

Prospects of Research on Citizen Participation in Local Budget Process: A Meta-Analysis

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September 21, 2012
PPMRN Conference

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Introduction

- Last three decades saw an increasingly interest in broad and deepen influences of citizen participation in formulating and implementing local budget—clients, customers, purchasers, taxpayers, voters, advocates, volunteers, co-producers, stakeholders and interest groups.
- CP Methods: e.g., voting (budget referenda), public hearing, advisory committee, citizen panel (jury), survey, focus group, deliberation and open meeting.
- Scholars are intrigued by a classical dilemma of citizens' right to participate (government → citizens) versus citizens' ability to participate in local resource allocation (citizens → government or citizens ↔ government).
- Prior researches on citizen participation in the local budget process focus on similar research questions: “how have local governments implemented for engaging citizen input in their budget process?” “how have citizens participated in their local budget process?”, and “which factors have most affected the process of citizen participation?”

Literature Review on Citizen Participation

Negative Ideas about the Citizen Participation in the Budget process

- The most significant concern: Participants are **not always representative of the community** -“Thin democracy” (Ebdon, 2000; Barber, 2005).
- **Budget complexity, terminology, and inherently in Politics** → Difficult to understand and no idea about how to either obtain information or participate due to lack of knowledge and expertise (Fisher, 1993; Thomas, 1995; Berman, 1997; Ebdon, 2002, Schachter, 1997; Callahan, 2002).
- Most public officials view it as **a road to increased conflict, increased levels of public scrutiny, increased staff work load and additional resource allocation.** (Ebdon, 2000; Callahan, 2002).
- It cannot influence uncontrollable issues, unwillingness to get involved, a time consuming, and disparity of priorities between the public and government, etc.

Positive Impacts of Citizen Participation in the Budget Process

- Important to **align budgetary decisions with different priorities and values of citizens and the gov't** (Kahn, 1997; Franklin et al., 2009).
- **Feeding useful information into budgeting and citizens in cities with more participation were found to be less cynical** (Berman, 1997).
- **Educating people**, that is, they can learn from governments regarding what (why) governments do as well as inform them public preferences and opinions (Ebdon, 2002; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004).
- **Ensuring that gov't does the right thing** under citizens' direct voice in public decisions (Callahan, 2002).
- Help to **build strategic alliances or a long-term partnership between community and citizens** (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Liao and Zhang, 2012).

Literature Review:

Citizen Participation and Performance

- Prior research has examined “**participation-performance nexus**” (Beierle and Cayford, 2002; Kathlene and Martin, 1991; Landre and Knuth, 1993; Moynihan, 2003; Neshkova and Guo, 2012; Sirianni, 2009; Thomas, 1990, 1995), demonstrating that citizen participation can enhance the performance of public sector.
- **Kravchuk and Schack (1996)** emphasize that the performance measurement system should be adjusted to meet key users (citizens) in the design and development phase.
- **Franklin and Ebdon (2007)** note three main rationales for engaging citizen participation in the budget process: (1) public officials learn citizens’ preferences, (2) citizens review public officials’ accountability, and (3) citizens will better understand resource allocation decisions.
- As individuals or as members of organized advocacy groups, citizens can help define measure, gather data independently or in cooperation with the public agencies based on trust and support, suggest other data sources, and assess the data from critical perspectives (**Julnes and Holzer, 2008**).
- **Gou and Neshkova (2012)**: Involving citizens enhances the transparency of the budget process and improves governments’ accountability and responsiveness. It also shows that citizen participation in the budget process has greatest positive (+) effect on organizational performance at both the early and ending stages of the budget process, namely, the stages of “information sharing” and “program assessment.”

Research Questions

- No single perfect technique for successful citizen participation!
- No common systematic measurement of CP in the local budget process.
- No consensus on the way that local governments communicate effectively to their citizens (community) in their findings.
- Mostly case studies and/or survey data for the analysis; self-selection problem and generalization issues may exist.
- This study narrows down the main focus into the effectiveness of citizen participation (performance):
 - (1) What's the notion of citizen participation in the budget process, based on direction of the information sharing between government and citizens (one-way or two-way)?***
 - (2) Which determinants (factors) may most affect the available, accurate, usable budget information sharing between government and citizens?***
- After synthesizing related variables and indicators from empirical studies and building up one conceptual framework, this study employs a meta-regression analysis to find some evidence on major determinant(s) for the most effective citizen participation in the local budget process.

Data

- **Unit of Analysis**

: Total 44 studies (articles and book chapters) that deal with citizen participation in the local government budget process

- **Time Period**

: Over three decades (From the early 1980s through 2012)

- **Data Sources**

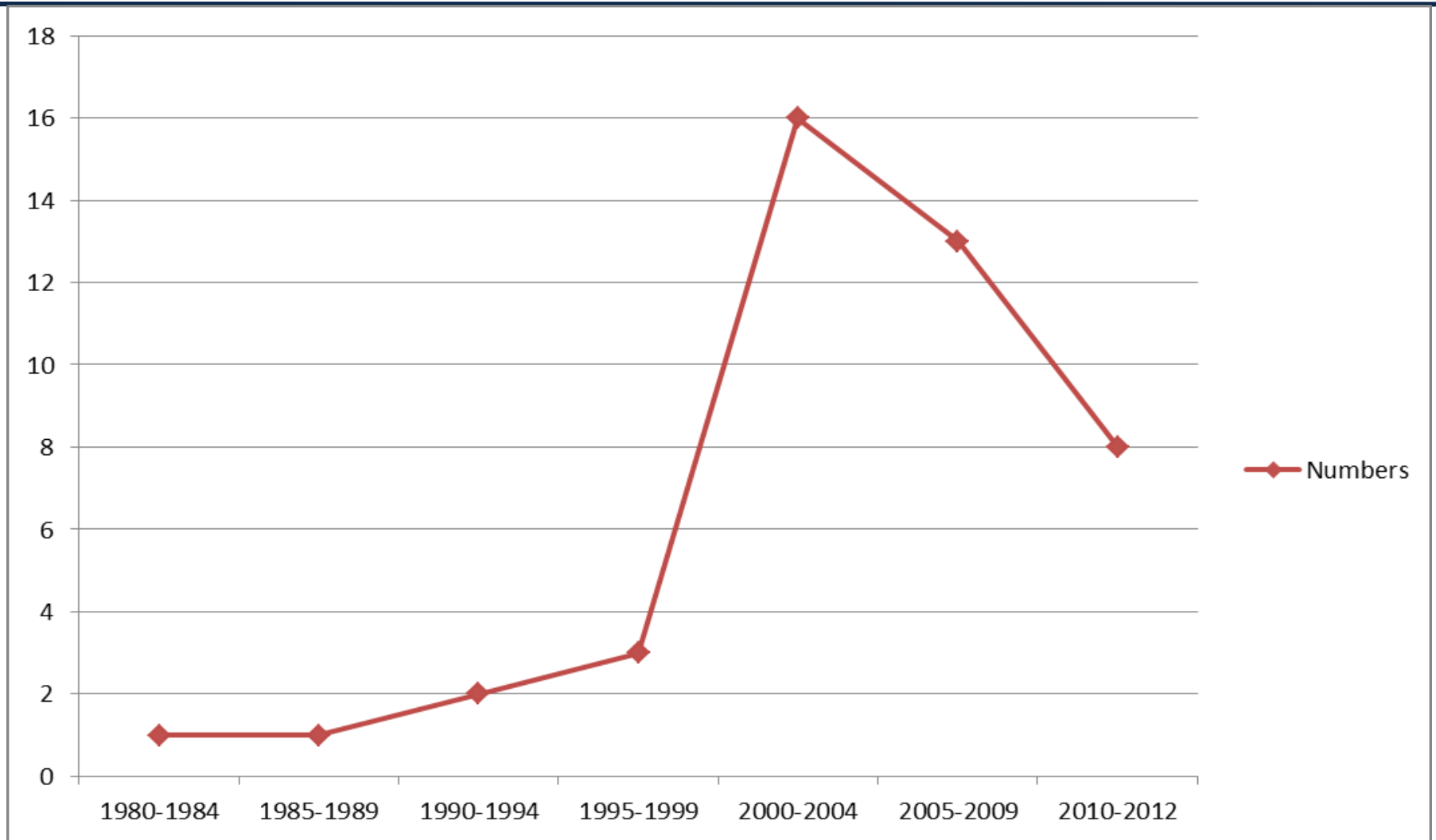
: Search two representative keywords, “*Citizen Participation (Input/Involvement)*” and “*Local Budget (Process)*” with Google Scholar, Internal Library Search Engines (Category of PA Journal), and references in each article like a Snowball effect

