections. In the UK, ethnic minorities are 2.3 times less likely to be on the electoral register (Apostolova Vyara and Uberoi, 2019, pp.16-19). A similar pattern can be observed for income. In the UK - while the gap is much smaller compared to the United States - the lowest socio-economic classes (C, D, E) are less likely to be registered than the most well-off (Apostolova Vyara and Uberoi, 2019, p.22).

The aim of the direct mail campaigns employed in this study was to increase participation rates overall, and in particular, increase them for BME and high deprivation neighbourhoods.

4.1.1. Non-electoral forms of participation and citizen consultations

Public engagement besides elections is an important mechanism to inform and update policy-makers on the preferences of their constituents. Increased engagement has also been linked to consensus-building and a greater acceptance of policy choices and trade-offs (Leighley and Oser, 2018). Most democratic countries have made public engagement exercises part of the routine of policy-making and planning (OECD, 2009). While there is a great variety of public engagement types, citizen consultations, which typically involve asking the public to comment on legal documents or complete surveys on the policy issue, are most commonly used in the OECD (Moro, 2005; OECD, 2009). citizen consultations can be tokenistic power sharing arrangements (Arnstein, 1969) or mean genuine co-creation (Bishop and Davis, 2002), depending on the extent to which there is a commitment to consult before policy decisions are fixed and to use results in policy design and implementation.

The evidence base for citizen consultations and other non-electoral participation is scarce and in many aspects completely lacking. Studies of public participation are mainly situated in the fields of (urban) planning and public administration. The majority of work on this subject remains descriptive and sometimes borders the naively enthusiastic (Bishop and Davis, 2002; Catt and Murphy, 2003; Kroll, Neshkova, and Pandey, 2017; Oh and Lim, 2017; Neshkova and Guo, 2018; Shipley

and Utz, 2012, for commentary). Studies that discuss barriers to public participation pervasively note the skepticism and cynicism of bureaucrats tasked with managing these processes and delivering policy recommendations based on their results. Representativeness or more precisely the lack thereof is core to this scepticism. Bureaucrats note that organised interests turn out at a higher rate than minorities and "average citziens" (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Bickerstaff and Walker, 2005; Buckwalter, 2014). Empirical work further suggests that the input that is provided from "average citizens" still comes from a narrow range of opinions and demographic backgrounds (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Shipley et al., 2004; Bickerstaff and Walker, 2005; Uyesugi and Shipley, 2005). Often citizens are simply not aware of the opportunity to participate. This is mainly due to a lack of resource mobilisation on behalf of governments (Yang and Callahan, 2007).

Yet, even when citizens are aware of opportunities, there is a lack of demand for participation, which reportedly is due to a (perceived) lack of time (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Yang and Callahan, 2007), prohibitive cost (Helling, 1998) and low internal and external political efficacy (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001a; Yang and Callahan, 2007; Coleman, Gibson, and Schneeberger, 2011). There has been little to no work published on how to get more citizens and a wider range of them to input in the first place.

A few exceptions exist. Butler and Arceneaux (2015) tested different forms of encouragement to serve on a local government committee in a field experiment. They find that offering social recognition has no significant effect and offering training targeted at increasing the internal political efficacy of participants had a negative effect on participation. The experiment was not powered for sub-group analysis but finds suggestive evidence that citizens from lower socio-economic groups reacted negatively to both treatments and more so than people from higher socio-economic groups. Butler and Arceneaux (2015) theorise that the training treatment backfired because it implied that the task at hand was difficult - it required training - and that it involved a substantial time commitment. In their view, recognition might not have had a positive effect on turnout as it signalled that serving on the committee was above and beyond one's civic duty.

However, with a lack of empirical tests of interventions targeted at turnout in public participation, it remains unclear whether the negative effects that Butler and Arceneaux (2015) observe are an artifact of their interventions or are a results of a mismatch between interventions

and incentive structures at play. It is plausible that different incentive structures exist for non-electoral public participation compared to voting.

An alternative explanation is provided by Butler and Hassell (2018). They theorise that government communication that encourages public participation might backfire generally because it signals to citizens that the government is already taking care of the issue. Thus, behavioural messages might encourage free riding rather than having the intended mobilising effect.

However, there are some positive results. Peixoto, Sjoberg, and Mellon (2017) find that email encouragements to take part in an online participatory budgeting exercise significantly increase participation. In another field experiment, Hock, Anderson, and Potoski (2013) tested whether invitation phone calls can increase attendance of town hall (civic) meetings. While they found a positive effect of phone calls which is comparable to that of phone calls used in GOTV experiments, their study also was severely underpowered, casting doubt on the accuracy of their estimate. Furthermore, they only increase participation among residents who are business owners and could be affected by the planned changes that were scheduled to be discussed in the town hall meeting. It is thus questionable whether the findings truly speak towards methods aimed at diversifying participation. What is more, these two studies look at forms of non-electoral public participation that provide more opportunities for deliberation, which sets them apart from the more streamlined processes used by most (local) governments.

Uyesugi and Shipley (2005) to the contrary specifically concentrate on initiatives targeted at increasing public participation among ethnic minorities. They report that translating recruitment materials into languages of the main ethnic minorities resident in Vancouver, Canada, was perceived positively and ethnic minority participants had positive views of the participation process. Uyesugi and Shipley (2005) however do not trace nor comment on the link between targeted outreach and actual turnout at the participation initiatives. Their qualitative case study remains largely descriptive; it does not allow for conclusions about whether the employed tactics caused increases in participation nor which ones worked better than others.

Any successful strategy aimed at increasing participation will likely require increasing demand for participation, while holding the costs for such efforts at a minimum. Due to their low cost, mail outs, telephone and - to a more limited extent - face-to-face interaction are commonly used

to advertise public participation initiatives. The get-out-the-vote (GOTV) literature has evaluated these tactics and others in the context of electoral participation. I will discuss next what we could learn from these studies and where their results might have limited application due to the differences between citizen consultations and electoral participation.

4.1.2. GOTV and behavioural strategies to mobilise citizens

Problems of mobilisation and participation have been thoroughly studied in the context of national and local elections. The get-out-the-vote (GOTV) studies have employed randomised experiments to test communication and behavioural strategies to increase and broaden participation (Gerber, Green, and Shachar, 2003; Nickerson, 2007; Arceneaux and Nickerson, 2009; Nickerson, 2008). Relevant to this study, researchers in the US and the UK have found the effect of direct mail to lie between 1 and 2 percentage points (Gerber, Green, and Larimer, 2008; John and Brannan, 2008; Fieldhouse et al., 2013; Fieldhouse et al., 2014), depending on the message used (Gerber and Green, 2000; Gerber, Green, and Larimer, 2008), the salience of the election and pre-existing voting habits (Gerber, Green, and Shachar, 2003; Fieldhouse et al., 2014; Coppock, Guess, and Ternovski, 2016).

Especially relevant for the current study, increases in participation following communication campaigns have been shown to also take effect for minority ethnic populations (Latinos in the USA: Michelson, 2005; American Asians: Wong, Lien, and Conway, 2005; Immigrants in France: Pons and Liegey, 2018). However, as Enos, Fowler, and Vavreck (2014) find, interventions not specifically targeted at minority voters might attract majority voters to the detriment of those who are already under-represented, thereby widening the participation gap. In a similar vein, Miller, Reynolds, and Singer (2017) find that younger voters can be mobilised when they are targeted, but that they are disproportionately from households with above-median income. It is evident that the mobilisation threshold for low income and minority ethnic groups is higher than for other groups (García Bedolla and Michelson, 2012, pp.191-210).

Tactics based on behavioural science might fare better than purely informational strategies. For instance, Valenzuela and Michelson (2016) find that where Latino identities are strong, identity appeals successfully increase turnout among these voters. Literature on campaigns particular to minorities remains scarce, but several studies aimed at increasing turnout among the general public

have tested a wide range of behavioural techniques.

Nickerson and Rogers (2010) find that asking people to make a plan to vote increases turnout by 4.1 percentage points. Their intervention draws on literature on the power of implementation intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006; Sniehotta, 2009). Gerber and Green (2000) use injunctive social norms to mobilise voters. Bond et al. (2012) draw on the power of descriptive social norms - knowing that your friends voted - to increase turnout. Related, Dellavigna et al. (2017) find that using social image concerns about not voting can increase turnout.

However, it is unclear whether these tactics would have similar effects when applied to non-electoral forms of public participation. Bennion and Nickerson (2010) look at electoral registration, and find that simple reminders can help to overcome technical challenges associated with outreach to citizens that lower engagement – in this case the need to download forms from a link contained in an email. However, Townsley and Turnbull-Dugarte (2019) find in a recent field experiment in the UK that face-to-face encouragements to register for postal voting had no effect. Regardless, motivations to sign-up for the electoral register are linked to motivations to vote. citizen consultations, on the other hand, require a motivation to be engaged in politics beyond candidates and party politics. Participants need to show a genuine interest in the policy issue or at least understand how it relates to other concerns that they hold, in order to be motivated to take part. Secondly, citizen consultations are – with rare exception – not as salient as elections. Canvassing might be an effective tactic to increase turnout even in low salience contexts (Green, Gerber, and Nickerson, 2008). However, canvassing is expensive and thus usually not an option for public participation campaigns that rely purely on government funds and much smaller amounts of money than election campaigns. They thus have to rely more heavily on less costly but potentially also less effective, remote forms of communication.

Somewhat closer to the context of citizen consultations, Coppock, Guess, and Ternovski (2016) test whether participation in online petitions can be increased by using different communication techniques. They find that remote forms of communication - in this case, a direct message sent via Twitter - can increase the number of people who sign an online petition. However, both signing an online petition and registering for elections are much less time intensive actions than taking part in a consultation. Most citizen consultations involve answering online survey questionnaires that

often comprise of several pages of questions or require people to read and comment on complicated policy proposals and planning documents. This means, we can expect it to be more difficult to persuade people to participate in a consultation than to sign a petition or cast a vote.

In addition to lower salience and greater effort, as discussed, citizen consultations also suffer from a lack of readily available social norms relating to what should be done with their results and why participation should be regarded as socially desirable.

