Where the grass is always greener:
Non-participants’ contingent legitimacy perceptions of deliberative citizens’ forums

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When I first read an article in 2015, I never imagined it would become a key contributor to this dissertation. The article is titled “Deliberation, Participation, and Democratic Legitimacy: Should Deliberative Mini-publics Shape Public Policy?” and was written by one of the best political philosophers in the world. Back then, I still was a master’s student and had just fallen for the idea of involving randomly selected citizens into political decision-making. In that article, Cristina Lafont has argued that citizens’ forums were illegitimate or superfluous, and in doing so she unceremoniously broke my heart (I don't mean it literally). Today, I am grateful to her with all my heart (which is no longer broken) for this fundamental and important criticism, which three years later has been the departure point for my doctoral thesis.

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Abstract

Deliberative citizens' forums (DCFs) are illegitimate or superfluous (Lafont, 2015). Not long ago, this claim not only startled many enthusiasts, but also sparked a heated and controversial debate among both theorists and practitioners about what roles DCFs should (normative debate) and can (political debate) pursue in political decision-making.

The study has two objectives. First, it contributes to the *normative debate* on the appropriateness of DCFs in political decision-making, arguing that they can be helpful tools for (some) citizens – but not for all. Heterogeneous societies inevitably require divisions of labor, and DCFs may serve as shortcuts for (some) citizens. Second, it contributes to the *empirical debate*, aiming to (better) understand citizens' contingent preferences for DCFs. Finally, it employs conjoint experiments, which are relatively novel methodological tools in political science, and thus also contributes to a *methodological debate*.

The main argument is contingency. Citizens are not a homogeneous group, but may have very different views on different types of DCFs. It is argued that legitimacy perceptions hinge on both *object-related conditions* (design- and issue characteristics) and *subject-related conditions* (familiarity of DCFs and heterogeneity within the citizenry). DCFs need to be situated and evaluated within such contextual variations. It therefore asks not only whether citizens support DCFs *in general*, but also how they should *ideally be designed* to meet citizens different claims to legitimacy.

The point of departure is a general *novelty proviso*. Most citizens neither are familiar with DCFs including their design criteria (e.g., authorization and recruitment of participants), nor do they know about their (critical) democratic implications. Therefore, this study expects citizens to be rather reluctant, perhaps even skeptical, about DCFs. The study presents a number of assumptions. First, it expects citizens generally assign DCFs a limited, non-empowered, but institutionally tightly coupled role in political decision-making. By the same token, it expects them to account for both democratic "add-ons" that "boost" inclusion, inter alia. Second, it expects issue characteristics and substantive preferences to enter into citizens' legitimacy perceptions. Third, it assumes that legitimacy perceptions are contingent on citizens' familiarity of DCFs, with a prime focus on their knowledge, experience, and expectations.

Finally, the study emphasizes on heterogeneity among citizens, arguing that legitimacy perceptions vary across different strata of the citizenry. It distinguishes various "types" of citizens that are relevant from both a theoretical and political perspective: (1) engaged citizens, (2) politically disaffected citizens, (3) populist citizens, (4) citizens with participatory or delegative conceptions of democracy, and (5) confided citizens.

The study analyzes two conjoint experiments conducted with 231 university students (*pilot study*) and 2,039 respondents that are representative for the German population (*main study*). The results show that citizens tend to look rather favorable toward DCFs (though support is not overwhelming, but rather moderate). For many citizens, they are an appropriate but constricted tool in political decision-making. As expected, legitimacy perceptions generally appear to be higher when DCFs are both vested with circumscribed authority and closely tied to established institutions of the representative system. Furthermore, citizens want DCFs to provide inclusionary "extra provisions" (which privileges for example random sampling and large groups). Second, however, DCFs cannot be a general panacea to the "crisis of democracy" and they do not automatically strengthen democracy. Societies are increasingly heterogeneous, with citizens having different expectations on the roles of DCFs in political decision-making. Ultimately, however, raising awareness of DCFs seems to be a serious issue. The results show that legitimacy assessments of citizens change when they know "more" about DCFs.

These findings are not only significant in terms of both the normative and empirical debate, but also have major practical implications. "Designers" of DCFs may be advised to consider the heterogeneity within the citizenry. A "smart" and "target-group-specific" designing could not only be more effective, but also prevent disappointment among both public officials and citizens. Surely, not all citizens can be fully satisfied. Yet we might need to come up with more "realistic" approaches, which also implies abandoning the rosy picture of DCFs (at least to some extent). DCFs cannot do everything for everyone; if we continue to pursue a "unitary" approach, we might run the risk of "overestimating" the support of DCFs. Therefore, design questions must always be addressed according to specific goals. Second, efforts need to be made to raise citizens' awareness of DCFs, such as involving children in decision-making at school at an early age or using explanatory videos in various sectors of society.

Zusammenfassung

Bürgerforen sind illegitim oder überflüssig (Lafont, 2015). Diese Behauptung hat vor nicht allzu langer Zeit eine kontroverse Debatte unter Theoretiker*innen und Praktiker*innen darüber (neu) entfacht, welche Rolle Bürgerforen bei der politischen Entscheidungsfindung spielen sollen (normative Debatte) und können (politische Debatte).

Die Studie verfolgt zwei Ziele. Zum einen leistet sie einen Beitrag zur *normativen Debatte* über die Angemessenheit von Bürgerforen in der politischen Entscheidungsfindung und argumentiert, dass sie in zunehmend heterogenen Gesellschaften für (manche) Bürger*innen hilfreiche „Shortcuts“ sein können – aber nicht für alle. Zum anderen trägt sie zur *empirischen Debatte* bei und zielt darauf ab, die Präferenzen der Bürger*innen für Bürgerforen (besser) zu verstehen. Dazu nutzt sie mit Conjoint-Experimenten ein für die Politikwissenschaft relativ neuartiges Werkzeug und trägt damit auch zu einer *methodischen Debatte* bei.

Das Hauptargument basiert auf Kontingenz. Die Bürger*innen sind keine homogene Gruppe, sondern können sehr unterschiedliche Ansichten über verschiedene Arten von Bürgerforen haben. Es wird argumentiert, dass Legitimitätswahrnehmungen sowohl von *objektbezogenen Bedingungen* (Designmerkmale und Themenmerkmale) als auch von *subjektiven Bedingungen* (Bekanntheit von Bürgerforen und Heterogenität der Bürger*innen) abhängen. Bürgerforen müssen innerhalb solcher kontextuellen Bedingungen verortet und bewertet werden. Die Studie fragt daher nicht nur, ob die Bürger*innen den Einsatz von Bürgerforen *generell* unterstützen, sondern auch, wie sie idealerweise *gestaltet sein müssen*, um den *unterschiedlichen* Legitimitätsanforderungen der Bürger*innen gerecht zu werden.

Der Ausgangspunkt ist ein *allgemeiner Neuheitsvorbehalt*. Für die meisten Bürger*innen sind Bürgerforen nicht nur unbekannte Instrumente, sondern viele wissen auch nicht über Designoptionen (zum Beispiel Autorisierung und Rekrutierung der Teilnehmenden) und deren (kritischen) demokratischen Implikationen Bescheid. Die Studie argumentiert, dass Bürger*innen daher generell eher zurückhaltend gegenüber Bürgerforen sind und formuliert davon ausgehend eine Reihe von Hypothesen. Erstens wird angenommen, dass Bürger*innen den Bürgerforen eine begrenzte, nicht-ermächtigte, jedoch institutionell eng gekoppelte Rolle in der Politikgestaltung zuweisen und gleichzeitig Wert auf zusätzliche demokratische

„Vorkehrungen“ (wie beispielsweise die Inklusion möglichst vieler Interessen) legen. Zweitens wird angenommen, dass Themenmerkmale und substanzielle Präferenzen in die Legitimitätswahrnehmungen einfließen. Drittens wird angenommen, dass Legitimitätswahrnehmungen von der Bekanntheit der Bürgerforen innerhalb der Gesellschaft abhängen, wobei insbesondere Kenntnisse, Erfahrungen und Erwartungen der Bürger*innen einen Einfluss haben. Schließlich betont die Studie die Heterogenität unter den Bürger*innen und argumentiert, dass sich die Legitimitätswahrnehmung in verschiedenen Teilen der Gesellschaft unterscheiden. Es werden verschiedene "Typen" von Bürgern*innen unterschieden, die sowohl aus theoretischer als auch aus politischer Sicht von Bedeutung sind: (1) engagierte Bürger*innen, (2) politisch desillusionierte Bürger*innen, (3) populistische Bürger*innen, (4) Bürger*innen mit partizipativen oder delegativen Demokratiekonzeptionen und (5) Bürger*innen mit hohem sozialen Vertrauen.

In der Studie werden zwei Conjoint Experimente ausgewertet, die mit 231 Universitätsstudierenden (*Pilotstudie*) und 2,039 repräsentativ Befragten (*Hauptstudie*) in Deutschland durchgeführt wurden. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Bürgerforen weitestgehend unterstützt werden (auch wenn die Unterstützung nicht überwältigend, sondern eher mäßig ist). Für viele Bürger*innen sind sie ein geeignetes, jedoch begrenztes Instrument in der politischen Entscheidungsfindung. Wie erwartet, bevorzugen Bürger*innen generell eher Formate, die *beratend* eingesetzt werden (wenn Bürgerforen z.B. Empfehlungen an politisch gewählte Vertreter*innen abgeben) und eng an vorhandene Institutionen des repräsentativen Systems *gekoppelt* sind (wenn z.B. neben Bürger*innen auch Politiker*innen teilnehmen). Darüber hinaus erwarten Bürger*innen „Zusatzleistungen“, die vor allem im Zusammenhang mit Repräsentation und Diversität stehen (z.B. Zufallsauswahl der Teilnehmenden und große Gruppen). Zweitens zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass Bürgerforen kein „Allerheilmittel“ für die Krise der Demokratie sind und nicht automatisch die Demokratie stärken. Die Gesellschaften sind zunehmend heterogen, und Bürger*innen haben unterschiedliche Erwartungen an die Rolle der Bürgerforen in politischen Entscheidungsprozess. Letztlich scheint die Sensibilisierung für Bürgerforen jedoch ein ernsthaftes Thema zu sein. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass sich die Legitimitätseinschätzungen der Bürger*innen ändern, wenn sie „mehr“ darüber wissen.

Diese Ergebnisse sind nicht nur in Bezug auf die normative und empirische Debatte von Bedeutung, sondern haben auch Implikationen für die politische Umsetzung solcher Verfahren. Erstens sollten „Designer" die Heterogenität innerhalb der Bürgerschaft berücksichtigen. Eine „intelligente", zielgruppenorientierte Gestaltung kann nicht nur effektiver sein, sondern auch Enttäuschungen sowohl bei politischen Entscheidungsträgern als auch bei Bürger*innen vorbeugen. Jedoch müssen realistischere Ansätze entwickelt werden, die Unterstützung für Bürgerforen in Abhängigkeit unterschiedlicher Erwartungen bewerten, anstatt sie weiterhin "einheitlich" zu untersuchen (und dadurch Unterstützung möglicherweise überschätzen). Fragen der Gestaltung sollten daher immer im Hinblick auf spezifische Zielesetzungen beantwortet werden. Zweitens müssen Anstrengungen unternommen werden, das Bewusstsein der Bürger*innen für die Bürgerforen zu schärfen, z.B. durch die frühzeitige Einbeziehung von Kindern in die Entscheidungsfindung in der Schule, oder den Einsatz von Erklärvideos in verschiedenen Bereichen der Gesellschaft.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"Though small, they are among the most promising actual constructive efforts for civic engagement and public deliberation in contemporary politics"
(Fung, 2003, p. 339)

Democracies today are facing serious threats, such as increasing polarization, populism and a general pessimism about democracy among (some) citizens, with decreasing voter turnout, dwindling political trust, and disenchantment with politics being just some of the alarming indicators. By the same token, representative democracies are failing to find solutions to some of the most pressing political problems. These trends have prompted both scholars and practitioners to consider how public decisions should and can be made to compensate for these failures (cf. Fung, 2015, p. 515), with many pinning their hopes on so-called "minipublics" to improve democratic legitimacy and social acceptance of public decision-making (cf. Dryzek & Tucker, 2008, p. 868).

"Minipublics" have become a promising catchword for deliberative forms of citizen participation, both in the academic and political debate. They are representing a variety of dialogical participatory procedures where a diverse group of citizens (or at least a "fair cross-section of the persons residing in the community[1]" (Sintomer, 2019, p. 52)) engage in facilitated deliberations on pressing policy issues and produce outcomes (usually recommendations) that reflect the considered (public) opinion. Various definitions have emerged from the academic literature, with all emphasizing the importance of combining some sort of *representativeness* and *deliberation* (e.g., Farrell, Curato, et al., 2019; Goodin & Dryzek, 2006; Setälä & Smith, 2018). What makes them so appealing is their capacity to bring together ordinary people to an optimal deliberative setting[2] that allows for high-quality deliberation among participants (cf. Dryzek et al., 2019, p. 1145; Sintomer, 2019, p. 53). Enthusiasts praise DCFs particularly for their capacity to overcome the problem of a relatively uninformed and ignorant citizenry.

[1] Jury Selection and Service Act of 1968, 28 U.S.C. § 1861-3
[2] E.g., providing balanced information, expert testimony, facilitator supervision.

DCFs not only "mirror" the citizenry but also arrive at the best possible policy outcomes, reflecting what citizens would think if they have had deliberated (cf. Fishkin, 2009, 2018). This study adopts an expansive yet practical definition, which considers formats with alternative sampling strategies[3]. Only recently, for example, Steel, Bolduc, Jenei, and Burgess (2020) have argued that the decision for representation criteria should hinge on the actual goal the forum is pursuing. Representation then can be interpreted either as *statistical representativeness* (encouraging random selection) or *diversity* (encouraging alternative strategies such as quotas or self-selection). This study therefore adopts a more comprehensive term and refers to *deliberative citizens' forums* (hereinafter *DCFs*) in general.

Yet, the idea of sortition in political decision-making is nothing new, but traces back to ancient Athens where each citizen (except for women and slaves) was eligible to be selected by lot to the boule (main council), the magistracies, and the nomothetai (supreme court) and other courts (cf. Sintomer, 2019, p. 54). In contemporary political theory, Robert Dahl pioneered the idea of a "mini-populus" (Dahl, 1989) as a supplement to democracy where the judgment of the mini-populus would represent the judgment of the demos (cf. Dahl, 1989, p. 342). Practically, a return to lottery took place with a few seminal experiments in the 1970s (citizen juries and planning cells) and in the 1980s (consensus conferences). Ultimately, Fishkin brought about a major spark in political science when he introduced the Deliberative Poll© in the early 1990s (the idea of having randomly selected citizens deliberate on an issue under optimal conditions and polling them before, during, and after the discussions). However, DCFs received little attention until the turn of the millennium, when groundbreaking cases in Canada and the Netherlands attracted media attention again. Ever since, DCFs have become an indispensable part of politics (e.g., Fournier, van der Kolk, Carty, Blais, & Rose, 2011; Grönlund, Bächtiger, & Setälä, 2014). To date, DCFs have become a main impetus to both the theoretical and political debate on fighting the "crisis of democracy" and enhancing legitimacy with a recent OECD report even speaking of a deliberative wave (OECD, 2020). Across the globe various formats such as citizens' assemblies, citizens' juries, consensus conferences, or

[3] While some scholars adopt restrictive definitions calling for pure random sampling of participants (e.g., Deliberative Polls©), others deploy intermediary and expansive definitions that better suit political practice (cf. Ryan and Smith 2014).

citizens' panels have been implemented within the last two decades (e.g., Setälä & Smith, 2018).

Yet, the *normative point of departure* of this study is that DCFs cannot be a panacea for all the problems of representative democracies, but need to be situated in different contexts. For a long time, there was a prevailing assumption that DCFs quasi-automatically strengthen democracy (cf. Curato, Vrydagh, & Bächtiger, 2020; Dryzek et al., 2019; Fishkin, 2009, 2018; Smith, 2009). At the same time, questions arise about their desirable (and feasible) implementation in representative democracy. Typically, DCFs take predefined formal "functions" or "roles"[4] that are subject to a more general debate about how (if at all) they can exert macro policy influence (e.g., Dryzek, 2010; Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). Usually, DCFs draft recommendations which serve as considered advices to either decision-makers or the public. However, they could (theoretically) take on a more decisive or radical role in political decision-making (cf. Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). Some scholars even argue for extensive institutional reforms that would grant DCFs greater empowerment in the political system. Ideas range from moderate forms that would supplement or replace second chambers with citizens (e.g., Abizadeh, 2019; Gastil & Wright, 2019; van Reybrouck, 2016) to radical forms that would confer direct decision-making power or replace legacy institutions (e.g., Buchstein, 2019; Guerrero, 2014; Hennig, 2017; Landemore, 2020). For Buchstein, for example, previous efforts have been too "uncourageous". Given the effort and the positive experience, therefore, the idea of assigning them a binding function in the political sphere seems to be obvious (cf. Buchstein, 2009, p. 384).

By the same token, DCFs increasingly face powerful and sound criticisms. Critics echo a common feature: DCFs would diminish rather than increase democratic legitimacy because they bypass deliberations by the public at large (e.g., Böker, 2017; Lafont, 2019; Parkinson, 2006). Hence, criticism relates mainly to the disconnection between *participants* (a handful of citizens) and *non-participants* (the majority of citizens). In "Democracy without shortcuts", Lafont (2019) argues that DCFs bear the risk of creating "blind deference" on part on non-participants which violates principles of democratic self-government. Non-participants would

[4] Note, I refer to roles that describe a formal relationship to political decision-making only. Other functions include for example testing for acceptance of political decisions or breaking deadlocks in political decision-making (cf. Dryzek, 2010, p. 169).

have no reasons to trust DCFs because they will never know whether recommendations or decisions made by participants conform to their own interests, values, and preferences. Referring to Fishkin, she correctly reminds us, while participants usually change their opinions, non-participants are not exposed to the same deliberative filter, and, quite obviously, the participants are no longer a mirror of society after the event, even if this mirror would have worked perfectly at the beginning of the DCF (cf. Lafont, 2017, 2019). She quotes Parkinson (2006) here, who argues that participants are more likely to have become experts through information and reflection, while non-participants have not had this experience (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 118). By the same token, DCFs are neither authorized nor accountable to make political decisions which would make the political use of DCFs a serious challenge. So what reasons would citizens (then) have to trust DCFs?

From an *empirical point of departure*, however, this study argues that we still lack convincing empirical responses on the question of their appropriateness within a democratic system. The question of appropriateness, however, is a subjective one and hinges on the perspective we are taking. When properly designed, DCFs indeed can have a variety of positive effects on *participants*, including opinion changes and knowledge gains (e.g., Fishkin, 2018; Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Himmelroos & Christensen, 2014; Normann Andersen & Hansen, 2007; Suiter, Farrell, & O'Malley, 2016; Vries et al., 2010), overcoming group polarization (e.g., Grönlund, Herne, & Setälä, 2015; Karpowitz, Raphael, & Hammond, 2009; Strandberg, Himmelroos, & Grönlund, 2019), and the development of positive political attitudes and faith in democracy (e.g., Boulianne, 2019; Grönlund, Setälä, & Herne, 2010). Moreover, a growing body of research finds positive effects on *non-participants* as well, such as informing (e.g., Boulianne, 2018; Gastil, Knobloch, Reedy, Henkels, & Cramer, 2018; Már & Gastil, 2020; Setälä et al., 2020; Suiter, Muradova, Gastil, & Farrell, 2020) and mobilizing citizens (e.g., Gastil, Richards, & Knobloch, 2014; Lazer, Sokhey, Neblo, Esterling, & Kennedy, 2015).

While all these studies make important contributions to both the internal functionality of DCFs and their scaling, we still have little knowledge on how *non-participants perceive DCFs*. Most recently there have been some attempts to address such questions, showing that the general support for DCFs is rather high (though not overwhelming) among citizens (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020a, 2020b; Jacquet, Niessen, & Reuchamps, 2020; Pilet, Bol, Paulis, Vittori, & Panel, 2020). While these are indeed important initial attempts to understand legitimacy of DCFs, the

studies lack both a contextualization and a linkage to the controversial debate about their appropriate uses and their legitimacy in representative democracy. Hence, my main research question is:

When and under what circumstances do citizens perceive DCFs as legitimate tools in political decision-making?

This study attempts to understand non-participants contingent legitimacy perceptions. It not only asks *whether* citizens support the use of DCFs (e.g., Bedock & Pilet, 2020a, 2020b; Jacquet et al., 2020; Pilet et al., 2020), but and asks *how DCFs must be designed* in order to solicit support *among (different) citizens*. I argue that citizens legitimacy perceptions hinge on both *object related conditions* (design of DCFs and issue characteristics) and *subject related conditions* (familiarity and citizen heterogeneity). Hence, more specifically, this study asks how DCFs should ideally be *designed* in order to meet citizens' *different* demands for legitimacy. The starting point is a general novelty proviso. Most citizens neither are familiar with DCFs, nor do they know about their (critical) democratic implications. Therefore, I expect citizens to be reluctant, perhaps even skeptical, about DCFs. In concrete, I expect citizens to generally assign DCFs a limited, non-empowered, but institutionally tightly coupled role in policymaking. At the same time, I expect them to account for both democratic "add-ons" that "boost" inclusion and their own outcome preferences. The crucial point, however, is contingency. Citizens are not a homogeneous group but different strata of citizens may have very different views of DCFs. Therefore, I expect their evaluations to be contingent on familiarity, their experiences and expectations, and their attitudes toward politics. Note, however, this empirical perspective is not equivalent to a normative or theoretical perspective to legitimacy. Whereas the latter specifies objective or systemic criteria for what should be legitimate the former asks for what individuals believe is legitimate (cf. Weatherford, 1992, pp. 150–151).

*Perceived legitimac*y is at the centerpiece of this study, providing an important *complementary perspective* for examining the appeal of DCFs from the perspective of non-participating citizens. I suggest legitimacy perceptions to hinge on (1) the *design of DCFs* with citizens in general ask for clearly circumscribed but maximally "democratic" formats which privileges non-empowered and coupled DCFs with random recruitment, large groups, face-to-face and clear-cut majority recommendations. Next, I expect (2) *issue characteristics* and (3) *substantial*

consideration to enter legitimacy perceptions. Whereas technical and less salient issues are argued to be particularly apt for DCFs citizens may be more reluctant towards non-technical and salient issues. By the same token, I assume that non-participants may be more willing to accept decisions of the DCFs if they are consistent with their own preferences. Moreover, I expect that legitimacy perceptions depend on the extent to which citizens are *aware of DCFs* (4), with a particular eye on citizens' knowledge, experiences, and expectations. DCFs usually lack public awareness, which might produce more reluctant assessments. By the same token, citizens need minimal knowledge in order to understand various design features of DCFs and their democratic implications. Consequently, citizens might be more likely to reject empowered uses of DCFs if they are aware of (problematic) democratic implications. Finally, particular emphasis is on the *heterogeneity among citizens*, with various "types" of citizens (such as (5) engaged, (6) disenchanted, (7) populist, (8) participatory and delegative, and (9) confided groups) demanding different things from DCFs. In concrete, I expect enlightened citizens (high political sophistication), disaffected citizens (political dissatisfaction, low feelings of responsiveness, stealth attitudes), populist citizens, participatory citizens, and confided citizens (high social and interpersonal trust) to share more positive feelings on DCFs than less enlightened, satisfied, non-populist, delegative, and less confided citizens. By the same token, I expect these different "citizen types" to place different value on various design features.

I evaluate these assumptions using two conjoint experiments with 231 University students[5] (pilot study) and a representative sample of 2,039 respondents[6] (main study), both in Germany. First, the conjoint experiments consider a variety of design criteria that are crucial both from a theoretical and practical perspective. Second, they connect legitimacy perceptions to substantial issue preferences. Third, the main study additionally examines subgroup preferences for various types of citizens. Finally, I address the problem that most citizens are not aware of DCFs. In this regard, respondents in the main study were provided with an information package (video, arguments, and glossary) familiarizing them with various institutional designs of DCFs.

This study is organized as follows. *Chapter two* takes stock of both the normative and empirical debate on DCFs in political decision-making and situates the central research question into

[5] As part of the master project seminar "Perzeptionen der Demokratie" in the class of 2018/2019.

[6] Sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG), project number 432370948

this debate. I start with a brief discussion about the definition of deliberative democracy and *objective legitimacy* with a prime focus on minimal yet realistic conceptions of deliberation (cf. Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019). Next, drawing on a functionalist approach (cf. Warren, 2017), I argue while DCFs can be appropriate means for some democratic functions they are misguided for others. In doing so, I disentangle the current theoretical debate about desirable goals of DCFs and advocate a contingent role of DCFs that does not necessarily deem the "second-best" option problematic. I then take up the main point of criticism, namely that DCFs would not be sufficiently democratic under certain circumstances, especially with regard to the disconnect between participants and non-participants. I discuss three arguments related to representativeness and show that the arguments can be alleviated at least to some extent. Finally, I sketch difficulties in the empirical debate and argue that research has failed to sufficiently investigate citizens' legitimacy perceptions.

Chapter three takes a different perspective and addresses *subjective legitimacy* by sketching a bottom-up approach that asks how citizens perceive DCFs. I take a multistep route drawing on both the classical support model (cf. Easton, 1965) and procedural justice theory (e.g., Tyler, 2006). I argue that neither model alone can adequately explain support for DCFs and suggest a combined model. Next, I put forth a contingency argument, stating that – while embedded in a general novelty proviso – legitimacy perceptions hinge on both object related conditions and subject related conditions. Finally, I review existing research and present hypotheses.

Chapter four addresses the research design. I start with a discussion about the significance of conjoint experiments in political science including their strengths and weaknesses. Next, I briefly describe the two experiments and place them within the political debate on DCFs in Germany. Finally, I discuss my data, measurement instruments, operationalizations, and analysis strategies.

Chapter five presents the empirical results for both studies. I start with the benchmark models for both studies to test the importance of various design features and issue characteristics on non-participants' legitimacy perceptions. Drawing on the main study only, I then examine subgroup differences for various types of citizens. Finally, I summarize and discuss results and present some robustness checks.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion and links theoretical arguments against the use of DCFs to legitimacy perceptions of citizens. In doing so, I draw three general conclusions on the theoretical and political discussion of DCFs and provide some thoughts for further research with a prime focus on contextualization. First, for many citizens, DCFs seem to be an appropriate but constricted tool in political decision-making, privileging advisory uses and tight coupling to legacy institutions of the representative system, which, however is not a general panacea to the crisis of democracy. Various citizens expect different things from DCFs, with some even envisioning empowered uses. Second, (some) citizens seem to share some of the normative concerns, especially when it comes to strong authorization. Finally, awareness about DCFs is (still) a serious issue and requires more than just having heard about them. Overall, citizens' preferences may matter for further democratic designing of DCFs.

In sum, the basic goal of this study is both to (better) understand citizens' preferences for DCFs and to situate them in the heated, predominantly normative, debate about the appropriateness of such novel tools in political decision-making. To do so, it uses conjoint experiment that are relatively novel methods in political science allowing to better capture multidimensional and conditional preferences. The study therefore attempts to contribute to both the theoretical debate and the empirical debate.

Chapter 2:
Deliberative citizens’ forums in the academic and political debate: What *should* and what *do* they contribute to democracy?

“I do not take my argument to lead to the conclusion that all uses of empowered minipublics would necessarily be democratically suspect or illegitimate”

(Lafont, 2019, p. 159)

Deliberative democracy has experienced a significant impetus since the early 1990s (e.g., Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Habermas, 1992, 1996) and has become much more than an ideal or abstract theory. A very diverse field of research has developed, which is not only characterized by various “turns” in deliberative democracy[7], but also confronted with harsh criticism (cf. Dryzek, 2010, p. 4). The institutional turn in the early 2000s has sparked controversial debates about DCFs and its limits, with a prime focus on the question of how deliberative democracy could be institutionalized (Chambers, 2003). Since then, the debate has continued within both a practical turn (the question of how to implement deliberative democracy in the real world (e.g., Fishkin, 1995, 2009)) and an empirical turn with a focus on testing and redefining deliberative democracy[8] (e.g., Bächtiger, Niemeyer, Neblo, Steenbergen, & Steiner, 2010).

This chapter addresses the main concept of this study, namely legitimacy. It first situates legitimacy within the general debate on deliberative democracy and then addresses the normative critique about DCFs. In doing so, I draw on objective legitimacy concerns raised by political theorists and philosophers. Note, this study understands legitimacy as a comprehensive concept that comprises both normative and empirical criteria. Therefore, this chapter begins with discussing normative criteria followed by an empirical understanding in Chapter 3. However, this *does not mean* that it intends to test normative criteria empirically.

[7] Institutional, systemic, practical, and empirical turn. For a review (cf. Dryzek,2010, pp. 6–9).

[8] E.g., how to integrate deliberation into routine political structures and processes (cf. Neblo, 2005).

I proceed as follows. I first situate the use of DCFs within deliberative democracy, sketch desirable goals of DCFs within representative democracies, and argue that these goals may differ from general goals of deliberative democracy. Next, I situate DCFs within the debate about legitimacy. I argue that the criticism primarily relates to their representativeness. In this context, I present three arguments against the use of DCFs and suggest alternative strategies. Finally, I turn to the empirical debate and situate my main research question.

2.1. Deliberation, deliberative democracy, and legitimacy

To date, there is an ongoing and heated debate about the definition and scope of deliberation in both contemporary democratic theory and policymaking. Although deliberative democracy has ancient roots, it was rarely part of scholarly debates and research until the late 1980s. Joseph Bessette firstly introduced deliberative democracy to contemporary democratic theory with an emphasis on principles to ensure effective public discourse (cf. Bessette, 1980). Yet, what started as an "ideal" (Cohen, 1989, p. 17) or "theoretical model" (Floridia, 2017, p. 5), has long since become more "realistic". This had consequences for the interpretation of deliberation in political theory. There has been a shift to minimal definitions which, however, include more realistic communication styles such as storytelling, narratives, and bargaining (Bächtiger et al., 2010; Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019)[9]. Nevertheless, deliberative democrats widely agree that mutual reason giving and listening[10] are at the core of deliberation (cf. Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, p. 5). Consequently, deliberation is a form of communication that places great emphasis on mutual justification through reasoning about common concerns (cf. Cohen, 1989, p. 21). Eventually, however, it is inclusion that makes deliberation democratic (cf. Floridia, 2017, p. 5): All people affected by a public issue should be included directly (or indirectly through representation). Others have put forth some nuances by adding more dynamic components such as the ideal of persuasion instead of coercion and manipulation (cf. Dryzek, 2000, p. 1) or interaction and reflective weighing (cf. Mansbridge, 2015, p. 27).

[9] This debate is not the focus of this study. In their influential contribution, Bächtiger et al. (2010) distinguish different types of deliberation. Furthermore, Beauvais (2020) distinguishes four forms of communicative practices based on two criteria: deliberative argumentation and orientation towards collective issues, with both being essential to deliberation.

[10] For me, this means "engaging", which carries a stronger commitment, rather than just "listening". Someone can pretend "listening" passively without engaging with reasons. Engaging, on the other hand, means actively dealing with the reasons.

Deliberative democracy, then, is a democratic system in which components such as reasoning and listening occur in different ways in different arenas (cf. Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019).

A core concept of deliberative democracy theory is *legitimacy* (Cohen, 1989; Dryzek, 2000). Political decisions are legitimate because they are the result of authentic and consequential deliberation of all affected people (cf. Cohen, 1989). Yet, the main criticism with this notion concerns scaling and the question of how to involve large numbers of people in consequential deliberative decision-making (cf. Parkinson, 2006). By the same token, serious deliberation among *all affected citizens* is impossible and cannot involve more than a few people (cf. Goodin, 2000, p. 82). But then, again, the delicate question is to whom consequential deliberative activities should be limited.

Enthusiasts argue DCFs are particularly apt here because they combine the democratic mirror (representativity) with the democratic filter (considered opinion) (e.g., Fishkin, 2009). In turn, others argue that the citizenry at large would have no reasons to endorse consequential decisions made by a few who are neither authorized to do so nor accountable (Lafont, 2019). Or as Parkinson puts it: "deliberative decisions appear to be illegitimate for those left outside the forum" (Parkinson, 2003, p. 181). Moreover, Parkinson also reminds us that the question of legitimacy is one of decision-making and not exclusively of opinion-forming. Legitimacy, in this sense, is an attribute ascribed to objects (cf. Parkinson, 2006, p. 22). The point here is we have to consider subjects who attribute legitimacy to objects (whether it is a decision or a procedure). Finally, it is important to add that there is more to legitimacy than just acceptance. It not only requires political objects to be legal or constitutional, but also that those who grant legitimacy do so freely, believe it to be morally right, and are aware of the object they are asked to accept (cf. Dryzek, 2010, p. 21). This latter point, however, is problematic for DCFs because most citizens lack awareness and experiences with such novel instruments in political decision-making. Yet there are empirical arguments as well. Most democracies today are representative democracies and solutions are being sought to integrate deliberative components effectively and legitimately into existing political processes. In that regard Neblo even argues, that "our normative concepts must be educated by our best analyses of social reality" (Neblo, 2005, p. 170). In this sense, DCFs are complements to representative democracy and we need to ask for viable ways to include them in political decision-making.

Similarly, there has recently been a shift from a (unrealistic) model-based view of democracy[11] to more functionalist or problem-based approaches (e.g., Warren, 2017). According to Warren (2017), democracies face multiple problems: at a minimum, they must ensure empowered inclusion, collective will-formation, and collective decision-making. Although democracies use democratic practices to address these problems, they are not equally effective. Just as ineffective a sledgehammer is in sinking a screw, deliberation is ineffective (and sometimes even counterproductive) to solve the problem of collective decision-making, inter alia. Similarly, Bächtiger and Parkinson argue that we need to see deliberation more realistically and assess it both in light of its goals[12] and against the contexts in which it takes place (cf. Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, p. 19). Consequently, this study argues that DCFs can perform some functions in a democracy – but not all.

2.2. Between desirable goals of deliberative democracy and deliberative citizens' forums

This chapter seeks to disentangle the current theoretical debate about DCFs and place them within the context of democratic legitimacy. It demonstrates that while there are stark arguments for using DCFs in political decision-making processes there is considerable criticism about their implementation. Most forcefully, Lafont (2019) has reminded us that the only source of democratic legitimacy is a conception of democracy that gives priority to deliberation in mass society (see also Böker, 2017; Chambers, 2009).

The main argument I address in this chapter is that DCFs are not equally useful for all purposes and we need to think carefully about (whether) and when it makes sense to use them. Drawing on a problem-based approach (cf. Warren, 2017), I argue that DCFs cannot fill all the gaps deliberative democracy is seeking to solve. In practice, DCFs sometimes even pursue goals quite different from those envisaged by deliberative democracy theory. Thus, we may have to choose a more realistic route in assessing the role of DCFs in actual political decision-making.

[11] Democracy has long been thought of in terms of various models such as electoral, participatory, or deliberative democracy (e.g. Coppedge et al., 2011).

[12] They distinguish between epistemic, ethical, emancipatory, transformative, clarifying, and legitimacy-oriented goals (cf. Bächtiger and Parkinson, 2019, pp. 28–37).

2.2.1. Opting for the second-best?

Let us begin with a highly promising argument put forth by Fishkin: DCFs are particularly appealing because they start with a reflection of the population that then experience the deliberative filter and therefore arrive at the best possible decision (cf. Fishkin, 2009, p. 25). This experience is exclusively restricted to the participants in DCFs though. Considering that *democratic deliberation* needs to include all affected people (cf. Floridia, 2017, p. 5), DCFs strictly speaking would hardly align with the ideal of deliberative democracy. In that regard, Fishkin (2018) acknowledges that DCFs are second best strategies only. There is always a certain amount of division of labor in large democracies because it is simply impossible to have all people deliberate on a given issue (cf. Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020; MacKenzie & Warren, 2012). Nonetheless, Fishkin argues, DCFs can help embody an image of democracy if people "would have deliberated". The goal, however, remains hypothetical. Ultimately, a transformative strategy would consist of a deliberative macrocosm or "deliberative society" (Fishkin, 2018, p. 7).

By contrast, Lafont (2018) argues the second-best option is problematic from a participatory interpretation of deliberative democracy. According to her, the second-best strategy is not an improvement of democracy because, although it emphasizes some democratic values, it is to the detriment of others. In order to illustrate the second-best problem, she makes an analogy and puts us in the hypothetical situation where we would have to take three pills for curing a disease. For some reason, however, we would only have two pills. Lafont argues that we have no obvious reason to take just two pills, since this could actually worsen our condition. Moreover, we would not know if taking two pills is the best alternative. There could be others, e.g., not taking any medication at all. Analogously, we would have no reason to pursue a second-best strategy because it might take us further away from the ultimate goal of a participatory interpretation (cf. Lafont, 2018, p. 137).

But we can also tell a slightly different story: Although perhaps a few would opt for not taking the pills, there are certainly also many (if not most) who prefer to take the two pills. Others, in turn, might take the pills in certain situations only, for example in an emergency. The point is that the decision on whether or not to take the two pills or to choose an alternative strategy depends on both the *situation* and the *person* who has to make that decision. The same applies

to DCFs. To me, a *participatory interpretation* implies that everyone has to decide for themselves whether to take the pills or not, whether to choose an alternative strategy, or whether to consider DCFs as good strategies. Opportunities for participation have increased considerably in recent years, which means that citizens inevitably have to decide where to choose an active, participatory rote and where they prefer to stay passive, with the latter even being the dominant choice among citizens in contemporary societies (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 98). However, one needs to be reasonably aware about potential chemical interactions or side effects of the pills. This requires individual risk assessments and again depends not only on the severity of the situation, but also on how one feels about the medication. The problem, however, is that drugs are not available for all diseases and alternative strategies are needed here. Again, by analogy, DCFs are no appropriate means for all problems, and the decision of when to use DCFs is a contingent one.

2.2.2. Desirable goals of deliberative citizens' forums

Over the past decade, a body of literature has identified a number of desirable effects associated with DCFs which, however, partly differ from the goals of deliberative democracy (cf. Goldberg, 2018). I assign these goals to three dimensions, namely goals referring either to an *inside-forum*, *outside-forum*, or *democratic* dimension. First, goals referring to the *inside-forum dimension* exclusively concern participants. DCFs designed to ensure high quality deliberation. The primary goal is for participants to learn and acquire knowledge and competences, but also to change their long-term attitudes and raise awareness (e.g., a more general orientation towards the common good or increased political engagement). Moreover, carefully considered design choices (Chapter 3.2.2. and Chapter 3.3.1.) should also overcome problems of social inequality and ill-considered opinions (e.g., Fung, 2003; Setälä & Smith, 2018). Thus, DCFs aim at contributing to participants preference transformations or even opinion changes (e.g., Fishkin, 2009), enhancing epistemic quality (Landemore, 2013), facilitating fairness and respect (Mansbridge et al., 2012), and evoking side effects such as trust (e.g., Grönlund et al., 2010)[13].

Second, DCFs can also have goals outside the group of participants (*outside-forum dimension*). They include goals relating to both political authorities and the public. I distinguish *informing the public*, *influencing public opinion*, and *mobilization*. Firstly, DCFs can inform non-participants

[13] For a review see Bächtiger and Wyss (2013).

and policymakers about the considered opinions of participants (cf. Fishkin, 2018, p. 7). Ideally, both citizens and policymakers engage with the information in some way. As with ordinary opinion polls, information may feed into intra-party and parliamentary discussions when policymakers feel a practical commitment to democracy (cf. Fishkin, 2018, p. 146). If citizens in turn are aware of DCFs and democratic procedures are important to them, they may feel democratically commitment (cf. Fishkin, 2018, p. 147) and accept decisions because they were made through a deliberative process in which each positions haven been heard and arguments have been weighted. However, this does not have to do exclusively with information, but with trust. This brings me to the second point, namely influence on public opinion. One the one hand, DCFs can have "signaling effects" to non-participants, signaling what a considered opinion would look like (cf. Ingham & Levin, 2018). Now this is the classical Fishkin argument, with results of DCFs showing what citizens would think if they had deliberated. Thus, similar to partisan cues, DCFs can serve as shortcuts for uninformed citizens (cf. Ingham & Levin, 2018, pp. 654–655).

On the other hand, DCFs can serve as trusted information proxies (MacKenzie & Warren, 2012). Most citizens do not have time, interest, or competencies to engage with every political issue, requiring them to ultimately take shortcuts. Although non-participants do not experience the transformations as their deliberative counterparts in the DCFs did, they might still trust participants to have arrived at good results (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, pp. 108–109). Recently, Pow, van Dijk, and Marien (2020) found that citizens seem to have high "like-me perceptions" about participants in DCFs. I will come back to this trust-based uses later in this chapter. Finally, though ambitious, DCFs can mobilize citizens to talk about their experiences, building bridges to everyday conversations, which may ultimately contribute to broader public discussion (e.g., Lafont, 2019; Lazer et al., 2015). The expectation here is that discussions will continue outside the DCFs and spill over to "everyday talks" (Mansbridge, 1999a).

Third, DCFs pursue goals referring to a *democratic dimension*, which, however, may include goals referring to both the inside-forum and outside-forum dimension when specifically analyzed against their democratic realizations. Take inclusion as an example. Inclusion can be evaluated either in terms of internal and external exclusion within the DCFs (inside-forum) or examined in terms of its consequences for the public (outside-forum). Furthermore, one could

ask how well DCFs perform democratic functions such as collective will formation, collective decision-making, and, again, empowered inclusion (Beauvais & Warren, 2018; Warren, 2017) or criteria for a democratic process[14] (cf. Dahl, 1998). For example, Jäske and Setälä (2020) show that different democratic innovations (e.g., referendums, participatory budgeting, and citizen assemblies) serve different democratic functions. Hence, a single practice cannot fix all problems of democracy, rather we need a combination of very different democratic practices (see also Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019; Warren, 2017). But both enthusiasts of DCFs and citizens must realize that while DCFs can address some problems, they cannot address all of them. In that regard, I have referred to the example of a sledgehammer earlier in this chapter. We need to know at least two things: What a sledgehammer is and how to use it (or how not to use it). It sounds trivial, but it is not. Using it the wrong way can do a lot of serious damage. The same applies to DCFs: we need to understand what they are and what they can achieve realistically.

I will discuss the extent to which DCFs actually achieve effects on these three dimensions in Chapter 2.3. For now, it is only important to note that goals of deliberative democracy may differ from goals of DCFS, and that various DCFs may have different goals.

2.2.3. Contingent roles of deliberative citizens' forums in democratic decision-making

In deliberative democracy, the debate about DCFs is not monotonous but has continued to change over the years since the institutional turn in the 2000s. In this context, Curato, Vrydagh, and Bächtiger (2020) refer to "generations" DCFs. While *first generation* scholars primarily question how DCFs work best, focusing rigidly on both their internal functioning and quality of deliberation (e.g., Fishkin, 2009), *second generation* scholars have begun to address both their consequentiality and their roles in democratic deepening. In light of a legitimacy deficit of traditional institutions, they raise questions about the scaling-up of DCFs and their integration in a deliberative system (e.g., Curato & Böker, 2016; Gastil & Wright, 2019; Hendriks, 2016; Setälä, 2017). Finally, *third generation* scholars have only recently begun to challenge the widely held idea that DCFs automatically strengthen democracy. Instead, they are trying to understand when (if ever) and in what form it makes sense to use them. First, this reasoning

[14] Whether DCFs provide opportunities for effective participation, equality, gaining enlightened understanding, exerting control, and inclusion (cf., Dahl, 1998, p. 38).

requires us moving away from the idea that DCFs have far-reaching diffusion effects into the general population. Of course, they can (under certain circumstances); but usually they do not. Second, it is well known that DCFs lack visibility among citizens and only very few citizens selectively participate. According to Lafont, this ultimately creates a legitimacy problem: "Empowering the few is hardly ever a way of empowering the many" (Lafont, 2019, p. 111). With that legitimacy problem in mind, third-generation scholars are concerned with participatory reorientations in complex governance systems, inter alia.

This has encouraged many scholars to reconsider appropriate uses of DCFs with a number of suggestions have emerged of how they might be visualized. Most of such efforts take a problem-based or goal-oriented approach (Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020; Jäske & Setälä, 2020; Kuyper & Wolkenstein, 2019; Lafont, 2019; MacKenzie & Warren, 2012). A problem-oriented approach considers DCFs as only one possible means or "practices" (Warren, 2017) for achieving certain democratic goals (democratic dimension, see Chapter 2.2.2.) with other practices may be more effective, direct, or smooth (cf. Curato, Vrydagh, & Bächtiger, 2020, p. 5). Hence, this approach breaks with the idea that DCFs automatically improve democracy but instead assumes that in some cases they may even be insufficient or even superfluous. Although they may work quite well in terms of participants (intra-forum dimension) and even have some impact on non-participants (outside-forum dimension), they may perform poorly in meeting (some) democratic goals.

Thus, we need a more realistic approach that not only asks what DCFs can actually achieve but also considers its democratic implications[15]. In that regard, most DCFs have formal "functions" or "roles". While they usually have advisory roles only they could also be endowed with more decisive or radical roles (e.g., Buchstein, 2009, 2010, 2019) that would give them direct decision-making power (cf. Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). Kuyper and Wolkenstein (2019) for example argue that their role should be contingent on the responsiveness of the current political system. In some circumstances, namely when the current party system is severely eroded and persistently lacks responsiveness to its constituencies, it may make even sense to vest DCFs with empowered roles. Conversely, there would be hardly any reason to leave decisions to DCFs if the system acts responsively (cf. Kuyper & Wolkenstein, 2019). In

[15] This argument draws on Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020).

that case, DCFs can still advise political decision-making, but greater authority would not only be superfluous, but probably not wanted by the citizenry.

For Lafont (2017, 2019) the normatively desirable goal is a participatory re-orientation of democracy. DCFs, she argues, could add value to this participatory goal but only in certain situations, namely when they contest the majority opinion, play a vigilant role, or anticipate policy issues (cf. Lafont, 2017, pp. 95–99, 2019, pp. 146–159). First, DCFs can challenge the prevailing majority opinion and signal the public how an informed citizenry would think and decide. This usually happens when the opinion of the DCF clashes with the public opinion and, ideally, incentivizes citizens to reconsider their opinions. Hence, the more the opinion of the DCFs actually diverges from public opinion the more the public should scrutinize public opinion and engage further with information (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 152).

Second, DCFs can alert the citizenry that they are being ignored by policymakers and that their needs are not being addressed. This happens when the opinion of the DCF aligns with the public's opinion but is not reflected in actual policy decisions. Consequently, citizens may become more involved in other participatory activities and actively challenge political authorities to take policy action. In this case, citizens do not question public opinion, but the political system (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 153). Indeed, this is closest to Kuyper and Wolkenstein (2019), who argue that remedial action is needed when the political system is not responsive. In addition, however, citizens could put pressure on political authorities to become more responsive. In that regard, DCFs could enhance external deliberative accountability (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 211) by incentivizing public authorities to publicly justify their decisions. In this respect, DCFs are even more likely than the public to exert pressure on political decision-makers. DCFs are often part of public news coverage. Moreover, they are usually initiated top-down and are therefore more likely to have "inquiry power" to ask what ultimately have happened to the recommendations.

Finally, DCFs could anticipate problems or policy issues that have been ignored by the public, thus increasing visibility. The primary task, then, is to identify the most important policies from a wide range of issues and thus determine the public debate. Again, ideally, citizens would seek further opportunities to participate (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 158).

Eventually, however, Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020) argue the uses of DCFs are always contingent. Drawing on Lafont, I have told a story about taking pills earlier in this chapter. We need to recognize that citizens have different attitudes and not all expect the same things from DCFs. While they are very helpful and important to some, they may be superfluous or even useless to others. This, Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020) argue, hinges not only on thematic differences but also on the strength of opinion of non-participants, the direction of recommendations, the degree of consensus, and the different political attitudes of citizens.

2.2.4. The problem with empowered uses of deliberative citizens' forums

This section takes an in-depth look at harsh critiques vis-à-vis empowered DCFs. The debate largely rests on normative and philosophical positions. To date, DCFs have played little or no empowering role in reality; rather, they are complementary to representative decision-making with mostly advisory character. Hence, the debate about DCF needs to be framed in a representative context and discuss roles that are useful within this system (see above). A basic assumption of representative democracy is that citizens are vested with abilities to influence political authorities and that, through elections, they have the opportunity to evaluate their performance and hold political them accountable (cf. Manin, Przeworski, & Stokes, 1999, p. 29). Hence, DCFs must be formally linked or "coupled" (e.g., Hendriks, 2016) to the representative system in some way, whether through self-commitment of political authorities, or through the institutionalization in the representative system.

In recent years, however, critics have started to question DCFs from a participatory angle. DCF would not only fail to realize mass participation and emancipation (Chambers, 2009; Pateman, 2012), but also undermine the participatory core of self-government (Lafont, 2019)[16]. For this reason, critics have become skeptical about the ability of DCFs to provide convincing arguments to non-participants (e.g., Lafont, 2015, 2019; Parkinson, 2003, 2006). Apparently, Lafont argues, citizens would have no reasons to blindly trust DCFs since they have not participated themselves. Their argument draws mainly on the discrepancy between political representation and representativeness of the DCF. In political theory, representation is a

[16] By contras Parvin (2018) rejects the idea that we need more participation. According to him, we should acknowledge that most citizens do not want active parts in political decision-making; instead, we should think of new approaches to democracies. He suggests a system that satisfies both desirable democratic outcomes and political equality without citizen participation.

“conceptual thicket” (Goodin & Dryzek, 2006, p. 221)[17] , with a “new wave” pushing a number of conceptions to the fore, particularly since the 2000s (for a review see Wolkenstein & Wratil, 2020).

Representation has long been thought of as the opposite to participation. This study places great emphasis on inclusion in the context of representation and draws on Plotke (1997) who argued that the opposite of representation is exclusion. Inclusion is closely related to participation, with some even arguing that participation is a central component of representation (cf. Brown, 2006). Yet, inclusion in DCFs can mean different things. Whereas most presume statistical representation[18] as the silver bullet for inclusion, Steel et al. (2020) have only recently argued that in some cases, namely when DCFs aim at detecting a variety of perspectives or drafting recommendation in co-creative designs, it might even make sense to forgo statistical representativeness in favor of diversity (cf. Steel et al., 2020, p. 53; see also Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). In the remainder of this discussion, I refer to Brown (2006), who not only considers *participation* but adds *accountability* and *authorization* as central concepts of representation[19]. I discuss three related arguments against the political use of DCFs and point out to possible avenues[20] to address these concerns.

The normative point of departure is that DCFs may face a dilemma, which Lafont dubs *blind deference*: A shortcut that is incompatible with the democratic ideal of self-government and thus unrelated to democratization. Just because a few citizens have the opportunity to influence political decisions, there is no reason for non-participants to blindly defer to recommendations of those who have had the opportunity to deliberate (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 111). Blind deference, Lafont argues, is associated with the “prescriptive force” (Lafont, 2019, p. 119) of the outputs of DCFs. Although Lafont has since moved away from a general rejection of DCFs and suggested alternative uses (see Chapter 2.2.3.), in a previous paper she

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[17] See for example Pitkin (1967) who firstly showed that representation is a complex concept with multiple elements; Mansbridge (1999b, 2003, 2011); Rehfeld (2011); Saward (2006, 2008).

[18] Drawing on Fishkin (2009, 2018) and others, representation in DCFs is usually considered as descriptive representation. Though not perfect, random recruitment strategies are used to draw statistically representative samples of the population, emphasizing the equal chance of being selected to ensure that certain groups are not systematically excluded. For a discussion of recruitment strategies see Chapter 3.2.2. and Chapter 3.3.1.

[19] Note, Brown (2006) further includes expertise and resemblance, which I omit from my argument, or only mention in passing, since they are not part of the harsh critique of DCFs.

[20] This draws on Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020).

argued DCFs are either superfluous or illegitimate (cf. Lafont, 2015, 2017). First, taking an epistemic route, we would have no reasons to assume that DCFs provide the best possible solution compared to alternatives such as expert committees. Second, from a democratic route, it would be rather unlikely that all conflicting views of the citizenry are represented in a DCF because much of disagreement exist within pluralistic societies. Moreover, we would have no reasons to assume that participants share the same interests, attitudes, and preferences, particularly after they have deliberated. While participants may change perspectives throughout the deliberations, such transformation processes do not occur among nonparticipants. The latter would therefore have no reason to assume that their opinions (still) correspond with those of the participants. Consequently, Lafont says, DCFs cannot achieve both the filter and the mirror claim simultaneously: achieving one goal does not justify the other (Lafont, 2017).

(1) They are not genuinely participatory

The first argument is thus a *participatory* one, stressing both internal (limited participation within DCFs) and external (limited effects on non-participants, e.g., mobilization) considerations (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 213).

First, there seems to be a tension between giving an equal opportunity to participate, giving and equal chance of being selected, and actual participation of citizens (see also Beauvais & Bächtiger, 2016). A choice for equal opportunity in selection (which privileges formal equality) is always a decision against equal opportunity in participation because citizens who actually want to participate are not allowed to (see also Schaal & Wilhelm, 2018, p. 212). By the same token, an equal opportunity to participate does not mean that citizens actually make use of it. Although a democratic argument, a large proportion of citizens choose to remain passive in political decision-making opt for living in a democratic system, which Manin (1997) refers to as *audience democracy* instead. This is especially true for socially disadvantaged groups, who are more likely than other groups not to participate. Effective participation hence tends to be limited to a manageable constituency. The point here is, that DCFs seem to be far less participatory than we might suggest (cf. Brown, 2006, pp. 212–213).

Second, it is often argued that representative samples are important to draw conclusions about the general population. Descriptive representation should also improve substantive

representation because (original) preferences in representative panels are more likely to correspond to the preferences of the public (e.g., Fishkin, 2018). However, this would require very large groups while ignoring not only the heterogeneity among citizens in pluralistic societies but also that participants are very likely to change their opinions and preferences.

I agree with Lafont that non-participants could not only face conflicting views, but also may not know if they would have taken the majority position if they had deliberated themselves (cf. Lafont, 2019). However, I do not believe non-participants trust citizen forums *solely* because individual citizens are just "like them" and have exactly the same interests, concerns, goals, etc. Not even twins can claim that. Rather, I think we need a more general though realistic perspective on what DCFs actually represent to the citizenry.

We then quickly fall into a dichotomous argumentation, where the question is no longer whether or not DCFs are accurate reflections of society, but to what extent they are able to enrich political decision-making. The relevant comparison then is between DCFs understood as *one possible actor* and other actors, such as elected representatives, experts, or interest groups. To this end, non-participants evaluate DCFs based on the "ordinariness" of participants (see also Gül, 2019) relative to other actors such as politicians. Similarly, Lafont reminds us that participants are "like us in the sense that they are ordinary citizens and […] are unlikely to have hidden agendas or conflicts of interest in their deliberations about the public interest" (Lafont, 2017, p. 91). Hence, the comparison *is not* between interest, goals, opinions, and values of *individual* citizens and their deliberating counterparts as long as the DCF *as a whole* ensures both diversity and plurality of social characteristics and initial viewpoints (see also Goodin & Dryzek, 2006, p. 221). Therefore, DCFs may embody a symbolic sense of representation where non-participants identify with the value of diversity rather than with a particular participant (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 220).

The argument is thus based on approximation: the better we succeed in mapping heterogeneity in DCFs, the more likely we are to have good reasons to trust them. Indeed, we would probably all agree that homogeneously composed forums are far from enough. However, this does not suggest that the participants have to be a proportionally accurate sample of the population, as long as we can guarantee that all potentially affected groups are represented. Moreover, citizens can also represent the interests of other citizens (perhaps even

better), although they are not descriptive reflections, much as, for example, a wife trusts her husband to advocate her interests adequately, and vice versa.

(2) They have no formal accountability

I have argued in Chapter 2.2.2. that political representatives and other governmental organizers can provide a link between citizens and participants because they may feel a *practical commitment* to democracy and include outputs of DCFs into their decisions (cf. Fishkin, 2018, p. 146). In that sense, DCFs are tightly coupled to legacy institutions. However, political representatives are not accountable to DCFs but to their constituencies. Commitment and accountability are therefore individual decisions. One problem remains here because normative grounds on which elected representatives make their judgments are unclear (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 119): What reasons would representatives have for relying on the judgments of participants rather than on those of their constituencies?

One possibility is *indirect accountability* with a simple logic: both participants and non-participants (who need to know about the DCF) are potential voters. Since elected representatives are accountable to their constituents only, citizens must actively hold them accountable by reminding them to address the recommendations in political decision-making. In my view, this does not require citizens to fully agree with the recommendations themselves; rather, it is about responsiveness on the part of policymakers, which does, however, require reasonable engagement with the recommendations and justification of final decisions. It may not even be a serious problem for citizens if policymakers do not respond to the outcomes the *first time* (unless the issue is very important to them). However, if recommendations are ignored *repeatedly*, citizens are likely to become more skeptical of decisionmakers, which in turn may translates into a negative perception of responsiveness. Again, both participants and non-participants are potential voters. Therefore, policymakers may actually have incentives to take the DCF seriously. They not only face the threat of being *voted out of office* in the next election, but also of *citizens initiating a bottom-up referendum* themselves. Many public officials fear this kind of direct participation[21], which may ultimately incentivize them to take a serious look at DCFs and, if necessary, initiate such procedures themselves.

[21] There are practical examples in Germany. See for example Vetter, Geyer, and Eith (2015) for Baden-Wuerttemberg.

In this case, where DCFs are *not formally empowered* to make decisions, they are at least indirectly linked to electoral accountability, which, however, requires transparency (again, engaging with DCFs and justifying decisions). In this context, Saward emphasizes on *discursive accountability*, the "ongoing giving of accounts, explanations or reasons to those subject to decisions" (Saward, 2001, p. 566). However, arguments against DCFs are rarely about such advisory uses described above. Rather, critique include theoretical cases where they would have *greater empowerment* in political decision-making, decoupled from legacy institution and authorized to make political decisions (e.g,. Kuyper & Wolkenstein, 2019). In this case, the concern is no longer about accountability between policymaker, participants, and non-participants, but about *accountability between participants and non-participants*.

Lafont finds this last relationship as extremely worrisome. In her view, non-participants would have no ability to *hold* DCFs accountable because they are not formally empowered to act on behalf of "the citizens", nor can they be held accountable for their "decisions" (c.f. Lafont, 2019, p. 119). Although non-participants still can criticize or challenge DCFs, they have no formal means to hold them accountable (cf. Landa & Pevnick, 2020, p. 5). The normative point of departure here is that rather than holding someone accountable, DCFs can *give* account for the underlying reasons (Brown, 2006; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Mansbridge, 2003) where participants in DCFs are accountable to each other for their arguments. In this regard, accountability is not about holding participants accountable for their actions (and for who they are), but about giving an account their deliberations (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 221). A key criticism is that participants in DCFs are neither formally elected nor appointed in their own right (for example, by virtue of special achievements) and therefore cannot be called to account (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 211). Usually, participants are selected (mostly at random) for their "ordinariness". In this sense, participants could feel a "democratic commitment" (see above), irrespective of the recruitment strategy and assuming they know about DCFs and their implications. Non-participants, as with elected representatives, may ask participants to justify and explain their positions. Although not mandatory, taking their role or "commitment" seriously increases the likelihood that participants will have a symbolic or intrinsic interest in explaining and justifying their positions outside the forum.

In sum, participants may be accountable for their "commitment" which includes their conscience, their role as a participant, and the knowledge that they would not have been

selected and would likewise have been in the position of non-participants. MacKenzie and Warren (2012) for example argue non-participants would have good reasons to trust participants for their costly effort they invest in DCFs without receiving direct compensation. The link between non-participants and DCFs can best described as indirect but individual control. Individually, everyone can decide for themselves whether or not to trust the DCFs. This is a genuinely democratic argument. However, a serious legitimacy problem would occur if trust did not persist in the long term and DCFs existed but virtually "bypassed" citizens. This could happen, for example, if certain groups systematically win or lose, or if DCFs continuously make decisions that are not supported by a large majority of citizens. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Lafont argues blind deference exists where no ability for control exists (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 8). As we have seen, we can indeed imagine such capacities, albeit indirectly. I will come back to this point in a moment.

(3) They are not authorized to shape public decisions

The main argument against empowered use of DCFs is the lack of legitimacy induced through absence of authorization (e.g., Lafont, 2015, 2017, 2019; Parkinson, 2006). DCFs do not formally act on behalf of citizens because they have not been mandated to do so by the public (cf. Goodin & Dryzek, 2006, p. 233). Authorization describes the ability of an institution to form and exercise binding public policy (cf. Kuyper & Wolkenstein, 2019, p. 663). While it is useful to refer to varying degrees of authorization (see Chapter 3.2.2. and Chapter 3.3.1.), for now we are only concerned with the distinction between *advisory bodies* and *empowered bodies*. There are different mechanisms that authorize representatives.

Usually, elected representatives are authorized through public elections. In that regard, Manin (1997) argues elections are superior to sortition in modern democracies because elections require renewed consent each time a vote is cast (deselection or reelection). Consent is thus considered the main source of legitimacy (ibid., p. 88). Moreover, indirect attributions exist such as appointment (e.g., cabinet members) or licensing (e.g., experts). DCFs by contras are not authorized in any of these ways (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 208). Rather, participants are *selected* through a specific mode (usually through sorting mechanisms), which, however, is "arbitrary" and independent of any particular ability or will (I argued earlier that "ordinariness" is the only underlying quality).

There is a heated (primarily normative) and ongoing debate about the authorization of DCFs. Whereas some advocate strong authorization for both theoretical and empirical reasons, Lafont (2019, p. 117) is primarily concerned with reasons non-participating citizens would have for trusting DCFs in circumstances they do not know whether their opinion would have been in the majority or not (which indeed is an important question in deliberative democratic theory). Conversely, enthusiasts of empowered use primarily question both the *motivation of citizens* to participate in non-empowered forums and the *trust base* of citizens, if DCFs do not have any direct impact on policymaking but "fizzle out" in the political system (e.g., Buchstein, 2009, 2010). Ultimately, Buchstein argues, there are two possible scenarios for DCFs: Either we leave it at the purely consultative use of DCFs and accept that their advantages might be nullified by classical representative or direct democratic processes[22]. Or we grant them a sufficiently authoritative status[23] (cf. Buchstein, 2019, pp. 362–363).

But what would authorization look like in DCFs? Brown (2006) puts forward the idea of *lay authority* (Brown, 2006, p. 209) where, just as with professional certification of experts, sortition of lay citizens authorize DCFs. Where experts act according to their technical expertise, participants act upon their personal experiences and feelings. Neither case assumes that they are acting on behalf of others. In addition, DCFs may be *indirectly authorized* if they were initiated and implemented through top-down processes. Warren (2009) refers to such processes as "governance-driven democratization". In this case, formally authorized government organizations or the government itself "delegate" authorities to some (mostly circumscribed) extent to DCFs (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 208).

(4) Is blind deference inevitably a problem?

As noted earlier in this chapter, each of these arguments is embedded in a general proviso, namely, blind deference. Now that we have a better idea of the problem, I will address blind deference in more detail below and suggest possible ways to alleviate the problem. According to Lafont, the problem of blind deference is twofaced: citizens *lose democratic control over decision-making* and *lack a basis for trust*. Following the participatory argument, DCFs leave the

[22] Empirically, he refers to the Citizens' Assembly in British Columbia where a referendum did not reach the necessary formal hurdles (cf. Buchstein, 2009, pp. 388–389).
[23] Or "aleatory democracy" (cf. Buchstein, 2009, p. 390).

general public disconnected because non-participants have not engaged in deliberations and would ultimately have no reason to support the decisions (cf. Lafont, 2019, pp. 121–128). With regard to trust, the mirror claim would ultimately collapse when it comes to substantial representation (interests, preferences, and values) instead of descriptive representation. In this respect, Brown (2006) refers to the problem of resemblance, the similarity between participants and non-participants.

Participants in DCFs are not only heterogeneous and have different interests that outsiders may not be able to identify, but participants may have major disagreements and different identities, which can make it difficult for non-participants to trust DCFs in general (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 218). But this is not the whole problem. Again, even if we could assume (in the hypothetical case) that non-participants do trust the DCFs, even though they know that participants have changed their initial preferences, we cannot assume that preferences of non-participants conform to the majority opinion. Lafont reminds us that pluralistic societies ultimately face many conflicting perspectives. Crucially, however, the better a DCF succeeds in "representing" this plurality, the less likely participants are to reach consensus, and the less likely any individual opinion of non-participants will be reflected in the (perhaps narrow) majority opinion of DCF. Indeed, it is equally possible that individual opinions belong the minority, even though the participants have experienced exactly the same discussions. However, since non-participants cannot trust all conflicting views at the same time, Lafont concludes, they cannot trust the majority of the forum either (cf. Lafont, 2019, pp. 113–114).

But is that really something citizens would claim for if we asked them? As I will discuss further in Chapter 3.2., DCFs usually have very limited public visibility and most citizens do not follow the normative debate about DCFs (cf. Rojon, Rijken, & Klandermans, 2019). Dahl (1989, 1990) was among the first who brought to our attention that modern societies need radical institutional changes in order to deal with growing complexity. In an increasingly mediatized and polarized society, it is becoming more and more difficult to keep track of all relevant issues. Most citizens not only lack the time and resources to deeply engage with all possible political issues, but also must rely on division of labor where they have to trust others (Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020; MacKenzie & Warren, 2012; Warren & Gastil, 2016)[24]. It is a

[24] This section draws on Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020).

"romantic dogma" (Warren, 1996, p. 243) to assume that every citizen has the time and resources to engage in deliberation. "Choices for passivity" (MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 98) are necessarily dominant in contemporary societies, even among the most active citizens. DCFs thus might be one remedy to complexity. In that regard, MacKenzie and Warren (2012) argue that DCFs act as "trusted information proxies to guide citizens' political judgments in situations characterized by limited information" (ibid., p. 96). Here, citizens' trust bases on the ability of DCFs to prepare and compress information in best possible deliberative circumstances and make it available to citizens because participants in DCF are more knowledgeable about both a certain issue and the actual working of DCFs (cf. Suiter et al., 2020, p. 257).

Yet, many citizens will remain just happy bystanders and will hardly care about DCFs. For some other citizens, however, DCFs might help to sharpen their focus on certain issues. Probably not in the form of a magnifying glass that would help them to identify one-to-one with the recommendations of the DCFs. Rather in the form of a pair of farsighted glasses that might help them to situate their own views in a broader perspective. But this does not mean that DCF are the only route to take. Other practices can be just as useful. Not everyone needs farsighted glasses. Some people see well enough without them, while others need a thicker lens for the left eye than for the right. Still others prefer to use contact lenses. The point here is that DCFs are useful signals for some citizens – but not for all.

Next, DCFs are *additional* sources of information only. In much the same way that people engage with reviews of a product or service on the Internet, recommendations from DCFs can serve as individual "guides" to opinion formation and decision-making. However, this does not work the same way for everyone, but depends, for example, on the strength of one's own opinion and the direction of the recommendation. For example, let's say we want to buy a new computer and we read reviews about a certain model on the Internet. The default case would be that we trust customer reviews (except exotic ones). If we had already made a firm commitment to a particular model, we would probably be more likely to look for positive comments to confirm our intentions. However, we will inevitably encounter negative evaluations in our research, but we will try to eliminate them either through further research or additional sources of information. This is what political psychologists refer to as motivated reasoning (e.g., Taber & Lodge, 2006). In contrast, if we are still undecided about the model,

we will give much greater weight to both positive and negative reviews. Of course, dealing with reviews also depends on how important the purchase is to us personally. In the case of a blender, for example, we would put much less effort into our research. But customer reviews are not the only source we could draw on, such as exchanges with friends or direct vendor information. The idea is simply that citizens use heuristics to make decisions – whether it is a computer purchase decision or trusting recommendations of DCFs.

This is what we have called semi-blind deference elswhere: "If we accept that shortcuts are necessary in any democratic system, […] then the question is not only whether deference is blind or non-blind in theory, but whether heuristics and cues are of high quality and trustworthy in practice" (Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020, p. 35). In the article we argue that signals from DCFs trigger whether citizens engage with alternative information or not. But this does not only hinge on the issue type, opinion strength, direction of the recommendation and the level of consensus reached by a DCF but also on the type of citizens (cf. Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020, pp. 36–39). As a remainder: not everyone needs glasses. Think for example of strongly partisan persons. They will hardly use recommendations of DCFs. While I have more to say on this in Chapter 3.2.2., the take home message is, even when citizens do not take part in DCFs themselves, they can still trust the recommendations of DCFs.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to revisit the idea of DCFs as a component of a participatory orientation. I am quoting Lafont when I argue that political parties, together with social movements, nongovernmental organizations, the media, and other actors, contribute to the formation of reflective public opinion, which is ultimately the source of legitimacy (cf. Lafont, 2020, p. 1164). Accounting for the discussions above, what reasons would we have to not include DCFs to that list? They certainly add value for *some* citizens. For others, in turn, they do not. I suppose we could continue this story forever. For example, think of interest groups. What reason would in turn other citizens have to trust them? Many citizens might find them highly questionable and fear that interests could be biased in favor of resource-rich associations. All of these questions are a matter of degree. Similarly, Warren agrees that there is little difference between DCFs and other bodies in this regard[25].

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[25] Personal conversation between Mark Warren, André Bächtiger and myself in February 2021. Warren sees a small difference between DCFs and interest groups in two dimensions. First, DCFs have no (or

I take that contingency argument as an empirical point of departure for my survey experiment (Chapters 4-6). Note, however, the experiment does not provide a fully-fledged test of semi-blind deference but examines conditions that affect DCFs uptake from a citizen perspective (e.g., how different issues, opinion strength, direction of recommendations, and the level of consensus affect preferences of citizens). Furthermore, it accounts for plurality within the citizenry and tests differences among different types of citizens.

In the remainder of this chapter, I conclude by reviewing the empirical debate on DCFs, which will help me identify research gaps and ultimately situate my main research question, how non-participants perceive DCF.

2.3. Deliberative citizens' forums in empirical research

We can situate empirical research on DCFs within the three generations of DCFs (see Chapter 2.2.3.). To date, most research has been conducted within the first and second generations, like for example research on goals of DCFs (see Chapter 2.2.2.). However, scarce research exists on the third generation. The purpose of this chapter is not only to provide an overview of the current state of the empirical debate, but also to point out some challenges. It begins with difficulties in empirical research, followed by a brief discussion of the current state of research and how my research question fits into this discussion.

A first challenge comes with defining and operationalizing DCFs. In Chapter 1, I pointed to a great plurality of definitions within political and social science, varying mostly with regard to their inclusivity[26]. I then invited a practical definition that includes any DCF that meets at least three criteria: Participation is *deliberative* and a priori *limited* to a certain number of citizens but, depending on the purpose, pursues best possible *inclusion* of a variety of perspectives. Additionally, other design features of DCFs vary in their actual implementations. DCFs and their definitions, however, are not only contested in the political and social sciences, but have also found their way into a variety of other disciplines with very different emphases (e.g., public administration, political sociology, communication studies, and urban planning).

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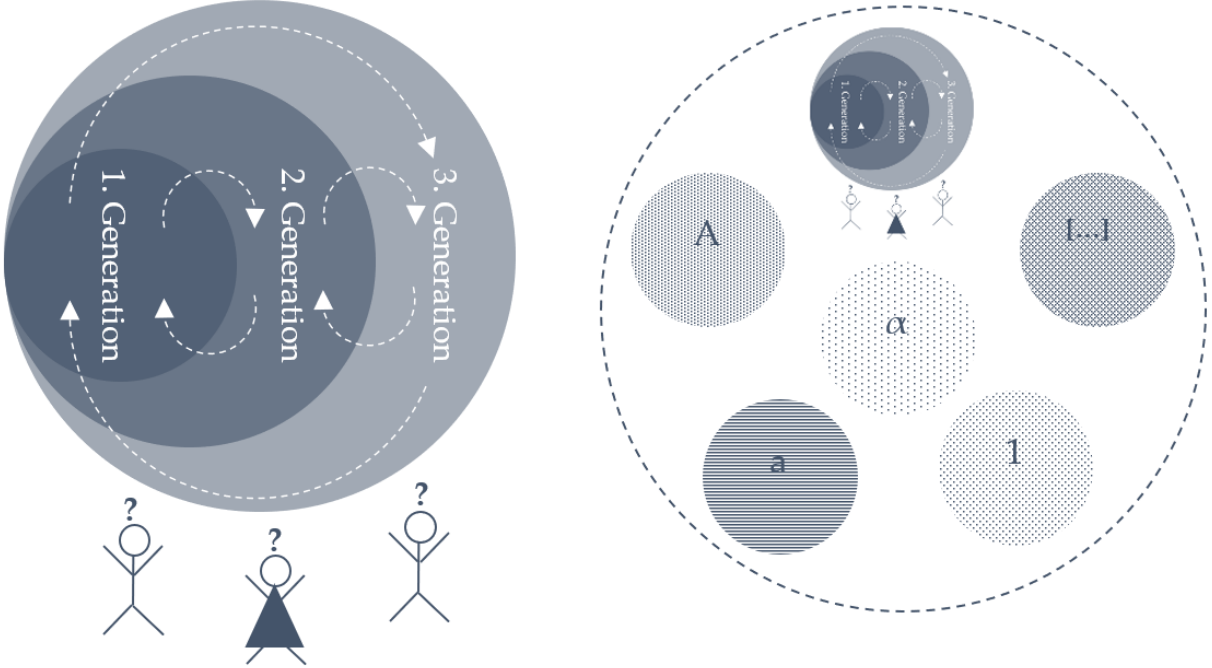
fewer) strategic motivations. Second, interest groups are organized around a particular issue, which might make it somewhat easier for citizens to trust.

[26] For a review see Ryan and Smith (2014).

While, the diversity of definitions makes it difficult to obtain an overview of the field, it also reveals the importance of DCFs across different disciplines. Figure 1 points to that diversity (right) and illustrates various empirical debates in political science (left).

Figure 1: Localization of DCFs in empirical political science and other disciplines



Note: Own illustration.

Second, empirical research is confronted with poor data and a lack of official statistics on DCFs. The main problem here is a lack of knowledge about the actual population of DCFs. Indeed, we know there are a lot and DCFs are getting growing attention both in theory and in practice. But do we have even the faintest idea how many citizen forums are actually implemented? How then can we generalize if we simply have no idea of the actual population? Strictly speaking, we then are unable to draw any inference. Many databases rely on self-reporting, which can lead to systematic bias and overrepresentation of best practice cases. Thus, we can hardly learn from failing ones. Spada and Ryan (2017) remind us that this also reflect in publication biases in highly ranked journals. Taken together it seems that research on DCFs still is "failing to examine failures" (Spada and Ryan, 2017). Another point worth to mention here is a practical one: democratic innovations (and particularly DCFs) have become an appealing "business" for many practitioners and academics and there seems to be a "pressure at the gate" (Spada & Ryan, 2017, p. 775) since organizers of DCFs often assign commissioned or accompanying research where failing cases are less desirable.

Third, there seems to be a tension between normative and empirical work, which becomes problematic when that tension is either too weak or too strong (cf. Spada & Ryan, 2017, p. 774). Since the late 2000s, a key focus of deliberative democracy has been on reconnecting philosophical concepts with positive empirical science. While one major challenge is on the appropriate measurement of deliberation, another challenge concerns on the practical implementation of deliberative ideals in different contexts, for instance the interplay of institutions, culture, and issues (e.g., Bächtiger & Hangartner, 2010; Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019). The latter point is particularly important when comparing cases and citizens attitudes across countries. The empirical turn (see above) has taught us that translating deliberative ideals into empirically measurable constructs might have significant limitations, although many empirical scholars are familiar with the conceptual literature (e.g., Bächtiger et al., 2010; Curato, Dryzek, Ercan, Hendriks, & Niemeyer, 2017; Dryzek, 2010)[27].

Finally, some studies fail to employ an explicit or controlled research design, but seem to implicitly assume – as with first- and second-generation – that DCFs yield positive effects, without distinguishing them from other potential determinants at both the institutional level (e.g., the comparison between DCFs and other techniques) and the individual level (e.g., citizens' attitudes). Other studies, in contrast, attempt to evaluate individual DCFs either in terms of democratically desirable goals or how they perform in real world decision-making (e.g., Beauvais & Warren, 2018; Jäske & Setälä, 2020).

Empirical research has long been focusing on the internal working of DCFs and their effects on participants (first generation). However, this has not only left questions unanswered regarding their scalability (second generation), but has also glossed over the benefits of DCFs with both neglecting potential negative impacts and ascribing DCF the status of a panacea (third generation). In the following, I briefly summarize the empirical findings for the inside-forum, outside-forum, and democratic dimensions (see Chapter 2.2.2.). I conclude by posing my own research question within that framework.

Inside-forum. First, much of research has been done with regard to the *inside-forum dimension*. It is well elaborated that DCFs – when properly designed – can have positive effects on

[27] Wolkenstein and Wratil (2020) recently identified the same problem for representation. They argue that many empirical scholars eschew translating sophisticated representation concepts into empirical constructs.

participants. Research has long been interested in whether deliberation in DCFs can actually lead to preference changes, or, differently put, whether DCFs contribute to a considered public opinion[28]. To date, findings show not only that DCFs work comparatively well in mapping social heterogeneity (even better than opinion polls), but also that participants significantly change their opinions through knowledge gain, inter alia (e.g., Fishkin, 2018; Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Himmelroos & Christensen, 2014; Normann Andersen & Hansen, 2007; Suiter et al., 2016; Vries et al., 2010). Others show that deliberation can correct preexisting distortions by shaping shared understandings of the issues (cf. Niemeyer, 2011).

Furthermore, there seems to be a transformative effect even on participants' expectations about DCFs. The studies by Curato and Niemeyer (2013) and Jacquet (2019) show that expectations prior to the DCFs (mostly "instrumental" or "external", e.g., consequentiality) are different to their post deliberative expectations (mostly "expressive" or "internal", e.g., social aspects)[29]. Furthermore, expectations differ according to the general level of political engagement among participants (Jacquet, 2019)[30]. Other studies even indicate that heterogeneous DCFs composed of citizens with varying views and well-structured conversations can overcome group polarization (e.g., Grönlund et al., 2015; Karpowitz et al., 2009; Strandberg et al., 2019)[31].

Furthermore, research shows that participants not only develop empathy for other positions, but are more inclined to put aside their own positions (e.g., Fishkin & Luskin, 2005). Finally, research reveals that participants can even develop long-lasting positive attitudes and faith in democracy. This reflects, for example, in their efficacy and political trust (e.g., Boulianne, 2019; Grönlund et al., 2010), their continued and strengthened civic and political engagement in the larger public beyond the DCF (e.g., Boulianne, Chen, & Kahane, 2020; Grönlund et al., 2010;

[28] Deliberative Polls© are particularly apt for examining such effects because they entail pre- and post-deliberation surveys.

[29] I find similar results for Heidelberg, a municipality in Germany. Referring to an explorative case study, I identified participants' positive and negative expectations. My findings show that respondents had instrumental expectations at the beginning (e.g., good decisions and influence on decision-making) (cf. Goldberg, 2018).

[30] Jacquet (2019) demonstrates that particularly less engaged citizens develop new expectations during their participation in DCFs. This is important since it indicates that preferences are contingent on the type of participants.

[31] Sunstein (2002) argues that joint discussions among participants steer the entire group toward more extreme positions.

Knobloch & Gastil, 2015), or their increased "appetite" for deliberative participation (cf. Christensen, Himmelroos, & Grönlund, 2017).