Journal/Periodical & Year of Publication Since 1980

Name of Journal & Periodical ¹	1980-1989	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-Present	Total	Percentage ²
Government Finance Review	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	6.82
International Review of Public Administration	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2.27
International Social Science Review	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2.27
Journal of Policy Analysis and Management	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.27
Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management	0	0	0	6	5	0	11	25
National Civic Review	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2.27
Others (Handbook, Book Chapter)	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	4.55
Popular Government	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2.27
Public Administration Quarterly	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	4.55
Public Administration Review	1	1	1	0	2	0	5	11.36
Public Budgeting & Finance	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	9.09
Public Management	0	0	2	1	1	1	5	11.36
Public Productivity and Management Review / Public Performance and Management Review	0	0	0	2	1	1	4	9.09
State and Local Government Review	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2.27
The American Political Science Review	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.27
The American Review of Public Administration	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2.27
Total	2	2	3	16	13	8	44	100

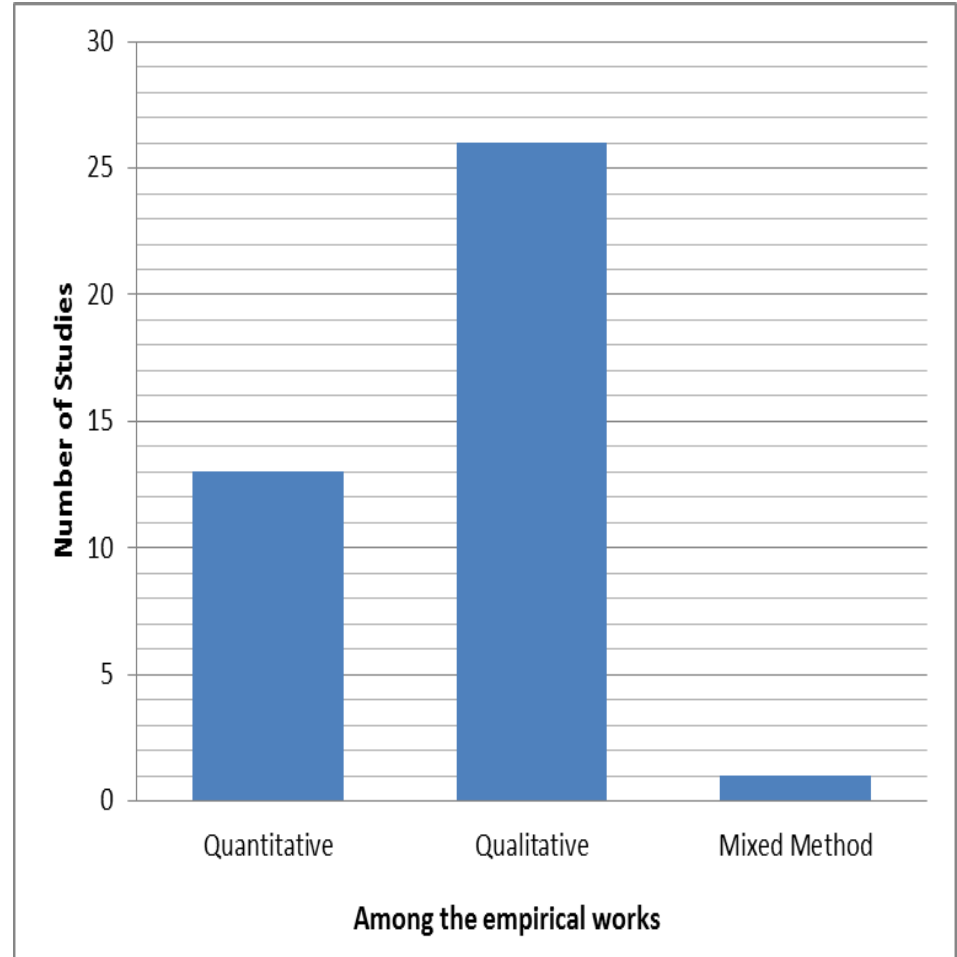
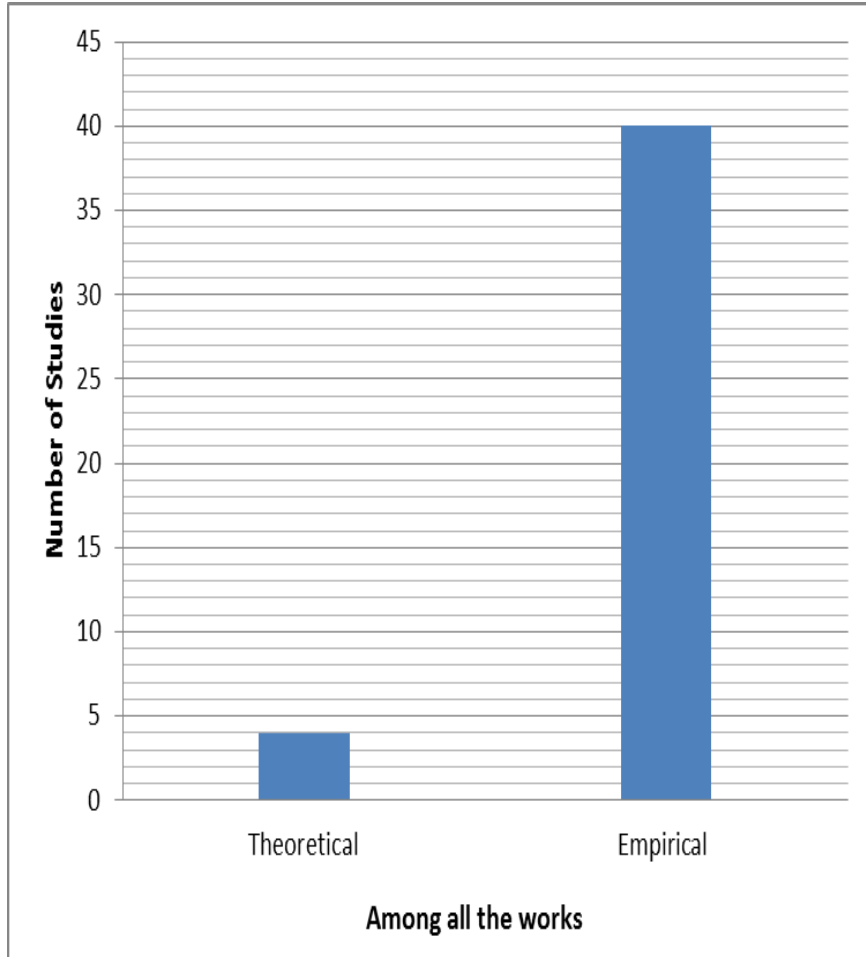
NOTES: (1) Name of Journal and Periodical is listed alphabetically. (2) Represents the ratio of articles published in a certain journal to total numbers of selected articles in this paper.