First, contrary to elections, there is no legal basis nor an accepted norm available that determines what turnout and what percentage of support should be regarded as legitimate. This means that participating in a consultation is riskier than turning out in an election. In an election, if one's chosen party attains a clear majority, it is accepted that the public gave them the mandate to govern, even if turnout was low and less than the majority of the public voted. To the contrary, if a policy suggestion receives support from a majority of citizens in a public participation initiative, yet turnout was low, it is much less clear whether the support can be regarded as legitimate. This different risk-reward ratio implies that incentives different to those used in GOTV literature need to be mobilised in order to motivate citizens to turn out in public participation processes. Then, it is possible that participation in citizen consultations is only weakly linked to socially conformist behaviour. For instance, it is unlikely that someone can boast to their friends that they responded to a consultation on measures to improve health and well-being in their area. In contrast, it is much more likely that someone can boast about voting for a candidate who supports universal health care for all. That might mean social norm interventions are less likely to be credible and effective for citizen consultations than in GOTV settings.

Another aspect in which consultations differ from other forms of participation is how the event is advertised to the general public. Many governments use sampling techniques or target their efforts to a very specific subset of local populations. This might obliterate a sense of participation as civic duty. The fact that this burden is not shared equally among citizens make targeted citizens reluctant to give up their time to participate.

Citizen consultations might be more akin to volunteering and acts of charity, by which one gives up time and potentially money to contribute to a cause one cares for or help one's community. Literature on contributions on public goods might therefore be better suited to inform what could

be viable interventions to boost participation.

4.1.3. Evidence on increasing contributions from the public goods literature

Offering financial incentives

The most intuitive solution to increasing participation might simply be to reward people for doing so and punish them when they shirk. Such incentive schemes can however quickly take an authoritarian turn - very much contrary to the democratic ideal that they should support. Lotteries, however, are fun - they have the connotation of excitement, suspense and - in the case of charity raffle tickets - have long been associated with charitable causes.

Several studies from public economics find that compared to voluntary contribution schemes – i.e. you contribute as much as you like – lotteries lead to larger contributions (Morgan and Sefton, 2000; Lange, List, and Price, 2007). This effect seems to be independent of risk preferences (Lange, List, and Price, 2007) and has also been demonstrated outside the laboratory, in field experiments (Landry et al., 2006). In terms of social change and long-term impact, financial incentives can however be problematic. There is a fear that they might crowd-out intrinsic motivations, meaning that without the external incentives, people no longer want to contribute. Meier (2007) shows that after a university withdrew a charity donation matching scheme, Swiss students decreased their contributions to a level below of what they had paid before the scheme had been introduced.

Yet, most field experiments looking at taxation and donations find no such effects (Eckel, Grossman, and Johnston, 2005; Dwenger et al., 2014) or only partial crowding-out (Adena and Huck, 2017). In a more political context, John (2016) find that lotteries can increase electoral registration. There is thus suggestive evidence that lotteries could also increase participation in citizen consultations. They might also be especially successful at attracting low income groups for whom the advertised bounty provides greater marginal gains than for wealthier individuals. Further, lotteries are inexpensive compared to pay-all schemes and easily administered - an important concern for cash strapped public bodies and administrations.

There are however also dangers associated with picking such a strategy. For one, public

services might start having to compete over public participation in their citizen consultations. If one local government institution introduces a lottery for public citizen consultations, others might experience a reduction in participation as people become unwilling to participate in causes that do not offer similar incentives. Krieg and Samek (2017) illustrate that social compared to financial incentives do not have such displacement effects. I will therefore next look at non-financial rewards.

Providing symbolic rewards

A viable alternative to lotteries might be to use non-monetary rewards, or so-called symbolic rewards. Symbolic rewards span a wide range of gestures – from a simple 'thank you' to elaborate ranking systems and award ceremonies. Empirical tests of symbolic rewards for public participation are few. Panagopoulos (2011) tested the effect of "thank you" messages included in direct mail campaigns on electoral turnout in the US He finds that messages of gratitude significantly increase turnout across three elections with different salience levels and taking place in different locations and time points. Notably, the effects are fairly consistent across contexts and larger than those observed from direct mail campaigns which do not feature "thank you" messages (Gerber and Green, 2000; John and Brannan, 2008; Fieldhouse et al., 2014).

Most other studies on the topic are located in the fields of economics and management. Grant et al. (2007), for example, find that employees in a fundraising body of a university collect more donations after a beneficiary thanks them and they briefly interact with the beneficiaries. In other words, being thanked for one's effort and seeing that the recipients of one's work are grateful increases effort which leads to more donations being collected. Similarly, Kosfeld and Neckermann (2011) observes that students hired to work on a database project who were sent a congratulatory card (in symbolic recognition of good performance) compared to students who received nothing improved their performance. In another field experiment by Bradler and Neckermann (2016), the quality and speed of data entry clerks increased when researchers sent thank-you cards to them in advance, compared to groups who did not receive such cards. Despite these studies using student populations as their main employee groups, similar conclusions arise from field experiments with different populations. In a natural experiment with Wikipedia users, Gallus (2015) discovers that Wikipedia users who received symbolic rewards for editing a certain number of Wikipedia pages are

20% more likely to stay active contributors in the long-run. Bellé (2015) finds in a field experiment that nurses perform better (number of surgical kits assembled within a limited time) when they are promised a symbolic reward (an award for performance). Notably, the effects of performance-based pay were indistinguishable from only offering a non-monetary award.

Given that they are less costly and do not attach a monetary value to public participation, which could be counter-productive to establishing a strong social norm for participation and reduce intrinsic motivation, using symbolic rewards could be an effective strategy to increase participation in citizen consultations.

One thing to bear in mind however is that the effectiveness of symbolic rewards might vary with their perceived prestige and the visibility of the reward Bovaird and Löffler (2009). Some symbolic rewards might be perceived as bigger or better than others. While this field experiment only allows us to test a limited number of such rewards, future comparisons of different rewards will help to refine predictions about how differences in rewards likely affect their effectiveness.

Prompting beliefs of political efficacy

In qualitative case studies of participation across the UK, (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001a) observed that many citizens felt participation in citizen consultations and similar public engagement exercises were futile. For many government communication about public participation lacked goal clarity. Across studies, citizens also noted a lack of external efficacy - they felt that what they demanded would not be reflected in policy (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001a). These concerns have been echoed to me in many informal conversations and semi-structured interviews that I have conducted as part of my background research for representation issues in local governments. Political efficacy has been widely studied in political science and its sub-field political psychology (Finkel, 1985, for an overview). Goal clarity, alongside efficacy are also identified as key drivers of motivation and task performance in studies deriving from the behavioural sciences (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996; Hysong, 2009).

That said, studies on political efficacy mostly rely on panel studies. This means it remains unclear whether an increase in political efficacy causes citizens to participate in political activities or whether it is a construct that is merely correlated with another, unobserved factor. Similar limita-

tions apply to the behavioural science literature on self-efficacy and goal clarity. The vast majority of studies on this topic suffer from small sample sizes and often they also lack adequate control groups. However, given that these variables show substantial and significant positive correlations with desirable behaviours across contexts, academic disciplines and methodologies makes it seem plausible that targeting these mechanisms could help to mobilise citizens to take part in citizen consultations.

While it is difficult to affect internal political efficacy - one's political literacy, for instance - external political efficacy and goal clarity could be increased through improved government communications. For example, if the city government would spell out how participation of an individual or household affected political outcomes, this might increase external political efficacy. This would not necessarily mobilise people who have too low levels of internal political efficacy to take part - they simply do not think they are up for the job - but it could move the threshold for those who have sufficient levels of internal efficacy but simply do not see the point of participating.

Suspending anonymity

Anonymity might be an obstacle to public participation in citizen consultations. Usually, citizen consultations are publicised by faceless entities such as ministries, government departments or local government authorities. In other words, requests do not come from a specific person. With the exception of town hall meetings and focus groups, responses tend to be submitted remotely, online or via mail. In the case of large-scale citizen consultations, responses to citizen input also only happen on the aggregate; there is no corresponding response to every input provided. One can imagine that receiving a letter, Facebook advertisement or similar from "authority X" elicits more likely Kafak-esque sentiments than a strong urge to contribute.

Empirical findings support such intuition; people tend to be less cooperative and generous when they are anonymous and interact with unidentified persons than when they are known by name or face (Fox and Guyer, 1978; Bohnet and Frey, 1999; Andreoni and Petrie, 2004; Small and Lerner, 2008; Alpizar, Carlsson, and Johansson-Stenman, 2008). For instance, when game partners are identified by name or photo before playing a variety of economic games, people cooperate more (Fox and Guyer, 1978) and donate more (Andreoni and Petrie, 2004; Small and Lerner, 2008).

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These effects are not confined to laboratory settings. Alpizar, Carlsson, and Johansson-Stenman (2008) observe in a natural field experiment that contributions to a national park (a public good) are higher when they are made in front of a person than in a private booth. Reducing the degree of anonymity might help to motivate citizens to be more generous with their time and effort. Reducing anonymity on both the government's and the citizen's side would however be at odds with the idea that keeping participating citizens anonymous facilitates open and honest input. Given such concerns, it might only be feasible to reduce anonymity on one side - making the government organisation less anonymous while upholding the privacy of the citizen. To my knowledge, there are no published experiments on public goods that remove anonymity only for one party.[1] The closest analogy is the identified victim effect – a phenomenon first observed by psychologists (Schelling, 1966). It describes the pattern that people tend to donate more to identified individuals (e.g. Suzie who suffers from cancer) than groups or larger causes (e.g. Cancer UK). Contrary to studies on donor anonymity, experiments investigating the identified victim effect are largely confined to laboratory settings and effect sizes are negligibly small (Lee and Feeley, 2016). One of the few field experiments finds no effect of identifying victims on the amount and value of donations (Hjernø and Rasmussen, 2014).

The effect of removing anonymity of government bodies in requesting citizen participation has not been tested yet, and related experiments have mixed results. However, the added benefit of removing anonymity is not only linked to the potential of increased participation. Even if the citizen remains anonymous, knowing who will handle one's responses might imbue citizens with more confidence and trust in the process. Further, removing anonymity would make it easier for citizens to hold specific persons to account when input is not handled as promised.