Outside-forum. While these effects have their own value, they are limited to the small number of citizens. The *outside-forum dimension* has been less explored for long, although research has grown considerably in recent years[32]. Among this emerging body of research, a key finding is that DCFs do have effects on non-participants. First, research shows that the outputs of DCFs have informing effects on non-participants. Not only do DCFs influence citizens' policy opinions (e.g., Boulianne, 2018; Ingham & Levin, 2018), but they also enhance their knowledge on policy issues (e.g., Gastil et al., 2018; Már & Gastil, 2020; Setälä et al., 2020; Suiter et al., 2020).

Second, DCFs can have effects on policy-making and public officials as well (e.g., Jacquet & van der Does, 2020). Public officials are often accused of having no real interest in DCFs and only implement minor or unimportant recommendations. The study by Font, Smith, Galais, and Alarcon (2018) reveals some of these criticisms. They show that public officials tend to "cherry pick" favorable proposals. Yet they also show that higher quality processes have positive effects on the implementation of recommendations.

Third, DCFs can also mobilize citizens. Studies not only show that they can evoke interpersonal discussions outside the DCFs (e.g., Gastil et al., 2014; Lazer et al., 2015), but also that they can mobilize voters and stimulate public participation (e.g., Denters & Klok, 2010; Gastil et al., 2018; Gastil, Rosenzweig, Knobloch, & Brinker, 2016). Moreover, the findings by Már and Gastil (2020) suggest that even in a polarized society, DCFs can help to decrease systematic biases among voters. Fourth, DCFs can have "emanating effects" (Knobloch, Barthel, & Gastil, 2020), which are attitudinal effects beyond the participants of DCFs. Research demonstrates that DCFs can increase citizens' senses of efficacy (e.g., Boulianne, 2018; Knobloch et al., 2020) and empathy (when being exposed to balanced information (Suiter et al., 2020)).

Finally, hearing about the DCFs can even evoke support for policy proposals and generate a sense of legitimacy (Boulianne, 2018). Others add more nuance to these findings, showing that

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[32] Many of them, however, focus on single cases or very specific formats, for example the Citizen Initiative Review (CIR).

DCFs not necessarily positively affect political trust. Such effects only occur under specific circumstances, e.g., when citizens perceive the process as fair (e.g., Christensen, 2019; Werner & Marien, 2020). Most studies, however, put an emphasis on citizens' awareness about DCFs. As such, they only imply any scaling effects when they are visible to citizens.

Democratic. Finally, for the past few years, there has also been research on the *democratic dimension*. Although there are a few studies that deal explicitly with the question how well DCFs serve certain democratic functions such as collective will formation, collective decision-making, and empowered inclusion (cf. Beauvais & Warren, 2018; Jäske & Setälä, 2020; Warren, 2017), most (qualitative) studies apply encompassing democratic frameworks to individual cases (e.g., Caluwaerts & Reuchamps, 2015, 2016; Geissel & Newton, 2012; O'Flynn & Sood, 2014; Smith, 2009). The few studies drawing on functionalist approaches focus on the ability of DCFs to complement representative decision-making. They show that, if properly designed, DCFs can improve democratic decision-making by deepening its performance (cf. Beauvais & Warren, 2018; Jäske & Setälä, 2020).

A prime focus of empirical research is on inclusion and equality within and across DCFs. While DCFs (depending on their recruitment strategies (e.g., Griffin, Abdel-Monem, Tomkins, Richardson, & Jorgensen, 2015)) descriptively work in the expected manner some studies indicate that there are indeed differences with regard to their internal inclusion. Particularly women, participants with lower levels of education, and participants with a working-class background have significantly less influence within the discussions (e.g., Gerber, 2015; Himmelroos, 2017; Karpowitz, Mendelberg, & Shaker, 2012). Although it seems that DCFs are confronted with the same socioeconomic biases as other forms of participation (cf. Goidel, Freeman, Procopio, & Zewe, 2008), it turned out, however, that well-designed DCFs mitigate these negative effects and avoid inequalities (cf. Karpowitz et al., 2012). Furthermore, the study by Jacquet (2017) reminds us that a majority of citizens still refuse to participate. He shows that citizens have different motivations for their refusal. Whereas some of them have no inherent democratic origin (e.g., focus on the private sphere or conflicting appointments) others are directly connected to the way the political system operates (e.g., alienation from politics and DCFs lack of influence).

Taken together, research reveals that DCFs can have positive effects on all three dimensions. Among a variety of attempts to involve citizens in political decision-making, DCFs are thus certainly very promising efforts. At the same time, however, they are very exclusive affairs – perhaps even the most exclusive ones. We know that only a smattering of citizens actually participates – both because they have been invited *and* decided to participate. And even if effects can emanate from that microcosm to non-participating citizens, as research suggests, we still know very little about how non-participating citizens assess DCFs. While all these studies make important contributions to our understanding how DCFs work (first generation) and how they are scaled (second generation), we still lack convincing empirical responses on the question of their appropriateness within a democratic system (third generation). My study seeks to address one aspect of this question, namely how non-participating citizens perceive DCFs. Do they find them appropriate? Do they need them at all? Are they happy bystanders or do they want to participate themselves? And, above all, when and under what circumstances do they want DCFs? All of these are questions that have received little attention so far[33]. This is the departure point in my next chapter.

[33] I discuss exemptions in Chapter 3.3.

Chapter 3:
A bottom-up-approach to legitimacy. Non-participants' perceptions of deliberative citizens' forums

"Even if we grant the simulation claim, it does not entirely solve the legitimation problem because decisions still have to be justified to those who did not participate"

(Dryzek, 2001, p. 654)

Perceived legitimacy is at the centerpiece of this study. In contrast to normative or external legitimacy (Chapter 2), perceived legitimacy assumes a *subjective understanding*, emphasizing the importance of negative or positive perceptions of citizens toward DCFs. This chapter argues that citizens (or at least a large proportion) do not follow the scholarly, predominantly normative debate about DCFs. Note, while this by no means implies a renunciation of external or objective legitimacy, it understands subjective legitimacy as an important complementary perspective, examining the appeal of DCFs from the perspective of non-participating citizens.

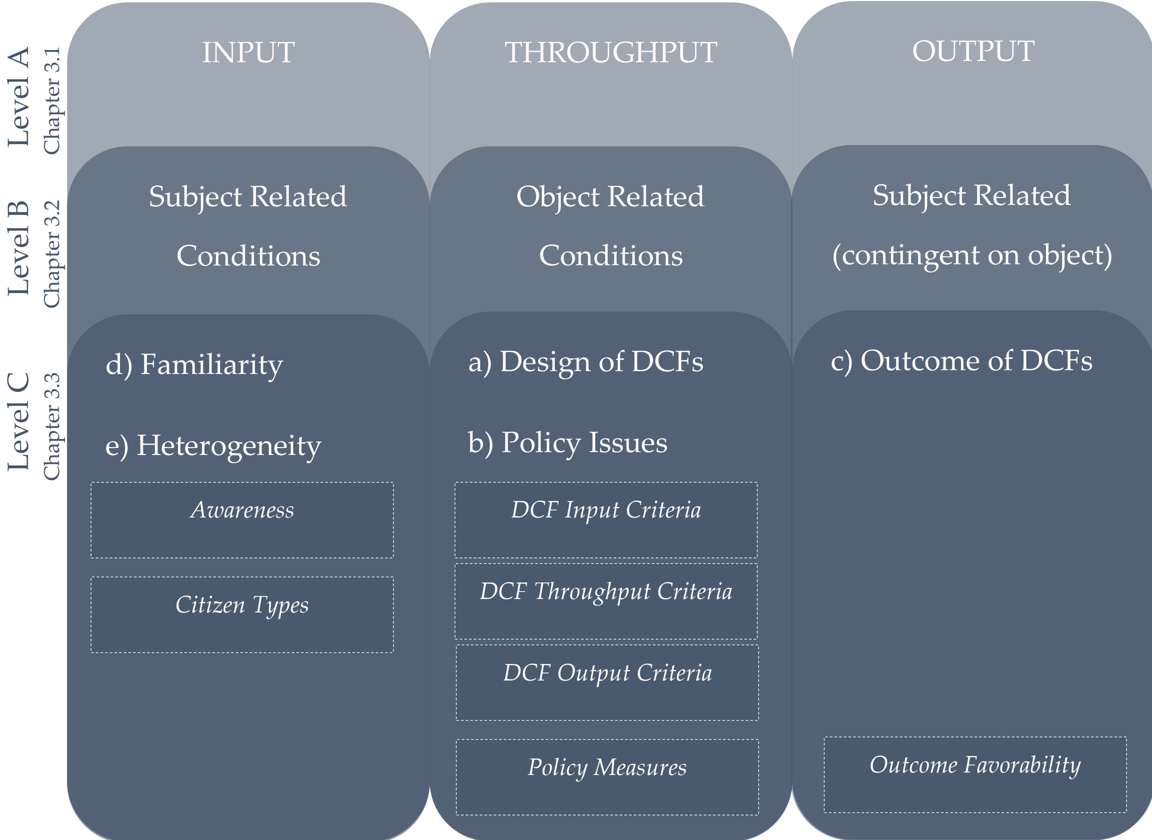
This chapter is taking a multistep route towards a perception-based approach to legitimacy drawing on multiple theoretical concepts. First, it addresses the concept of perceived legitimacy in general, drawing on both the classical *political support model* (Easton, 1965, 1975) and *procedural justice theory* (e.g., Tyler, 2006). It then uses both approaches complementary to employ a theoretical framework that helps situate support for DCFs.

Second, it puts forth a *contingency argument*, stating that legitimacy perceptions hinge on both *object related conditions* (differences in the realization of DCFs (throughput dimension of political support)) and *subject related conditions* (differences between citizens (input and output dimension of political support)). In other words, citizens may have very different views of DCFs, and treating them as a single, monolithic group[34] could lead to false conclusions about

[34] In the context of populism van Reybrouck uses this expression for "monolithic people" (p. 18). Similarly, I argue seeing citizens as one unified group is delusive oversimplification that might lead to wrong conclusions about citizens legitimacy perceptions.

perceived legitimacy. Third, drawing on research on perceived legitimacy the chapter presents hypotheses on the relationship between object and subject related conditions and perceived legitimacy. Figure 2 summarizes the theoretical structure and refers to the corresponding chapters.

Figure 2: Criteria for assessing DCFs



Note: Own illustration.

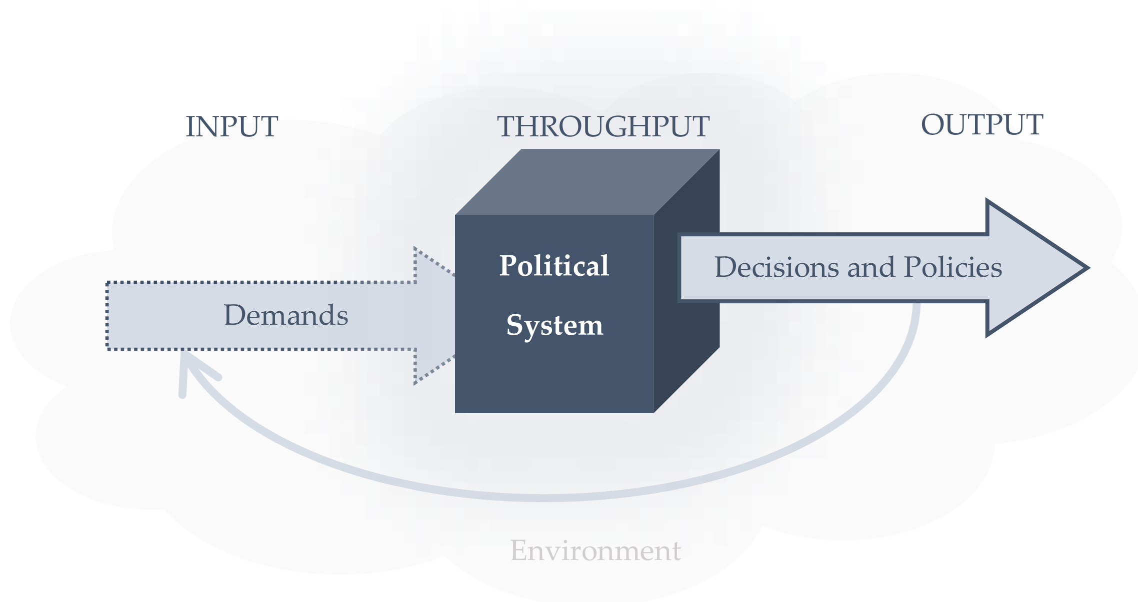
3.1. Perceived legitimacy in the context of political support and procedural justice

Good political decisions are those that are *made* democratically (cf. Estlund, 2009, p. 65). But are they? Even democracies sometimes can be poor performers and even the "best" among them can suffer massively in political support of their citizens. According to David Easton, for example, democratic systems can suffer massive deteriorations if they fail to gain the support of their citizens (Easton, 1957, 1965, 1975). Are then political decisions still legitimate?

3.1.1. An input-output-model of political support

This section sketches Easton's system model of political support and draws parallels to DCFs. The support model includes five basic elements (Figure 3): Citizens in a particular political *environment* (including political culture and political socialization) provide *inputs* (demands, political support) to the political system. The *political system* processes these inputs through established political procedures and eventually generates *outputs* (policy decisions). The system, however, operates as a black box: political procedures are not at the focus of interest. Finally, a *feedback loop* links the outputs of the system to the demands of citizens (cf. Easton, 1965). Yet the feedback loop will be sufficiently successful only if citizens are aware of the system's tasks and the consequences for citizens, for example, that they can hold political authorities accountable (cf. Easton, 1975, p. 439). In other words, citizens need a minimal awareness about the system.

Figure 3: Basic model of political support



Note: Adapted from Easton, 1957, p. 384; own illustration.

Easton (1965) has prominently differentiated two kinds of political support: diffuse support (directed towards the political community and political regime) and specific support (directed towards political objects such as authorities). *Diffuse support* includes citizens' durable values and norms toward the political system. It consists of a "reservoir of favorable attitudes" (Easton, 1975, p. 444) or "generalized attachment" (Easton, 1975, p. 444) to the system. As such, diffuse support originates in the belief in the legitimacy of political objects (cf. Easton, 1975,

p. 447). By contrast, *specific support* is a short-termed orientation and refers to both the performance of political authorities and outputs (cf. Easton, 1975, p. 438). Both have different sources though. The main source for specific support is conformity of one owns preference with the output of the system[35]. This source does not require trust in authorities per se as long as the outputs match to one owns demands. Another source for specific support is the general performance of authorities (cf. Easton, 1975, pp. 438–439). Next, sources for diffuse support sometimes coincide with sources of specific support. Easton argues that experiences of citizens perform spillover effects to diffuse support. This might occur when citizens positively or negatively evaluate a series of outputs and performances over a long period which then transform into generalized attitudes (cf. Easton, 1975, pp. 445–446). Hence, even if the political authorities (temporarily) receive little or no support, the system may still enjoy a considerable amount of it. However, it is extremely difficult to strengthen diffuse support once it is weak, and vice versa (cf. Easton, 1975, p. 444).

We are now ready to turn to the main question of this section, namely how DCFs can be situated within the support model. In what follows, I not only draw parallels between the input-output model and DCFs, but also explain the extent to which the support model is helpful in explaining perceived legitimacy of DCFs. Following Easton, I conventionalize DCFs as objects of political support that have to withstand public scrutiny. Political support in this study has a directional component indicating the direction (positive or negative) of citizens attitudes toward an object (cf. Easton, 1975, p. 436). The starting point is an empirical one: It is still an open question to what extend non-participants support DCFs in political decision-making (for a review see Chapter 3.2.1. and Chapter 3.3.). In order to address this question from a systems logic outlined above, I suggest a minimum of three conditions: First, the political system is assumed to be *sound and open* towards the implementation of DCFs. Second, DCFs are their own elements *within* the political system, receiving its own inputs, operating in its own internal logic, and generating its own outputs. Finally, *citizens perspectives* are assumed as central properties for assessing perceived legitimacy[36].

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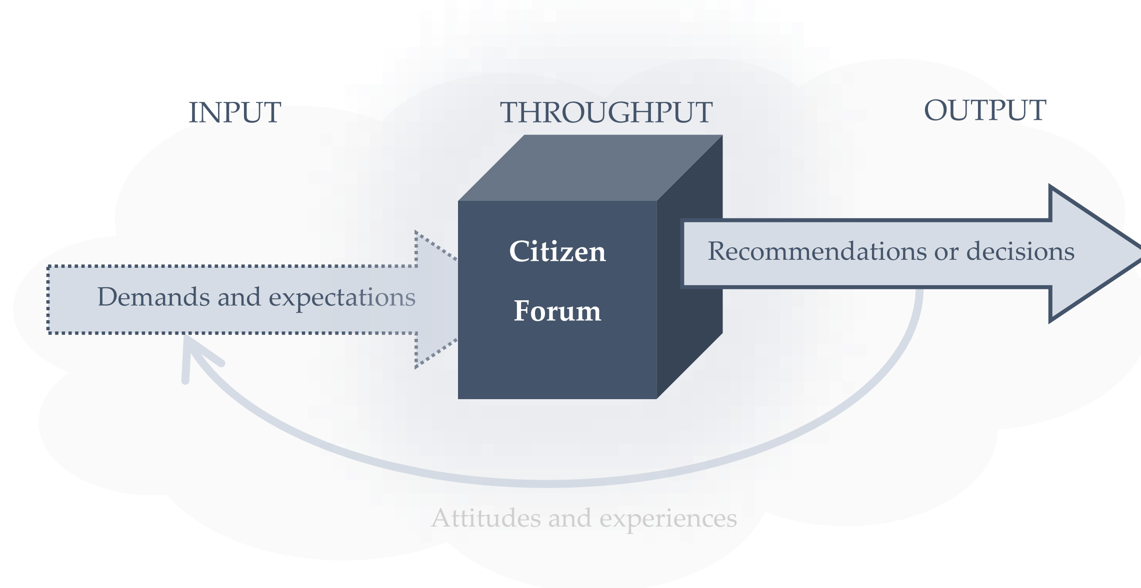
[35] Which is similar to outcome favorability (see Chapter 3.1.2., Chapter 3.1.3., Chapter 3.2.2.).

[36] Note, in this line of argument, DCFs are perceived as systems in their own right, processing citizens input and producing policy outcomes. However, it is also possible to integrate DCFs into a systems locus from a different perspective, namely as an additional source of input for the political system. This has already been discussed in Chapter 2, focusing on the theoretical and normative implications.

Figure 4: The input-output model and DCFs



Note: Own illustration.

The application to DCFs (Figure 4) starts with a simple assumption: To varying degrees, citizens have expectations (demands) that inform their assessments about DCFs. However, as we will see later in this chapter, most citizens are not familiar with novel tools such as DCFs and, accordingly, a large proportion have no specific expectations at all. Thus, my argument specifies a fourth condition, namely that sufficient efforts have to be made to increase citizens' awareness.: "[…] let me mention that in order to be of any use to the citizenry, citizens would need to be familiarized with the [DCFs; SG] workings, so that they would understand the political significance they reveal" (Lafont, 2017, p. 94). Once citizens are aware of DCFs, they are in a better position to define their own expectations. The main argument here is that citizens ultimately need (stable) experience with DCFs in order to generate diffuse support. But even if they may not have specific expectations about DCFs yet, I assume them to at least have some about the outcome. What seems most likely here is to expect that DCFs deliver "good" policy outcomes that correspond to their own preferences. In addition, citizens may (though less likely) have more ambitious expectations of *how* decisions are made. Irrespective of the type of expectation, the point is simply that they can have an impact on how citizens perceive DCFs and their outcomes. Within this input-output model, however, DCFs still operate as black boxes. Although we conceptualize them as tools within a political system with a certain degree of influence, the input-output approach does not allow us to consider internal aspects of DCFs.

3.1.2. A throughput model of political support

The input-output approach sketched in the previous section follows a simple logic: A political systems processes certain inputs and generates political decisions that in a certain direct or indirect way reflect processed inputs. In the midst of this process, however, the approach is "blind" to the question of *how* political decisions were made. In order to unravel the black box, this study adds a proceduralist approach, emphasizing that citizens care not only about political outcomes but also about the decision-making process (cf. Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2012; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Social psychology has long put procedures of making political-decisions at the center of legitimacy beliefs (cf. Tyler, 2006, p. 379). This is closely tied to the concept of procedural justice[37] where "judgments about the fairness of the process by which policy decisions are made" (Lind & Tyler, 1988, p. 158) are central to citizens legitimacy perceptions. Empirical research corroborates this assumption. For instance, Thibaut and Walker (1978) and McComas et al. (2007) find that decision acceptance is closely linked to procedural fairness[38]. In that regard, the willingness to defer to political decisions arises from the perceived fairness[39] of the procedures (cf. Tyler, 2006, p. 382). The underlying psychological mechanism is quite simple: Citizens perceive and evaluate a certain event on the basis of certain criteria (e.g., fairness), which then lead to reactions and ideally translate into decision acceptance (cf. Tyler et al., 1997, p. 5). Thus, a procedural perspective assumes that the performance of a system is evaluated based on *how* it converts inputs into outputs.

Yet, citizens also have substantial considerations which might alter their process perceptions (cf. Lind & Tyler, 1988), although procedural fairness is still important for decision acceptance (see also Tyler et al., 1997). For instance, Esaiasson et al. (2019) show outcome favorability[40] to have the strongest effect on decision acceptance (cf. Esaiasson, Persson, Gilljam, & Lindholm, 2019, p. 309). Moreover, procedural justice theory assumes that favorable procedures can

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[37] For reviews see for example MacCoun (2005) and Tyler (2006).

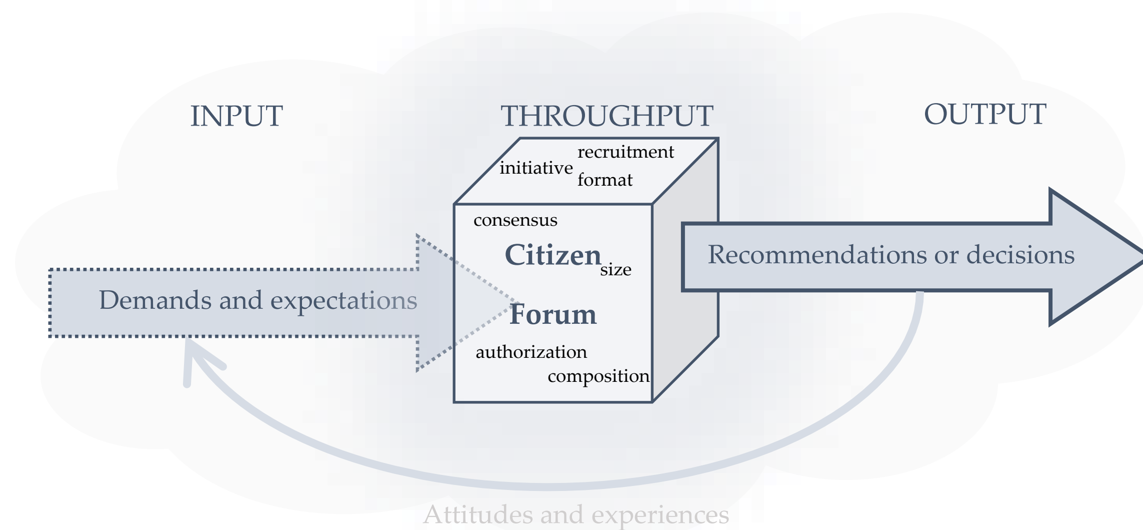
[38] I follow MacCoun (2005, p. 172) who uses the terms procedural justice and procedural fairness interchangeable.

[39] Fairness, "is an idea that exists within the minds of individuals' psychological understanding of legitimacy" (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, and Huo, 1997, p. 5).

[40] That is the consistency of the outcomes with one owns substantive preferences. For a discussion on outcome favorability see Chapter 3.1.3. and Chapter 3.2.2.

mitigate unfavorable outcomes. In this regard, empirical research shows that procedural justice seems to be particularly important when a political process produces unfavorable outcomes (cf. Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Klosko, 2004). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2012) even argue that positive process perceptions can translate into positive assessments of the political system. Similarly, a recent study by Werner and Marien (2020) finds that legitimacy perceptions increase even among losers when citizens were given more opportunities to participate. Finally, support for political decision-making processes in general (i.e. diffuse support) can be strengthened if procedures are repeatedly perceived as fair (cf. Hechter, 2013).

Figure 5: The procedural model and DCFs



Note: Own illustration.

Next, I apply the procedural approach to DCFs (Figure 5). Again, some assumptions need to be specified. First, the throughput approach focuses on the internal functioning of DCFs, requiring the "black box" to be opened with a main focus on various design features. Again, a key point here is awareness or knowledge about democratic designing. In order to render proper judgements, non-participants ultimately have to engage with design choices and their implications (see also Lafont, 2017, pp. 94-95)[41]. Second, the meaning of "fairness" needs to be specified. This study understands fairness as one *among* several possible principles or cognitive motives for evaluating DCFs[42]. In other words, fairness perceptions are not the only

[41] Similarly, Dryzek (2001) argues that justification of decisions to those who did not participate requires the population to understand the logic of random sampling (cf. Dryzek, 2001, p. 654).
[42] E.g., self-interest, affectedness, strategical considerations, or general convictions about DCFs.

possible route to procedural acceptance and perceived legitimacy. For some citizens, perceived fairness may ultimately be the most important source for assessing DCFs. Still, for others, some other motives may be important, such as deeply held convictions about particular features of a DCFs (e.g., the random selection of participants), which might have nothing to do with fairness whatsoever, but rather with knowledge about recruitment strategies and their democratic implications[43]. Others in turn may find a single design feature particularly attractive, while still others may prefer the combination of multiple characteristics. Psychologists often refer to this as heuristics. Note, however, this study does not presuppose *any particular* heuristic.

We are now ready to turn to the basic functioning of DCFs within a procedural approach. First, the main driver for perceived legitimacy is the design of DCFs. Jäske (2019), for example, finds that the institutional design of citizen participation has positive effects on citizens' support for local governments and non-participants' legitimacy beliefs (cf. 2019, pp. 619–620). Note, at this point, we are only concerned with the basic idea, namely that the design of DCFs strengthens or diminishes perceived legitimacy. Concrete design features are not yet important but are discussed in Chapter 3.2.2. Second, the assessment of a DCF may also affect the assessment of its outcome. Hence, even if a person is dissatisfied with the outcome, but at the same time satisfied with the DCF, chances of also accepting the outcome are better. This approach, however, neglects citizens' substantial preferences on policy issues. Research on outcome favorability impressively demonstrates that alignment between one owns substantial preferences and policy output is powerful in explaining decision acceptance (cf. Arnesen, 2017; Esaiasson et al., 2019; Esaiasson, Gilljam, & Persson, 2017; Marien & Kern, 2018). Similarly, Estlund argues that procedural approaches often lag behind their desire to focus on procedural values only. Just because a decision has been made procedurally perfect does not imply that policy losers have to change their minds about the policy (Estlund, 2009).

Finally, again, experience plays a crucial role, which may not only alter the assessment of a particular event, but also influence general – or diffuse – support of DCFs where *repeated experiences* feed into citizens' assessments (see also Hechter, 2013). The logic here is simple: A

[43] For example, even if a person finds it unfair not to be allowed to participate themselves, they might still have a positive assessment of the DCF because they know that random selection guarantees a more diverse sample of citizens.

single experience does not stand in a void, but loops back to the assessment of future DCFs. Once a person has gained enough experiences, it is likely that they will include either the average or salient experiences when assessing future DCFs. Here, experiences serve as availability heuristics with the evaluation of a particular DCF being influenced by the ease and speed with which examples are retrieved from one's memory (e.g., Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). As an example, imagine a person who has had positive experiences with DCFs on average and now is confronted with a negative case. Drawing on their previous experience, this person might nevertheless evaluate this case more positively than they would have done without previous experience. Yet the point is that recurrent experience can have a significant impact on the general assessment of DCFs.

3.1.3. Sketches of a theoretical support model of deliberative citizens' forums

This section draws conclusions from the two previous sections. It asks for the theoretical and empirical implications of the approaches outlined above, addresses their merits and limitations, and sketches a general support model of DCFs. Adopting either the input-output model or the throughput model has both strengths and weaknesses with each shedding light on *different aspects of DCFs*. While the input-output approach put forth by Easton ignores procedural aspects, the procedural approach proposed by Tyler and colleagues fall short on the output side. I argue that both can be combined. Adding a procedural aspect is necessary in heterogeneous societies where disappointments and frustrations among citizens are inevitable. Everyone will lose sometimes and must accept unfavorable decisions. The question, then, is what such an inclusive approach might look like.

I identify four theoretical mechanisms[44] that explain perceived legitimacy of DCFs. For the ease of simplification, imagine a non-participating citizen '*A*' and a DCF '*B*'. What reasons might *A* have to support *B*? The first and modest reason is that *A* supports *B* because *B* delivers desirable decisions. This does not require *A* to trust *B* per se as long as the output of *B* aligns with *A's* own demands (cf. also Easton, 1975, p. 438). The first link thus constitutes a classical *output relationship* that is closely tied to *A's* own outcome orientation, or differently put outcome favorability (e.g., Esaiasson et al., 2019). Second, *A* trusts *B* to make good decisions because *B* has either repeatedly made favorable decisions in *A*'s interest or *A* beliefs *B* to

[44] This list makes no claim to exhaustivity.

behave in the general public interest. Irrespective of *A's* concrete motivations (they could be either personal or public-oriented) *B* provides decisions that satisfy *A's* daily demands (cf. Easton, 1957, p. 395). This mechanism thus is a continuously version of the first one. It constitutes a *trust-based relationship* (see also MacKenzie & Warren, 2012). Third, *A* beliefs in the adequacy of *B* irrespective of substantive reasons or expectations on the outcome. Rather it expects *A* to have some inner or deeply rooted motives for supporting *B* where inner motives can be manifold, such as a general preference for political decision-making, a perceived lack of alternatives, or alienation from current forms of political decision-making. But whatever the personal motivations are, the point is simply that citizens have different contexts (e.g., politicization, socialization, experience with civic participation) that affect their attitudes toward DCFs. This mechanism thus constitutes an *appropriateness relationship*. Finally, *A* feels committed to *B* because of a deep-seated set of attitudes or predispositions which Easton dubs as a "supportive state of mind" (Easton, 1957, p. 390). This mechanism comes close to the third mechanism, but moves beyond the assessment of the status quo. The main driver is A's commitment or, in other words, A's willingness to stick with B even under unfavorable conditions (cf. Boynton, Patterson, & Hedlund, 1968, p. 169). Drawing on the procedural approach, however, *A* could also support *B* because *A* is convinced in the functioning of *B*. The source of support thus is an *institutional commitment relationship*.

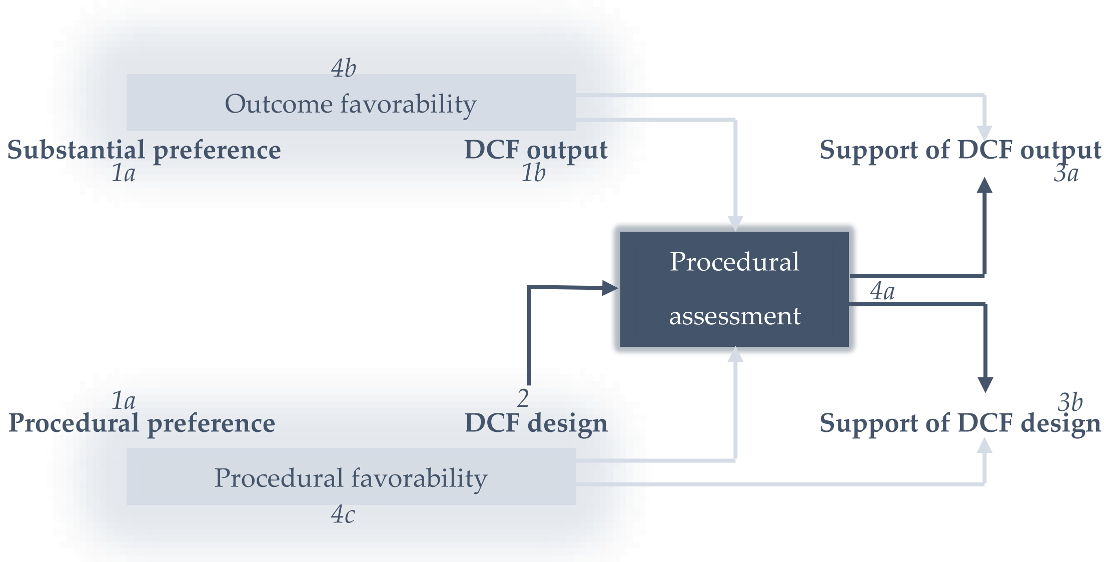
While the first two mechanisms are output-oriented, the remaining two mechanisms rely either on more general beliefs about DCFs or on their procedural and institutional aspects. The first have to do with preference alignment or conformity (see above). The latter are about general or affective attitudes going beyond immediate quid pro quo (preferred outcomes). Note, coherent relationships might exist. Mechanisms not need to be mutually exclusive and can complement each other[45].

I expect two dimensions of support to feed into citizens assessments of DCFs: support of *outputs (recommendations and decisions)* and support of *procedural arrangements (design*

[45] For example, a *classic institutional commitment or appropriateness relationship colored by an output relationship* (see also Klosko, 2004; Tyler, 2006): If I like the process, I will also support the decision (even if I would have preferred a different decision). Another example is an *institutional commitment relationship colored by a trust-based relationship* where learning effects prompt internalized support: Because I accumulate experience over time, I learn that DCFs can produce both, outcomes that align with my preferences and outcomes that do not. Moreover, I may even learn something about different design aspects in conjuncture with the realization of certain democratic goods.

characteristics). Second, I assume support to have a temporal component: *specific support*, based on a single experience with a DCF and *internalized support* based on an average assessment of several procedures and outcomes. Third, support of DCFs is *context dependent* and hinges on citizens *experiences and awareness*. Experience, again, relate either to a specific DCF or to a share of attitudes towards DCFs in general. Moreover, a specific experience might color durable experiences. In that regard, citizens memorize specific experiences and include them in future assessments of DCFs. Finally, while preferences on the outcome can exist even without any knowledge about the decision-making process, citizens need minimal knowledge about how DCFs work in order to have procedural preferences.

Figure 6: A theoretical support model of DCFs



Note: Own illustration.

Figure 6 summarizes these considerations. The model includes four sets of variables: input and output variables (1), procedural variables (2), support variables (3), and mechanisms (4). The model posits that citizens perceive a DCF and make an assessment based on that perception, which in turn causes responses in the form of support both related to the output and the DCF design[46].

DCFs, however, do not operate in a void. Citizens might have clear expectations on the output (*substantial preferences*) and internal functioning (*procedural preferences*) with both mapping the

[46] I follow Jäske (2019) and Esaiasson et al. (2019) who distinguish procedural evaluations from outcome evaluations.

input dimension (1a). *Substantial preferences* refer to citizens opinions on the issue at stake. *Procedural preferences* refer to opinions on design choices of DCFs (see Chapter 3.2.2.). Moreover, DCFs can produce different *outputs (1b)* (e.g., recommendations or decisions). I will not discuss various forms of it here but, again, in Chapter 3.2.2. What is more vital here is that the output could be either in favor of or against a particular measure. The *support dimension* distinguishes two support variables. Citizens could either support DCFs for their *outputs (3a)*, for their *design (3b)*, or both. *Support of DCFs outputs* refers to citizens attitudes towards the recommendation or decision. *Support of DCFs design* refers to citizens attitudes towards the functioning of DCFs. As argued above whereas support of outputs is a temporal matter limited to a particular DCF, support of DCFs design can also translate into internalized support.

Finally, I distinguish three mechanisms. The first is *procedural assessment* (4a) and constitutes the classical support relationship associated with procedural justice theory (Tyler et al., 1997). In that regard, the way in which DCFs operate affects acceptance of outputs irrespective of one owns substantial preference. Imagine for instance *person A* who prefers *output x* but gets *output y*. However, because *A* supports the *design p* of the DCF, *A* has good reasons to support *y*. Furthermore, the model envisions a second procedural mechanism, namely the effect of procedural assessments on supporting DCFs design. Surely, this may sound superfluous since the procedural assessment per definition always is an assessment of a given DCF design. Differently put, *A* supports *y* but also the design *p* leading to *y* (see above). *A*, however, could also support *p* without supporting *y*.

The second mechanism is *outcome favorability*[47] (4b). First, outcome favorability has a direct effect when directly linked to acceptance of the output. When this effect is strong, procedural assessments may become superfluous or even hollow (cf. Esaiasson et al., 2019, p. 294). Second, outcome favorability exerts an indirect effect when the alignment between substantive preference and outcome influences the procedural assessment of a DCF (cf. Esaiasson et al., 2019, p. 294). Again, imagine *A* preferring *x* but getting *y* (see above). Because *A* receives an unfavorable output, *A* is more likely to have a negative assessment of *p*. In that regard,

[47] See Esaiasson et al. (2019) for a general definition (p. 292). Note, outcome favorability is not equivalent to self-interest (cf. Esaiasson et al., 2019, p. 294). According to Esaiasson et al. (2019), preferences for various outcomes base on different reasons with self-interest being one of them. The reason per se is unimportant for assessing outcome favorability (ibid. p.294). This study follows Grimes (2006) who groups different sources under the term "utility" (Grimes, 2006, p. 296).

motivated reasoning or motivated skepticism (cf. Kunda, 1990; Taber & Lodge, 2006) might play a role, with citizens searching for confirming evidence. Disconfirming evidence in contrast causes citizens to engage more deeply with information. Thus, when citizens receive an unfavorable output (as in case of *person A*), they might engage with alternative information, e.g., the concrete design of the DCF. This could feed their assessments on the DCF and thus indirectly affect support. Note, however, this only works for retrospective assessments. Usually, citizens receiving unfavorable outcomes are more likely to have negative assessments of procedures. Assessments of the DCF are thus endogenous to outcome favorability (cf. Esaiasson et al., 2019, p. 296). On the other hand, imagine *person B* with preference *y*. Because *B* gets the preferred output, *B* is more likely to supports *p* in that particular instance.

Finally, this study adds a novel mechanism, namely *procedural favorability* (4c). I define procedural favorability as the degree to which the design of a single DCF corresponds with one owns procedural preference (i.e., expectations). First, procedural favorability has a direct effect on support of the design when procedural preferences align with the actual design. Again, imagine *A* who prefers *p* actually getting *p* and thus support the design of the DCF. This does not necessarily cause *A* to support the output as well. Following procedural justice theory, however, *A* would have good reasons to also accept the output. Depending on how pronounced procedural preferences are, procedural favorability may even lead to acceptance of undesirable outcomes. Second, procedural favorability might exert an indirect effect. This occurs, first, when citizens repeatedly receive their preferred design (or at least parts of them) encouraging them to accumulate these experiences into internalized support of DCFs. The stronger this internalized endorsement is the less tragic should disappointments or frustrations concerning individual DCFs be. Yet again, the assessment of the DCF is not endogenous to procedural favorability. Earlier in this chapter, I made a good case for believing that cumulative assessments of multiple DCFs feed back into citizens' preferences, which in turn enter into their evaluations of a future DCFs. Overall, a reservoir of positive experiences could help compensate for disappointments with individual DCFs.

3.2. Towards a contingent understanding of non-participants' legitimacy perceptions

This chapter puts further nuance to the theoretical support model outlined in the previous chapter. It suggests a contingent bottom-up approach that assumes both *object related conditions* (issues and design of a DCF) and *subject related conditions* (familiarity and heterogeneity) to enter citizens legitimacy assessments. The chapter proceeds in two steps. It first engages with perceived legitimacy and general preferences for DCFs. It then turns to the contingency part and identifies various objective related and subjective related conditions. Note, this chapter specifies and describes important criteria only. I address the state of research and corresponding hypotheses in Chapter 3.3.

3.2.1. *Perceived legitimacy*

To date, the debate on the legitimacy of the DCFs has been mainly normative. Emphasis was placed on how well (or poorly) DCFs reflect the principles of legitimacy (cf. Chapter 2). Yet, dealing with *citizens attitudes* requires a perception-based approach to legitimacy which is different from a philosophical or normative concept of legitimacy (Parkinson, 2003). A perception-based conception of legitimacy asks for the extent to which DCFs are *perceived as legitimate means of political decision-making*. This question is anything but superfluous. Without sufficient support of the citizens, DCFs would enjoy very limited respect within the political decision-making processes (e.g., Bedock, 2017; Buchstein, 2019; Easton, 1965).

This study considers legitimacy as a psychological property, defined as an "internal value that is linked to personal feelings of obligation and responsibility to others" (Tyler, 2006, p. 390) which in turn should encourage citizens to voluntarily accept and obey decisions and rules (cf. Tyler, 2006, p. 376). Perceived legitimacy of DCFs, then, is defined as the willingness of citizens to support them as elements of the political decision-making process. Hence, individual assessments of DCFs are central for their legitimacy. To date, agreeing on both a coherent definition and a consistent operationalization of perceived legitimacy has been a challenging task in empirical research. Studies tend to either define perceived legitimacy very differently or even leave it undefined. While not necessarily problematic it should be kept in mind when

dealing with various research questions. First, most studies focus on *decision acceptance*[48] (e.g., Arnesen, 2017; Arnesen & Peters, 2018; Esaiasson et al., 2017; Esaiasson et al., 2019; Grimes, 2006; Kevins, 2020) and sources of legitimacy (e.g., procedural fairness or outcome favorability) that affect decision acceptance.

Second, some studies focus on procedural aspects with measures on *procedural acceptance* (e.g., De Fine Licht, Naurin, Esaiasson, & Gilljam, 2014) and *fairness perceptions*. Here, perceived legitimacy is operationalized as either the general perception that an authority is just (cf. De Fine Licht et al., 2014, p. 113) or the degree to which the decision-making process was fair. Items include both the overall assessment about the decision-making process[49] and fairness assessments about how the decision was made and how citizens were treated within that process[50] (e.g., Esaiasson, Gilljam, & Persson, 2012; D. Jacobs & Kaufmann, 2019; Jäske, 2019; Werner & Marien, 2020).

Third, a few studies focus on *attitudes about authorities* like trust (Grimes, 2006), external efficacy (Boulianne, 2018), or perceived responsiveness[51] (Esaiasson et al., 2017; Kevins, 2020). Moreover, some studies focus on *political support* in general[52] (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020a, 2020b; Christensen, 2020; Pilet et al., 2020; Rojon et al., 2019) or *support for a specific aspect of the decision-*

[48] E.g., "To what degree do you find this decision acceptable" (Arnesen, 2017).
[49] e.g. "What do you think of how the decision was made?" (D. Jacobs and Kaufmann, 2019).
[50] e.g., "The decision making in my municipality is just and treats different groups of citizens fairly" (Jäske, 2019), or "How fairly do you think the decision was made? How fair do you think you as a citizen were treated when the decision was made?" (D. Jacobs and Kaufmann, 2019; De Fine Licht et al. 2014), or "How fair do you think the process was that led to the decision" and "How appropriate was the decision-making procedure?" (cWerner and Marien, 2020).
[51] e.g. Asking for an assessment about "found out about the wishes of citizens" (listened), "tried to accommodate the wishes of citizens" (accommodated), and "explained their policy to citizens" (explained) (Kevins, 2020; Esaiasson et al., 2017).
[52] e.g., "People sometimes talk about the possibility of letting a group of citizens decide instead of politicians. These citizens will be selected by lot within the population and would then gather and deliberate for several days in order to make policy decisions, like politicians do in parliament. Could you indicate whether you think that is a good idea to let a group of randomly selected make decisions instead of politicians?; And "overall, do you think it is a good idea to let a group of randomly-selected citizens make decisions instead of politicians" (Pilet et al., 2020); "Could you tell us whether you would be very much in favor, rather in favor, neither in favor nor against, rather against or very much against the following political mechanisms for your municipality" (Bedock and Pilet, 2020a). Or via a "question asking respondents to select what types of actors should be given the central role in deciding what is best for the country" (Bedock and Pilet, 2020b). "Do you think this is a good or bad way of political decision-making" (Rojon et al., 2019). Or finally more generally through choosing one scenario (Christensen, 2020).

making process like sortition in politics inter alia[53] (e.g., Bedock & Pilet, 2020a, 2020b; Jacquet et al., 2020; Pek, Kennedy, & Cronkright, 2020; Pow et al., 2020). Finally, some studies have started to measure *perceived legitimacy of DCFs*. However, they either deal with single aspects of DCFs (for example, either recruitment or authorization (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020a; D. Jacobs & Kaufmann, 2019; Jacquet et al., 2020; Pek et al., 2020)), different generic forms of democratic decision-making (Christensen, 2020; Rojon et al., 2019; Werner & Marien, 2020), or participatory innovations in general (Jäske, 2019). Yet, all these measurements lack any explicit reference to both *object related conditions* (design of DCFs and issue characteristics) and *subject related conditions* (familiarity with DCFs and citizen heterogeneity).

I take a different route and argue legitimacy perceptions to be contingent on different configurations of DCFs embedded in a particular context. The next two sections distinguish two conditional sets of variables. Whereas *object related conditions* refer to criteria of the DCF per se, *subject related conditions* refer to awareness and citizen heterogeneity. I present hypotheses on the relationship between both sets and perceived legitimacy in Chapter 3.3. I argue the assessment of object related criteria is contingent on subject related conditions: Citizens perceive DCFs based on objective criteria but their assessments are (partly) driven by their experiences, interests, attitudes, and values[54].

3.2.2. Object related conditions

This chapter identifies and specifies contextual conditions that vary across DCFs. They include individual design features and issue types.

(1) Design and output of deliberative citizens' forums

DCFs can take many different shapes (e.g., Curato et al., 2021). Only recently, Steel et al. (2020) have suggested a purposive design approach where the designing of DCFs hinges on their

[53] e.g. „The institution of a legislative chamber that is composed of randomly selected citizens would be a good thing" (Jacquet et al., 2020), or "In general, are you against or in favour of an advisory citizen' assembly on important issues affecting Northern Ireland?" (Pow et al., 2020)

[54] Corresponding to the theoretical support model (Chapter 3.1.3.), object related conditions refer to the throughput dimension while subject related conditions refer either to the input side (e.g., citizen heterogeneity) or the output side (e.g., outcome favorability).

actual aims. But what kind of "incentive structures" (Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 304) would non-participating citizens like to see in order to solicit their legitimacy perceptions?

This section identifies a variety of design criteria important for both theorists and practitioners[55]. I follow a threefold (see also Caluwaerts & Reuchamps, 2015, 2016; Harris, 2019) distinction between

1. *input criteria (inclusion)*,
2. *throughput criteria (quality of internal decision-making)*, and
3. *output criteria (formal link to decision-making)*

of DCFs[56].

Input criteria: The inclusion of citizens

A first set refers to representation and diversity within a DCF. Its accounts for both the openness of DCFs to participants and external and internal inclusion[57] (cf. Caluwaerts & Reuchamps, 2015, p. 153; Harris, 2019, p. 48). This study includes two criteria: *recruitment* and *group size*.

Recruitment. There is an ongoing and heated debate on the status of sortition and other recruitment mechanisms (cf. Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 302). Overall, choosing appropriate recruitment strategies hinges on the purpose of the DCF and the definition of representativeness (cf. Steel et al., 2020). For most deliberative democrats random sampling techniques are the silver bullet for ensuring a representative sample. By contrast, concerns exist about self-selection which would privilege citizens who are interests and have resources to participate (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 106). From both a practical and monetary angle (cf. Ryan & Smith, 2014, p. 17), however, it often makes better sense to invite all residents

[55] Note, the list includes criteria following an expansive rather than a restrictive definition of DCFs (cf. Ryan and Smith, 2014, p. 12).
[56] This approach has parallels to Warren's (2017) problem-based approach distinguishing between three problems democracies are facing, namely empowered inclusion (input), collective will formation (throughput) and collective decision-making (output).
[57] In that regard I echo Young (2002) who famously distinguishes between external and internal exclusion. Whereas external exclusion occurs when citizens "are kept outside the process" (p. 55), internal exclusion describes when "citizens lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others" (p. 55) although they are formally in the room.

or certain strata of the citizenry only[58]. Particularly in small DCFs quotas or oversampling may even produce more inclusive panels with various social perspectives (cf. Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 302). In this review, I focus on *random selection* and *self-selection* only[59]. *Random selection (1)* has a long heritage in democracy and democratic theory (cf. Smith, 2012, p. 94). Nowadays, Fishkin's work on Deliberative Polls® has set a pioneering milestone for random sampling in political decision-making. In practices, however, only about 20 percent of DCFs use pure random sampling strategies (cf. Paulis, Pilet, Panel, Vittori, & Close, 2020, p. 8). Random selection relies on neutral mechanisms of chance. *Self-selection (2)* envisions the idea of "all affected interests" (Goodin, 2007, p. 50). According to Dahl (1990, p. 64), everyone affected by a decision should have the right to participate[60]. Note, however, even random selection comes with a certain degree of self-selection. Citizens who finally *decide* to participate usually are politically more interested and better educated (e.g., Fishkin, 2018, p. 118; Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010). Finally, neither an equal chance for being selected (random selection) nor an open invitation to all citizens (self-selection) does mean that everyone actually does have the same opportunity to participate. Usually, DCFs are small groups with very limited numbers of participants, inevitably causing exclusions of citizens who would have otherwise participated (see Chapter 2.2.4.).

Group Size. DCFs vary in the number of participants, with formats including about 10 to more than 1000 participants (e.g., Paulis et al., 2020; Setälä & Smith, 2018). Popular examples are the G1000 and DPs® with about 200-1000 participants, Citizens' Assemblies with about 100 to 200 participants and citizen juries and consensus conferences with about 10 to 36 participants (cf. Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 301). Although small groups are more affordable in terms of implementation and allow for higher quality discussions (e.g., Fishkin, 2009), they perform worse in mirroring the public. But even small groups are able to reflect the diversity of citizens with different views, interests, and preferences (cf. Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2008; Sintomer, 2018,

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[58] In Germany for example, where most deliberative processes take place at the municipal level, participants are rarely selected by lot.

[59] Some other mechanisms exist (e.g., election, quotation, hybrid combinations), but they have little practical relevance only. For a review see Harris (2019).

[60] Goodin (2007) distinguishes between all actually affected interest (p. 52), all possibly affected interests (p. 53), all and only affected interests (p. 56), and probably affected interests (p. 59).

p. 342). This study distinguishes between *(1) small groups* (around 20 participants), *(2) medium groups* (around 150 participants), and *(3) large groups* (around 500 participants).

Throughput criteria: The quality of internal decision-making

The second set refers to the quality of deliberation, participation, and decision-making (cf. Caluwaerts & Reuchamps, 2015, p. 154; Harris, 2019, p. 48). This study employs two criteria: the dialog format and the majority rule. As for the latter, this study combines talk-centric and voting-centric mechanisms (Chambers, 2003). Although DCFs usually are talk-centric, participants cast votes the end of the deliberations.

Dialog Format. DCFs typically use *face-to-face* formats *(1)* which, however, require citizens to be physically present. This can be a barrier for some citizens, for example in terms of time, access, or distance. In recent years, however, online formats have become more prominent and increasingly important. This has mainly practical reasons. National and transnational collaborations are mushrooming whereas contexts are changing, with both developments necessarily requiring alternative formats (e.g., the Corona Pandemic). *(2) Online formats* share most of the features of face-to-face deliberation, including inclusive, reciprocal, and respectful discussion phases (cf. Srandberg & Grönlund, 2018, p. 366). Moreover, research shows that online deliberation contributes to opinion formation, knowledge, political self-efficacy, and trust to the same extent as face-to-face deliberation (cf. Srandberg & Grönlund, 2018, p. 372; Strandberg, 2015). Online formats can contain synchronous (e.g., chats or meetings) and asynchronous (e.g., internet forums) elements.

Decision Rule/Degree of Consensus. Eventually participants need to agree on a common statement or decision. Usually, DCFs adopt majority rules to pass recommendations or decisions. Curato et al. (2017) remind us that "productive deliberation is plural, not consensual" (p. 31). There are different modes of decision-making including preference aggregation, bargaining, negotiation, and deliberation (cf. Elstub & Escobar, 2019, p. 20 for a review). DCFs usually deploy hybrid combinations. The degree of consensus describes the share of votes for a particular output. On two extreme poles, discussions may end in a clear majority (when almost all participants agree or disagree) or a narrow majority (e.g., when only

somewhat more than half agree or disagree). This study includes decisions made with *(1)* a *clear majority* and *(2)* a *narrow majority*[61].

Output criteria: The formal link to political decision-making

A final set includes criteria on the formal link between DCFs and the broader public[62] (cf. Caluwaerts & Reuchamps, 2016; Harris, 2019, pp. 52–53). By formal links this study refers to both the coupling to legacy institutions of the representative system and the empowerment of DCFs[63]. First, c*oupling* asks how tightly different democratic institutions stick to one another, assuming that the stronger institutions are coupled, the more responsive they are to one another. The question about adequate coupling is a contingent one though and depends on the institutions involved (cf. Hendriks, 2016). This study includes coupling criteria referring to the ability of DCFs to collaborate with legacy actors. These include questions about the convener (or initiator) of the DCF and the composition of the group. Second, *empowerment* concerns the formal authorization of DCFs in a representative system. With regard to DCFs empowerment asks for their ability to shape binding decisions inter alia.

Convener/Initiative. Initiatives for DCFs can come top-down[64] within the empowered space (e.g., national and local governments, public administration) and bottom-up within the public space (e.g., activists and protest groups, think tanks, NGOs). Usually, DCFs start with *(1) top-down initiatives* from the government or governmental institutions. Examples include the Citizens' Assemblies in Ireland (Suiter, Farrell, & Harris, 2017) and British Columbia (Fournier et al., 2011). *Bottom-up initiatives (2)*, however, come from non-governmental or civil organizations and actors (cf. Farrell, Curato, et al., 2019, p. 6). One striking example here is the Icelandic national forum (cf. Landemore, 2015). Crucially, conveners are largely in charge of defining the agendas and goals of DCFs and provide resources, for example for compensation, incentives, childcare, facilitation and technology used.

[61] Theoretically, DCFs could even reach consensus on concrete issues (cf. Fung, 2007, p. 164), „meta consensus" (Niemeyer and Dryzek, 2007), or decisions with supermajorities (cf. Harris, 2019, p. 50).

[62] Inclusiveness and diversity criteria discussed earlier in this chapter (e.g., Steel et al., 2020) constitute linkages between DCFs and the public as well. But they are informal in nature and not formally linked to decision-making.

[63] For coupling and empowerment see also Kuyper and Wolkenstein (2019) and Hendriks (2016).

[64] Warren (2009) refers to this as "governance-driven democratization".

Group Composition. With the support of expert testimony and independent facilitators (cf. Harris, 2019, 47; 51), selected *citizens usually deliberate among themselves (1)*. There are, however, examples of *co-governance formats (2)* including both selected citizens and other governmental and organized actors such as politicians, administrative staff, and stakeholders. Popular examples are the Irish Constitutional Conventions, where 66 citizens and 33 politicians discussed about constitutional reforms (cf. Suiter et al., 2017) and the G1000s in the Netherlands where randomly selected citizens deliberated together with other stakeholders like employers and government officials (cf. Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 303). Recently, there have even popped up ideas about hybrid bicameralism with chambers composed of elected politicians and lay citizens (Gastil & Wright, 2019) or of replacing representatives with selected citizens (van Reybrouck, 2016).

Authorization. Outputs vary with regard to their binding character and incorporation in the policy-making process. This study distinguishes three mechanisms that are relevant from both a practical and theoretical view[65]: Recommendations to public officials, recommendations put to a public referendum, and binding decisions. For a theoretical discussion on the role of DCFs in the representative system see Chapter 2.2.3. and Chapter 2.2.4. Usually, DCFs lack any formal authority to make political decisions (cf. Goodin & Dryzek, 2006, p. 223) and serve as *non-compulsory recommendations (1)* for policymakers (cf. Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 302). Textbook cases see DCFs complementary to representative institution, helping policymakers address difficult or controversial political issues and make more effective and legitimate policy decisions (cf. Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 306). Next, DCFs can be part of an integrative participatory process. Here, the output of a DCF is *put to a public vote (2)*, where elements of deliberative democracy are combined with elements of direct democracy (cf. Farrell, Curato, et al., 2019, p. 9; Setälä, 2017). Examples include the Canadian Citizens' Assemblies on electoral reforms in British Columbia (e.g., Fournier et al., 2011), the Irish Citizens' Assemblies on same-sex marriage and abortion (e.g., Farrell, O'Malley, & Suiter, 2013; Farrell, Suiter, & Harris, 2019; Suiter et al., 2017; Suiter, 2018), and the Citizen Initiative Review (CIR)[66], which was institutionalized in Oregon but now has applications in other US states and Europe (e.g.,

[65] Note, I exclude DPs® from that list since they take a different approach. Although their aim is to capture opinion changes through surveys, they are not interested in creating political decisions (cf. Setälä and Smith, 2018, p. 303).
[66] see https://healthydemocracy.org/cir/

Christensen, 2019; Gastil et al., 2018; Gastil & Richards, 2013). Finally, in order to overcome "tokenistic nature" of purely advisory roles (Buchstein, 2010, 2019), DCFs (theoretically[67]) could also be formally empowered to make *binding decisions (3)*. Mansbridge (2020), for example, could envision empowered roles in the future, which, however, is contingent on knowledge about and experiences with DCFs. On her account, experience with DCFs and monitoring could diminish or even abolish the problem of blind deference raised by Lafont (cf. Mansbridge, 2020, p. 21). By contrast, the most forceful argument against the political use of DCFs concerns *objective legitimacy* (see Chapter 2.2.4.), including questions on both representativity and accountability (cf. Lafont, 2015, 2017, 2019; Parkinson, 2006). In sum, whatever shape DCFs may take, they should always be consequential (cf. Farrell, Curato, et al., 2019, p. 9; Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). Or differently put: It needs more than just talking (cf. Sintomer, 2018, p. 349).

(2) Issues and outcome favorability[68]

DCFs address various political issues[69] such as health, environment, science, planning, immigration, poverty, security, and constitutional and electoral changes (cf. Paulis et al., 2020, p. 18). Issues can significantly impact the internal functioning and impact of politics in general (Lowi, 1972, p. 299) or DCFs in specific (cf. Fung, 2007, p. 162). Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020) distinguish three issue types that are particularly apt for DCFs: technical complex issues and issues with long-term effects, issues that pose the risk of political collusion, and deadlock issues (cf. Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020, p. 35).

Moreover, issues seem to have a salience dimension including personal stakes[70]. Previous research reveals that deliberation works best when issues are less salient and less controversial (cf. Naurin, 2010; Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steenbergen, 2004). Moreover, Lafont's radical critique that "many [citizens; SG] will find out that the majority of the sample is not

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[67] One exemption are DCFs in the city of Gdansk (Poland) where recommendations of a DCF are implemented when a sufficient number of participants (more than 80 percent) agreed (Gerwin, 2018).

[68] While outcome favorability is a subjective condition (see Figure 2), it is closely tied to objective criteria (certain policy measures). Consequentially, I conceptually assign it to object-related conditions.

[69] For example, the POLITICIZE Dataset at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/Z7X6GT and the Participedia database at https://participedia.net/

[70] Fung distinguishes between cold and hot deliberation. Whereas cold deliberation (low stakes) promote open-minded and factual discussions, hot deliberations (high stakes) encourage citizens to participate because they have much to lose personally (cf. Fung, 2003, p. 345).

like them, since they actually oppose their view, values and policy objectives on the issue in question" (Lafont, 2019, p. 116) seems particularly resonant on controversial, polarizing, and highly salient issues where citizens may already have strong opinions.

Drawing both on literature on issue voting and policy research this section seeks to disentangle and categorize various issues. First, policy analysis classifies issues based on policy areas, which ignores the fact that an issue can be assigned to several policy areas. Second, Lowi (1972) further categorizes issues based on their intended effects, distinguishing between redistributive (e.g., welfare) and distributive (e.g., subsidies) issues and regulative (e.g., environmentalism) and constitutive (e.g., abortion) issues. A third approach distinguishes between high and low politics issues (Keohane & Nye, 1977). High politics issues are essential for state survival (e.g., national security and military) whereas low politics issues are important for societal and human well-being and security (e.g., economy, welfare, infrastructure, education, and health care). Finally, Carmines and Stimson (1989) categorize issues based on citizens perceptions and distinguish between hard and easy political issues. Easy issues are usually symbolic, highly contested, and personally relevant. They require little specialized knowledge and citizens tend to assess them on gut responses. Typically, they include affective issues such as abortion or same-sex marriage. Hard issues are typically technical, less contested, and less personally relevant. They often require special skills and knowledge to assess them. Examples are economic and regulatory issues (cf. Carmines & Stimson, 1980, p. 80). Similarly, MacKenzie and Warren (2012) distinguish technical, political complex issues (e.g., health care or global warming) and technical, temporal complex issues (e.g., genome editing). Whereas political complex issues are highly contested within politics with many differing interests, temporal complex issues have not yet developed political attention (ibid., pp. 103-104)[71]. Moreover, research shows that citizens' issue perceptions are not arbitrary and indeed important to understand preferences on political decision-making procedures (e.g., Goldberg, Wyss, & Bächtiger, 2020; Wojcieszak, 2014).

However, perceptions can change over time. Take, for example, the development of novel vaccines, which is usually a hard issue. With the Corona pandemic, however, the issue of vaccination has not only become very salient but has suddenly become a private yet politically

[71] Similar, Lafont (2017, 2019) refers to anticipatory issues.

very controversial matter. None of the presented issue classifications account for such changes[72]. Drawing on MacKenzie and Warren (2012), I suggest a twofold approach. First, I disentangle the hard and easy distinction and focus on technical complexity. Second, I add salience which allows for situational and temporary assessments. Taken together, I assume issues to vary on two dimensions: *technical complexity* and *salience*[73]. The combination of these two dimensions yields four issue-types (Table 1).

Table 1: Four issue types

	technical	**non-technical**
high salience	technical/salient: *Climate change; Vaccines*	non-technical/salient: *Refugee policy; Prioritization*
low salience	technical/non-salient: *Currency systems; Taxes*	non-technical/non-salient: *Foreign aid; Euthanasia*

Note: Examples in italics.

Indeed, perceptions of issues are subjective in nature. For example, Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020) argue that deference to DCFs also hinges on both previous opinion strength and the direction of the output. While recommendations of DCFs are particularly apt for citizens who have uncertain or no opinion they can also help citizens to situate their own pre-existing opinions (cf. Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020, p. 35). As discussed earlier in this chapter, *outcome favorability* takes an important role when explaining decision acceptance (e.g., Arnesen, 2017; Esaiasson et al., 2019; Marien & Kern, 2018). Usually, DCFs address concrete policy measures rather than policy issues, for example measures to reduce greenhouse gases in the context of climate change. Now, citizens probably already have preferences about the issue at stake – they either support or oppose these measures. The point is, these preferences can significantly influence how citizens evaluate DCFs. In concrete, outcome favorability assumes that citizens particularly support DCFs when the measure aligns to their own preferences (e.g., Esaiasson et al. 2017; 2019).

[72] At best, the distinction between low and high politics provides a starting point. Although not envisaged in the original concept, one could argue that the perception of low politics and high politics can change. Issues that were considered low at one point in time may become high, and vice versa.

[73] Note: MacKenzie and Warren (2012) use a political vs. temporal dimension instead of salience. I think salience fits perfectly here though. Whereas political issues are part of the public debate (thus more salient), temporal issues have not yet developed much political attention (cf. MacKenzie and Warren, 2012, pp. 103–104).

3.2.3. *Subject related conditions*

To date, the normative and empirical debate (see Chapter 2) has adopted a fairly unitary view of the citizenry. However, every society comes with societal, cultural, and political diversity. Citizens have mixed experiences with political decision-making processes and different attitudes toward politics. I argue that "the citizens" per se is an oversimplification and shallow term, ignoring that different strata of the citizens might have very different views on DCFs[74]. In a nutshell: DCFs might be legitimate tools for some citizens but not for all. Starting from this heterogeneity argument, the aim of this section is to identify and describe relevant concepts.

(1) Awareness, experiences, and expectations[75]

Rojon et al. (2019) hit a sore spot when they note that most citizens hardly follow the normative debate about DCFs. And even *if* citizens have already had some experiences they are more likely to assess DCFs independently of the normative debate. There is something to this, I think. A crucial point is the limited visibility of DCFs (e.g., Rummens, 2016). DCFs seem to remain black boxes to most of the citizens so to say (see Chapter 3.1.). This study includes three criteria: citizens' *awareness about DCFs*, their *experiences with DCFs*, and their *expectations about DCFs*. The Cambridge Dictionary defines *awareness (1)* as either the *knowledge* that something exists or the understanding of a situation based on *information* or *experience*. In order to make proper legitimacy assessments, citizens need minimum knowledge about DCFs, including what they are, their roles in political decision-making, and their functioning (see also Lafont, 2017). Awareness therefore has much in common with visibility (e.g., Rummens, 2016), transparency, and communication (cf. Pow et al., 2020, p. 52). Concerning the mirror-claim, for example, nonparticipants would ultimately need to know who the participants are and how they were selected (cf. Lafont, 2017). One possible source of awareness is *experience (2)*. Experiences can be indirect and indirect. Indirect experiences do not require that a person has already participated in a DCFs themselves. Rather, experiences come from reports about DCFs or stories told by friends or family. Direct experiences require that a person has already participated in a DCF at least once themselves. The theoretical literature specifies *expectations*

[74] This draws on an argument put forth in Bächtiger and Goldberg (2020) and Goldberg (2021).
[75] This section draws on Goldberg (2021).

(3) on what DCFs ideally should contribute to democracy[76]. Although normative expectations must not align with actual expectations of the citizens, the latter are important for assessing perceived legitimacy. Citizens may have no expectations at all, formulate expectations based on their past experiences, or even express normative expectations.

(2) Democratic preferences and political attitudes

This study claims that various types of citizens have different views on what role DCFs should play in democracies. I focus on five types that are part of the scholarly and public debate: *enlightened citizens, disaffected citizens, populist citizens, participatory and delegative citizens,* and *confided citizens*.

Recent research has added further nuance to earlier approaches (political dissatisfaction, new politics, and stealth democracy), putting forth further types. These include *populist citizens* and citizens yielding different *participatory or delegative* conceptions. Finally, this study includes *confided citizens* as a novel type that accounts for social trust. The remainder of this chapter juxtaposes these different types of citizens which are determined by the degree to which citizens share certain attitudes. This is not to say that citizens cannot have several attitudes. In fact, it is very likely that citizens have multidimensional attitudes (e.g., Bengtsson, 2012; Font, Wojcieszak, & Navarro, 2015; Goldberg et al., 2020) yielding types like dissatisfied populists or participatory confidants.

Enlightened citizens. This type includes engaged (Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, 2007), post-materialist (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) assertive (Dalton & Welzel, 2014), and critical (Norris, 2011) citizens. Enlightened citizens can be rich in objective resources (e.g., income and education) and subjective resources (e.g., high sense of internal efficacy[77] and political interest).

Disaffected citizens. Political dissatisfaction has many dimensions and refers to the political support model (see Chapter 3.1.1.). Political support describes “an attitude by which a person

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[76] For a discussion see Chapter 2.2.2. and Chapter 2.3. I distinguished between goals referring to an inside dimension (e.g. high-quality deliberation), an outside dimension (e.g. informing citizens), and a democratic dimension (e.g. responsiveness).

[77] Political efficacy has two central dimensions: external (a “system-regarding attitude”) and internal (a “personal dimension of belief”) efficacy (cf. Pollock, 1983, p. 400). Whereas external efficacy refers to the feeling that a political system acts responsively to demands of citizens, internal political efficacy embraces citizens’ feelings about their own political skills and competences to engage politically.

orients himself [or herself, SG] to an object either favorably or unfavorably, positively or negatively" (Easton, 1975, p. 436). Political dissatisfaction can not only reflect in political mistrust and low feelings of external efficacy[78] (e.g., Dalton et al., 2001), but also in stealth attitudes[79] (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002). I focus on four groups of disaffected citizens: dissatisfied citizens, citizens with low external efficacy, citizens with low political trust, and stealth citizens.

Populist citizens. Populism is the "permanent shadow" of modern representative democracies (cf. Müller, 2016, p. 11). This study defines populism as a "thin centered ideology" (Mudde, 2004, p. 544) or a "moralistic imagination of politics" (Müller, 2016, p. 19) that "[…] considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). Müller (2016) argues just *being critical about elites* does not make citizens populist. Additionally, populists perceive themselves as a *homogeneous group* sharing *anti-pluralistic attitudes*: Only they represent the 'real' or 'morally pure' people (cf. Mudde, 2004; Müller, 2016; Schulz et al., 2018). Hence, populism is somewhat exclusionary, with only some people really are the people (cf. Müller, 2016, p. 21).

Participatory versus delegative citizens. Citizens have different views about their roles in political decision-making. Whereas some want to get actively engaged in politics, others opt for the role of happy bystanders and want to remain passive. Accordingly, citizens typically adopt a more participatory (including direct-democratic and deliberative processes) or delegative (including the classical delegate principle via elections but also other principal agent relations[80], e.g., appointment of experts) conception of democracy.

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[78] see footnote77.

[79] Although stealth citizens are not interested in politics and prefer to remain passive they ask for participation (or "need" to do so) when they think that the current system is corrupt. Stealth democracy describes the desire of citizens for efficient decision-making: "In a stealth democracy, governmental procedures are not visible to people, unless they go looking; the people do not routinely play an active role in making decisions, in providing input to decision makers, or in monitoring decision makers. The goal in stealth democracy is for decisions to be made efficiently, objectively, and without commotion and disagreement" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002, p. 143).

[80] Contingent on different authorization mechanism. Authorization mechanisms include election, appointment, licensing, or authority of science (experts) inter alia (c.f. Brown, 2006).

Confided citizens. There are different views about the role DCFs should play in the democratic system (see Chapter 2.2. and Chapter 3.2). For example, DCFs could draft recommendations that serve as information for other citizens, supplement representative decision-making, or even make political decisions. Yet this always requires a certain degree of social trust among citizens and non-participants (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012). Although I am not specifying concrete trust relationships, I argue confided citizens to trust DCFs because of intrinsic motives such as general trust in fellow citizens, faith in participants competences, perceptions of ordinariness[81] (e.g., Gül, 2019; Pow et al., 2020), or general convictions about the appropriateness of DCFs.

3.3. Hypotheses

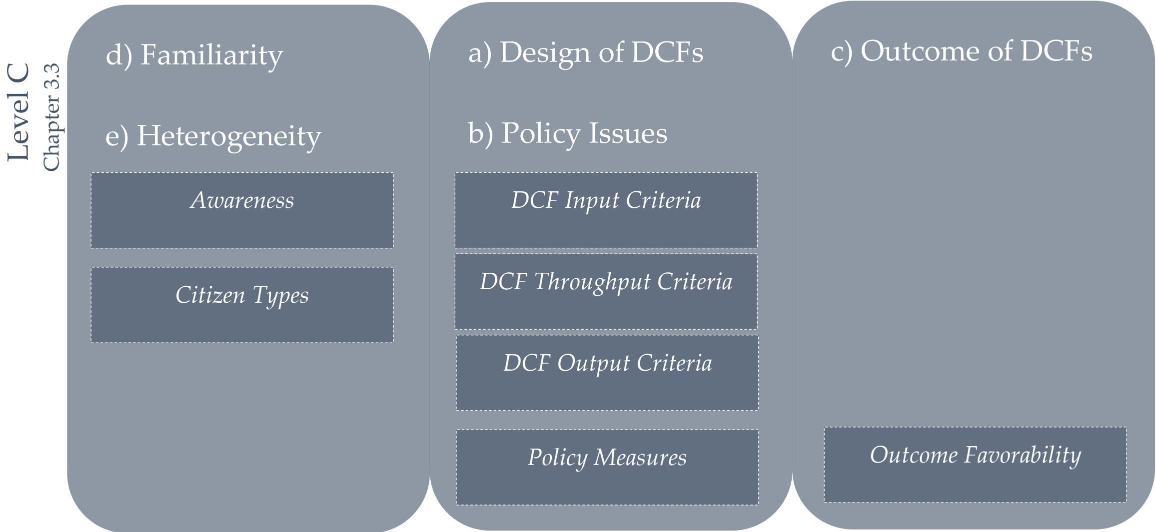
DCFs have long been thought to quasi-automatically improve democracy and cure legitimacy gaps (cf. Curato, Vrydagh, & Bächtiger, 2020). To date, however, scarce research exists on non-participants' legitimacy perceptions on DCFs[82], although much research has been done on support for direct citizen participation and democratic innovations in general. Studies consistently report similar results across different countries, with a general desire for more participation among citizens (e.g., Bengtsson & Christensen, 2016; Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler et al., 2007; Coffé & Michels, 2014; Dalton, Scarrow, & Cain, 2004; Donovan & Karp, 2006; Font et al., 2015; Gherghina & Geissel, 2019; Goldberg et al., 2020; Webb, 2013). Others, in turn, show that citizens tend to have difficulties forming coherent preferences but prefer anything else to the status quo of representative decision-making (cf. Bengtsson, 2012; Goldberg et al., 2020; Werner and Marien, 2020). For example, both Christensen (2020) and Rojon et al. (2019) find support for both talk-centric and voting-centric procedures among citizens. With regard to deliberative innovations such as DCFs, Neblo et al. (2010) show that, once it is a real alternative, citizens desire to get involved in deliberative activities is even more pronounced than expected. Similarly, D. Jacobs and Kaufmann (2019) find that citizens perceive decision-making processes more legitimate when they include DCFs. Finally, most

[81] When citizens yield strong like-me perceptions (cf. Pow et al., 2020). This is not so much about representativeness, but about the differentiation between ordinary citizens and politicians.
[82] Research on DCFs usually refers to participants only.

recent studies reveal that general support for DCFs is rather high among citizens (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020b; Jacquet et al., 2020; Pilet et al., 2020).

This study examines citizens contingent legitimacy perceptions. It takes DCFs as a given relatively novel institutional practice with limited visibility and asks *how DCFs must be designed* in order to solicit support *among (different) citizens*. This is my argument in a nutshell: The starting point is a general novelty proviso. Most citizens are neither familiar with DCFs nor do they know about their democratic implications. Therefore, I expect citizens to be fairly reserved, maybe even skeptical about DCFs and to assess DCFs for their *output criteria*. In concrete, I expect citizen in general to give DCFs limited, non-empowered but institutionally tightly coupled roles in political decision-making. By the same token, I expect them to account for both inclusionary and internal add-ons (*input and throughput criteria*) and their own substantive considerations (*outcome favorability*). The crucial point is contingency though. The citizens are not a monolithic group but have different experiences, attitudes, and preferences. Thus, I expect citizens to assess DCFs conditional on familiarity (*awareness, experiences, and expectations*) and attitudes towards politics and political decision-making (*citizen types*).

Figure 7: Citizens' conditional legitimacy perceptions



Note: Own illustration.

In doing so, I take a threefold approach. Figure 7 summarizes relevant concepts (a-e) and corresponding variables.

1. First, I focus on *input, throughput, and output characteristics of DCFs* (a) and *issue characteristics* (b).

2. Next, I relate legitimacy perceptions to citizens *substantial preferences*[83] (c).
3. Finally, I add *familiarity* (d) and *citizen heterogeneity* (e).

Table 2 at the end of this chapter summarizes the hypotheses.

3.3.1. Design characteristics

MacKenzie and Warren (2012) have argued that the development of trust in DCFs[84] is contingent on its design[85], inter alia. Thus, depending on the configuration of input, throughput, and output criteria, I assume citizens to support some versions of DCFs but not all.

(1) Input criteria

Recruitment. Random selection tends to fulfill many desirable democratic goals. First, it not only provides an equal chance for every citizen of being selected but also distributes inequalities evenly within the group of selected citizens (cf. Brown, 2006, p. 212; Buchstein, 2010, p. 438). Second, it contributes to better results or even promote epistemic advancement through cognitive diversity (cf. Landemore, 2013). Random selection is particularly apt in facilitating participation of citizens from socially marginalized groups, encouraging social heterogeneity (cf. Buchstein, 2010, p. 447), inter alia. Research shows for example, that citizens who typically refuse participation are more willing to participate in deliberative forums (cf. Neblo et al., 2010; cf. Smith, 2012, p. 97). Finally, because random selection relies on neutral mechanisms of chance, the risk of partiality and lack of objectivity (cf. Buchstein, 2010, p. 437) or conflict and social cleavages (cf. Pek et al., 2020) is lower.

However, there are democratically undesirable effects as well. First, ordinary citizens often either lack the willingness or capacity to sincerely engage in political deliberations (e.g., Achen & Bartels, 2017; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). Second, randomly selected citizens lack any kind of obligation or responsibility for their fellow citizens. By the same token, random

[83] With a focus on outcome favorability. Unfortunately, I am not able to account for procedural favorability (see Chapter 3.2.) because the survey did not include questions on expectations about various design features.
[84] To be sure, trust is not equivalent to perceived legitimacy but I argued earlier in this chapter that trust and perceived legitimacy relate to each other. Trust, then, is one source of legitimacy.
[85] MacKenzie and Warren (2012) distinguish representativity, screening against conflicts of interest, and deliberativeness (2012, p 105).

selection refuses participation for citizens who are presumably most committed to the public good (cf. Mansbridge, 1999b, p. 631; Pek et al., 2020, p. 4). Self-selection, by contrast tends to reinforce exclusion. Participants in DCFs tend to be better situated than the average public (cf. Curato & Niemeyer, 2013; Fung, 2007, p. 162; Goidel et al., 2008; Griffin et al., 2015).

To date, most studies focus on random selection only [86]. Recently, political scientists have started to consider additional recruitment mechanisms. For example, Pow (2021) finds no significant differences between sortition based selection and election on perceived legitimacy among Irish people. Similarly, Jacobs and Kaufmann (2019) find that US citizens perceive self-selection as equally legitimate as random selection. Moreover, Christensen finds no significant differences between preferences for random selection and self-recruitment among Finish citizens (cf. Christensen, 2020, p. 247). Similarly, a qualitative case study in Canada even reveals a strong preference for self-selection mechanisms among local activists particularly because it enables participation for all interested and motivated citizens (Beauvais & Warren, 2018). Finally, but more generally, Neblo et al. (2010) have shown that particularly citizens who do not want to participate in traditional party politics were more likely to accept an invitation to engage in deliberative activities in the United States. Hence, although many theorists consider random selection to be the silver bullet, many citizens tend to accept or even prefer alternative selection mechanisms (cf. D. Jacobs & Kaufmann, 2019, p. 104).

Are then all (costly) efforts to achieve representativity for naught? One concern about self-selection in DCFs draws on experiences with participation in direct-democratic settings where participation usually is very socially selective. MacKenzie and Warren (2012), for instance, argue that self-selection tends to be skewed towards resourceful, well organized and interested citizens. Representative sampling[87], by contrast, prompts impartiality and overcomes these limitations by including unorganized and inarticulate interests (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 106). More generally, random selection reflects diversity within the citizenry most effectively and helps mitigate existing inequalities in political participation (e.g., Fishkin, 2009). Arnesen and Peters (2018) find a higher decision acceptance among Norwegian citizens when decisions were made by a descriptively representative group of citizens. Moreover, they show that representative criteria have even mitigated unfavorable

[86] A restrictive definition of DCFs always includes random selection (cf. Ryan and Smith, 2014).
[87] Either random sampling for large groups or stratified random sampling for small groups.

decisions (cf. Arnesen & Peters, 2018, p. 889). Echoing the contingency argument on descriptive representation put forth by Mansbridge (1999b), the authors find this effect to be strongest for disadvantaged groups, e.g., women and residents of socially deprived areas (cf. Arnesen & Peters, 2018, p. 884). Similarly, Pek et al. (2020) find support for random selection in the context of student governments where some students have previously been systematically excluded in traditional votes[88].