Time Distribution of the Previous Studies



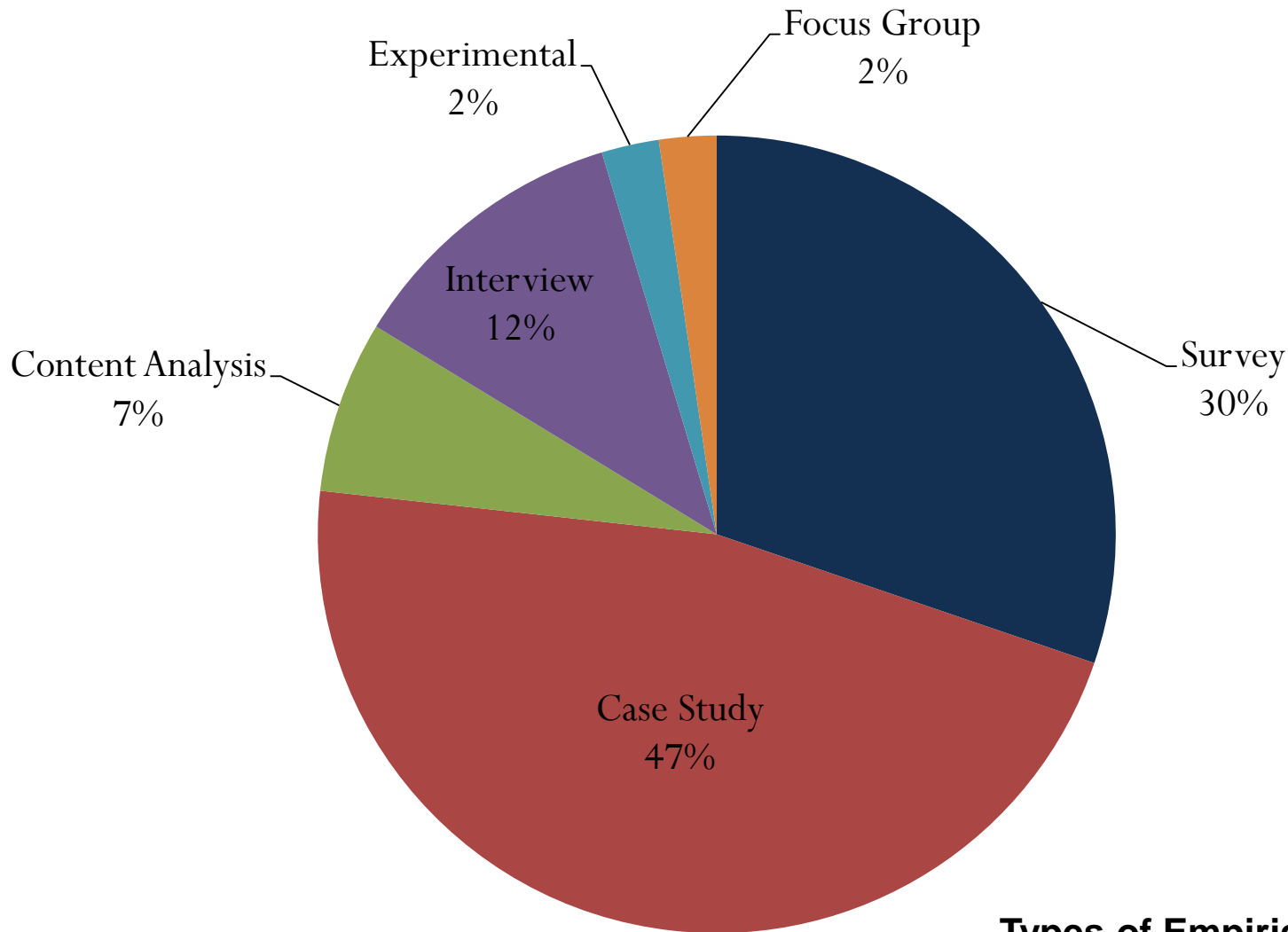
From the early 1980s through 2012

Trends in Public Administration Research on Citizen Participation in Local Budgeting



Type of Studies (empirical v. non-empirical)

Trends in Public Administration Research on Citizen Participation in Local Budgeting



Types of Empirical Studies

A List of Selected Literature

Authors(Year)	Methods	Unit of Analysis/ Data	Mechanisms	Measurement of CP	Determinants
Alexander et al. (2007)	Quantitative/ Survey	102 Budget and finance directors in all 159 counties in the state of Georgia.	Phone calls, e-mail, faxes, face-to-face contact, public meetings	Asks to rank the methods of citizen involvement in the county budget process from those that occur most frequently to those that occur less frequently - Likert-type scale. The higher the score, the greater the level of citizen involvement in the county budget process (e.g., phone calls, e-mail, faxes, face-to-face contact, attendance at public meetings, via elected officials or media).	The degree of citizen involvement in the governmental process in general, and budget or finance director's attitude toward citizen involvement in the local budget process, government culture
Bearfield and Dubnick (2009)	Qualitative/ Case Study	Two managers' management style to seek citizen participation in Big Dig (Mega-projects regarding Boston's Central Artery/Tunnel Project)	Public meeting, dialogue with citizens	Whether each manager considered stakeholders (citizens) into the project process	Management/ Leadership style (managerial philosophy)
Beckett and King (2002)	Qualitative/ Content Analysis	Articles titled citizen participation in the budget process in the 2002 symposium of Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management	-	-	-
Benest (1998)	Theoretical (Guideline)	-	Community value workshops and surveys	-	-
Berner (2001)	Quantitative/ Survey	City and county managers, town clerks, budget or financial personnel, budget staffs in 167 Municipalities and 56 counties in North Carolina (1999)	Public hearing is the most and the least effective method	Answers to which methods are the most commonly used and effective and managers' recommendations	Government staff's support, responsibility of the governing board, timing (get citizen input early and often, in a timely manner)
Berner (2004)	Quantitative/ Survey	City and county managers, town clerks, budget or financial personnel, staffs in 167 Municipalities and 56 counties in North Carolina (fall of 1998 and spring of 1999)	Public hearings	Answers to the questions regarding necessity of citizen involvement in budgeting, which methods are the most commonly used and effective, and managers' recommendations	Timing

A List of Selected Literature (cont.)