4.1.4. Choice of interventions and hypotheses

The number of treatment arms was based on power simulations conducted as part of the trial planning. The results are available in the pre-analysis plan registered at EGAP.[2] Households were

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[1]For instance, in the most recent published review of of public goods experiments, Zelmer (2003) finds several experiments that vary anonymity, yet none lift anonymity only for the contributing party.

[2]The pre-analysis plan is available for download at the following URL (EGAP registration number: 20181219AB): http://egap.org/registration/5404

block-randomised into one of seven arms: a control or one of six intervention arms (see next section for more details on the randomisation).

The choice of treatments was determined in conjunction with the city's Policy and Strategy team. The control mailing was based on the city's mailing used in the previous year, only with minor changes to colour scheme, date and website links. The consultation solicited responses only from a randomly selected sample of households, meaning that people who were not part of this random selection could not have known of the citizen consultations. This meant that there was no pure control (i.e. a group that received no mailing at all). The control is therefore the mailing that was based on that of previous years; it represents the status quo and can thus inform us on what would happen if governments would change nothing about how they currently try to engage citizens. The treatment interventions were based on the reviewed literature, with the expectation that they would increase participation rates compared to the status quo (control) mailings.

All treatments comprised of changes to text and images of the control letter. The following interventions were chosen: (i) symbolic reward, (ii) anonymity reduction, (iii) financial incentive, (iv) political efficacy, (v) symbolic reward and anonymity reduction combined and (vi) a combination of symbolic reward, financial incentive and anonymity reduction, which - for simplicity - I will refer to as the "all behavioural" treatment from here on (see Appendix II for full materials).

The symbolic reward intervention was chosen to test the differences between financial and non-financial rewards. The symbolic reward was designed to be a thank-you message and the promise to send a digital report on the survey outcomes, with a tailored message about the participant's neighbourhood and areas of interest. The tailored message was designed to be similar to certificates, a commonly used symbolic rewards.

The report included statistics about health habits, loneliness, social activities and public service quality. This was framed as "learning about what one's neighbours think about [the city]". If the citizen participated, they received the report via email once the project had finished.

The anonymity-reducing intervention was chosen mainly for two reasons. For one, there was a large albeit mainly laboratory-based body of evidence for the positive effects of making interactions less anonymous. Secondly, many public sector organisations opt for personal appeals by senior political leaders when they send letters to the public. To date, it is unclear whether such a

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letter – in this case, an appeal from the mayor directly to the citizen, including a personal signature and picture – is any more effective than anonymous government communication.

The financial incentive condition consisted of a lottery that participants entered automatically when they submitted the consultation form online. They could win a shopping voucher worth 200 British pounds (about USD 260), which they could use in a wide range of local stores.

The political efficacy intervention aimed to increase external political efficacy. The intervention consisted of an infographic that specified what citizens' tax money was used for and how input from citizens influences the allocation of such funds. A reference was included in the text that highlighted that participation in the previous consultation had led to specific changes in how the city government's budget was allocated. Thereby, the political efficacy highlighted that citizens' participation led to concrete changes.

The two last interventions (T5 and T6) - combinations of some of the other interventions - were created as it is commonly observed that treatment effects using only a single mechanism are weak. It is assumed that treatment effects are additive and combining the interventions leads to a larger effect than using them individually.

Based on the literature, I expected all treatments to lead to higher participation rates than the control. The symbolic reward treatment to the contrary might appeal more to already engaged citizens, who care about well-being statistics collected as part of the consultation. They are likely more educated and live in less deprived areas.

The anonymity treatment in general should increase participation for all. In the case of this experiment I however expect that it specifically increases participation rates for citizens from high BME neighbourhoods. The mayor who is asking for submissions in the anonymity treatment is Black British Caribbean. The anonymity treatment might therefore also work as an identity appeal for black citizens.

The financial incentive treatment is expected to increase participation rates especially among lower income individuals as the prize offered signifies a larger marginal gain for low-income individuals than wealthier ones. The political efficacy treatment should have a larger marginal effect for people from lower socio-economic groups as they tend to have lower levels of internal and external efficacy. On the other hand, we might observe a threshold effect, by which a certain level

of education and interest in government needs to be present to engage with the information enough to have a persuasive or motivating effect.

The combined treatments should lead to higher rates of participation than other treatments if the effects are additive. However, a trade-off of more messaging is that there is more information to process. According to the cognitive load theory, presenting more information can lead to disengagement or poor processing - this is especially true for people from low socio-economic backgrounds (Sweller and Kalyuga, 2011). The last two treatments might therefore not be as well suited for diversification as some of the other treatments.

4.2. Experimental Design

4.2.1. Field context

This field experiment took place in a large city in the UK, in fall and winter 2018. Similar to other large cities in the UK, it historically is a Labour Party stronghold. At the time of the field experiment, a minority ethnic Labour mayor had been in power. He initially won the mayoral contest with a large advantage over his opponent, the incumbent. Anecdotally, however, his popularity has drastically declined.[3]

The population size of the city is comparable to Miami, Florida or Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. Compared to the rest of the UK, the city has a relatively young population. Students comprise about 10 percent of the population. The city is home to two large universities and has attracted significant amount of international shipping, oil and energy companies. The city is rapidly diversifying. The largest drivers of diversification since 2001 were immigrants from Poland, Somalia and other African countries. Just under 20 percent of the city's population are non-white. The largest proportion of non-white people is Black, followed by people of Asian origin and those of mixed heritage.

The public participation exercise that was central to this field experiment was a large-scale consultation, which the city government repeats every year. The consultation centers around health

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[3]I can only base this on anecdotes since no opinion polls exist on this particular mayor and opinion polls on non-executive politicians are generally a rare occurrence in the UK.

and well-being issues but also covers themes such as satisfaction with local government services. The city bases several of its budgeting decisions on the results of this consultation. For instance, in previous years the city government adapted its allocations to serve problem areas and areas with poor indicators for health and well-being. Participating in the consultation involved completing a 16-page long survey, which covered perceptions and experiences with one's neighbourhood, housing, local services, diet, exercise, education and job prospects, and several personal details.[4] The survey could be completed by scanning a QR-code on the mail-out or typing the short website URL into a browser. If the consultation form was not submitted within 2-3 weeks from the mail-out date by a targeted household, the city government sent a paper survey with another reminder for completion to the household. In the reminder, households were encouraged to complete the online form but if they preferred, they could mail back the paper form without cost. All reminders featured the same treatment message as the initial letter and otherwise did not differ from each other. For citizens who struggled with both online and printed forms, forms with extra large fonts were made available and volunteers at town hall debates offered assistance to those who requested it.

4.2.2. Random assignment and implementation

The city government has a practice of using stratified random sampling to target a subset of their population for high impact citizen consultations. In this case, the city government sampled 29,008 households – a sample that was representative of population distributions across political wards. It over-sampled wards with a BME households making up more than 40% of the population and those that fell into the lowest income quintile. I then used the anonymised sample of households to block-randomise households into a control group and one of the six interventions. Random assignment was blocked by deprivation level of the neighbourhood, the percentage of BME residents in the neighbourhood and political ward, all at LSOA2-level, the smallest statistical unit surveyed by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) of the UK. IDs were constructed from the postcode

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[4]It is evident that the consultation asked for a considerable time commitment and cognitive work to be completed. Reducing such requirements and making them more appealing to underrepresented groups is a worthwhile endeavour in and of itself. However, this study focused on communication mechanisms advertising and encouraging participation. The consultation itself was therefore left as it had been designed in the previous years. This also allows for qualitative comparisons with turnout in years leading up to the field experiment.

plus the intervention link and the possible number of submissions per postcode plus intervention combination, i.e. there was a unique ID for each combination of household (anonymised address) and non-anonymised postcode). Design and analysis strategy were pre-registered at EGAP and ethics approval obtained from UCL Research Ethics Committee. The letters included a URL and QR code. The QR code could be scanned with a mobile phone and led citizens directly to the webpage containing the consultation form. Survey pages and content did not differ between interventions. The consultation survey was not searchable and could not be navigated onto from any other page of the city's government's webpages. The envelope of each treatment mailing included the key message printed on the outside, to increase the likelihood that households were exposed. Even if a household member did not open or read the letter, they likely caught the key message on the envelope when they found their mail at home.

4.2.3. Outcome measures

Participation is measured as completing and submitting the consultation form, online or via mail. This is coded as a binary variable (Y).

$$Y \in [0, 1] \tag{4.1}$$

For ease of interpretation, I will report the results in terms of the percentage per condition which participated.

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4.2.4.   Analysis strategy

I use OLS regression with fixed effects for blocks to estimate the Intention-to-Treat effect.[5]

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 T_i + \Gamma A_{i_j} + \varepsilon_{i_j} \tag{4.2}$$

Y_i is a binary outcome whether the household i completed the consultation or not.

T_i is a vector of binary variables that indicate which treatment the household i has been
assigned to the Control is always set to zero.

A_{i_j} is a vector of binary blocking variables for household i based on characteristics
of their postcode area j

ε is the error term for household i, clustered at the postcode level j.

4.3.   Results

4.3.1.   Description of data

The city received 3,883 unique submissions. In addition to the randomised links, the city government made a link available to citizens who attended town hall debates and for Facebook advertisements. This was orthogonal to treatment assignment, meaning that exposure to these activities was un-related to the randomisation and participation via these town hall debates and by following the Facebook link were measured separately. I removed 178 submissions made through these links be-cause they were not part of the randomised experiment. A total of 399 submissions were from postcodes that were included in the randomisation. Because of how the ID was created, matching submissions which were made through non-assigned links is problematic if the postcodes had more than one single treatment assigned. Luckily, all of the 399 submissions only had one treatment as-signed, meaning that matching was still possible. In the main analyses, I set the outcome for these 399 households as Y=0 since their response did not come through the assigned link but through

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[5]Note that this approach is more conservative than that included in the pre-registered analysis plan. Further, based on some simulation tests conducted by Coppock and colleagues (2008), I will repeat these analyses computing differences-in-means computed by block and taking their weighted sum. P-values for these estimates will be estimated using randomisation inferences.

the links promoted independent of randomisation. Since these 399 households were assigned to a treatment, it could however be argued that their submissions should nonetheless be included in an estimation of the Intent-To-Treat effect. I therefore repeat the same analyses with the outcome variable Y set to one (Y=1). The conclusions do not change: counting these submissions as valid (Y=1) or invalid (Y=0) does not change the estimate of the effect size (within six digits). Forty-eight households submitted more than one response, i.e. several household members submitted a response. For these, I only keep, as per time stamp, the first submission. This leaves a total of 3,100 valid submissions.