From a theoretical perspective, Steel et al. (2020) suggest that the selection of recruitment strategies should hinge on the actual purpose of a DCF. They conclude: "In sum, statistical representativeness should be a priority for [DCFs; SG] that aim to approximate the counterfactual public will, but not necessarily for [DCFs; SG] that aim to elicit a range of perspectives or co-create recommendations" (Steel et al., 2020, p. 53). Moreover, knowledge about recruitment strategies should prompt citizens to assess DCFs for both their inclusion of a variety of interests and their capacity to minimize the dominance of organized interests (see also MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 112).

Group size. Two different views exist with respect to the number of participants. One emphasizes deliberative quality while the other focuses on representativeness. DCFs should be "small enough to be genuinely deliberative, and representative enough to be genuinely democratic" (Goodin & Dryzek, 2006, p. 220). Research shows that deliberative quality is higher in small groups than in large groups. Hence, if citizens care more about deliberative quality than representativity, they are arguably more likely to prefer small groups. By the same token, we know that citizens hardly follow the normative debate about deliberative quality (cf. Rojon et al., 2019). If, on the other hand, citizen value representativity (see above), they are more likely to reject small groups. Empirical research on citizens preferences tends to confirm the emphasis on representativity, namely a preference for large groups as compared to groups with just a few participants (cf. D. Jacobs, 2019).

In sum, starting from a general novelty proviso of DCFs in representative democracies, I expect citizens to assess DCFs for their inclusionary capacities:

[88] Of course, student governments are not comparable to actual political decision-making. Nonetheless, the qualitative study by Pek et al. (2020) provides intriguing insights on the advantages and disadvantages associated with random selection.

__H1a:__ The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of random selection and large groups, and lowest under conditions of self-selection and small groups.

(2) Throughput criteria

Dialog format. It is almost impossible to imagine participatory reforms today without the use of information and communication technologies (cf. Neblo, Esterling, & Lazer, 2018, p. 33)[89]. The importance of online formats has ever since changed significantly (also for citizens) with the outbreak of the Corona pandemic. DCFs have moved online as well, with the Scottish Climate Assembly[90] started in November 2020 just being one example. Online formats are particularly apt in involving large numbers of participants, even from very different geographical regions, making participation not only more accessible but also feasible on a large scale (cf. Smith, 2009, p. 143). Moreover, anonymity in online formats encourages some citizens who otherwise would have not participated to attend the forum (cf. Wyss & Beste, 2017).

On the downside, however, anonymity could likewise encourage disrespectful behavior. Additionally, because online formats require hardware, which not everyone can afford or use, they could disadvantage citizens with low technical skills (e.g., the elderly population) and lacking access to computer equipment (e.g., lower-income groups). Finally, issues of internal exclusion could be even more pronounced in online formats. Research on gender dominance for instance finds that men are more likely to participate in online discussions than women who tend to lurk only (cf. Harris, 2019, p. 52 for a review). However, because online formats reinforce inequality and privileges citizens with higher technical skills and competences while at the same time is more impersonal, citizens may have concerns about fairness and trust. Corroborating that line of argument, Christensen (2020) find a preference for face-to-face discussion as compared to online formats. Overall, however, there seems to be a mixed picture on the discussion format.

Degree of consensus. Consensus is hardly a tangible goal for decision-making in pluralistic societies and even most deliberative democrats are now tackling more "realistic" goals such as voting and negotiation (cf. Bächtiger et al., 2010, p. 34; Curato et al., 2017, p. 31). Most DCFs

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[89] Neblo et al. (2018) for instance refer to online town halls.
[90] see https://www.climateassembly.scot/

actually involve voting (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 112). To date, however, there has been no empirical research on acceptable approval quorums for votes in DCFs. Drawing from a psychological understanding, however, one would expect non-participants to trust DCFs more the more consensual the decisions. Conversely, the more ambiguous the decisions, the less sense it makes for non-participants to trust, and the more sense it might make to solicit additional information (cf. Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020, p. 37; MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 109) decisions may signal non-controversial judgements (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012) and be perceived as the public opinion causing a "social constraint" among non-participants (cf. Már & Gastil, 2020, p. 110). According to Lafont (2019), however, non-participants can barely identify with a majority of participants. Non-participants would have no reasons to trust the majority of participants since both the majority and the minority have been provided with the same information and have gone through the same deliberative exercise. Hence outputs of DCFs are nothing more than considered opinions of a majority of participants (cf. Lafont, 2019, p. 116). But, again, most non-participants will hardly follow the normative debate on deliberation (cf. Rojon et al., 2019).

Taken together I expect citizens to additionally assess DCFs for the quality of internal decision-making. Given that citizens presumably not follow the normative debate about DCFs, however, I expect these criteria to be less important than input criteria:

> ***H1b:*** *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of clear majorities and face-to-face discussions, and lowest under conditions of narrow majorities and online discussions.*

(3) Output criteria

Convener. Initiatives for DCFs can come top-down and bottom-up (see Chapter 3.2.2.). One risk about top-down initiatives is the "abuse of office", meaning that governmental institutions could use DCFs for their own agenda (cf. Farrell, Curato, et al., 2019) or cherry-pick preferable outcomes (Font et al., 2018). Similarly, Sintomer (2018) argues that top-down processes are unlikely for causing policy change. When DCFs only exist because authorities in certain power structures use them, recommendations are unlikely to be implemented unless they reinforce the status quo (cf. Sintomer, 2018, p. 349). Bottom-up mechanism, by contrast, perform a link between the public space and the empowered space (cf. Dryzek, Bächtiger, & Milewicz, 2011,

p. 40)[91]. Particularly in an environment, where citizens are getting more and more dissatisfied with the current functioning of representative democracy and detached from party politics, one line of argument would assume DCFs to be particular attractive when they were initiated bottom-up (i.e. decoupled from current incumbents). In that regard, Pow et al. (2020) find that citizens tend to dislike DCFs the more they perceive politicians to be similar to them and vice versa. With regard to citizens perceptions, however, and following the "novelty" argument outlined above, I expect citizens to be rather skeptical about DCFs that are decoupled from legacy institutions of representative democracy.

Group composition. Usually, only citizens attend DCFs (cf. Setälä & Smith, 2018, p. 303). However, mixed-group formats are gaining attention both in academia and practice. Involving politicians and administrators can serve as an effective tie to final decision-making and upscaling of DCFs recommendations (Setälä, 2017), reduce rifts between authorities and citizens, and increase mutual learning (cf. Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). Moreover, participating politicians might serve as "advocates" for citizen concerns outside the forum, defending recommendations within their own parties and political committees (cf. Vandamme, Jacquet, Niessen, Pitseys, & Reuchamps, 2018, p. 391). Another argument comes with authenticity and accountability. Because politicians or other official authorities take part themselves, citizens can directly reach out to them and call them to account. Overall, mixed-groups seem to be promising tools for creating formal linkages to actual decision-making. In that regard, however, research finds a liberal bias among politicians (cf. Farrell, Suiter, Harris, & Cunningham, 2020), with mixed-groups being preferred particularly among politicians oriented toward the left political spectrum (cf. Jacquet et al., 2020, 2). In addition to politicians, mixed groups may involve other actors or "advocacy groups" from civil society and industry who can share own experiences, which might otherwise have been ignored. "Sharing their stories" is particularly useful for sensible issues. In the Irish case, for example, discussions on same-sex marriage included representatives of different churches, the LGBT movement but also children of same sex couples (cf. Harris, 2019, p. 51). By contrast, arguments against mixed groups relate to the professionalization or "intellectual domination" (Vandamme et al., 2018,

[91] In that regard Bua and Busso (2020) have introduced the term "democracy-driven governance", particularly referring to social movements that shape spaces of participatory governance. See also Sintomer (2018).

p. 392) of politicians. On the downside, politicians could hamper and dominate discussions which reduce both satisfaction of those involved external legitimacy (cf. Flinders et al., 2016, 11; 35; 40). Cases such as the Citizens' Assemblies in Ireland have taught us that groups composed of citizens and politician received considerable support among both citizens and public authorities.

However, empirical research on citizens' support for group composition is scarce. Recently, Pow (2021) did not find significant differences between different group compositions. He shows that pure and randomly selected citizen groups were perceived as *equally* legitimate as DCFs with mixed groups (combination of ordinary citizens and elected politicians). By contrast, the studies by Jacquet et al. (2020) and Vandamme et al. (2018) show a clear preference for mixed chambers. Noteworthily, however, about 30 percent of respondents were undecided, indicating that they were neither against nor in favor of a particular group composition.

Authorization. The current debate has put forth the idea of more "radical" DCFs that would give them more empowered roles in political decision-making (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020a; Pilet et al., 2020). Whereas stark normative concerns exist on empowering DCFs[92] (cf. Lafont, 2019; Parkinson, 2006), deliberative democrats widely agree that DCFs should be vested with strong authorization only in very circumscribed situations, for example when the political system is persistently unresponsive (cf. Kuyper & Wolkenstein, 2019) or faces major democratic deficits (cf. Fung, 2007, p. 165). Moreover, some argue that purely consultative uses could face motivational problems: If cherry-picking behavior of public authorities (cf. Font et al., 2018), symbolic misuse, and tokenistic exercise (cf. Farrell, Curato, et al., 2019, p. 9) exist why should citizens participate if their inputs do not feed political decisions (cf. Buchstein, 2019; van Reybrouck, 2016). A recent study by Jacquet et al. (2020) finds for example that politicians oppose DCFs that go beyond consultation. Nonetheless, DCFs could still serve as monitoring bodies and encourage representatives to comment on their decisions (cf. Goodin & Dryzek, 2006, p. 235). Yet research on what roles citizens want DCFs to play is scarce. First, a few studies find that citizens tend to have higher legitimacy and responsiveness perceptions when they are vested with greater power (cf. Gundelach, Buser, & Kübler, 2017; Kevins, 2020).

[92] For a detailed discussion see Chapter 2.2.4.

However, these studies did not specifically address DCFs, but decision-making power in general[93]. Second, some studies find support for consultative bodies among citizens (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020a; Christensen, 2020; Pilet et al., 2020; Rojon et al., 2019). For Example, a qualitative study by Jacquet (2019) asked participants about their future visions of DCFs. While they clearly like to see DCFs implemented in political decision-making, they envision advisory roles only where citizens make proposals but elected representatives finally decide.

In sum, I have argued that coupling (connecting DCFs with legacy institutions of representative democracy) and empowerment (giving DCFs decision-making power) provide a formal link between DCFs and the public. Drawing on the idea of "deliberative" or "symbolic" accountability (Brown, 2006, p. 211), therefore, DCFs can be linked to policymaking even without strong empowerment. However, this requires either participation of political representatives in DCFs, making clear "commitments" about the use of the results, or transparent communication about the purpose of the forum in case of top-down initiated processes. Thus, I expect citizens to assess DCFs mainly for their output criteria with a preference for non-empowered and tightly coupled alternatives.

> ***H1c:*** *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of advisory outputs (non-empowerment), top-down initiatives, and mixed groups (tight coupling), and lowest under conditions of binding outputs (strong empowerment), bottom-up initiatives, and mere citizen groups (loose coupling).*

3.3.2. Policy issues

Moreover, whether DCFs are trustworthy to non-participant also hinges on the issue at stake (cf. MacKenzie and Warren, 2012, p. 105, 108). First, a number of studies exist examining the relationship between various types of issues and preferences for political decision-making *in general*[94], showing that preferences are conditional on issue types, inter alia (e.g., Goldberg et al., 2020; Wojcieszak, 2014). They show that citizens are more likely to prefer participatory governance for salient (Goldberg et al., 2020) or symbolic and "easy" issues (Wojcieszak, 2014)

[93] Whereas Gundelach et al. (2017) focused on parents' councils, Kevins (2020) examined consultation measures (polling and town-hall meetings).

[94] Juxtaposing different kinds of democratic governance, e.g., representative decision-making, technocratic decision-making, and participatory decision-making via referendums.

and representative processes for less salient and "hard" issues. Similarly, Werner (2019) identifies "switchers" for direct-democratic preferences, suggesting that citizens do not have stable preferences but opt for referendums based on certain issues. Second, just a few studies address issue variations within DCFs with most deliberative democrats agreeing that not all issues are equally apt for DCFs. Many see low stake issues (less controversial and less salient issues) and technical complex issues congenial to deliberations because they are both less politicized and not (yet) associated to a consolidated public opinion (e.g., Bächtiger & Hangartner, 2010, p. 612; Fung, 2003; MacKenzie & Warren, 2012). MacKenzie and Warren, for example, consider issues of high complexity as found in "areas of rapid scientific, technological, and organizational development" (MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 117) particularly apt for DCFs. First, DCFs can address issues that are very complex but involve many differing interests, conflicts, and overlapping responsibilities (cf. MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 103).

Moreover, DCFs can "simulate publics, that are not yet present" (MacKenzie & Warren, 2012, p. 118) when issues are complex but have not yet gained any public attention (see also Lafont, 2017, 2019). Empirically, Christensen (2020) shows that citizens perceive "hard" political issues (e.g., economic growth, government reforms) particularly apt for participatory innovations. Similarly, Pilet et al. (2020) find that citizens tend to dislike more controversial issues such as immigration and European integration. Furthermore, Lafont adds an accountability component. Because participants are not accountable to non-participants, non-participants cannot expect participants to adequately represent and defend their own interests, values, and policy goals which is even more likely for controversial issues (cf. Lafont, 2019). Finally, issues may have a psychological component, namely citizens' perceptions of personal losses. For example, Pilet et al. (2020) show that citizens are more likely to support DCFs once they know that their position align their fellow citizens. However, as Lafont correctly notes, it is impossible to know whether one will be among the winners or the losers. Thus, it is more likely that citizens prefer DCFs dealing with less controversial issues.

Taken together, I expect technical issues (salient and less salient) to boost legitimacy feelings. In that case citizens may feel that legacy institutions either failed to find adequate solutions (salient issues) or have not yet addressed them (less salient issues). Conversely, I expect non-technical issues (particularly salient) to decrease legitimacy feelings, since non-participants

may think that participants may not adequately represent them (see also Lafont, 2019; MacKenzie & Warren, 2012).

H2a: *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of technical (salient and less-salient) issues and lowest under conditions of non-technical (particularly salient) issues.*

H2b: *Under conditions of non-technical (salient and less-salient) issues, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.*

3.3.3. Outcome favorability

Research has shown that outcome favorability strongly matters for legitimacy perceptions (see Chapter 3.2.1. and Chapter 3.2.1.). For example, Arnesen and Peters (2018) show that outcome favorability has even a greater effect on perceived legitimacy than actual decision-making influence. Similarly, the studies by Esaiasson et al. (2012) and Marien and Kern (2018) reveals that outcome favorability exerts the strongest effect on decision acceptance. Others, however, show that procedural aspects are important besides outcome favorability (e.g., Esaiasson et al., 2019; Kevins, 2020). Pow et al. (2020), for example, find like-me perception (see below) to have a significantly greater impact on decision acceptance than outcome favorability. Thus, although procedural aspects may also be important to the judgments of citizens (e.g., Esaiasson et al., 2019, p. 309), I assume substantive considerations to enter their legitimacy perceptions. Following the established literature on outcome favorability, I expect that outcome strongly matters for citizens' assessments of DCFs. By the same token, I expect citizens to be more critical (and demanding) regarding DCFs when they receive unfavorable outcomes.

H3a: *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of substantial preference congruence and lowest under conditions of substantial preference divergence.*

H3b: *Under conditions of substantial preference divergence, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.*

3.3.4. *Familiarity*

I have argued that the assessment of DCFs is embedded in a general novelty proviso: Since DCFs are a relatively novel instruments in political decision-making and (most) citizens lack experiences, they tend to be skeptical when such tools are put into action. Consequently, there might be a generic legitimacy gap of DCFs, leading citizens in general to give DCFs a constricted role in political decision-making. Yet, a crucial point about DCFs is their limited visibility to the citizenry (e.g., Rummens, 2016). To begin with, I recall Lafont and her argument that citizens would need to get familiarized with DCFs in order to understand their significance (cf. Lafont, 2017, p. 94). From that point of view, the critique about DCFs is persuasive only when citizens are aware of various design features and their democratic implications. Conversely, when citizens understand both the purpose and functioning of DCFs their legitimacy perceptions might increase (see also Fung, 2003). Likewise, empirical studies tend to confirm a relationship between familiarity and the assessment of DCFs. Boulianne (2018), for example, demonstrates that being informed about DCFs can help to strengthen legitimacy perceptions among citizens. In turn, other studies suggest that citizens have difficulties assessing DCFs. Bedock and Pilet (2020a) and Jacquet et al. (2020) show for example that respondents tend to choose the middle category[95] when simply asking for their preferences, which may indicate ambivalent opinions or non-attitudes. Both research teams correctly note, that many citizens are simply not familiar with DCFs. Similarly, Gastil et al. (2016) suggest that citizens may need more information about DCF to make informed and robust trust judgments[96].

I argue familiarity to have three sources which, however, relate to each other: experiences, expectations, and awareness[97]. With regard to the use of referendums, Werner, Marien, and Felicetti (2020) demonstrate that experiences actually do matter how citizens perceive them. In contexts where referenda are frequently used, citizens possess more realistic expectations on what referenda can contribute to democracy. With regard to DCFs, studies indicate that

[95] Respondent placed themselves neither in favor nor against DCFs.

[96] This also brings a methodological challenge: Ordinary survey items may tap into non-attitudes. While the items tend to work better when asking about familiar procedures (e.g., representative decision-making), respondents have difficulty with unfamiliar procedures such as deliberative procedures (cf. Bengtsson, 2012, p. 61).

[97] Which can originate from experiences but also from mere information.

participants have changed their expectations during the process[98] (cf. Curato & Niemeyer, 2013; Jacquet, 2019), became more interested in expressive than in instrumental goals (cf. Curato & Niemeyer, 2013), or even became more skeptical about the actual impact of DCFs (cf. Goldberg, 2018). Thus, experiences with DCFs might contribute to more realistic expectations.

Taken together, I expect experiences, expectations, and knowledge to affect legitimacy perceptions, with all contributing to more realistic pictures of DCFs. First, I expect information on the pros and cons of DCFs to contribute to a more positive image of DCFs in general with citizens placing a greater emphasis on inclusion and representativity. Second, following the transformative nature of expectations, namely that expectations can change depending on experience, I expect legitimacy perceptions to differ depending on whether or not citizens already have had expectations about DCF[99]. Finally, I expect the direction of experience (positive, negative) to influences perceived legitimacy. Individuals who have had positive experiences in the past tend to perceive DCFs more legitimate than those who have had negative experiences and vice versa[100].

> ***H4a:*** *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of proper information and positive experiences.*
>
> ***H4b:*** *Under conditions of proper information, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.*
>
> ***H4c:*** *Under conditions of negative experiences, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.*
>
> ***H4d:*** *Both the perceived legitimacy of DCFs and the importance of input, throughput, and output criteria differ between citizens who do and do not have expectations of DCFs.*

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[98] One could argue that these experiences will translate into carry over effects on the assessment of future DCFs (see discussion on procedural favorability earlier in this chapter).

[99] Note, this study tests whether differences exist among the two groups only. By contrast, substantive expectations are not examined which also means that procedural preferences (and consequently procedural favorability) cannot be addressed empirically. However, legitimacy is supposed to be higher when procedural expectations are met (see Chapter 3.1.3.).

[100] But again, this may also hinge on expectations that are not explicitly tested.

3.3.5. Heterogeneity

The main argument in this study is contingency: Perceptions of legitimacy hinge on both object-related and subject-related conditions. Embedded in a general novelty proviso, hypotheses on both design characteristics and issue specific characteristics have been presented. This section turns to hypotheses for different strata of the citizenry.

(1) Enlightened citizens

The *new politics and cognitive mobilization thesis* assume political sophistication and political interest to be main drivers for explaining citizens' support for more political involvement *in general* (e.g., Bowler et al., 2007; Dalton, Burklin, & Drummond, 2001; Gherghina & Geissel, 2019). Furthermore, it seems that enlightened citizens not only want more kinds of participation but ask for qualitatively good ones (cf. Dalton & Welzel, 2014). Yet existing empirical research has produced mixed results with regard to DCFs. Whereas Bedock and Pilet(2020a, 2020b) find a weak positive relationship between perceived political competence and support for sortition in politics, both Pilet et al. (2020) and Jacquet et al. (2020) find not such evidence. They show that citizens with higher objective resources (e.g., education) tend to oppose rather than support sortition in politics (see also Bedock & Pilet, 2020b). Furthermore, Pilet et al. (2020) find that citizens with a low (rather than a high) sense of internal efficacy are supportive of DCFs.

Overall, these studies tend to point in the opposite direction, namely that enlightened citizens are more skeptical about novel procedures such as DCFs. Based on these empirical findings, one might assume enlightened citizens to be reserved about when such tools are put into action. However, I argue their assessment to be conditional on characteristics of the DCFs. Therefore, I assume that citizens tend to have positive attitudes towards citizen forums, but only if they meet certain standards. By the same token, they might be more likely to critically engage with various characteristics of DCFs. In concrete, I expect them to be less open to empowered uses while demanding extra provisions such as representativity[101]. Less

[101] Anderson and Goodyear-Grant (2010) show that highly enlightened citizens are more skeptical of referendums since they are more likely to scrutinize them against the background of violating minority rights.

enlightened citizens, by contrast, might either choose not to care about such criteria or fail to link characteristics of DCFs to their democratic consequences.

H5a: *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among political enlightened citizens compared to less enlightened citizens.*

H5b: *Enlightened citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less enlightened citizens.*

(2) Disaffected citizens

The *political dissatisfaction thesis* states that disenchantment or "enragedness" with the actual shape of representative democracy breeds appetite for more citizen involvement and reformations of democracy (e.g., Bowler et al., 2007; Dalton et al., 2001; Dalton & Welzel, 2014). Yet, although sharing some commonalities, disaffected citizens are not a uniform group (cf. Webb, 2013)[102]. Several studies confirm the positive relationship between political dissatisfaction, political mistrust, or low external efficacy and support for citizen participation *in general* (e.g., Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Dalton et al., 2001; Goldberg et al., 2020; Webb, 2013). Now there are also some empirical studies that confirm the same association for DCFs (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020a, 2020b; Jacquet et al., 2020; Pilet et al., 2020). Moreover, Pow et al. (2020) find citizens' perceived dissimilarity to politicians to strongly matter for their legitimacy perceptions[103].

Finally, the *stealth thesis* (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002) claims that many citizens actually prefer effective and efficient policy-making and opt for participation only when they perceive the current system to be corrupt[104]. To date, scarce research exists on support for deliberative processes among stealth democrats. Nevertheless, a body of research has emerged showing

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[102] Webb (2013) shows, for example, that whereas dissatisfied (yet enlightened citizens) citizens prefer deliberative democracy, stealth citizens favor direct democracy.

[103] Note, Pow et al. (2020) did not find any effect for dissatisfaction. I think, however, the question of whether citizens perceive politicians to be similar to them might correlate with political satisfaction. That is, citizens who agree with the statement tend to be satisfied with the performance of politicians. Conversely, those who disagree with the statement are more likely to be dissatisfied.

[104] Thus, "stealth democracy" is a hypothetical concept designed as an alternative to the "corrupt" status quo. In contrast, "sunshine democracy" describes a concept of how representative democracy should work from the perspective of citizens (cf. Neblo et al., 2010, p. 573).

that stealth citizens, similarly to dissatisfied citizens, prefer *any alternative* to the status quo (e.g., Bengtsson, 2012; Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Goldberg et al., 2020; Webb, 2013; Werner, 2019). Similarly, both Kuyper and Wolkenstein (2019) and Bedock and Pilet (2020b) argue that citizens demand greater empowerment especially when the classical principle of delegation and division of labor between representatives and represented faces major distortions.

In sum, I expect that disaffected citizens want something else from democracy and prefer any alternative to the current representative democracy. As such, I expect them to have "instrumental" thoughts on DCFs, namely perceive them as a possibility to get rid of current legacy institutions (see also Werner, 2019). Consequently, I expect disaffected citizens to be generally more supportive of DCFs, more open to strong authorization, and more open to detachment from legacy institution while caring less about extra provisions. By contrast, I expect "allegiant citizens[105]" (cf. Dalton & Welzel, 2014) to have higher expectations on DCFs. Since they are actually satisfied with the way politics currently works, I assume them to primarily value DCFs for their inclusionary and internal extra provisions. Moreover, I expect them to prefer non-empowered DCFs that are tightly coupled to legacy institutions. In that regard, DCFs could serve as an extra boost for allegiant citizens to make representative politics even better.

> ***H6a:*** *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among political disaffected citizens compared to allegiant citizens.*
>
> ***H6b:*** *Political disaffected citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and less interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to allegiant citizens.*

Note, existing empirical research has not been able to clearly distinguish between the *new politics and cognitive mobilization thesis* and the *political dissatisfaction thesis* (including the *stealth thesis*). There are also some ambiguous findings, especially for enlightened citizens. Contrary to the new politics thesis, the studies by Bengtsson and Mattila (2009) and Coffé and Michels (2014) find that less educated citizens with low political knowledge and low external efficacy prefer direct democratic decision-making to representative democracy. Webb (2013), in turn,

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[105] e.g., citizens with high respect for authorities, high political trust, high support for conventional forms of participation, high sunshine attitudes, high political satisfaction.

shows that dissatisfied citizens are politically interested and self-efficacious, suggesting that both approaches need not be mutually exclusive.

As for deliberative alternatives, Neblo et al. (2010) find for instance that particularly citizens with low objective resources (low income and racial minorities) feel abandoned by current politics and prefer alternatives. Finally, Bedock and Pilet (2020a) finds cumulative effects showing that citizens who simultaneously have a higher sense of political self-competence and are dissatisfied support empowered uses of DCFs whereas self-competent and satisfied citizens prefer advisory DCFs. They conclude that enlightened citizens may trust politicians but still endorse advisory DCFs that co-exist with legacy institutions but do not challenge representative decision-making (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020a, pp. 5–6).

(3) Populist citizens

Populism often conflates with the crisis of democracy and questions have been raised about the capacity of deliberative democracy and DCFs to face recent populist democratic backsliding (cf. Curato, Bächtiger, et al., 2020; Doyle & Walsh, 2020). To date, research has focused almost solely on direct-democratic instruments demonstrating support for referenda among populist citizens (e.g., K. Jacobs, Akkerman, & Zaslove, 2018; Zaslove, Geurkink, Jacobs, & Akkerman, 2020). Yet we have surprisingly little knowledge about what citizens with populist attitudes[106] think about DCFs. With respect to referendums, Müller argues that populists tend to support direct-democratic instruments only to ratify the "genuine popular interest as a matter of identity" rather than because it is "a matter of aggregating empirically verifiable interests" (Müller, 2016, p.29). Moreover, populists think that they are the only "real democrats" pushing for necessary democratic reforms (see also Zaslove et al., 2020, pp. 4–5). In fact, however, populists are strictly against pluralism. By contrast, DCFs are very pluralistic and actively seek to be a highly diverse and representative mirror of the population. Therefore, one would expect populists to be hesitant about DCFs (see also Zaslove et al., 2020, p. 9). However, populists could still support DCFs because they share anti-elitist attitudes (e.g.,

[106] Recent research reveals that citizens show populist attitudes to varying degrees (e.g., Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove, 2014; Mohrenberg, Huber, and Freyburg, 2019; Spruyt, Keppens, and van Droogenbroeck, 2016). However, populist citizens not necessarily have to vote for populist parties. Some even argue that voting for populist parties would be "insufficient to determine if someone has stronger populist attitudes than others" (Zaslove et al., 2020, p. 3).

Mudde, 2004). Thus, as long as they think that the "right representatives represent the right people" (Müller, 2016, p. 25) they would find good reasons to support DCFs to "corrupt" politicians. Moreover, as with stealth democrats, there seems to be an "anything but" attitude among populist citizens (cf. Goldberg et al., 2020, p. 313; Zaslove et al., 2020, p. 17). In that regard, Zaslove et al. (2020) find populists to be supportive to more people-centered modes of participation, irrespective of its concrete design.

To conclude, similarly to disaffected citizens, I expect that populist citizens want something else from democracy and prefer any alternative to the current representative system. Consequently, I assume that populist citizens in general support DCFs. Moreover, since populists seek radical reforms, I expect them to prefer more radical and empowered uses that are decoupled from "corrupt" legacy institutions. By the same token, I expect them to be less concerned about inclusive (or pluralistic) extra provisions.

> ***H7a:*** *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among populist citizens compared to non-populist citizens.*
>
> ***H7b:*** *Populist citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and less interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to non-populist citizens.*

(4) Participatory and delegative citizens

Although citizens differ in their general ideas of how democracy should ideally look like (e.g., Landwehr & Steiner, 2017) they can have multidimensional, non-separable preferences (e.g., Bengtsson, 2012; Font et al., 2015). For example, Goldberg et al. (2020) find a desire for hybrid models among citizens, combining elements of representative, direct-democratic and deliberative democracy. These and similar studies reveal that while many citizens seem to agree on innovating representative democracy they are vague about what the changes should look like. Bengtsson put it to a catchy slogan: citizens seem to know "what they do not want, rather than what they want" (Bengtsson, 2012, p. 61).

I have distinguished between *participatory* (any kind of citizen involvement[107]) and *delegative* (including representative and expert-based decision-making) preferences for democratic

[107] E.g., the study by Goldberg et al. (2020) shows that dialogical and direct democratic items on political decision-making constitute the same factor (p. 326).

decision-making (cf. Font, 2015, p. 157; Bengtsson, 2012). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) have argued that citizens pursue a participatory path only because there are no alternative options. Conversely, if it became an option they would prefer a technocratic model in which experts or unelected businessmen decide. According to Neblo et al. (2010), however, the preference for stealth democracy among Americans is driven by so-called non-separable preferences, namely citizens base their desire for participation on perceptions of a corrupt elite (p. 568). Yet although Neblo and colleagues agree with Hibbing and Theiss-Morse that citizens would prefer stealth democracy to direct democracy, they argue that if deliberative democracy would become a feasible option, citizens would prefer the latter to direct democracy. Preferences for expert decision-making are less clear though[108]. For example, Bengtsson (2012) concludes that citizens either have positive feelings about representative decision-making or want a more citizens involvement but no group exclusively prefers a greater role for experts. Similarly, VanderMolen (2017) finds no coherent preferences for a technocratic model among Americans either.

I expect citizens preferences or conceptions of democratic governance to affect their legitimacy perceptions of DCFs. Of course, the most straightforward assumption is simple: Particularly participatory citizens support DCFs. However, the story is not as simple as it seems at first glance[109]. Simply asking citizens for their participatory preferences tells us little whether their preference is truly participatory (or rather delegative) since they might prefer participatory forms for decision-making but want to stay passive themselves (see also Bengtsson & Christensen, 2016). Compared to delegative citizens, however, I nevertheless expect participatory citizens to be more supportive of DCFs. Moreover, I expect that participatory citizens are seeking for maximal participatory DCFs, demanding both more consequential tractions and extra provisions. Conversely, and similarly to allegiant citizens, I assume delegative citizens to primarily value DCFs for their inclusionary and internal extra provisions while rejecting empowered DCFs that are decoupled from legacy institutions.

[108] The stealth concept is often related to technocratic models. However, the stealth concept still is democratic, since citizens – if they want to – could participate (cf. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002, p. 239).

[109] I thank Cristina Lafont who raised this point in a personal conversation in February 2020.

H8a: *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among participatory citizens compared to delegative citizens.*

H8b: *Participatory citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less participatory citizens.*

H8c: *Delegative citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to tight coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less delegative citizens.*

(5) Confided citizens

Recent research indicates interpersonal trust and citizens perceptions of their fellow citizens to take key roles in explaining perceived legitimacy of DCFs (cf. Bedock and Pilet, 2020b; Pow et al., 2020). I suggest that interpersonal trust in conjuncture with DCFs can have three sources: *general trust in fellow citizens*, *confidence in citizens competences to deal with political issues*, and the perception that *participants are citizens like me* (cf. Pow et al., 2020). Empirical research reveals that confidence in the capacities of other citizens has a positive effect on support of sortition in politics (cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020b). Additionally, Pow et al. (2020) find that citizens seem to trust DCFs mainly because they are composed of people like them. Like-me perceptions can be situated within both a descriptive and a substantial conception of representation. Citizens might perceive participants of DCFs similar to them either because they believe that DCFs statistically reflect the citizenry or because they think (some) participants share their own positions, interests, or thoughts on an issue. With regard to the latter Pilet et al. (2020) show that support for DCFs is higher for citizens who think that their opinion aligns with those of their fellow citizens. Yet both understandings require non-participants to have minimal knowledge about DCFs in general and recruitment mechanisms specifically[110]. Moreover, I assume that social trust is independent of political trust. Mistrust in fellow citizens does not exclude mistrust in politicians any more than trust in both or none. But particularly in light of growing political mistrust (see above), citizens may prefer anything (or anyone) else to

[110] That they know, for example, that they could have been participants themselves. Either by equal chance because they were drawn by lot see also Pow et al. (2020, p. 45) or by equal opportunity because they formally had the opportunity but refused.

politicians. Moreover, "perceptions of ordinariness[111]" might be more important to (some) citizens than the actual evaluation of politicians, even if they are politically satisfied and trust politicians. In that regard, Pow et al. (2020) find that citizens are supportive of DCFs particularly when they think that politicians are not like them. The question then is a about magnitude or distance: the perceived distance to politicians might be greater than the perceive distance to other citizens, even when citizens do not know their fellow citizens.

To conclude, I expect citizens to perceive DCFs as legitimate because they see participants as their confidants. Consequently, I assume that confided citizens in general support DCFs and trust participants to make decisions. Since, however, social trust is independent of political trust, but is at the same time a question of perceived distance between both citizens and politicians and citizens and participants, I expect confided citizens to be more open to empowerment and decoupling of DCFs while simultaneously asking for best possible inclusion of all interests.

> ***H9a:*** *The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among citizens who perceive participants as their confidants than among citizens who do not.*
>
> ***H9b:*** *Confided citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less-confided citizens.*

[111] In terms of "the citizens" versus "the politicians".

Table 2: Hypotheses

Design criteria

H1a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of random selection and large groups, and lowest under conditions of self-selection and small groups.

H1b: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of clear majorities and face-to-face discussions, and lowest under conditions of narrow majorities and online discussions.

H1c: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of advisory outputs (non-empowerment), top-down initiatives and mixed groups (tight coupling), and lowest under conditions of binding outputs (strong empowerment), bottom-up initiatives and mere citizen groups (loose coupling).

Issues and outcome favorability

H2a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of technical (salient and less-salient) issues and lowest under conditions of non-technical (particularly salient) issues.

H2b: Under conditions of non-technical (salient and less-salient) issues, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.

H3a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of substantial preference congruence and lowest under conditions of substantial preference divergence.

H3b: Under conditions of substantial preference divergence, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.

Familiarity

H4a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of proper information and positive experiences.

H4b: Under conditions of proper information, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.

H4c: Under conditions of negative experiences, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions.

H4d: Both the perceived legitimacy of DCFs and the importance of input, throughput, and output criteria differ between citizens who do and do not have expectations of DCFs.

Enlightened citizens

H5a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among political enlightened citizens compared to less enlightened citizens.

H5b: Enlightened citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less enlightened citizens.

Disaffected citizens

H6a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among political disaffected citizens compared to allegiant citizens.

H6b: Political disaffected citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and less interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to allegiant citizens.

Populist citizens

H7a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among populist citizens compared to non-populist citizens.

H7b: Populist citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and less interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to non-populist citizens.

Participatory and delegative citizens

H8a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among participatory citizens compared to delegative citizens.

H8b: Participatory citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less participatory citizens.

H8c: Delegative citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to tight coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less delegative citizens.

Confided citizens

H9a: The perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among citizens who perceive participants as their confidants than among citizens who do not.

H9b: Confided citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to non-confided citizens.

Chapter 4: Research design. How to assess legitimacy perceptions

"Conjoint experiments are popular because they allow researchers to understand how respondents weigh the various attributes and to test competing theories about which attributes are most important"

(Jenke, Bansak, Hainmueller, & Hangartner, 2021, p. 75)

Survey experiments are of particular importance in political science because they allow researchers to draw causal inferences (e.g., Mutz, 2011). Classical survey experiments, however, test the experimental manipulation as a whole (cf. Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto, 2014, p. 2). Conjoint experiments and other factorial surveys, by contrast, are particularly apt to capture multidimensional effects. In political science, the work of Hainmueller et al. (2014) was particularly groundbreaking. Conjoint experiments (and other factorial techniques) combine multiple dimensions and allow researchers to test multiple hypotheses simultaneously. Although they are relatively novel tools in political science[112], they have experienced a great resurgence within the last ten years, with both became standard tools for analyzing multidimensional preferences (e.g., Abramson, Kocak, Magazinnik, & Strezhnev, 2020; Auspurg & Hinz, 2015; Bansak, Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto, 2021; Sauer, Auspurg, & Hinz, 2020). What makes them so fascinating is their combination of randomized experimental design with large and heterogeneous samples (cf. Sauer et al., 2020, p. 196). Conjoint experiments ask respondents to assess hypothetical profiles or scenarios[113] that vary across multiple attributes *($A_1 – A_n$)* that can take several *levels ($L_{A1(1-n)}$ - $L_{An(a-n)}$)*. They, simply put, estimate the *joint effect* of two or more independent variables on the expression of a dependent variable (cf. Green & Rao, 1971, p. 355). This study implements and analyzes *two multifactorial conjoint experiments* in Germany and estimates the joint effect of various design features of DCFs on their legitimacy. The logic is simple: Just as the purchase decision for a

[112] They were usually used in marked research (e.g., Orme, 2020). For a review see Auspurg, Hinz, and Liebig (2009) and Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto (2015).

[113] This study uses "profiles" interchangeable with "scenarios" or "conjoint configurations".

product (e.g., a new computer) depends, inter alia, on the joint effect of various characteristics (e.g., a mix of price, brand, performance, etc.), the perceived legitimacy of a DCF depends on the joint effect of different design characteristics (e.g., group composition, recruitment, and authorization).

This chapter proceeds as follows. Before turning to the design of these two experiments, it first sketches the importance of conjoint experiments in political science. Finally, it describes the data, measurement strategies, and analysis methods.

4.1. Conjoint analysis in political science

Multidimensional survey experiments differ in their presentation style. While vignettes describe fictitious scenarios in short paragraphs, conjoint experiments use a tabular presentation, comparable to profiles. Empirical research shows that conjoint experiments are particularly apt to provide easy-to-read information and to replicate decisions in natural settings (Hainmueller et al., 2015). Moreover, conjoint experiments can overcome response biases and circumvent the disadvantages of conventional survey techniques such as non-attitudes or unreliable responses relying on self-reporting (cf. Alexander & Becker, 1978, p. 93).

In conjoint designs, respondents are asked to assess hypothetical scenarios with randomly varying attributes that serve as precise descriptions and are closest to behavioral benchmarks (cf. Green & Rao, 1971; Hainmueller et al., 2014). For example, Hainmueller et al. (2015) show that conjoint experiments match behavioral benchmarks remarkably well. The design with fully randomized attribute levels allows to estimate the effects of each attributes on the probability of preferring a certain scenario. Finally, the design allows to estimate interaction effects both *between subjects* (often referred to as *subgroup preferences*) and *within subjects* (interactions of various design attributes) (cf. Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015, p. 535).

However, conjoint experiments are also subject to criticism. First, descriptions of scenarios are always hypothetical (e.g., Albarracin, Johnson, & Zanna, 2014). Although conjoint experiments always try to provide best possible information (cf. Costa, 2021), respondents could respond quite differently in hypothetical settings as compared to how they would behave in real world decisions (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2015, p. 2395). Second, conjoint experiments may lack external validity because they are equally prone to response bias. Third, one should be beware of

possible recency effects, especially with respondents who spend only a short time with the scenarios. Finally, conjoint experiments require respondents to complete complex tasks such as comparing random vignette configurations (cf. Düval & Hinz, 2020). The use of eye-tracking methods has provided insights into how respondents evaluate scenarios in conjoint experiments. Jenke et al. (2021) show that respondents in paired conjoint designs use a combination of two strategies: vertical and horizontal assessments, with the former comparing attribute by attribute within the same scenario and the latter within attributes, i.e., comparing one attribute between the two scenarios (cf. Stefanelli & Lukac, 2020). Furthermore, Düval and Hinz (2020) show that respondents are not prone to order effects within scenarios.

4.2. Two conjoint based studies to assess non-participants' legitimacy perception

This study uses two conjoint experiments in Germany to predict the joint effect of various characteristics of DCFs on non-participants' perceived legitimacy. Germany shares some characteristics of consensus democracies (cf. Lijphart, 1999), in which dialog is an important component and power is shared among different institutions. Typically, participation in Germany distinguishes between information, consultation and co-governance. Dialogical participation is not formally required, but is increasingly being implemented at all government levels. The aim is to bring citizens and decision-makers into conversation, who exchange arguments and ideally reach a common decision. Another important aspect is the inclusion of groups that are hard to reach. Although various forms of dialogical citizen participation have been conducted in Germany since the late 1990s (cf. Remer, 2020), the use of DCFs (as understood in this study) is a relatively recent phenomenon that entered political practice only about a decade ago. Since then DCFs have earned growing attention both in politics and society. Prominent examples are the "Bürgeforum Corona" and the "Bürgerrat Demokratie". Germany therefore seems well suited to contribute to the political or practical debate.

DCFs, however, vary considerably with regard to their actual design and we do not know which "configurations" citizens would like to see realized. This study therefore implements hypothetical scenarios that are generically composed of various design attributes of DCFs. I administered two conjoint experiments which were embedded in a student online survey at

the University of Stuttgart (*pilot study*) and a representative public survey among German residents aged 18 and older (*main study*).

I examine the impact of various features of DCFs on perceived legitimacy. These included a total of eight attributes in the pilot study *(A_{P1} – A_{P8})* and nine in the main study *(A_{M1} – A_{M9})*. Conjoint experiments vary considerably with regard to their design. Some choices needed to be made about the *conjoint configuration* (e.g., single vs multiple tasks, open vs forced responses), the *complexity* (e.g., the number of vignettes, choice tasks, and dimensions), and the *methods of analysis* (e.g., Abramson et al., 2020; Bansak, Hainmueller, & Hangartner, 2016; Bansak, Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto, 2018; Düval & Hinz, 2020; Hainmueller et al., 2014; Hainmueller et al., 2015; Jenke et al., 2021; Sauer et al., 2020).

First, both studies implemented a *paired conjoint design*, in which I randomized each of the attributes 24 times (i.e. 12 comparison tasks) in the pilot study respectively 12 times (i.e. six comparison tasks) in the main study to form unique profiles of DCFs. The attributes were mutually independent from each other since no restrictions on possible combinations were involved (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014). The profiles were presented in a table with three columns. While the first column indicated the names of the attributes (design and issue characteristics of DCFs), the other two columns contained randomly assigned attribute dimensions (levels of the attributes). After receiving two profiles each on the same page (two scenarios were presented side by side, allowing for comparison of both scenarios on each attribute), respondents were first asked which DCF they thought was more legitimate (choice outcome). Second, they were asked to rate each profile (rating outcome). Respondents were "forced" to choose their preferred scenario, which may have prompted them to engage more intensively with the profiles (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2015, p. 2396).

Next, the two experiments differ slightly in terms of their *complexity*. Although recent research on the number of choice tasks and satisficing suggests that respondents can answer dozens of scenarios without a noticeable decline in response quality (cf. Bansak et al., 2018), it should be noted that DCFs are unfamiliar to most citizens. This makes it difficult for them to access scenarios and might exhaust them. In addition, because the conjoint experiments were embedded in a larger survey, I made sure to keep the effort sufficient but as minimal as possible. The main differences between the two studies concern both the number of choice

tasks (see above) and the framing of the scenarios. Although both studies included issue variations (see Chapter 3.2.2.), they used different modes of presentation. In the pilot study policy issues were presented to the respondents before the actual conjoint task. In the main study, however, they were integrated directly into the conjoint tables. Third, the two experiments differed slightly in the attributes that were included in the profiles. Whereas both included a total of eight attributes (policy issue, recruitment, group size, group composition, discussion format, level of consensus, authorization, and output), the main study added a ninth attribute (initiative). Finally, there were small differences regarding the information packages respondents were provided with. While respondents in the student sample were randomly assigned to two groups, one of which received both basic information and arguments about DCFs, and the other of which received only basic information, respondents in the main study were provided all the same information (via a short video) and arguments (via a factsheet). However, respondents in both samples had the option of accessing a glossary of basic information about the design features when completing the survey.

As for *methods of analysis*, both experiments use a causal quantity of interest, the *Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE)* which can be nonparametrically identified (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014, p. 3)[114]. The AMCE indicates the causal effect – the increase or decrease of the probability of choosing a scenario – if an attribute switches from one attribute level to another while averaging over the distribution of all other attributes (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014). Drawing on Bansak et al. (2021), let me give a brief example. Suppose, for instance, *attribute A* is the recruitment of participants in DCFs with A_1 = *self-selection* and A_2 = *random selection*. $AMCE_A$ compares the probability of a scenario including self-selection preferred over another randomly generated scenario to the probability of a scenario including random selection preferred over a similarly generated scenario.

AMCE, however, *cannot* be interpreted as the probability of self-selection being preferred over random selection. AMCE therefore only indicate the change from one attribute level to another. Moreover, AMCE uses a "double averaging" combination: It aggregates preferences

[114] This is a straightforward and easy way to assess and interpret conjoint data because AMCE does not assume any behavioral model. Hainmueller et al. (2014) write, this approach is "agnostic about how respondents reach their observed decisions—they might be maximizing utility; they might be boundedly rational; they might use weighted adding, lexicographic, or satisficing decision strategies; or they might make choices according to another model" (p. 3).

across attributes (more specifically, the distribution of possible DCFs) and respondents (cf. Bansak et al., 2021, p. 6).

While AMCE analysis are still the main vehicle for causal interpretations of effect sizes in conjoint experiments, a recent methodological debate has been sparked surrounding the appropriateness of estimation parameters in conjoint experiments (e.g., Abramson et al., 2020; Bansak et al., 2021; Leeper, Hobolt, & Tilley, 2020). For example, a recent paper by Abramson et al. (2020) questions the adequacy of AMCEs for interpreting respondents' preferences. The authors argue there are two flaws with AMCEs: Neither do they indicate whether a majority of respondents prefer scenarios with one attribute level over those with another attribute level, nor do they indicate whether the average respondent prefers scenarios with one attribute level over those with another attribute level (cf. Abramson et al., 2020, p. 3). Instead, they suggest using measures that represent the proportion of respondents who prefer a particular attribute. In contrast, however, Bansak et al. (2021) show that such proportion measures are even less informative in contexts with multiple attributes. Thus, the critique mainly shows that some caution is needed when interpreting the effects.

Bansak et al. (2021) argue that AMCE have at least two advantages. First, they average over both direction (preference for a particular attribute level over another attribute level) and intensity (strength of preference for a particular attribute level over another attribute level). While some contend focusing on both might be an undesirable feature (cf. Abramson et al., 2020), for them it can even be a desirable feature rather than a bug (cf. Bansak et al., 2021, p. 18). As such, AMCEs are useful for reflecting differences in both expected preference shares and important or unimportant attributes[115]. Second, AMCEs can be interpreted independently of preference heterogeneity and attribute interactions, making them particularly informative for conditional analyses (cf. Bansak et al., 2021).

Overall, the main advantage of using AMCE is that it allows for assessing the "whole package" without treating attributes in isolation and allows to detect the most important attributes averaged over all attributes. Returning to our example, even though respondents would prefer

[115] For voting behavior, they argue: "Combining directionality and intensity is fitting in many political applications: in many cases, a minority of people with intense preferences over a certain attribute can drive its electoral significance. And this is not merely a rhetorical point because, as illustrated above, the AMCE identifies the difference in expected vote shares" (Bansak et al., 2021, p. 18).

self-selection when assessing "recruitment" in isolation, they might be perfectly fine with random selection when other attributes are included.

In addition, Leeper et al. (2020) have raised another concern. Specifically, they warn that using AMCE analysis for descriptive purposes can be misleading when analyzing subgroups because researchers arbitrarily select the reference categories for each attribute. Instead, they propose a descriptive measure, the marginal mean, which is the mean score of an attribute level averaged over all other attributes[116].

4.2.1. Pilot study[117]

The pilot experiment was embedded in a student survey administered through Qualtrics. The survey was conducted with a Master's course at the University of Stuttgart and was fielded in May 2019. The participants were recruited via a newsletter announcement and an email invite. A total of *231* persons completed the survey, most of them were university students with a social science background. Although student samples lack external validity and represent a very different population, the pilot study was useful for testing the applicability and feasibility of the conjoint design. Moreover, research has demonstrated that high school students (e.g., Helwig, Arnold, Tan, & Boyd, 2007) and university students (e.g., Esaiasson et al., 2012) are able to make judgments quite similar to adults. The results of the pilot study were found to differ only slightly from those of the main study. This indicates that the design is replicable for very different populations.

As part of the pilot study, respondents were randomly assigned to one of two groups, each provided with different information components that were presented prior to the conjoint experiment. Whereas a "glossary only-group" was presented with basic information about different design attributes of DCF, an "argument-group" was presented with pro and con arguments on various design attributes additionally to these basic information (see Appendix D1). Just before the conjoint experiment, the respondents were presented with these information packages respective to their assigned treatment group and were asked to read the

[116] Note, although the main interest of this study is a causal (and not descriptive) interpretation of effects, I additionally rerun analysis with marginal means (Appendix C2), which however, indicate descriptive differences for subgroup preferences only.
[117] Findings were published with the Journal of Deliberative Democracy in April 2021 (cf. Goldberg, 2021).

information carefully. As an incentive, they were assured of an additional reward of one euro. In addition, the survey provided an optional glossary of attribute descriptions for respondents to access during the conjoint experiment (pop-up windows).

Table 3: Attributes and attribute levels used in the pilot study

Attributes	Levels
Recruitment	Random selection, self-selection
Group Size	Small (about 20), medium (about 100), large (about 500)
Discussion Format	Face-to-face, online
Degree of Consensus	Narrow majority (about 52%), clear majority (about 64%), vast majority (about 88%)
Group Composition	Citizens alone, mixed (citizens and politicians)
Authorization	Binding recommendation to elected officials, non-binding recommendation to elected officials, recommendation followed by a referendum, binding decision
Policy Issue	Refugees, waste disposal
Output	In favor of the measure, against the measure

Note: Attributes and attribute values used to generate various DCFs in the pilot study.

Table 3 shows the attributes and attribute levels used to generate the profiles of DCFs in the *pilot study*. The attribute levels were fully randomized. The conjoint consisted of eight attributes with 2 to 4 attribute levels. I employed a *paired conjoint design with forced choice* where respondents were asked to assess randomly assigned profiles of DCFs. Following an introduction explaining the task respondents were presented with profiles of two DCFs. Each respondent completed *twelve comparisons* between pairs of profiles, each displayed on a new screen. The effective sample size was 5,544 (the number of respondents (231) multiplied by 24, since each respondent received 24 tasks (12 pairs) in total). The first six pairs were on the salient issue (refugees), while the remaining six were on the less salient issue (waste management). For each comparison, respondents were asked to both choose their preferred profile (*choice outcome*) and assess each profile (*rating outcome*). For further information on the outcome variables see Chapter 4.3.2. The pilot study has two limitations though. First, caution is needed about generalizability. The sample is not representative, nor does a student sample tell us anything about citizens in general. The study is nonetheless useful for probing the

appropriateness of conjoint experiments for assessing of legitimacy perceptions of DCFs. Thus, at best, it can serve as a role model for further research. Second, the results may be somewhat skewed by the large number of conjoint tasks that had to be completed by a relatively small number of respondents. This should be less problematic in terms of overall estimates, but does not allow for subgroup analyses and interaction models.

4.2.2. Main study

The main study was conducted using a representative sample of *2,039* German residents aged 18 and older. The data come from a quota sample weighted by age, gender, education and region such that the sample is representative of the margins in the German resident population. The survey experiment was administered through YouGov and was fielded between 12/08/2020 and 12/16/2020. As part of the main study, respondents were presented with two information packages. First, respondents had to watch a short video prior to the conjoint experiment. The primary purpose of the cartoon style video was to explain what DCFs are and how they operate. Figure 8 illustrates a snippet of the video. For an English translation of the voice over see Appendix D2.

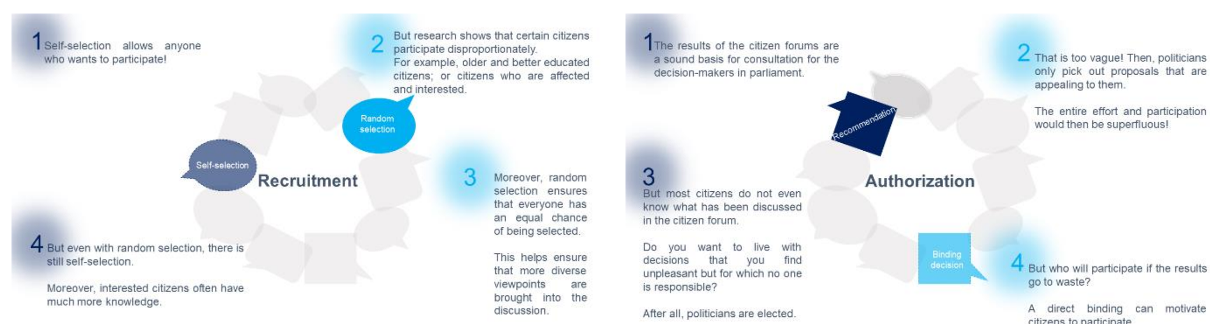
Figure 8: Explanation video

Note: Segment of the explanation video. For the translated voiceover see Appendix D2.2.

Second, immediately after the video respondents were presented with visual fact sheets showing pro and con arguments on various design features[118]. Figure 9 shows the English translation of the fact sheets. The respondents were presented with these information packages just before the conjoint experiment. As with the students' sample, respondents were additionally incentivized when they read the arguments. Finally, and similarly to the pilot study, respondents were given the opportunity to access an optional glossary while filling the survey.

[118] Due to potential sacrificing effects, I limited the number of design features presented to the two main critical features discussed theoretically, namely recruitment and authorization (see Chapter 2.2.4.).

Figure 9: Arguments on various design characteristics



Note: Arguments (translated) that were presented to the respondents before the conjoint experiment.

Table 4 shows the attributes and attribute levels used to generate the profiles of DCFs in the *main study*. In addition to the full randomization of attribute levels (see pilot study), the order of the attributes was fully randomized between respondents, but was kept constant for each respondent. This should help minimize primacy and recency effects (cf. Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015, p. 535), although it should be noted that speedy respondents may be somewhat more susceptible to recency effects (cf. Düval & Hinz, 2020). An exception was the first attribute (policy issue), which was the initial attribute for each respondent. The conjoint consisted of nine attributes with 2 to 4 attribute levels. As with the pilot study, I employed a *paired conjoint design with forced choice* where respondents were asked to assess randomly assigned profiles of DCFs. Following an introduction explaining the task respondents were presented with profiles of DCFs. Unlike the students' sample, I included four instead of two issues that were randomly assigned for each profile. Each respondent completed *six comparisons* each displayed on a new screen. The effective sample size was 24,468 (the number of respondents (2,039) multiplied by 12, since each respondent received 12 tasks (6 pairs) in total). For each pair, respondents were asked to both choose their preferred scenario (*choice outcome*) and to assess each scenario (*rating outcome*). Further information on the outcome variables are provided in the next Chapter.

The main study differs from the pilot study in two respects. First, all respondents received the same information packages. Second, the attributes are slightly different: I included four policies instead of two; I included an additional attribute (initiative), as this turned out to be a much-discussed feature of DCFs (see Chapter 3.2.2.); I excluded the "vast majority" option for degree of consensus; and finally, I combined the "recommendation to elected officials" option for authorization. Regarding the latter, the pilot study has shown that even students see little

difference in terms of the advisory function of DCFs. Because the design was already challenging, the scenarios were simplified as much as possible.

Table 4: Attributes and attribute levels used in the main study

Attributes	Levels
Recruitment	Random selection, self-selection
Group Size	Small (about 20), medium (about 150), large (about 500)
Discussion Format	Face-to-face, online
Degree of Consensus	Narrow majority (about 52%), clear majority (about 71%)
Initiative	NGO, government
Group Composition	Citizens alone, mixed (citizens and politicians)
Authorization	Recommendation to elected officials, recommendation followed by a referendum, binding decision
Policy Issue	Climate change, refugees, crypto currency, foreign aid
Output	In favor of the measure, against the measure

Note: Attributes and attribute values used to generate various DCFs in the main study.

4.3. Data, measurement, and analysis

This chapter describes and discusses the data, operationalizes key variables (quantities of interest and subgroup variables), and presents analysis strategies.

4.3.1. Data

This study combines conjoint experiments with the advantage of heterogeneous samples (cf. Sauer et al., 2020). This study analyses two sets of interaction effects. First, it investigates differences in effects based on respondents' characteristics as hypothesized (see subject related conditions in Chapter 3.2.3. and Chapter 3.3.5.). This is often referred to as subgroup analyses (hereinafter *between interactions*). Second, there could be interactions among the attributes of the DCF (hereafter *within interactions*). Note, however, that I have not hypothesized any interactions among attributes, other than issue variation and outcomes. To date, there has been scant research on how, if at all, various attributes interact, which risks making hypotheses arbitrarily. Recently, there also have been discussions about data-driven approaches where

heterogeneous treatment effects are detected through machine learning strategies (e.g., Abramson et al., 2020). While this is a useful method for identifying subgroups in the absence of any theoretical assumptions, I focus on theoretically relevant subgroups that have already been identified in Chapter 3.2.3. As for sample size for interaction models, market researchers often recommend a minimum sample size of 25 to 100 per group, but this is a rule of thumb and should be judged critically against representative criteria. The recommendation for representative studies is a minimum sample size of 200 respondents per subgroup (cf. Orme, 2020, p. 65). However, Stefanelli and Lukac (2020) warn that the sample size for interaction effects must be significantly increased to meet the criteria of statistical power (see Chapter 5.4.). Since only 231 respondents completed the pilot study, both subgroup analyses and interactions are conducted only for the main study.

Table 5: Comparison of key features between the pilot study, main study, and ESS 2018

	Pilot study (n=231)	**Main study (n=2,039)**	**ESS 2018 (Germany) (n=2,358)**
Age	25.6 years	50.2 years	49.7 years
Gender			
male	41.1 %	46.3 %	51.4 %
female	58.9 %	53.7 %	48.6 %
Political alignment *(11-point scale)*			
left (1-4)	59.8 %	24.2 %	30.3 %
middle (5-7)	35.4 %	62.8 %	58.7 %
right (8-11)	4.8 %	13.0 %	11.0 %
Political interest*	*(11-point scale)* 81.8 % interested (hereof 42 % very interested)	*(5-point scale)* 41.4 % interested** (hereof 13.8 % very interested)	*(4-point scale)* 66.4 % interested (hereof 24.1 % very interested)

Notes: * Scales were z-standardized; ** 77 % including moderate interested (middle category).

The pilot study differs significantly from the main study with regard to representativeness (see Table 5). Whereas the pilot study draws on a convenience sample of mostly university students (see Chapter 4.2.1.), the sample of the main study is representative for the German population aged 18 and older. Not surprisingly, the students' sample is skewed towards younger, politically interested individuals who are more likely to identify with the left political

spectrum. Further, it turned out that more female students participated in the experiment. In contrast, the quoted and weighted sample of the main study comes very close to the benchmark survey (ESS 2018). One exemption is political interest (see also Appendix A1.3.) where respondents in the main study tended to be less politically interested that respondents of the ESS. Note, however, the ESS uses a four-point scale, forcing respondents to one direction whereas I employed a five-point Likert scale including a middle category (M=3.23; SD=1.12).

4.3.2. Measurement

This section describes, operationalizes, and summarizes relevant variables for the analysis. The question wording, distribution of variables, and, if applicable, factorial analyses for index variables are provided in Appendix A and Appendix B. Unless otherwise noted, items were aggregated into mean indices. In addition to the conjoint experiments both surveys contained key covariates such as political attitudes, policy preferences on various policy issues, and socio-demographics.

(1) Dependent variables

Table 6 summarizes the dependent variables for both the pilot study and the main study. It describes the coding of each variable based on responses to two questions (choice and rating) presented after each pair of profiles. The main quantity of interest are the *choice outcome variables* which indicate whether a respondent has chosen a scenario or not. Responses were coded to a binary variable that is '1' for the preferred scenario and '0' otherwise. The choice outcome has become a standard in conjoint analyses because it efficiently approximate real-world decisions (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014, p. 5). Within a series of a robustness checks (see Chapter 5.4. and Appendix C4) conjoint analyses were reran for the rating outcome variables (cf. Bansak et al., 2016; Hainmueller et al., 2014; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015).

While the choice question was identical in both studies, the rating question differed slightly in wording. Whereas the pilot study was concerned with an established literature on procedural fairness (e.g., Esaiasson et al., 2012), the main study has broadened the definition of perceived legitimacy, assuming that other than fairness-perceptions could play a role for individual legitimacy perceptions (see Chapter 3.1.3.).

Table 6: Measurement of conjoint outcome variables

Variable	Description Pilot Study	Description Main Study
Choice outcome (forced)	A binary indicator of whether a scenario was the preferred one. It bases on responses to the following question which was coded *'1'* if a respondent has chosen a scenario and *'0'* otherwise: "Which of these two scenarios do you prefer?"	A binary indicator of whether a scenario was the preferred one. It bases on responses to the following question which was coded *'1'* if a respondent has chosen a scenario and *'0'* otherwise: "Which of these two scenarios do you prefer?"
Rating outcome (scaled)	A scaled version of the rating outcome, where *'1'* indicates that a respondent does *not find the scenario fair at all* and *'7'* that a respondent *finds the scenario very fair*. The question for each scenario was: "In your opinion, how fair is scenario [1/2]?"	A scaled version of the rating outcome, where *'1'* indicates that a respondent judges the scenario to be *very unfavorable* and *'7'* that a respondent judges the scenario to be *very favorable*. The question for each scenario was: "In your opinion, how do you feel about citizen forum [A/B]?"
Retrospective assessment	Not asked.	Self-reported appropriateness of DCFs in political decision-making. Directly after assessing various profiles of DCFs respondents were asked: "Do you think that citizen forums are appropriate means of involving people in political decision-making?" with a scale from '1,' *I think it is a very bad option* to *'7' I think it is a very good option*.

Note: Question wording for the outcome variables.

Thus, while the pilot study has employed a standard indicator of perceived legitimacy stating whether respondents perceive a given process to be fair (M=4.50; SD=1.45; 7-point scale), the main study more broadly asked respondents how favorable or unfavorable they assess a given scenario[119] (M=4.25; SD=1.54; 7-point scale).

Additionally, the main survey included a retrospective question on the overall adequacy of DCFs. I use this variable for descriptive purposes only and examine whether various groups of citizens perceive DCFs as equally apt for entering political decision-making (see Chapter 5). Directly after the conjoint tasks, respondents were asked whether they perceive citizen forums

[119] Werner and Marien (2020) used two measures, a standard item on perceived legitimacy stating "How fair do you think the process was that led to the decision" and a second item asking "How appropriate was the decision-making procedure" with both leading to substantially identical results.

as appropriate means of involving people in political decision-making (M=4.83; SD= .51; 7-point scale).

(2) Issue variables

Both surveys included two issue related questions on various policy issues: the self-reported salience of an issue and individual preference. The pilot study included two issues (*refugees* (salient) and *waste management* (less salient)). The main study included four issues (*climate change* (salient/technical), *refugees* (salient/less technical), *currency systems* (less salient/technical), and *foreign aid* (less salient/non-technical)). Table 7 describes the issue-related variables, which were needed in order to measure empirical issue salience and outcome favorability. Respondents were first asked how important or unimportant they find the various policy issues. Next, they were asked whether they support or oppose a variety of concrete policy proposals on these issues. For further information on the implementation and wording see Appendix A1.2.).

In the pilot study, both issue salience and issue preference were measured on a 11-point scale where 1 meant “very unimportant” for salience respectively “no support of the measure” for preference and 11 meant “very important” for salience respectively “full support of the measure” for preference. Empirically, the refugee issue (M=8.08; SD=2.11) was found to be significantly more salient than the waste issue (M=4.69; SD=2.52) among respondents in the pilot study. In addition, students tended to both support building a refugee shelter (M=8.35; SD=2.82) and increasing trash fees (M=6.26; M=2.74).

The main study used a 7-point scale with identical substantive meaning as in the pilot study. Differences in empirical salience were less pronounced in the main study though still in the expected direction. Both climate change (M=5.58; SD=1,64) and refugees (M=5.06; SD=1.72) were perceived as slightly more important than currency (M=4.57; SD=1.58) and foreign aid (M=4.81; SD=1.50). Moreover, whereas respondents tended to support the proposal on net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (M=4.65; SD=1,67) and development cooperation (M=4.79; SD=1,57), they tended to reject measures on admission of refugees (M=3.97; SD=1,87) and crypto currencies (M=3.24; SD=1,90).

Table 7: Measurement of issue-related variables

Variable	Description Pilot Study	Description Main Study
Issue salience	Self-reported salience of two policy issues (*refugees*, *waste management*). For each issue respondents were asked to answer the following question: "Please indicate how important or unimportant the issues are for you personally" With a scale ranging from *'1' very unimportant* to *'11' very important*.	Self-reported salience of four policy issues (*Climate change*, *refugee policy*, *currency systems*, and *foreign aid*). For each issue respondents were asked to answer the following question: "Please indicate how important or unimportant the issues are for you personally" With a scale ranging from *'1' very unimportant* to *'7' very important*.
Issue preference	Respondents were asked to imagine the following situations: 1. Due to high inflows of refugees, a refugee hostel is being built in your direct neighborhood. 2. Due to high waste volumes, the waste fees in your municipality are to be increased by 25%. For each measure, respondents were asked: "Would you support the measure?" With a scale ranging from *'1' not at all* to *'11' completely*.	Respondents were given brief introductions for specific measures related to the four policy issues (see Appendix A1.2.). For each measure, respondents were asked: "How much do you personally support the measure?" With a scale ranging from *'1' I strongly reject* to *'7' I strongly support*.
Outcome favorability	A binary indicator which is *'1'* if the *[Output]* of a DCF corresponds with one owns *[Issue preference]* and *'0'* otherwise. Note: This required *[Issue preference]* to be dichotomized first. For each *[Issue preference]*, values higher than the midpoint *(>6)* were coded as support of a measure.	A binary indicator which is '1' if the *[Output]* of a DCF corresponds with one owns *[Issue preference]* and *'0'* otherwise. Note: This required *[Issue preference]* to be dichotomized first. For each *[Issue preference]*, values higher than the midpoint *(>4)* were coded as support of a measure.

Note: Question wording for the issue variables.

Finally, to capture outcome favorability, the outcome of a scenario was compared to respondents' individual preferences (cf. Esaiasson et al., 2019, p. 297). To this end, all values above the mean were coded as agreement on the preference questions. Using respondents' positions on various issues, outcome favorability was then coded as a binary variable that is "1" if the outcome of the conjoint (for or against the measure) matches the individual preference for the measure, and "0" otherwise.

(3) Subgroup variables

Furthermore, I have been arguing that citizens are no monolithic group but instead have very different attitudes and expectations about democracy. Treating "the citizens" as an entity constitutes a delusive oversimplification that might lead to wrong conclusions about citizens legitimacy perceptions of DCFs. In the remainder of this section I operationalize various subgroup variables. While Table 8 provides information about question wording and measurement, Appendix A1.3. summarize the distribution, indexing, and – when applicable – factor analyses (Appendix B1)[120] of all relevant subject related variables. In preparation for the conjoint analysis in Chapter 5, I applied a median split rule for all relevant subgroup variables (hereinafter *grouping variables*) which allows for a proper consideration of their distributions (see Appendix A2). The rule applied two conditions: 1. If *median* > *mean* then 'low' was assigned for < median and 'high' for ≥ median. And 2. If *median* < *mean* then 'low' was assigned for ≤ median and 'high' for > median.

A first set of variables captures *citizens familiarity* with DCFs. To begin with, both studies asked respondents for their self-reported *experience with DCFs* in two steps. First, respondents were asked whether they have made some experiences at all. A substantial part of the students (52%) stated that they already have made some experiences with DCFs. Within the broader public, however, DCFs seem to be relatively unknown to most citizens. Only 16.7% think they know much about them and only 3.4% have participated. 41.6% have never heard about DCFs. The remaining 38.3% have at least heard about them. Next, using a 7-point negative/positive scale, respondents who already have had some experiences with DCFs (at least heard about or more) were asked to give an average assessment about these experiences. On average, experienced respondents tended to evaluate their experiences rather positive (M=4.74; SD=1.2). Second, beforehand the conjoint experiment, respondents in the main study were asked whether or not they have concrete *expectations for DCFs* with about 35% stated to have clear expectations[121].

A second set of variables captures citizens democratic preferences and political attitudes. First, drawing on the new politics and cognitive mobilization hypothesis, *enlightened citizens* were operationalized using three variables: highest level of education (not asked in the pilot study),

[120] Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation.
[121] Not asked in the pilot study.

political interest, and internal efficacy. For *education*, respondents were asked to indicate their highest earned educational attainment including lower secondary school qualification ("Haupt- oder Volksschulabschluss"), secondary school certificate ("Realschulabschluss") and higher education qualification ("Abitur, Fachhochschulreife"). Additionally, categories included "still in education" and "without qualification". Note the latter two categories were ignored for analyses because either they were not distinctive (e.g., someone who is currently earning a higher education qualification through second-chance qualification is both still in education but already earned an educational achievement) or did not allow for conclusions about the actual educational level (e.g., someone who does not have any certificate could currently graduate at high school). About *political interest*, I mentioned earlier in this chapter that respondents in the pilot study were slightly more interested (M=7.99; SD=1.69; 11-point scale) than respondents in the main study (M=3.23; SD=1.12; 5-point scale). *Internal efficacy* was measured using the standard PEKS scale with two items ("understand politics" and "discuss politics"). Factor analysis show that responses load on one common factor (Appendix B1 (A.Table 9)). Therefore, the two items were combined to create a single index (α=.82 in the pilot study and α=.85 in the main study), with higher values indicating high internal efficacy (M=7; SD=1.72; 11-point scale in the pilot study and M=3.59; SD=1.09; 5-point scale in the main study).

Second, drawing on both the political dissatisfaction hypothesis and stealth thesis four variables (political satisfaction, external efficacy, political trust, and stealth attitudes) were included for *disaffected citizens*. In both studies respondents were asked for the extent to which they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Germany, with lower values indicating *dissatisfaction with democracy.* Respondents in the pilot study tended to be slightly more satisfied with democracy (M=7.48; SD=1.78; 11-point scale) than respondents in the main study (M=4.25; SD= 1.72; 7-point scale). *External efficacy* was measured using the standard PEKS scale with two items ("politicians care" and "politicians keep contact"). Factor analysis show that responses on these items load on one common factor (Appendix B1 (A.Table 9 and A.Table 10)). Therefore, the two items were combined to create a single scale (α=.75 in the pilot study and α=.86 in the main study), with lower values indicating low external efficacy (M=5.20; SD=1.64; 11-point scale in the pilot study and M=2.36; SD=1.02; 5-point scale in the main study). Next, while *political trust* was measured using a single question in the pilot study with '1' indicating low trust in politicians and '11' high trust in politicians

(M= 6.06; SD=1.76), a total of three items ("trust in parliament", "trust in government", and "trust in politicians"[122]) were used in the main study. Factor analysis show that responses load on one factor (Appendix B1 (A.Table 11)). The three items were combined to a single index (α=.95), with lower values indicating low political trust (M=3.93; SD=1.68; 7-point scale). Finally, *stealth attitudes* were measured using four standard items suggested by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002). Using 11-point scales in the pilot study and 7-point scales in the main study, respondents were asked about the extent to which they agree or oppose with the statements "stealth1: stop discuss and take action", "stealth2: compromise means selling out principles", "stealth3: decisions by businessmen", and "stealth4: decisions by experts", with higher values indicating stealth attitudes. The results of the factor analyses suggest stealth attitudes appear to be two-dimensional: A.Table 12 and A.Table 13 in Appendix B1 show both a "disaffection dimension" (stealth1 and stealth2) and an "actor dimension" (stealth 3 and stealth4). In order to cope with these empirical patterns, I created two stealth indices where the first captures anti-politician attitudes (α=.58 in the pilot study and α=.68 in the main study) and the second alternative-actor preferences (α=.44 in the pilot study and α=.62 in the main study). Yet, given both the insufficient Cronbach's alpha and comparability with existing studies, I followed the approach suggested by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse and combined all four stealth items to a single index. Though still not optimal this index justifies a more appropriate scale (α=.59 in the pilot study and α=.66 in the main study), with high values indicating stealth attitudes (M=4.63; SD=1.65; 11-point scale in the pilot study and M=4.05; SD=1.24; 7-point scale in the main study)[123]. In addition, the main survey included questions on *sunshine democracy*, which are a reversed version of the stealth concept (cf. Neblo et al., 2010, p. 572). Factor analysis show that all four items load on one dimension (Appendix B1 (A.Table 14)). Therefore, the four items were combined to a single index (α=.65), with higher values indicating high sunshine attitudes (M=5.41; SD=1.09; 7-point scale).

Citizens democratic governance preferences have been captured by two concepts: *participatory citizens* (including their direct-democratic and deliberative preferences) and *delegative citizens*

[122] The survey also included a question on trust in experts. The factor analysis indicates, however, that trust in experts loads on a different dimension (Appendix B1 (A.Table 11))), which is why I omitted experts from analyses.

[123] Nevertheless, we should keep in mind in further analyses that stealth attitudes can differ greatly in their form. Additionally, I have reran all analyses differentiating between both dimensions (Appendix C2.3.).

(including their representative and technocratic preferences). Both studies included questions on participatory, representative, and technocratic conceptions of democracy. Corroborating previous studies, citizens conceptions of democracy seem less clear (e.g., Bengtsson, 2012). Factor analyses for both studies show that although respondents seem to have a clear "participatory" conception of democracy, including both direct democratic forms ("referendums") *and* deliberative form ("political discussions in support of representative democracy"), "delegative" attitudes seem neither entirely distinctive nor conclusive (Appendix B1 (A.Table 15 and A.Table16)). Both technocratic and representative attitudes seem somewhat nebulous since items for both concepts slightly cross-load.

Participatory attitudes were measured using two items on direct-democratic and deliberative preferences indicating respondents' self-reported preferences on referendums (M=6.45; SD=2.57; 11-point scale in the pilot study and M=5.03; SD=1.70; 7-point scale in the main study) and political discussions (M=7.59; SD=2.07; 11-point scale in the pilot study and M=5.26; 1.36; 7-point scale in the main study). While both items were used separately for the conjoint analyses, I additionally employed an index variable comprising of both items. Again, higher values indicate positive participatory attitudes (M=7.02; SD=1.87 in the pilot study and M=5.14; SD=1.38 in the main study). Finally, *delegative attitudes* were measured using two questions on representative and technocratic political decision making. While the pilot study asked respondents to what extend they agree to the statements that only elected representatives should make political decisions (M=6.10; SD=2.62; 11-point scale) and that independent experts should make political decisions (M=5.27; SD=2.78; 11-point scale), respondents in the main study were asked whether they think decisions made by elected representatives (M=4.49; SD=1.62; 7-point scale) or by experts (M=4.15; SD=1.60; 7-point scale) were the worst or best way of political decision-making. For both studies, higher values indicate delegative attitudes.

Next, Following Schulz et al. (2018) I used eight items to capture *populist citizens*[124]. These items cover a threefold distinction of populist attitudes on an *anti-elitism*, *sovereignty*, and *homogeneity* dimension (see Table 8). Factor analyses confirm these three dimensions empirically (Appendix B1 (A.Table 17)), with α=.61 for anti-elitism, α=.81 for sovereignty, and α=.86 for homogeneity. Although Schultz et al. (2018) remind us, that treating populism as a

[124] Note, the populism questions were included in the main survey only.

unidimensional construct might be an oversimplification of the actual concept, this study additionally measures populism as a single index composed of all items (α=.81), which is common for most populism studies. Nevertheless, analyses were reran using the three fain-grained measures proposed by Schutz et al. (2018). Overall, respondents tend to have moderate populist attitudes (M=4.70; SD=1.09 on a 7-point scale), with lower values for the homogeneity dimension (M=4.02; SD=1.46) and higher values for both the sovereignty (M=4.91; SD=1.45) and anti-elitism (M=5.37; SD=1.35) dimensions.

Finally, the main study contained some questions for *confided citizens*. These included like-me perceptions and social trust perceptions. Following Pow et al. (2020) *like-me perceptions* were measured using three items on respondents' perceptions of participants in a DCFs (participants "are like-me", "have the same background", and "share the same experiences"). Factor analysis show that responses on these items load on one common factor (Appendix B1 (A.Table 18)). Therefore, the three items were combined to create a single scale (α=.89), with higher values indicating positive like-me perceptions (M=4.30; SD=1.38 on a 7-point scale). In terms of *trust perception*s, respondents first were asked to what extent they trust ordinary citizens to make decisions that are "in the public interest" and are "good decisions". Again, the factor analysis confirms one common factor (Appendix B1 (A.Table 19)) which then was comprised to a single index (α=.89), with higher values indicating high trust in fellow citizens (M=4.49; SD=1.41 on a 7-point scale). Second, respondents were asked about the extent they trust DCFs in general with results indicating moderate trust perceptions (M=4.47; SD=1.29 on a 7-point scale).

Table 8: Measurement of covariates

Variable	Description Pilot Study	Description Main Study
Experiences	Self-reported experience with DCFs. Respondents were presented with a short description of DCFs (see Appendix D1.1.) and asked: "Do you have experience with such citizen forums?" Response categories included *'Yes, I have already participated in one or more citizen forums'*, *'Yes but I have not yet participated myself'*, and *'No'*.	Self-reported experience with DCFs. Respondents were presented with a short description of DCFs (see Appendix D2.1.) and asked: "Please tell us, how well, if at all, are you familiar with citizen forums?" Response categories included *'I am unfamiliar with citizen forums'*, *'I have heard of citizen forums before'*, *'I know about citizen forums, but have not yet participated'*, *'I have already participated*

		in a citizen forum', and *'I have already participated in several citizen forums'*. Respondents who indicated that they at least have heard about citizen forums were asked the following question: "How do you evaluate citizen forums based on your experience or knowledge?" with a scale ranging from *'1' very negative* to *'7' very positive*.
Expectations	Not asked.	A binary indicator of whether respondents stated expectations on DCFs. The question wording was "Do you have concrete ideas about the roles or tasks that citizen forums should have in policy-making?" which was coded *'1'* if a respondent stated expectations and *'0'* otherwise.
Education	Not asked.	Self-reported highest educational attainment. The scale contains five categories: *'Currently in school education'*, *'lower secondary school ("Haupt- oder Volksschulabschluss")'*, *'secondary school/ middle school ("Realschulabschluss" or equivalent)'*, *'high school/ higher education (Abitur, Fachhochschulreife" or above)'*, and *'without school qualification'*.
Internal Efficacy	Self-reported assessments of one's own political competences. Index variable consisting of two items (Political Efficacy Short Scale (PEKS)), with a 11-point scale ranging from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'11' strongly agree*. Respondents were asked: "I feel confident to actively participate in a conversation about political issues" and "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country". The responses on these two items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating a high sense of internal efficacy.	Self-reported assessments of one's own political competences. Index variable consisting of two items. (Political Efficacy Short Scale (PEKS)), with a 5-point scale ranging from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'5' strongly agree*. Respondents were asked: "I feel confident to actively participate in a conversation about political issues" and "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country". The responses on these two items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating a high sense of internal efficacy.
Political Interest	Self-reported assessment of the question "How interested would you say you are in politics?" with a scale ranging from *'1' not at all interested* to *'11' very interested*	Self-reported assessment of the question "How interested would you say you are in politics?" with a scale ranging from *'1' not at all interested* to *'5' very interested*.