Authors (Year)	Methods	Unit of Analysis/ Data	Mechanisms	Measurement of CP	Determinants
Bener et al. (2011)	Qualitative/ Telephone Interviews	40 interviews from elected officials, budget staffs and citizens in North Carolina	Public hearings and citizen surveys	Measures the number of positive responses about 10 themes of citizen participation from three city stakeholders (elected officials, staff, and citizens) and look at similarities and differences	Timing (more input should be earlier in the process), communication and cooperation
Berner and Smith (2004)	Qualitative/ Content Analysis	50 state statutory requirements regarding public participation in the local government budget process (1999-2000)	Public hearing	Examines whether cities and counties each state meet 6 categories (proposed budget stage for inspection, notice of availability, publish budget or summary, notice of hearing, public hearing, and publish final budget)	Communication with the public, voluntary efforts of governments to engage the public, and timing (early of the budget process)
Borget (2010)	Qualitative/ Case Study	Employee budget teams and the budget focus committee in the City of Provo, Utah (2009)	Citizen advisory committee	-	Partnership between employees and residents (citizens)
Boydston and William (2004)	Qualitative/ Case Study	Nashville's budget process in Tennessee	Metro's website (Citizen's Guide to the Metro Budget through Internet)	-	Internet Guide, communication device about the budget
Callahan (2000)	Theoretical (Story telling)	Monroe municipal government	Budget advisory committee	-	Cooperation of public officials and interests in the participation of citizens
Callahan (2002)	Quantitative/ Survey	192 citizens, municipal managers and elected officials in 26 New Jersey municipalities	Citizen advisory committee	Measures the effectiveness of the citizen participation process (7 items) and outcome of effectiveness (3 items) with 4 Likert scale	Partnership or a shared role in the process
Cole and Caputo (1984)	Mixed/ Case Study and Survey	General revenue sharing program (GRS) and chief executive officers in city with a population over 50,000 (surveys from 1973 through 1982)	Public hearing	Compares pre-test with post-test (cities that did not hold hearings in the early period but hold it later v. cities that consistently held hearings over the entire period)	-

A List of Selected Literature (cont.)

Crosby et al. (1986)	Qualitative/ Case Study	A citizen panel regarding water quality in Minnesota (1984)	Information meeting, statewide poll (telephone survey), citizen panels	6 Criteria (representation of participants, effective decision making, fair process, cost-effectiveness, flexibility, likelihood that the recommendations of the groups will be followed should be high)	Cost of the process, criteria (participation selection, cost effectiveness, effective decision-making and fair procedure, flexibility, and recommendation)
Ebdon (2000a)	Quantitative/ Empirical study	465 suburban districts with budget referenda and city districts without referenda in the state of NY (1990)	Budget referenda	Total expenditures per pupil, teaching expenditures per pupil, and non-teaching expenditures per pupil	-
Ebdon (2000b)	Quantitative/ Survey	2787 managers in cities and counties with the council-manager form of government based on a 1996 survey from International City/County Management Association (ICMA)	Formal group, budget summary/document, media coordination, survey, citizen committee, and town or neighborhood-based meeting	Measures how often the manager uses each of different methods to develop the recommended budget and which three methods the manager feels are most effective for budget preparation with 4-point scale	Cultural diversity/homogeneity (size measured by population), and political culture (diversity, race, language, education level, income, government form - structure)
Ebdon (2002)	Qualitative/ Telephone Interviews	City government budget staffs and directors in 28 Midwestern cities with populations greater than 25,000 in the state of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska	Public hearing, direct contact to city council members, website, email, call-in television show, and citizen budget education committee	Asks to answer the five topics: types of citizen participation used in the budget stage, participation and communication methods during city council consideration of the budget, types of participants, effects of input, and limits to participation	Government structure (mayor-council form vs. council-manager form), budget complexity, citizen disinterest
Ebdon (2003)	Theoretical	-	Public hearing, referenda, citizen surveys, public meeting, citizen advisory committee and deliberative process	Frequency of usage each method	Timing (the early stage of participation) and two-way deliberative communication
Ebdon and Franklin (2004)	Qualitative/ Case Study and interview	Two Kansas cities (Topeka and Wichita) in 2001, 40 interviews of city council members	Public hearing, citizen advisory board meetings, citizen survey, focus groups, open forum, and budget simulation	Measures 6 criteria: representation of input, large opportunity, the early in the process, sincere preferences and willingness to pay, two-way communication between the public and city officials, and real decisions	Two-way deliberative communication between citizens and public officials and timing

A List of Selected Literature (cont.)

Ebdon and Franklin (2006)	Qualitative/ Content Analysis	-	Public meetings, focus groups, simulations, advisory committees, and surveys	-	Gov't environment (structure of form of gov't, political culture, legal requirements, population size and diversity), design of the process (timing, sincere preferences and willingness to pay), the mechanisms used to elicit participation (public meetings, focus groups, simulations, advisory committees, and surveys), goals and outcomes
Franklin et al. (2009)	Quantitative/ Survey	City council members, city managers in Iowa cities in 2004 and elected officials in 11 other Midwestern states in 2005	Surveys, budget simulation, citizen budget committee, focus groups, spending budget meetings, regular public hearings, televised public hearings with call-in features, neighborhood and district meeting	By rating the frequency of usage among nine different methods for the past two budget cycles	Professional norms of city managers and gap between what mechanisms are required by law and the mechanisms that are valued by elected officials or are used by citizens
Franklin and Ebdon (2005)	Qualitative/ Case Study	Two Midwestern cities (Burlington in Iowa and Topeka in Kansas)	-	Examines whether two cities meet the four factors: city structure, citizen participant (population), participation process (legal requirements) and mechanisms for participation used	City structure (size, form and legal requirement), type of participants through invitation or selection, mechanisms (multiple or one-shot), timing and coverage (city-wide or single issue)
Hassett and Watson (2003)	Qualitative/ Case Study	Historical development and process of usage of citizen survey in Auburn, Alabama, for the past 17 years	Citizen survey	Annual survey (A likert scale)	-
Ho and Coates (2002)	Qualitative/ Case Study	9 Iowa cities which participated in the three-year CIPA (citizen-initiated performance assessment) project in 2001	Citizen-based performance measurement	-	Collaboration among citizens, elected officials and city staffs, citizen's perspective, political neutrality (interests)
Ho and Coates (2006)	Qualitative/ Case Study	9 Iowa cities which participated in the three-year CIPA project from 2001 to 2004	Citizen performance team (city council members, administrative staffs, and citizen representatives)	-	Communication between elected officials and departmental staffs, collaboration among citizens, elected officials and city staffs
Justice and Dülger (2009)	Qualitative/Case study	-	-	-	Environment, goals, process design, mechanisms, intermediation, fiscal transparency