Table 4.1: Intent-to-Treat (ITT) Effects on Participation (submission of a survey)

	Control	T1. symb. reward	T2. anonymity	T3. financial incentive	T4. efficacy	T5. anonymity	T6. all behavioural
Participation rate	12.9%	11.4%	10.7%	10.7%	10.8%	9.1%	9.2%
Number of HHs that participated	534	475	441	445	445	378	378
N	4,128	4,177	4,142	4,142	4,144	4,147	4,128
ITT unadjusted (in percentage points)		-1.6*	-2.3**	-2.2**	-2.2**	-3.8***	-3.7***
ITT, adjusted for blocking (in percentage points)		-1.5*	-2.3**	-2.2**	-2.2**	-3.8***	-3.7***

4.3.2. Balance checks

For all households, data on the BME composition and deprivation level of their neighbourhood is available. There is no other information available on these households. As intended, the treatment groups do not differ in terms of the blocked variables: deprivation level, BME percentage and electoral ward of the household. Since all of these variables are recorded as categories, I use Chi-Square tests to check for significant differences in cell counts between treatment groups.

Table 4.2: Results of balance checks (post-treatment)

	All	Control	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	X2	p-value
Deprivation level	19.7%	20.6%	20.1%	19.5%	19.7%	19.8%	19.8%	19.8%	2.01	0.918
BME %age	14.95%	15.1%	15.2%	14.9%	15.1%	15.0%	14.4%	14.9%	1.63	0.950
Ward									183.80	0.756

4.3.3. Demographic make-up of submissions

Households who submitted a response to the consultation [Y=1] were asked to provide demographic details as part of the consultation survey. The city government made this data available to me. I thus check whether the composition of people who submitted a response differs between treatment conditions. Note that this is post-treatment and thus not speak to the quality of randomisation. It is rather an assessment of the heterogeneity of people who responded to the treatment. I find that people differ slightly in terms of age; those who submitted via the symbolic reward and financial incentive links are younger than people who submitted consultation forms in response to other treatments (Table 4.3). People who submitted responses do not differ significantly in terms of religious or ethnic background.

4.3.4. Treatment adherence

It appears that manipulation was effective for the vast majority of households. Since the consultation links were not publicly available, participants needed to see the letters, open them and type the included link into a web browser or scan the QR code to submit a response. Only nine letters

Table 4.3: Demographics of submissions, difference between treatment arms

	All	C	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	X2	p-value
Age									48.50	0.002
16-24	3.7	2.6	5.5	2.0	4.5	3.8	3.4	3.9		
25-49	42.6	40.3	49.9	42.2	47.0	38.1	39.2	40.4		
50-64	24.2	24.2	21.5	26.8	20.7	25.3	24.9	27.0		
65 and over	27.6	31.7	21.7	27.0	26.5	30.7	30.2	25.2		
Missing	1.9	1.3	2.0	1.4	2.0	2.4	3.4			
Religion									21.72	0.596
No religion	50.7	47.2	55.6	54.0	50.1	50.7	48.2	49.3		
Christian	40.1	43.6	36.6	37.4	39.8	41.3	41.5	40.4		
Muslim	1.4	0.8	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.3	1.3		
Other	4.2	4.7	3.2	4.1	5.2	3.8	5.0	3.4		
Missing	3.6	3.8	3.2	3.2	3.4	2.5	4.0	5.5		
Ethnicity									24.73	0.74
White UK	81.8	83.9	79.6	82.3	82.0	83.2	81.2	79.5		
Other white	8.3	4.9	11.4	7.7	8.5	8.3	8.7	9.5		
Other	3.87	5.06	4	2.95	4.72	2.69	3.17	4.2		
Missing	2.6	2.6	1.7	3.4	1.4	3.1	2.9	3.4		
Black	1.7	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.6	1.1	1.3	2.1		
South Asian	1.7	1.9	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.6	2.1	1.3		

were returned to the sender. Further, a multiple choice and free text question was included in the consultation form; it asked citizens to state where they had heard about the consultation. Of the 3,100 valid submissions 3,004 citizens stated that they had heard about the consultation via a government letter that they had received (97% of submissions). Given the multitude of steps necessary to get to the website, it is thus very likely that households read either both or one of the treatment messages printed on the envelope or those included in the letter, which were the most prominent feature (see 4.6 for intervention materials).[6]

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[6]It is however not possible - as in many field experiments - to assess how households construed the messages included in the letters and which particular elements drove them to act as they did (Paluck and Shafir, 2017).

4.3.5. Intention-to-Treat effect

Model 1 in Table 4.4 illustrates the results without the addition of covariates. Model 2 provides an estimate of the treatment effects with fixed effects for blocks, as specified in the Analysis section above (also see Table 4.6). Model 3 estimates the interaction of treatments, deprivation levels and BME percentage of the targeted neighbourhoods.

I find that all treatments backfire - they significantly reduce participation rates compared to the control. The "all behavioural" treatment performs worst and the symbolic reward treatment performs the least worse, with other treatments falling in between. Directionally, for neighbourhoods with a high BME percentage, the political efficacy treatment increases participation rates by a similar magnitude as the "all behavioural" treatment reduces participation. However, the confidence intervals are too large to discern whether this difference is due to chance.

I repeat these analyses using logistic regression models, which are better fit for binary outcomes (Table 4.3). The main conclusions do not change. The logit model suggests that the combined symbolic reward and anonymity-reducing treatment might particularly badly for neighbourhoods with high deprivation levels. However, this difference is only significant at $p<0.1$. Further after controlling for multiple comparisons, the effect would disappear. Therefore, it is unlikely that differences are substantive.

The estimation of the ITT reported above assumes that one cannot count participation as successful (Y=1) if the submission was made with a link other than the one that was assigned to the household. Yet, for the 139 people who used the 'wrong' link but reported that they remember receiving a letter, it is very much plausible that the original treatment caused to them participate - albeit via some diversions. I therefore repeat the above analyses with the outcome set to one (Y=1) also for those households who submitted their responses via a link different to the one that they were originally assigned.

As Table 4.7 illustrates, I find the same pattern as in our main analyses. All treatments seemingly perform worse than the control.

Figure 4.1: Coefficient estimates - all sample

29,008
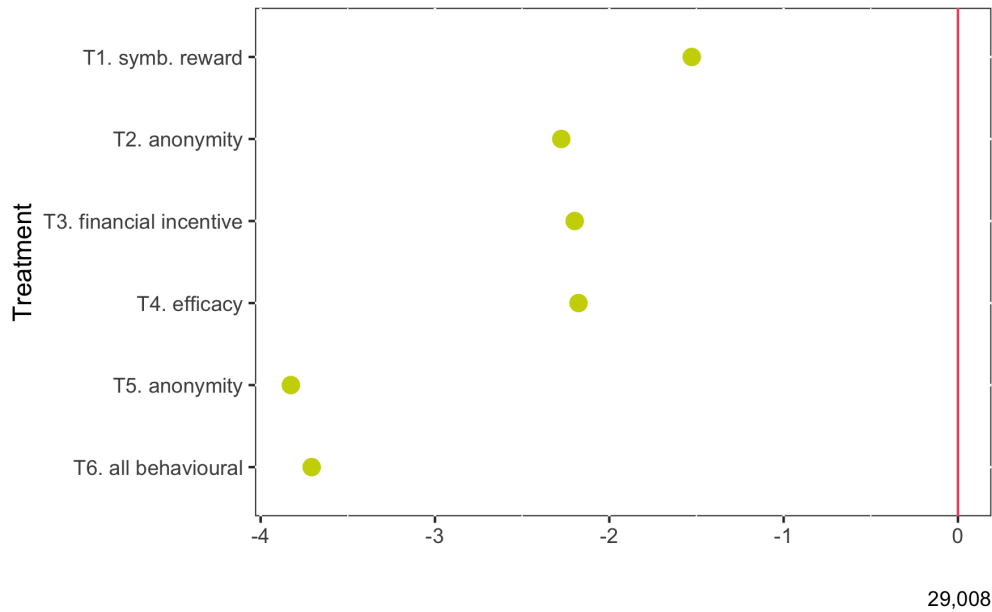
4.4.   Discussion

Non-electoral participation processes entail the promise of encouraging and sustaining greater democratic engagement, beyond and between elections. However, most of these processes are non-deliberative. Citizen consultations relying on surveys that are targeted at statistically representative samples of the consulted public are the most widely used for of consultation, especially in developed countries (OECD, 2009). These forms however suffer from low and homogenous participation. Relying on results from citizen engagement exercises that are unrepresentative risks systematically excluding the needs and concerns of a large swathe of the citizenry. This trial set out to test whether changes in government communications can increase participation rates and diversify the pool of participants. The GOTV and related literature suggests that this is possible in the electoral context (Gerber, Green, and Shachar, 2003; Nickerson, 2007; Arceneaux and Nickerson, 2009; Nickerson, 2008). However, non-electoral forms of participation differ significantly in terms of the incentive frameworks they offer. It is thus unclear whether the same tactics can succeed in this context. The attributes of non-electoral participation mechanism make them more similar to charitable causes: people volunteer their time for something they regard as worthwhile but that does not necessarily