Political Satisfaction	Self-reported satisfaction with the current functioning of democracy. Respondents were asked "How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Germany?" on a scale from *'1' not satisfied at all* to *'11' very satisfied*.	Self-reported satisfaction with the current functioning of democracy. Respondents were asked "How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Germany?" on a scale from *'1' not satisfied at all* to *'7' very satisfied*.
External Efficacy	Self-reported assessments of one's own feelings about the responsiveness of politicians. Index variable consisting of two items (Political Efficacy Short Scale (PEKS)), with a 11-point scale ranging from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'11' strongly agree*. Respondents were asked: "Politicians care about what ordinary people think" and "Politicians try to keep in close contact with the population". The responses on these two items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating a high sense of external efficacy.	Self-reported assessments of one's own feelings about the responsiveness of politicians. Index variable consisting of two items (Political Efficacy Short Scale (PEKS)), with a 5-point scale ranging from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'5' strongly agree.* Respondents were asked: "Politicians care about what ordinary people think" and "Politicians try to keep in close contact with the population". The responses on these two items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating a high sense of external efficacy.
Political Trust	Self-reported trust in politicians. Respondents were asked: "How much do you trust or distrust politicians?" with a scale ranging from *'1' no trust at all* to *'11' complete trust*.	Index variable consisting of three items. Respondents were asked: "How much do you personally trust the parliament?", "How much do you personally trust the government?", and "How much do you personally trust politicians?" The scales range from *'1' no trust at all* to *'7' complete trust*. Responses on these three items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high political trust.
Stealth attitudes	Index variable consisting of the four original stealth items (cf. Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002): "Elected officials would help the country more if they stopped talking and just took action on important problems", "What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out one's principles", "Our government would run better if decisions were left up to successful business people", and "Our government would run better if decisions were left up to non-elected, independent experts rather than politicians or the people"	Index variable consisting of the four original stealth items (cf. Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002): "Elected officials would help the country more if they stopped talking and just took action on important problems", "What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out one's principles", "Our government would run better if decisions were left up to successful business people", and "Our government would run better if decisions were left up to non-elected, independent experts rather than politicians or the people"

	Scales run from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'11' strongly agree*. Responses on these four items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high stealth attitudes.	Scales run from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'7' strongly agree*. Responses on these four items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high stealth attitudes.
Sunshine attitudes	Not asked.	Index variable consisting of the four original sunshine items (cf. Neblo et al., 2010): "It is important for elected officials to discuss and debate things thoroughly before making major policy changes", "Openness to other people's views and a willingness to compromise are important for politics in a country as diverse as ours", "In a democracy like ours, there are some important differences between how government should be run and how a business should be managed", and "It is important for the people and their elected representatives to have the final say in running government, rather than leaving it up to unelected experts" Scales run from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'7' strongly agree*. Responses on these four items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high sunshine attitudes.
Participatory attitudes	Index variable of two items, indicating respondents self-reported attitudes on the following forms of political decision-making: "Political discussions for citizens should be organized more often in support of representative democracy" and "Important political issues should more often be decided in referendums" on a scale from one to eleven where *'1' indicates disagreement* on the statement and *'11' agreement*. Responses on these two items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high participatory attitudes.	Index variable of two items, indicating respondents self-reported attitudes on the following forms of political decision-making: "Political discussions for citizens should be organized more often in support of representative democracy" and "Important political issues should more often be decided in referendums" on a scale from *1 to 7* the extent to which they *agree or disagree* with these statements. Responses on these two items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high participatory attitudes.
Delegative attitudes	Two variables, indicating support for representative decision-making, where respondents were asked how strongly they agree with the statement that "Only elected representatives should make political decisions" or	Two variables, indicating support for representative decision-making ("Let elected political representatives decide") or expert decision-making ("Allow experts in different policy areas to take decisions") where *'1'*

	expert decision-making, that "Independent experts should make political decisions". Preferences were measured using a 11-point scale where *'1'* indicates *disagreement* on the statement and *'11' agreement*.	indicates *the worst way to make political decisions* and *'7'* the *best way to make political decisions.*
Populist attitudes	Not asked.	Index variable consisting of eight items. Respondents were asked the following questions (cf. Schulz et al., 2018): "The differences between the people and the so-called elite are much greater than the differences within the people" (Anti1), "Elected officials would help the country more if they stopped talking and just took action on important problems" (Anti 2), "The people should have the last say on important political issues through referendums" (Sov1), "People and not the politicians should make the most important political decisions" (Sov2), "The politicians in parliament must follow the will of the people" (Sov3), "Ordinary people share a good and honest character" (Hom1), "The ordinary people pull together" (Hom2), "The ordinary people share the same values and interests" (Hom3). Scales run from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'7' strongly agree*. Responses on these eight items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high populist attitudes. Additionally, mean indices for each populism dimension were built.
Like me perceptions	Not asked.	Index variable consisting of three items (cf. Pow et al., 2020). Respondents were asked to indicate how much they perceive the following statements to be accurate using a scale running from *1 to 7*: "Participants of the citizens' forum are people like me", "The participants of the citizens' forum have similar experiences to me", and "The participants of the citizens' forum have a similar background to me".

		Responses on these three items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high like-me perceptions.
Trust in fellow citizens	Not asked.	Index variable consisting of two items indicating the extent to which they trust fellow citizens to make political decisions. Respondents were presented with the following statements and asked to assess them on a scale from *'1' strongly disagree* to *'7' strongly agree*: „I trust that ordinary citizens make political decisions that are in the public interest", and "I trust that ordinary citizens make good political decisions". Responses on these two items were averaged (row means) with high values indicating high trust in fellow citizens.
Trust in DCFs	Not asked.	Self-reported trust in DCFs. Respondents were asked: "Do you believe that citizens' forums in general can be trusted?" with a scale from *'1' cannot trust citizen forums at all* to *'7' can fully trust citizen forums*.

Note: Question wording for various covariates.

4.3.3. Analysis

Both the pilot study and the main study allow me to test a proper counterfactual about how citizens would assess DCFs if they were fully informed (and had at least the opportunity to think through it[125]). This touches on Lafont's critique (2017; 2019) who stated that citizens need to have both some awareness and knowledge about DCFs (see Chapter 2.2.). As describes earlier in this chapter, respondents were presented with various information packages, including information and arguments via visual fact sheets (pilot and main study) and a video presentation (main study). Unless otherwise noted, this study employs a *causal quantity of interest*, the *Average Marginal Component Effect* (AMCE). AMCEs express the expected change in the probability that a scenario was chosen when a particular attribute level is compared to

[125] Indeed, not all did. The main study, however, also recorded the time respondents spend for reading the information packages and answering the conjoint parts. I use this information for robustness checks (Chapter 5.4.).

the baseline level (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014). Since each respondent received several conjoint tasks standard errors were clustered per respondents (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014, p. 17). The *effective numbers of observations* reflect the number of respondents multiplied by the number of scenarios[126]. All models employ the *choice outcome* as main quantity of interest, which, unless otherwise noted, was regressed on all attributes of DCFs. Effects are measured in percentage points and indicate the increase or decrease in the probability of choosing a DCF when an attribute switches from one category (reference category) to another. Effects can be interpreted as both the direction and intensity of a certain attribute level (see Chapter 4.2.). Additionally, Marginal Means (cf. Leeper et al., 2020) were estimated for descriptive representations (Appendix C)[127]. Analyses were reran using the rating outcome variables (see Chapter 5.4.; Appendix C).

Unless otherwise noted, models were estimated using the Cregg package (Leeper, 2020) in R that was developed primarily because of potential misinterpretations of AMCEs for subgroup analyses[128]. Additionally, the Cregg package allows for a straightforward calculation and visualization of effects.

[126] 24 (or 12 pairs) for the pilot study and 12 (or 6 pairs) for the main study. For more information see Chapter 4.2.1. and Chapter 4.2.2.

[127] Marginal Means require no modelling assumptions and are *descriptive quantities of interest*. They represent the mean outcome (choice or rating) across all observations of a particular attribute level, averaging across all remaining levels (cf. Leeper et al., 2020). For ease of simplification, consider two attributes with two levels respectively: recruitment (random selection, self-selection) and composition (mixed groups, citizen groups). Thought as a two-way contingency table four Marginal Means on the margins for each level in each attribute (random selection, self-selection, mixed groups, citizen groups) exist where the average is taken for the remaining levels. The Marginal Mean for random selection, for instance, then is the average across random selection for mixed groups plus random selection for citizens groups.

[128] https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/cregg/cregg.pdf

Chapter 5: Results

"The argument is not about whether minipublics, per se, produce those goods or not; the claim here is simply, that from an empirical point of view, we need to be open to the possibility that in some contexts and for some purposes, a variety of institutions may do the job"

(Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, p. 79)

This study examines citizens *contingent* perceptions of DCFs. It not only asks whether citizens support the use of DCFs *in general* (e.g., Bedock & Pilet, 2020a; cf. Bedock & Pilet, 2020b; Jacquet et al., 2020; Pilet et al., 2020), but takes DCFs as a given (yet novel) practice and asks how they *must be designed* in order to solicit support among (different types of) citizens. It presents results from both a conjoint experiment with 231 students (pilot study) and a similar conjoint experiment with 2,039 respondents in Germany (main study). Both conjoint experiments consider *object related conditions*, including a variety of design characteristics (Chapter 3.2.2. and Chapter 3.3.1.) and issue characteristics (Chapter 3.2.2., Chapter 3.3.2., and Chapter 3.3.3.). Furthermore, the main study examines *subject related conditions* and contextualizes support for DCFs within both their familiarity (Chapter 3.2.3 and Chapter 3.3.4.) and approaches that have been discussed in conjuncture with democratic preferences, inter alia (Chapter 3.2.3. and Chapter 3.3.5.). Note, however, due to the insufficient sample sizes in the pilot study, both within interactions and subgroup analyses are presented for the main study only.

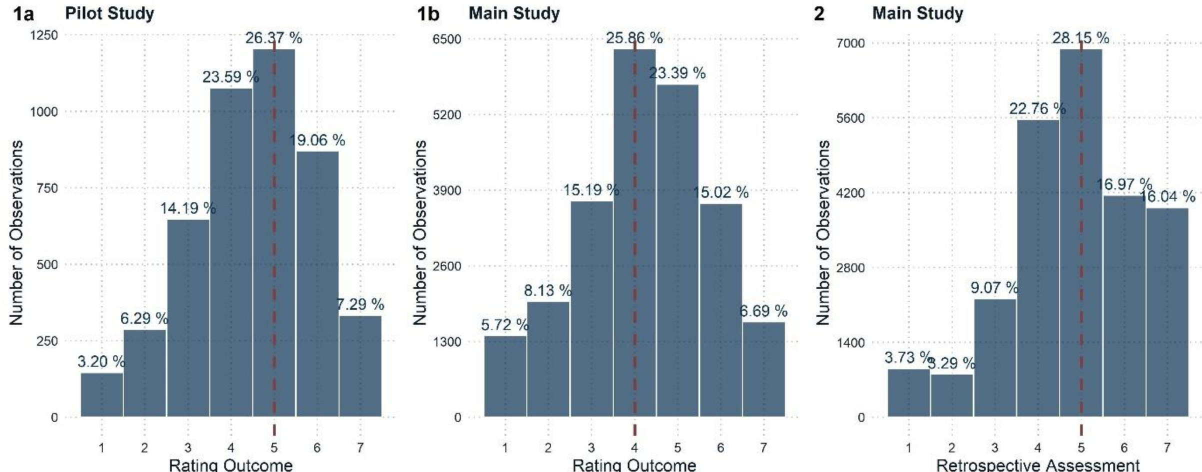
This chapter proceeds as follows. It first refers to the *benchmark models* with all respondents for both the pilot and the main study. These include all conjoint attributes presented above. Second, it includes important *attribute interactions* (within interactions), namely issue characteristics and outcome favorability. It then examines *subgroup differences* (between interactions) for various types of citizens in order to test for heterogeneous effects. Finally, the chapter closes with a *discussion of the results* followed by a batch of *robustness checks and diagnostics*. I present results in two steps each. First, I use two *descriptive measures* to examine overall support of DCFs. While the *rating outcome variable* of the conjoint experiment describes

the average rating of the scenarios (hereinafter 'rating outcome'), the *retrospective assessment variable* describes respondents' perceived appropriateness of DCFs after being exposed to multiple scenarios (hereinafter 'retrospective assessment')[129]. Descriptive differences between subgroups and mean comparisons are appended (Appendix B2). Second, AMCEs were estimated to examine the *causal effects* of various design- and issue characteristics on support of DCFs.

5.1. Benchmark models: How non-participants assess deliberative citizens' forums

Overall, respondents tend to endorse DCFs (although support is not overwhelming, but rather moderate). However, although 49.7% (pilot study) and 45.1% (main study) of respondents were positive about DCFs[130], a large portion opted for the center category, indicating ambiguous preferences inter alia. Only 23.7% (pilot study) and 29.0% (main study) clearly opposed DCFs[131]. Figure 10 visualizes the distributions of the rating outcome variables (left and center panel) and the retrospective assessment of DCFs in the main study (right panel).

Figure 10: Overall support of DCFs



Note: Panel 1a and 1b present the distribution of the rating outcome variables for the pilot (left) and main study (middle). Panel 2 shows the distribution of the retrospective assessment of DCFs. Dashed vertical lines represent median categories; *n1a*=4,565; *n1b*=24,468; *n2*=24,468.

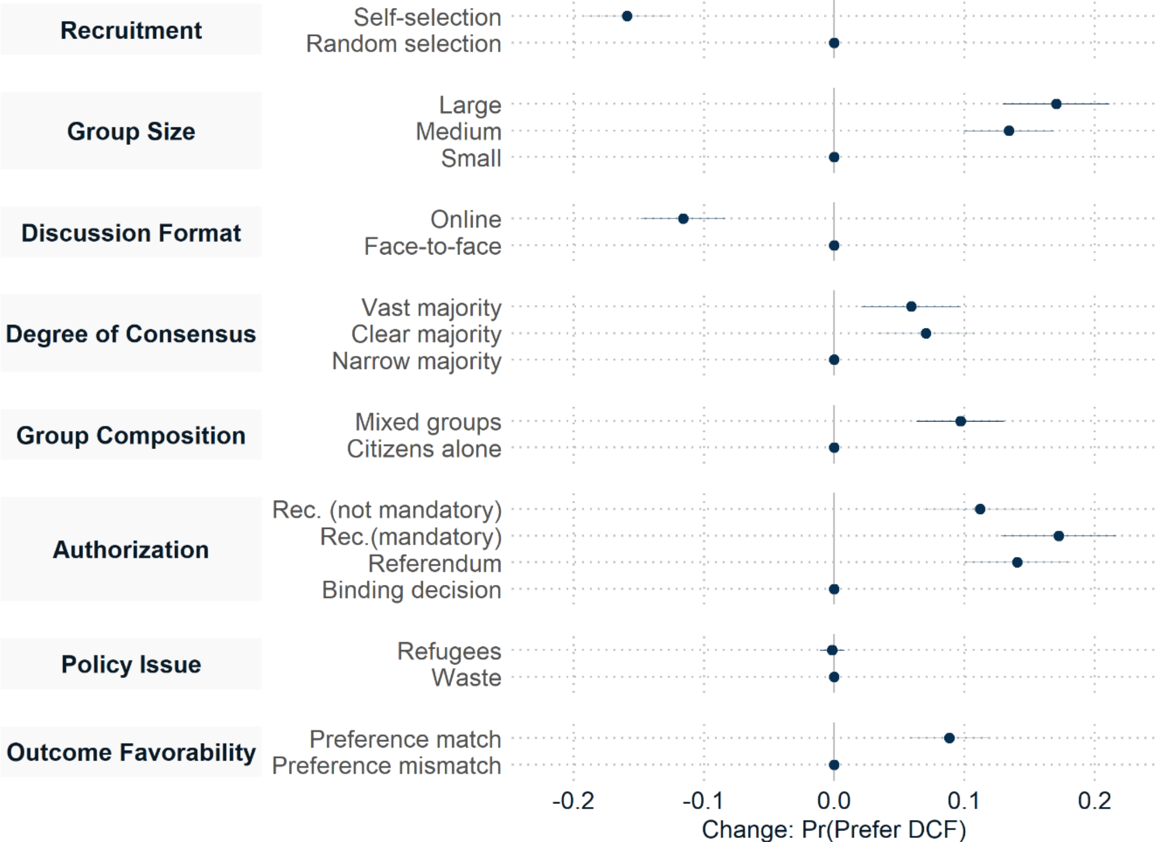
[129] The retrospective assessment was included in the main study only.

[130] Responses above midpoint.

[131] Responses below midpoint.

On average, students in the pilot study tended to rate scenarios slightly more positive (M=4.5; SD=1.45) than respondents in the main study (M=4.25; SD=1.54). Retrospectively asked, however, 61.2% of respondents consider DCFs to be appropriate means of involving people in political decision-making. Only 16.1% yield opposite opinions. Overall, the average retrospective assessment (M=4.83; SD=1.51) was slightly higher than the average rating of the scenarios (see above).

Figure 11: Benchmark model pilot study - choice outcome



Note: Pilot study; effective number of observations = 4,542. Effects of randomly assigned attributes of DCFs on the probability of choosing a DCF. Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

Next, I estimated the effects of *input, throughput, and output criteria* (Chapter 3.3.1.), *issue characteristics* (Chapter 3.3.2.), and *outcome favorability* (Chapter 3.3.3.) on the outcomes of interest (see Appendix C1 for additional outcome variables). Figure 11 and Figure 12 visualize coefficient plots for the pilot and the main studies. They show the effects of various attributes on the probability that respondents have chosen a DCF. Points without bars denote the

baseline for each attribute[132]. Dots with horizontal bars represent cluster-robust 95% confidence intervals. Point estimates to the right of the vertical zero line indicate a positive effect of a certain attribute level on choosing a DCF compared to the baseline, whereas those to the left indicate a negative effect. Those that touch the vertical zero line indicate no significant differences in compared to the baseline category.

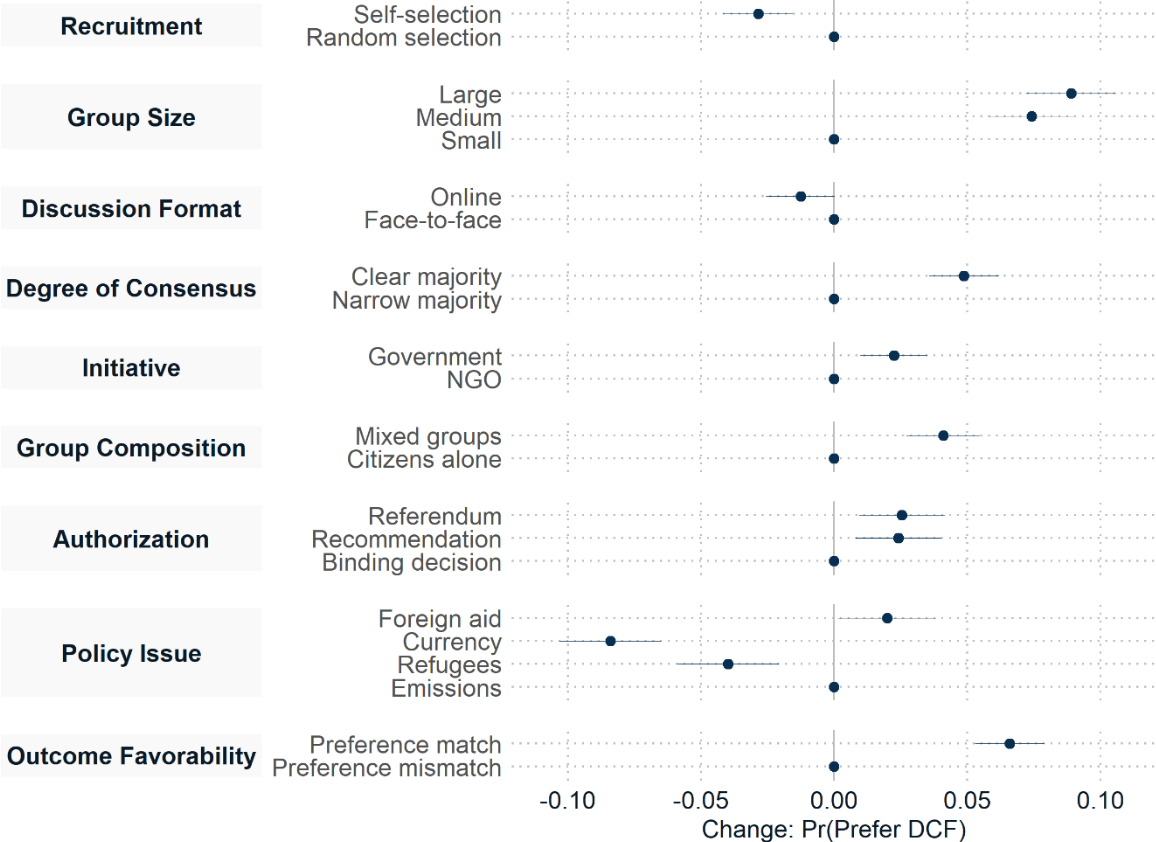
The findings of both studies are largely identical, although results of the pilot study are much clearer in terms of effect size. Note, in order to help illustrate the interpretation of effects, I report all effects for both benchmark models in this chapter. For ease of simplification, however, the remaining chapters interpret directions of effects and their substantial meanings only. First, non-participants tend to endorse large groups with randomly selected citizens (*input criteria*). The probability that DCFs were supported decreased by 16% (pilot study) and 3% (main study) when the level switched from random selection to self-selection. By the same token, the probability that a scenario was chosen increased when the level of group size switched from small to medium (13.4% in the pilot study and 7.4% in the main study) and from small to large (17.1% in the pilot study and 8.9% in the main study). Marginal Means plots (Appendix C1.2.) reaffirm these findings, with small groups having the strongest effect on rejecting DCFs in both the pilot and the main study. Second, non-participants assess DCFs for their *throughput criteria*, with a better chance of winning support if participants drafted proposals with clear majority decisions. The probability that a scenario was chosen increased by 7% (pilot study) and 5% (main study) when the level switched from narrow to clear majority decisions[133]. The effect of discussion format is less clear though. While respondents in the pilot study preferred face-to-face discussions, the negative effect for online discussions is both small and not significant in the main study. Overall, as expected, non-participants seem to demand both inclusionary and internal extra provisions, corroborating **H1a and H1b**.

Third, contrary to advocates of strongly empowered and decoupled uses of DCFs (see Chapter 2.2.), but confirming **H1c**, non-participants in general dislike any decisive and institutionally

[132] Reference categories are as follows: Recruitment = Random selection; Group size = Small; Group; Discussion format = Face-to-face; Degree of consensus = Narrow majority; Composition = Citizens alone; Authorization = Binding decision; Outcome favorability = Mismatch.
For the *main study* additionally: Policy issue = Climate change; Initiative = NGO.
For the *pilot study* additionally: Policy issue = Waste disposal.
[133] There is no statistically significant difference for vast majorities (pilot study).

decoupled roles of DCFs (*output criteria*). The effects for authorization indicate that the probability of supporting a DCF increased when the level switched from binding decisions to any advisory role preceding actual decision-making. Compared to binding decisions, support for DCFs increased by 17.2% (pilot study) and 2.4% (main study) when the output was a recommendation to elected officials and by 14.1% (pilot study) and 2.5% (main study) when the output was a recommendation followed by a referendum[134].

Figure 12: Benchmark model main study - choice outcome



Note: Main study; effective number of observations = 24,468. Effects of randomly assigned attributes of DCFs on the probability of choosing a DCF. Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

With regard to coupling, top-down formats (main study only) composed of mixed groups were more likely to win support. More precisely, the probability that a scenario was chosen increased by 9.7% (pilot study) and 4.1% (main study) when the level for group composition switched from exclusively citizens to mixed-group memberships, including citizens,

[134] Moreover, Marginal Means plots (Appendix C1.2.) for the pilot study show that binding decisions together with small groups even exert the strongest effects on rejecting DCFs.

administrators and political actors. Moreover, the chance that a scenario was chosen increased by 2.2% for governmental as compared to non-governmental conveners (main study).

Finally, legitimacy perceptions also hinge on substantial considerations, although findings of the pilot and main studies slightly differ. Issue differences had large effects in the main study, but hardly had any effect in the pilot study. Outcome favorability, by contrast, strongly mattered for both. First, my expectations regarding issue types are not fully met. Whereas there were no significant differences between issues in the pilot study, findings for issue variations slightly differed from my assumptions in the main study. Here, respondents perceived both the non-technical/less-salient issue (foreign aid) and the technical/salient issue (emissions) as particularly apt for DCFs, whereas the non-technical/salient issue (refugees) and especially the technical/less-salient issue (currency) decreased their legitimacy perceptions. More precisely, the probability that a scenario was chosen increased by 2% when the level switched from emissions to foreign aid but decreased by 4% (refugees) and 8.4% (currency). Moreover, disconfirming my expectations, Marginal Means plots (Appendix C1.2.) demonstrate, that the currency issue was also the least liked one followed by refugees, climate change, and foreign aid. Apparently, non-participants preferred either non-technical but non-salient issues or technical but salient issues to be subject to DCFs. As a remainder, **H2a** claimed that perceived legitimacy of DCFs is highest under conditions of technical (salient and less-salient) issues and lowest under conditions of non-technical (particularly salient) issues. Whereas the first part of the hypothesis is confirmed for the technical/salient issue (emissions) it is not for the technical/non-salient issue (currency). And whereas finding for the non-technical/salient issue (refugees) corroborates the second part of the hypothesis it does not for the non-technical/non-salient issue (foreign aid), where support even was most remarked. Finally, the effect for outcome favorability conforms my expectations (**H3a**). DCFs are about 8.8% (pilot study) and 6.5% (main study) more likely to win support when the level switches from non-preferred to preferred policy outputs, indicating that support for DCFs quickly decreases when decisions are against the one's own substantive policy preferences, putting a question mark on strong empowerment of DCFs in general.

In sum, findings of both the pilot and the main study reveal that non-participants in general support non-empowered, purely advisory and institutionally coupled DCFs while simultaneously demanding extra institutional provisions that make DCFs more representative

and inclusive. By the same token, non-participants yield strong substantial considerations, with legitimacy perceptions being higher for decisions that align with their own preferences.

To further examine substantive considerations, I have run within interaction models both for policy issues and outcome favorability and the respective design features of DCFs. Figure 13 and Figure 14 show conditional effects of attribute values for various policy issues and outcome favorability. Note, to minimize inferential errors this section reports Marginal Means instead of Average Component Interaction Effects (ACIEs) since the interpretation of ACIEs is difficult when attributes contain more than two attribute levels (e.g., policy issue)[135]. I use Marginal Means plots to show preferences for different attributes contingent on the policy issue and outcome favorability. For both interaction terms and conditional AMCEs see Appendix C3. First, there are small differences between various policy issues even though the effects are less clear than expected with only outcome favorability producing explicit differences (Appendix C3.1.).

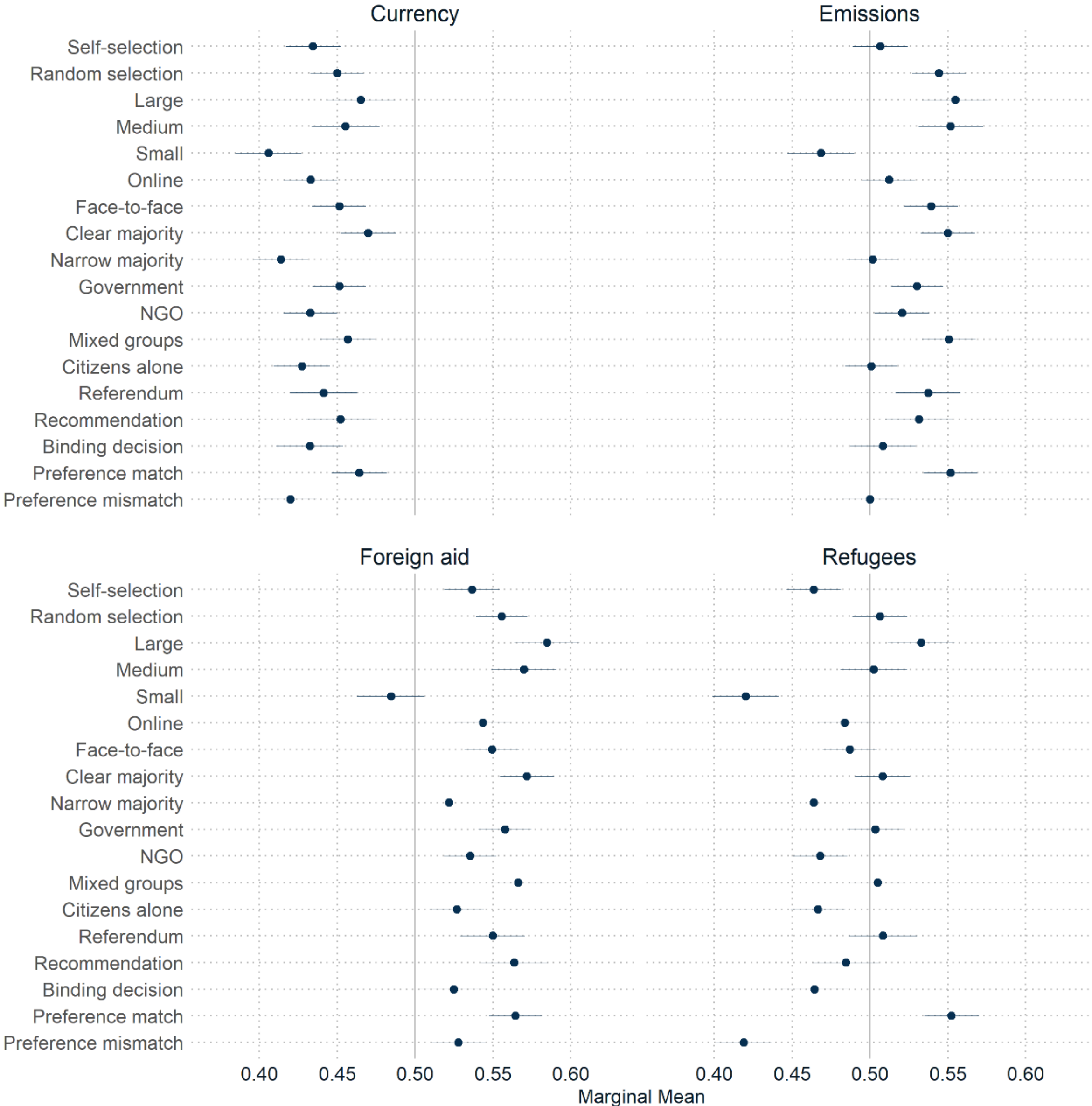
Although citizens yield strong substantive considerations independently of concrete policy issues, the effect is most marked for the refugee (and emission) issue. Thus, preference alignment seems even more important for salient issues. There are a few more interesting effects for various policy issues interactions, but they were not significant when explicitly tested for differences in effect sizes (Appendix C3.1). Nevertheless, I report descriptive differences (Figure 13). Note, results are anything but clear and must be interpreted with caution. Rather, they depict tendencies only and require further research.

As for input criteria, interaction effects for recruitment indicate small differences for both the refugee and emission issues (but not for foreign aid and crypto currency), with a slight but clear preference for random selection. Moreover, effects for group size are the same for every issue, with large groups being preferred to small groups although this effect seems most marked for both the refugees and emission issues (here, small groups have been rejected most clearly). To sum up, input criteria tend to be more important for salient issues than for less

[135] Here, ACIEs report the change in the probability of choosing a DCF of each level of an attribute relative to its reference category and contingent on another attribute (cf. Leeper, 2020; Leeper et al., 2020). For example, we could check the effects for each level of authorization, relative to the baseline level (e.g., binding decision), contingent on the policy issue. It is also possible to run an *explicit test of differences* that, however, is contingent on both the respective baseline categories and levels of the interaction variable (see Appendix C3).

salient issues. Next, throughput criteria seem equally (un)important for every issue. While there are no differences for discussion format, the degree of consensus yields the same effects for each issue with clear majorities being preferred over narrow ones.

Figure 13: Conditional effects for various policy issues



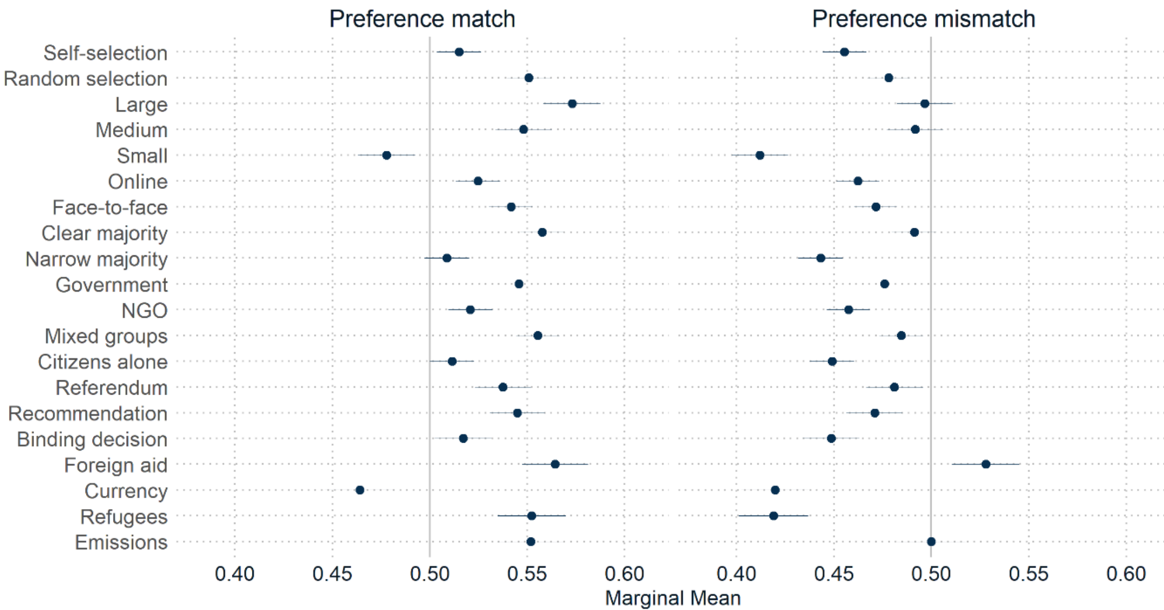
Note: The figure shows Marginal Means for various characteristics of DCFs contingent on the policy issue.

With regard to coupling, the effect for group composition is independent of the issue, with mixed groups being preferred over mere citizens groups. As for initiative, however, citizens were slightly more likely to choose scenarios including top-down initiatives than bottom-up initiatives for the refugee issue, while there are no differences for the remaining issues. Taken together, although coupling criteria are important for all issues, there appears to be somewhat

greater demand across salient issues. Finally, citizens tend to prefer non-empowered DCFs particularly for non-technical issues. The interaction effects suggest that except for the refugees and foreign aid, no difference exists across the issues. For the refugee issue, however, referendums were preferred over binding decisions. By contrast, recommendations were preferred over binding decisions for foreign aid (see also Appendix C3.1.)).

Overall, these findings only partly confirm **H2b**. Although citizens are less open to strong empowerment under conditions of non-technical issues (refugees and foreign aid), most of the design attributes are equally (un)important across various policy issues, indicating that citizens are not significantly more or less open to coupling and more or less interested in extra provisions depending on the issue at stake.

Figure 14: Conditional effects for outcome favorability



Note: The figure shows Marginal Means for various characteristics of DCFs contingent on outcome favorability.

Second, while citizens in general tended to choose scenarios where the outcome aligned with their own preferences there are small differences both for authorization and policy issues (Figure 14; see also Appendix C3.2.). Although citizens who received an unfavorable outcome were generally less likely to support these scenarios, they were more likely to opt for referendums compared to binding decisions[136]. By contrast, there were no such differences for authorization for citizens who received a favorable outcome. Furthermore, even for preference

[136] The difference for authorization is significant for the rating outcome variable (see Appendix C3.2.).

matches, citizens tended to avoid the currency issue. By contrast, citizens who received a non-preferred outcome were more likely to reject the refugee issue (see above). Again, some interesting effects emerge. Although citizens tended to avoid small groups even in cases where the outcome aligned with their preferences, this effect is even more pronounced for cases with preference mismatch. By the same token, although citizens in general tended to endorse clear majorities, this effect is even more marked for citizens obtaining non-preferred outcomes. Taken together, my findings only partly conform **H3b**. Although citizens are less open to strong empowerment under conditions of substantial preference divergence (favoring referendums), the remaining design criteria are equally (un)important.

5.2. Contingency: How different types of citizens assess deliberative citizens' forums

Starting from a contingency argument (Chapter 2.2.4. and Chapter 3.2.), this chapter presents findings for different strata of the citizenry. It does so by focusing on *theoretically relevant subgroups* (see Chapter 3.2.3. and Chapter 3.3.5.).

For each type of citizens this chapter applies a twofold approach. First it uses both the *rating outcome* and the *retrospective assessment* of DCFs to describe overall support of DCFs. It then iterates over different subsets and estimates AMCEs for both input, throughput, and output criteria and issue characteristics on preferring DCFs for each subgroup. Subgroups were built using a median split rule (see Chapter 4.3.2. and Appendix A2). For each grouping variable I ran two tests to formally check whether there are statistically significant differences between the two groups: Whereas the two-sided t-tests indicates significant differences in means for the rating outcome and retrospective assessment of DCFs, nested model comparisons (ANOVA) detect preference heterogeneity and test whether any interactions between the grouping variable and attribute levels differ from zero (cf. Leeper, 2020, p. 5). Unless otherwise noted, both mean comparisons and nested model comparisons were significant with at least p=0.05 (see Appendix B2 (A.Table 21 and A.Table 22)).

I refer to difference plots to show conditional AMCEs. Difference plots can be interpreted straightforwardly as the *estimated difference in effect sizes for one group (main group) compared to another (comparison group)* (cf. Leeper, 2020). For dichotomous outcomes (choice outcome), they

indicate the increase/decrease in the probability of choosing a scenario for a particular attribute level relative to its baseline level in the main group minus the probability of choosing a scenario in the comparison group for the same attribute level relative to its baseline category[137].

Note, however, difference plots show *differences in effect sizes* between the two groups only. A negative (positive) effect in differences does not indicate that the comparison group necessarily possessed the opposite effect when the attribute switched from one level to another. A negative (positive) effect indicates that main group was *more likely* to reject (prefer) the scenario as compared to the comparison group. Moreover, while significant effects indicate differences between the two groups, *non-significant effects* only indicate that both groups perceived the attributes *equally important or unimportant*. Finally, differences show the heterogeneity in causal effects of attribute variations only. They do not, however, depict descriptive (dis)similarities (cf. Leeper et al., 2020). For separate effects for various subgroups (Conditional AMCE) and descriptive differences in preferences (Marginal Means) see Appendix C2.

5.2.1. Familiarity

With regard to familiarity I have distinguished three mechanisms: information, experiences, and expectations (see Chapter 3.2.3). As for *information*, I checked for differences between respondents who had sufficiently engaged with arguments on various design criteria of DCFs and those who had not[138]. First, mean comparisons show that respondents who have read the arguments thoroughly express significantly higher legitimacy perceptions (arguments on authorization: M=4.28; SD=1.52; arguments on recruitment: M=4.28; SD=1.5) than respondents who have not read the arguments (M=4.22; SD=1.55 resp. M=4.22; SD=1.57). Similarly, reading arguments positively affect the retrospective assessment of DCFs. While respondents who have read the arguments thoroughly are more comfortable with envisioning DCFs as elements in political decision-making (authorization: M=4.99; SD=1.44; recruitment: M=4.98; SD=1.45),

[137] As a toy example, when the probability for satisfied citizens to choose a scenario increase by 5% when the level for authorization switches from binding decisions to recommendations whereas it is 0% for dissatisfied citizens, the difference for dissatisfied citizens is minus 5%.

[138] Outliers were excluded using the interquartile range (IQR) which is the difference between the 75th percentile and the 25th percentile of a variable's distribution. For both timing variables, any observation 1.5 times the IQR greater than the third quartile or 1.5 times the IQR less than the first quartile were defined as outliers.

retrospective assessments are lower among respondents who have read the arguments scarcely only (M=4.68; SD=1.55; resp. M=4.67; SD=1.55). Similarly, even though indirectly comparable only, respondents of the students' sample who were in the information group (arguments on various design features) had significantly higher legitimacy perceptions (M=4.62; SD=1.46) than students who only had the opportunity to read the glossary (M=4.38; SD=1.44). For better illustration, Figure 17 (average evaluation of DCFs) and Figure 18 (retrospective assessment) show distributions of various familiarity variables, including knowledge, experiences, and expectations.

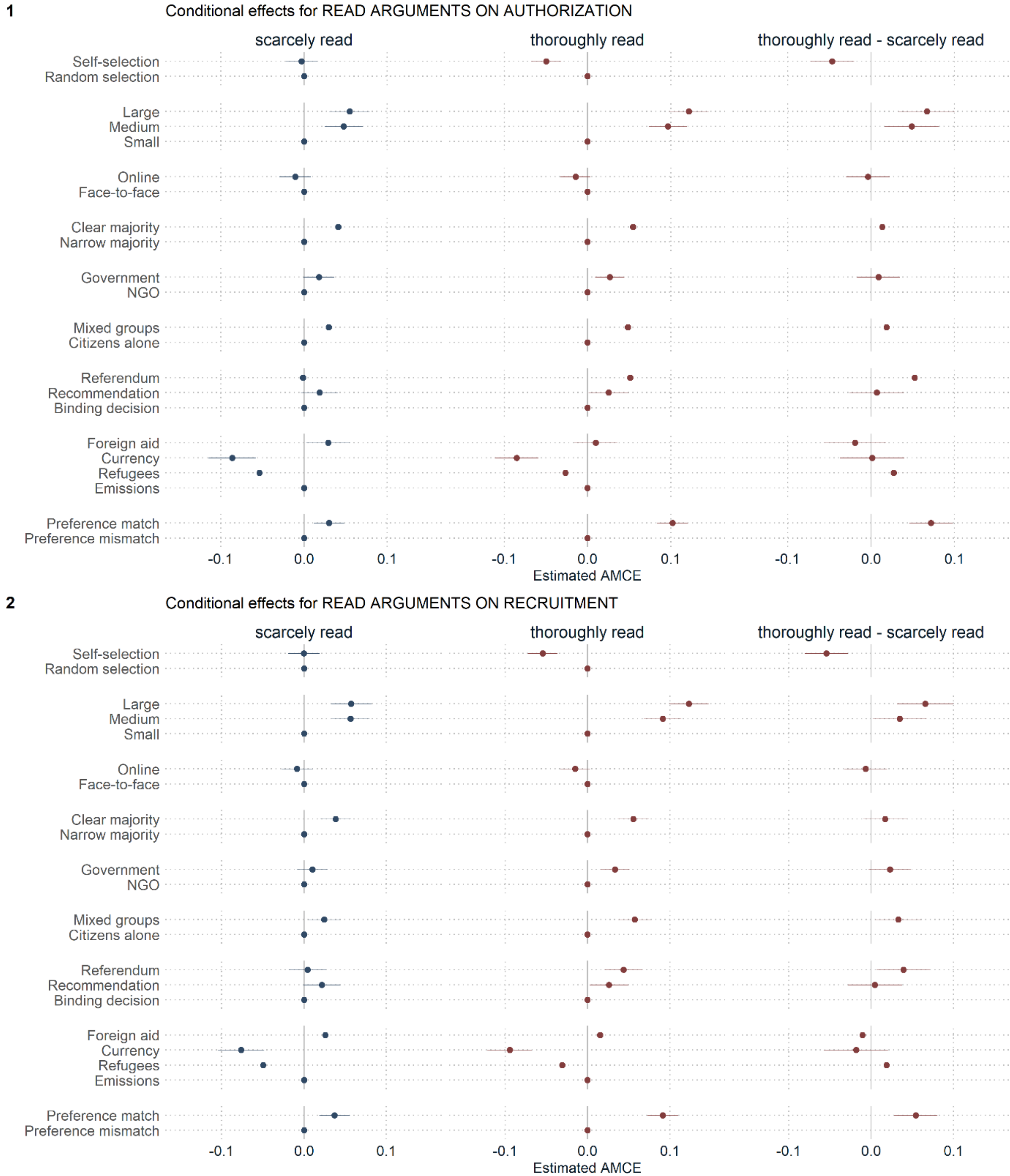
Next, Figure 15 presents effects for respondents who have engaged with the argument sheets for less than the median time[139] (left panel), respondents who have engaged with the argument sheets for more than the median time (center panel), and differences in effects for respondents who read the arguments thoroughly compared to those who did not (right panel)[140]. According to Lafont, citizens eventually need to be aware of important design features and their democratic implications (cf. Lafont, 2017), which should also be reflected in effect differences across both groups. The plots show significant differences between degrees of engagement with various arguments, which are largely identical for both arguments about authorization (top panel) and recruitment (bottom panel).

First, calls for extra provisions are particularly important for informed citizens, who were more likely to choose scenarios with random selection and larger groups than scenarios with self-selection and small groups. There are, however, no significant differences for any throughput *criteria*, indicating that discussion format and degree of consensus tended to be likewise important (in the case of majorities) or unimportant (in the case of discussion format) to both informed and uninformed citizens. Third, the effects for empowerment and coupling are more pronounced among respondents who have engaged with the arguments. In particular, respondents who spent more time than average on the arguments showed an even stronger preference for both advisory roles of DCFs (particularly including follow-up referendums) and mixed groups (though the effect is significant only for arguments on recruitment). Finally,

[139] Which is 16.09 seconds for authorization and 20.17 seconds for recruitment.
[140] For illustration purposes, this type of visualization is used once here. The remainder of this chapter refer to the difference plot (right panel) only. See Appendix C2(1) for conditional effect plots for each subgroup.

although there seem to be no differences between policy issues, better informed respondents tended to give even more weight to their own preferences. Note, however, the effect for outcome favorability is significant for less informed respondents as well.

Figure 15: Conditional effects for information - choice outcome

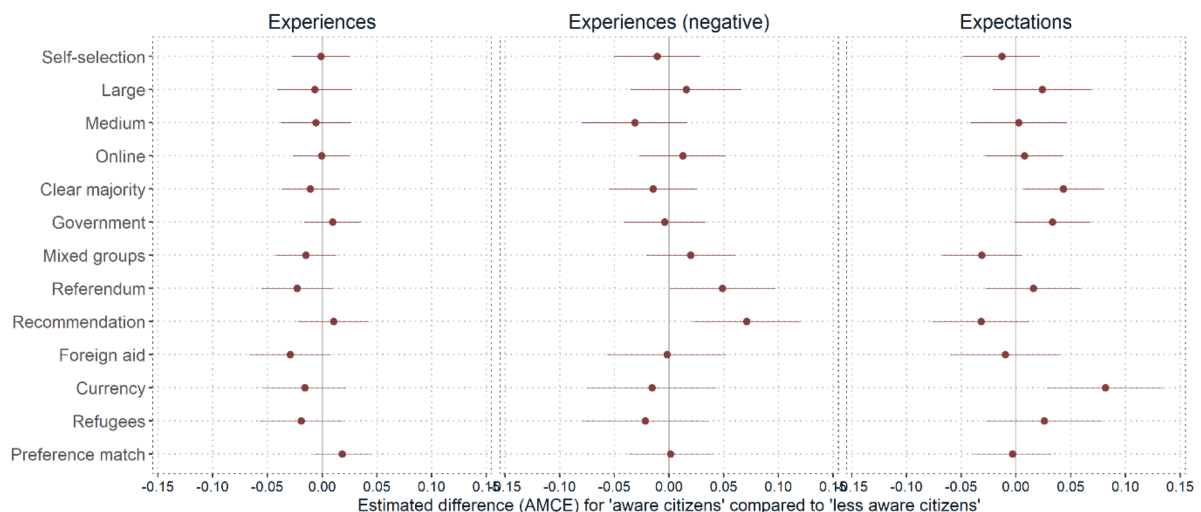


Note: The right panel shows differences in AMCE between those who have read arguments thoroughly (center panel) to those who did not (left panel).

Overall, these findings confirm **H4b** stating that under conditions of proper information, citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions. Furthermore, however, it appears that there were no such effect differences between the information group and the glossary only group in the student sample (Appendix C2 (A.Figure 16)). This "non-result" may be explained by the fact that most students have already had more knowledge about DCFs since the vast majority are concerned with such formats as part of their studies.

Next, both the average rating of the scenarios and the retrospective assessment of DCF differ significantly between citizens who have had some *experience* with DCF and citizens with no experience. While respondents with at least some experience are, on average, more positive about DCFs (M=4.29; SD=1.56) and consider them more appropriate (M=4.95; SD=1.45), inexperienced respondents are somewhat more negative in both their evaluation (M=4.19; SD=1.51) and retrospective assessment (M=4.67; SD=1.56) of DCF.

Figure 16: Difference plots for experiences and expectations - choice outcome



Note: Effects show the differences of AMCE for aware citizens compared to less aware citizens. Reference categories (top to bottom: random selection, small, face-to-face, narrow majority, NGO, citizens alone, binding decision, emissions, preference mismatch) are not shown.

These differences are even more marked among citizens with *positive experiences* (rating outcome: M=4.5; SD=1.6; retrospective assessment: M=5.5; SD=1.3) compared to citizens with *negative experiences* (rating outcome: M=4.11; SD=1.51; retrospective assessment: M=4.44; SD=1.42). Figure 16 shows differences in effect sizes for experienced citizens in comparison with unexperienced citizens including the average direction (positive or negative) of their

experiences. While experience per se makes no difference for the importance of various criteria[141], the effects for authorization differ when considering the direction of experience. Particularly citizens with negative experiences were more favorable towards scenarios that included any advisory roles of DCFs compared to binding decisions.

Taken together, these findings partly corroborate **H4c**. Under conditions of negative experiences, citizens are less open to strong empowerment. Both coupling and extra provisions, however, are equally important or unimportant for both groups of citizens.

Finally, evaluations of DCFs do not significantly differ depending on whether citizens have any *expectations* on DCFs or not ($p=0.054$). On average, both respondents possessing clear expectations of DCFs ($M=4.32$; $SD=1.69$) and respondents without any expectations ($M=4.27$; $SD=1.48$) rated DCFs quite similarly. Nevertheless, it turned out that differences exist for the retrospective assessment of DCFs ($p<0.001$). On average, citizens who reported having clear expectations of DCF in policymaking rated DCF more positively ($M=5.17$; $SD=1.48$) than their counterparts ($M=4.83$; $SD=1.42$). However, there are some significant differences when looking at effects for citizens expressing expectations compared to citizens without expectations (Figure 16), even though effects are less clear the expected (with only initiative, majorities, and issues producing differences). While no differences exist for recruitment, group size, group composition, authorization, and outcome favorability, citizens who reported having some expectations tended to prefer top-down procedures[142] backed with clear majority decisions compared to bottom-up procedures with narrow majority decisions. Intriguingly, respondents with clear expectations were also more open to the currency issue.

Overall, findings for expectations only partly conforms **H4d**. Whereas there are no significant differences in legitimacy perceptions between citizens with clear expectations and citizens without any expectations, the latter significantly perceive DCFs less appropriate for political decision-making (even though support is still high). Moreover, although citizens with expectations care more about clear decisions (throughput), there were no further differences for any input and output criteria.

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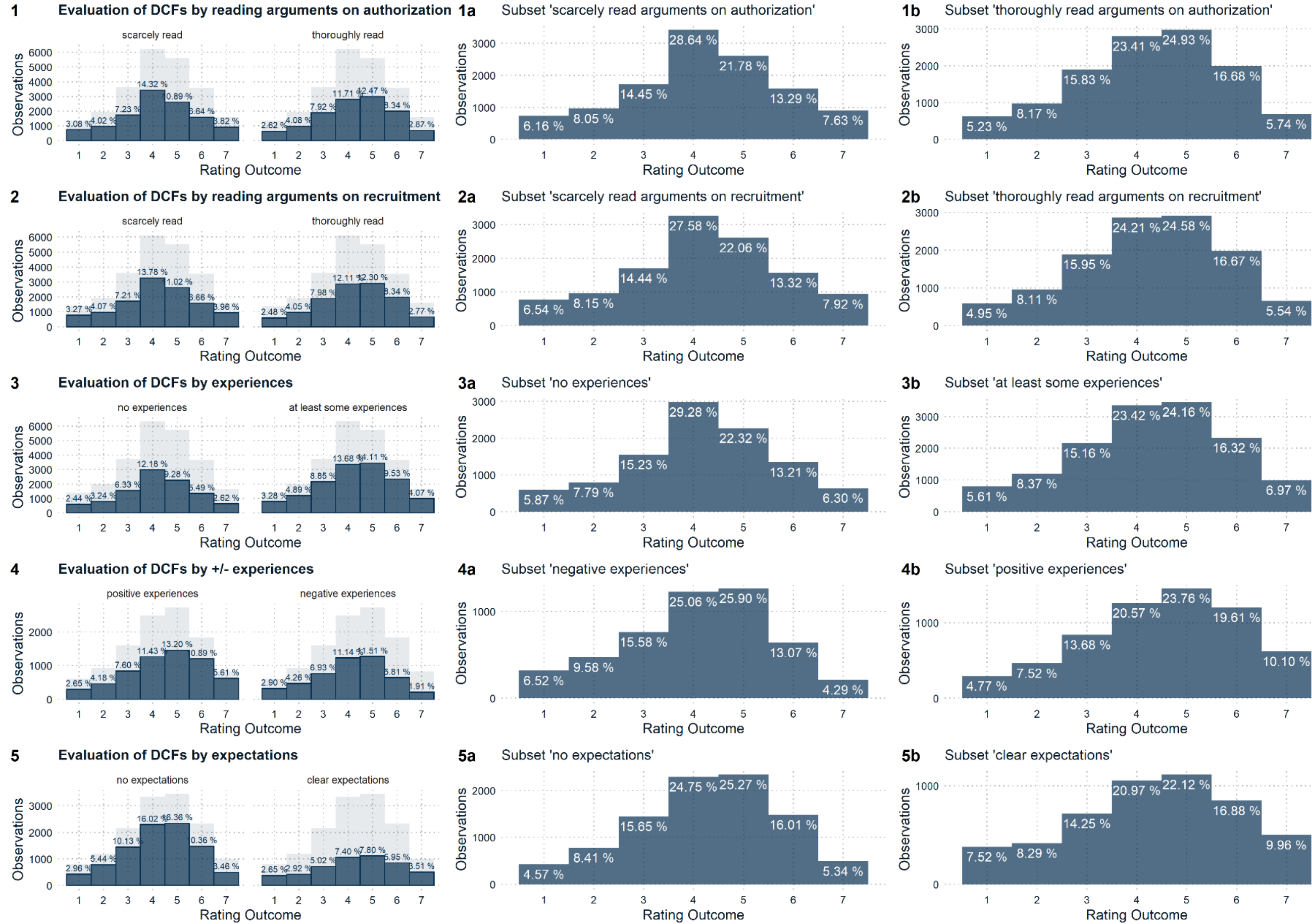
141 Nested model comparisons were not significant for the choice outcome but for the rating outcome ($p<0.001$).

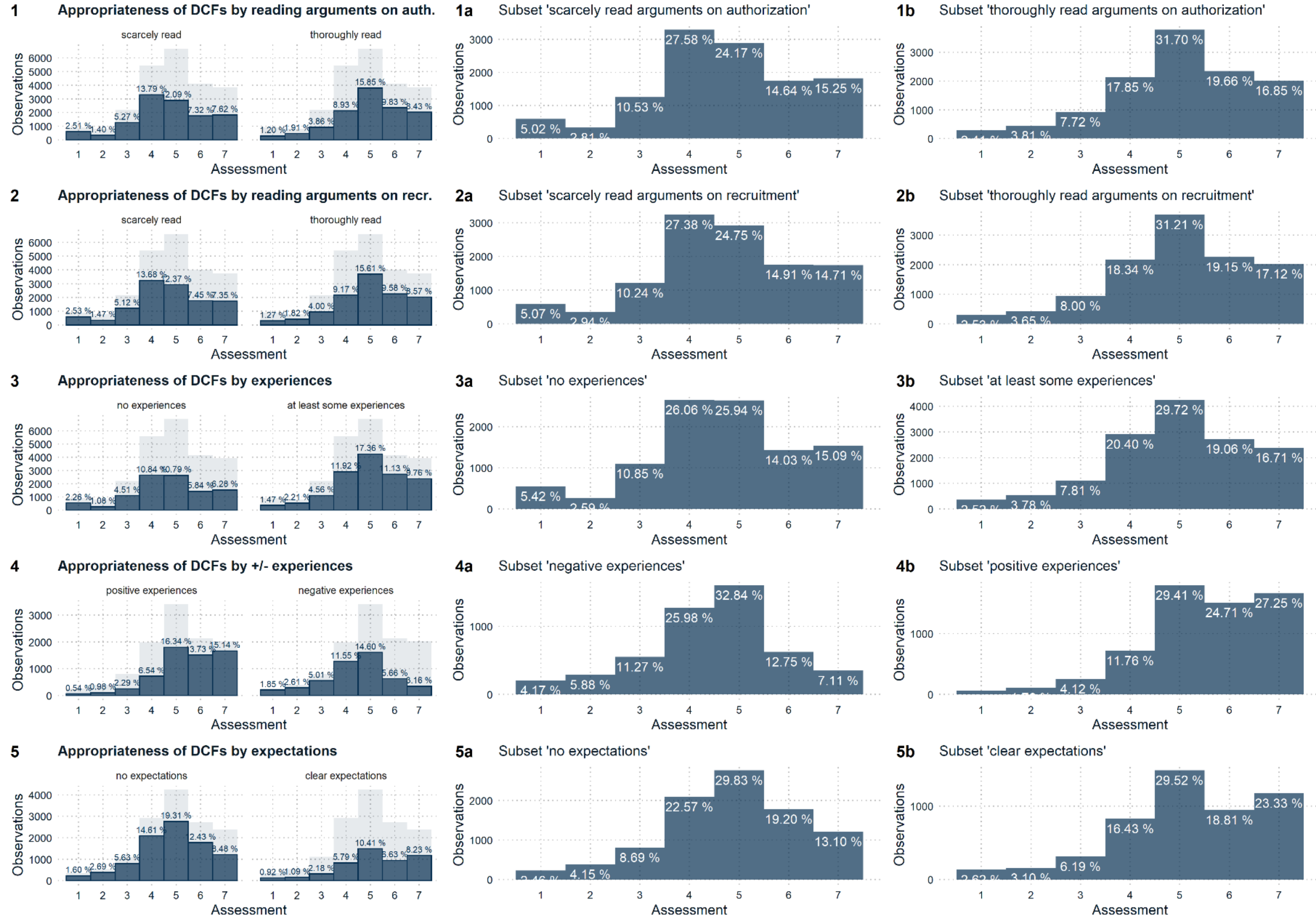
142 While there seems to be a slight preference for government-initiated procedures, the effect is only marginally significant.

Figure 17: Evaluation of DCFs by awareness



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *rating outcome* by five awareness variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each subgroup level respectively. n_1=23,928; n_2=23,676; n_3=24,468; n_4=11,016; n_5=14,292.

Figure 18: Retrospective assessment of DCFs by awareness



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *perceived appropriateness of DCFs* by five awareness variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=23,928; n_2=23,676; n_3=24,468; n_4=11,016; n_5=14,292.

In sum, the findings for familiarity reveal that perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher under conditions of proper information and positive experiences (**H4a**) and by the same token is perceived as most appropriate under conditions of positive experiences and clear expectations.

5.2.2. *Enlightened citizens*

Following an established literature on both the new politics and cognitive mobilization hypotheses (see Chapter 3.3.5.), I employ three variables for enlightened citizens: political interest, internal efficacy, and education. As for *political interest*, mean comparisons show no significant differences in the average rating of DCFs between politically interested citizens (M=4.26; SD=1.63) and less interested citizens (M=4.24; SD=1.47), indicating that both groups are equally supportive of DCFs. However, with regard to the retrospective assessment, interested respondents are significantly more positive toward DCFs (M=4.97; SD=1.58) than less interested respondents (M=4.74; SD=1.44). Moreover, perceived legitimacy of citizens varies between *education* and *internal efficacy*. While higher educated citizens tend to be significantly *less* supportive of DCFs in general (rating outcome: M=4.17; SD=1.5; retrospective assessment: M=4.8; SD=1.43) than lower educated citizens (rating outcome: M=4.3; SD=1.62; retrospective assessment: M=4.92; SD=1.61)[143], self-efficacious citizens tend to be slightly *more* supportive of DCFs in general (rating outcome: M=4.29; SD=1.63; retrospective assessment: M=4.94; SD=1.57) than less self-efficacious citizens (rating outcome M=4.22; SD=1.45; retrospective assessment: M=4.74; SD=1.43).

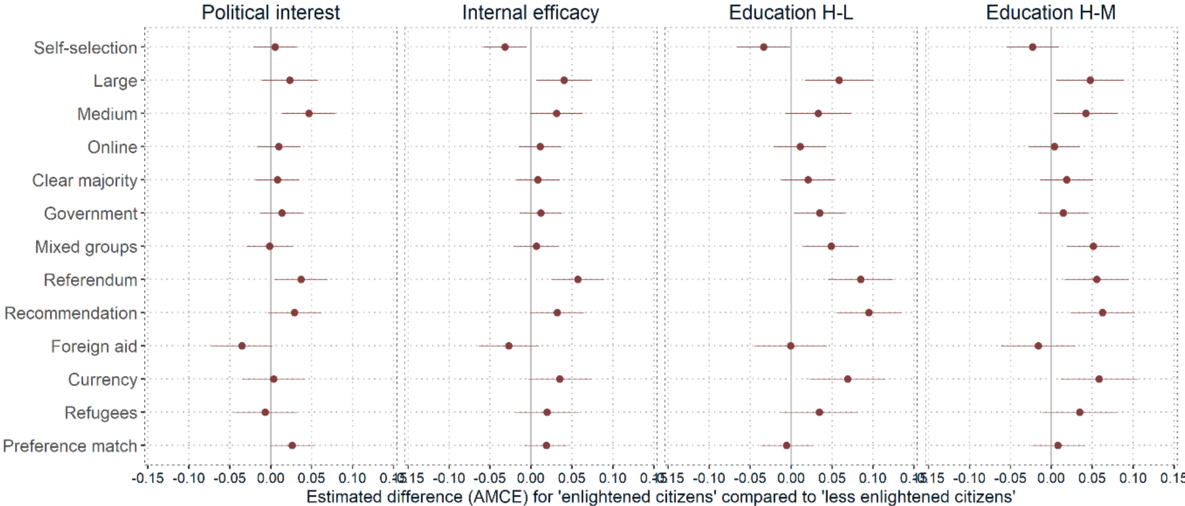
Overall, these mixed results only partly conform **H5a**. Although the perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among politically interested citizens (although for retrospective assessment only) and self-efficacious citizens, it is not among higher educated citizens. To provide a better picture, Figure 20 (average evaluation of DCFs) and Figure 21 (retrospective assessment) show the distributions of variables for political interest, internal efficacy, and education.

Turning to the importance of various attributes of DCFs and issue characteristics, nested model comparison tests indicate that any of the interactions between attribute levels and

[143] For ease of juxtaposition and interpretation, the education variable was cut in three dummy variables: Lower versus higher education (omitting the middle category), medium versus higher education (omitting the lower category), and lower versus medium education (omitting the higher category).

variables for enlightened citizens are significant[144]. Figure 19 shows differences in effect sizes for enlightened citizens in comparison with less enlightened citizens, with both higher educated citizens and citizens with a high sense of internal efficacy in particular being more ambitious about DCFs. However, only a few differences exist between politically interested and less interested citizens.

Figure 19: Difference plots for enlightened citizens - choice outcome



Note: Effects show the differences of AMCE for enlightened citizens compared to less enlightened citizens. Reference categories (top to bottom: random selection, small, face-to-face, narrow majority, NGO, citizens alone, binding decision, emissions, preference mismatch) are not shown.

The findings mostly corroborate my expectations. First, enlightened citizens (again, particularly higher educated and self-efficacious ones) care more about extra provisions, but principally about input criteria. In concrete, compared to less enlightened citizens, both higher educated citizens and citizens with high internal efficacy prefer random selection and large group sizes. Next, the importance of throughput criteria, however, did not differ between enlightened and less enlightened respondents in the sample.

Third, enlightened citizens tend to be less open to strong authorization of DCFs and prefer them to be tightly coupled to representative institutions. Again, these effects are most marked for educated citizens.

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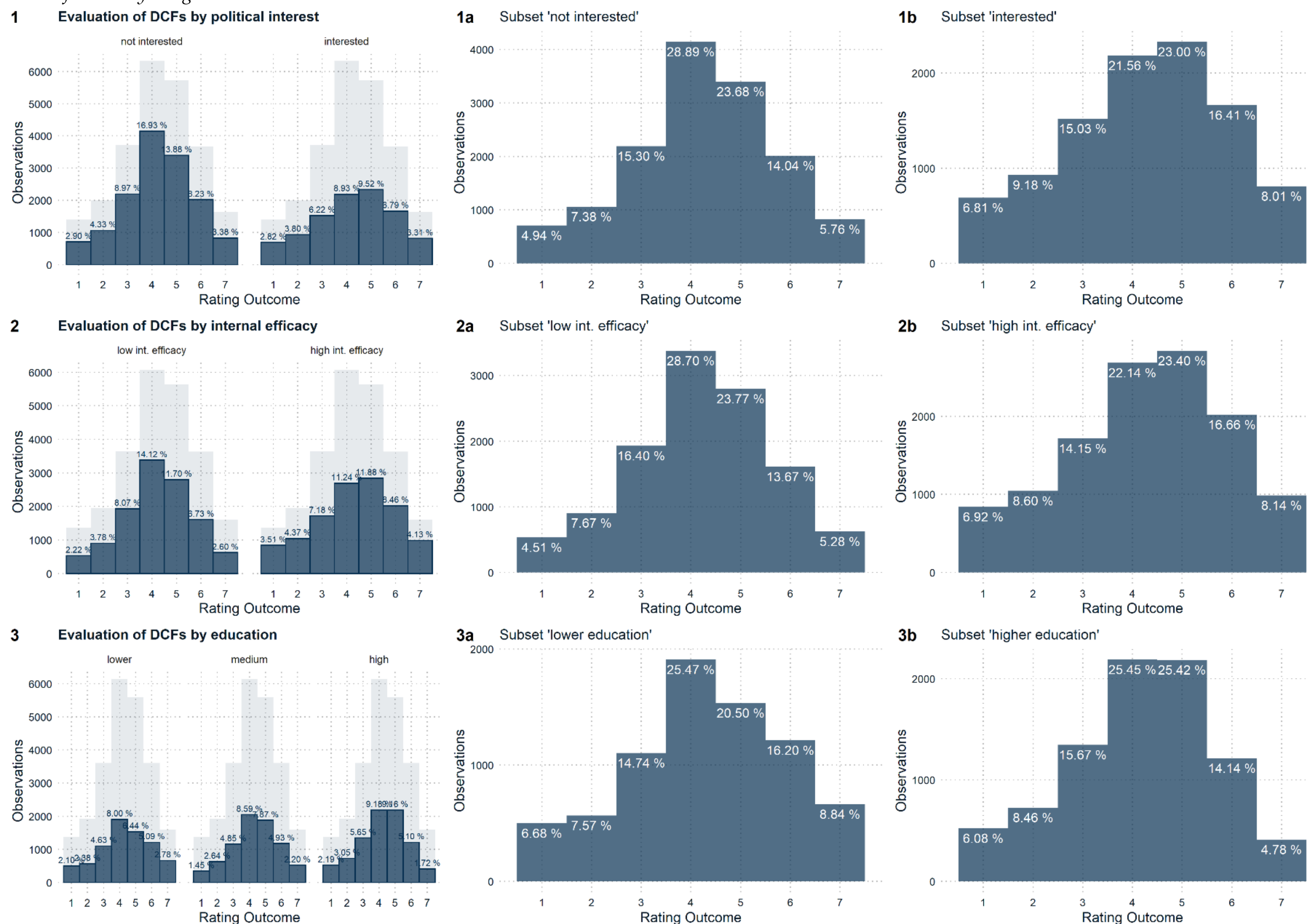
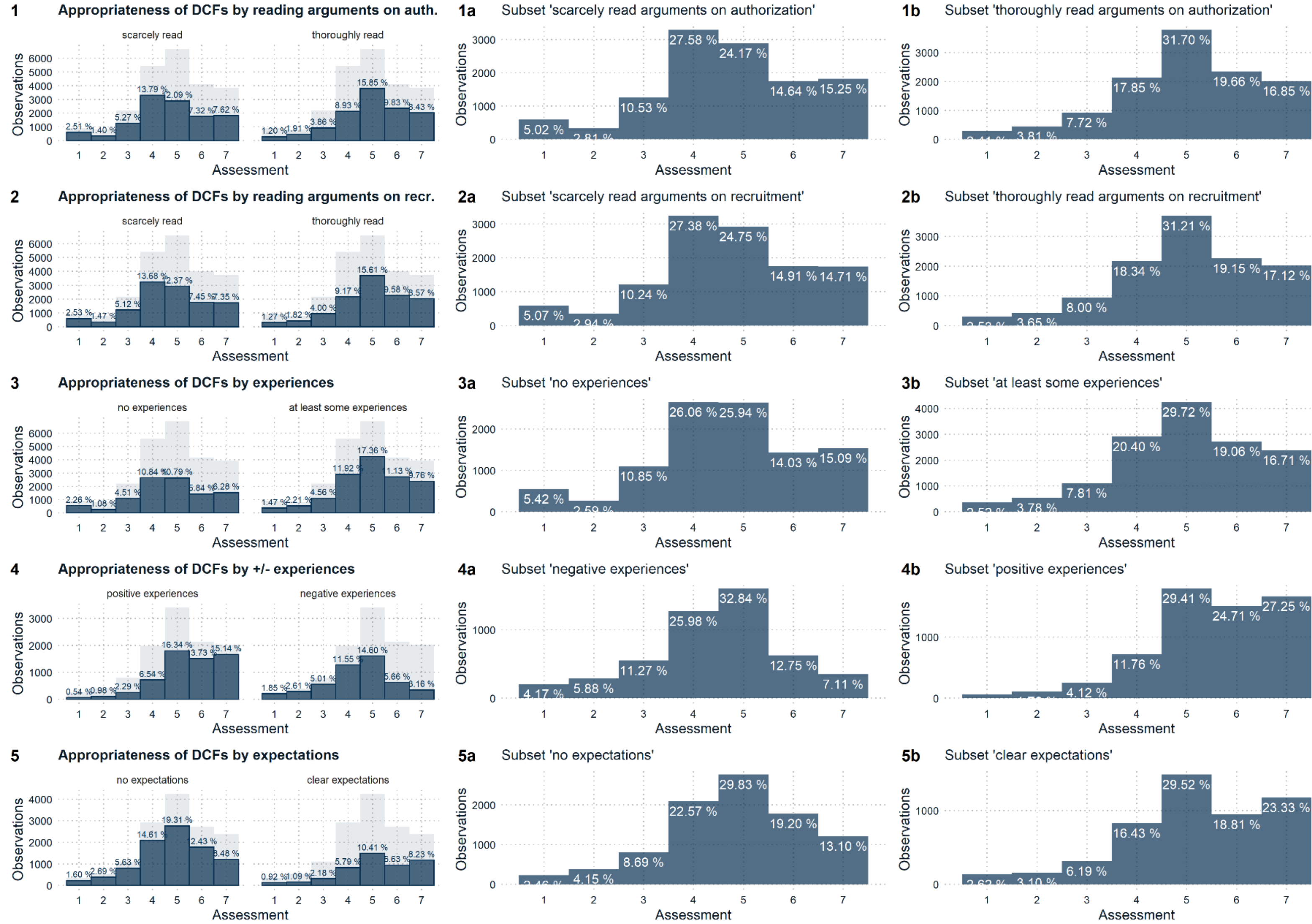
[144] p=0.05 for political interest, p<0.001 for internal efficacy, p<0.001 for lower-higher education and medium-higher education. Note, the test was not significant for lower-medium education. Conjoint analyses thus were performed for the first two groups only.

Figure 20: Evaluation of DCFs by enlightenment



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *rating outcome* by three enlightenment variables. The remaining panels show distributions within each level. n1=24,468; *n2*=23,916; *n3*=24,468 (*n3a*+*n3b*=16,080).

Figure 21: Retrospective assessment of DCFs by enlightenment



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *perceived appropriateness of DCFs* by three enlightenment variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=24,468; n_2=23,916; n_3=24,468 (n_{3a}+n_{3b}=16,080

In concrete, compared to less educated citizens, higher educated citizens were more likely to choose scenarios that included recommendations to elected officials or recommendations to be put to a referendum compared to scenarios that included binding decisions. The effect for referendums also applies to politically interested and as self-efficacious citizens. With regard to coupling, the effects for group composition and initiative suggest that top-down initiated DCFs composed of mixed groups enjoy greater support (although among educated citizens only) than bottom-up panels composed solely of citizens.

Confirming **H5b**, the results show that enlightened citizens seem to be highly demanding when it comes to both representative criteria and the linkage of DCFs to representative decision-making processes.

Finally, the only significant difference for issue characteristics and substantive considerations is for the currency issue, where highly educated citizens were slightly more likely to choose scenarios that included this technical (yet low salience) issue compared to the technical (but more salient) issue of containment measures in the context of climate change. Again, outcome favorability matters equally for both groups of citizens.

5.2.3. Disaffected citizens

I employ four variables for various types of disaffected citizens: political dissatisfaction, external efficacy, political trust, and stealth attitudes. First, and contrary to my expectations, (some) disaffected citizens perceive DCFs less legitimate than allegiant citizens[145]. Mean comparisons show that *dissatisfied citizens* (rating outcome: M=4.16; SD=1.57; retrospective assessment: M=4.79; SD=1.56), *citizens with a low sense of external efficacy* (rating outcome: M=4.12; SD=1.61), and *citizens with low political trust* (rating outcome: M=4.06; SD=1.62; retrospective assessment: M=4.79; SD=1.56) tend to feel significantly *less* positive about DCF in general than satisfied citizens (rating outcome: M=4.36; SD=1.51; retrospective assessment: M=4.92; SD=1.45), citizens with a high sense of external efficacy (rating outcome: M=4.37; SD=1.47), and citizens with high political trust (rating outcome: M=4.39; SD=1.48; retrospective assessment: M=4.9; SD=1.47). Intriguingly, however, my expectations are met for external efficacy for the retrospective assessment of DCFs. Here, citizens with a low sense of external

[145] Citizens with high political satisfaction, external efficacy, political trust, sunshine attitudes.

efficacy were more favorable toward DCFs (M=4.92; SD=1.54) than citizens with high external efficacy (M=4.76; SD=1.48).

Second, it turned out that *stealth citizens* (rating outcome: M=4.37; SD=1.57; retrospective assessment: M=5.00; SD=1.46) in particular are *more* supportive of DCFs than non-stealth citizens (rating outcome: M=4.18; SD=1.52; retrospective assessment: M=4.75; SD=1.52)[146]. Additionally, I included sunshine attitudes. Mean comparisons show that citizens with high sunshine attitudes were more positive toward DCFs, both for the rating outcome (M=4.35; SD=1.62) and the retrospective assessment (M= 5.05; SD=1.55) as compared to citizens with low sunshine attitudes (M=4.16; SD=1.44 resp. M= 4.64; SD=1.41). In line with Webb (2013), these varying results for disaffected citizens suggest they seem not to be a uniform group either.

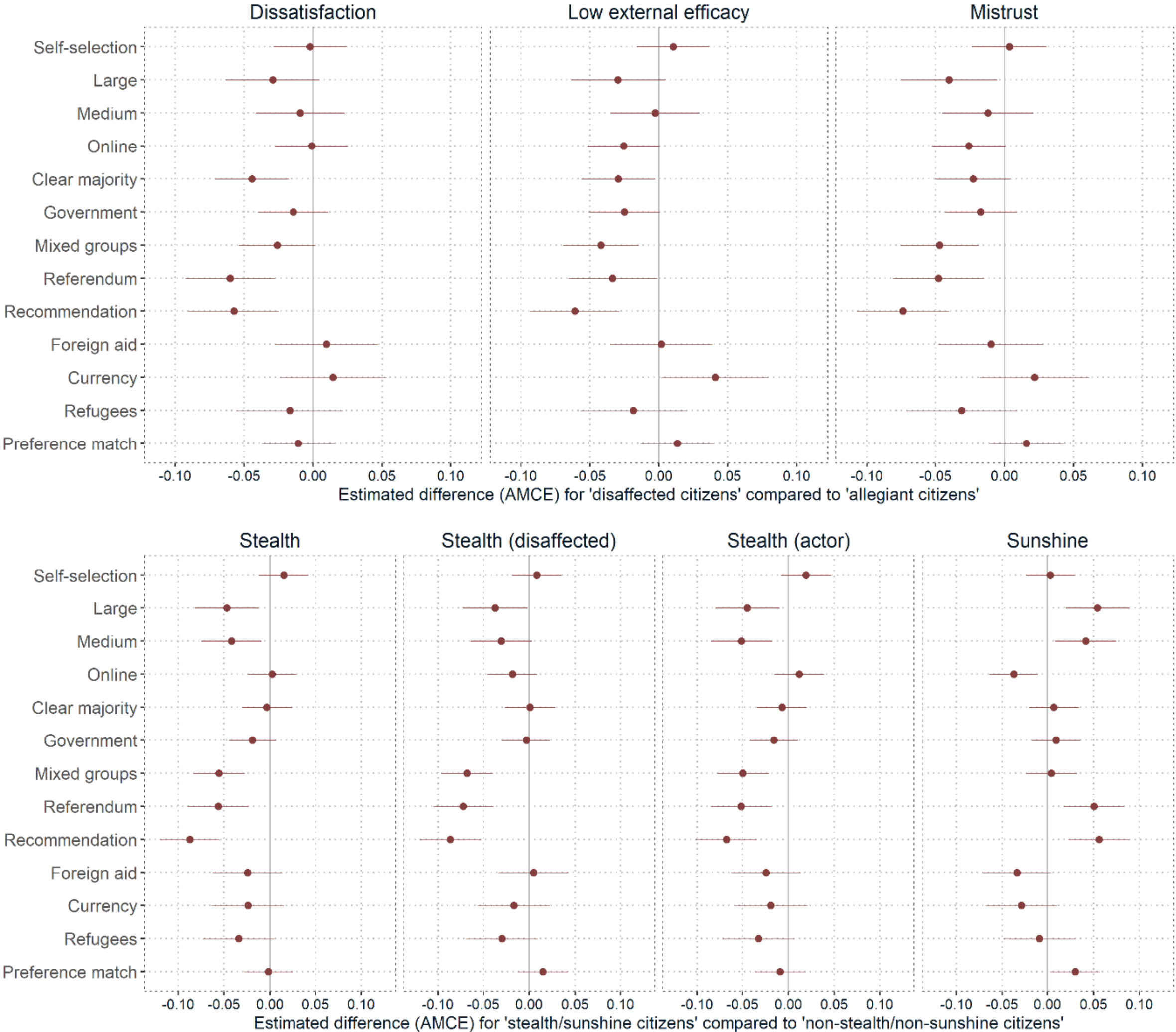
Except for stealth citizens, these findings contradict **H6a**. Although disaffected citizens also show moderately high levels of perceived legitimacy, DCFs are perceived as even more legitimate among allegiant citizens. For better illustration, Figure 23 (average evaluation of DCFs) and Figure 24 (retrospective assessment) show distributions for all four variables for political disaffection plus sunshine democracy.