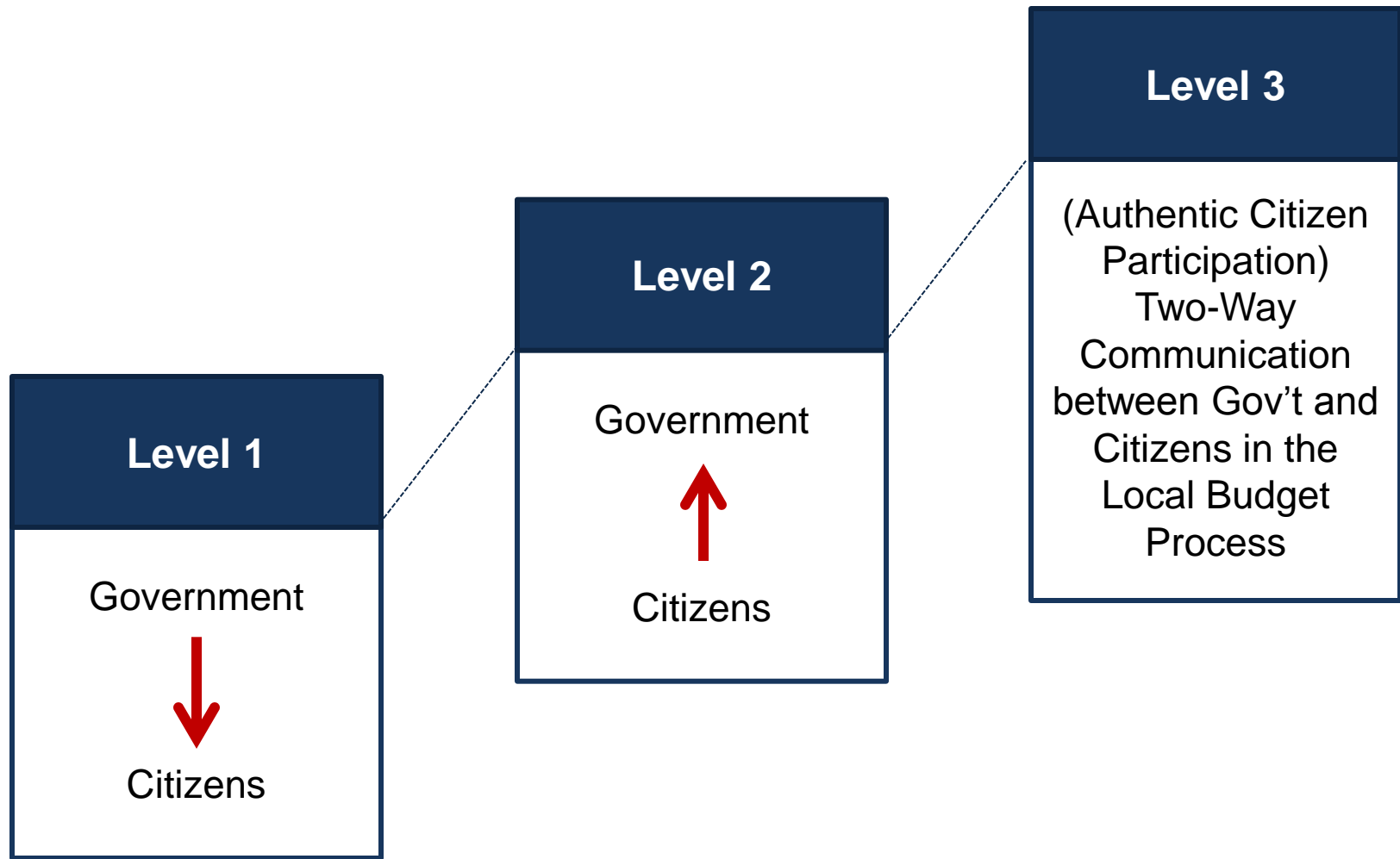
A List of Selected Literature (cont.)

Kathlene and Martin (1991)	Qualitative/ Case study	Individual/Boulder, Colorado	Citizen information panel	Participation rate; integration of citizens' opinions and policymaking; citizen evaluations.	Citizens; Policy makers; The design of participation process; the role of policy analysts.
King et al. (1998)	Qualitative/ Interview	Individual: citizens and public administrators/ Northeast Ohio	-	Open, honest discussion; Commitment; trust; focus	The administrators, the citizens, the administrative process and structure
Kloby (2009)	Qualitative/ Interview	Individual/Chief financial officer	-	Financial information reporting	Chief financial officers (individual); Support from elected officials; Organizational capacity (coordination, cooperation, training).
Lerner (2011)	Qualitative/ Case study	Individual/Chicago residents	-	-	Representation; the role change of stakeholders, including politicians, public employees, and citizens.
Liao and Zhang (2012)	Quantitative/ Survey	NJ local govt.	-	Public communication, public consultation, public negotiation	Political support, mechanisms, city managers' intention
Lu (2011)	Quantitative/ Survey	Individual/Georgia	-	Participation pattern	Open to external stakeholders; shared responsibility among stakeholders; specifying purposes.
Marlowe and Portillo (2006)	Quantitative/ Survey	Local govt./Michigan and Minnesota	-	-	The perception of managers on the usefulness of citizen input
Moulder and Carlee (2010)	Theoretical	Local govt.	-	Dialogue	Building dialogues; transparent; engagement skills
Ohren and Bernstein (2001)	Qualitative/ Case study	Individual/Michigan	Focus group/Telephone surveys	-	Citizen involvement; engagement skills; Collaboration between universities/community,
Orosz (2002)	Qualitative/ Case study	Columbus, Ohio.	-	-	The process design; representation; the authentic use of information gathered from citizens.

A List of Selected Literature (cont.)