Figure 4.2: Participation rates by treatment group
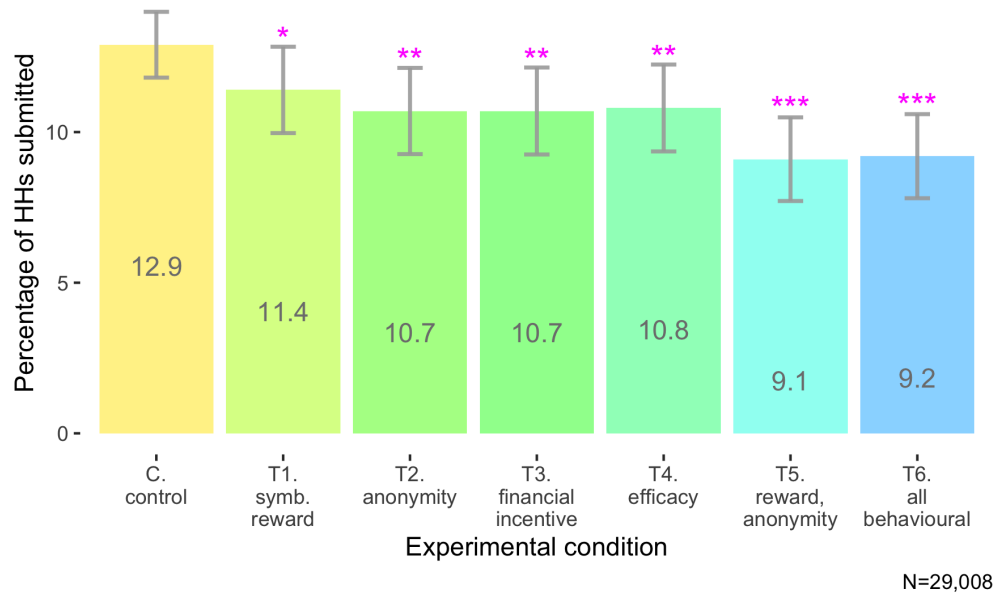
have the same norms of civic duty nor payoffs attached to it as electoral participation does. However, I find that, overall, behaviourally informed direct mail campaigns backfire - they make it less likely that citizens submit a response to a consultation. Effect sizes are comparable to GOTV studies but negative for the overall sample. There currently exists limited theoretical and empirical work on the topic that can help to explain this phenomenon. I therefore elaborate on hypotheses emerging from the current findings and the handful of relevant studies, with a view to identifying factors that prevent behaviourally informed campaigns to lead to increases in participation as expected.

For one, it is possible that the effects of behavioural interventions are considerably more context-dependent and specific to the exact reward provided than previously theorised. For instance, while lotteries might sufficiently incentivise people to register to vote (John, Macdonald, and Sanders, 2015), a voucher might not be regarded as desirable enough to complete a lengthy survey. Not only the incentives provided bu the complexity of actions that are requested from the public should receive more attention. The easier and less burdensome non-electoral public participation would be, the more likely it is that citizens can be mobilised to follow through with them.

Further, incentives might interact with social norms attached to the incentivised actions: Voting is associated with civic duty. Engaging in non-electoral forms of participation will see a

Figure 4.3: Participation rates by treatment for neighbourhoods with high BME & high levels of deprivation
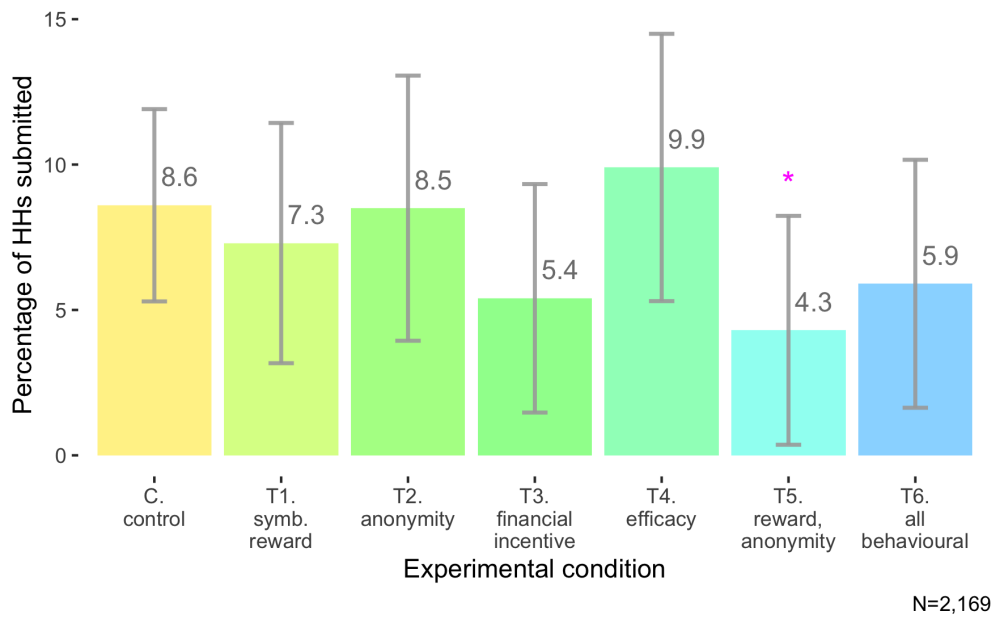
weaker association. If a behavioural incentive suggests that the action is *not* common among the general public, then the social norm might be degraded. This should affect contexts in which the norm is already weak even more so than contexts such as voting, where the norm is strong. A recent study, published after the completion of this trial, by the same author who investigated symbolic rewards on Wikipedia, finds support for this hypothesis - rewards that suggest that a behaviour is not the norm backfired (Robinson et al., 2019).

An alternative explanation is that treatments compared to the control increased cognitive load (Sweller and Kalyuga, 2011) because of an increase in text or visuals, which meant that the letter was harder and thus less appealing to process. Indeed, the "all behavioural" treatment performed worst, which would support such an explanation. Yet, there is no clear correlation between an increase in stimuli and performance of the letters. For instance, the political efficacy treatment used less text than the control, yet performed worse.

A more likely explanation is that the treatment only had an effect on a sub-population of the targeted sample. If those who usually do not engage in non-electoral public participation initatives are hard to move, the treatments likely had no effect on them. On the other hand,

those citizens who were already committed to take part might have been put off by the additional incentives provided. There is evidence that external motivation can "crowd out" existing, internal drivers (Abadie et al., 2017). This effect might be heightened when original motivations were heavily based on the assumption that participation is the norm and the treatments suggested that this was not the case.

Similar to what Butler and Arceneaux (2015) suggest, it is also possible that additional incentives suggest that the task at hand is more burdensome or difficult than people otherwise would assume.

Future trials should thus focus on disentangling (i) effects on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, (ii) relations to existing social norms, (iii) the role of cognitive load, and (iv) heterogeneous effects on already committed and hard-to-reach populations. If governments could find ways to design citizen outreach that grow participation rates per se and also increases their representativeness, it would boost the prospects of public participation mechanisms to manifest as the democracy-supporting and -enhancing processes their proponents claim them to be.

That noted, it is imaginable that non-electoral public participation processes that do not offer the opportunity for deliberation will remain unpopular, regardless of incentives. If the public feels that citizen consultations are a mere tick-box or information collection exercise, without meaningful impact, changing government communication about them will not address a lack of broad-based participation. This trial could not effectively conclude whether an emphasis on efficacy and impact might shift attitudes and behaviour of minority citizens. This avenue is worth exploring further. However, it is likely that to incentivise people who are disengaged and have low levels of political knowledge, explanations of the connections between citizen input and policy output will need to be clarified further than what the infographic in the tested treatment letter could provide.

Undoubtedly, change is not only desirable among the public. Increasing the representativeness of non-electoral participation processes could be a first step to improve their perceived legitimacy. In turn, this could encourage a virtuous cycle in which public officials also take such input more seriously and throughput of citizen feedback increases. The hope remains that if public participation processes can be strengthened, the health of democracy as a whole would strengthen.

Table 4.4: Main results: ITT on participation

	Dependent variable:		
	Participation		
	no covars	w/ covars	w/ covar. int.
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Symbolic	-0.016*	-0.015*	-0.018*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Anonymity	-0.023**	-0.023**	-0.026**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Financial incentive	-0.022**	-0.022**	-0.022*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Efficacy	-0.022**	-0.022**	-0.029**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Symbolic + Anonymity	-0.038**	-0.038**	-0.039**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)
All behavioural	-0.037**	-0.037**	-0.040**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)
High deprivation area		-0.039**	-0.039**
		(0.004)	(0.013)
High BME area		-0.016**	-0.032*
		(0.005)	(0.014)
Symbolic x High depriv.			-0.004
			(0.017)
Anonymity x High depriv.			0.003
			(0.017)
Fin. inc x High depriv.			-0.002
			(0.017)
Efficacy x High depriv.			0.011
			(0.017)
Symbolic + Anonymity x High depriv.			-0.015
			(0.016)
All behavioural x High depriv.			0.008
			(0.016)
Symbolic x High BME			0.025
			(0.019)
Anonymity x High BME			0.018
			(0.019)
Fin. inc x High BME			0.004
			(0.017)
Efficacy x High BME			0.031
			(0.019)
Symbolic + Anonymity x BME			0.025
			(0.018)
All behavioural x BME			0.009
			(0.018)
Constant	0.129**	0.139**	0.142**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Observations	29,008	29,008	29,008

Note:	+ p <0.1; * p <0.05; ** p <0.01

Table 4.5: Robustness checks using logit: ITT on participation

	Dependent variable:		
	Participation		
	no covars	w/ covars	w/ inter.
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Symbolic	-0.147*	-0.143*	-0.160*
	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.076)
Anonymity	-0.221**	-0.220**	-0.234**
	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.077)
Financial incentive	-0.211**	-0.212**	-0.196*
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.078)
Efficacy	-0.209**	-0.210**	-0.261**
	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.078)
Symbolic + Anonymity	-0.393**	-0.395**	-0.367**
	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.080)
All behavioural	-0.379**	-0.381**	-0.377**
	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.080)
High deprivation area		-0.470**	-0.393**
		(0.059)	(0.138)
High BME area		-0.186**	-0.326*
		(0.065)	(0.153)
Symbolic x High depriv.			-0.094
			(0.197)
Anonymity x High depriv.			-0.039
			(0.204)
Fin. inc x High depriv.			-0.112
			(0.205)
Efficacy x High depriv.			0.072
			(0.200)
Symbolic + Anonymity x High depriv.			-0.438+
			(0.229)
All behavioural x High depriv.			-0.029
			(0.210)
Symbolic x High BME			0.253
			(0.211)
Anonymity x High BME			0.163
			(0.222)
Fin. inc x High BME			-0.014
			(0.215)
Efficacy x High BME			0.323
			(0.217)
Symbolic + Anonymity x BME			0.236
			(0.239)
All behavioural x BME			0.002
			(0.238)
Constant	-1.907**	-1.802**	-1.797**
	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.053)
Observations	29,008	29,008	29,008