Next, Figure 22 shows differences in effect sizes for disaffected citizens compared to allegiant citizens. The findings mostly corroborate my expectations. First, disaffected citizens care slightly less about inclusionary and internal extra provisions than allegiant citizens, even though the effects are less clear than expected, with only group size and the degree of consensus showing differences. There are some differences across different types of disaffected citizens though. Both stealth citizens and citizens with low political trust care less about large groups while dissatisfied citizens and citizens with low external efficacy are less concerned about clear majorities. Alternatively, citizens with high sunshine attitudes were more likely to reject scenarios that included online formats compared to face-to-face discussions. Second, disaffected citizens tend to be more open to strong authorization of DCFs and prefer them to be decoupled from representative institutions. In concrete, compared to

[146] There are only slight differences between the disaffection and actor dimension of stealth attitudes. A) *Disaffection dimension*: high stealth (rating outcome: M=4.32; SD=1.6; retrospective assessment: M=4.99; SD=1.49), low stealth (rating outcome: M=4.19; SD=1.47; retrospective assessment: M=4.7; SD=1.5). B) *Actor dimension*: high stealth (rating outcome: M=4.39; SD=1.51; retrospective assessment: M=4.93; SD=1.43), low stealth (rating outcome: M=4.18; SD=1.56; retrospective assessment: M=4.83; SD=1.54).

allegiant citizens, effects for all types of disaffected citizens indicate that they were less likely to choose scenarios that included recommendations or referendums compared to scenarios that included binding decisions. Moreover, the effects both for group composition and convener indicate that DCFs composed of mixed groups were less likely to win support than panels composed of pure citizen groups.

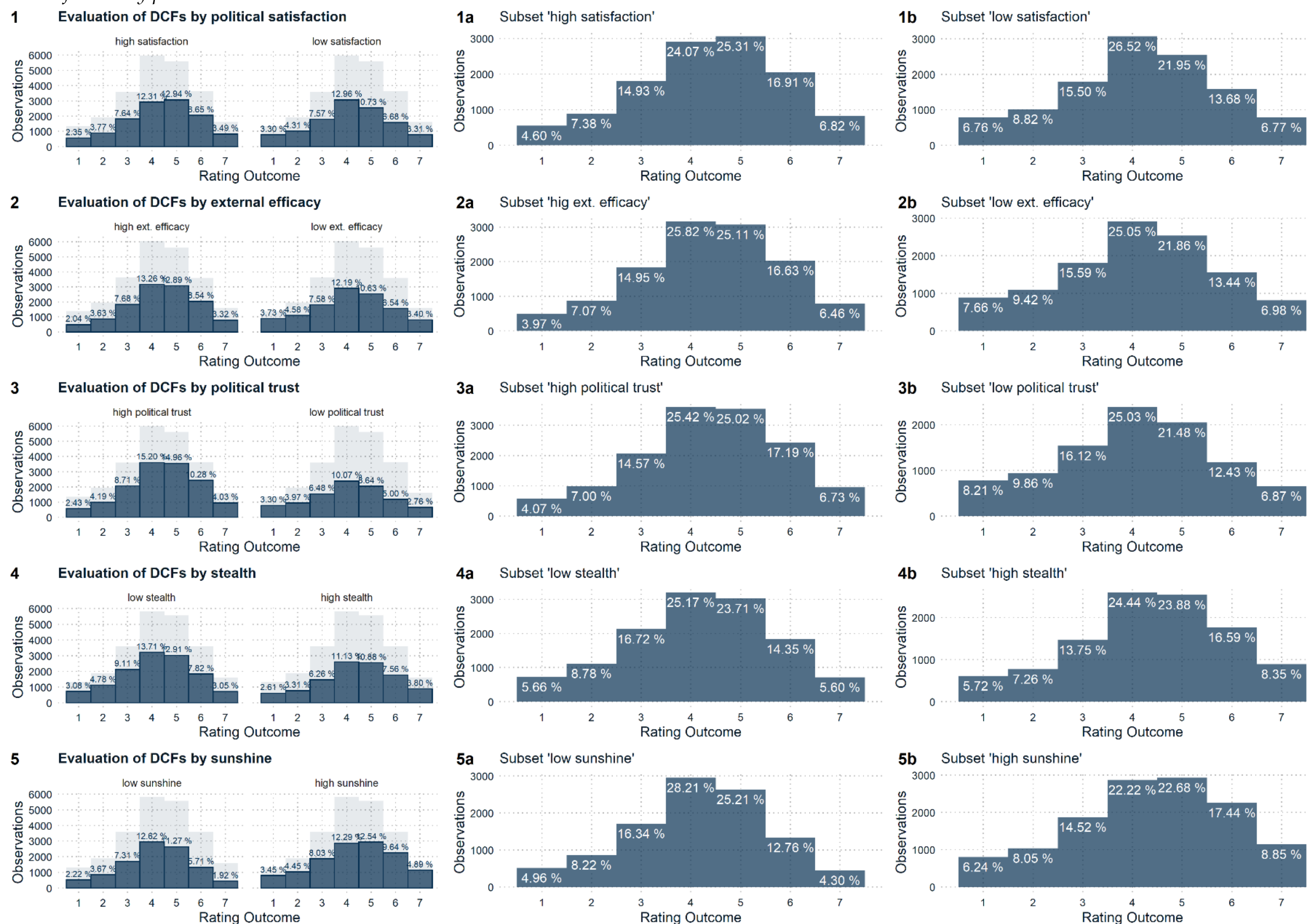
Figure 22: Difference plots for disaffected citizens - choice outcome



Note: Effects show the differences of AMCE for disaffected citizens compared to allegiant citizens. Reference categories (top to bottom: random selection, small, face-to-face, narrow majority, NGO, citizens alone, binding decision, emissions, preference mismatch) are not shown.

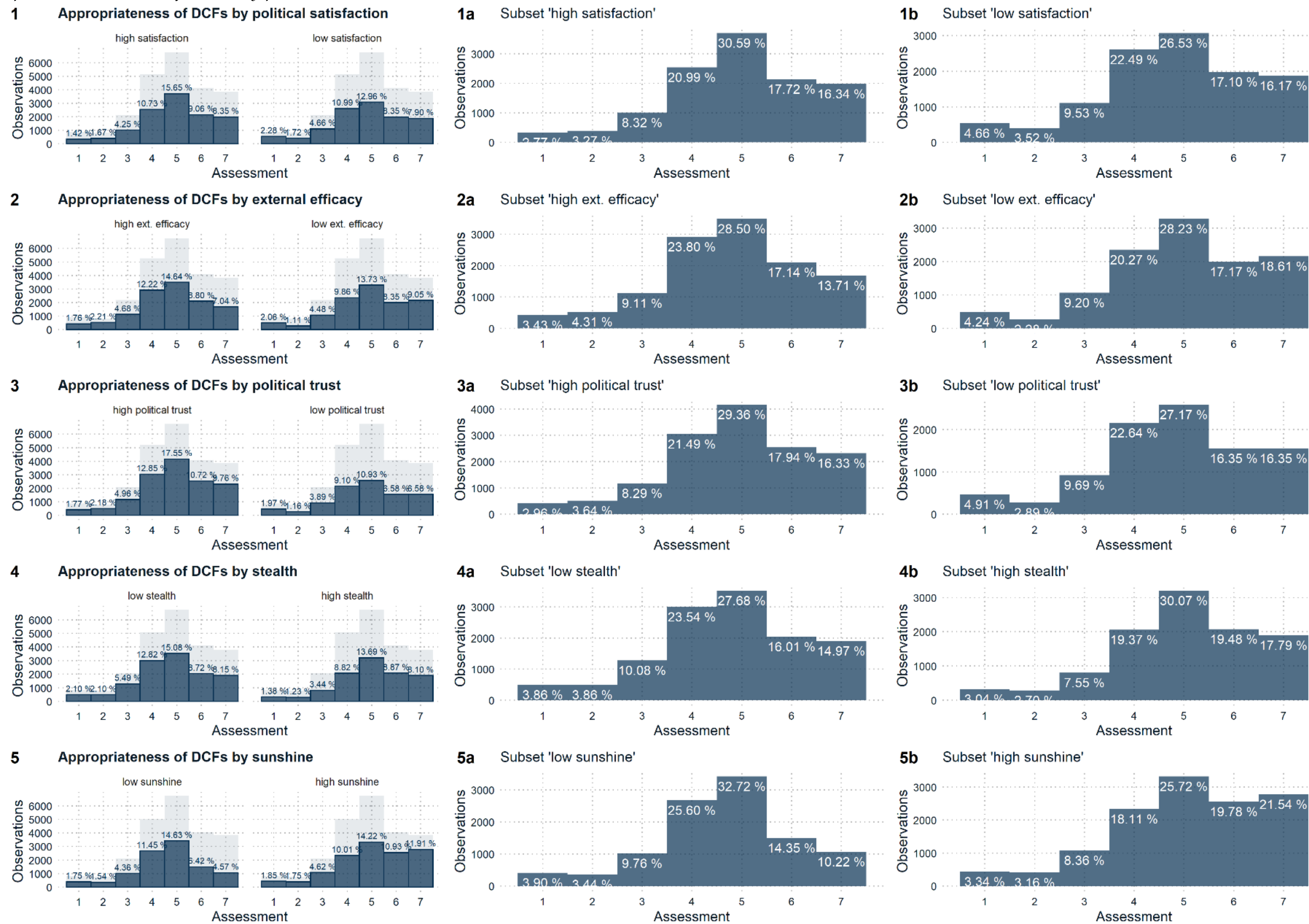
Third, when it comes to issue characteristics and substantive considerations, there are no differences between disaffected and allegiant citizens. Again, outcome favorability matters equally for both groups of citizens. Finally, as expected, the effects for sunshine attitudes are mostly reversed to disaffected citizens.

Figure 23: Evaluation of DCFs by political disenchantment



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *rating outcome* by five disenchantment variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=23,700; n_2=23,856; n_3=23,724; n_4=23,400; n_5=23,376.

Figure 24: Retrospective assessment of DCFs by political disenchantment



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *perceived appropriateness of DCFs* by five disenchantment variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=23,700; n_2=23,856; n_3=23,724; n_4=23,400; n_5=23,376.

In terms of outcome favorability, however, citizens with strong sunshine attitudes actually tend to have even stronger substantive considerations than citizens with weak sunshine attitudes.

In sum, findings conform **H6b** showing that disaffected citizens are more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling, and less interested in (some) extra provisions compared to allegiant citizens.

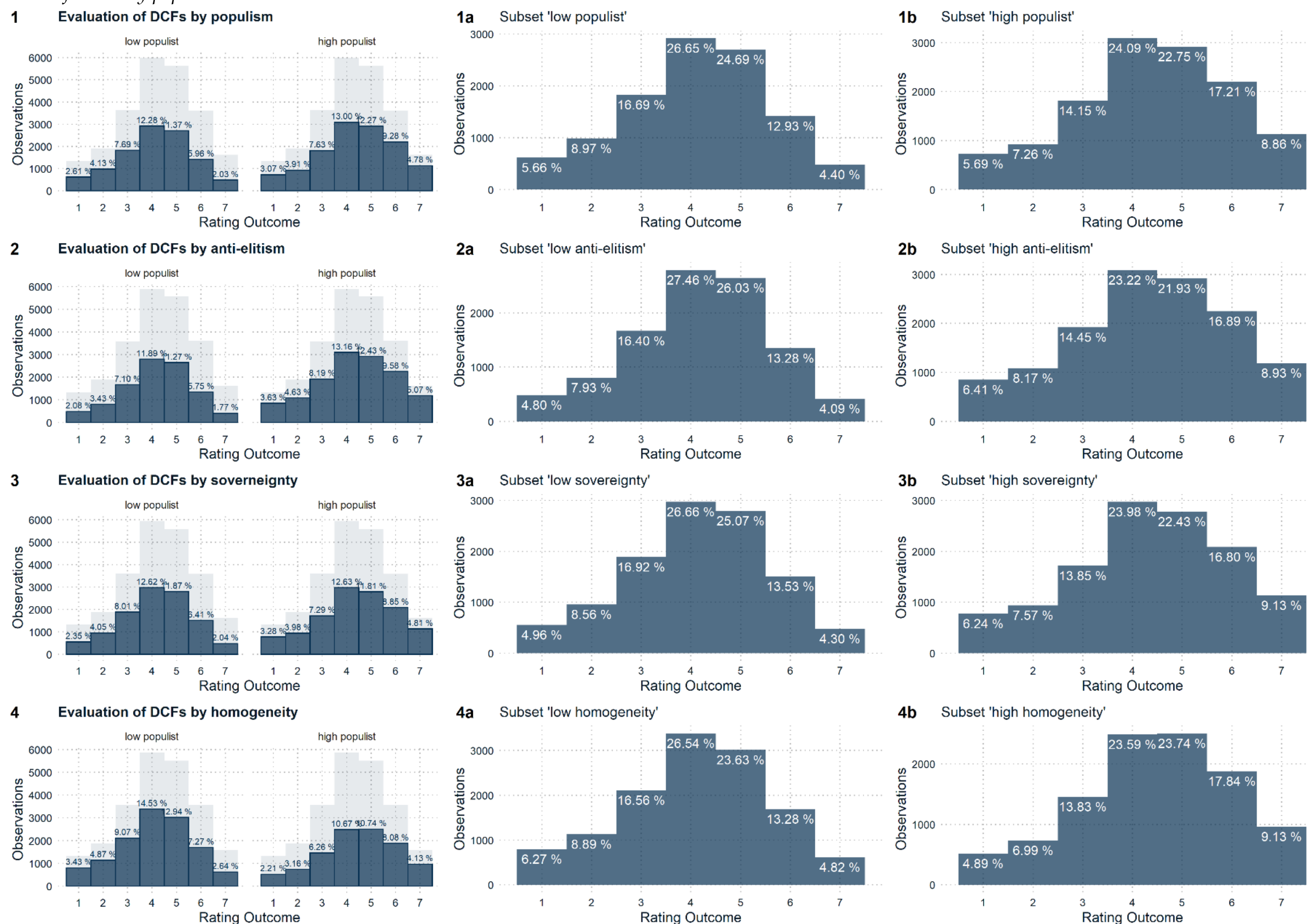
5.2.4. Populist citizens

Political disaffection is closely associated with populism. Following Schulz et al. (2018) I employ three dimensions of populism (anti-elitism, sovereignty, and homogeneity). Similar to stealth citizens, and confirming **H7a**, *populist citizens* are *more positive* toward DCFs in general than non-populists, as reflected in higher ratings of both the scenarios (M=4.38; SD=1.59 compared to M=4.12; SD=1.48) and the retrospective assessments (M=5.09; SD=1.5 compared to M= 4.58; SD=1.45)[147]. To provide a better visualization, Figure 25 and Figure 26 show the distributions of the overall populism index and various populism dimensions.

Figure 27 shows differences in effect sizes for populist citizens compared to non-populist citizens, both for the overall populism index and different dimensions of populism. First, populist citizens seem not to differ from non-populist citizens when it comes to input and throughput criteria. Extra provisions tend to be equally important to both groups of citizens. The only difference is for discussion formats, with populist citizens more clearly rejecting online formats compared to face-to-face discussions. Turning to output criteria, the findings correspond to the expectations. Populist citizens are more open to strong authorization of DCFs and prefer them to be disconnected from legacy institutions. In concrete, compared to non-populist citizens, populist citizens prefer binding decisions and citizen panels composed of pure citizen groups to any advisory outputs (including referendums) and mixed-groups.

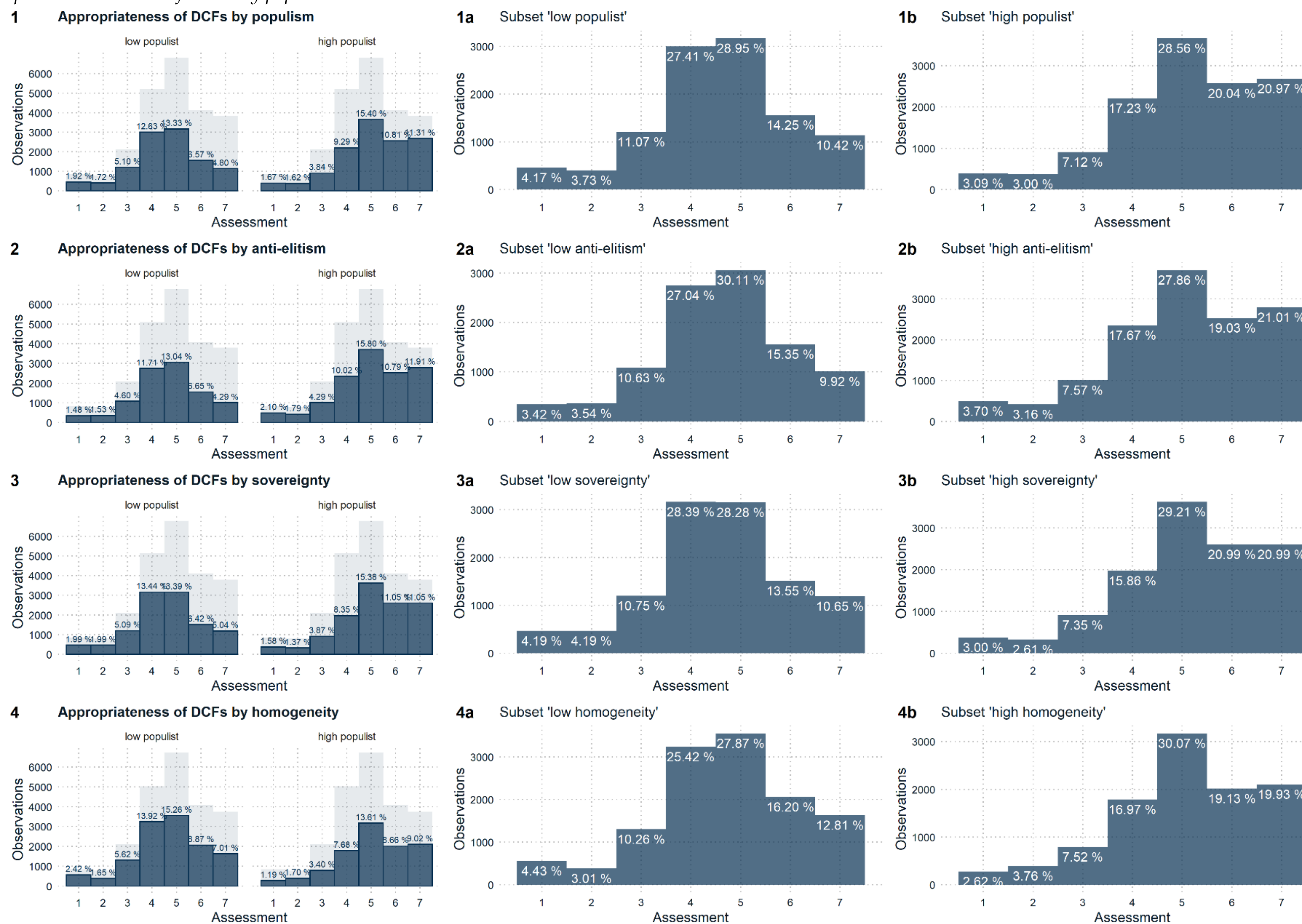
[147] A) *Anti-elitism*: high populist (rating outcome: M=4.32; SD=1.63; retrospective assessment: M= 5.04; SD=1.54), low populist (rating outcome: M=4.18; SD=1.43; retrospective assessment: M= 4.63; SD=1.4). B) *Sovereignty*: high populist (rating outcome: M=4.36; SD=1.61; retrospective assessment: M=5.13; SD=1.48), low populist (rating outcome: M=4.16; SD=1.45; retrospective assessment: M 4.56; SD=1.46). C) *Homogeneity*: high populist (rating outcome: M=4.44; SD=1.56; retrospective assessment: M=5.05; SD=1.49), low populist (rating outcome: M=4.12; SD=1.51; retrospective assessment: M=4.69; SD=1.49). All reported mean differences are statistically significant ($p<0.001$).

Figure 25: Evaluation of DCFs by populism



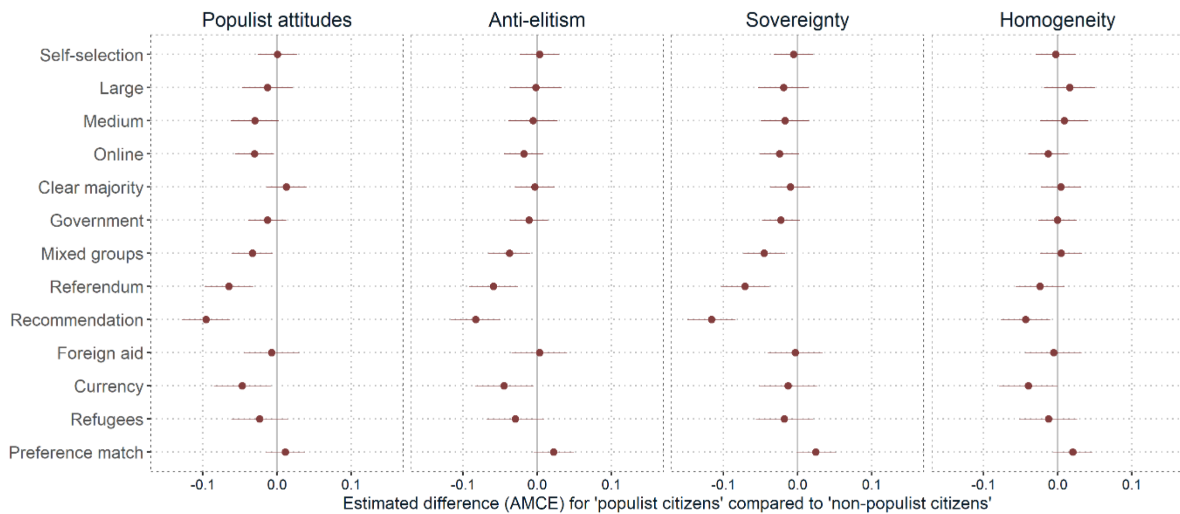
Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *rating outcome* by four populism variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=23,760; n_2=23,472; n_3=23,568; n_4=23,289.

Figure 26: Retrospective assessment of DCFs by populism



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the perceived appropriateness of DCFs by four populism variables. The remaining panels show distributions within each level. n1=23,760; n2=23,472; n3=23,568; n4=23,289.

Figure 27: Difference plots for populist citizens - choice outcome



Note: Effects show the differences of AMCE for populist citizens compared to non-populist citizens. Reference categories (top to bottom: random selection, small, face-to-face, narrow majority, NGO, citizens alone, binding decision, emissions, preference mismatch) are not shown

Moreover, although populist citizens give equal weight to outcome favorability than non-populist citizens, populist citizens tend to be less open to the currency issue. Finally, there seem to be no substantial differences across the three populism dimensions. The only exemption is for the homogeneity dimension, where respondents with high populist attitudes tend to make no distinction between binding decisions and follow-up referendums.

Overall, these findings partly confirm **H7b**. Although populist citizens are more open to strong empowerment and less open to coupling (at least when it comes to mixed group compositions), they are equally interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions as non-populist citizens (with random selection, large groups, face-to-face discussions, and clear majorities).

5.2.5. Participatory and delegative citizens

As expected, *participatory citizens* on average rated the scenarios in the conjoint experiment more positively (M=4.39; SD=1.66) than citizens with low participatory attitudes (M=4.17; SD=1.43). In addition, there are small differences between direct-democratic and deliberative attitudes, with deliberative citizens tending to score somewhat higher (M=4.42; SD=1.66) than direct-democratic citizens (M=4.36; SD=1.68). These differences are even more marked for the retrospective assessment of DCFs. Here, citizens with high participatory attitudes were more

likely to evaluate DCFs positively (M=5.29; SD=1.47) than citizens with low participatory attitudes (M=4.52; SD=1.41). As for the retrospective assessments of DCFs, however, there seem to be almost no differences between deliberative and direct-democratic attitudes. The average for citizens with high direct-democratic attitudes is 5.33 and 5.36 for citizens with high deliberative attitudes. And conversely, 4.54 (direct-democratic) and 4.56 (deliberative) for low participatory attitudes. Moreover, *delegative citizens* are also found to be more favorably inclined toward DCFs. While the average rating of DCFs is even slightly higher among citizens with strong representative attitudes than among participatory citizens (strong representative attitudes: M=4.4; SD=1.55; weak representative attitudes: M=4.13; SD=1.54), there are no significant differences (p=0.9) in the retrospective assessment of DCFs between citizens with strong representative attitudes (M=4.89; SD=1.51) compared to citizens with weak representative attitudes (M=4.89; SD=1.47). Next, similar to stealth attitudes, *technocratic citizens* possess even *more positive attitudes* toward DCFs (rating outcome: M=4.45; SD=1.53; retrospective assessment: M=5.03; SD=1.43) compared to citizens low on the technocratic dimension (rating outcome: M=4.14; SD=1.55; retrospective assessment: M=4.79; SD=1.53).

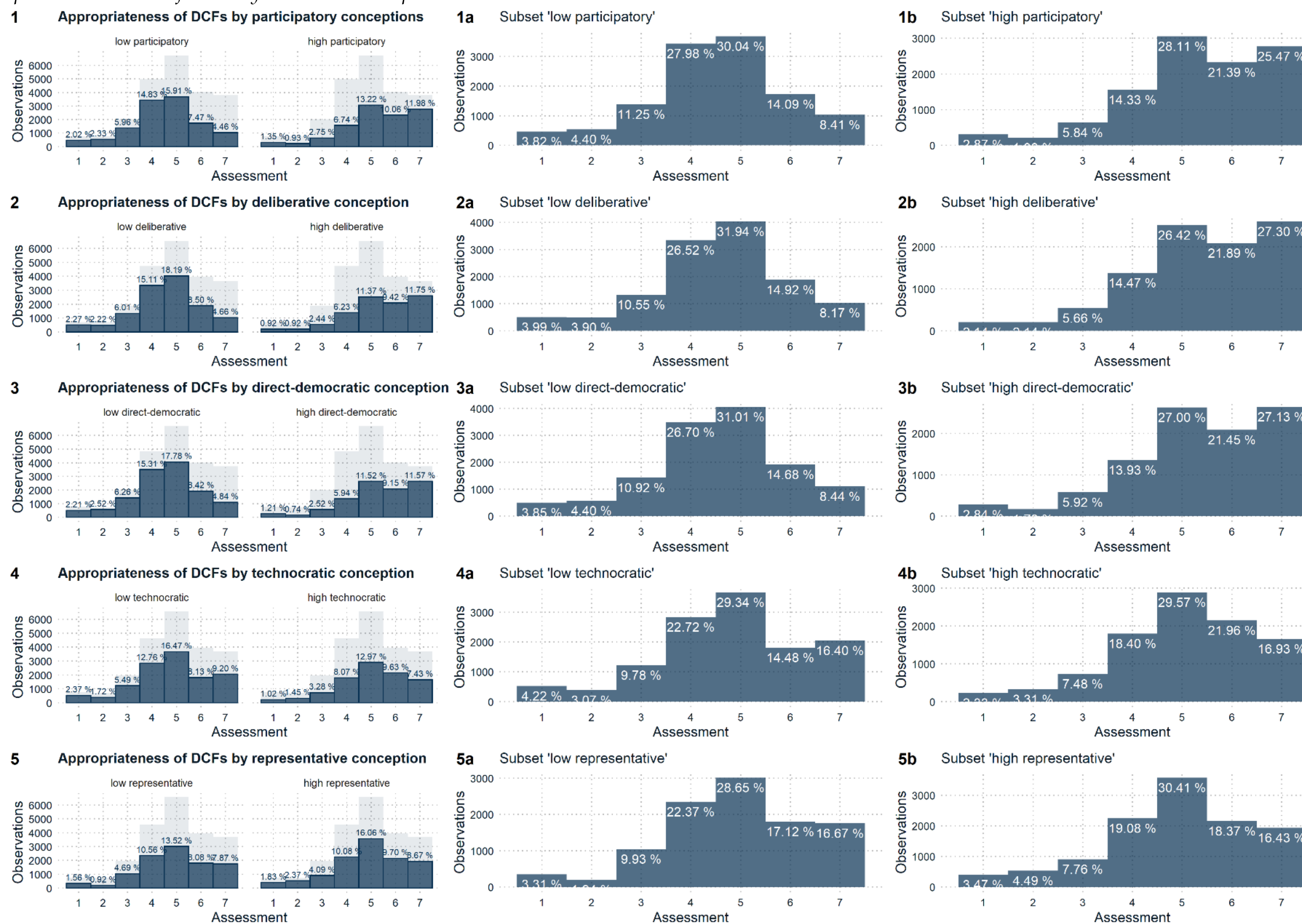
In sum, these findings contradict **H8a**. Both participatory and delegative citizens are almost equally supportive of DCFs. The perceived legitimacy is *not* higher among participatory citizens compared to delegative citizens. For better illustration, Figure 28 (average evaluation of DCFs) and Figure 29 (retrospective assessment) show distributions of the variables for participatory (direct-democratic and deliberative) and delegative (representative and technocratic) conceptions.

Turning to the design and issue characteristics, Figure 30 shows differences for both participatory compared to less participatory citizens and delegative compared to less delegative citizens. As expected, preferences of participatory citizens differ from delegative citizens. Yet, the findings for *participatory citizens* only partly corroborate with the expectations (see Chapter 3.3.5.). First, there are no significant differences both for input and throughput criteria, indicating that participatory citizens in general are as interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions as less participatory citizens (see also Appendix C2.5.). Intriguingly, however, participatory citizens are more open to strong authorization of DCFs and prefer them to be decoupled from legacy institutions.

Figure 28: Evaluation of DCFs by democratic conceptions

Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *rating outcome* by five democratic conception variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=23,148; n_2=22,164; n_3=22,812; n_4=22,296; n_5=22,272.

Figure 29: Retrospective assessment of DCFs by democratic conceptions



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *perceived appropriateness of DCFs* by five democratic conception variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=23,148; n_2=22,164; n_3=22,812; n_4=22,296; n_5=22,272.

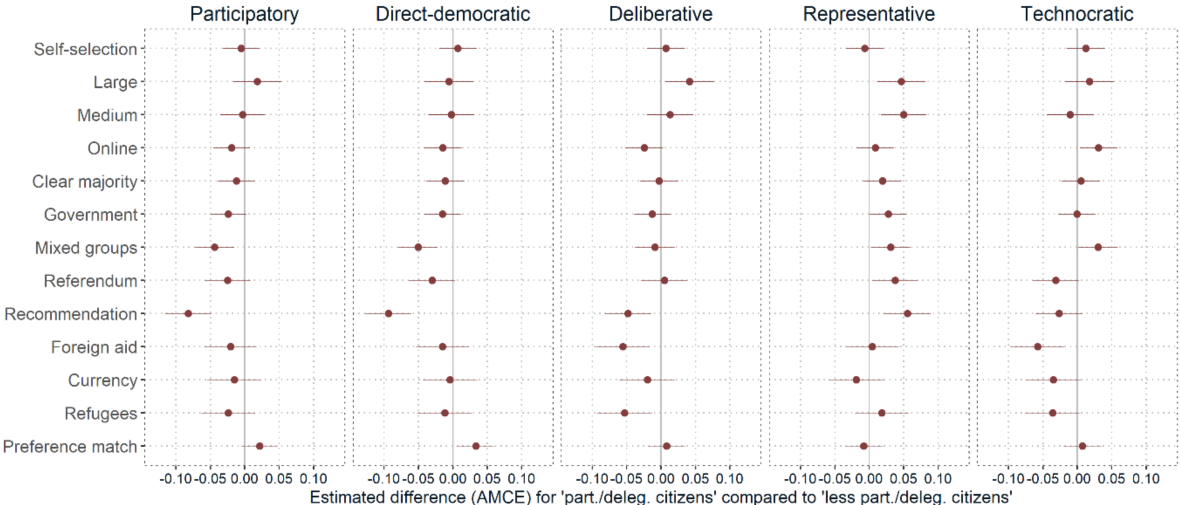
In concrete, compared to less participatory citizens, they were more likely to reject scenarios that included recommendations compared to binding decisions, citizen panels composed of mixed members compared to pure citizen groups, and governmental initiated procedures compared to bottom-up initiatives. Next, although there seem to be no issue differences across participatory and less participatory citizens, outcome favorability matters equally for both groups. Finally, there are a few differences between direct-democratic and deliberative conceptions. Binding decisions seem to be "more" appealing for direct-democratic citizens compared to citizens with low direct-democratic attitudes (see Appendix C2.5. (A.Figure 53)). By the same token, intriguingly, even citizens with deliberative conception of democracy tend to "dislike" mere advisory roles of DCFs (see Appendix C2.5. (A.Figure 54)), although deliberative citizens seem to care more about large groups than less deliberative citizens. Moreover, substantive considerations seem to play a role particularly for direct-democratic citizens. Whereas outcome favorability matters equally for deliberative and less deliberative citizens, direct-democratic citizens were significantly more likely to choose scenarios that aligned with their own substantial preferences.

Overall, findings for participatory citizens partly confirm **H8b**. Although participatory citizens are more open to strong empowerment and less open to coupling, they are as interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions as less participatory citizens.

Turning to *delegative citizens*, there are some differences between representative and technocratic conceptions, with particularly representative citizens are more likely to meet the expectations presented in Chapter 3.3.5. First, citizens with a dominant representative conception of democracy care slightly more about inclusionary extra provisions, even though the effects are less clear than expected (with only group size producing differences). The remaining input and throughput criteria are equally important to both delegative and less delegative citizens. Technocratic citizens, by contrast, were more likely to ask for online formats than less technocratic citizens. Next, although both representative and technocratic citizens prefer DCFs to be tightly coupled to legacy institutions, effects for authorization are less clear among both groups of citizens. In concrete, compared to less delegative citizens, effects for both representative and technocratic citizens indicate that they were more likely to choose top-down formats composed of mixed groups compared to bottom-up scenarios composed of mere citizen groups. Note, the effect for group composition is significant for

representative citizens only. Furthermore, while representative citizens tend to be less open to strong authorization, preferences for technocratic citizens do not differ from less technocratic citizens in that regard. Finally, when it comes to substantive considerations, there seem to be no differences between delegative and less delegative citizens. Again, outcome favorability matters equally for both groups. It turned out, however, that particularly technocratic citizens tend to be less open to the foreign aid issue (which was the most preferred issue in general).

Figure 30: Difference plots for participatory and delegative citizens - choice outcome



Note: Effects show the differences of AMCE for different democratic conceptions. Reference categories (top to bottom: random selection, small, face-to-face, narrow majority, NGO, citizens alone, binding decision, emissions, preference mismatch) are not shown.

In sum, my findings confirm **H8c** for representative citizens only. While representative citizens are less open to strong empowerment, more open to tight coupling, and more interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions compared to less representative citizens, there tend to be no clear differences across technocratic and less technocratic citizens (except for coupling).

5.2.6. Confided citizens

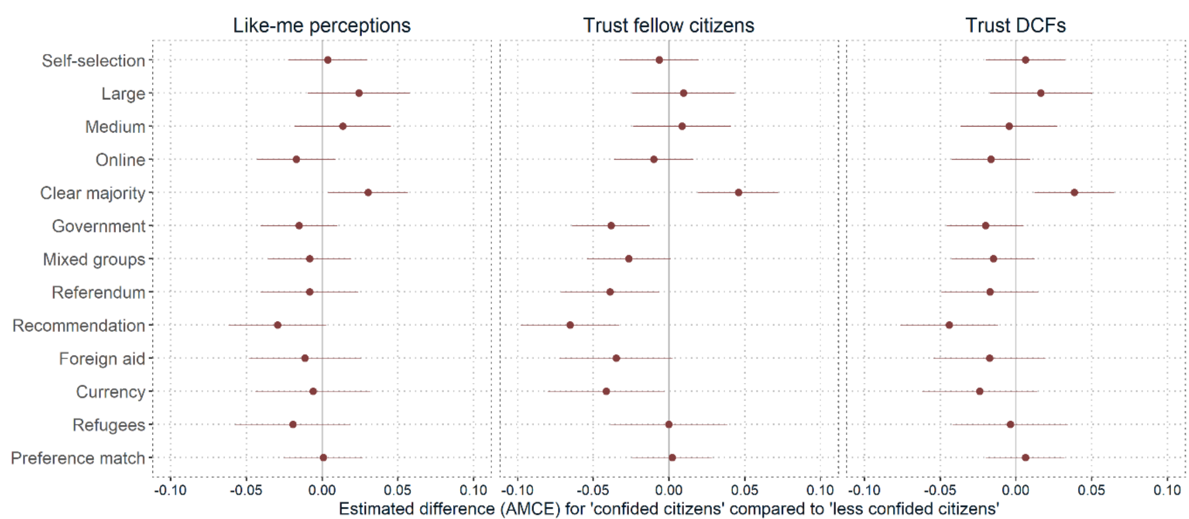
I situate confided citizens within the concept of social trust and draw on three variables in conjuncture with DCFs (cf. Pow et al., 2020): *Like-me perceptions*, *trust in fellow citizens*, and *trust in DCFs*. As expected endorsement for DCFs is remarkably high across all three variables. Confided respondents in general tended to have both higher ratings on DCFs (like-me perceptions: M=4.52; SD=1.53 compared to M=3.95; SD=1.49; trust in fellow citizens: M=4.47;

SD=1.54 compared to M=3.96; SD=1.48; trust in DCFs: M=4.52; SD=1.55 compared to M=3.96; SD=1.47) and a more positive retrospective assessment of DCFs (like-me perceptions: M=5.38; SD=1.31 compared to M= 4.23; SD=1.48; trust in fellow citizens: M=5.46; SD=1.27 compared to M= 4.02; SD=1.39; trust in DCFs: M= 5.66; SD=1.1 compared to M= 3.97; SD=1.38) compared to respondents with low levels of social trust.

Overall, these findings confirm **H9a**, stating that the perceived legitimacy of DCFs is higher among citizens who perceive participants as their confidants compared to citizens who do not. Again, for better illustration, Figure 32 (average evaluation of DCFs) and Figure 33 (retrospective assessment) show distributions of the social trust variables.

Next, nested model comparisons show mixed results. Whereas the test is significant for both trust in fellow citizens (p<0.001) and trust in DCFs (p=0.05) it is not for like-me perceptions[148], indicating that there are differences in effects between confided citizens and less confided citizens for the first two variables but not the latter. However, this does not mean that the both design and issue characteristics do not matter for citizens with strong "like-me" perceptions. It only indicates that there are no differences between citizens with strong and weak "like-me" perceptions.

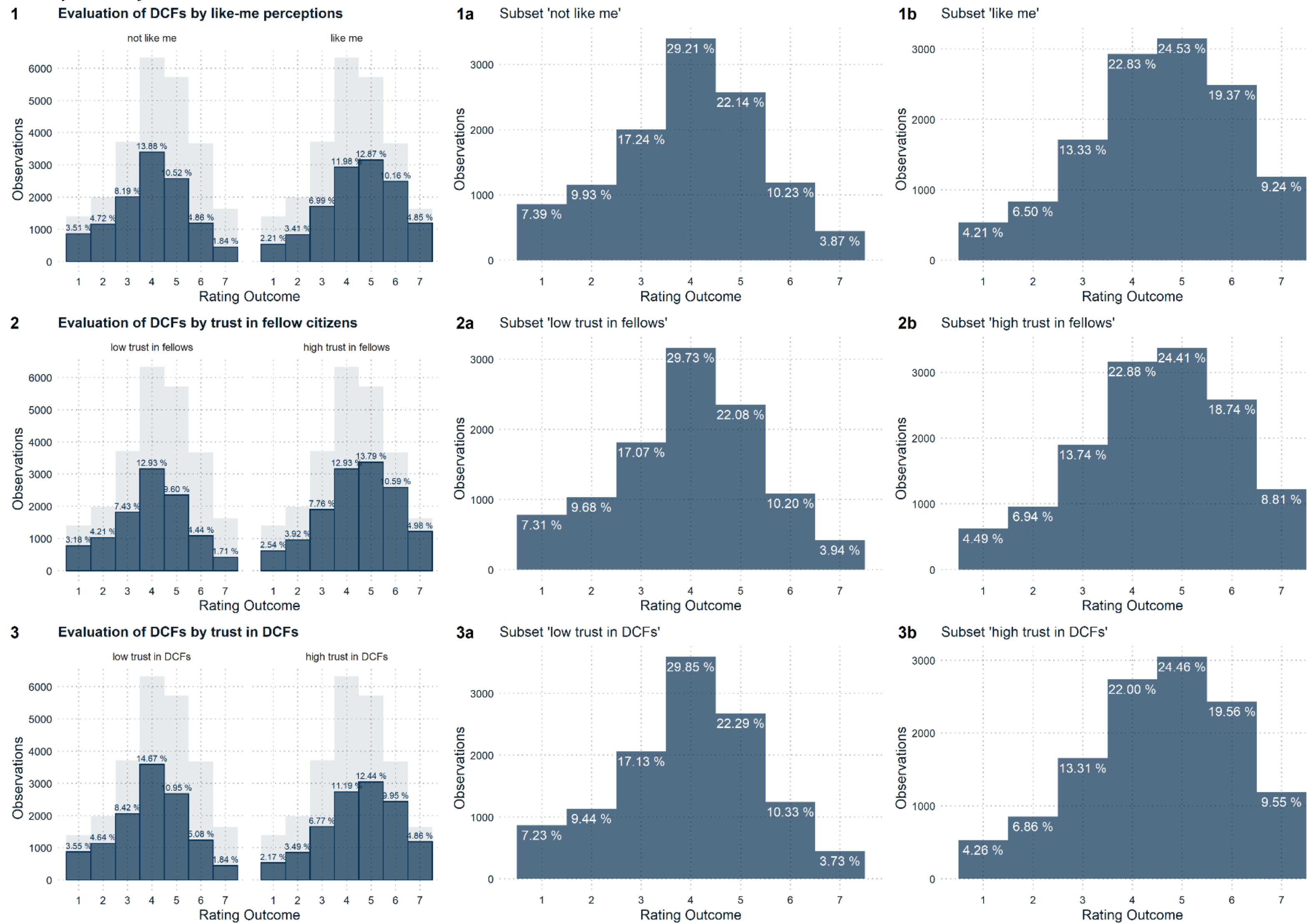
Figure 31: Difference plots for confided citizens - choice outcome



Note: Effects show the differences of AMCE for confided citizens compared to less confided citizens. Reference categories (top to bottom: random selection, small, face-to-face, narrow majority, NGO, citizens alone, binding decision, emissions, preference mismatch) are not shown.

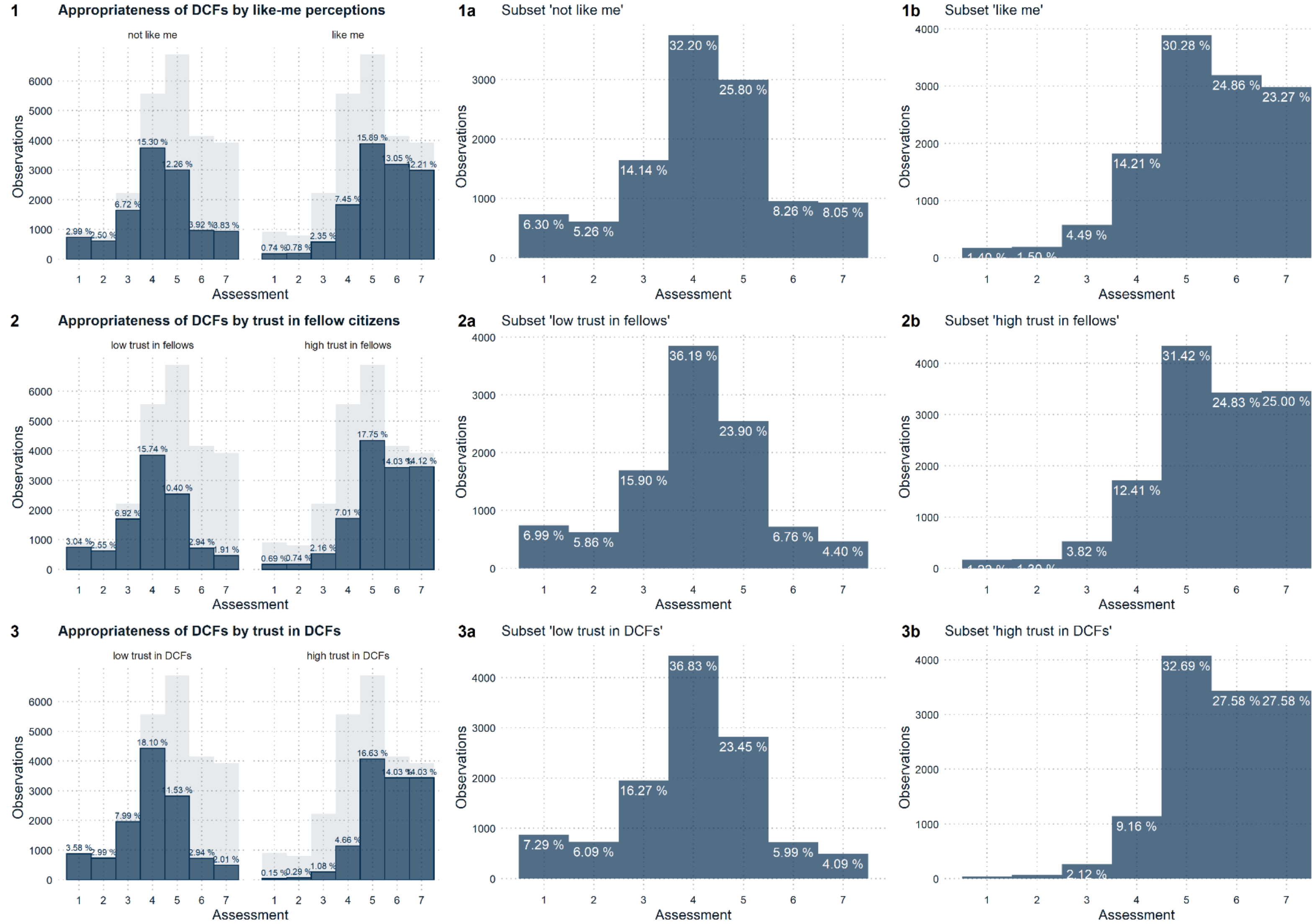
[148] The test is significant for the rating outcome variable though.

Figure 32: Evaluation of DCFs by social trust



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *rating outcome* by three social trust variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=24,468; n_2=24,468; n_3=24,468.

Figure 33: Retrospective assessment of DCFs by social trust



Note: Observations (n) = Respondents x 12 scenarios. Panels to the left show distributions of the *appropriateness of DCFs* by three social trust variables. The remaining panels show distributions *within* each level. n_1=24,468; n_2=24,468; n_3=24,468.

Figure 31 shows differences in effects for confided citizens in comparison to citizens with low levels of social trust, with preferences varying slightly, even though less clear than expected (with only majorities, initiative, group composition, and authorization producing differences). First, confided citizens tend to care somewhat more about extra provisions. In particular, they more clearly asked for clear majorities when drafting proposals. Second, as expected, confided citizens tend to be more open to strong authorization of DCFs and, in case of trust in fellow citizens, prefer decoupling from legacy institutions. In concrete, compared to citizens with low levels of social trust, confided citizens were more likely to reject DCFs drafting recommendations as compared to making binding decisions and mixed-group memberships as compared to citizen panels composed citizens only. Moreover, while outcome favorability matters equally for both groups of citizens, confided citizens more clearly disliked the currency issue.

Although less clear than expected, these findings confirm **H9b** for some attributes of DCFs only. Confided citizens tend to be more open to strong empowerment, less open to coupling (at least for citizens who trust their fellow citizens), and more interested in internal extra provisions (clear majority decisions) compared to non-confided citizens.

5.3. Discussion

This chapter summarizes and discusses the main findings. First, I tested how non-participating citizens perceive DCFs *in general* and how *object related conditions* (including both design- and issue characteristics) adjust their legitimacy perceptions. The starting point was a *general novelty proviso*, assuming that non-participating citizens tend to be rather cautious or even skeptical about DCFs, thus giving them minimal roles in political decision-making, with non-empowerment and tight coupling to legacy institutions. By the same token, I expected them to call for "extra provisions" that would vest DCF with maximal inclusion and deliberative quality in the event that they are entitled to shape political decisions.

Overall, I found that non-participating citizens in Germany are moderately positive towards DCFs. By the same token, I found the design of DCFs to be a key driver of non-participants' legitimacy perceptions. While some criteria can increase legitimacy, others have the opposite effect. However, both legitimacy perceptions and effects of various design characteristics were

higher and more pronounced among students. Most of the students had a social science background and arguably knew much more about DCFs and critical design characteristics than average persons. For example, my results for the student sample indicate no differences for various design characteristics between students in the information group and students in the glossary group. One explanation may be that students in general already knew more about DCFs (including arguments for and against such procedures), which informed their evaluations. Another explanation may be the "neutral" framing of the arguments in the student sample. Yet, DCFs are now increasingly politicized, with strong proponents and strong opponents among those familiar with such procedures. Familiarity with DCFs is not necessarily an argument against the validity of my results, although student samples (in general) often face strong concerns about external validity given, for example, that they are better educated and have a higher level of political interest. For my argument (namely, that many citizens do not know much about DCFs and therefore might give biased assessments), this fact is actually useful. The students not only met one crucial criterion, namely that most of them have had a higher awareness of DCFs, but research also shows that students are able to make assessments quite similar to adults (e.g., Esaiasson et al., 2012)[149].

Eventually, my findings demonstrate that the effects of both studies are broadly similar, at least in effect directions, with even the pilot study performing reasonably well in reflecting the preferences of non-participating citizens. The results reveal that citizens are most likely to support *non-empowered* and institutionally *tightly coupled DCFs* with representative and inclusive *extra provisions*. Similarly, *issue characteristics* and *substantive considerations* matter for their assessments, confirming that citizens tend to have higher legitimacy perceptions when the decisions of DCFs are consistent with their own preferences.

My expectations regarding issue variations were not fully corroborated though. While especially the *technical/less-salient issue* (currency) and the *non-technical/salient issue* (refugees) received the least support, both the *technical/salient issue* (emissions) and particularly the *non-technical/non-salient issue* (foreign aid) were particularly apt from the perspective of non-participating citizens. Additionally, outcome favorability even intensified the negative effect for the refugee issue. One explanation for these ambiguous findings might have to do with the

[149] For the argument on convenience samples of students in conjuncture with DCFs see Goldberg (2021).

perceived salience or personal relevance of political issues, which can indeed change over time. The currency issue, for example, has now become popular but may be simply too complex being issued in DCFs. Overall, the results seem rather arbitrary. Another explanation may be a general aversion to certain policy issues that cannot be explained on grounds of their complexity and salience. In order to better capture issue differences, further research need to suggest issue specifications that make (more) sense from both a theoretical and an empirical perspective. We know there are differences between issues. But we do not (yet) know what exactly the differences are. This, however, is a crucial point, particularly when it comes to "designing" issues of DCFs in real political decision-making (see conclusion). Furthermore, there may well be interaction effects within subgroups, for example, for various policy issues in conjuncture with authorization mechanisms for enlightened versus less enlightened citizens. I found, for example, that higher educated citizens are more open to technical/less-salient issue (crypto currency). At the same time, and in contrast to the current prominent public image, citizens with higher levels of education were more inclined to reject (and not support) the equally technical issue of climate change. One explanation may be that the more sophisticated citizens "rank" the climate change issue in the context of accountability and specifically its (lack of) prioritization among elected representatives. It is conceivable that more highly educated citizens are more likely to call for mandatory outcomes on that particular issue since the "urge" to act is more pronounced, as with the currency issue. Further research should consider such within subgroups interactions. Finally, it turned out that substantive considerations are independent of both the design of DCFs and different strata of the citizenry. Much of the support for DCFs appears to have an instrumental dimension, with support declining rapidly when decisions go against the substantive policy preferences of nonparticipants. Not even "best designed" DCFs seem capable to overcome such substantial considerations.

Given that *substantive considerations* take such a prominent role, are enthusiasts simply misleading in their love for DCFs? Werner and Marien (2020) remind us that winner-loser gaps are part of any political decision-making process, even in representative settings. However, when *juxtaposing* the status quo of representative procedures with alternative procedures, Werner and Marien (2020) show that *participatory procedures* clearly conduce to higher legitimacy perceptions, even for unfavorable outcomes. The question "of whether decision

losers are more sensitive to process information than decision winners" (Werner & Marien, 2020, p. 5), however, is a tricky one. My findings for decision losers are almost similar to decision winners, except for authorization and issue variations. Decision losers tended to be more open towards referendums compared to binding decisions while winners did not distinguish between authorization mechanisms. However, the effect for authorization is both small and only marginally significant. Similarly, Werner and Marien (2020) find decision losers possess higher fairness perceptions on participatory procedures. Yet, one could argue that losers ask for "maximal" participation models, induced by both deliberative plus direct democratic components. Note, however, these are hypothetical scenarios only and citizens might act quite differently in real-world decisions.

Second, I tested for *subject related conditions*, namely *familiarity* and *citizen heterogeneity*. I was arguing that citizens must be *aware* of DCFs including their democratic implications and need to get familiarized with DCFs in order to make proper legitimacy assessments (see also Lafont, 2017). My findings show that *information, experiences, and expectations* affect how citizens assess aspects of DCFs. As expected, aware citizens tend to vest DCFs with advisory and institutionally coupled roles in political decision-making while simultaneously paying close attention to extra provisions of DCFs. These findings not only corroborate Lafont's concerns, but emphasizes the significance of informing citizens properly about DCFs (see conclusion). Arguably, information not only helped respondent do develop more informed opinions about DCFs, but also affected their legitimacy perceptions. Yet, we do not know the exact mechanisms causing these differences in effect. We assume that learning effects were ostensibly involved. However, other mechanisms such as priming or framing might have played a role as well[150]. Future studies need both to uncover and account for such mechanisms.

Furthermore, my findings indicate that many citizens neither have had any experiences with nor expectations about DCFs. Simply asking them for legitimacy perceptions without taking previous experiences and expectations into account might result in non-attitudes. Future research may need to come up with different or more nuanced legitimacy measures that accounts for previous experiences and expectations. For example, my results show that citizens who do not have expectations at all perceive DCF as less appropriate for political

[150] E.g., which and how arguments were presented.

decision-making. Simply "briefing" non-participants might evoke them to think about own expectations. Consequently, we cannot (yet) draw many conclusions about procedural favorability, as suggested in Chapter 3.1.3. Nevertheless, I think this aspect is important for future research, especially in the context of the strong emphasis on outcome favorability.

Next, legitimacy perceptions differ across *subgroups* within the citizenry. I was arguing that, contrary to the common image of DCFs as the ultimate savior to the crisis of democracy, legitimacy assessments are contingent on heterogeneity within the citizenry. My findings reveal that different strata of the citizens value or despise DCFs for different reasons. Overall, however, perceived legitimacy is reasonably high, and there are no extreme differences across subgroups. Even citizens with low social trust, for example, are moderately positive about DCFs. Furthermore, I demonstrated that differences exist even within the subgroups, for example across enlightened or disaffected citizens. This suggests that particular strata of the citizens are not uniform groups either. Yet we might need to come up with more "realistic" approaches, which also implies abandoning the rosy picture of DCFs (at least to some extent). DCFs cannot do everything for everyone; if we continue to pursue a "unitary" approach, we might run the risk of "overestimating" the support of DCFs.

For *enlightened citizens*, I found that perceived legitimacy is higher among politically interested and self-efficacious citizens but not among higher educated citizens. This is intriguing given that students in the pilot study (i.e. respondents with a higher educational level) tended to be more supportive of DCFs in general. Note, again, that most of them were social science students who tended to be both more interested in politics and more familiar with DCFs than the average citizens. I found that enlightened citizens assess DCFs particularly for their intrinsic values such as representativity and coupling to representative institutions and refused strong empowerment.

By contrast, *disaffected citizens* assess DCFs particularly for their empowered roles in political decision-making, caring less about extra provisions and coupling. Disconfirming the political dissatisfaction thesis, however, allegiant rather than disaffected citizens perceive DCFs as particularly legitimate. This may seem surprising at a first glance, but my findings align with an already existing trend in research: To date, empirical research has not been able to properly

distinguish between the new politics and political dissatisfaction hypotheses (cf. Goldberg et al., 2020, p. 313).

Stealth and populist citizens are exemptions though, with both possessing higher legitimacy perceptions than their allegiant counterparts. One explanation may be that disaffected, stealth, and populist citizens simply consider DCFs as a case of "the grass is always greener somewhere else", meaning that they simply prefer any alternative to the status quo of representative decision-making (see also Goldberg et al., 2020; Zaslove et al., 2020), with DCFs being one option "getting rid" of such unloved alternatives. Outcome favorability, however, matters equally for both groups, which suggest that substantive considerations may trump such "the grass is greener" considerations (particularly in cases where outcome favorability has the strongest effect). Moreover, although I would have expected populists to be particularly supportive of direct-democratic alternatives, my results show support for referendums was somewhat lower than for binding decisions. One possible explanation may be group composition. If populist citizens assume that the forum includes citizens who represent the interests of the "pure" citizens, a referendum might actually hinder or circumvent the process of "pure" decision-making. However, we do not know what respondents bear in mind when they hear something like "mere citizens groups" or "citizens like me and you". Here, interpretations could conflict considerably which requires further research.

Next, I found that both *participatory and delegative citizens* perceive DCFs as almost equal legitimate. However, while participatory citizens are more open to strong empowerment and less open to coupling and representative citizens are not, both are interested in inclusionary and internal extra provisions. Unfortunately, my data do not permit an answer to the question raised by Lafont as to whether a participatory conception is "truly participatory" or, in principle, also delegative - albeit in a different form (see Chapter 3.3.5.). In both participatory and delegative conceptions, citizens remain "passive" because they do not participate in DCFs themselves. This study, however, consciously aimed at non-participants. Moreover, the distinction between participative and delegative conceptions surely is a simplification of reality. My data show, for example, that preferences do not have to be mutually exclusive. Citizens with participatory attitudes may simultaneously have delegative attitudes (see also Bengtsson, 2012; Font et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, citizens seem to hold different "logics of delegation" depending on whether they adopt a more participatory or more representative conception of democracy. Whereas they follow a classical principal-agent logic and give DCFs a purely advisory role in more representative conceptions, they are more willing to delegate decision-making to their fellow citizens in participatory conceptions, but only if DCFs are as representative and inclusive as possible. My data, however, do not allow for any conclusions about the extent to which they consider themselves to become possible agents. However, one might assume that if they had read the information about DCF thoroughly, they might have concluded that they might have been part of DCFs themselves. Moreover, I found that both citizens with participatory and representative conceptions prefer random selection to self-selection. While this may promote representational criteria, it contradicts a "truly participatory" logic in which everyone would have had the actively participate.

Finally, my findings show that legitimacy perceptions hinge on *social trust*. Non-participants who trust their fellow citizens and DCFs, or citizens who think that participants are "people like them", possess significantly higher (even the highest) legitimacy perceptions. These findings corroborate Pow et al. (2020) who found like-me perceptions to be a significant predictor of legitimacy perceptions. Moreover, I found that confided citizens are more open to strong authorization and tend to prefer decoupling from representative institutions. Interestingly, however, design criteria matter equally for both citizens with high social trust and low social trust. For example, I demonstrated that both groups preferred DCFs composed of politicians and citizens to pure citizen groups. This contradicts the frequently cited "ordinary citizens" argument, stating that citizens would love DCFs because they are composed of independently motivated and diverse citizens instead of politicians with vested interests.

Taken together, these findings argue against Lafont, who harshly criticizes empowered uses of DCFs *in general*. On her account non-participating citizens would have no reasons to trust participating citizens because they would neither know them nor their interests. Yet I found that (some) non-participating citizens apparently do trust participating citizens (for whatever reason). Again, however, these are hypothetical cases and we do not know how non-participants would have acted in real cases. This comes with a practical implication as well: in order to generate like-me perceptions, trust in participating citizens, and trust in DCFs, non-

participants need to be aware of DCFs, their recruitment strategies, and group compositions (see also Pow et al., 2020). Overall, my findings suggest that we might need to take a step back and ask what citizens actually bear in mind when they think of "ordinary citizens". We simply do not know reasons why non-participants trust both their fellow citizens and DCFs. Although this might be a rockier road than expected, it may help to better understand motives instead of simply assuming that citizens support DCFs because they are composed of ordinary citizens. This may have to do, inter alia, with citizens' understandings and conceptions of representation.

Taken together, my findings suggest that taking heterogeneity within the citizenry seriously has considerable impact for democratic designing: depending on the needs of various types of citizens, the roles of DCFs may be very different ones.

5.4. Robustness checks, diagnostics, and retrospective power analysis

Finally, I have run a number of robustness and diagnostic checks (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014). First, I reran analyses with the rating outcome variables and estimated Marginal Means. Overall, effects seem to be somewhat clearer for the choice outcome variables (see also Hainmueller et al., 2015). Respondents, however, often tend to avoid choosing extreme categories. Additionally, I therefore employed two alternative binary rating variables which are dichotomized versions if the rating outcome (see Appendix C4.1.). For the first, all scenarios rated higher than 4 (midpoint of the scale) were coded as "1" and "0" otherwise (see also Bansak et al., 2016; Hainmueller et al., 2014). For the second, I omitted the middle category and transformed the rating item to a binary variable by grouping all three response categories to right of the middle category as "1" and all three categories left to the middle category as "0". Although a few cases were lost this way, it is possible to better control for a lack of accuracy in responses such as ambivalent opinions and non-attitudes. Both alternative rating variables yield pretty much identical outputs as the choice variable.

Second, I checked for the time respondents spent with answering the conjoint tasks. It turned out, that the substantive results tended to be more pronounced for respondents who have engaged with the conjoints for longer than the median (Appendix C4.2.). Additionally, I

included estimations for the first and third quantile. However, only some effects are different, namely recruitment, group size and authorization. These effects are similar to the information effects (Chapter 5.2.1.). This not only indicates that citizens need to be sufficiently familiar with DCFs to properly assess them, but also underpins my general conclusion.

Third I checked for *carry-over effects*, namely whether the assessments of the conjoint tasks were independent of each other, or whether they were influenced by previous measurements. This means that effects should be similar across the tasks, which would suggest that respondents chose the same design of DCFs regardless of which designs they had seen before (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014, p. 22). I estimated effects separately for each comparison. A.Figure 75 in Appendix C4.3. shows that the effects are largely similar across the tasks. Only the effects for group size were found to be slightly different in the first scenario (for the choice outcome but not the rating). I repeated the analyses for the first scenario and for all scenarios except the first, with result not changing any of my general conclusions.

Fourth, I tested for *profile order effects*, namely whether respondents tended to choose the left or right scenario more often. As a consequence, effects should be similar irrespective of whether the attributes were presented in the first or second scenario (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014, p. 25). My test shows that the effects are largely similar for the first and second profiles (see Appendix C4.4.).

Finally, I checked whether the *randomization* performed sufficiently. One possibility is to compare covariates of respondents (e.g., satisfied versus dissatisfied citizens) across attributes by regressing covariates on all attributes (cf. Hainmueller et al., 2014, p. 25). I ran the balance test for all subgroups and obtained largely insignificant effects, suggesting that the attributes were balanced (see Appendix C4.5. (A.Figure 82 and A.Figure 83)). Additionally, I checked for display frequencies, with A.Figure 81 in Appendix C4.5. indicating no differences within attributes.

Drawing on Stefanelli and Lukac (2020) I performed retrospective power analysis for assessing the quality of sample size[151], number of choice tasks and number of attribute levels. I used the

[151] Scarce research on appropriate sample sizes for conjoint experiments exists. Most researchers follow rules of thumb from commercial marketing research with sample sizes typically ranging between 150 and 1,200 respondents cf. Orme (2020, p. 65).

user-friendly application provided by the authors[152]. Their simulations show although large effect sizes require only a small number of observations, conjoint experiments cannot adequately reflect small effect sizes even with large samples (cf. Stefanelli & Lukac, 2020, p. 13). Their results suggest that sample size needs to be increased with the number of attribute levels to ensure sufficient statistical power (cf. Stefanelli & Lukac, 2020, p. 14). With a number of more than 2000 respondents, six conjoint tasks, maximum four attribute levels (policy measures), and an estimated effect size of 0.05, the design of the main study has sufficient statistical power, noticeably above 0.8. For the pilot study, given that the sample was mainly composed of university students with a social science background, effect sizes were expected to be comparatively clear. According to Stefanelli and Lukac (2020), such large effect sizes allow for relatively small sample sizes to achieve appropriate statistical power (see above). Given this high statistical power, statistical estimation errors for both direction and size are less likely. However, given the heterogeneity even among students, further studies should aim for larger sample sizes.

[152] A user-friendly application is accessible here https://mblukac.shinyapps.io/conjoints-power-shiny/

Chapter 6: Conclusion

"Most of the time, citizens currently have little participation except as spectators"

(Fishkin, 2018, p. 5).

In "Democracy for Realists", Achen and Bartels (2017) paint a somewhat pessimistic picture of the citizenry, characterizing them both as uninterested and incapable of fulfilling their democratic duties (see also Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Mutz, 2006). Rather, they would pay little attention to politics and instead opt for more pleasant activities. Indeed, even the most interested citizens lack time and resources to engage with all policy issues and make considered judgments. Citizens inevitably rely on divisions of labor in which they must trust others (e.g., Bächtiger & Goldberg, 2020; MacKenzie & Warren, 2012). Such a picture is difficult to reconcile with the idea of "Democracy Without Shortcuts", which envisions a participatory conception of deliberative democracy (Lafont, 2019). Somewhere in between is this study, which argues that DCFs can be helpful tools for (some) citizens.

Embedded in a general normative debate about the appropriateness of DCFs in political decision-making (Chapter 2), this study aimed to (better) understand citizens' preferences for DCFs. My study therefore provides both a theoretical and an empirical contribution. My main argument was that citizens' preferences are contingent: There is neither "the one perfect or superior procedure", nor are citizens a "monolithic group". Rather, citizens' legitimacy perceptions are embedded in both an objective context and a subjective context. However, there is a general proviso: DCFs are unusual and unfamiliar instruments for a large proportion of citizens, which may have an impact on their perceptions of legitimacy.

A key finding is that awareness about DCFs requires more than just having heard about them. Although about 50 percent of citizens (in Germany) know that these forms of participation exist, their perceptions of legitimacy change as soon as they know "more" about them. This result underlines Lafonts argument that citizens ultimately need to be sufficiently aware about (critical) features and their democratic implications such as authorization and recruitment, and their democratic implications. When we buy a car, we deal with (some) important car features

and do not purchase just any model simply because it is a car. If we care about the environment, for example, we might not necessarily choose a diesel. Similarly, if descriptive representativeness is important to us, we would tend to be less supportive of self-selection. This result, however, also emphasizes the importance of experience in conjunction with diffuse support. Whether and in what form DCFs are (or can be) anchored in the political system is likely to depend on whether citizens have a "realistic" idea of such tools.

Based on this argument, I conducted two conjoint experiments in Germany with 231 university students and a representative sample of 2,039 German residents aged 18 and older that presented respondents with hypothetical scenarios of DCFs, where they were thoroughly "briefed" beforehand about DCFs, their characteristics, and pro and con arguments on critical design characteristics. Below I elucidate three general conclusions: (1) there is no one-fits-all formula for DCFs; (2) citizens share some (normative) concerns raised by leading philosophers in the world; (3) both citizens' awareness about DCFs and their preferences may matter for democratic designing.

I find that non-participants generally possess moderate to high legitimacy assessments of DCFs, yet these can vary depending on the "configuration" of their design. Legitimacy generally appears to be higher when DCFs are both vested with *circumscribed authority* and *closely tied to established institutions* of the representative system (which envisions the idea of indirect authorization[153]) as well as providing *inclusionary "extra provisions"* (which privileges random selection, large groups, and clear majorities).

However, this is not a general panacea to the crisis of democracy. Societies are increasingly heterogeneous, which is also reflected in the legitimacy assessments of citizens. I find that legitimacy perceptions differ between various types of citizens. While *allegiant* citizens, citizens with a *representative* (but also *participatory*) conception of democracy, and citizens with a *high level of social trust* think that DCFs are both legitimate and appropriate, *populists*, citizens with *stealth attitudes*, and citizens with a *low level of education* are more positive about DCFs as well, with populists and stealth citizens appear to have different motivations for support than allegiant citizens with a representative conception of democracy (see below). Knowledge

[153] When formally authorized governmental organizations or the government itself "delegate" authorities to some (mostly circumscribed) extent to DCFs (Chapter 2.2.4.).

about and previous experience with DCFs also take on a key role for legitimacy assessments. Citizens who are aware of DCFs tend to have more positive attitudes toward them. Citizens' expectations, by contrast, do not seem to have much influence on legitimacy perceptions in general. Unfortunately, however, my data do not allow us to consider specific expectations (for example, procedural preferences or normative expectations). It is reasonable to assume that the type of expectation could make a difference for citizens' legitimacy perceptions, though qualitative studies are needed on this. In that regard, Jacquet (2017) finds that participants expect different things from DCFs, something future research should consider for *non-participants* as well. In this context, my theoretical support model considered procedural preferences, which, however, I could not account for in my empirical analysis. Finally, outcome considerations exist regardless of any heterogeneity in society and take a significant role in explaining citizens support for DCFs.

Moreover, different strata of the citizenry expect different things from DCFs (see Table 9). Both enlightened citizens (especially highly educated) and citizens with a preference for representative decision-making prefer non-empowered DCFs that are both closely tied to the representative system and maximally representative. Conversely, both disaffected citizens (including stealth citizens) and populists prefer more authoritative, decoupled DCFs and do not place more or less value on inclusive extra provisions as do their allegiant counterparts. Corroborating previous research (e.g., Goldberg et al., 2020; Webb, 2013), disaffected citizens seem not to be a uniform group either although all call for any alternatives away from the status quo.

In this respect, disaffected and populist citizens in particular seem to envision DCFs as an "alternative actor" to existing "unloved" alternatives such as greedy or corrupt politicians. Citizens with high trust in DCFs tend to assign them more decisive and decoupled roles, but only when decisions were made with clear majorities. For like-me perceptions, on the other hand, there are no significant differences. Finally, there seems to be a mixed picture for citizens with a participatory conception of democracy. Although they generally tend toward greater authorization and decoupling, citizens with a deliberative conception seem to place greater value on inclusion (large groups) than those with weak deliberative preferences. In contrast, citizens with a direct-democratic conception do not place more or less value on inclusion than citizens who do not share this conception. As Lafont correctly reminds us, however, we cannot

know whether citizens yield "true" participatory preferences. More likely, citizens have mixed conceptions. My data show, for example, that respondents can have multiple conceptions of democracy simultaneously, and that preferences are not mutually exclusive. However, my data did not allow for "ideal types" that would have excluded any overlap between participatory and delegative dimensions since the number of cases would have been too small for each type. Future studies need to investigate the extent to which participatory preferences can be more clearly delineated and examined.

Table 9: Summary for various types of citizens

	Input		Throughput		Output			
					(Coupling)		*(Empowerment)*	
	Random selection	Large groups	Face to face	Clear majority	Top-down	Mixed groups	Referendum	Recommendation
Enlightened	+	+			+	+	+	+
Disaffected				-		-	-	-
Stealth		-				-	-	-
Populist			-			-	-	-
Participatory						-		-
Deliberative		+						-
Direct						-		-
Representative		+			+	+	+	+
Technocratic			-			+		
Confided				+	-		-	-

Note: The figure shows the groups' evaluations of the attributes in comparison to their counterparts. '+' indicates that the group (compared to the counter group) more often picked scenarios that contained a certain attribute (compared to the reference category). '-' indicates that the group (compared to the counterpart group) less frequently chose scenarios with that attribute. For instance, the "+" for random selection shows that enlightened citizens (compared to less enlightened citizens) more often decided for random selection compared to self-selection.

Overall, my results suggest that citizens, at least in part, share the sharp "normative concerns", especially when it comes to strong authorization. For now, in a context where DCFs are still novel tools in political decision-making, citizens seem happy with limited roles. However, they seem to care much about clear majorities, regardless of whether they are personally among the winners or losers. Put differently, losers do not clamor for large majorities any more than winners do. Lafont has argued that citizens would have no reason at all to trust a majority because they would not know whether their own opinion would corroborate with it. Apparently, citizens do trust a majority although we do not (yet) have a convincing response why they are trusting. Future research should address this question, examining various reasons or motives citizens might have to trust not only DCFs as "actors" in general but also a majority of participants. One idea might be efficiency because unity is better "to enforce" democratically without further laborious discussion. Of course, we do not know whether citizens engage in such deliberations; my (pessimistic) guess is that citizens simply are not thinking such things through but rather draw on "democratic cues" they are familiar with from legacy institutions. I think it is a (too) romantic imagination to expect citizens to think along possible effects Lafont is raising in the context of majority (and minority) opinions. Many simply do not follow the normative debate and think about desirable goals of deliberation either. But do we necessarily always have to trip over ourselves, or should we just accept that this question probably has little relevance coming purely from a political debate? Maybe sometimes things are just as simple as they seem at first glance: As long as a decision is made with a sufficient majority, everything seems to be fine.

To conclude, although many citizens support DCFs, most want to give them "secondary roles" only. Some ask for bit roles, others give them major supporting roles. But they hardly ever get a leading role (so far). Future research, however, needs to address the extent to which these preferences change when citizens are repeatedly dissatisfied with the further processing of the results (e.g., when decision-makers increasingly tend to cherry-pick). In that regard I have argued that DCFs might perform *indirect or discursive accountability* in reminding decision-makers to address the results in political decision-making. This mechanism has powerful political significance because both participants and non-participants in the end are voters. However, this will require more experience with such procedures in general and with practical cases specifically. Therefore, by now, I cannot answer the question to what extent DCFs

(already) enjoy diffuse support. Further and more principled criticism concerns consensus on increasingly heterogeneous societies where, although desirable, consensus is hardly a realistic goal (e.g., Lafont, 2019). In any democracy, inevitably everyone will win and lose. Even a perfectly organized decision-making process can lead to undesirable results, while a poorly organized process can still lead to desirable ones and DCFs are no exemption. Sometimes they work satisfactorily, but sometimes they do not. As long as they do not systematically neglect certain interests and the winning/losing ratio is reasonably balanced, there is no problem from a democratic point of view.

The findings allow for some *practical implications*. Democratic "designers" might be advised to consider heterogeneity in society: First, the more democratic disenchantment and populist attitudes exist among citizens, the more effective could DCFs with empowerment be in tackling the crisis of democracy. The same is true for citizens with strong participatory attitudes. Irrespective of the normative desirability of strong empowerment, however, we also have to consider the extent of deep dissatisfaction in a society. Germany still seems to be a relatively responsive democracy in this respect, putting a question mark on strong empowerment. Nevertheless, "designers" could make participation more focused on such "target groups", considering that DCFs cannot solve all problems. However, "smart designing" might not only be more effective but also prevent disappointment among both public officials and citizens. Surely, not all citizens can be fully satisfied. Therefore, designing questions must always be addressed according to specific goals. Second, however, much of the support seems to have both an "instrumental" and "trust" dimension: Legitimacy perceptions decrease when the decisions of DCFs conflict with substantive policy preferences, casting doubts on strong authorization. At the same time, DCFs seem to gain support primarily when they are "trusted" to find good decisions. However, we need to better understand motives for when such trust is present and what reinforces such trust. One of the most serious issues, however, is the (lack of) awareness about DCFs. My results show not only that DCFs score better when citizens are familiar with them, but also that knowledge has an impact on the importance of various but especially "critical" features of DCFs. To ensure adequate assessments, efforts must be made to raise awareness among citizens. This could even begin in kindergarten or school, for example, by involving children in everyday decisions in "forum-like" processes or by organizing student committees. In addition, short explanatory

videos could be used in various areas of society, such as in TV advertising, at bus stops, on public transportation, or on WLAN login pages in public networks.

Of course, my study is not without limitations. Hence, I conclude my doctoral thesis by pointing to some challenges and avenues for further research. First, the *measurement and operationalization of perceived legitimacy* is a sensitive issue (Chapter 3.1.) and my study is not immune to it either. I placed perceived legitimacy within David Easton's support model and argued that perceptions of legitimacy go beyond aspects of procedural fairness. In this context, I have argued for a more general formulation that include various latent motives with procedural fairness being among them. While research shows that different indicators can produce substantially identical results (cf. Werner & Marien, 2020), from a theoretical perspective it may be useful to include different legitimacy questions in conjoint experiments. I suggest a threefold measure[154] for future research that considers both acceptability of decisions and participation in policy decisions (cf. Weatherford, 1992), in addition to process evaluation (e.g., procedural justice (e.g., Tyler, 2006)).

Second, research on perceived legitimacy need to address *further actors* like public officials who implement, supervise and realize DCFs[155]. Setälä (2021) has recently argued that DCFs can only serve as complements to representative democracy if they promote mutual justification among elected representatives who are responsible for the decisions. Yet, we need to understand what politicians (and other actors) expect from DCFs. To date, empirical research has missed to include expectations of further actors (exceptions are for example Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2019; Niessen, 2019; Pfeifer, Opitz, & Geis, 2020), which, however is important from a practical perspective. They take a decisive role in "determining" the type and liability of DCFs and understanding their needs and expectations might increase both the chance that proposals will be proceeded further (cf. Font et al., 2015) and their general commitment to DCFs. Jacquet et al. (2020) for example show that Politicians tend to support advisory DCFs but we need to take a step further and ask for their expectations when such novel tools enter political decision-making. Ultimately, DCFs need supportive structures in both the government and the public sphere (cf. Dryzek, 2010, p. 16). The only route that will take us in the right direction is an

[154] I thank Michael Neblo and André Bächtiger for fruitful and illuminating discussions on that issue.
[155] For instance, stakeholder (e.g. Pek et al., 2020; Niessen, 2019), public administrators (e.g. Eckerd and Heidelberg, 2019), or politicians (e.g. Jacquet et al., 2020; Thompson 2019).

empirical one. I made a start taking the path of the citizens. Other paths still need to be explored.

Third, further research needs to investigate legitimacy perceptions within *different institutional and cultural contexts*. My study focused on Germany where DCFs might work quite differently compared to other countries. Germany is a typical consensus democracy with an emphasis on corporatism, consultation and compromise (cf. Lijphart, 1999) and could therefore generally be more open to dialogical citizen participation and DCFs. By contrast, in majoritarian democracies with a strong degree of pluralism, compromises are more difficult to achieve and, accordingly, perceptions of DCFs may be different. Moreover, citizens perception of electoral systems could have an impact on their preferences for DCFs. While proportional representation in consensus democracies might "sensitize" citizens to representativeness and the inclusion of minority groups, this sensitization might be less pronounced in systems with majority representation. In addition to these institutional arrangements, countries also differ in their participatory cultures. In Germany, opportunities for citizen participation have been increasing for some years, especially at the local level. Yet other countries have different experiences with civic participation. Moreover, authorization of DCFs can vary widely in practice. In Germany, most practices do not entail any obligations for policymakers. Other countries, however, have already probed more binding procedures, such as the CA on same-sex marriage in Ireland or the Citizen Initiative Review in Oregon, where DCFs are only one part of a wider participatory process. Accordingly, citizens' expectations may differ in different contexts. Against a practical or political background, further research similarly needs to reconsider various attributes of DCFs that might be important in different contexts. I have proposed a distinction between input, throughput, and output criteria and argued that each dimension is relevant for a specific democratic objective (inclusion, quality of internal decision-making, and link to decision-making). I then proposed various criteria for each dimension to designing DCFs that were meaningful in the German context. However, this list is not exhaustive (e.g., Curato et al., 2021). From the perspective of deliberative democracy, by contrast, my study might particularly lack precession with regard to the throughput dimension. Future research should search for criteria that better emphasize deliberative quality. One possibility is, for example, the focus on balanced exchange and dialogue as opposed to efficient decision-making. This is particularly important in the context of

accountability among participants. I have been arguing that DCFs might perform worse on holding someone accountable (because they are not authorized to do so) but instead can *give account* for the underlying reasons (cf. Brown, 2006; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Mansbridge, 2003).