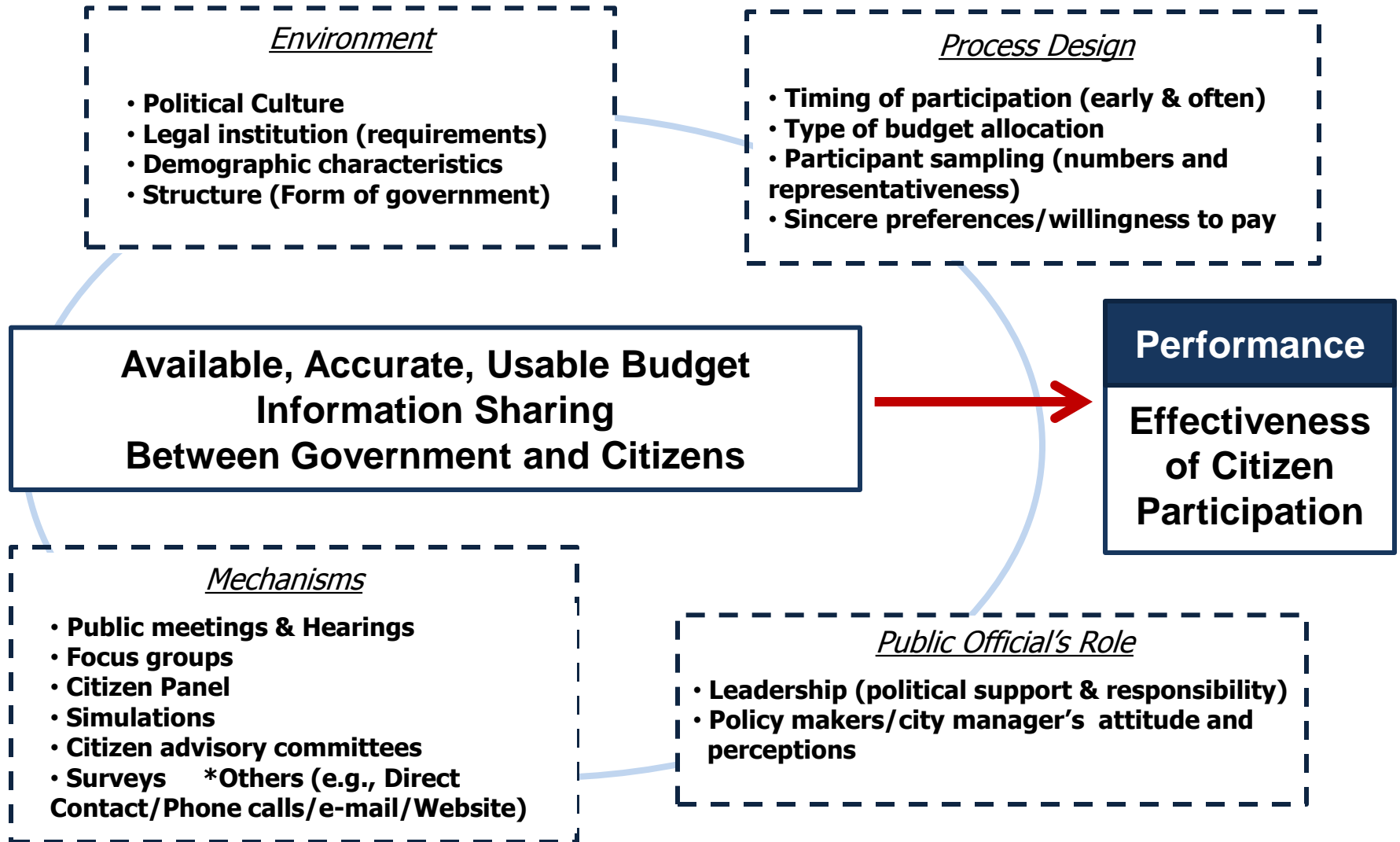
Preisser (1997)	Qualitative/ Case study	Individual/City manager/Redding, CA	-	-	Time for citizens, training for staffs.
Robbins et al. (2008)	Quantitative/ Survey	Individual/Connecticut	Web-based survey	Real-time interaction	The match between the technique and the goals of engaging citizens; representativeness
Robbins et al. (2009)	Qualitative/ Case study/ Focus group	Individual/West Hartford, Connecticut	Citizen survey	The mechanism of citizen survey	Collaboration among elected officials, managers, and citizens.
Rossmann and Shanahan (2012)	Qualitative/ Case study	Organization	Budgetary committee	Openness and inclusiveness	Willingness to participate, time constraints, participation group size, information constraints, leadership, media, state-level oversight.
Stampfler (2005)	Qualitative/ Case study	-	Advisory committee/ public hearings	-	A carefully designed process
Watson et al. (1991)	Qualitative/ Case study	Individual/Auburn residents	Citizen survey	The use of citizen survey	Survey methods, procedures; organizational structure
Zhang and Yang (2009)	Quantitative/ Survey	Florida local govt.	-	Consideration for formal recommendations; Coordination with media for input	Environment; City managers' characteristics
Zhang and Liao (2011)	Quantitative/ Survey	NJ local govt.	-	The interactive mechanisms of engaging citizens	Elected officials and city managers' attitude and perceptions; government structures; the politics of internal and external environment.

Directions of Information Sharing Through Citizen Participation in Local Budget Process



A Framework for Meta Analysis

(Ebdon & Franklin, 2004;2006, Franklin & Ebdon, 2005; Justice & Dülger, 2009)