Note:	+ p <0.1; * p <0.05; ** p <0.01

Table 4.6: Intent-to-Treat (ITT) Effects on Participation (submission of a survey)

	Control	T1. symb. reward	T2. anonymity	T3. financial incentive	T4. efficacy	T5. anonymity	T6. all behavioural
Participation rate	12.9%	11.4%	10.7%	10.7%	10.8%	9.1%	9.2%
Number of HHs that participated	534	475	441	445	445	378	378
N	4,128	4,177	4,142	4,142	4,144	4,147	4,128
ITT unadjusted (in percentage points)		-1.6*	-2.3**	-2.2**	-2.2**	-3.8***	-3.7***
ITT, adjusted for blocking (in percentage points)		-1.5*	-2.3**	-2.2**	-2.2**	-3.8***	-3.7***

Table 4.7: Robustness check: ITT on participation with Y coded differently

	Dependent variable:		
	Participation	Participation	
	no covars	w/ covars	w/ inter.
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Symbolic	-0.016*	-0.015*	-0.018*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Anonymity	-0.023**	-0.023**	-0.026**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Financial incentive	-0.022**	-0.022**	-0.022*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Efficacy	-0.022**	-0.022**	-0.029**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Symbolic + Anonymity	-0.038**	-0.038**	-0.039**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)
All behavioural	-0.037**	-0.037**	-0.040**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)
High deprivation area		-0.039**	-0.039**
		(0.004)	(0.013)
High BME area		-0.016**	-0.032*
		(0.005)	(0.014)
Symbolic x High depriv.			-0.004
			(0.017)
Anonymity x High depriv.			0.003
			(0.017)
Fin. inc x High depriv.			-0.002
			(0.017)
Efficacy x High depriv.			0.011
			(0.017)
Symbolic + Anonymity x High depriv.			-0.015
			(0.016)
All behavioural x High depriv.			0.008
			(0.016)
Symbolic x High BME			0.025
			(0.019)
Anonymity x High BME			0.018
			(0.019)
Fin. inc x High BME			0.004
			(0.017)
Efficacy x High BME			0.031
			(0.019)
Symbolic + Anonymity x BME			0.025
			(0.018)
All behavioural x BME			0.009
			(0.018)
Constant	0.129**	0.139**	0.142**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Observations	29,008	29,008	29,008
Note:		+ p <0.1; * p <0.05; ** p <0.01	

4.5.   Appendix I

4.5.1.   Alternative treatments considered

Field experiments rarely offer the opportunity to test as many interventions as theory might suggest are successful. I considered two more treatments for this trial based on promising results in related domains. However, due to characteristics of the experiment context and logistical reasons, I deemed them to be a poorer fit for the trial than the other interventions. I discuss them in more detail below to encourage future studies to consider these as intervention options.

Eliciting reciprocity

Even more so than anonymity, reciprocity has been studied as a key driver of contributions to public goods. As Seinen and Schram (2006) define it, reciprocity is "a conditional behavior where kind acts are rewarded and hostile acts are punished, even when this is costly and there is no direct self-interest to do so" (p.152). It is plausible that citizens would be more willing to "do a favour" for their government or local authority when they felt they benefited from the institution. I, however, argue that in the context of citizen consultations reciprocity is not a significant driver of participation. First and foremost, these institutions are tax-funded meaning that their output is not based on a favour but on an economic transaction. Even if a group of citizens might benefit more from the government institution than other groups, it is unlikely perceived as a favour. Citizens do not "owe" governments. More likely it is seen as a preference for redistribution that has been won or established via political and historical means. Even more so than anonymity, reciprocity has been studied as a key driver of contributions to public goods. It is plausible that citizens would be more willing to "do a favour" for their government or local authority when they felt they benefited from the institution. I, however, argue that in the context of citizen consultations reciprocity is not a significant driver of participation. First and foremost, these institutions are tax-funded meaning that their output is not based on a favour but on an economic transaction. Even if a group of citizens might benefit more from the government institution than other groups, it is unlikely perceived as a favour. Citizens do not "owe" governments. More likely it is seen as a preference for redistribution

that has been won or established via political and historical means. A field (James and Moseley, 2014) and survey experiment (James, 2011) conducted in the UK evidence find that citizens do not respond with gratitude to governments delivering high quality public services. To the contrary, these experiments show that citizens demand more quality following good performance than following poor performance. Reciprocity-eliciting communications are therefore likely ill-suited to increase participation rates in this context.

Employing social norms

There is an increasing number of studies using causal inference, which suggest social norms shift behaviour (Paluck, Green, and Green, 2017; Hallsworth et al., 2016; Zarghamee et al., 2017). In this context, it would be expected that where people perceive a social norm of participating in citizen consultations, - and perceive that it is generally approved to do so - , they will be more likely to participate. However, I maintain that a social norm intervention would be unsuitable for two reasons. One, currently no descriptive norms could be used as participation rates in citizen consultations are very low and clustered in certain demographic groups. Second, most citizen consultations have low prestige, low salience and – counter to elections – they partially duplicate efforts (e.g. citizens could rely on polling companies, think tanks and experts to inform policy-makers about their needs). The effectiveness of using an injunctive norm – one ought to take part – to mobilise citizens is therefore limited in this context.

4.6. Appendix II

4.6.1. Intervention materials

On the next pages you will find the letters used in the trial, in the same order as presented in the paper: (i) control, (ii) symbolic, (iii) anonymity, (iv) financial reward, (v) political efficacy, (vi) reward and anonymity and (vi) all behavioural.

Please note that due to requirements of confidentiality all identifying details have been removed and replaced with placeholders.

Tell us about life in Bristol

Bristol's Quality of Life Survey 2018

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Ref No.   00000000

Dear Resident

We'd like to invite you, and anyone aged over 16 in your household, to take part in an important survey to measure the quality of life in our city. This will help your local public services - including the health service - plan for the future.

To take the survey online type in the survey web address below or scan the QR code.

Complete our survey: www.bristol.gov.uk/qol18

It's easy to complete online, on your phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic device. It saves money if you can do this by **Mon 24 Sept**, but if you can't complete it online, we'll send you a paper copy to return after this date (postage pre-paid).

The Quality of Life survey provides us with a picture of life in Bristol, based on the experiences of people like you who live here, and will help us:

▶ Understand where you think we should spend time and money

▶ Consider the issues that concern you most

▶ Ensure that all communities in Bristol have their voice heard.

Thank you for taking time to help.

Yours faithfully,

Bristol City Council

Go straight to the survey: scan this QR code with your tablet or smartphone

If you require this in an alternative format, or to opt out of this survey, email: **research@bristol.gov.uk** or call **0117 922 2704**

Tell us about life in Bristol & get a free report sent directly to you

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Bristol's Quality of Life Survey 2018

Ref No. 00000000

Dear Resident

We'd like to invite you, and anyone over 16 in your household, to take part in an important survey to measure the quality of life in our city, which will help the local public service - including the health service - plan for the future.

To take the survey online type in the survey web address below or scan the QR code.

Complete our survey and we'll send you a report on what other people think about life in Bristol: www.bristol.gov.uk/qolsurvey

It's easy to complete online, on your phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic device. It saves money if you can do this by **Mon 24 Sept**, but if you can't complete it online, we'll send you a paper copy to return after this date (postage pre-paid).

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Bristol's **Quality of Life Survey** 2018

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

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To take the survey online type in the survey web address below or scan the QR code.

Complete my survey: www.bristol.gov.uk/qolsurvey18

It's easy to complete online, on your phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic device. It saves money if you can do this by **Mon 24 Sept**, but if you can't complete it online, we'll send you a paper copy to return after this date (postage pre-paid).

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▶ Consider the issues that concern you most

▶ Ensure that all communities in Bristol have their voice heard.

Thank you for taking time to help.

Yours faithfully,

Marvin Rees
Mayor of Bristol

Go straight to the survey: scan this QR code with your tablet or smartphone

If you require this in an alternative format, or to opt out of this survey, email: **research@bristol.gov.uk** or call **0117 922 2704**

Tell me about life in Bristol & get a free report on what others think

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Bristol's Quality of Life Survey 2018

Ref No. 00000000

Dear Resident

I would like to invite you, and anyone over 16 in your household, to take part in an important survey to measure the quality of life in our city, which will help the local public service - including the health service - plan for the future.

To take the survey online type in the survey web address below or scan the QR code.

Complete my survey and I'll send you a report on what people think about Bristol: www.bristol.gov.uk/qualitylife

It's easy to complete online, on your phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic device. It saves money if you can do this by **Mon 24 Sept**, but if you can't complete it online, we'll send you a paper copy to return after this date (postage pre-paid).

The Quality of Life survey provides us with a picture of life in Bristol, based on the experiences of people like you who live here, and will help us:

▶ Understand where you think we should spend time and money

▶ Consider the issues that concern you most

▶ Ensure that all communities in Bristol have their voice heard.

Thank you for taking time to help.

Yours faithfully,

Marvin Rees
Mayor of Bristol

Go straight to the survey: scan this QR code with your tablet or smartphone

If you require this in an alternative format, or to opt out of this survey, email: **research@bristol.gov.uk** or call **0117 922 2704**

Tell us about life in Bristol & get the chance to win £200

Bristol's Quality of Life Survey 2018

Ref No.   00000000

Dear Resident

We'd like to invite you, and anyone over 16 in your household, to take part in an important survey to measure the quality of life in our city, which will help the local public service - including the health service - plan for the future.