Finally, researchers need to further address the emerging *methodological debate* on conjoint experiments in political science. With respect to DCFs, alternative methods need to be further explored, particularly for subgroup analyses. There is a growing literature focusing on heterogeneous treatment effects that are particularly apt to estimating treatment effects for individuals (rather than all). For example, we might ask who exactly benefits from a particular design feature and who does not. In this study, I categorized subgroups of citizens based on preliminary theoretical considerations. Technically, however, conjoint experiments offer a multitude of (plausible) combinations, especially in the context of attribute interactions (which were not the focus of this study). One criticism, however, is that although conjoint designs allow for a variety of potential interaction effects, these are difficult to hypothesize and detect. Recently, data-driven approaches have been discussed in which heterogeneous treatment effects are detected through machine learning strategies (e.g., Abramson et al., 2020). Further research needs to build on this research and replicate studies using alternative estimands.

In summary, my dissertation contributes not only to the normative and empirical debate on DCFs, but also to the methodological debate by applying a conjoint design to an "exotic" research object[156], while placing it in an emerging methodological discussion. It shows that there is some truth to the critical voices, also and especially from the perspective of citizens. However, they do not sound defeating and disillusioning. (Some) citizens seem just somewhat reserved (yet realistic) about DCFs. Nonetheless they seem to be a welcome instrument in Germany. Not for everyone, but for a great many.

[156] Typically, conjoint designs have been applied to voting decisions or candidate preferences.

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Appendix

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Appendix A: Variables, operationalization, and measurement

A1: Distributions of Variables

A1.1. Outcome variables

Both conjoint experiments employed two outcome measures. For each comparison, respondents were asked to choose their preferred profile (*choice outcome*). Additionally, respondents were asked to assess each individual profile using the following questions (*rating outcome*):

- In your opinion, how do you feel about citizen forum [A/B]? (Main Study)
- In your opinion, how fair is scenario [1/2]? (Pilot Study)

The table below presents the distributions of both outcome variables.

A.Table 1: Distribution of the rating outcome variable

Variable	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	n
Rating Outcome (Main)	4.25	1.54	4	1	7	24,468
Rating Outcome (Pilot)	4.50	1.45	5	1	7	4,565

Note: In order to determine measures of central tendency and dispersion of the rating outcome variable, the dataset was transformed into long-format indicating that n = the effective number of observations which is the number of scenarios for each respondent multiplied by the number of respondents.

Directly after finishing the conjoint tasks in the main study, respondents were presented with the following question:

- Do you think that citizen forums are appropriate means of involving people in political decision-making?

A.Table 2: Distribution of the retrospective assessment variable

Variable	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	n
Appropriateness of DCFs	4.83	1.51	5	1	7	2,039

A1.2. Object related variables

(1) Issue salience

Pilot Study

Intro: Next, we will briefly ask for your opinion on political issues that are currently being discussed. How important are the following issues for you personally?

('1' very unimportant to '11' very important)

- Refugees
- Waste management

Main Study

Intro: We now present you various policy issues that are discussed in politics. Please indicate how important or unimportant the issues are for you personally.

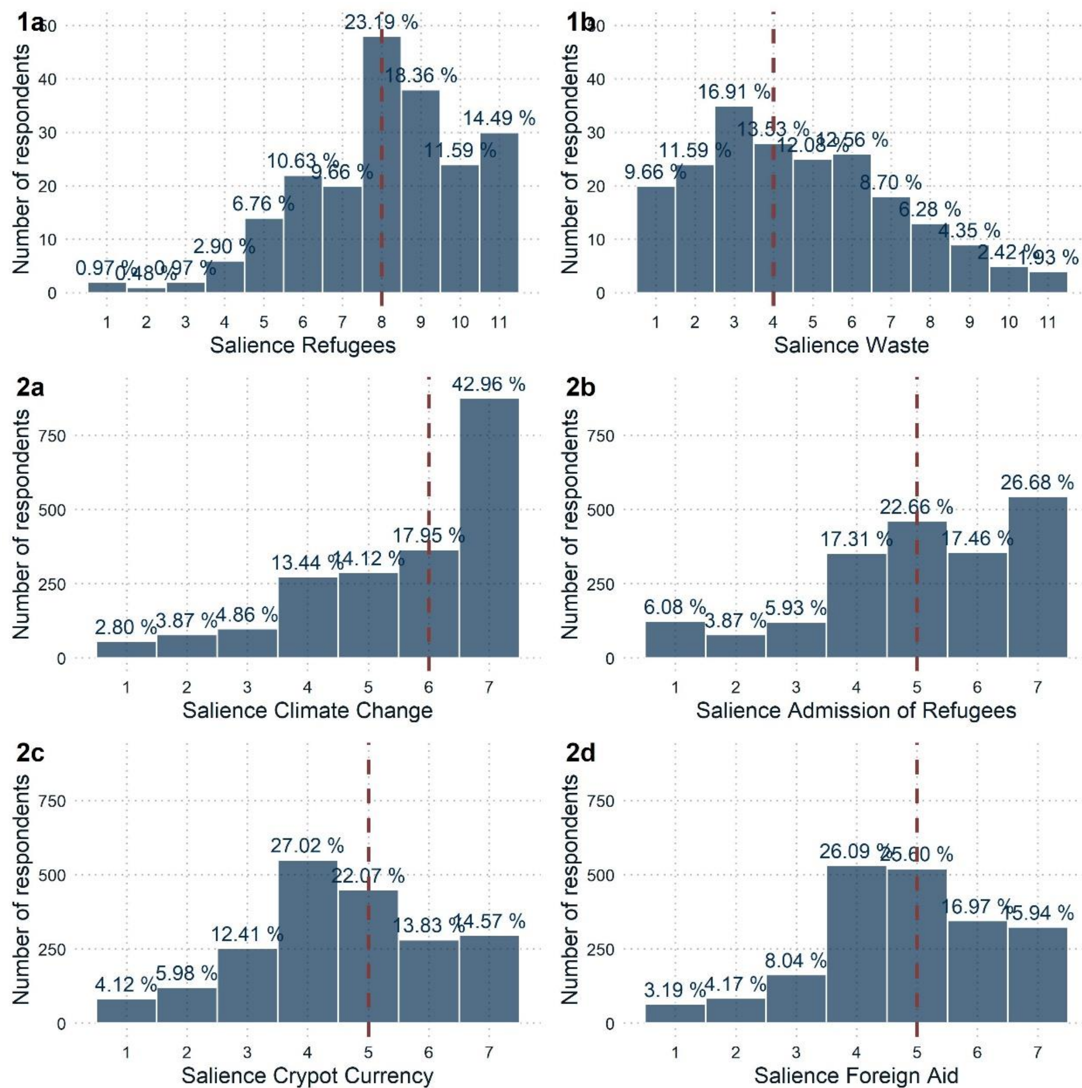
('1' very unimportant to '7' very important)

- Climate change
- Refugee policy
- Currency systems
- Foreign aid

A.Table 3: Distribution of the issue salience variables

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Median**	**Min**	**Max**	**n**
Pilot Study:						
Salience1: Refugees	8.08	2.11	8	1	11	207
Salience2: Waste	4.69	2.52	4	1	11	207
Main Study:						
Salience1: Climate	5.58	1.64	6	1	7	2,039
Salience2: Refugees	5.06	1.72	5	1	7	2,039
Salience3: Currency	4.57	1.58	5	1	7	2,039
Salience4: Foreign Aid	4.81	1.50	5	1	7	2,039

A.Figure 1: Issue salience in both samples



Note: The first row (1a and 1b) shows the distributions of salience variables in the pilot study. The remaining rows (2a to 2d) show the distributions of salience in the main study.

(2) Preference and outcome favorability

Pilot Study

Outcome favorability was computed by comparing respondents' preference for a policy measure with the randomly assigned output of the conjoint. Two sources of information were employed: the output of the DCF (in favor or against the measurement) and the individual preferences on the two measures.

Respondents were asked to imagine the following situations:

- Due to high inflows of refugees, a refugee hostel is being built in your direct neighborhood.

- Due to high waste volumes, the waste disposal fees in your municipality are to be increased by 25%.

For each measure, respondents were asked *('1' do not support at all to '11' completely support)*:

- Would you support the measure?

For both measures, values above the midpoint (>6) were coded as approval. Outcome favorability was coded as a binary variable, which is '1' if the output of the conjoint (in favor or against the measure) aligned with the individual preference on the measure and '0' otherwise.

Main Study

Outcome favorability was computed by comparing respondents' preference for a policy measure with the randomly assigned output of the conjoint. Two sources of information were employed: the output of the DCF (in favor or against the measurement) and the individual preferences on the four measures. Respondents were presented with short descriptions of the measures.

Intro: We are now presenting four concrete measures on the various policy issues. Please indicate how much you personally support or reject the measure.

Let us start with the so-called net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Net zero means that all greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans (e.g. CO2, methane and nitrous oxide) must be removed from the atmosphere. Concrete measures include, for example, a mandatory minimum share of green electricity and taxation of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon-intensive activities.

We now move to the admission of refugees. Refugees from conflict regions (e.g. war and poverty areas) seek protection in Germany, among other places. There are different admission procedures: the permanent admission of refugees, the humanitarian admission of refugees due to an acute crisis and the redistribution of refugees from member states with particularly stressed asylum systems (e.g. Greece and Italy).

Another topic is the regulation of crypto currencies, i.e. digital currencies with a decentralized and cryptographically secured payment system. In some countries, they have already proven as payment alternatives for private individuals. The best-known cryptocurrency is Bitcoin.

Similarly, the European Central Bank is discussing the introduction of a digital euro. Experts see both opportunities and risks.

Finally, we focus on state support for foreign aid. This involves measures to improve living conditions in developing countries. Examples are the improvement of the education and health system and the fight against poverty. In official development cooperation, an industrialized country provides material (e.g. loans or grants) or immaterial (e.g. expertise) support to a developing country.

For each measure, respondents were asked *('1' I strongly reject to '7' I strongly support)*:

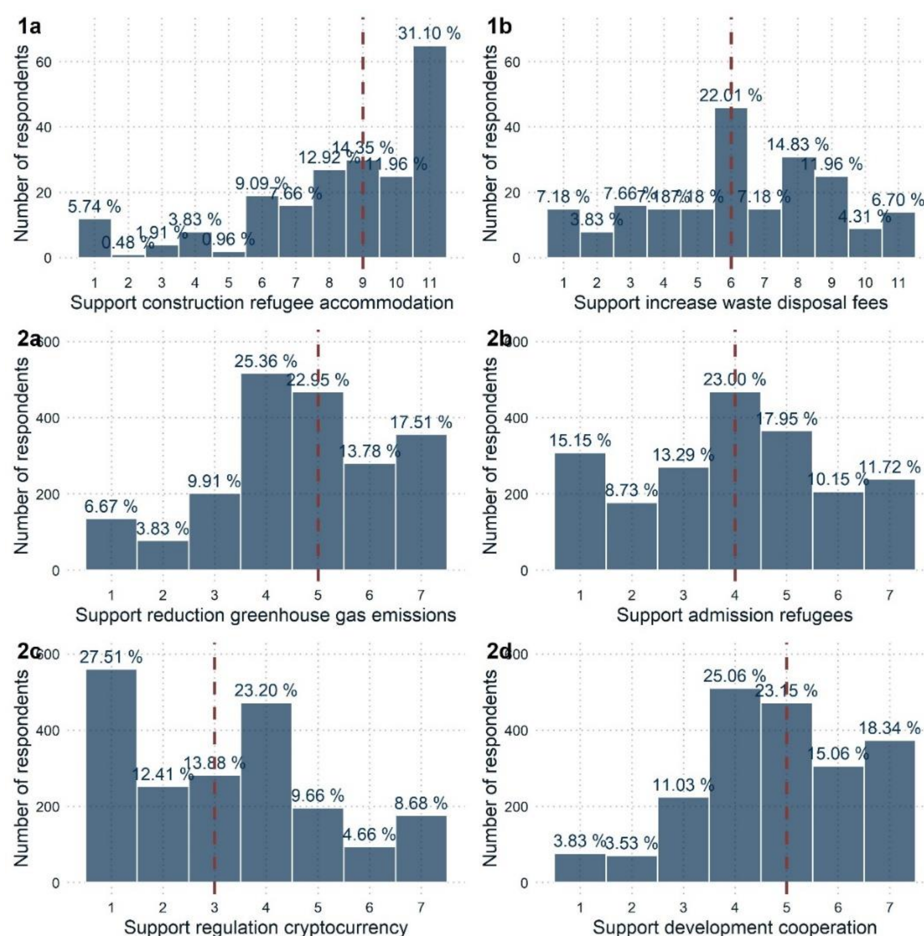
- How much do you personally support the measure?

For each measure, values above the midpoint (>4) were coded as approval. Outcome favorability was coded as a binary variable, which is '1' if the output of the conjoint (in favor or against the measure) aligned with the individual preference on the measure and '0' otherwise.

A.Table 4: Distribution of the outcome preference variables

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Median**	**Min**	**Max**	**n**
Pilot Study:						
Preference1: Refugees	8.35	2.82	9	1	11	209
Preference2: Waste	6.28	2.74	6	1	11	209
Main Study:						
Preference1: Climate	4.65	1.67	5	1	7	2,039
Preference2: Refugees	3.97	1.87	4	1	7	2,039
Preference3: Currency	3.24	1.90	3	1	7	2,039
Preference4: Foreign Aid	4.79	1.57	5	1	7	2,039

A.Figure 2: Outcome preference in both samples



Note: The first row (1a and 1b) shows the distributions of preference variables in the pilot study. The remaining rows (2a to 2d) show the distributions of preferences in the main study.

A1.3. Subject related variables

A.Table 5: Distribution of grouping variables (main study)

Variable	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	n
Read arguments (authoriz.)	19.07	16.95	16.09	0.55	72.11	1,994
Read arguments (recruitment)	21.79	16.62	20.17	0.84	74.13	1,973
Experiences	1.83	0.86	2	1	5	2,039
+/- experiences	4.74	1.2	5	1	7	918
Expectations				1	2	1,191
Political Interest	3.23	1.12	3	1	5	2,039
Political Satisfaction	4.25	1.72	5	1	7	1,975
External1: Politicians care	2.29	1.09	2	1	5	1,955
External2: Politicians contact	2.41	1.09	2	1	5	1,973

Index External Efficacy (α=.86)	2.36	1.02	2.5	1	5	1,988
Internal1: Understand politics	3.67	1.06	4	1	5	1,964
Internal2: Discuss politics	3.53	1.24	4	1	5	1,960
Index Internal Efficacy (α=.85)	3.59	1.09	4	1	5	1,992
Trust1: Parliament	4.05	1.73	4	1	7	1,924
Trust2: Government	4.08	1.86	4	1	7	1,967
Trust3: Politicians	3.67	1.70	4	1	7	1,959
Index Political Trust (α= .95)	3.93	1.68	4	1	7	1,977
Stealth1: Discuss	5.44	1.55	6	1	7	1,919
Stealth2: Compromise	4.41	1.80	4	1	7	1,804
Stealth3: Businessmen	2.55	1.69	2	1	7	1,882
Stealth3: Experts	3.72	1.73	4	1	7	1,802
S. Disaffection (Index, α=.68)	4.96	1.47	5	1	7	1,936
S. Actors (Index, α=.62)	3.10	1.48	3	1	7	1,911
Index Stealth (α=.66)	4.05	1.24	4	1	7	1,950
Sunshine1: Discuss	5.85	1.32	6	1	7	1,899
Sunshine2: Compromise	5.62	1.40	6	1	7	1,910
Sunshine3: Businessmen	5.24	1.64	6	1	7	1,834
Sunshine4: Experts	4.95	1.60	5	1	7	1,865
Index Sunshine (α=.65)	5.41	1.09	5.5	1	7	1,948
Participatory1: Referenda	5.03	1.70	5	1	7	1,901
Participatory2: Discussions	5.26	1.36	5	1	7	1,847
Index Participatory1 (α=.73)	5.14	1.38	5	1	7	1,929
Participatory3: Ask citizens	5.61	1.38	6	1	7	1,926
Participatory4: Participation	5.41	1.29	5	1	7	1,867
Index Participatory 2 (α=.71)	5.51	1.18	5.5	1	7	1,937
Delegatory1: Experts	4.15	1.60	4	1	7	1,858
Delegatory2: Representatives	4.49	1.62	5	1	7	1,856
Anti1: Differences	5.31	1.56	5	1	7	1,839
Anti2: Stop talking	5.44	1.55	6	1	7	1,919

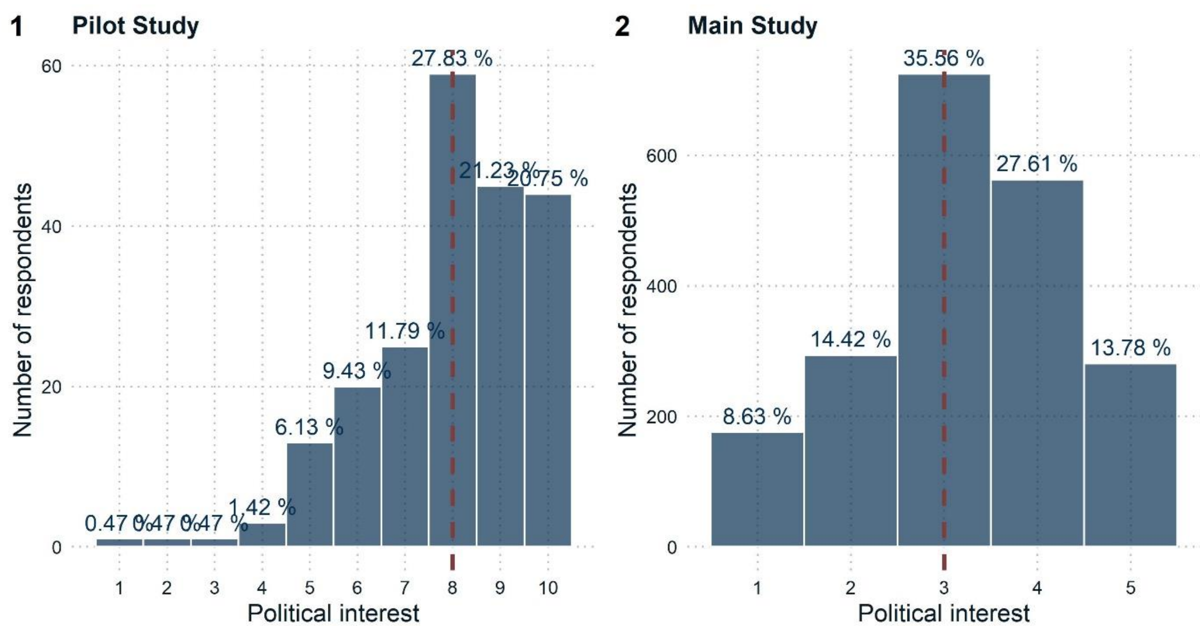
Sov1: Referenda	4.92	1.80	5	1	7	1,925
Sov2: Decide	4.44	1.83	4	1	7	1,923
Sov3: Will of the people	5.41	1.42	6	1	7	1,935
Hom1: Honest character	4.27	1.55	4	1	7	1,869
Hom2: Pull together	3.79	1.71	4	1	7	1,894
Hom3: Share values	4.02	1.64	4	1	7	1,892
Anti (Index, α=.61)	5.37	1.35	5.50	1	7	1,956
Sovereignty (Index, α=.81)	4.91	1.45	5	1	7	1,964
Homogeneity (Index, α=.86)	4.02	1.46	4	1	7	1,940
Index Populism (α=.81)	4.70	1.09	4.62	1	7	1,980
Like-me	4.60	1.55	5	1	7	2,039
Similar experiences	4.14	1.52	4	1	7	2,039
Similar background	4.14	1.50	4	1	7	2,039
Index Like-me (α=.89)	4.30	1.38	4.33	1	7	2,039
Fellows: Public interest	4.51	1.47	5	1	7	2,039
Fellows: Good decisions	4.47	1.46	4	1	7	2,039
Index Trust Fellows (α=.89)	4.49	1.41	4.5	1	7	2,039
Trust DCF	4.47	1.29	5	1	7	2,039

A.Table 6: Distribution of variables (pilot study)

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Median**	**Min**	**Max**	**n**
Experiences	1.58	0.61	2	1	**3**	209
Political Interest	7.99	1.69	8	1	10	212
Political Satisfaction	7.48	1.78	8	1	11	211
Trust Politicians	6.06	1.76	6	1	11	212
External1: Politicians care	5.16	1.82	5	1	9	212
External2: Politicians contact	5.25	1.84	6	1	11	212
Index External Efficacy (α=.75)	5.20	1.64	5.5	1	9.5	212
Internal1: Understand politics	6.45	1.64	7	1	9	211
Internal2: Discuss politics	7.55	2.09	8	1	10	212
Index Internal Efficacy (α=.82)	7	1.72	7.5	2	9.5	212
Stealth1: Discuss	6.17	2.71	6	1	11	211

Stealth2: Compromise	4.87	2.55	5	1	11	211
Stealth3: Businessmen	2.06	1.69	1	1	8	211
Stealth4: Experts	5.45	2.65	6	1	11	211
S. Disaffection (Index, α=.58)	5.52	2.25	5.5	1	11	211
S. Actors (Index, α=.44)	3.76	1.78	3.5	1	9.5	211
Index Stealth (α=.59)	4.63	1.65	4.5	1	9.75	211
Participatory1: Discussions	7.59	2.07	8	1	10	211
Participatory2: Referenda	6.45	2.57	6	1	11	211
Index Participatory (α=.43)	7.02	1.87	7	1	10.5	211
Delegatory1: Experts	5.27	2.78	6	1	11	211
Delegatory2: Representatives	6.10	2.62	6	1	11	211

A.Figure 3: Distribution of the political interest variables



A2: Grouping Variables

Median Split

All grouping variables were computed using a median split by following two rules:

- *If median > mean* then 'low' is assigned for < median and 'high' for ≥ median
- *If median < mean* then 'low' is assigned for ≤ median and 'high' for > median

A.Table 7: Median split for grouping variables (main study)

	n	alpha	mean	median	split	label
Read author.	1,994		19.07	16.09	≤ 16.09	scarcely read
					> 16.09	thoroughly read
Read recruit.	1,973		21.79	20.17	≤ 20.17	scarcely read
					> 20.17	thoroughly read
Experiences	2,039		1.83	2	< 2	no experiences
					≥ 2	at least some exp.
+/- experiences	918		4.74	5	≥ 5	positive exp.
					< 5	negative exp.
Expectations	1,191				1	no expectations
					2	clear expectations
Interested	2,039		3.23	3	> 3	interested
					≤ 3	non-interested
Dissatisfied	1,975		4.25	5	< 5	dissatisfied
					≥ 5	satisfied
Low-efficacious	1,988	.86	2.36	2.5	< 2.5	low external efficacy
					≥ 2.5	high external efficacy
Self-efficacious	1,993	.85	3.59	4	≥ 4	high internal efficacy
					< 4	low internal efficacy
Pol. trust	1,977	.95	3,93	4	< 4	low political trust
					≥ 4	high political trust
Stealth	1,950	.66	4.05	4	> 4	stealth
					≤ 4	non-stealth
Stealth disaffected	1,936	.68	4.96	5	≥ 5	stealth
					< 5	non-stealth
Stealth actors	1,911	.62	3.10	3	> 3	stealth
					≤ 3	non-stealth
Sunshine	1,948	.65	5.41	5.5	< 5.5	sunshine
					≥ 5.5	non-sunshine
Participatory	1,929	.73	5.14	5	> 5	high participatory
					≤ 5	low participatory
Deliberative	1,847		5.26	5	> 5	high deliberative
					≤ 5	low deliberative
Direct democratic	1,901		5.03	5	> 5	high direct-dem.
					≤ 5	low direct-dem.
Technocratic	1,858		4.15	4	> 4	high technocratic
					≤ 4	low technocratic
Representative	1,856		4.49	5	≥ 5	high delegative
					< 5	low delegative
Populist	1,980	.81	4.70	4.62	> 4.62	populist
					≤ 4.62	non-populist

Anti-elitist	1,956	.61	5.37	5.5	≥ 5.5	populist
					< 5.5	non-populist
Sovereignty	1,964	.81	4.91	5	≥ 5	populist
					< 5	non-populist
Homogeneity	1,940	.86	4.02	4	> 4	populist
					≤ 4	non-populist
Like-me	2,039	.89	4.30	4.33	≥ 4.33	like me
					< 4.33	not like me
Trust fellows	2,039	.91	4.49	4.5	≥ 4.5	high trust in fellows
					< 4.5	low trust in fellows
Trust DCF	2,039		4.47	5	≥ 5	high trust DCF
					< 5	low trust DCF

A.Table 8: Median split for grouping variables (pilot study)

	n	alpha	mean	median	split	label
Interested	212		7.99	8	≥ 3	interested
					< 3	non-interested
Dissatisfied	211		7.48	8	< 8	dissatisfied
					≥ 8	satisfied
Low-efficacious	212	.75	5.20	5.5	< 5.5	low external efficacy
					≥ 5.5	high external efficacy
Self-efficacious	212	.82	7.00	7.5	≥ 7.5	high internal efficacy
					< 7.5	low internal efficacy
Pol. trust	212		6.06	6	≤ 6	low political trust
					> 6	high political trust
Stealth	212	.59	4.63	4.5	> 4.5	stealth
					≤ 4.5	non-stealth
Stealth disaffected	212	.58	5.52	5.5	≥ 5.5	stealth
					< 5.5	non-stealth
Stealth actors	211	.44	3.76	3.5	> 3.5	stealth
					≤ 3.5	non-stealth
Participatory	211	.43	7.02	7	> 7	high participatory
					≤ 7	low participatory
Deliberative	211		7.59	8	≥ 8	high deliberative
					< 8	low deliberative
Direct democratic	211		6.45	6	> 6	high direct-dem.
					≤ 6	low direct-dem.
Technocratic	211		5.27	6	≥ 6	high technocratic
					< 6	low technocratic
Representative	211		6.10	6	> 6	high delegative
					≤ 6	low delegative

Appendix B: Analyses

B1: Principal Component Analysis

A.Table 9: PCA efficacy (main study)

Main Study	Components	
	External Efficacy	**Internal Efficacy**
External1: Politicians care	**0.93**	
External2: Politicians contact	**0.94**	
Internal1: Understand Politics		**0.92**
Internal2: Discuss Politics		**0.94**
Eigenvalues	2.12	1.39
% of variance	44.2	43.5

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=1,873; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 10: PCA efficacy (pilot study)

Pilot Study	Components	
	Internal Efficacy	**External Efficacy**
External1: Politicians care		**0.89**
External2: Politicians contact		**0.89**
Internal1: Understand Politics	**0.92**	
Internal2: Discuss Politics	**0.91**	
Eigenvalues	1.96	1.33
% of variance	42.3	40.3

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=211; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 11: PCA political trust (main study)

Main Study	Components	
	Trust Political Actors	**Trust Experts**
Trust1: Parliament	**0.85**	0.41
Trust2: Government	**0.83**	0.38
Trust3: Politicians	**0.90**	0.34
Trust4: Experts	0.42	**0.91**
Eigenvalues	3.37	(0.37)
% of variance	62.1	31,3

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=1,891.

A.Table 12: PCA stealth attitudes (main study)

Main Study	Components	
	Stealth Democracy: Disaffection	**Stealth Democracy: Actors**
Stealth1: Stop talking	**0.90**	
Stealth2: Compromise	**0.80**	
Stealth3: Businessmen		**0.87**
Stealth4: Experts		**0.80**
Eigenvalues	1.99	1
% of variance	37.6	37.2

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=1,691; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 13: PCA stealth attitudes (pilot study)

Pilot Study	Components	
	Stealth Democracy: Disaffection	**Stealth Democracy: Actors**
Stealth1: Stop talking	**0.84**	
Stealth2: Compromise	**0.81**	
Stealth3: Businessmen		**0.88**
Stealth4: Experts	0.31	**0.71**
Eigenvalues	1.80	(0.96)
% of variance	36.4	32.6

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=210; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 14: PCA sunshine attitudes (main study)

Main Study	Component
	Sunshine Democracy
Sunshine1: Discuss	**0.79**
Sunshine2: Compromise	**0.75**
Sunshine3: Businessmen	**0.64**
Sunshine4: Experts	**0.63**
Eigenvalues	2
% of variance	50.1

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=1,760.

A.Table 15: PCA citizens conceptions of democracy (main study)

Main Study	Components		
	Participatory Conception	**Technocratic Conception**	**Representative Conception**
Participatory1: Ask citizens	**0.82**		
Participatory2: Participation	**0.81**		
Participatory3: Referenda	**0.77**		
Participatory4: Discussions	**0.83**		
Delegatory1: Appointed experts		0.63	0.58
Delegatory2: Representatives			**0.88**
Delegatory3: Businessmen		**0.77**	
Delegatory4: Experts		**0.84**	
Eigenvalues	2.84	1.65	1.13
% of variance	33.1	22.0	15.2

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=1,625; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 16: PCA citizens conceptions of democracy (pilot study)

Pilot Study	Components		
	Technocratic Conception	**Participatory Conception**	**Representative Conception**
Participatory1: Discussions		**0.85**	
Participatory2: Referenda		**0.67**	-0.37
Delegatory1: Appointed experts	**0.85**		
Delegatory2: Representatives			**0.94**
Delegatory3: Businessmen	0.57	-0.32	
Delegatory4: Experts	**0.90**		
Eigenvalues	2.07	1.33	(0.90)
% of variance	32.4	21.9	17.4

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=208; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 17: PCA populism (main Study)

Main Study	Components		
	Populism: Homogeneity	**Populism: Sovereignty**	**Populism: Anti-elitism**
Hom1: Character	**0.86**		
Hom2: Together	**0.88**		
Hom3: Values	**0.87**		
Sov1: Referenda		**0.83**	
Sov2: Decide		**0.87**	
Sov3: Peoples will		**0.74**	
Anti1: Differences		0.34	**0.74**
Anti2: Stop talking			**0.87**
Eigenvalues	3.42	1.74	(0.84)
% of variance	29.4	27.4	18.3

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=1,688; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 18: PCA like me perceptions (main study)

Main Study	Component
	Like Me Perceptions
Like-me	**0.88**
Similar experiences	**0.91**
Similar background	**0.92**
Eigenvalues	2.45
% of variance	81.8

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=2,039; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

A.Table 19: PCA trust in citizens (main study)

Main Study	Component
	Trust in Fellows
Fellows: Public interest	**0.96**
Fellows: Good decisions	**0.96**
Eigenvalues	1.84
% of variance	92.0

Note: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation; n=2,039; loadings below 0.3 are suppressed.

B2: Mean Comparisons

B2.1. Rating outcome

A.Table 20: Differences in means – rating outcome (pilot study)

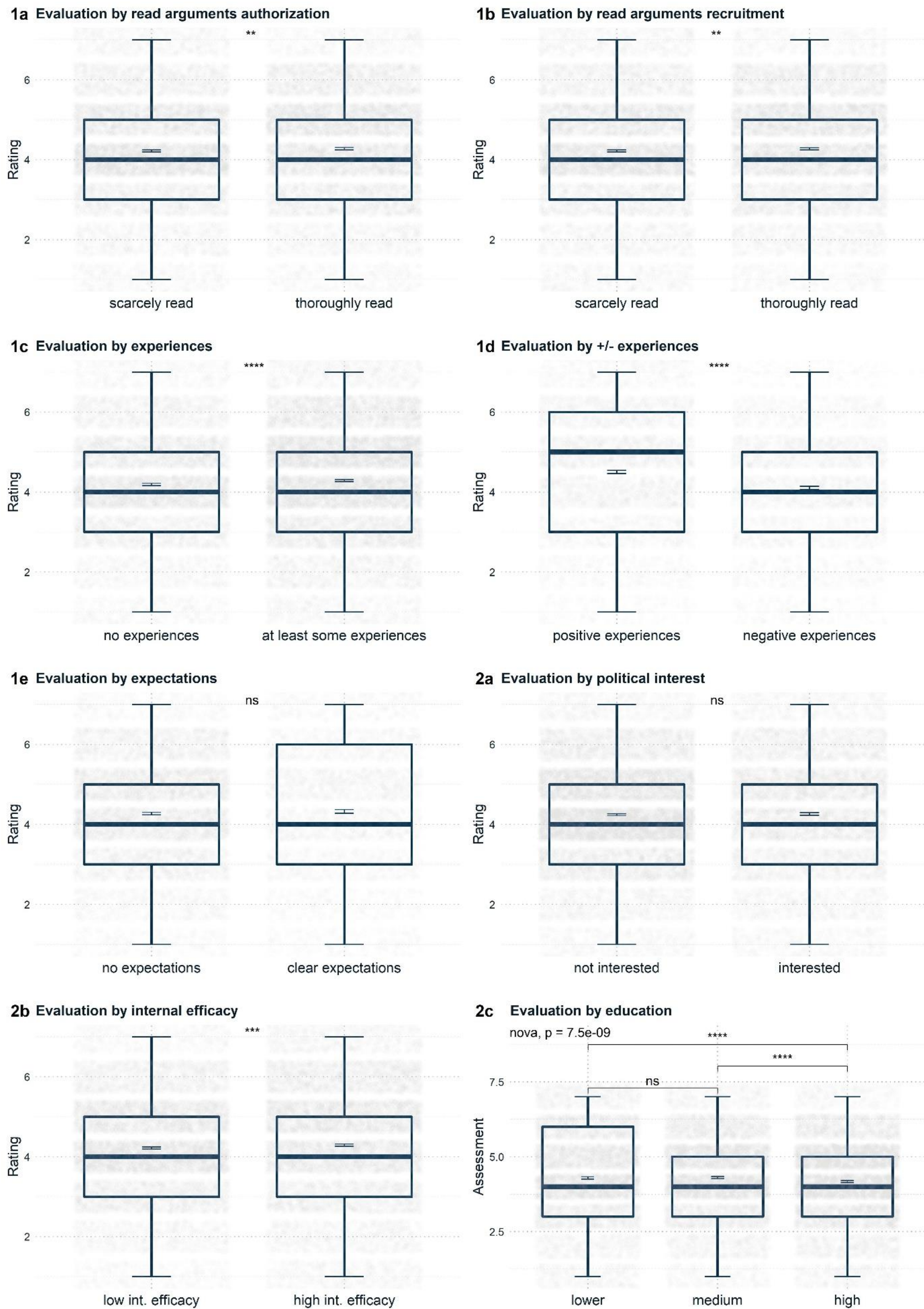
	means	t-value	p-value
Arguments – glossary	4.62 – 4.38	5.48	<0.001
Interested – non-interested	4.48 – 4.55	1.38	=0.167
Dissatisfied – satisfied	4.50 – 4.50	0.12	=0.904
Low-efficacious – efficacious	4.53 – 4.48	1.24	=0.214
Self-efficacious – non-self-efficacious	4.54 – 4.46	1.74	=0.082
Low pol. trust – high pol. trust	4.46 – 4.56	2.27	=0.024
Stealth – non-stealth	4.56 – 4.45	2.60	=0.009
Disaffection: stealth – non-stealth	4.56 – 4.43	3.04	=0.002
Actors: stealth – non-stealth	4.55 – 4.46	2.28	=0.029
Participatory – non-participatory	4.58 – 4.44	3.215	=0.001
Deliberative – non-deliberative	4.55 – 4.43	2.65	=0.008
Direct-democratic – non-direct- democratic	4.65 – 4.38	6.26	=0.000
Technocratic – non-technocratic	4.54 – 4.45	2.02	=0.044
Representative – non-representative	4.47 – 4.52	1.01	=0.311

A.Table 21: Differences in means – rating outcome (main study)

	means	t-value	p-value
thoroughly read – scarcely read (auth.)	4.28 – 4.22	2.74	=0.006
thoroughly read – scarcely read (recr.)	4.28 – 4.22	2.71	=0.007
Experiences – no experiences	4.29 – 4.19	4.89	<0.001
Experiences (+) – experiences (-)	4.50 – 4.11	13.261	<0.001
Expectations – no expectations	4.32 – 4.27	1,92	=0.054
Educ_lower – Educ_high	4.30 – 4.17	4.98	<0.001
Educ_medium – Educ_high	4.30 – 4.17	5.56	<0.001
Educ_lower – Educ_medium	4.30 – 4.30	0.32	=0.750
Interested – non-interested	4.26 – 4.24	0.9	=0.350
Dissatisfied – satisfied	4.16 – 4.36	9.9	<0.001
Low-efficacious – efficacious	4.12 – 4.37	12.3	<0.001
Self-efficacious – low-self-efficacious	4.29 – 4.22	3.7	<0.001

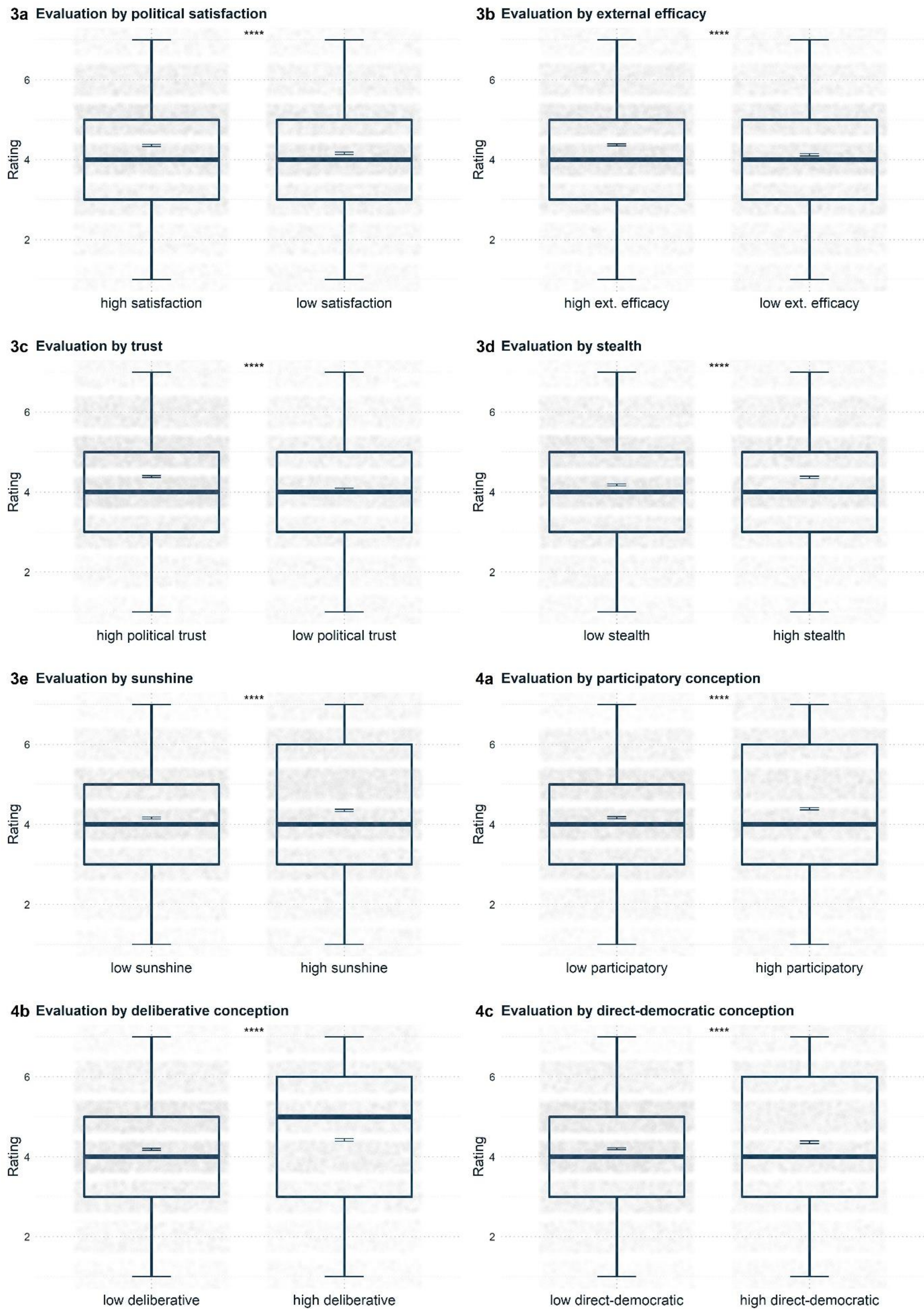
Low pol. trust – high pol. trust	4.06 – 4.39	15.9	<0.001
Stealth – non-stealth	4.37 – 4.18	9.2	<0.001
Disaffection: stealth – non-stealth	4.32 – 4.19	6.4	<0.001
Actors: stealth – non-stealth	4.39 – 4.18	10.5	<0.001
Sunshine – non-sunshine	4.35 – 4.16	9.3	<0.001
Participatory – non-participatory	4.39 – 4.17	11.0	<0.001
Deliberative – non-deliberative	4.42 – 4.19	11.2	<0.001
Direct-democratic – non-direct- democratic	4.36 – 4.20	7.9	<0.001
Technocratic – non-technocratic	4.45 – 4.14	14.2	<0.001
Representative – non-representative	4.40 – 4.13	13.0	<0.001
Populist – non-populist	4.38 – 4.12	12.9	<0.001
Anti-elitism: Populist – non-populist	4.32 – 4.18	7.0	<0.001
Sovereignty: Populist – non-populist	4.36 – 4.16	9.8	<0.001
Homogeneity: Populist – non-populist	4.44 – 4.12	16.3	<0.001
Like-me – not like-me	4.52 – 3.95	29.5	<0.001
Trust fellows – not trust fellows	4.47 – 3.96	26.2	<0.001
Trust DCF – not trust DCF	4.52 – 3.96	28.9	<0.001

A.Figure 4: Boxplots for the rating outcome variable by awareness (1) and enlightenment (2)



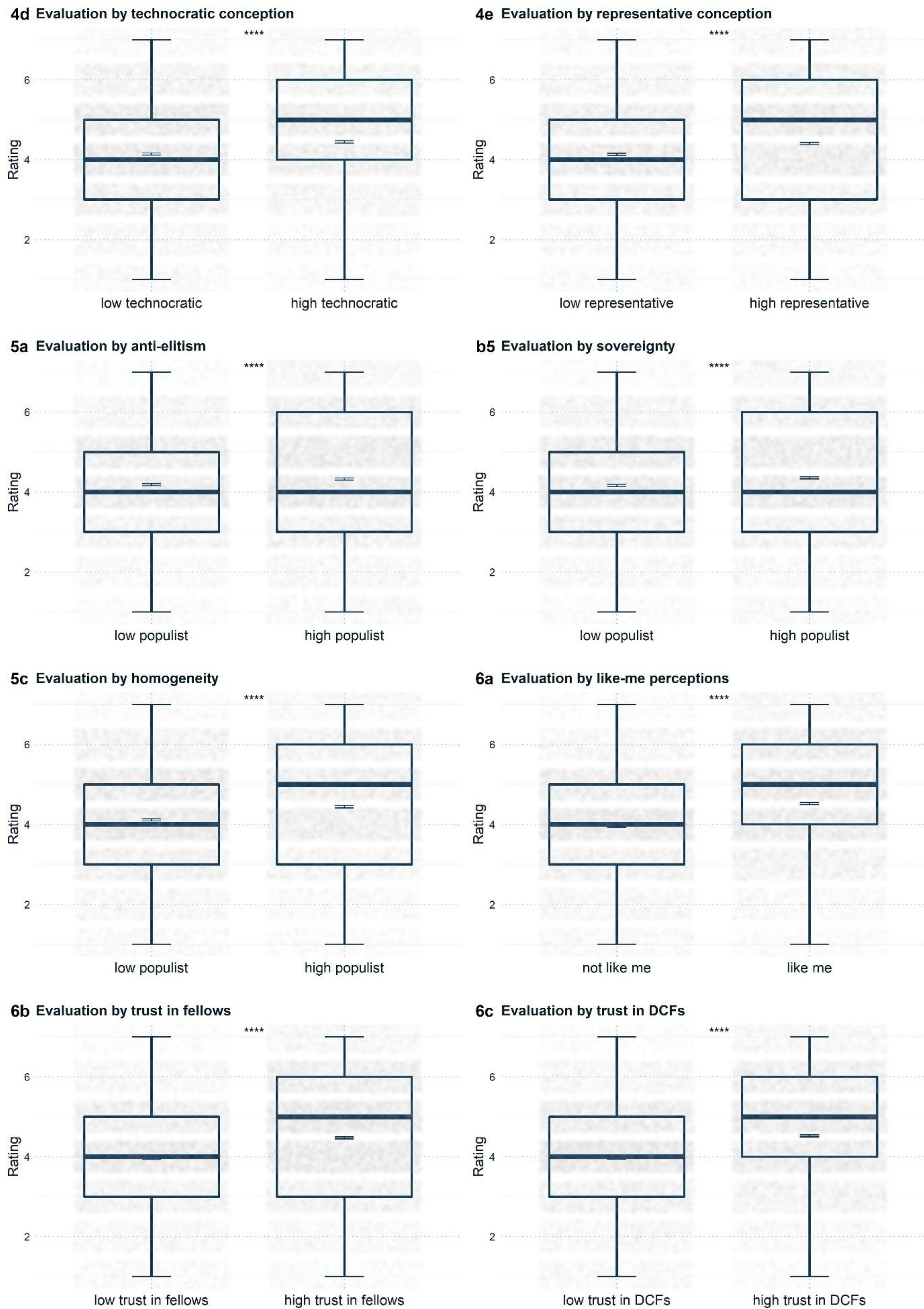
Note: solid bold lines within the boxplots show the median of respective subgroups. The dots with short horizontal lines show means with confidence intervals.

A.Figure 5: Boxplots for the rating outcome variable by disaffection (3) and participation (4)



Note: solid bold lines within the boxplots show the median of respective subgroups. The dots with short horizontal lines show means with confidence intervals.

A.Figure 6: Boxplots for the rating outcome variable by delegation (4), populism (5), and social trust (6)



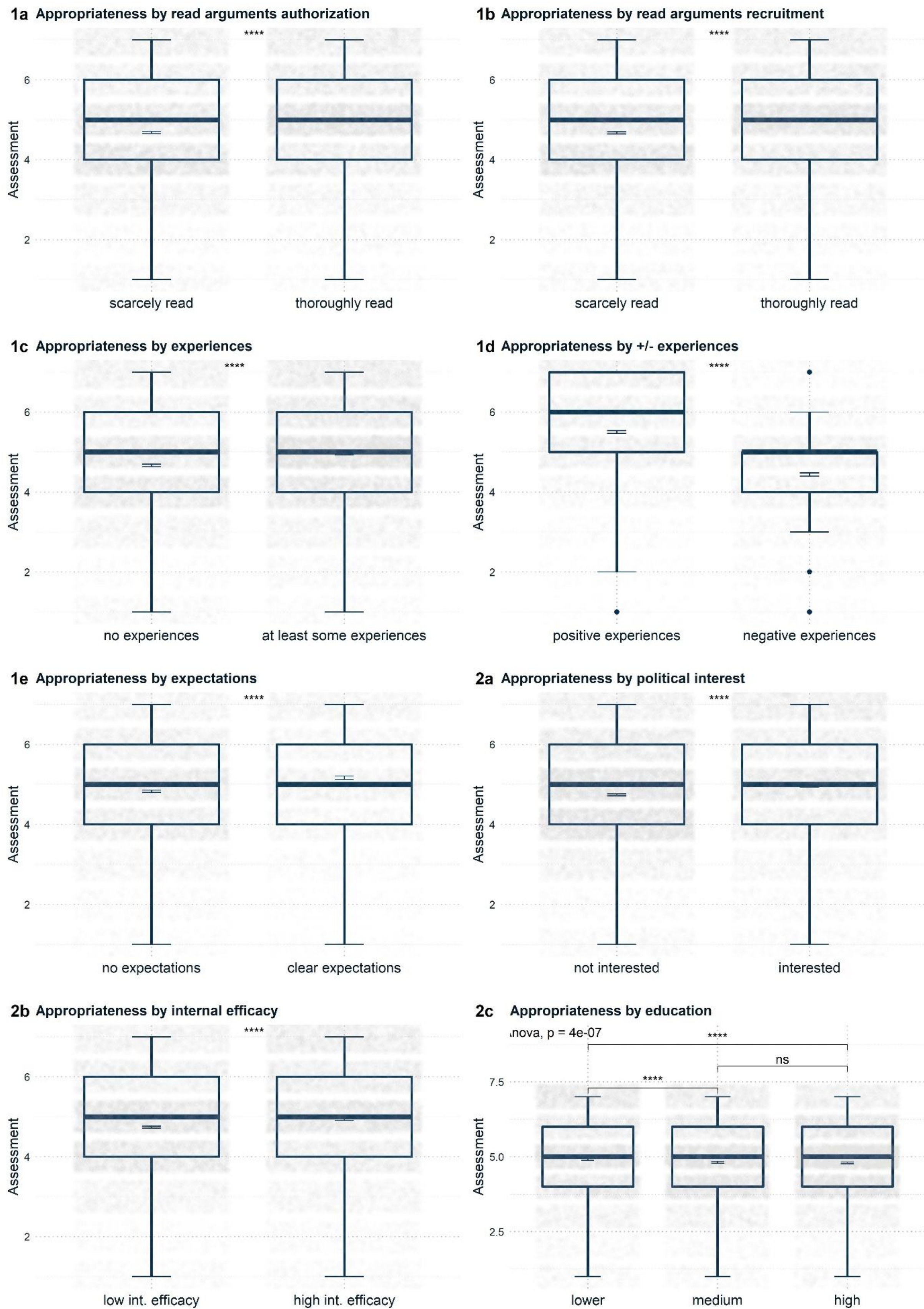
Note: solid bold lines within the boxplots show the median of respective subgroups. The dots with short horizontal lines show means with confidence intervals.

B2.2. Retrospective assessment

A.Table 22: Differences in means – retrospective assessment of DCFs (main study)

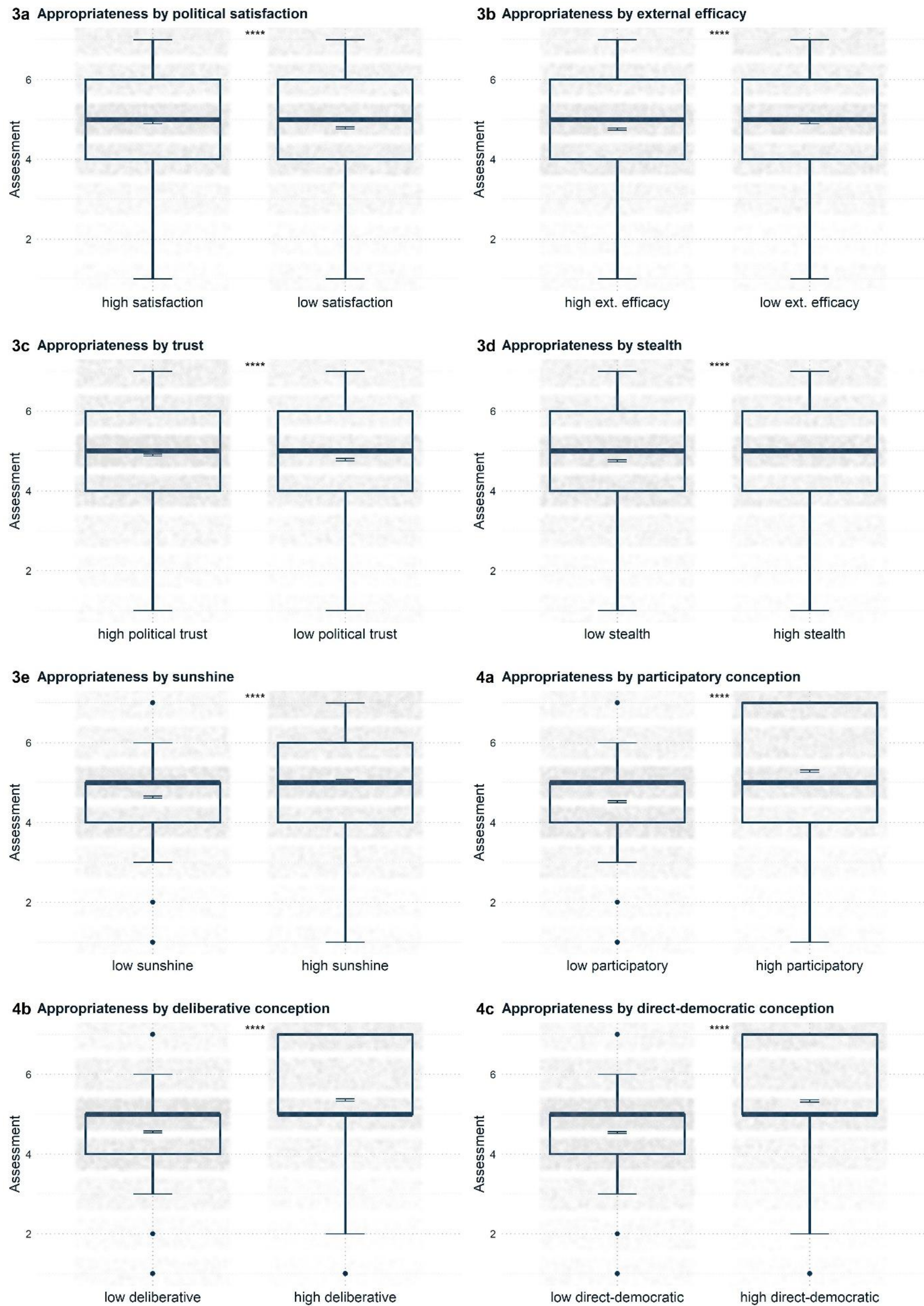
	means	**t-value**	**p-value**
thoroughly read – scarcely read (auth.)	4.99 – 4.68	15.99	<0.001
thoroughly read – scarcely read (recr.)	4.98 – 4.67	15.70	<0.001
Experiences – no experiences	4.95 – 4.67	14.43	<0.001
Experiences (+) – experiences (-)	5.55 – 4.44	40.64	<0.001
Expectations – no expectations	5.17 – 4.83	13.34	<0.001
Educ_lower – Educ_high	4.92 – 4.80	5.09	<0.001
Educ_medium – Educ_high	4.82 – 4.80	0.86	=0.389
Educ_lower – Educ_medium	4.92 – 4.82	4.02	<0.001
Interested – non-interested	4.97 – 4.74	11.76	<0.001
Dissatisfied – satisfied	4.79 – 4.92	6.76	<0.001
Low-efficacious – efficacious	4.92 – 4.76	8.19	<0.001
Self-efficacious – low-self-efficacious	4.94 – 4.74	10.26	<0.001
Low pol. trust – high pol. trust	4.79 – 4.90	5.52	<0.001
Stealth – non-stealth	5.00 – 4.75	6.40	<0.001
Disaffection: stealth – non-stealth	4.99 – 4.70	14.83	<0.001
Actors: stealth – non-stealth	4.93 – 4.83	1.91	<0.001
Sunshine – non-sunshine	5.05 – 4.64	21.18	<0.001
Participatory – non-participatory	5.29 – 4.52	40.62	<0.001
Deliberative – non-deliberative	5.36 – 4.56	41.40	<0.001
Direct-democratic – non-direct- democratic	5.33 – 4.54	41.02	<0.001
Technocratic – non-technocratic	5.03 – 4.79	12.12	<0.001
Representative – non-representative	4.89 – 4.89	0.06	=0.9
Populist – non-populist	5.09 – 4.58	26.79	<0.001
Anti-elitism: Populist – non-populist	5.04 – 4.63	21.16	<0.001
Sovereignty: Populist – non-populist	5.13 – 4.56	29.67	<0.001
Homogeneity: Populist – non-populist	5.05 – 4.69	18.42	<0.001
Like-me – not like-me	5.38 – 4.23	64.7	<0.001
Trust fellows – not trust fellows	5.46 – 4.02	84.24	<0.001
Trust DCF – not trust DCF	5.66 – 3.97	106.1	<0.001

A.Figure 7: Boxplots for the retrospective assessment of DCFs variable by awareness (1) and enlightenment (2)



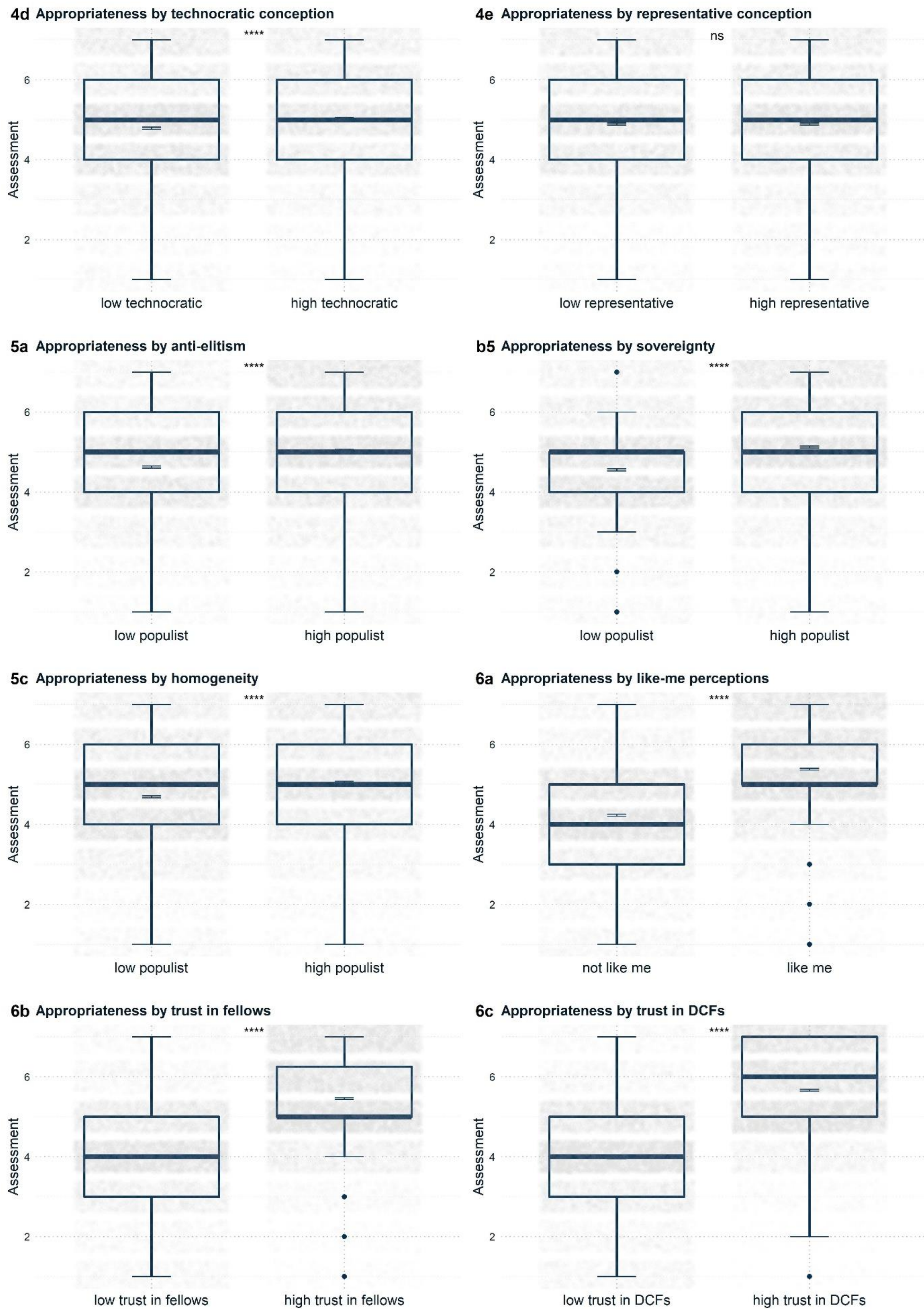
Note: solid bold lines within the boxplots show the median of respective subgroups. The dots with short horizontal lines show means with confidence intervals.

A.Figure 8: Boxplots for the retrospective assessment of DCFs variable by disaffection (3) and participation (4)



Note: solid bold lines within the boxplots show the median of respective subgroups. The dots with short horizontal lines show means with confidence intervals.

A.Figure 9: Boxplots for the retrospective assessment of DCFs variable by delegation (4), populism (5), and social trust (6)



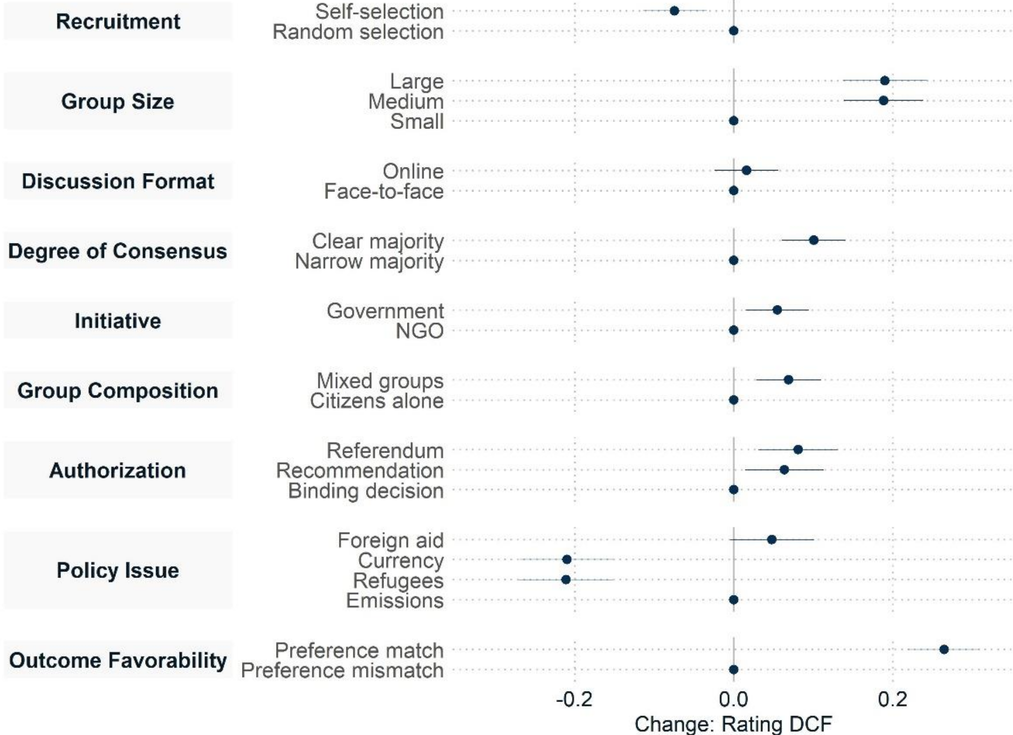
Note: solid bold lines within the boxplots show the median of respective subgroups. The dots with short horizontal lines show means with confidence intervals.

Appendix C: Additional conjoint analyses

C1: Benchmark models

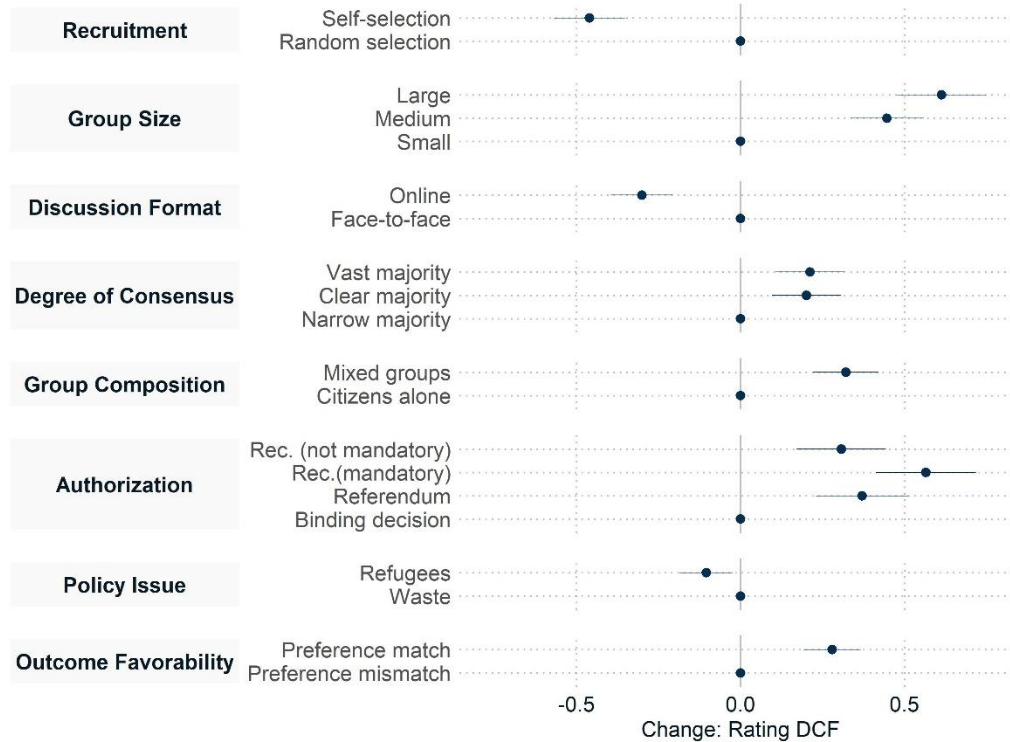
C1.1. AMCE

A.Figure 10: AMCE main study – rating outcome



Note: Effects show the change in the rating of a DCF (1 'very unfavorable' – 7 'very favorable'). Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category. Effective number of observations =24,468.

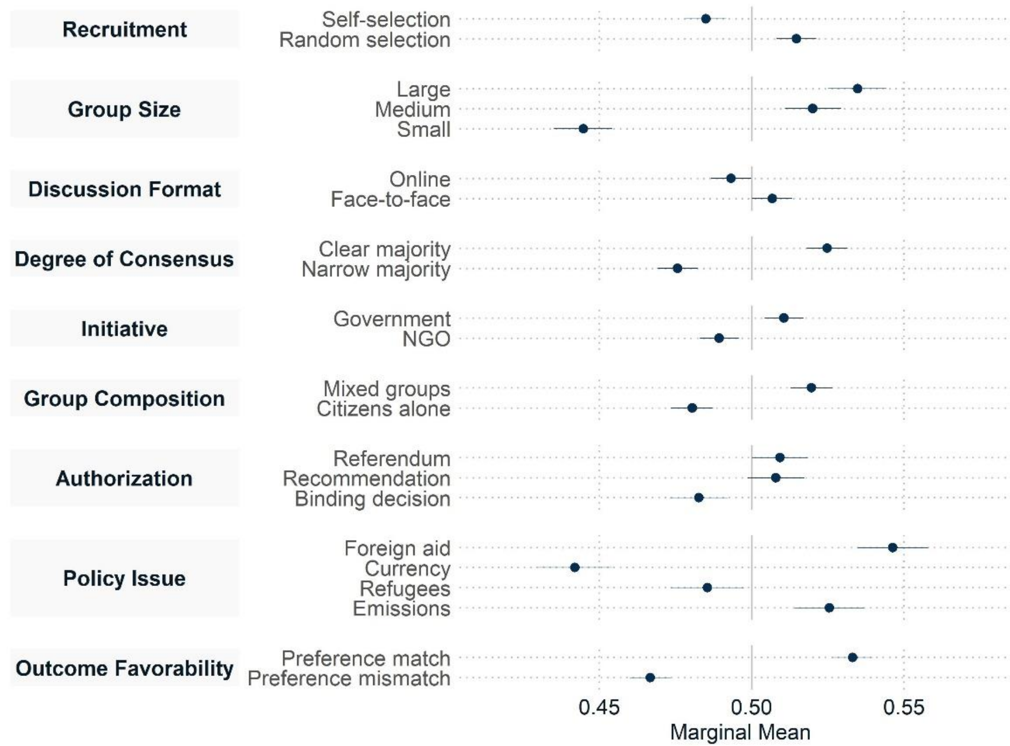
A.Figure 11: AMCE pilot study – rating outcome



Note: Effects show the change in the rating of a DCF (1 'very unfair' – 7 'very fair'). Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category. Effective number of observations = 4,565.

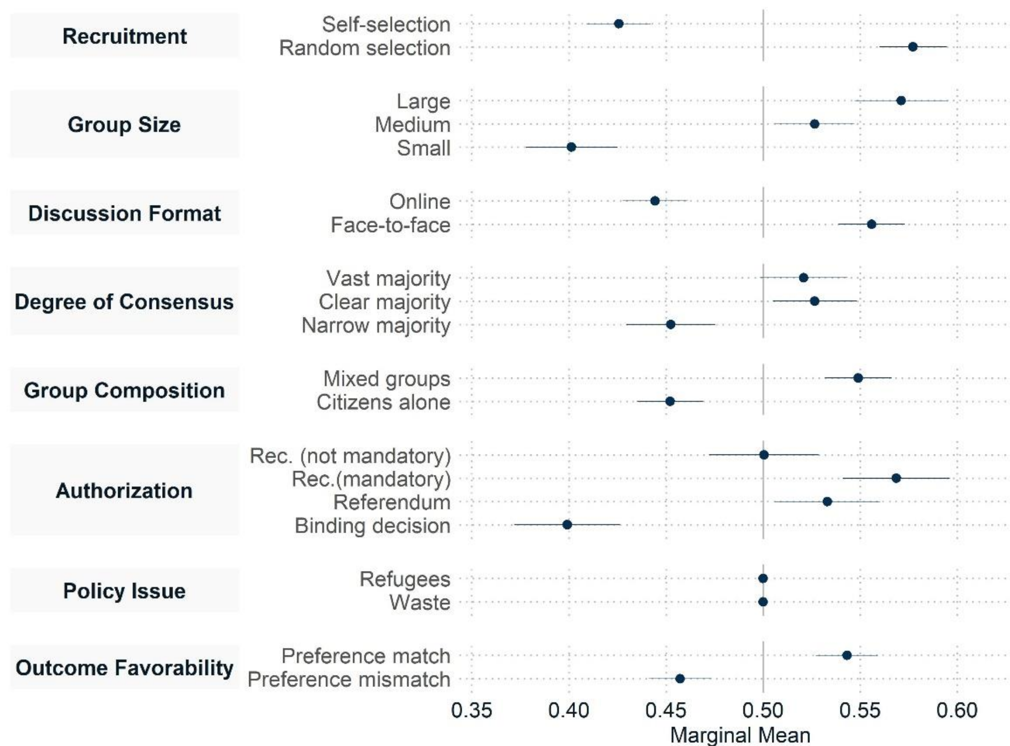
C1.2. Marginal Means

A.Figure 12: Marginal Means main study – choice outcome



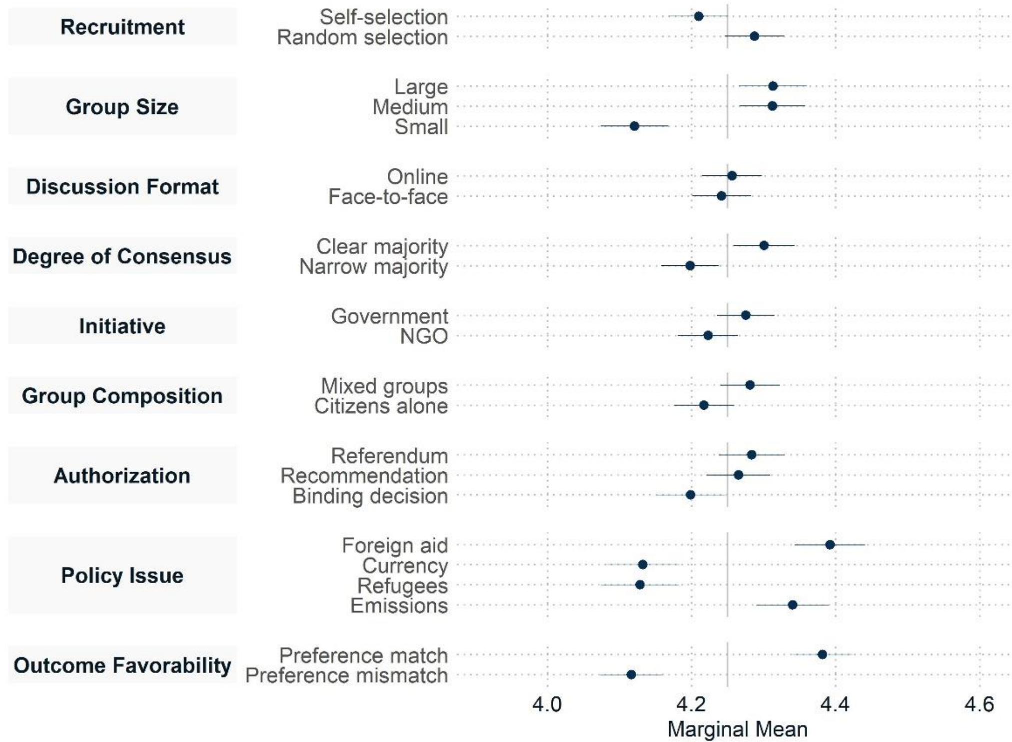
Note: Differences in Marginal Means. Effective number of observations =24,468.

A.Figure 13: Marginal Means pilot study -choice outcome



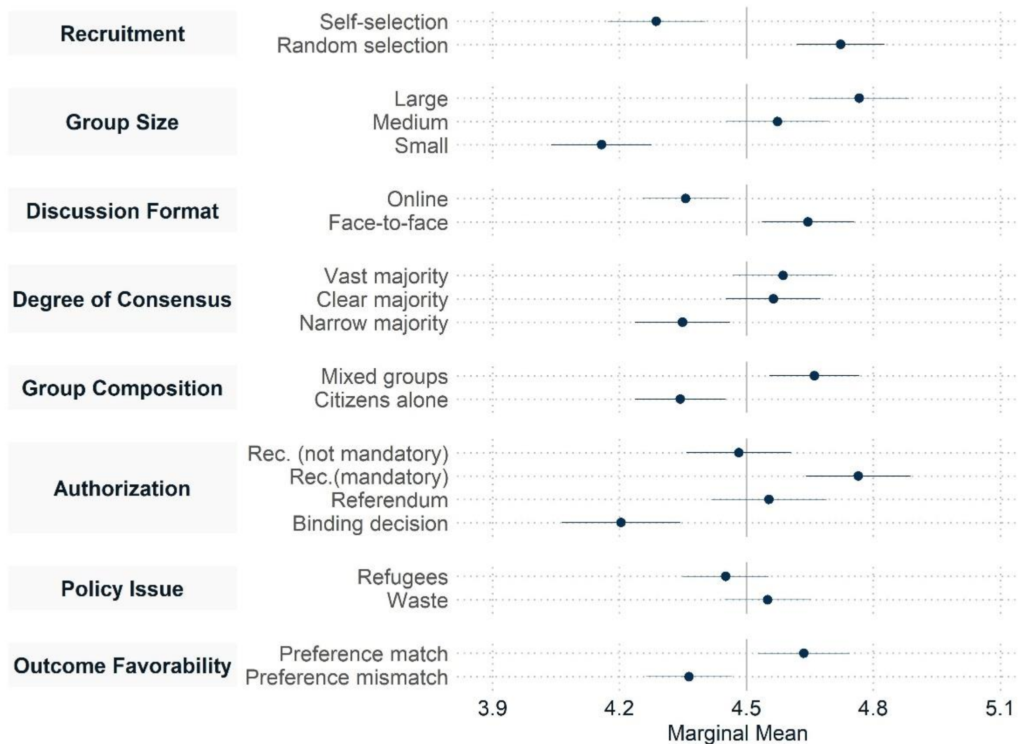
Note: Differences in Marginal Means. Effective number of observations = 4,542.

A.Figure 14: Marginal Means main study – rating outcome



Note: Differences in Marginal Means. Effective number of observations =24,468.

A.Figure 15: Marginal Means pilot study – rating outcome



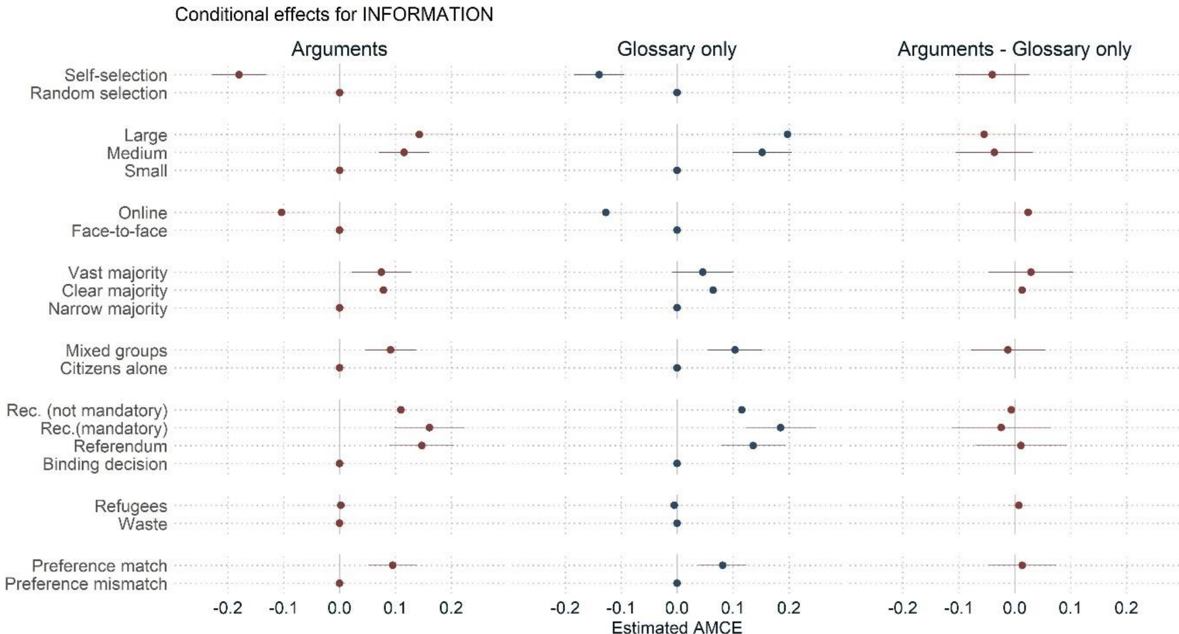
Note: Differences in Marginal Means. Effective number of observations = 4,565.