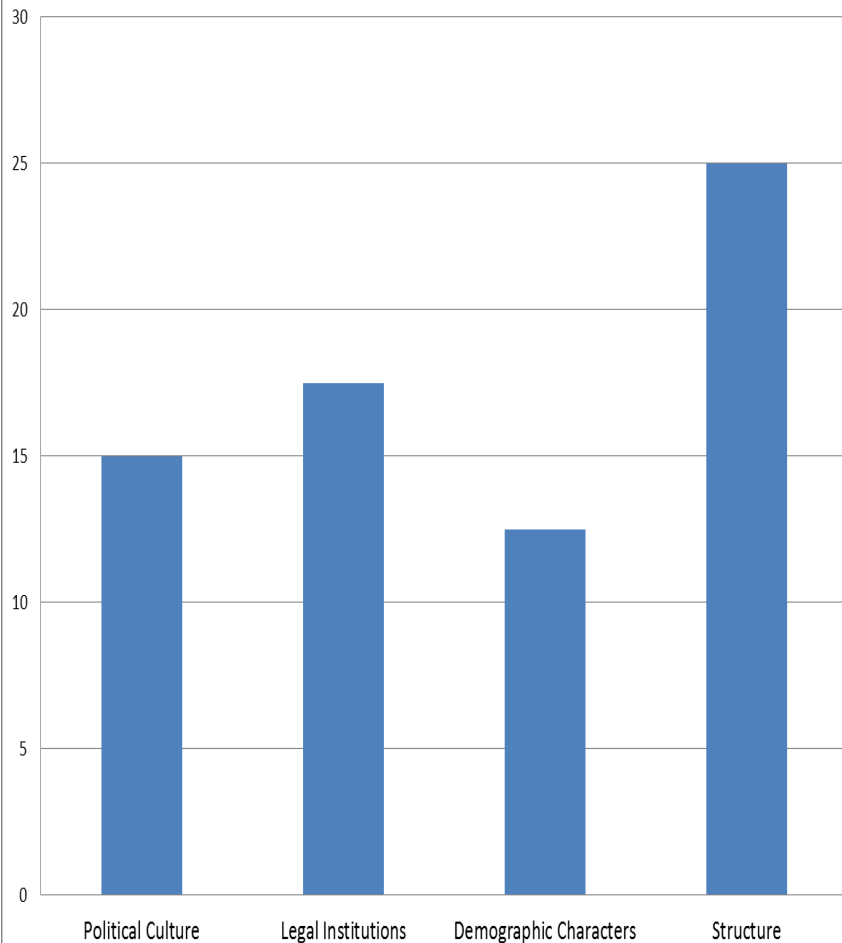


Descriptive Statistics

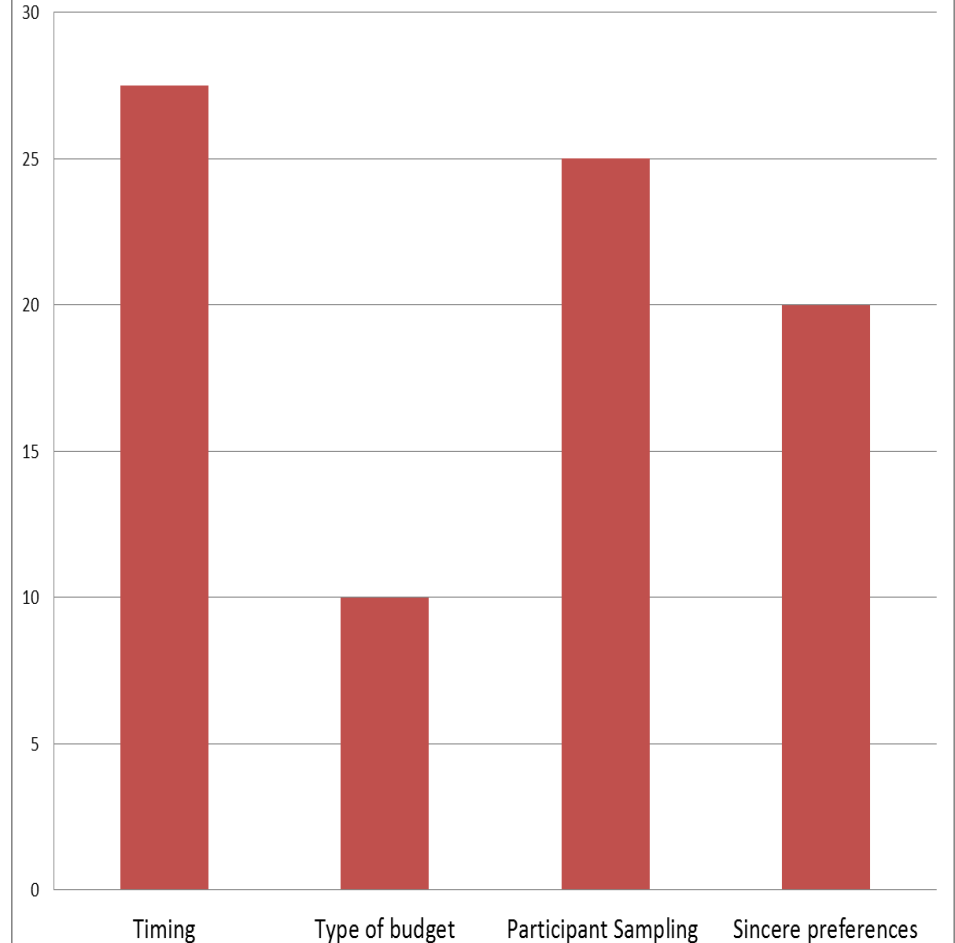
	Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max	Total
Environment	Political Culture	0.15	0.362	0	1	6
	Legal Institutions (Requirements)	0.175	0.385	0	1	7
	Demographic Characteristics	0.125	0.335	0	1	5
	Structure (Form of Govt)	0.25	0.439	0	1	10
Process Design	Timing (Early/Often)	0.275	0.452	0	1	11
	Type of Budget	0.1	0.304	0	1	4
	Participant Sampling (Representativeness)	0.25	0.439	0	1	10
	Sincere Preferences	0.2	0.405	0	1	8
Mechanisms	Public Meeting/Hearings	0.4	0.496	0	1	16
	Focug Group	0.175	0.385	0	1	7
	Citizen Panel	0.125	0.335	0	1	5
	Budget Simulation	0.125	0.335	0	1	5
	Citizen Advisory Committee	0.275	0.452	0	1	11
	Survey	0.325	0.474	0	1	13
	Others (E-mail, direct contact, or website)	0.3	0.464	0	1	12
Public Official's Role	Leadership (Support and responsibility)	0.325	0.474	0	1	13
	Manager's attitude and perception	0.2	0.405	0	1	8
Effectiveness of Citizen Participation In the Local Budget Process	Level 1 (Government --> Citizens)	0.35	0.483	0	1	14
	Level 2 (Citizens --> Government)	0.675	0.474	0	1	27
	Level 3 (Two-way information sharing)	0.35	0.483	0	1	14