To take the survey online type in the survey web address below or scan the QR code.

Complete our survey to win a £200 shopping voucher*:
www.bristol.gov.uk/quality18

It's easy to complete online, on your phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic device. It saves money if you can do this by **Mon 24 Sept**, but if you can't complete it online, we'll send you a paper copy to return after this date (postage pre-paid).

The Quality of Life survey provides us with a picture of life in Bristol, based on the experiences of people like you who live here, and will help us:

▶ Understand where you think we should spend time and money

▶ Consider the issues that concern you most

▶ Ensure that all communities in Bristol have their voice heard.

Thank you for taking time to help.

Yours faithfully,

Bristol City Council

Go straight to the survey: scan this QR code with your tablet or smartphone

*Terms and conditions apply, see website

If you require this in an alternative format, or to opt out of this survey, email: research@bristol.gov.uk or call 0117 922 2704

Make an impact - tell us about life in Bristol

Bristol's Quality of Life Survey 2018

Dear Resident

We'd like to invite you, and anyone over 16 in your household, to take part in an important survey to measure the quality of life in our city, which will help the local public service - including the health service - plan for the future.

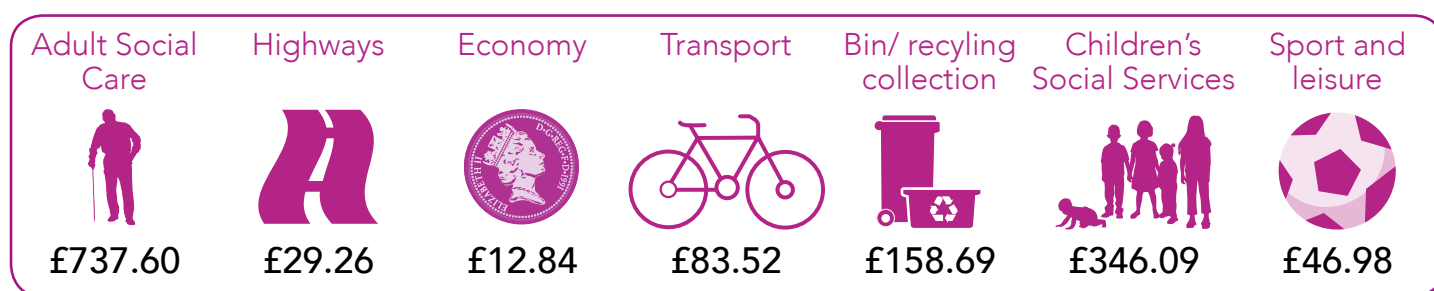To take the survey online type in the survey web address below or scan the QR code.

Make an impact, complete our survey: www.bristol.gov.uk/life18

It's easy to complete online, on your phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic device. It saves money if you can do this by **Mon 24 Sept**, but if you can't complete it online, we'll send you a paper copy to return after this date (postage pre-paid).

The Quality of Life survey provides us with a picture of life in Bristol, based on the experiences of people who live here, and will help us:

▶ Understand where you think we should spend time and money

▶ Consider the issues that concern you most

▶ Ensure that all communities in Bristol have their voice heard.

The below image shows the average amount spent on key services for every household in Bristol this year:

Adult Social Care	Highways	Economy	Transport	Bin/ recyling collection	Children's Social Services	Sport and leisure
£737.60	£29.26	£12.84	£83.52	£158.69	£346.09	£46.98

This survey is a chance for you to tell us what you think, and help to shape services in future!

Thank you for taking time to help.

Yours faithfully,

Bristol City Council

Go straight to the survey: scan this QR code with your tablet or smartphone

If you require this in an alternative format, or to opt out of this survey, email: research@bristol.gov.uk or call 0117 922 2704

Tell me about life in Bristol & get a free report & the chance to win £200

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Bristol's Quality of Life Survey 2018

Ref No. 00000000

Dear Resident

I would like to invite you, and anyone over 16 in your household, to take part in an important survey to measure the quality of life in our city, which will help the local public service - including the health service - plan for the future.

To take the survey online type in the survey web address below or scan the QR code.

Complete my survey to win a £200 shopping voucher*.
I'll send you a report on what other people think about life in Bristol:
www.bristol.gov.uk/survey18

Whether you're the lucky one to win a £200 shopping voucher or not, we'll send you a report about what other people think about life in Bristol.

It's easy to complete online, on your phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic device. It saves money if you can do this by **Mon 24 Sept**, but if you can't complete it online, we'll send you a paper copy to return after this date (postage pre-paid).

The Quality of Life survey provides us with a picture of life in Bristol, based on the experiences of people like you who live here, and will help us:

▶ Understand where you think we should spend time and money

▶ Consider the issues that concern you most

▶ Ensure that all communities in Bristol have their voice heard.

Thank you for taking time to help.

Yours faithfully,

Marvin Rees
Mayor of Bristol

*Terms and conditions apply, see website

Go straight to the survey: scan this QR code with your tablet or smartphone

If you require this in an alternative format, or to opt out of this survey, email: research@bristol.gov.uk or call 0117 922 2704

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Public participation encompasses mechanisms promise to deliver a more pluralist and in some cases more deliberative democracy through increased legitimacy of policies, a greater shift from elite-based to citizen-centred and citizen-driven policy design (Ryfe, 2005; Roberts, 2004; Papadopoulos and Warin, 2007; Huitema, Kerkhof, and Pesch, 2007; Parkinson, 2012; Doberstein, 2017; Boswell and Corbett, 2018).

Bureaucrats play the role of gatekeepers in this process (Lee and Feeley, 2016). They have substantial power over when, how and what type of information is collected, and how it is condensed and communicated to political decision-makers. To date, strikingly little is known about how bureaucrats respond to citizen input deriving from public participation initiatives. While many studies have highlighted barriers to meaningful and impactful participation (Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker, 2001b; Yang and Callahan, 2007; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Shipley et al., 2004; Bickerstaff and Walker, 2005; Uyesugi and Shipley, 2005; McKenna, 2011; Buckwalter, 2014), this body of work remains largely descriptive. It is neither clear what could be done to improve the quality of public participation processes, nor how changes might affect the responsiveness of bureaucrats, and how such behaviour is influenced by that of politicians.

This thesis set out to address some of these knowledge gaps. In Chapter 2, I tested if bureaucrats engage with information produced by public participation processes, and whether bureaucrats can be motivated to be more responsive to them. Using a field experiment, I found that in the status-quo bureaucrats do not meaningfully engage with input from public participation

processes. This is striking for several reasons. Most of the bureaucrats were residents too and should therefore have a selfish interest in facilitating impactful public participation. The participation exercise under study was salient. It was advertised widely throughout the authority. One might expect that if not selfish-rational reasons, mere curiosity would lead at least some bureaucrats to find out what citizens demanded. It is possible that bureaucrats lacked the time to engage with the information, yet reducing the time and effort required to process the provided information had no meaningful effect on engagement. Results suggest that more likely a lack of motivation to engage with the information drove behaviour.

Both treatments targeting bureaucrat motivation lead to significant and substantial increases in the rate at which bureaucrats engaged with citizen input provided through public participation. When values of public service were emphasised engagement rose from no bureaucrat engaging to 14 percent of them engaging. A simple symbolic reward increased engagement to percent. The magnitude of this effect is worth emphasising. Together these interventions mobilised about 500 bureaucrats – a change from zero. A total of 500 bureaucrats can drive substantial change in a local authority. Such a rapid increase in engagement highlights the power of behavioural mechanisms and the importance of informal mechanisms of control. Without the use of legislation, new monitoring mechanisms, monetary incentives or similar levers, 500 bureaucrats were mobilised to do what the political leadership wanted them to do and what participating citizens expected of them. Barriers typically raised by bureaucrats during qualitative interviews (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Bryer, 2009; Hustedt and Salomonsen, 2014; Hustedt and Salomonsen, 2018) - a lack of time and other resources - did not hinder them from engaging with citizen input.[1] Focusing on behaviour rather than narrative accounts thus opened up news ways of improving citizen-bureaucrat interactions. These findings highlight the importance of continuing and advancing the study of motivation in the public sector and its drivers.

Of course, bureaucrats do not make decisions in a vacuum. The parameters that hierarchy and political control will interact with other drivers of bureaucrat behaviour. Public participation mechanisms have introduced one more legitimate principal for the bureaucracy - citizens - and it is still unclear how this affects their behaviour. In Chapter 3 I thus investigated how bureaucrats

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[1]This should not imply that time or monetary constraints remain without effect. It is rather that the extent to which bureaucrats are motivated enables them to handle time and budget constraints differently.

react when demands of political principals and citizens are at odds, and whether this interacts with behavioural biases deriving from framing effects. I find that conflict leads bureaucrats to adopt more of an adviser role, but that information frames have no significant effect. The results also highlight the tensions between bureaucrats as experts and their role in supporting public participation mechanisms. Bureaucrats resist and exploit their – supposed – expertise to decide what they think is best. As survey results from Chapter 2 indicate, many bureaucrats substantially overestimate their knowledge of what citizens want and need. At worst, some bureaucrats know what citizens want but override these claims. Most bureaucrats actively resist providing power to citizens via public participation mechanisms. They discount citizen input and thereby re-assert their power as policy influencers. While framing had no effect in Chapter 3, the results of Chapter 2 illustrate that not all resistance is conscious. Qualitative versus quantitative information frames might be too weak a treatment to substantially change response patterns. However, tapping into motivational drivers, as illustrated in Chapter 2, can nudge bureaucrats to become more responsive.