C2: Subgroups

C2.1. Familiarity

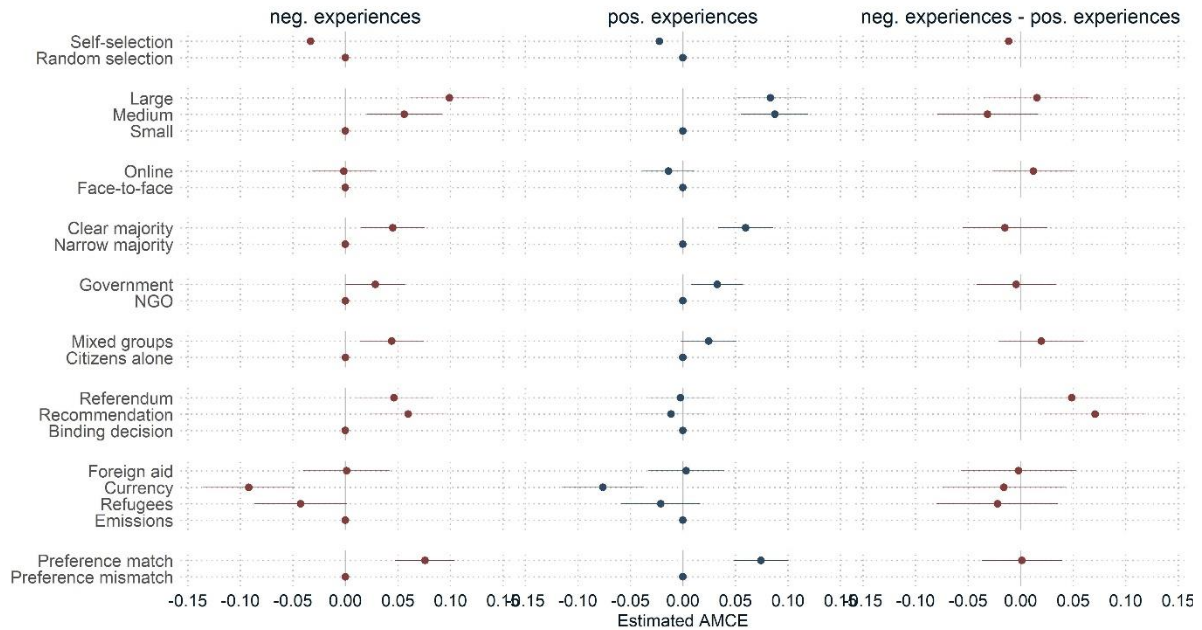
(1) Conditional AMCE

A.Figure 16: Conditional AMCE for information pilot study – choice outcome



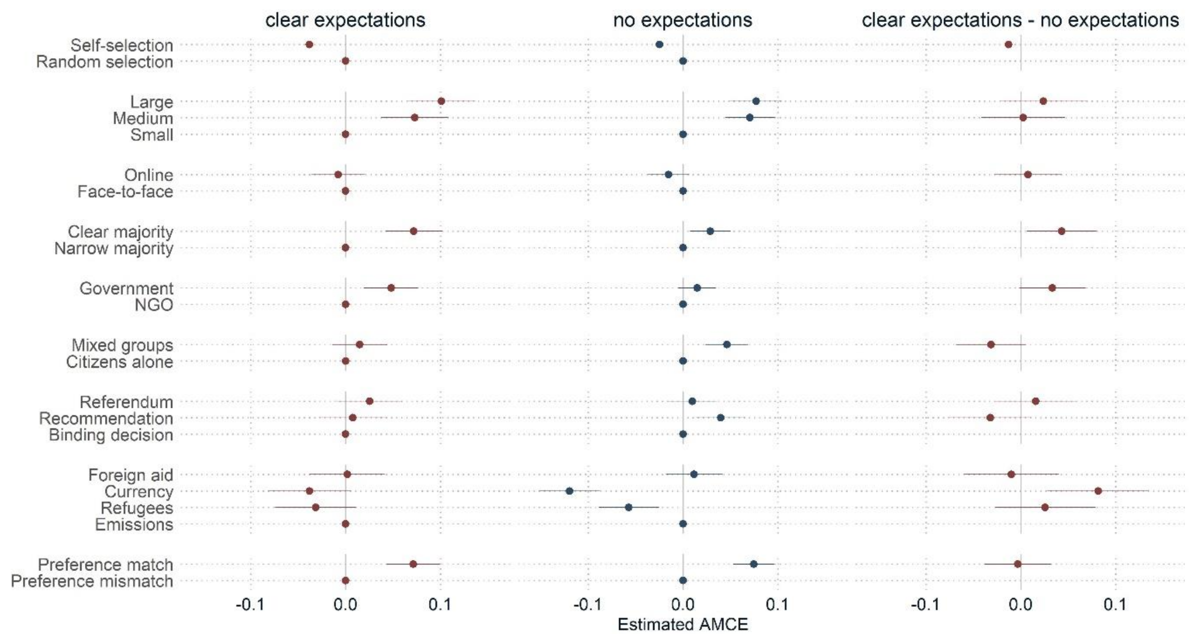
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents in the arguments group. The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents in the glossary only group. The right panel shows differences in AMCE between arguments compared to glossary.

A.Figure 17: Conditional AMCE for negative and positive experiences – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with negative experiences (n=4,896). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with positive experiences (n=6,120). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between negative compared to positive experiences.

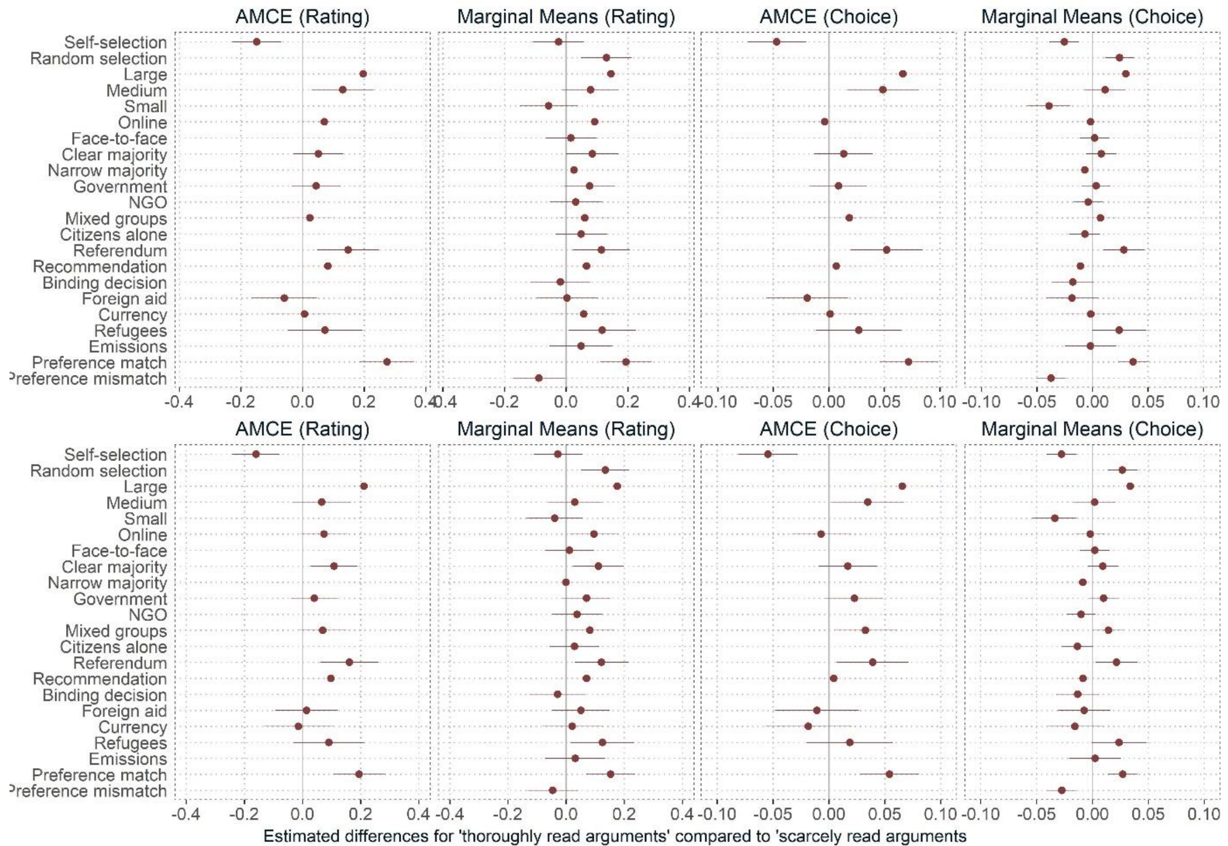
A.Figure 18: Conditional AMCE for expectations – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with clear expectations (n=5,040). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents without expectations (n=9,252). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between clear compared to unclear expectations.

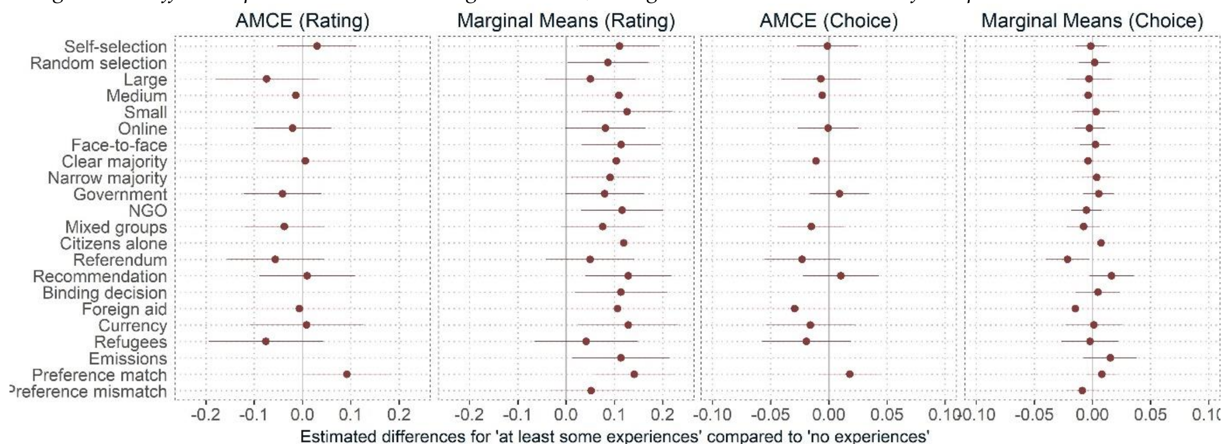
(2) Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means)

A.Figure 19: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for having read arguments



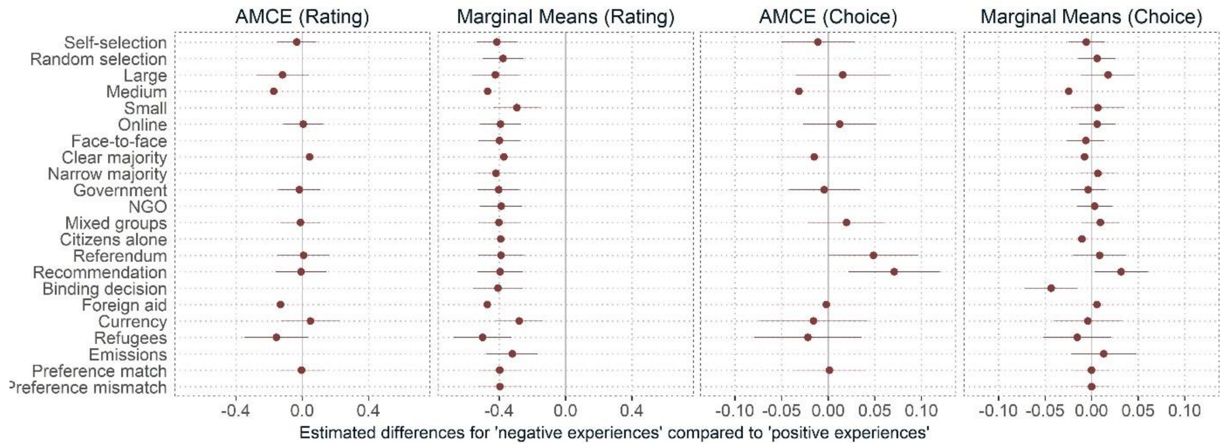
Note: Effects show differences for respondents who have read the arguments thoroughly compared to those who did not where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences. The upper row shows estimates for arguments on authorization (*n*=23,982). The bottom row shows estimates for arguments on recruitment (*n*=23,676).

A.Figure 20: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for experiences with DCFs



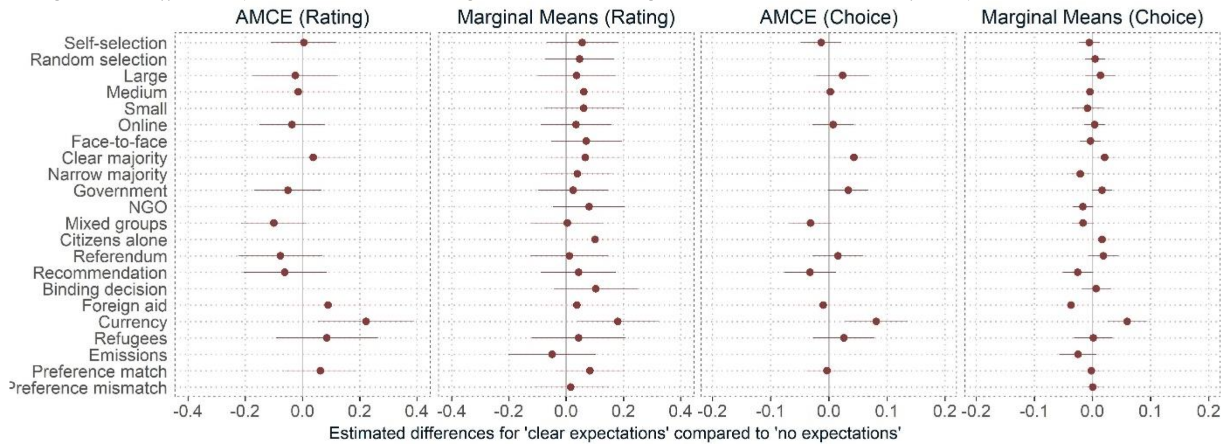
Note: Effects show differences for respondents who already have made experiences with DCFs compared to those who did not where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=24,468).

A.Figure 21: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for negative/positive experiences



Note: Effects show differences for respondents with negative compared to positive experiences with DCFs where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (n=11,016).

A.Figure 22: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for expectations

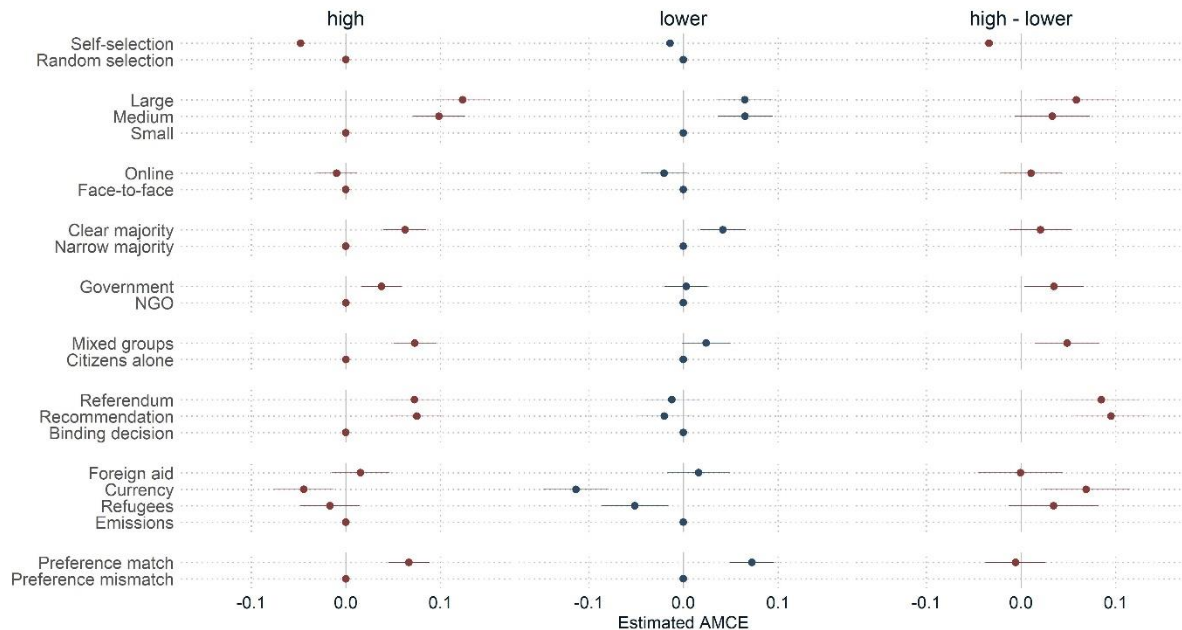


Note: Effects show differences for respondents with negative compared to positive experiences with DCFs where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (n=14,292).

C2.2. Enlightenment

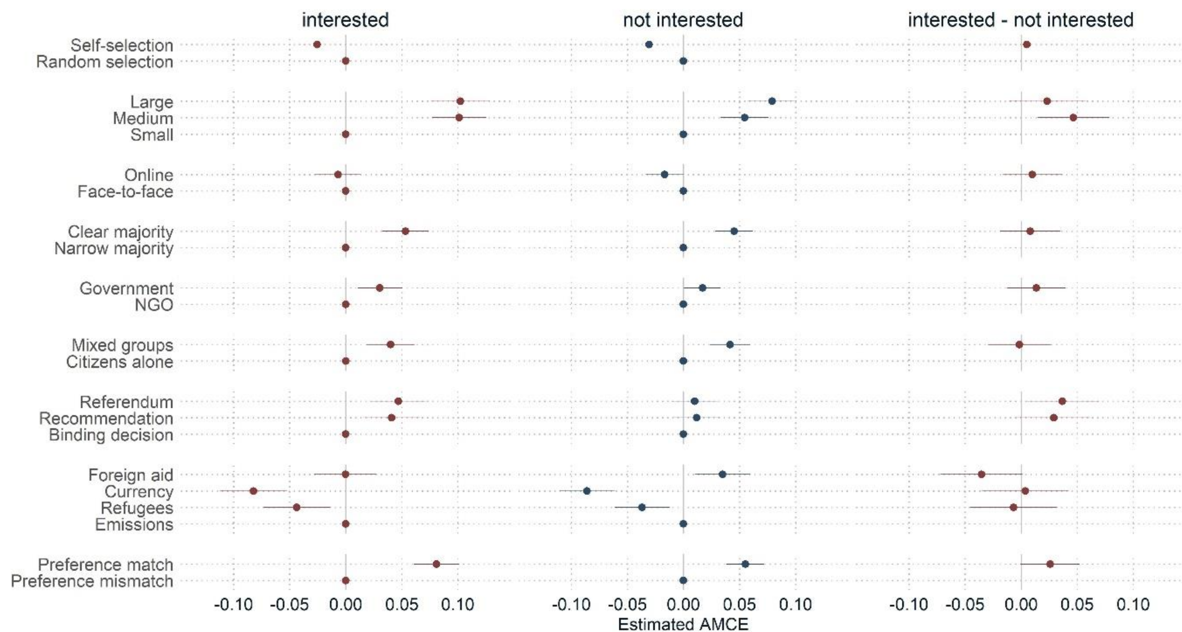
(1) Conditional AMCE

A.Figure 23: Conditional AMCE for education – choice outcome



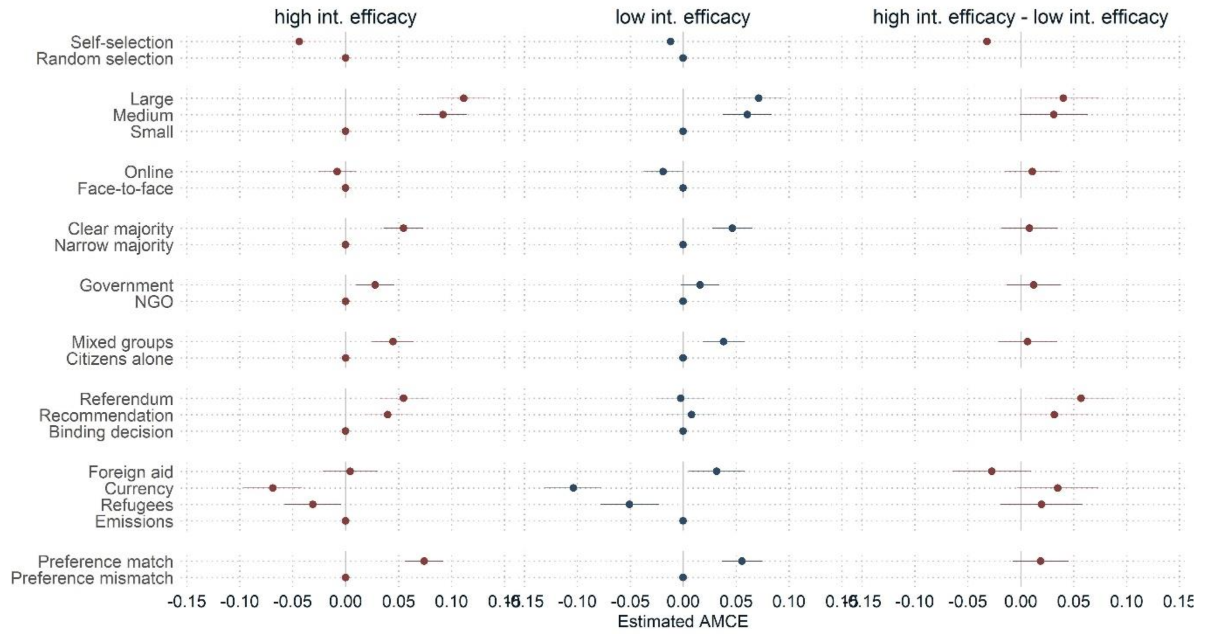
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with higher education (n=8,592). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with lower education (n=7,488). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between higher compared to lower education.

A.Figure 24: Conditional AMCE for political interest – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for politically interested respondents (n= 10,128). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for politically not interested respondents (n= 14,340). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low political interest.

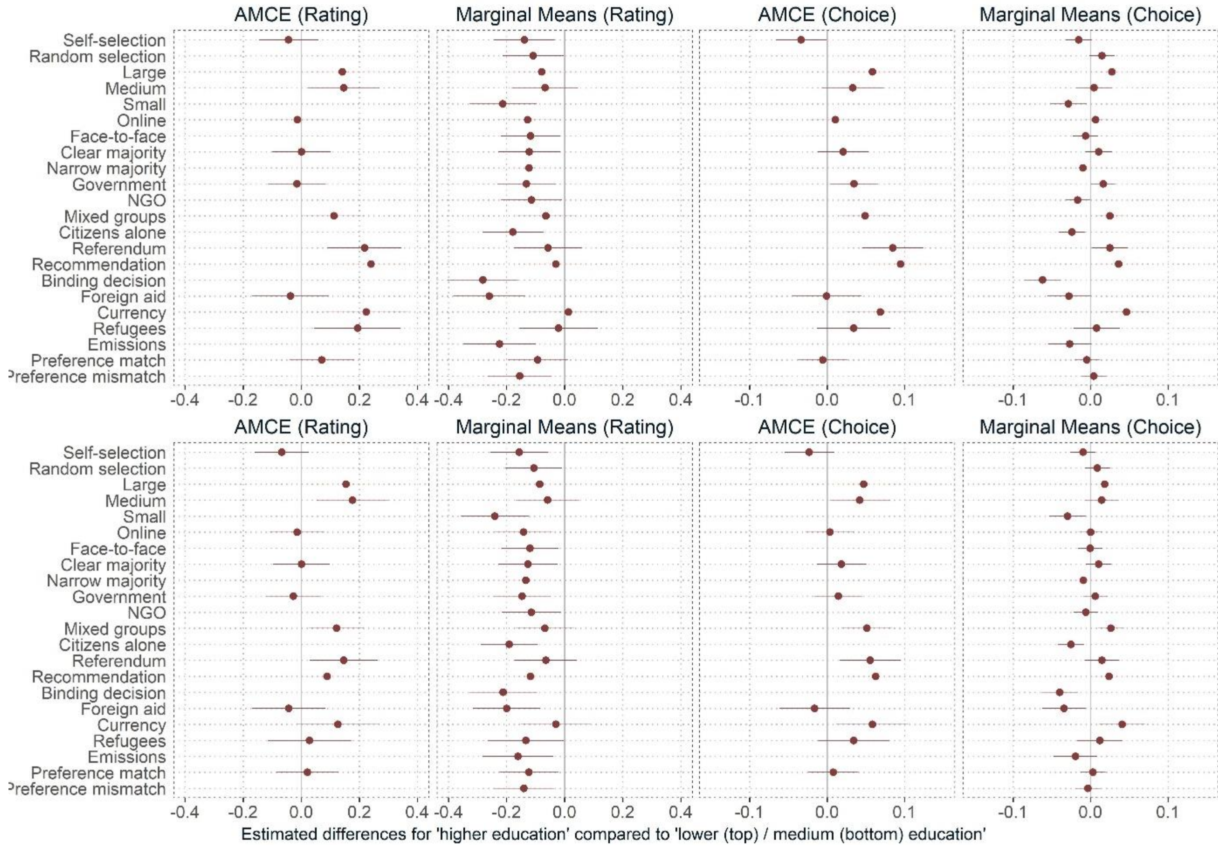
A.Figure 25: Conditional AMCE for internal efficacy – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high internal efficacy (n=12,144). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low internal efficacy (n= 11,772). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low internal efficacy.

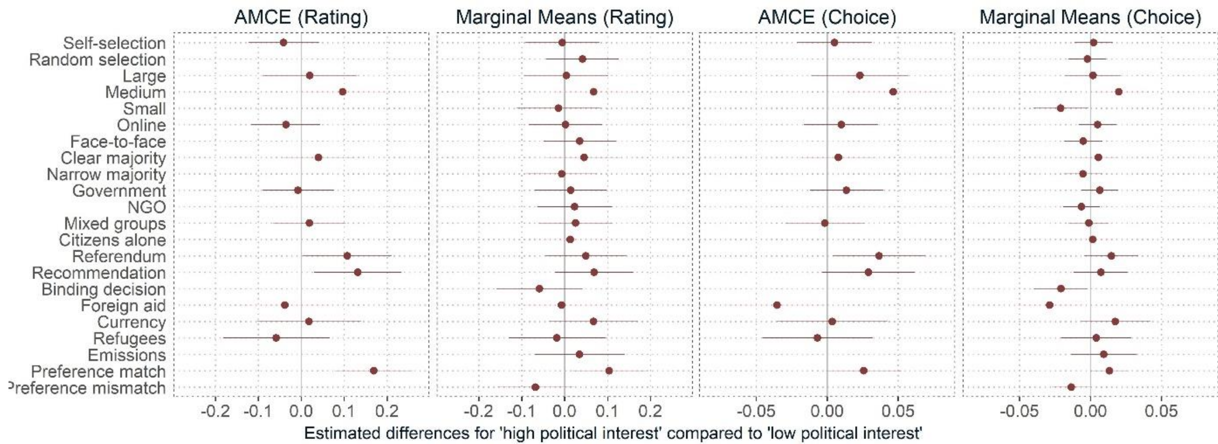
(2) Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means)

A.Figure 26: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for education



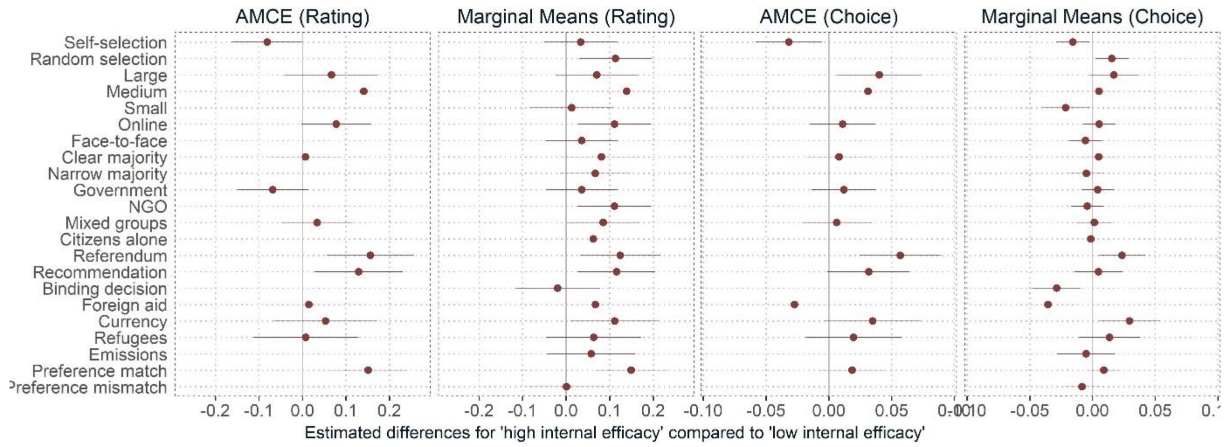
Note: Effects show differences for higher educated citizens ("Abitur, Fachhochschulreife" and above) compared to citizens with lower education where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences. The upper row shows estimates for higher compared to low education ("Haupt- oder Volksschulabschluss" and below) (*n*=16,080). The bottom row shows estimates for higher compared to medium education ("Realschul- oder gleichwertiger Abschluss") (*n*=16,344).

A.Figure 27: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for political interest



Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low political interest where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=24,468).

A.Figure 28: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for internal efficacy

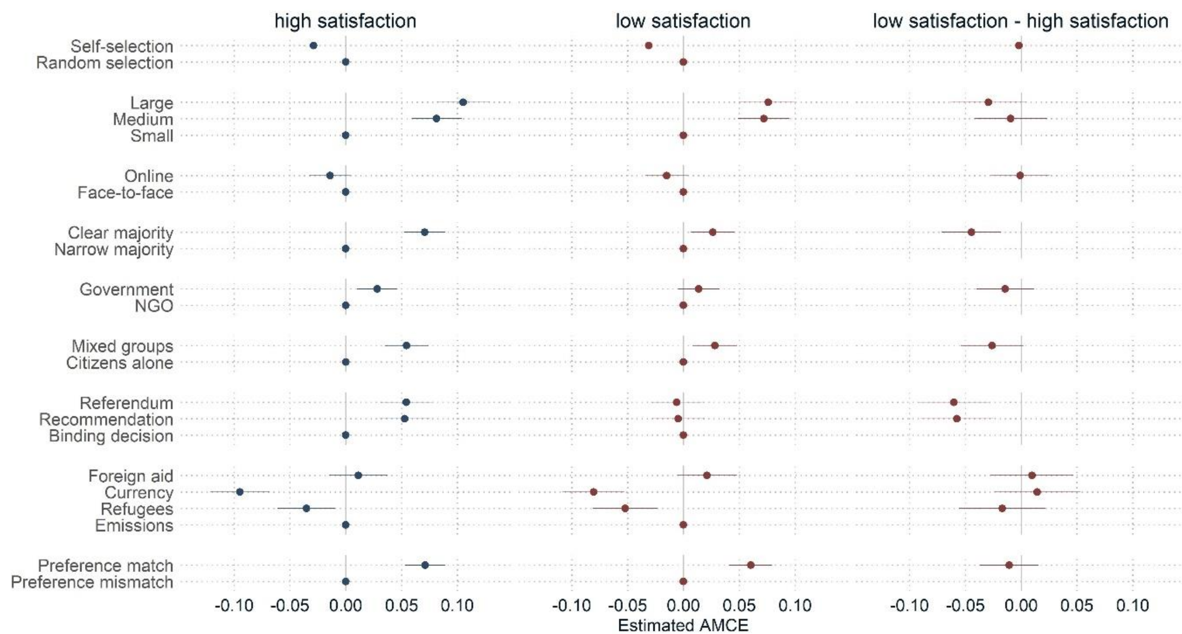


Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low internal efficacy where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,916).

C2.3. Political Disaffection

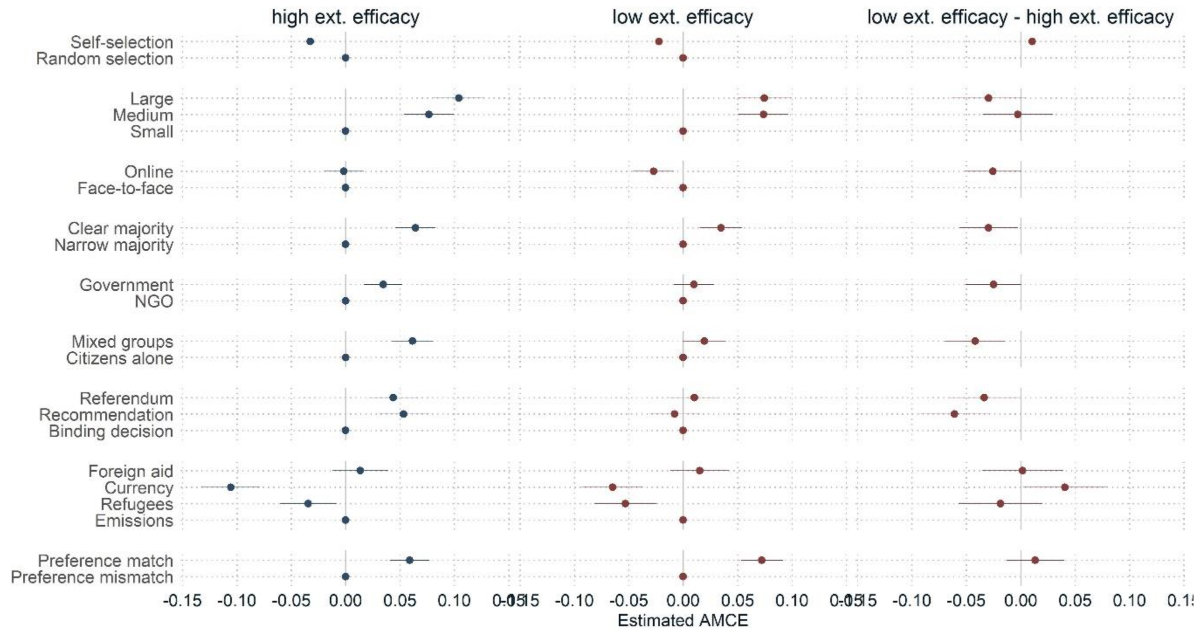
(1) Conditional AMCE

A.Figure 29: Conditional AMCE for political dissatisfaction – choice outcome



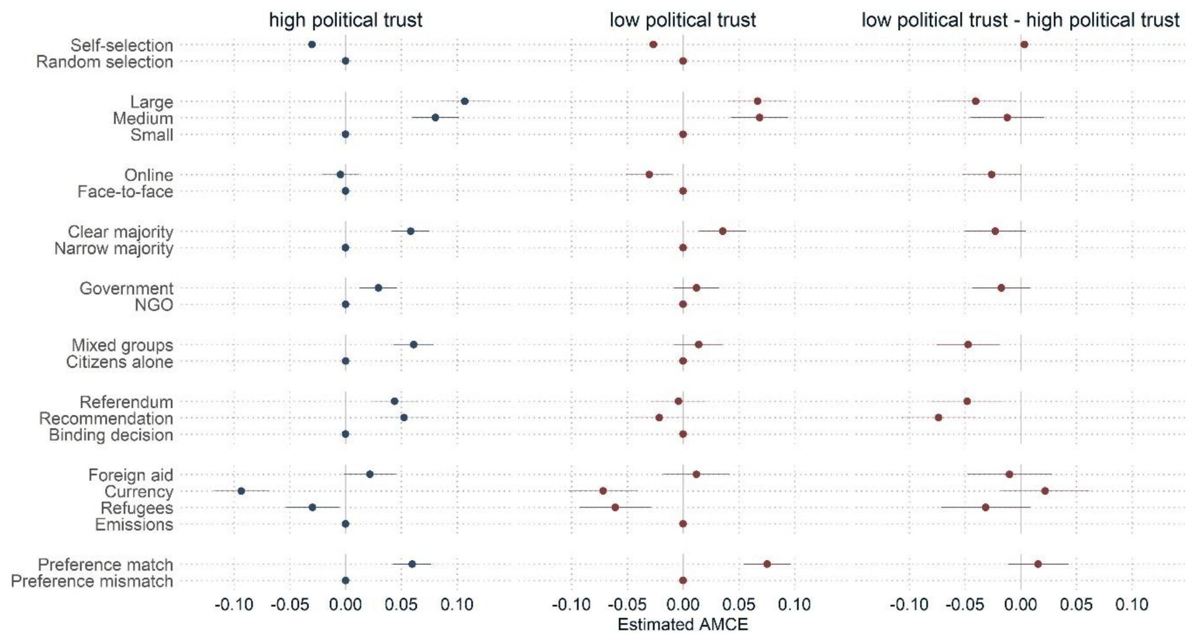
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for politically satisfied respondents (n=12,120). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for politically dissatisfied respondents (n=11,580). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between political dissatisfaction compared to political satisfaction.

A.Figure 30: Conditional AMCE for external efficacy – choice outcome



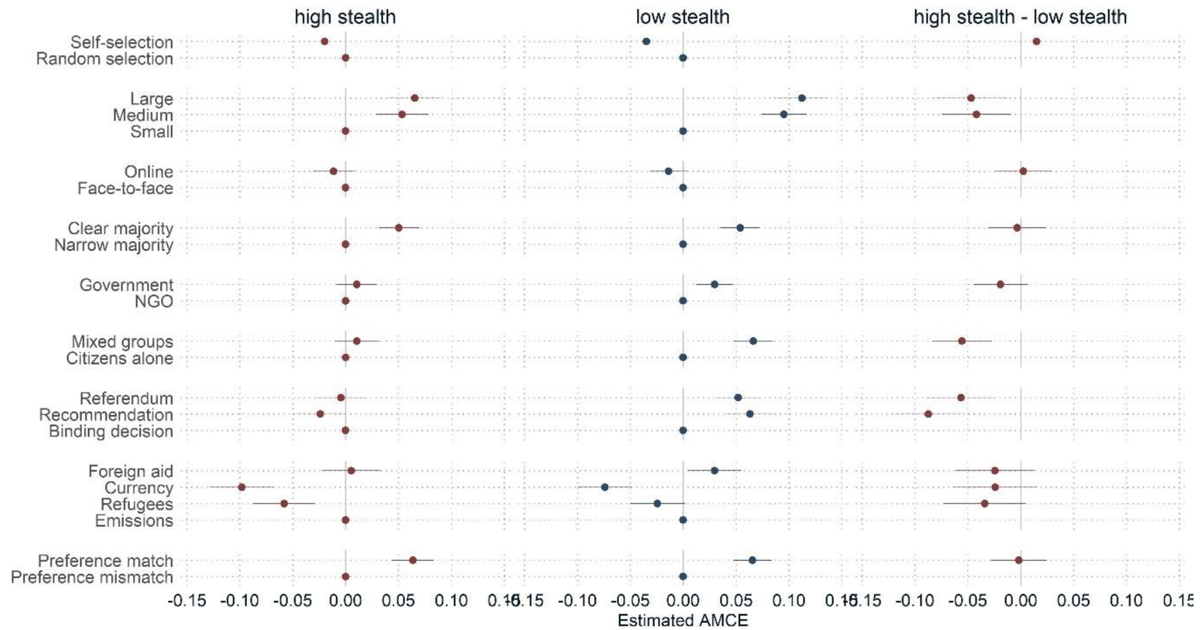
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high external efficacy (n=12,252). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low external efficacy (n=11,604). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between low compared to high external efficacy.

A.Figure 31: Conditional AMCE for political trust – choice outcome



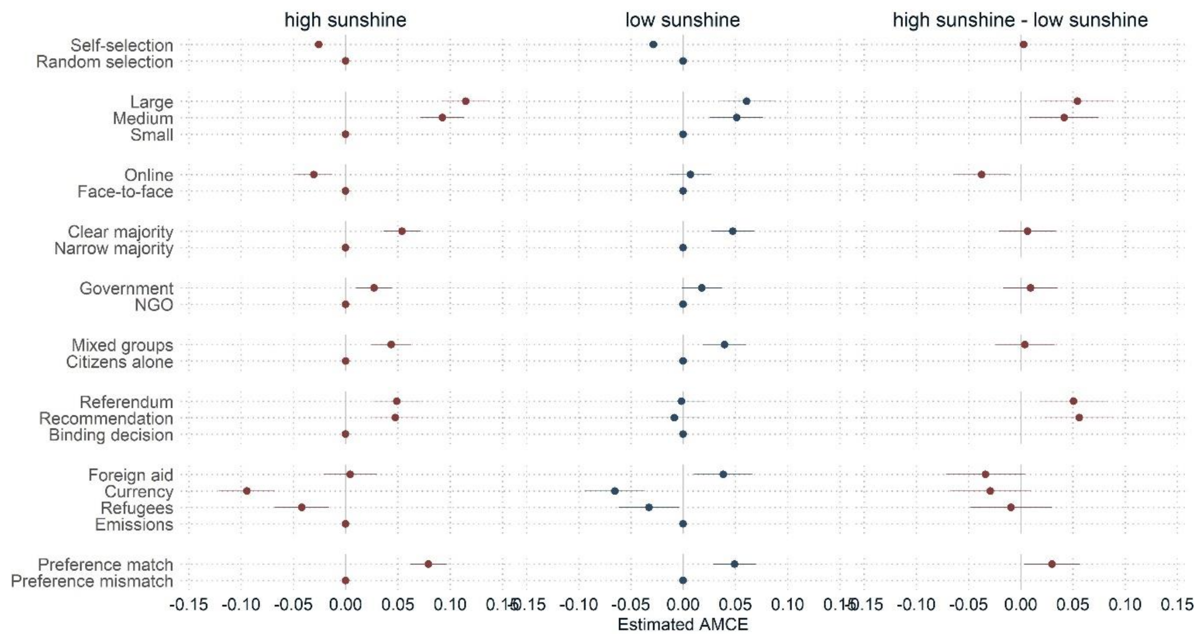
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high political trust (*n*=14,184). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low political trust (*n*=9,540). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between political mistrust compared to political trust.

A.Figure 32: Conditional AMCE for stealth attitudes – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high stealth attitudes (n=10,656). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low stealth attitudes (n=12,744). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between stealth compared to non-stealth attitudes.

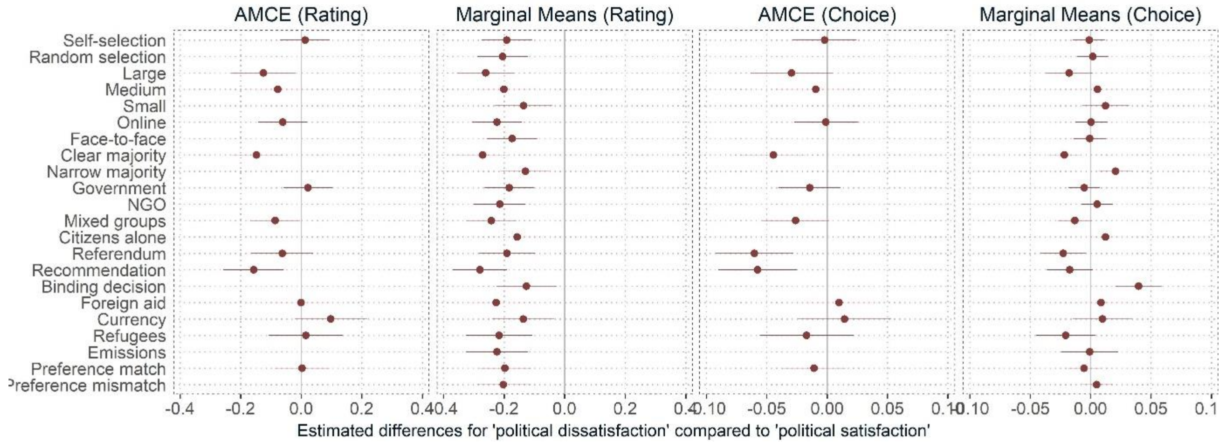
A.Figure 33: Conditional AMCE for sunshine attitudes – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high sunshine attitudes (n=12,924). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low sunshine attitudes (n=10,452). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between sunshine compared to non-sunshine attitudes.

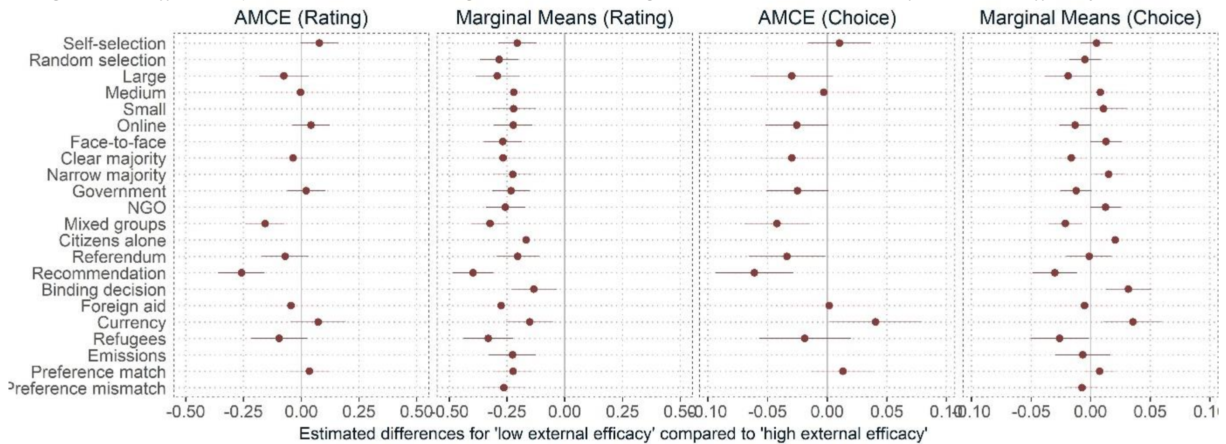
(2) Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means)

A.Figure 34: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for political dissatisfaction



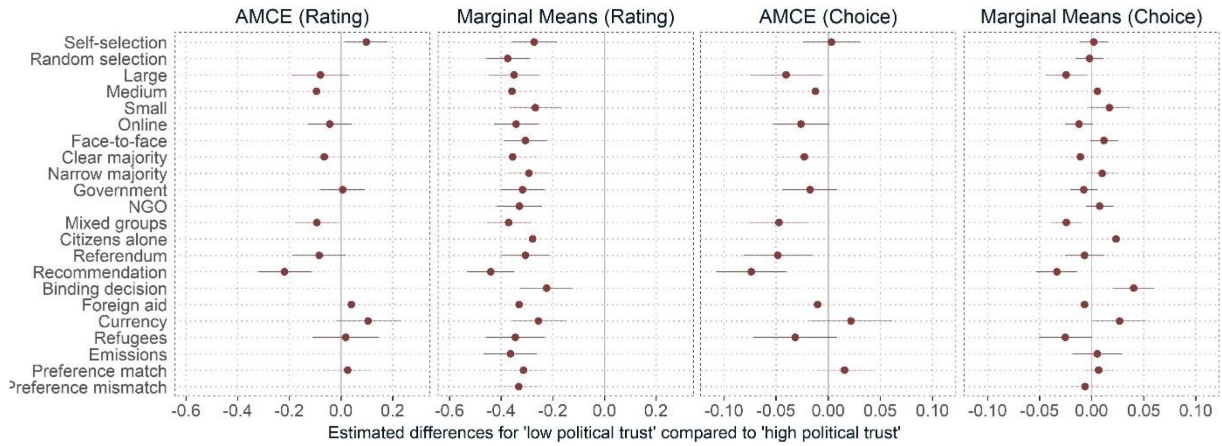
Note: Effects show differences for politically dissatisfied compared to politically satisfied citizens where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,700).

A.Figure 35: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for external efficacy



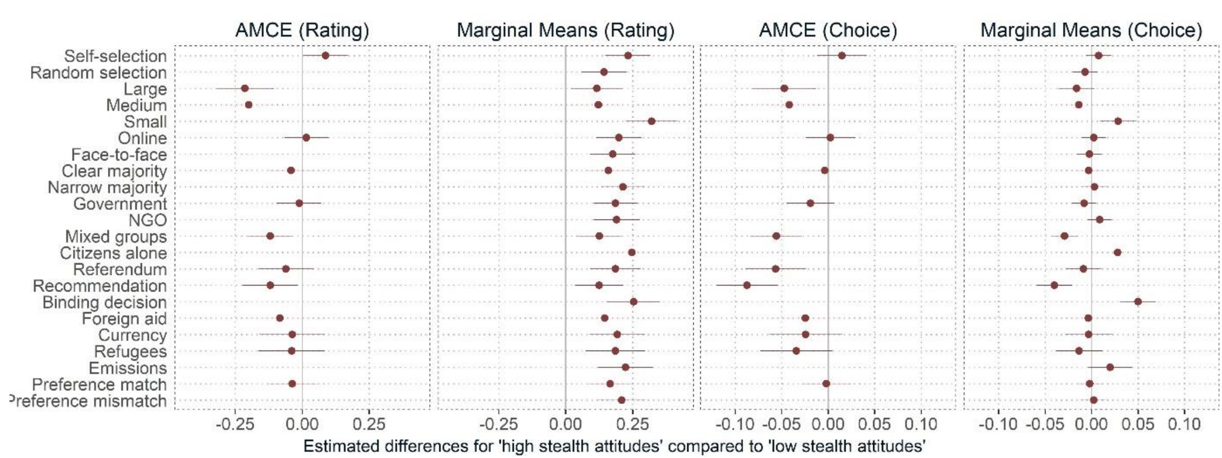
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with low compared to high external efficacy where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,856).

A.Figure 36: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for political trust



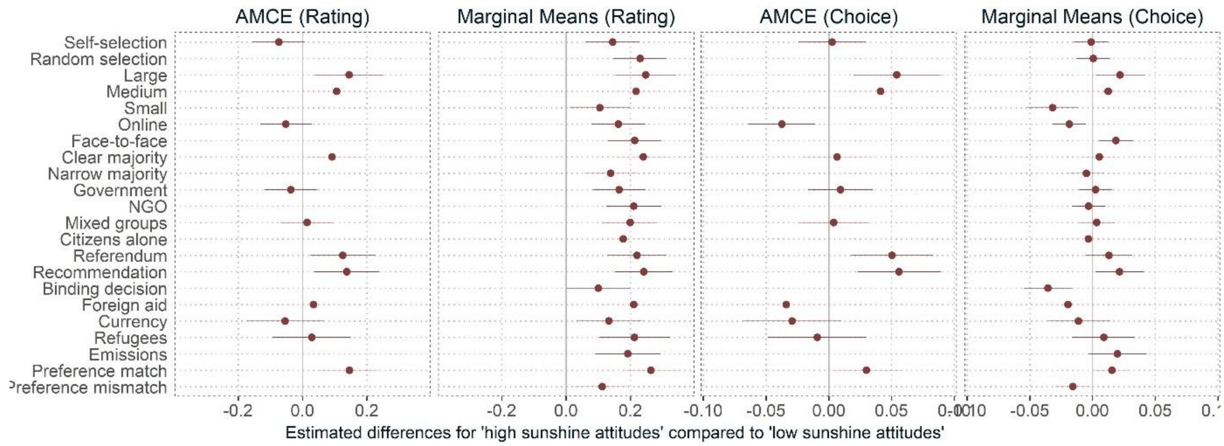
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with low compared to high political trust where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,724).

A.Figure 37: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for stealth attitudes



Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low stealth attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,400).

A.Figure 38: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for sunshine attitudes

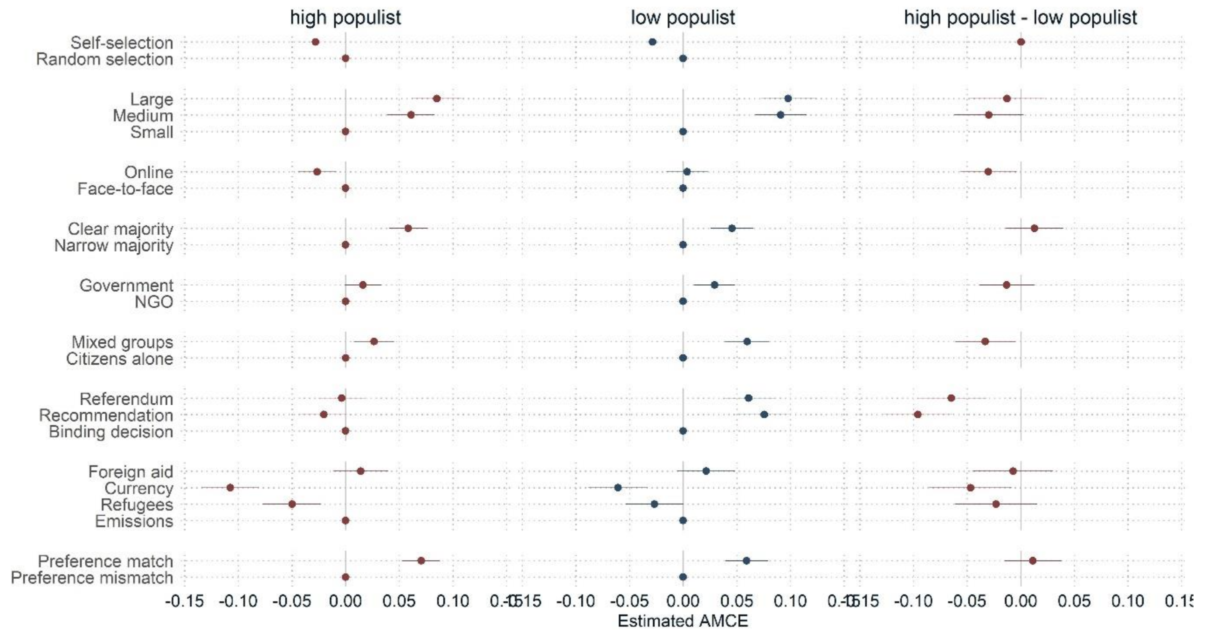


Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low sunshine attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,376).

C2.4. Populism

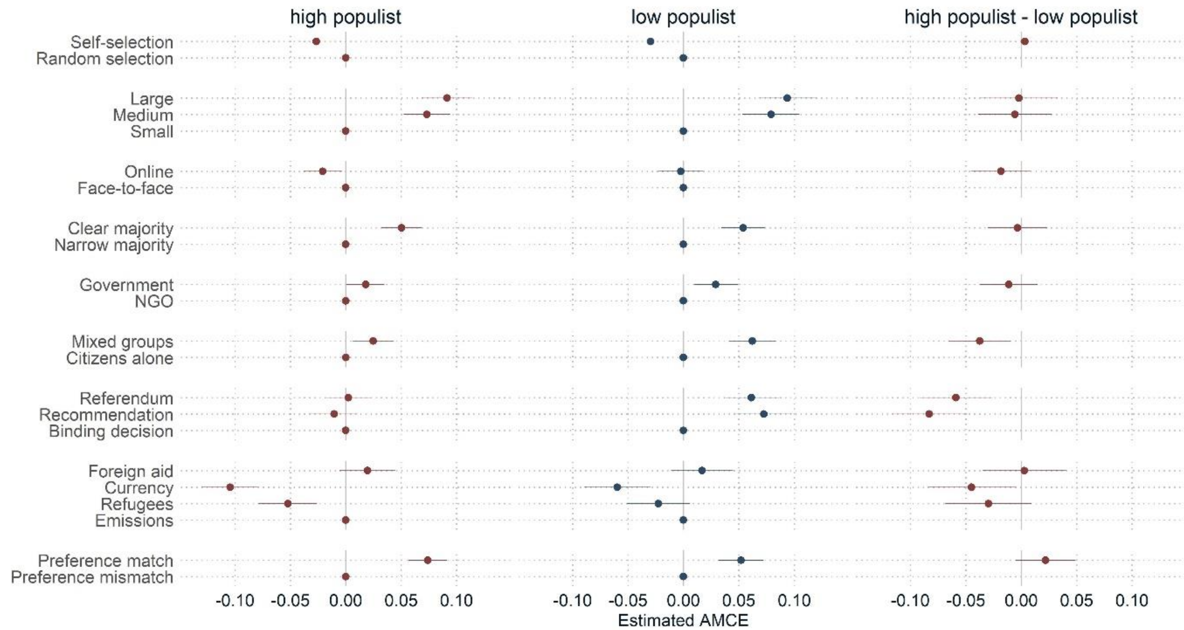
(1) Conditional AMCE

A.Figure 39: Conditional AMCE for populist attitudes – choice outcome



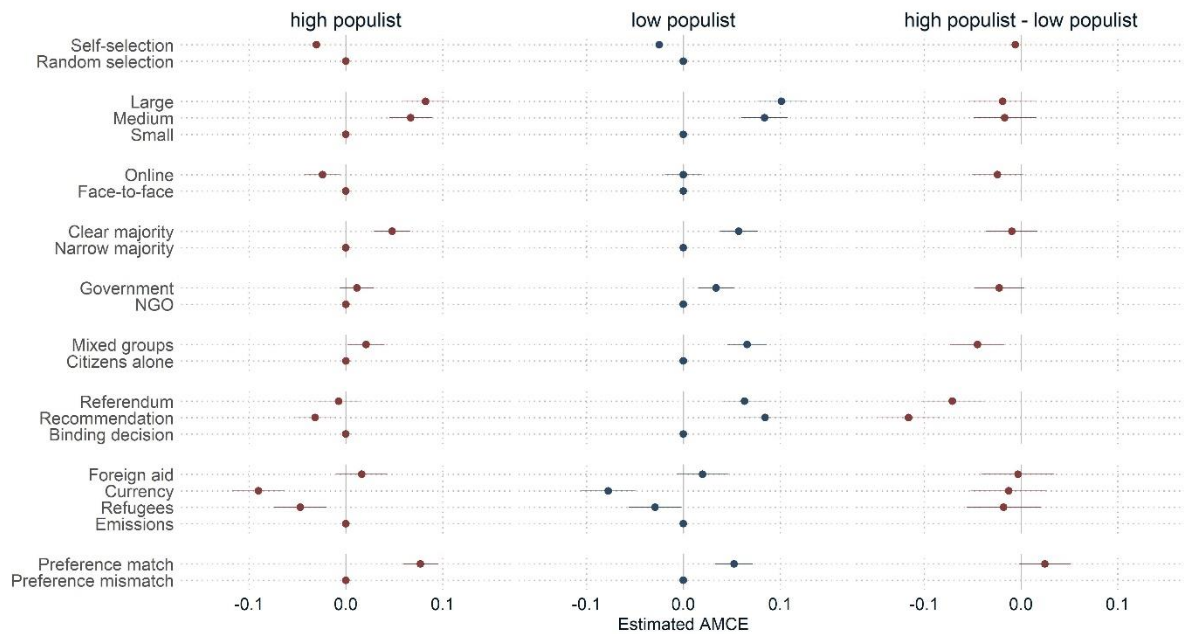
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high populist attitudes (n=12,816). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low populist attitudes (n=10,944). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low-populist attitudes.

A.Figure 40: Conditional AMCE for anti-elitism – choice outcome



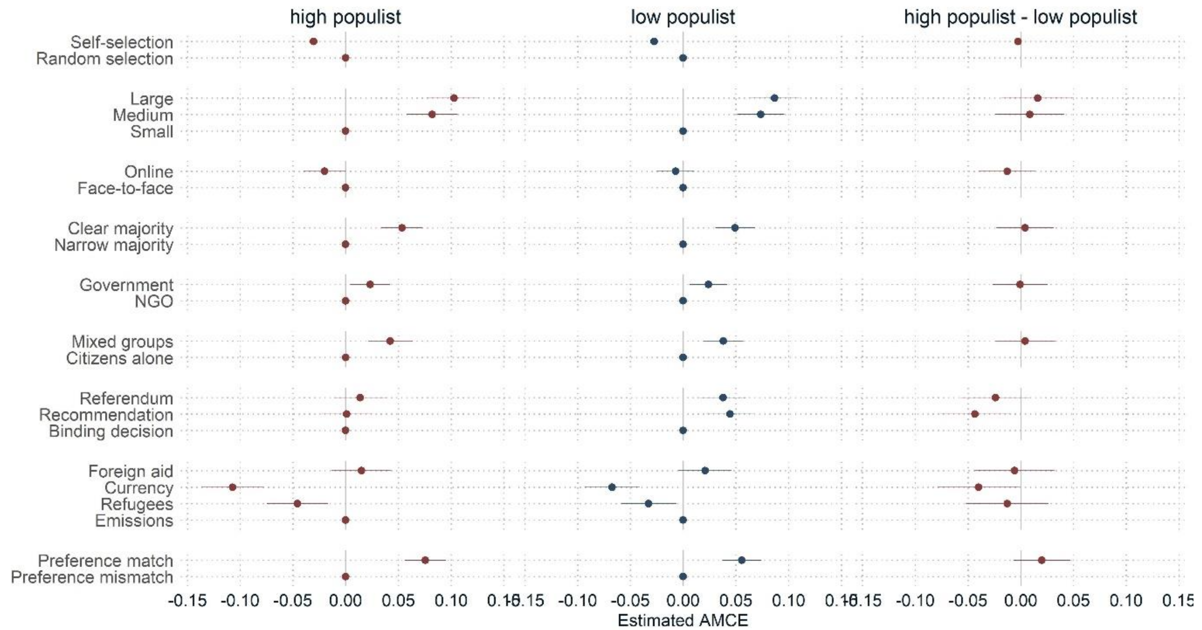
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high anti-elitist attitudes (n=13,308). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low anti-elitist attitudes (n=10,164). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low anti-elitist attitudes.

A.Figure 41: Conditional AMCE for sovereignty – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high sovereignty attitudes (n=12,408). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low sovereignty attitudes (n=11,160). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low sovereignty attitudes.

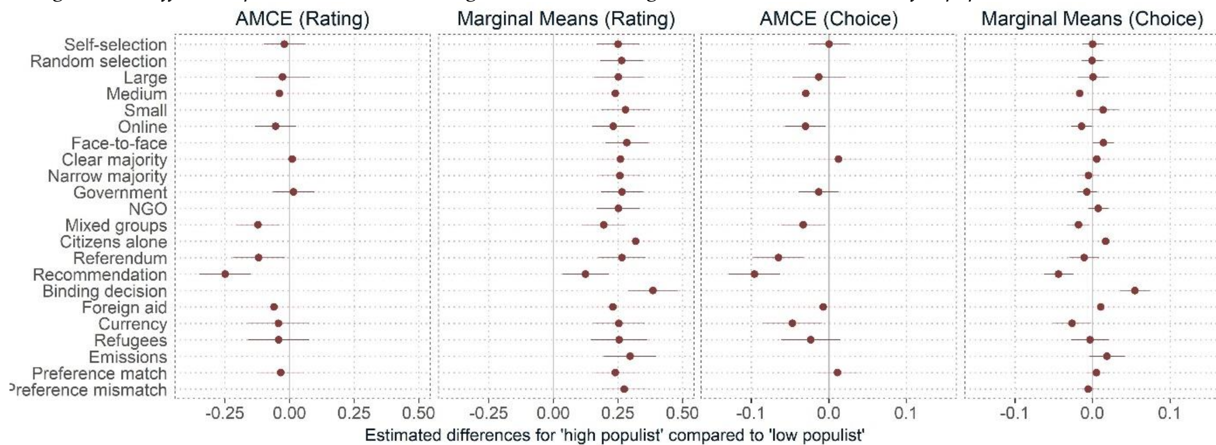
A.Figure 42: Conditional AMCE for homogeneity – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high homogeneity attitudes (n=10,536). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low homogeneity attitudes (n=12,744). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low homogeneity attitudes.

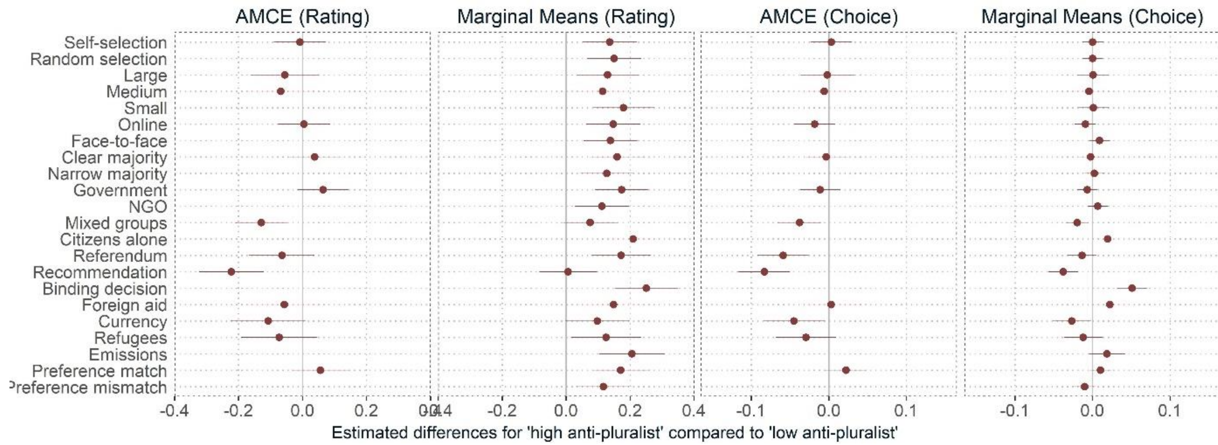
(2) Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means)

A.Figure 43: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for populist attitudes



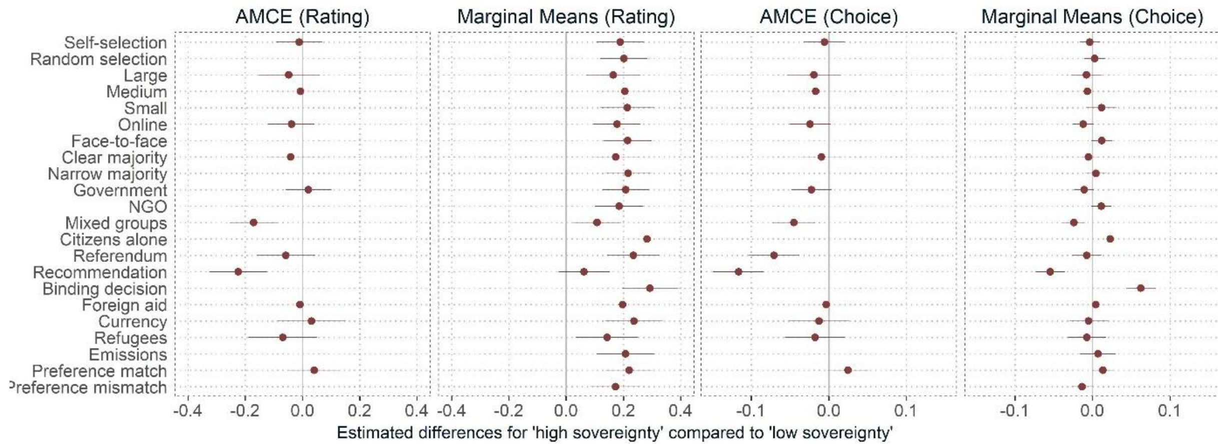
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low populist attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (n=23,760).

A.Figure 44: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for anti-elitism



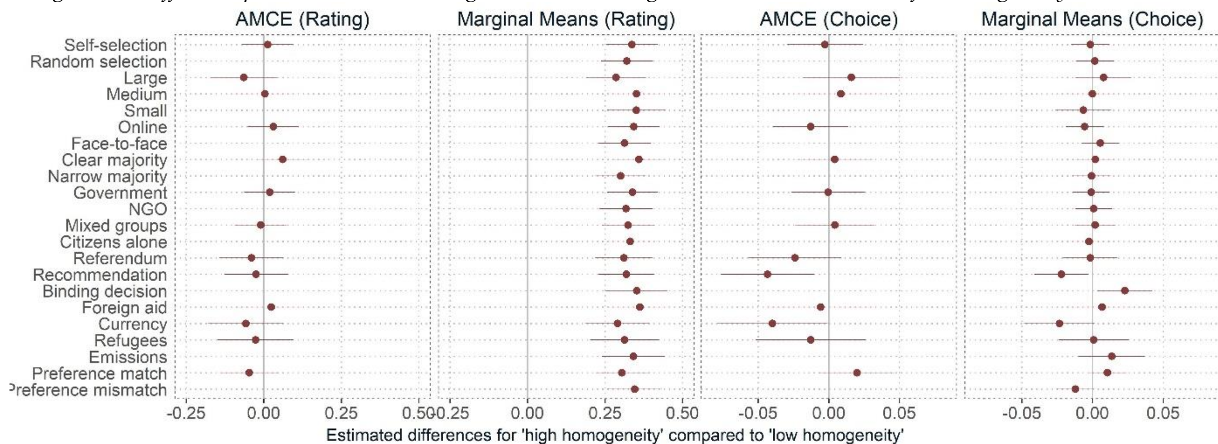
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low anti-elitist attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,472).

A.Figure 45: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for sovereignty



Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low sovereignty attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,568).

A.Figure 46: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for homogeneity

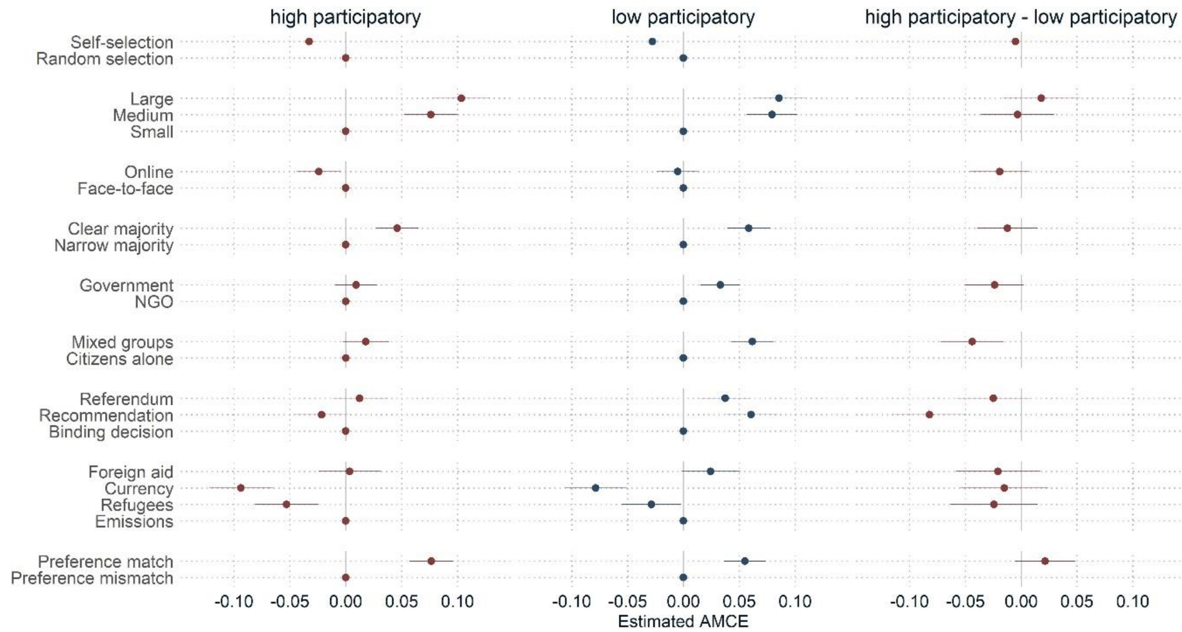


Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low homogeneity attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,289).

C2.5. Democratic conceptions

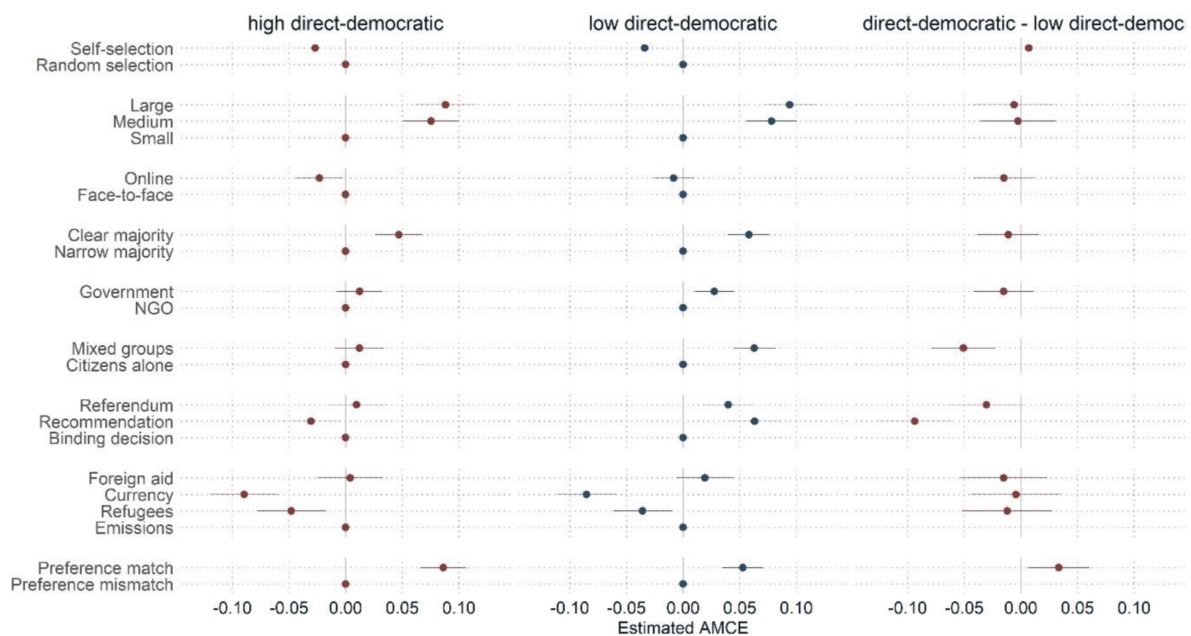
(1) Conditional AMCE

A.Figure 47: Conditional AMCE for participatory conceptions – choice outcome



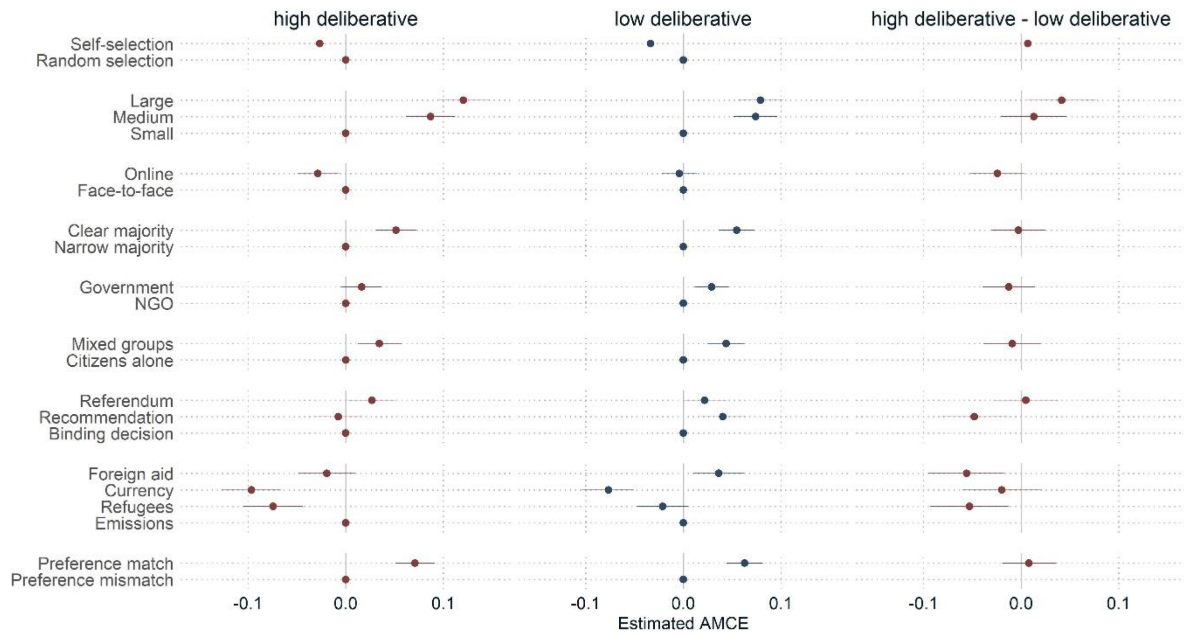
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high participatory attitudes (n=10,884). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low participatory attitudes (n=12,264). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low participatory attitudes.

A.Figure 48: Conditional AMCE for direct-democratic conceptions – choice outcome



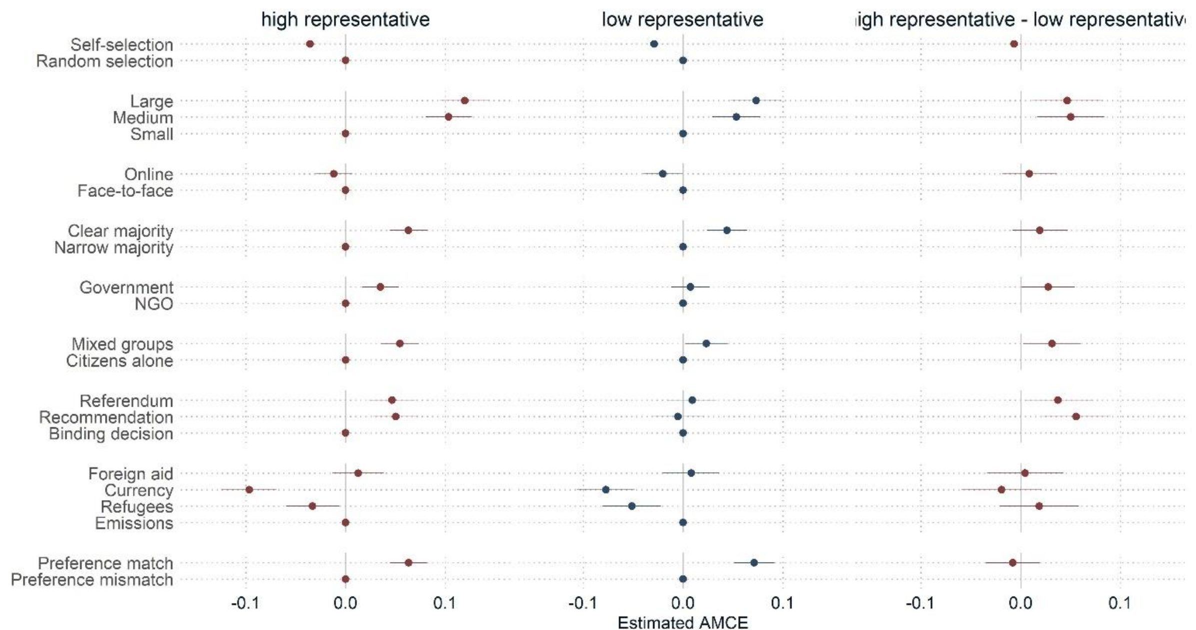
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high direct-dem. attitudes (n=9,732). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low direct-dem. attitudes (n=13,080). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low direct-dem. attitudes.

A.Figure 49: Conditional AMCE for deliberative conceptions – choice outcome



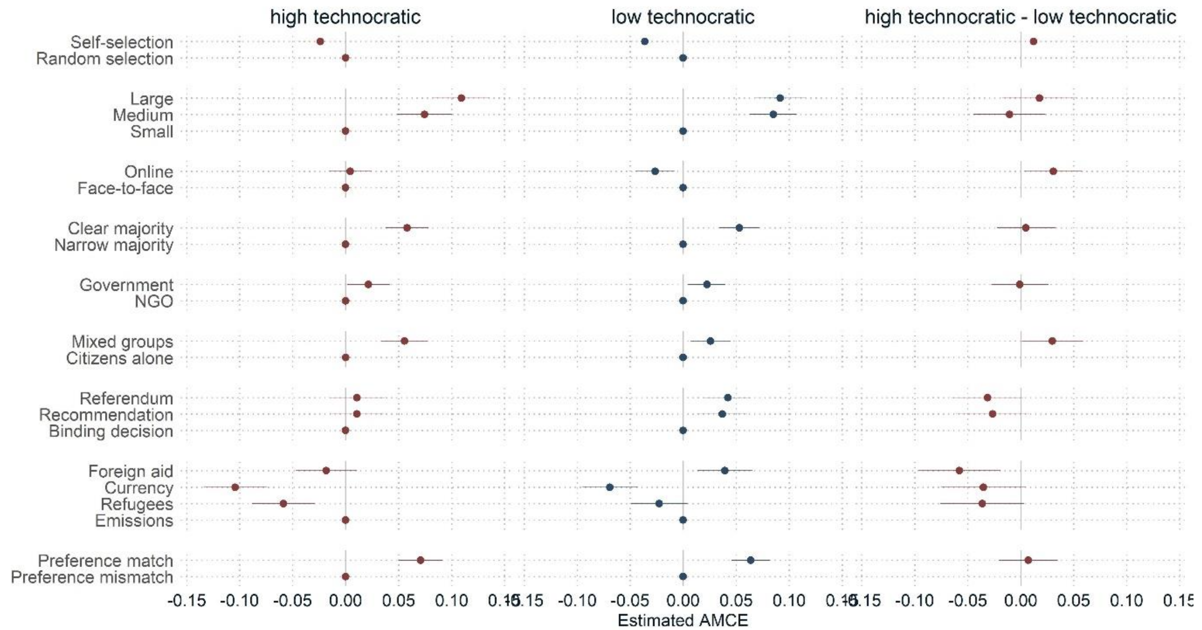
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high deliberative attitudes (n=9,540). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low deliberative attitudes (n=12,624). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low deliberative attitudes.