Estimates of Each Determinant

Environment



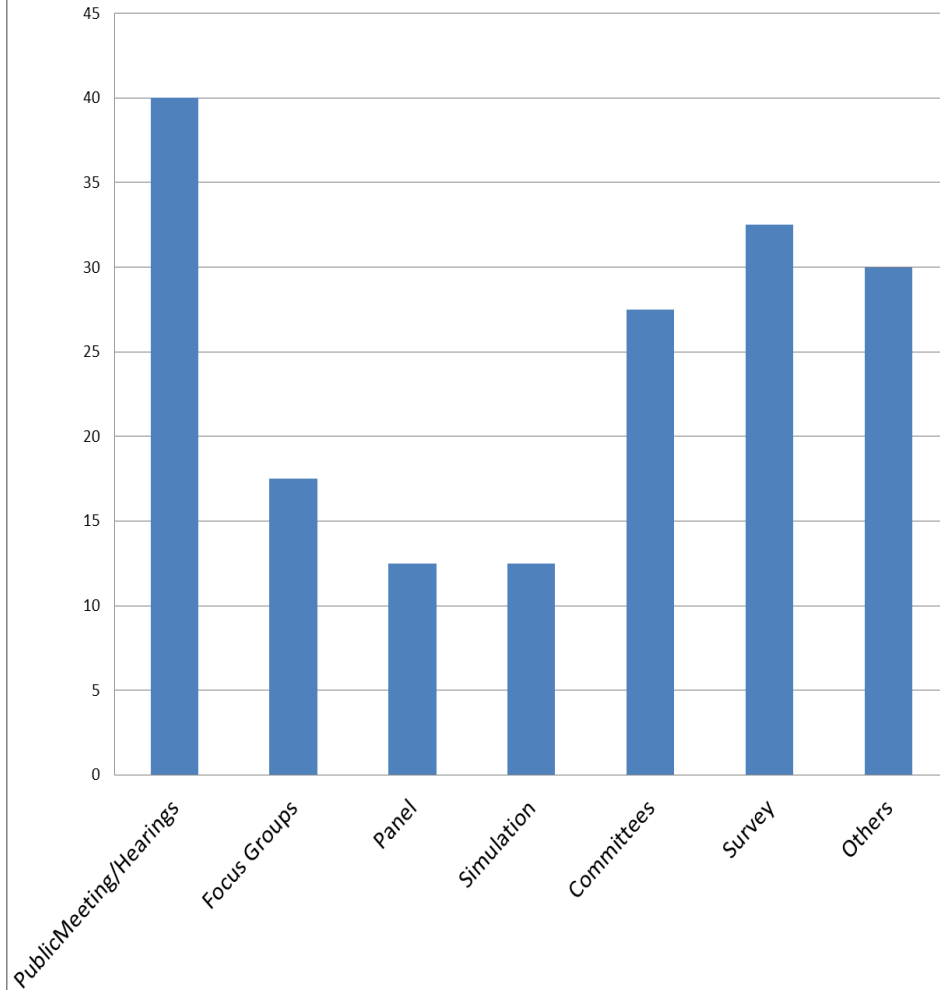
Process Design



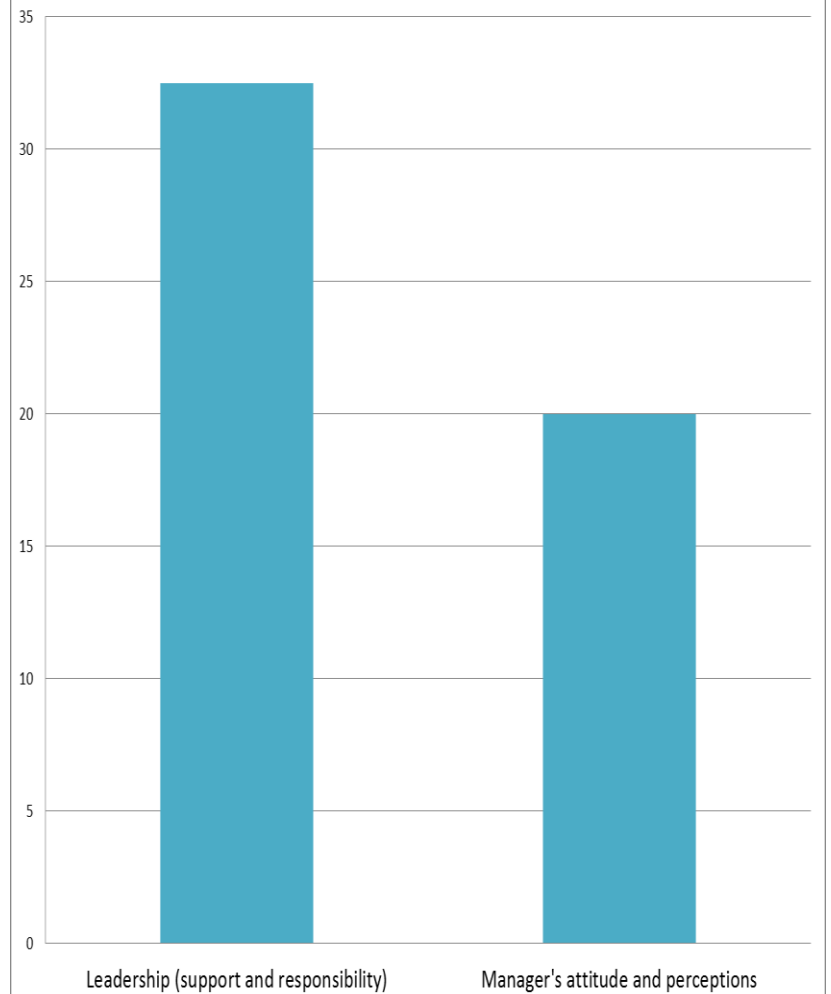
Percentages

Estimates of Each Determinant

Mechanisms

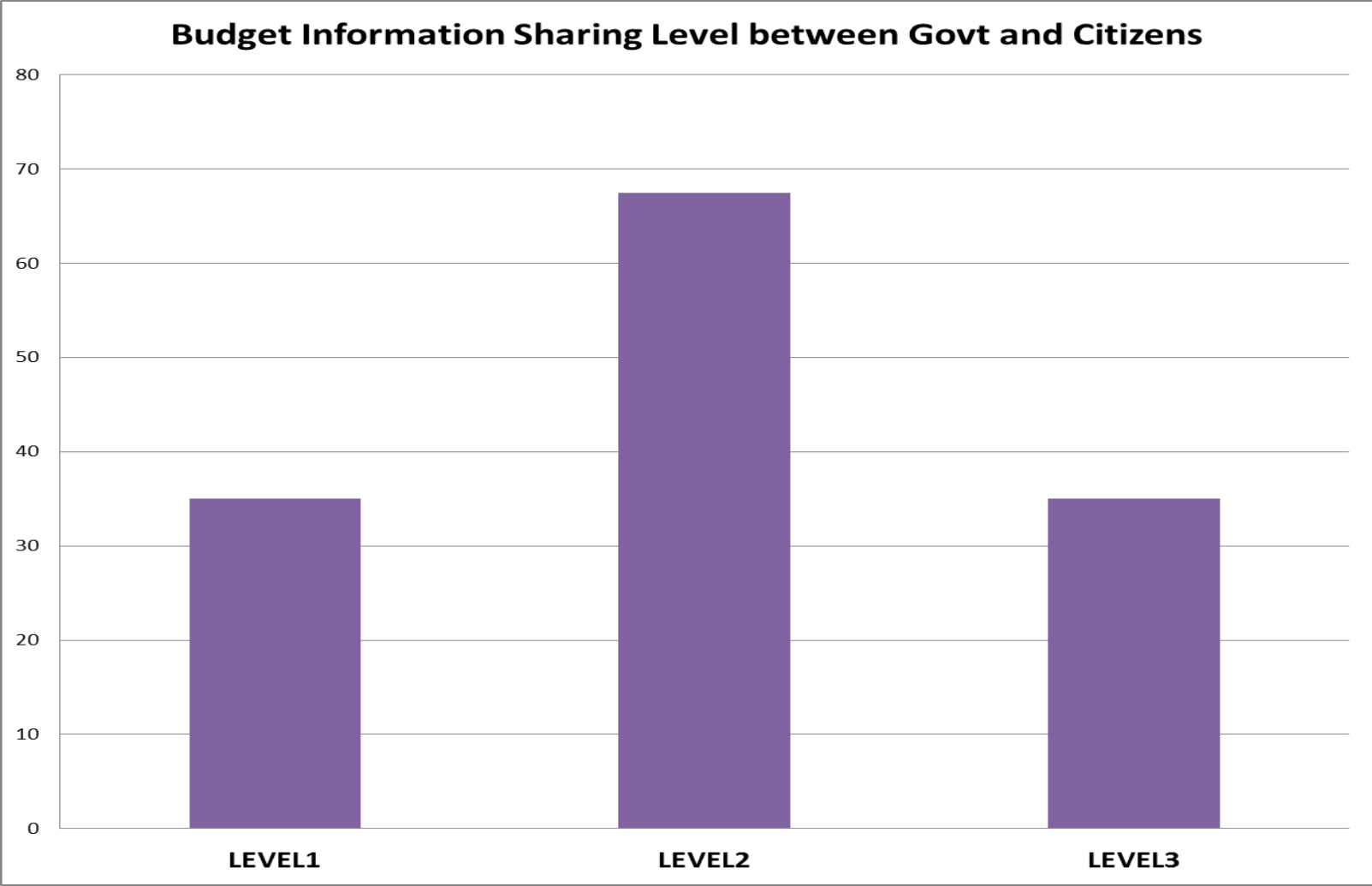


Public Official's Role



Percentages

Estimates of Each Level



Percentages

Conclusion and Discussion

- This study shows that some determinants are highly related to the effectiveness of citizen participation in the local budget process.
**Environment (Structure & legal institutions), Process Design (Timing & Representativeness of participants), Mechanisms (Public meeting/Hearing & Survey) and Leadership (Support).*
- In particular, if citizens can participate in the budget process “continuously” and their opinion can affect the real decision-making/policies in practice, it can be an authentic citizen participation (Level 3).
- **Research limitations and Future Research**
 - : More studies needed (citizen-participation articles in general)
 - : Meta-analysis regression as a follow-up study

Dimensions to Institutionalize Effective Citizen Participation (Cooper et al., 2006)