That acknowledged, it is equally important to emphasise that neither formal nor informal controls should enforce greater bureaucratic responsiveness to public participation without consideration for the objections of bureaucrats. Many concerns bureaucrats raised in Chapter 3 - which is echoed in existing qualitative research on the topic - are valid; they transcend pure perceptions and are grounded in political and economic realities. Public participation campaigns persistently struggle to recruit and mobilise a broad and representative spectre of people. This does not simply complicates drawing inference from public participation inputs, it risks perpetuating , and as Chapter 4 illustrated, potentially even exacerbating, the very same biases that are pervasive in elections. If minorities and low income groups are persistently underrepresented in public participation efforts, public participation will fail to delivery on its promise of supporting more pluralistic democracy. Bureaucrat demands for greater representativeness are thus a valid concern. Silencing the objections of bureaucrats is thus not desirable, neither in a pluralist-normative tradition nor given its practical implications. Bureaucrats can act as a powerful lobby withing government to pressure politicians to mobilise resources and to encourage widened cooperation with civil society to widen and diversify participation. Given the importance of representative public participation to its role as complimentary mechanism to electoral democracy, Chapter 4 addressed the crucial question of

what can be done to increase and diversify public participation.

While several papers report on public participation initiatives specifically targeted at minority or disadvantaged groups, little work exists on how to systematically broaden participation. This is at odds with literature on electoral turnout. The Get out the Vote (GOTV) literature provided robust causal evidence on drivers of increased and diversified electoral participation. However, public participation is different to elections in important ways. Contrary to electoral participation, norms around public participation are less clearly defined and readily available. What level of turnout and degree of representativeness can be accepted as legitimate basis for policy decisions is open to debate. It is also unclear to what extent public participation can be regarded as civic duty in the same way as electoral participation. Topics subject to public participation center around affect the daily life of citizens but might be less polarising, achieve less media attention and debating these issues might elicit less strong norms compared to electoral participation. The norms surrounding public participation are more akin to virtue signalling of charitable giving or volunteering.

I therefore drew on literature on public goods as well as the GOTV literature to test different tactics to encourage more and more diverse participation in a public participation exercise. Results presented in Chapter 4 show that the communication materials I tested all have similar effect sizes to those of the GOTV literature. However, they all backfire - all interventions significantly reduce participation rates. Similar to a study conducted by (Butler and Arceneaux, 2015), I find suggestive evidence that treatment effects are heterogeneous. Neighbourhood effects linked to minority ethnic clustering and to a lesser degree socio-economic deprivation are related to how households react to attempts by governments to increase their exercise of voice in between elections. These findings require further research to unpack and to develop a better understanding of what spurs turnout in non-electoral forms of participation.

5.1. Unique contributions and limitations

This thesis contributes to the fields of participation, bureaucracy and behavioural public administration both substantially and methodologically. It also showcases how an inter-disciplinary approach to research can enrich these fields as it draws psychology, economics and political science to inform

new hypotheses and test accepted wisdom.

In the field of participation, it provides evidence on inter-electoral turnout and minority representation, going beyond the study of electoral participation (Gerber, Green, and Larimer, 2008; Nickerson, Friedrichs, and King, 2006; Nickerson, 2007; John and Brannan, 2008; Green, Gerber, and Nickerson, 2008; Fieldhouse et al., 2013; Fieldhouse et al., 2014). It takes a critical and empirical approach to evaluating claims on the pluralist nature of public participation initiatives promoted by scholars on a normative basis (Fung and Wright, 2001; Fung, 2006; Mansbridge, 2011) and improves methodologically on existing field experiments on public participation (Hock, Anderson, and Potoski, 2013; Butler and Arceneaux, 2015).

Taking the study of the effect of multiple principals from a theoretical into an empirical and causal framework, this thesis also develops the theory on the role of the bureaucracy in mediating policy decisions and outcomes - an area which despite its continuing importance has seen little attention since the early 2000s (Fiorina and Noll, 1978; McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast, 1987; Banks and Weingast, 1992; Moe, 2006; Gailmard and Patty, 2007). It demonstrates that not only the presence of multiple principals but their interaction has significant effects on how bureaucrats respond.

Further, this body of work adds to the growth in studies assuming a behavioural model of administrator behaviour and an interest in testing the causality of theorised relationships relevant to public administration - behavioural public administration (James, Jilke, and Ryzin, 2017; Moynihan, 2018).

Contributions to theory

There are no clear theoretical predictions of democratic theory on how bureaucrats are expected to behave in response to public participation mechanisms since their responsiveness by construction is meant to be exclusively directed towards politicians (Saltzstein, 1992). Bureaucrats however use their discretion, in street-level (Lipsky, 1983) and in advisory functions to politicians (Dunleavy and Margetts, 2007; Gains and John, 2010; Lee and Feeley, 2016). On the one hand, bureaucrats have been imbued with even greater discretion through the growth of complex governance networks and need for highly professionalised services (Flinders, 2010). On the other hand, the very same

bureaucracy is largely responsible for overseeing and managing public participation processes aimed at increasing transparency and citizen influence on such policy functions. Sometimes their political principals pressure them to deliver on these promises, other times motives might be more focused on placating voters (ibid., McKenna, 2011).

Notably, the strength of informal, behavioural drivers that I observe suggests that any theory of bureaucratic responsiveness and political control of bureaucrat behaviour in the context of public participation needs to model interactions between (inter-)personal and organisational-hierarchical factors.

Methodological contributions

Methodologically, this thesis contributes by the use of well-designed and adequately powered experiments to study of bureaucrat behaviour and public participation. All experiments part of this thesis provide causal evidence where to date exclusively (public participation) or to a large extent (bureaucrat behaviour) only observational data exists. Two of the three experiments in this thesis were conducted in the field as opposed to in a laboratory or online setting.

Findings thus not only investigate causal relationships per se but also test whether they apply to complicated real life situations. The evidence deriving from this research project shows (i) that motivational rather than simple time and task related factors drive bureaucrat responsiveness to citizen input and illustrates; (ii) how conflict of citizen and political principals causes changes in the willingness of bureaucrats to implement policy; (iii) that approaches similar to those used in the Get-Out-The-Vote literature backfire in the context of non-electoral public participation.

The reliance on experiments in this thesis comes with a few drawbacks. One is that it remains untested to what extent the conclusions would generalise to other use cases. However, experiments presented as part of this thesis use a large number of bureaucrats (a total of over 8,000), drawn from a wide range of bureaucratic specialisations, spanning street-level, planning, junior and senior roles. Similarly, the experiment presented in Chapter 4 uses a representative, randomly selected sample of a large city in the UK. It is thus clear that its results do not just speak to a peculiar sub-population. Another drawback of randomised experiments is that they are poor at explaining why changes occur. Aware of this, I therefore tested for competing explanations

in Chapter 2 and included qualitative data where possible. Chapter 3 analyses the reasons of 300 bureaucrats, capturing opinions from different genders, age groups, areas of work and even legislations. Such a breadth of qualitative information is rare in this field. A follow-up survey used in Chapter 2 suggests that engagement with information from public participation does not necessarily overrule preconceptions that bureaucrats hold about citizen opinion. The combination of qualitative responses with experimental evidence thus strengthens claims about mechanisms underlying the observed changes.

Undoubtedly however more work on the same and related questions which this thesis poses will help to deepen our understanding of bureaucrat and citizen behaviour as part of public participation processes.

5.2. Implications for future research

Trust in procedural fairness matters for beliefs in the functioning of and satisfaction with democracy (Grimes, 2017). If public participation mechanisms fail to deliver on their promise to provide greater access to policy-making and implementation trust in processes and their promnise can be hurt. This is problematic in and of itself, but also in the context of populist parties campaigning on a platform of mistrusting elites (Iakhnis et al., 2018) and experts (Motta, 2018). Skepticism can be a positive force, in that it drives citizens to be vigilant and hold officials to account (Moehler, 2009; Grimes, 2017). Yet, skepticism based on a poor assessment of empirical evidence can have dire consequences. The rise of previously nearly extinct diseases due to lower levels of vaccination rates, driven by the anti-vaccination movement, is a case in point (Motta, 2018). Anti-elite sentiment and low trust in procedural fairness can encourage political unrest (Nilson and Nilson, 1980) and tax dodging (Bodea and LeBas, 2014).

There is also a danger that a failure of public participation mechanisms, in particular their ability to attract and convey voices from a broad-based section of society, can lead to a vicious cycle of eroding legitimacy: the less bureaucrats and elected officials believe in the legitimacy of these processes, the less likely they are to be responsive to them and thus the more likely they will frustrate expectations of those participating and jeopardise the long-term potential of public

participation mechanisms to address a sufficiently large and diverse body of citizens.

Creating meaningful, impactful, equitable and sustainable public participation processes is no small feat. Further tests of causal mechanisms that create more representative input, encourage greater responsiveness and long-lasting motivation to take citizen voice seriously will be needed.

What is more, changes in developed countries and the globalised market demand ever more flexibility and agility of the state apparatus, which in turn requires greater discretion for its bureaucrats. The rapid rise in a need for highly specialised knowledge workers, a creeping reversal of the age pyramid and parallel pressure on state coffers further means that bureaucrats will continue to do more with less. With such pressures on the public purse, pay-for-performance or the creation of a generously remunerated career bureaucracy will be unsuitable solutions to attract and retain a motivated public workforce. However, as this research project illustrated, bureaucrat behaviour is also influenced by non-monetary incentives and informal controls. What factors can motivate bureaucrats in the absence of monetary incentives and legal control will continue to be a crucial research question going forward.

Such research should ask whether drivers such as identified in this thesis can be institutionalised to increase bureaucrat motivation without wearing off their effect.

While this thesis has focused on bureaucrat behaviour, causal identification of the motivators of politician behaviour to promote and take seriously input from public participation processes would further compliment our understanding of power over public participation. Particularly as Chapter 3 illustrated, such behaviour should be researched as interaction with citizens and bureaucrats since dynamics between different parties can have significant effects on choices.

As some GOTV literature illustrated and also Chapter 4 in this thesis, there might be trade-offs to face between encouraging more participation overall and more participation among minorities and people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This research illustrated the importance of noting the different incentive structure and norms surrounding non-electoral compared to electoral participation.

Future studies could help to identify what norms and other behavioural drivers are at play in public participation processes that encourage turnout and how they differ from those present in electoral participation.

This thesis has highlighted that there are many areas of public participation that are key to the development and continuation of functioning democracies and that many aspects remain understudied. I hope that it inspired others to join me on the path of uncovering more of its workings.

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