A.Figure 50: Conditional AMCE for representative conceptions – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high representative attitudes (n=11,760). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low representative attitudes (n=10,512). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low representative attitudes.

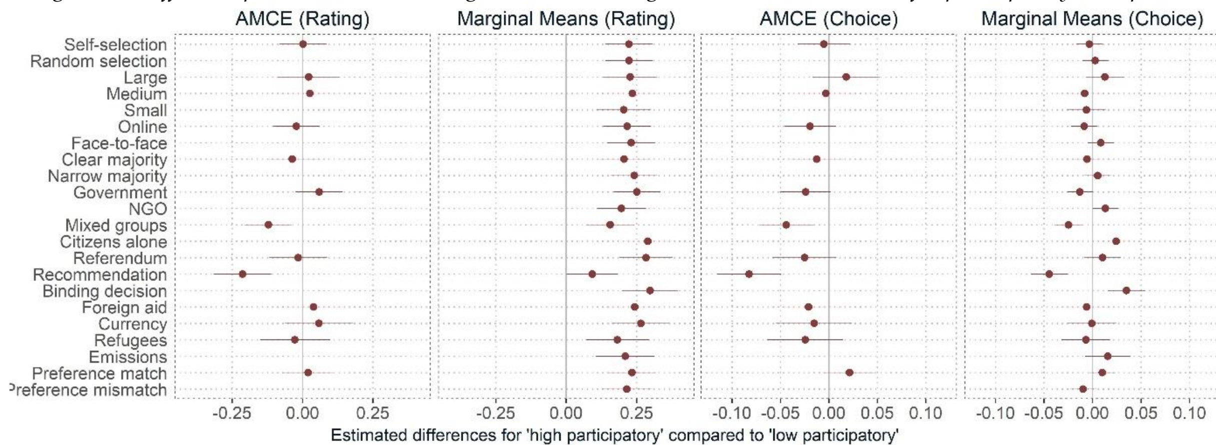
A.Figure 51: Conditional AMCE for technocratic conceptions – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high technocratic attitudes (n=9,780). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low technocratic attitudes (n=12,516). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low technocratic attitudes.

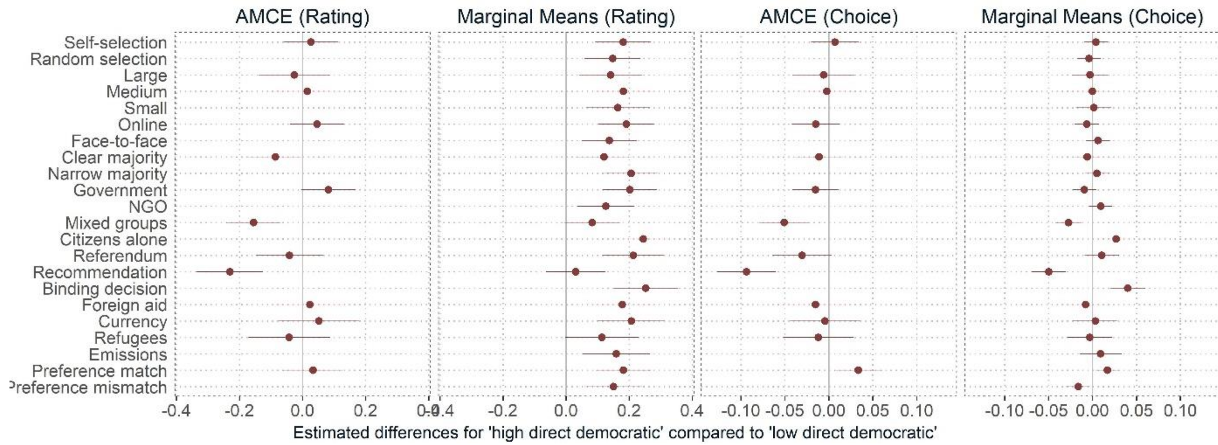
(2) Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means)

A.Figure 52: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for participatory conceptions



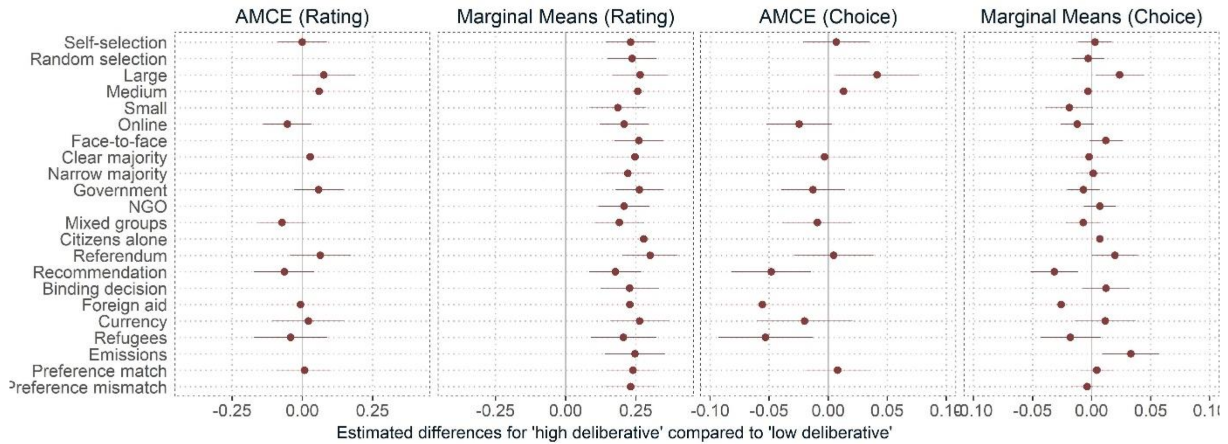
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low participatory attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=23,148).

A.Figure 53: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for direct-democratic conceptions



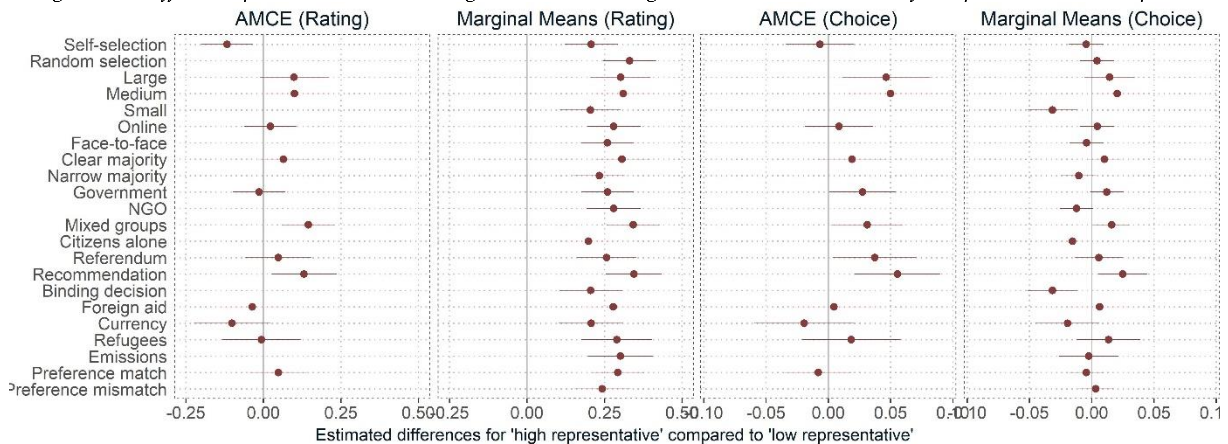
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low direct-democratic attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=22,812).

A.Figure 54: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for deliberative conceptions



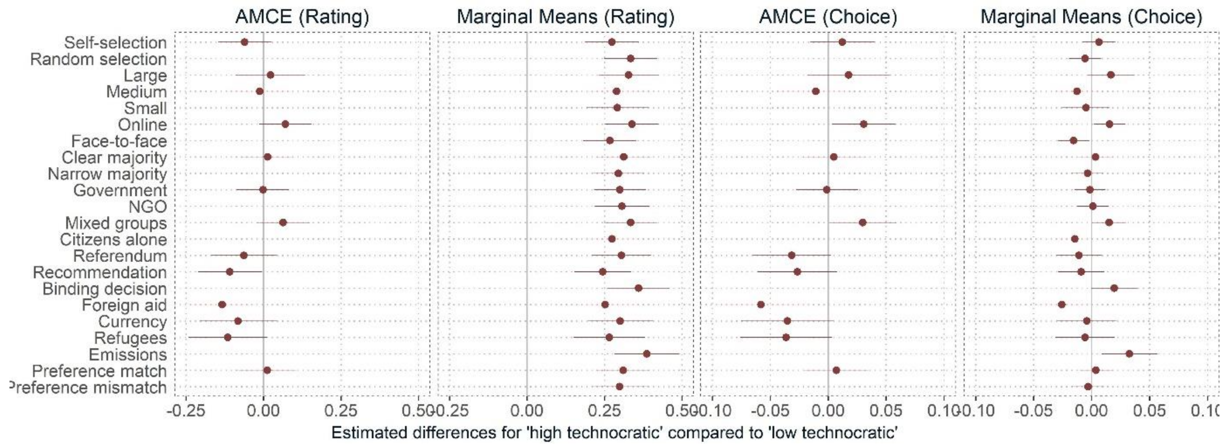
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low deliberative attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=22,164).

A.Figure 55: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for representative conceptions



Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low representative attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (n=22,272).

A.Figure 56: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for technocratic conceptions

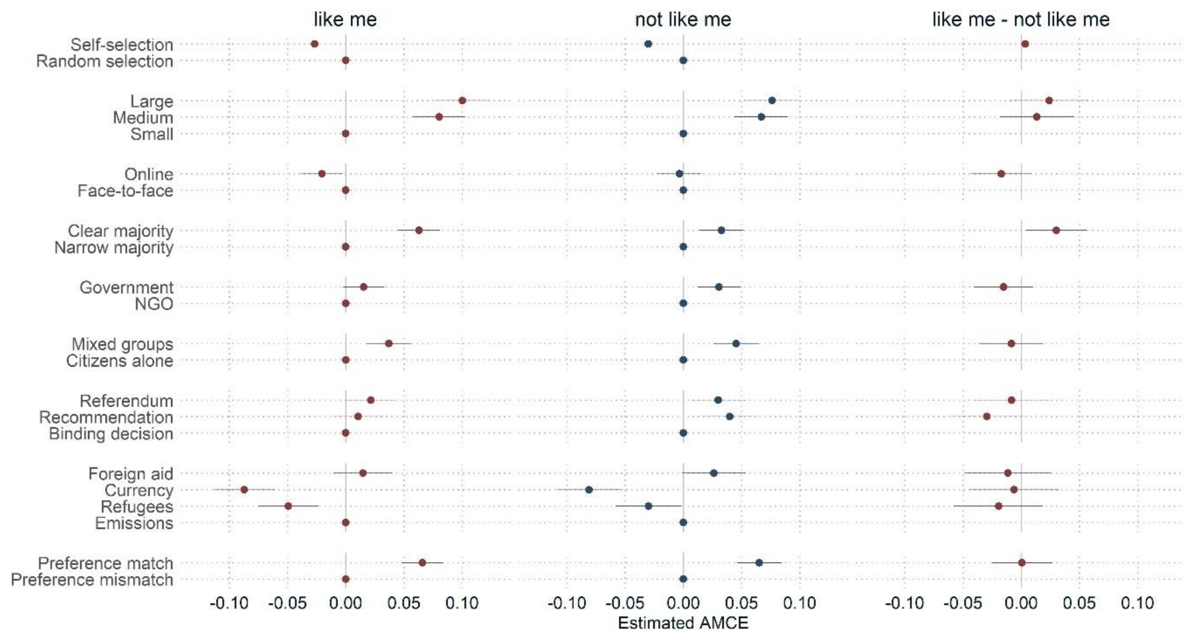


Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low technocratic attitudes where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=22,296).

C2.6. Social trust

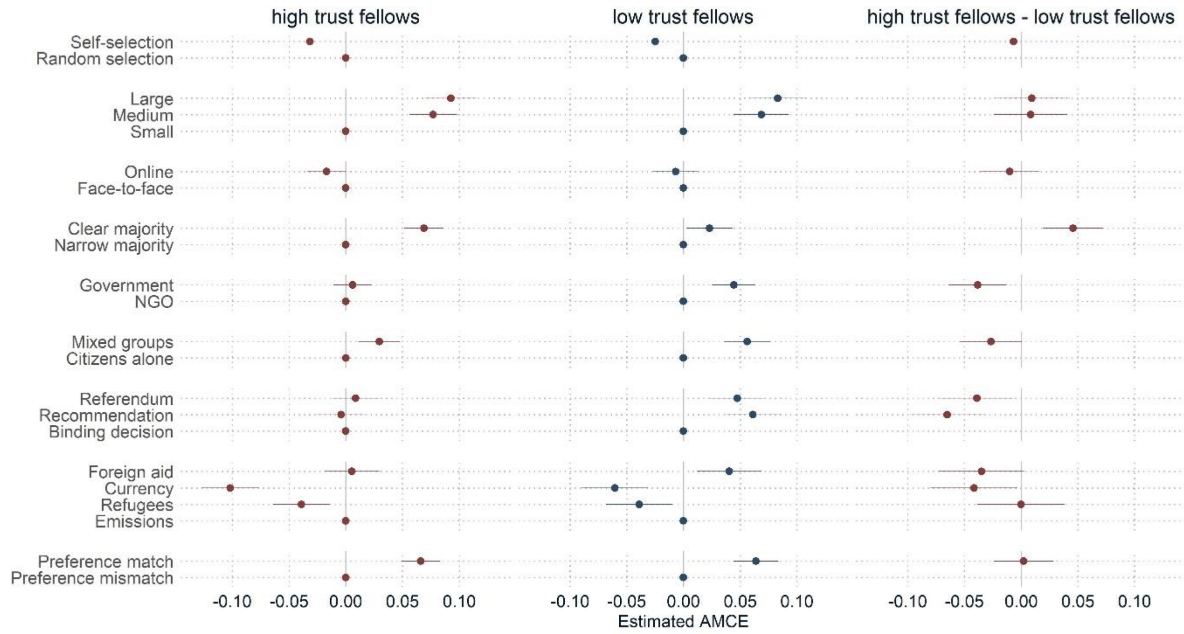
(1) Conditional AMCE

A.Figure 57: Conditional AMCE for like-me perceptions – choice outcome



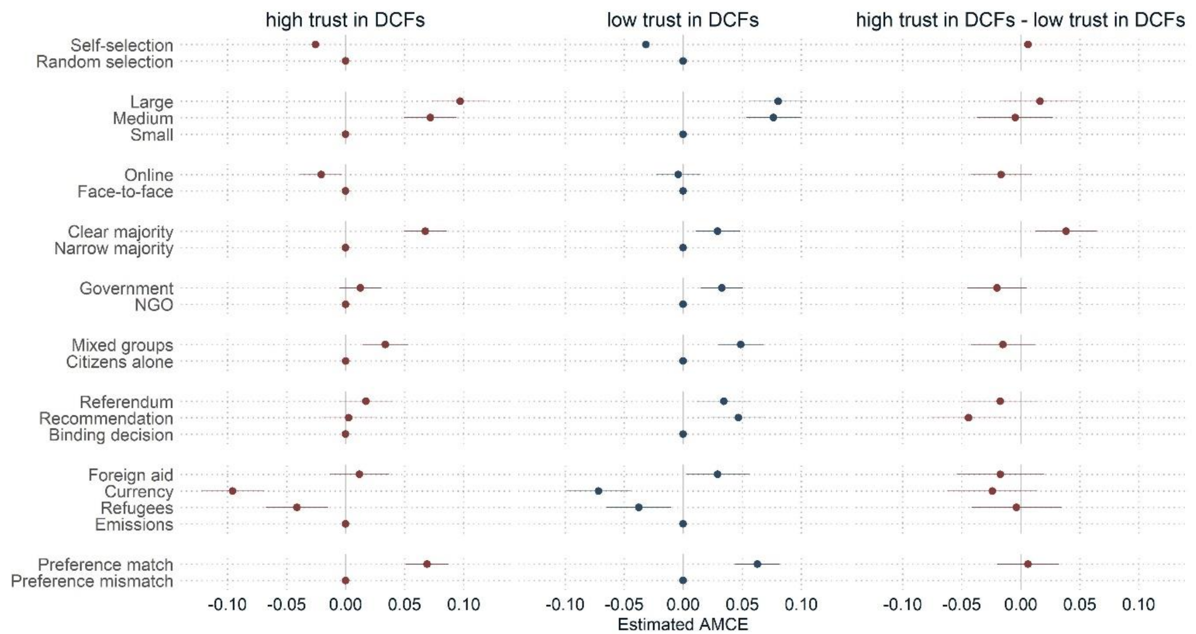
Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high like-me perceptions (n=12,840). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low like-me perceptions (n=11,628). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low like-me perceptions.

A.Figure 58: Conditional AMCE for trust in fellow citizens – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high trust in fellow citizens (n=13,824). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low trust in fellow citizens (n=10,644). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low social trust.

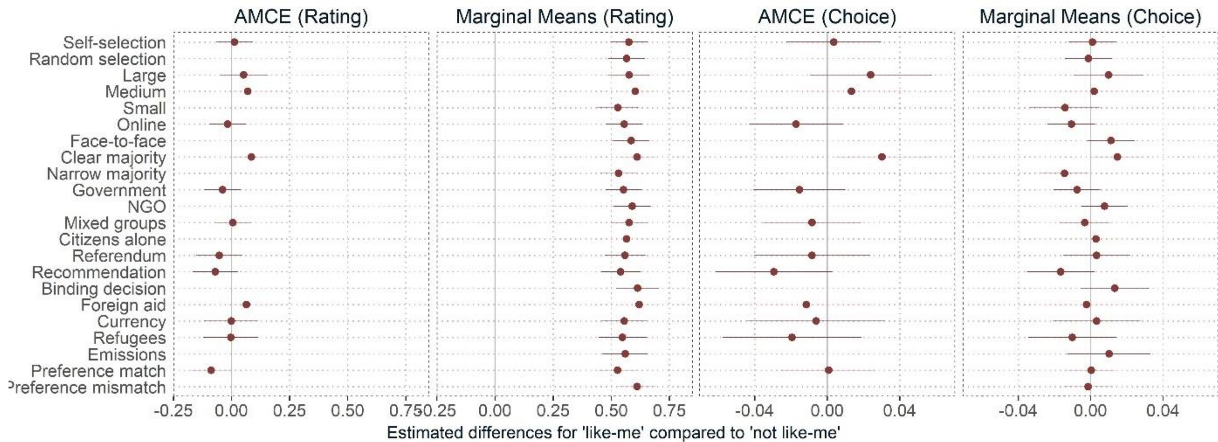
A.Figure 59: Conditional AMCE for trust in DCFs – choice outcome



Note: Heterogeneity in effects of attribute variations. The left panel shows AMCE for respondents with high trust in DCFs (n=12,444). The panel in the middle shows AMCE for respondents with low trust in DCFs (n=12,024). The right panel shows differences in AMCE between high compared to low trust in DCFs.

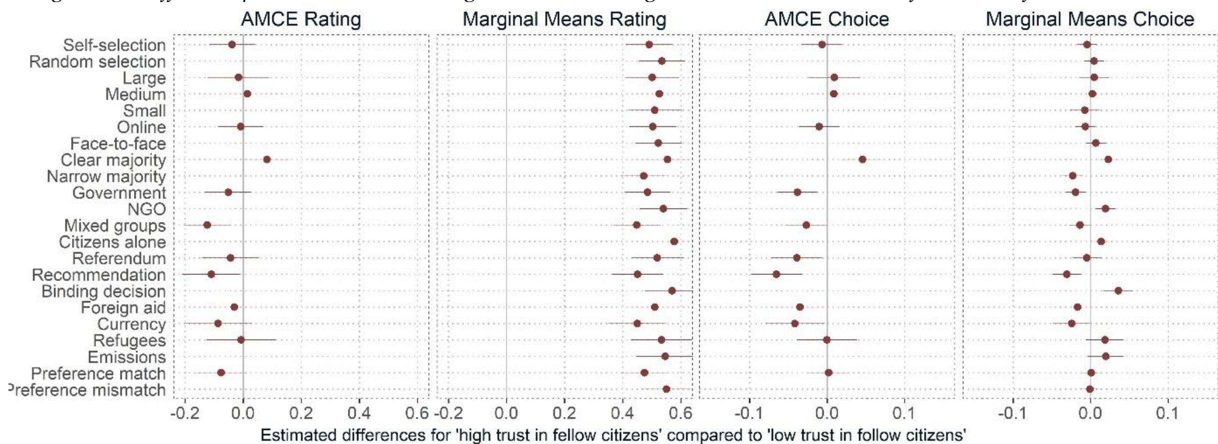
(2) Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means)

A.Figure 60: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for like-me perceptions



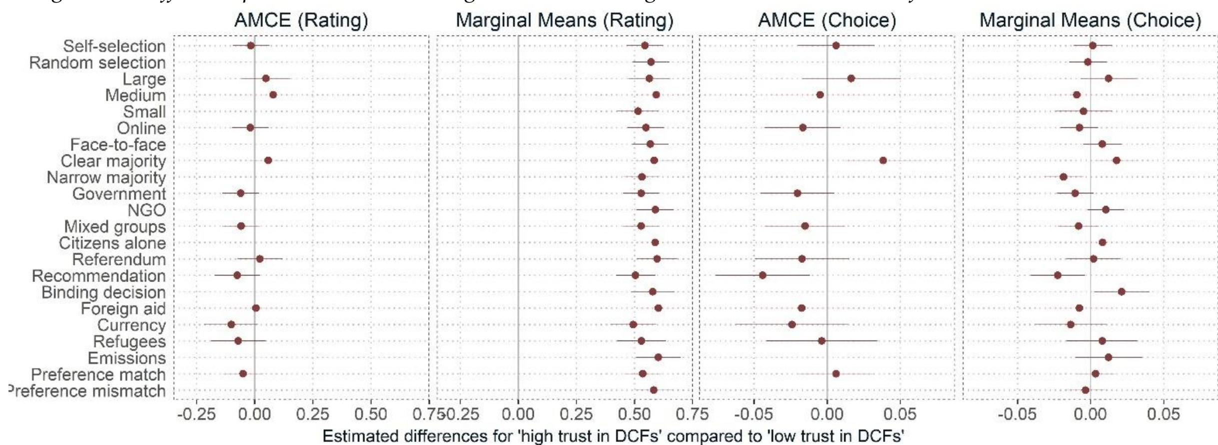
Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low like-me perceptions where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=24,468).

A.Figure 61: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for trust in fellow citizens



Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low trust in fellow citizens where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (*n*=24,468).

A.Figure 62: Difference plots (AMCE and Marginal Means, rating and choice outcome each) for trust in DCFs

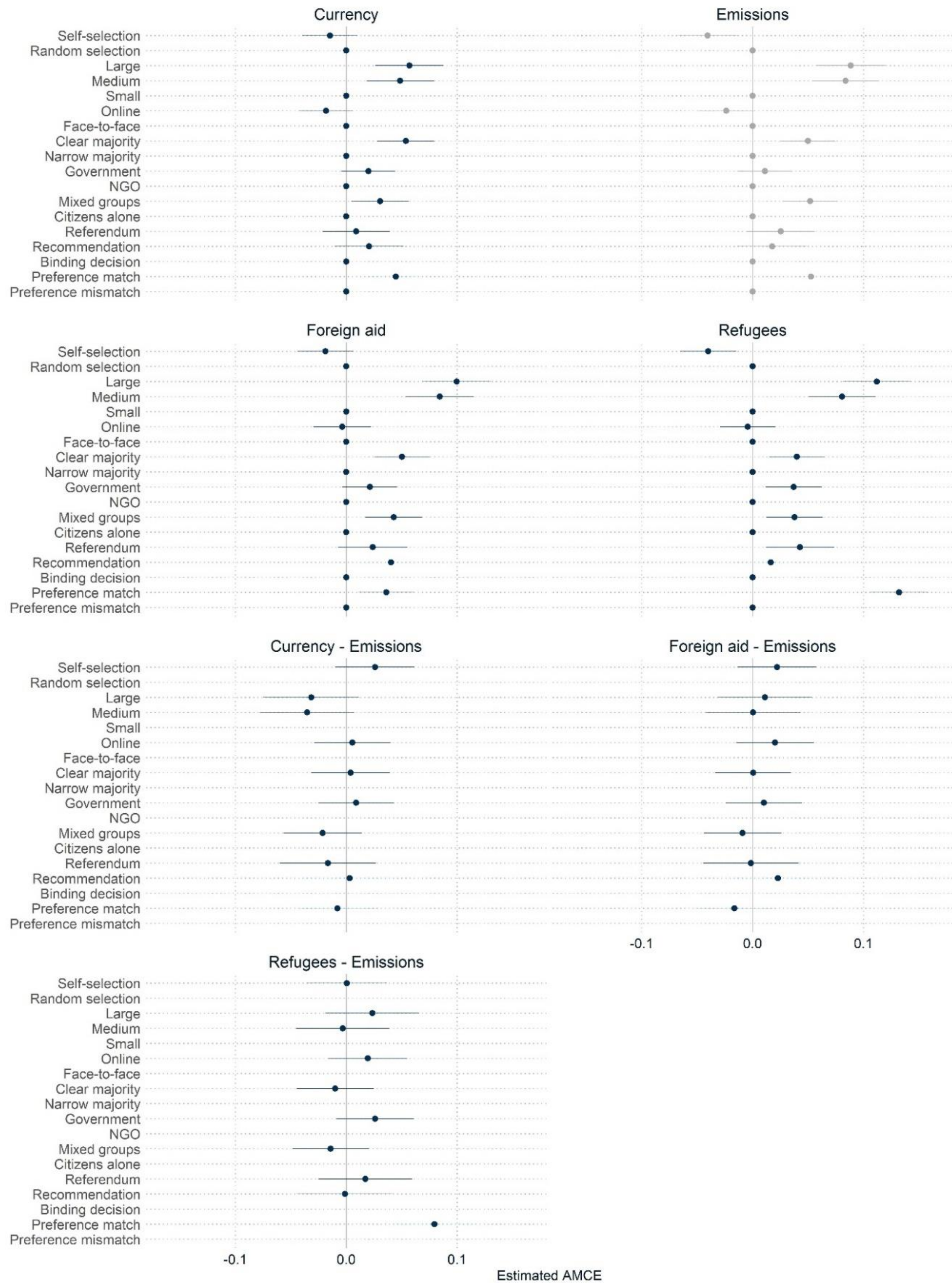


Note: Effects show differences for respondents with high compared to low trust in DCFs where AMCE represent differences in conjoint effect sizes and Marginal Means represent descriptive differences in preferences (n=24,468).

C3: Within interactions

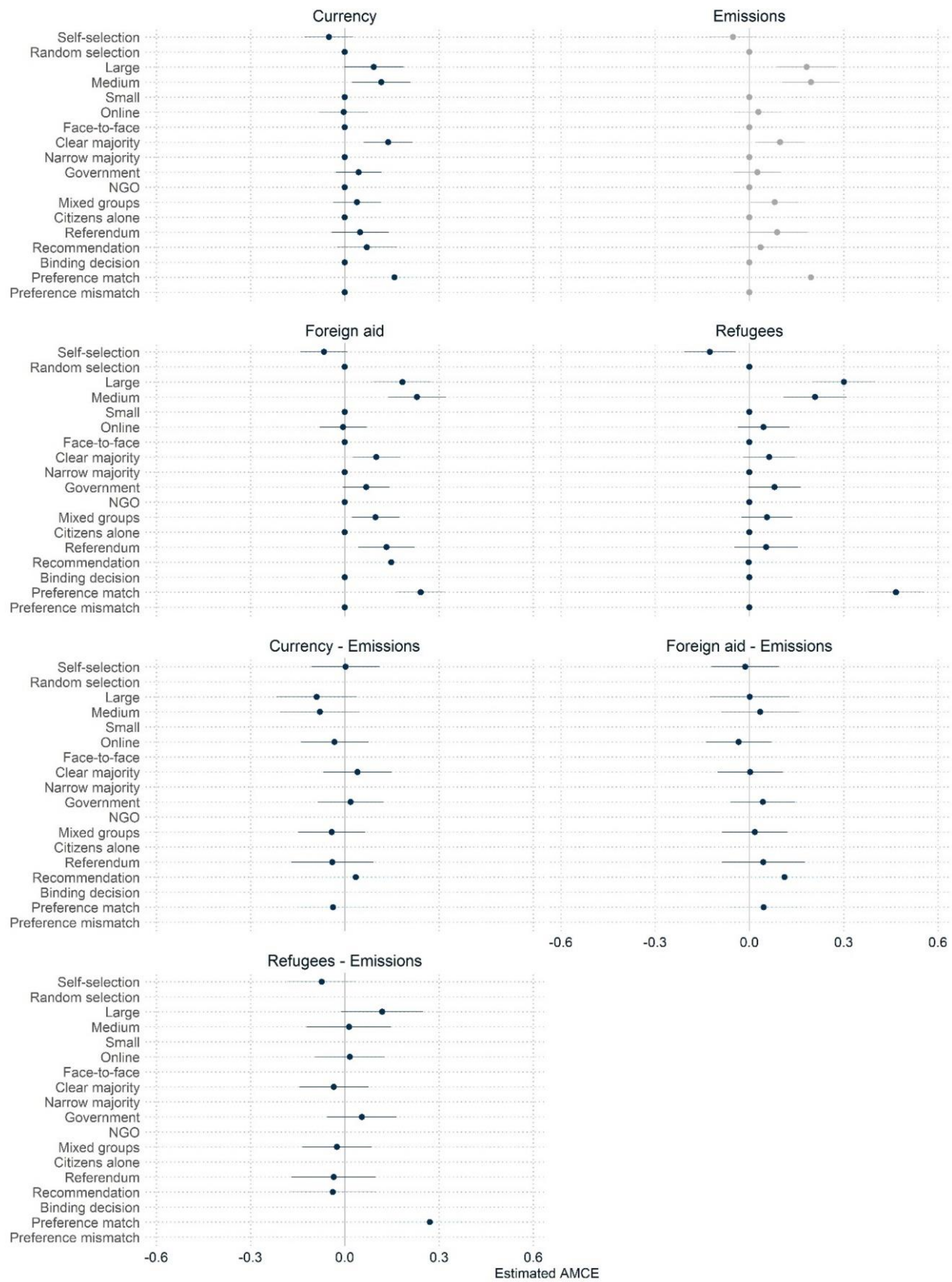
C3.1. Conditional effects for policy issue

A.Figure 63: Differences in effect sizes (ACIEs) – choice outcome



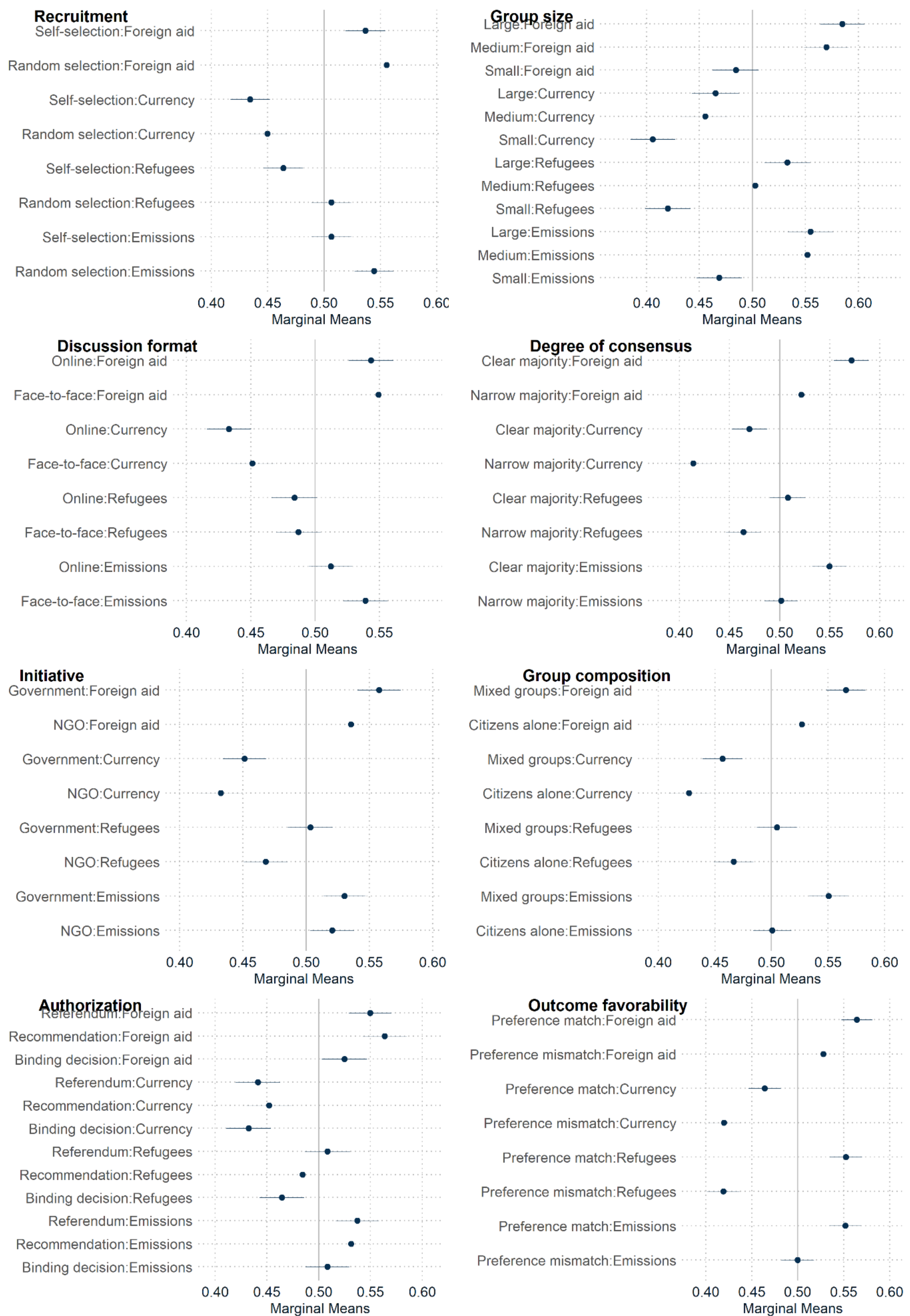
Note: Effects show causal interaction effects. ACIEs report the change in the probability of choosing a DCF of each level of an attribute relative to its reference category contingent on policy issue.

A.Figure 64: Differences in effect sizes (ACIEs) – rating outcome



Note: Effects show causal interaction effects. ACIEs report the change in the rating a DCF for each level of an attribute relative to its reference category contingent on policy issue.

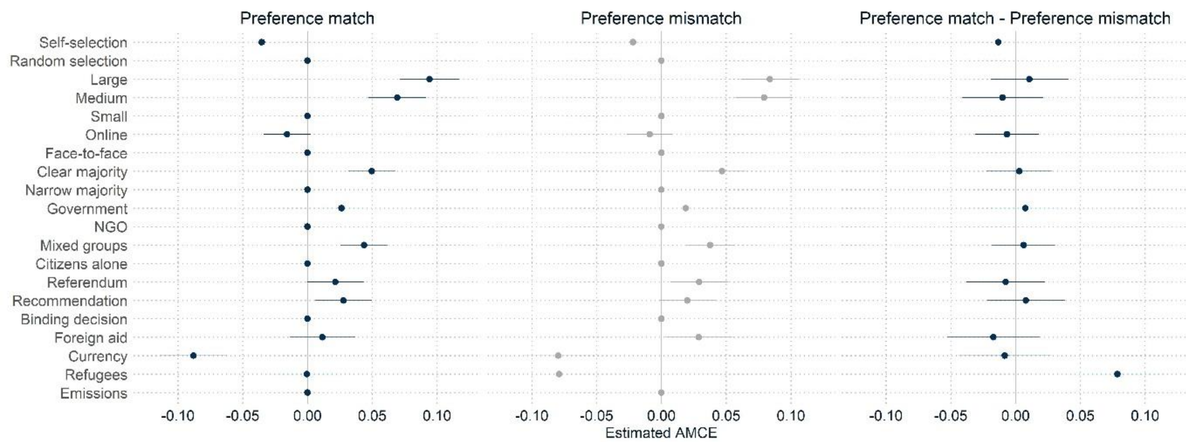
A.Figure 65: Policy issues x various attributes



Note: interaction terms between various attributes of DCFs and policy issues.

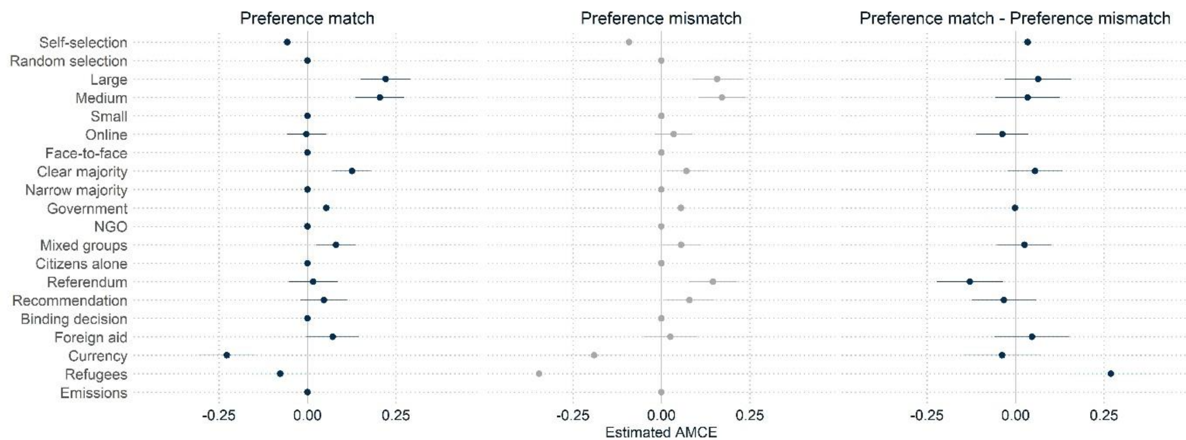
C3.2. Conditional effects for outcome favorability

A.Figure 66: Differences in effect sizes (ACIEs) – choice outcome



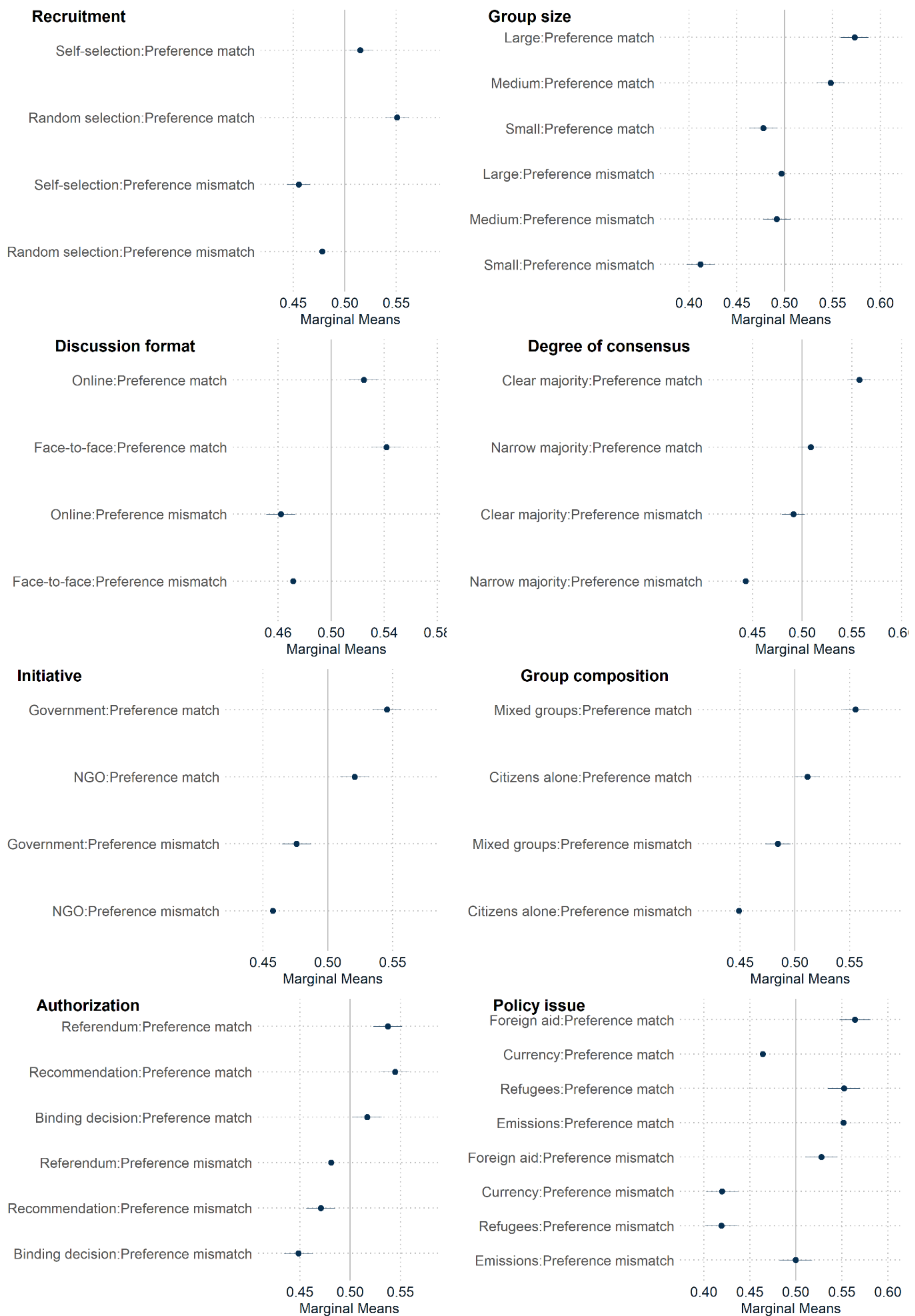
Note: Effects show causal interaction effects. ACIEs report the change in the probability of choosing a DCF of each level of an attribute relative to its reference category contingent on outcome favorability.

A.Figure 67: Differences in effect sizes (ACIEs) – rating outcome



Note: Effects show causal interaction effects. ACIEs report the change in the rating of a DCF for each level of an attribute relative to its reference category contingent on outcome favorability.

A.Figure 68: Outcome favorability x various attributes

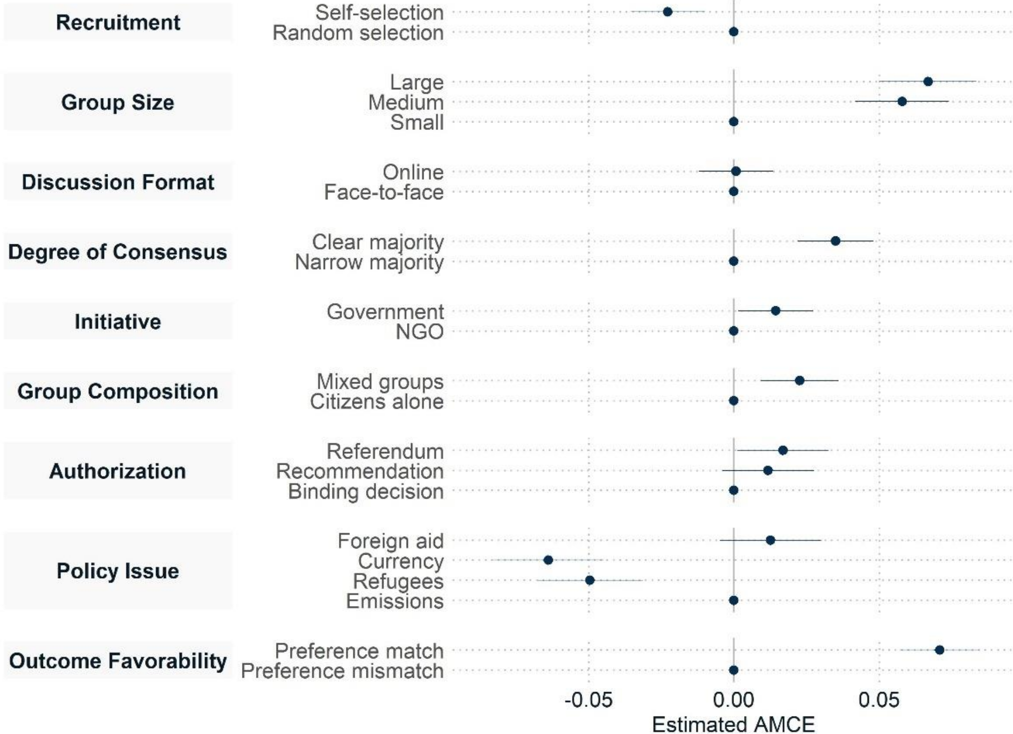


Note: interaction terms between various attributes of DCFs and outcome favorability.

C4: Robustness checks and diagnostics

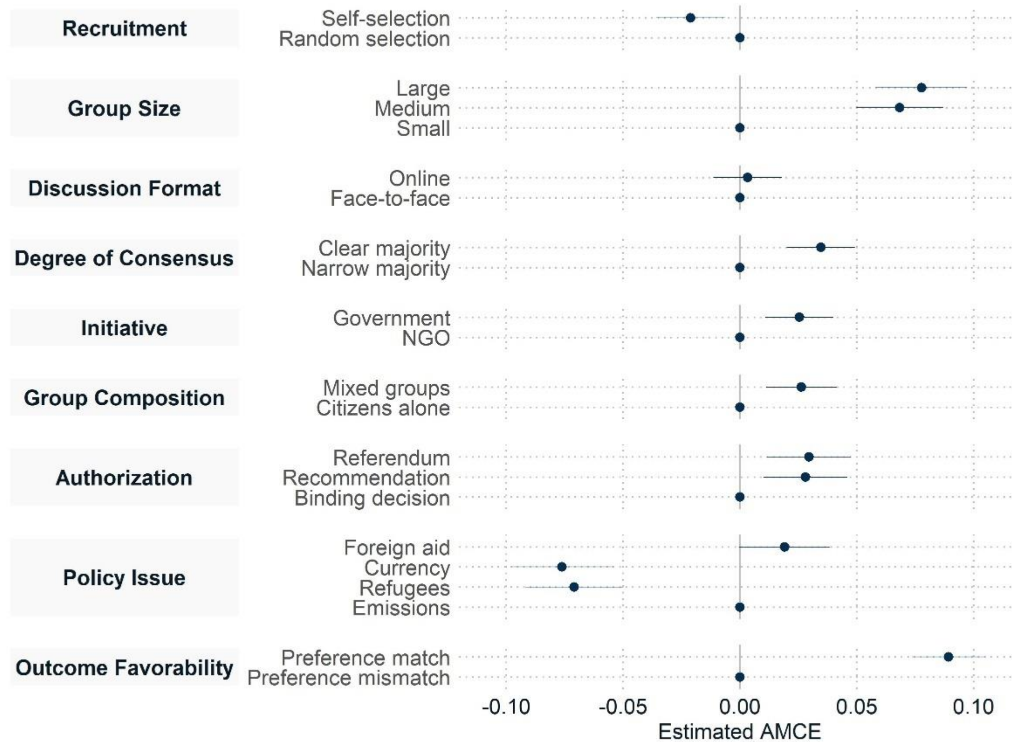
C4.1. Dichotomous rating outcome variables

A.Figure 69: Dichotomous rating variable (>median) AMCE main study



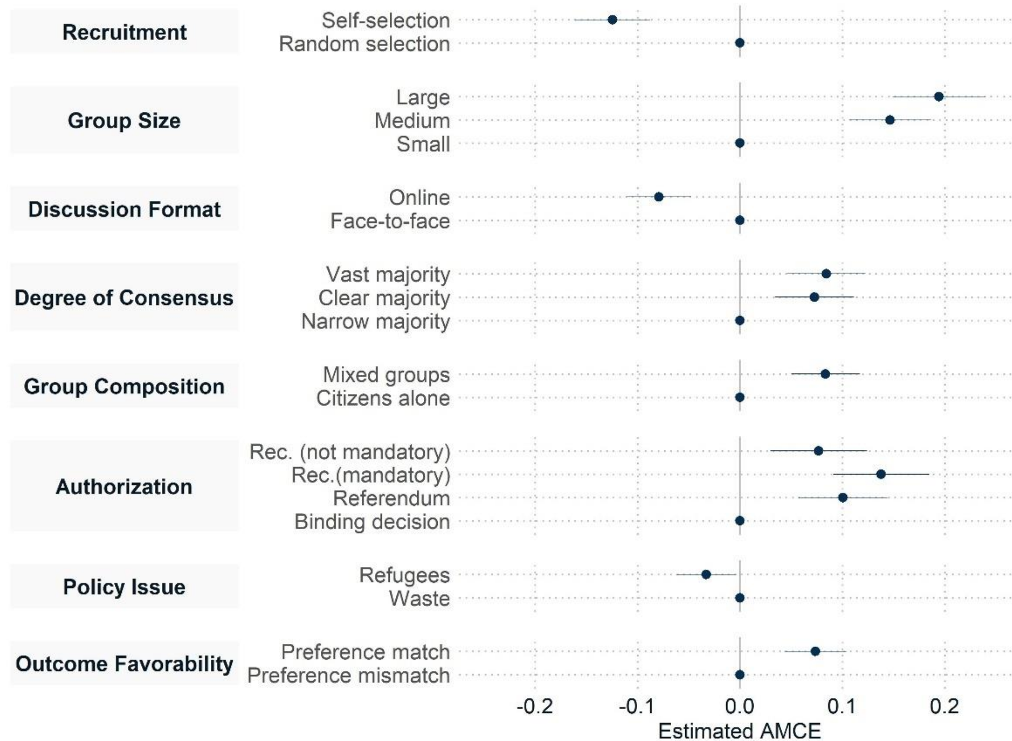
Note: Binary rating variable. Scenarios rated higher than 4 (midpoint of the scale) were coded as "1" and "0" otherwise. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

A.Figure 70: Dichotomous rating variable (without middle category) AMCE main study



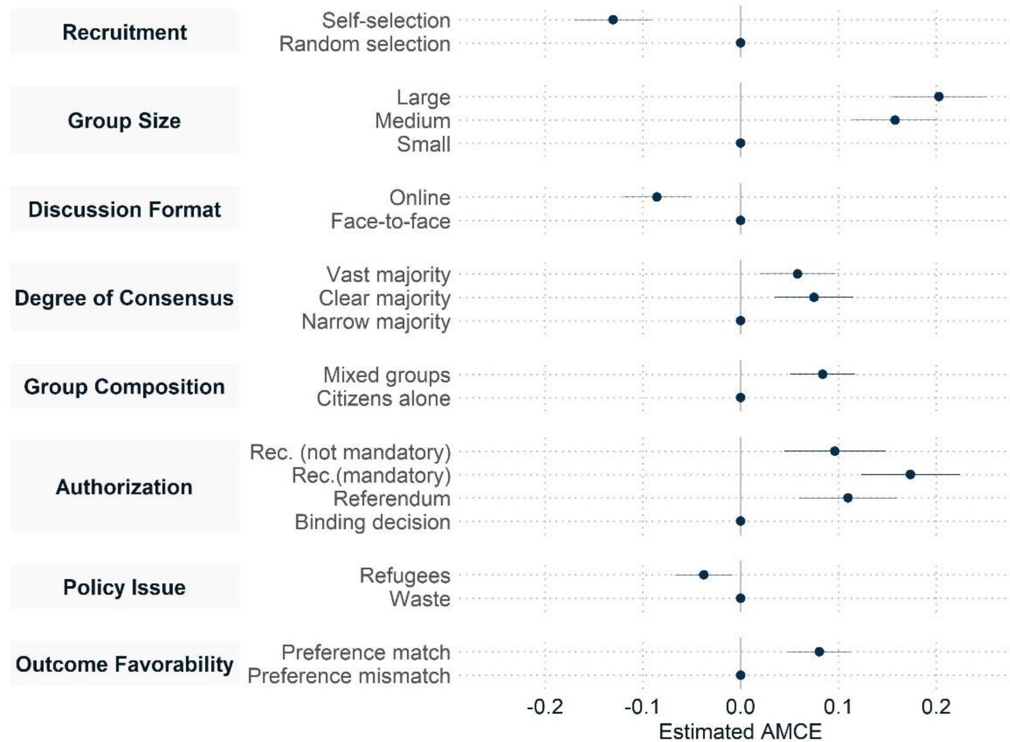
Note: Binary rating variable. Scenarios rated higher than 4 (midpoint of the scale) were coded as "1" and "0" otherwise. Middle category (4) was omitted. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

A.Figure 71: Dichotomous rating variable (>median) AMCE pilot study



Note: Binary rating variable. Scenarios rated higher than 4 (midpoint of the scale) were coded as "1" and "0" otherwise. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

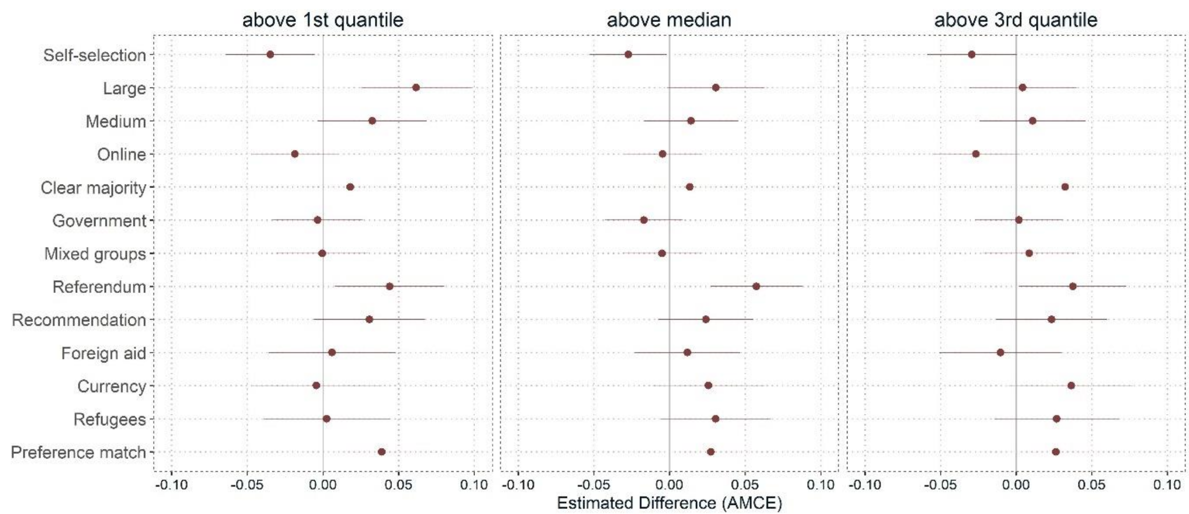
A.Figure 72: Dichotomous rating variable (without middle category) AMCE pilot study



Note: Binary rating variable. Scenarios rated higher than 4 (midpoint of the scale) were coded as "1" and "0" otherwise. Middle category (4) was omitted. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

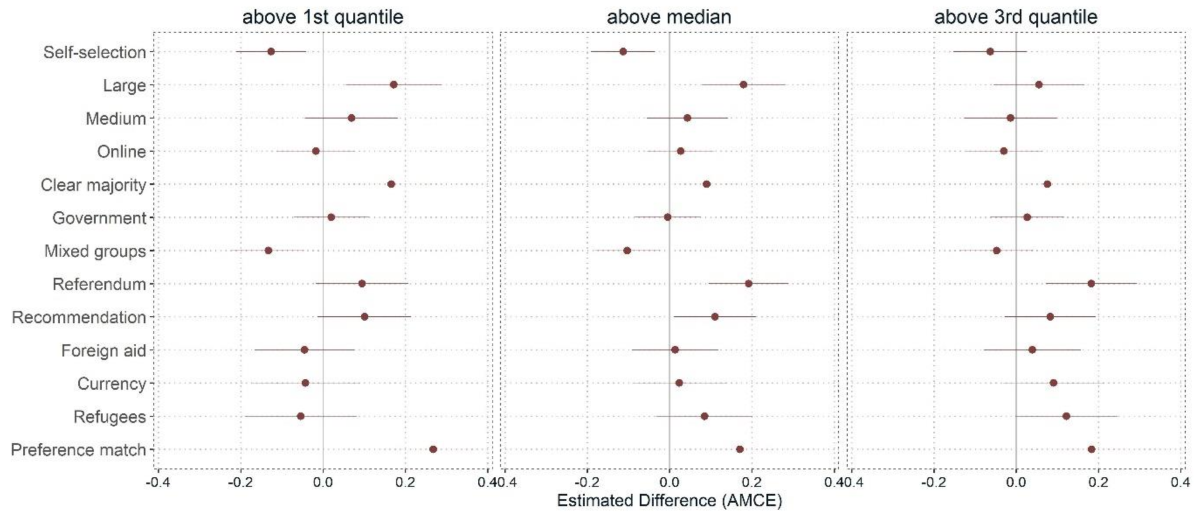
C4.2. Time spent with conjoint tasks

A.Figure 73: Engagement with scenarios AMCE main study – choice outcome



Note: Estimated differences in preferences for respondents who engaged with the scenarios for longer than above the first, second, and third quantile compared to those who engaged less than the first, second, and third quantile.

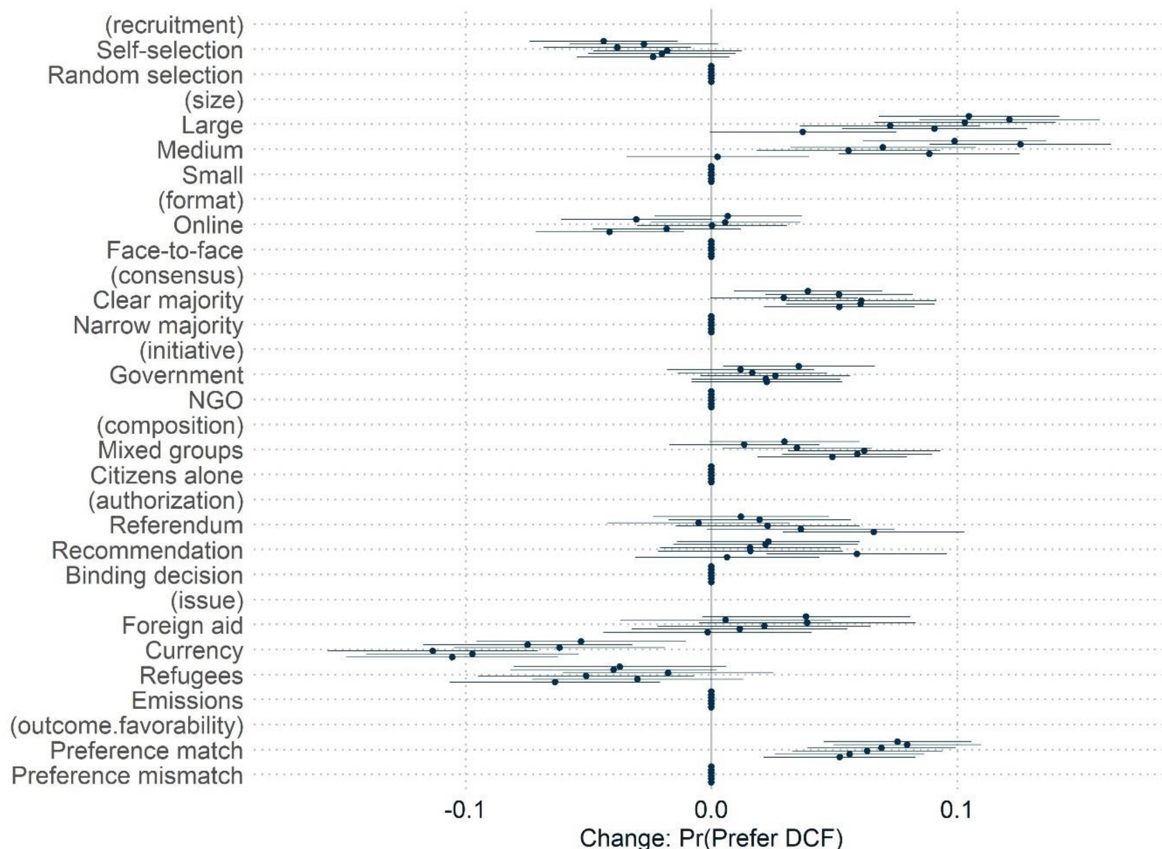
A.Figure 74: Engagement with scenarios AMCE main study – rating outcome



Note: Estimated differences in preferences for respondents who engaged with the scenarios for longer than above the first, second, and third quantile compared to those who engaged less than the first, second, and third quantile.

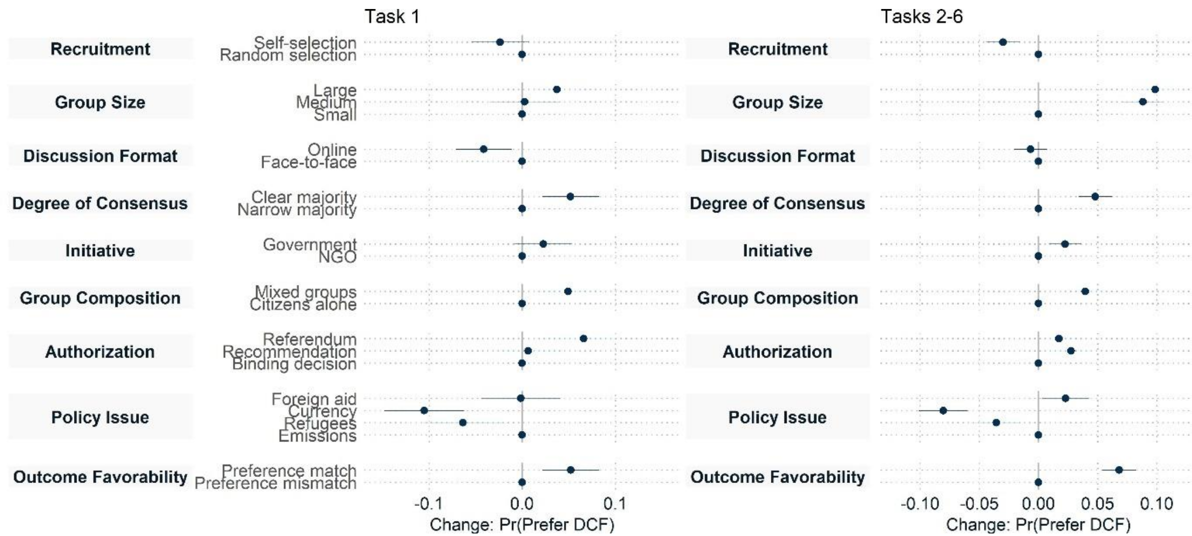
C4.3. Carry over effects

A.Figure 75: Carry over effects AMCE – choice outcome



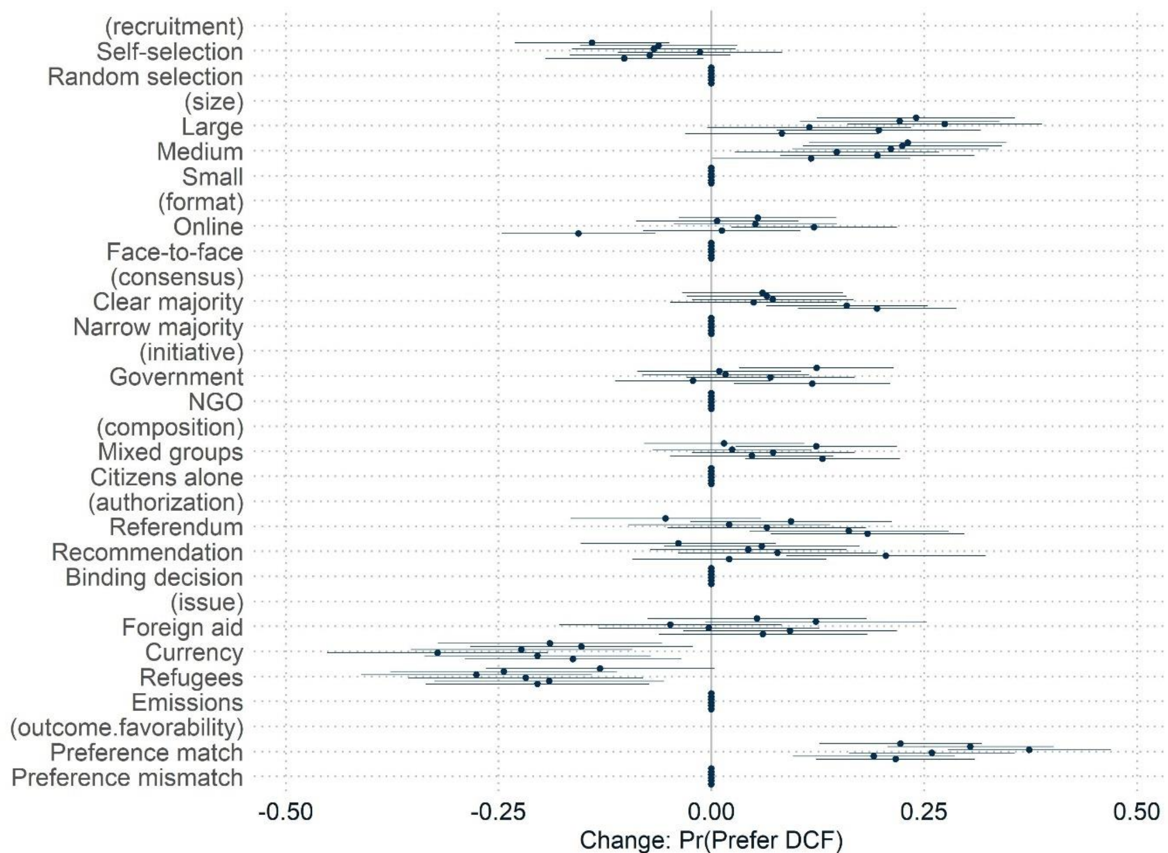
Note: The plots show effects of attributes on the probability of being chosen conditional on the number of the choice task. Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

A.Figure 76: Effects for the first task versus effects for the remaining tasks AMCE – choice outcome



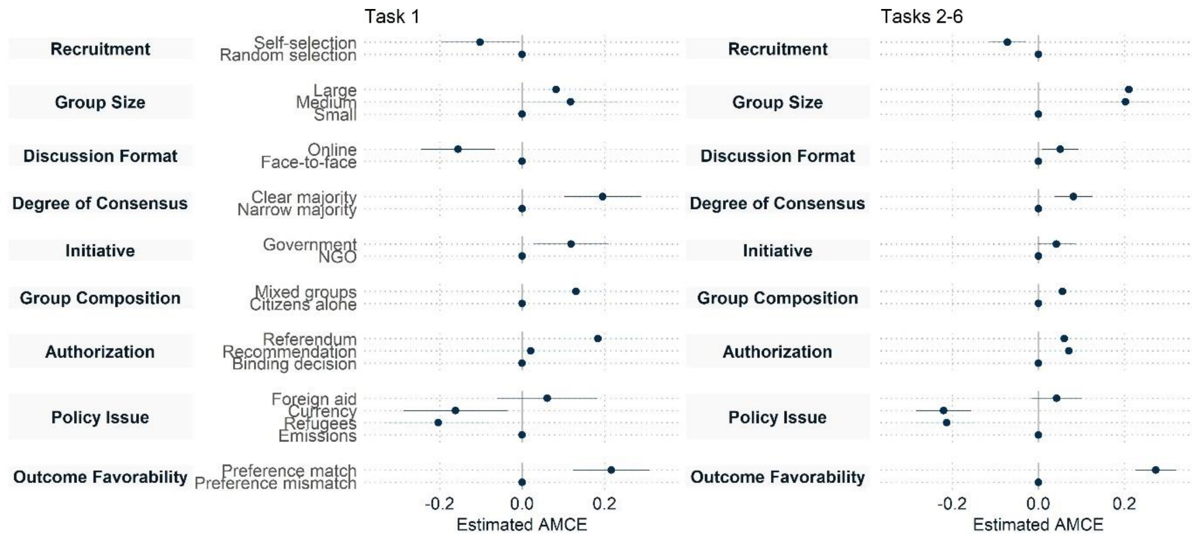
Note: The plots show effects of attributes on the probability of being chosen for the first choice task (left) and the remaining choice tasks (right). Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

A.Figure 77: Carry over effects AMCE – rating outcome



Note: Effects show the change in the rating of a DCF (1 'very unfavorable' – 7 'very favorable') conditional on the number of the choice task. Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

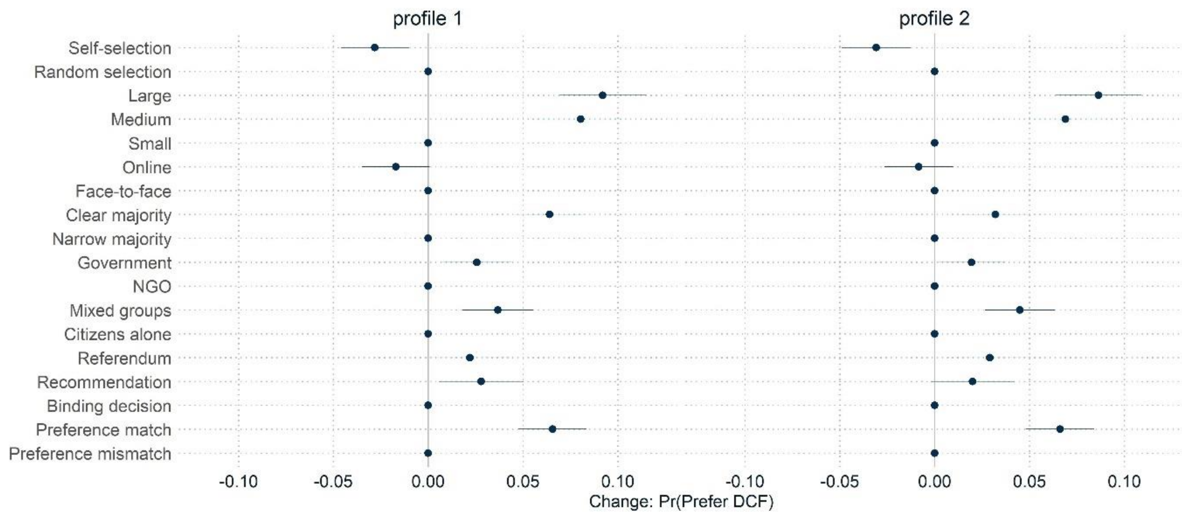
A.Figure 78: Effects for the first task versus effects for the remaining tasks AMCE – rating outcome



Note: Effects show the change in the rating of a DCF (1 'very unfavorable' – 7 'very favorable') for the first choice task (left) and the remaining choice tasks (right). Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

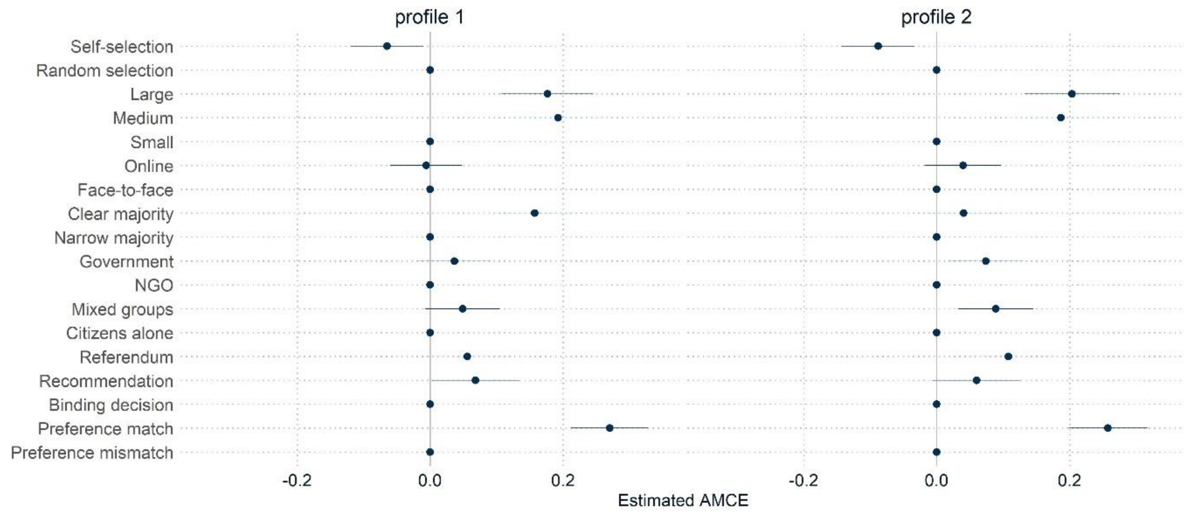
C4.4. Profile order effects

A.Figure 79: Profile order effects AMCE - choice outcome



Note: The plots show effects of attributes on the probability of being chosen conditional on the number of the profile number (left or right profile in a task). Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

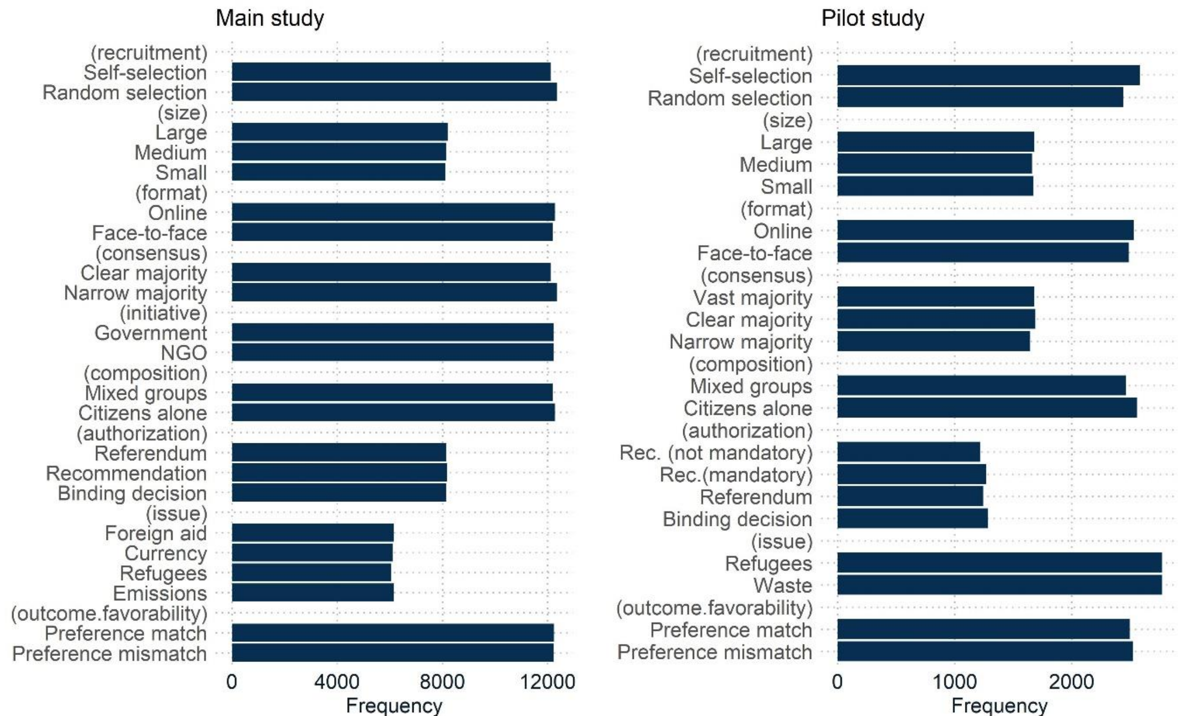
A.Figure 80: Profile order effects AMCE - rating outcome



Note: Effects show the change in the rating of a DCF (1 'very unfavorable' – 7 'very favorable') conditional on the profile number (left or right profile in a task). Estimates are based on regression estimators with clustered standard errors. Horizontal bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The points without bars denote the reference category.

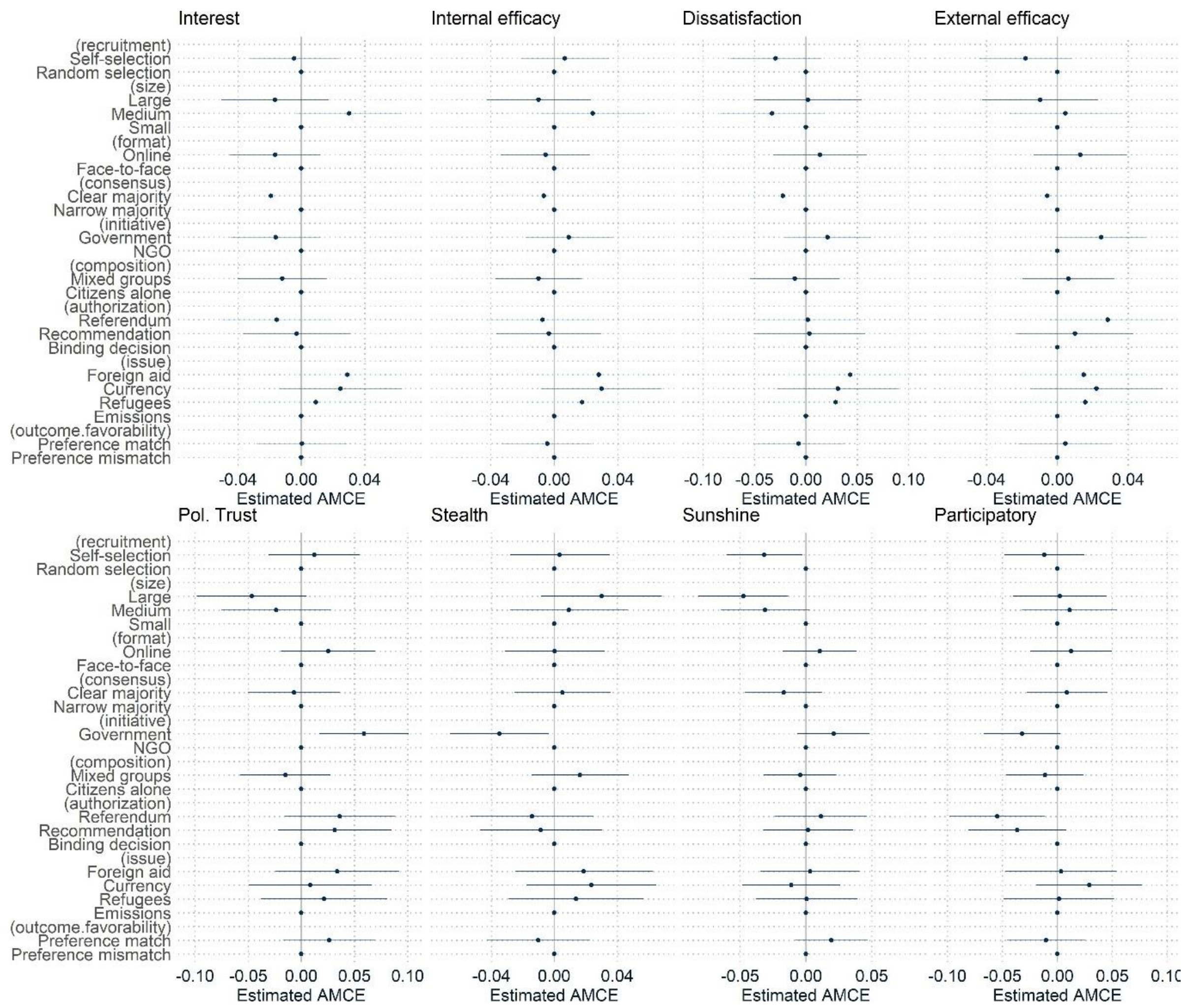
C4.5. Randomization

A.Figure 81: Display frequencies



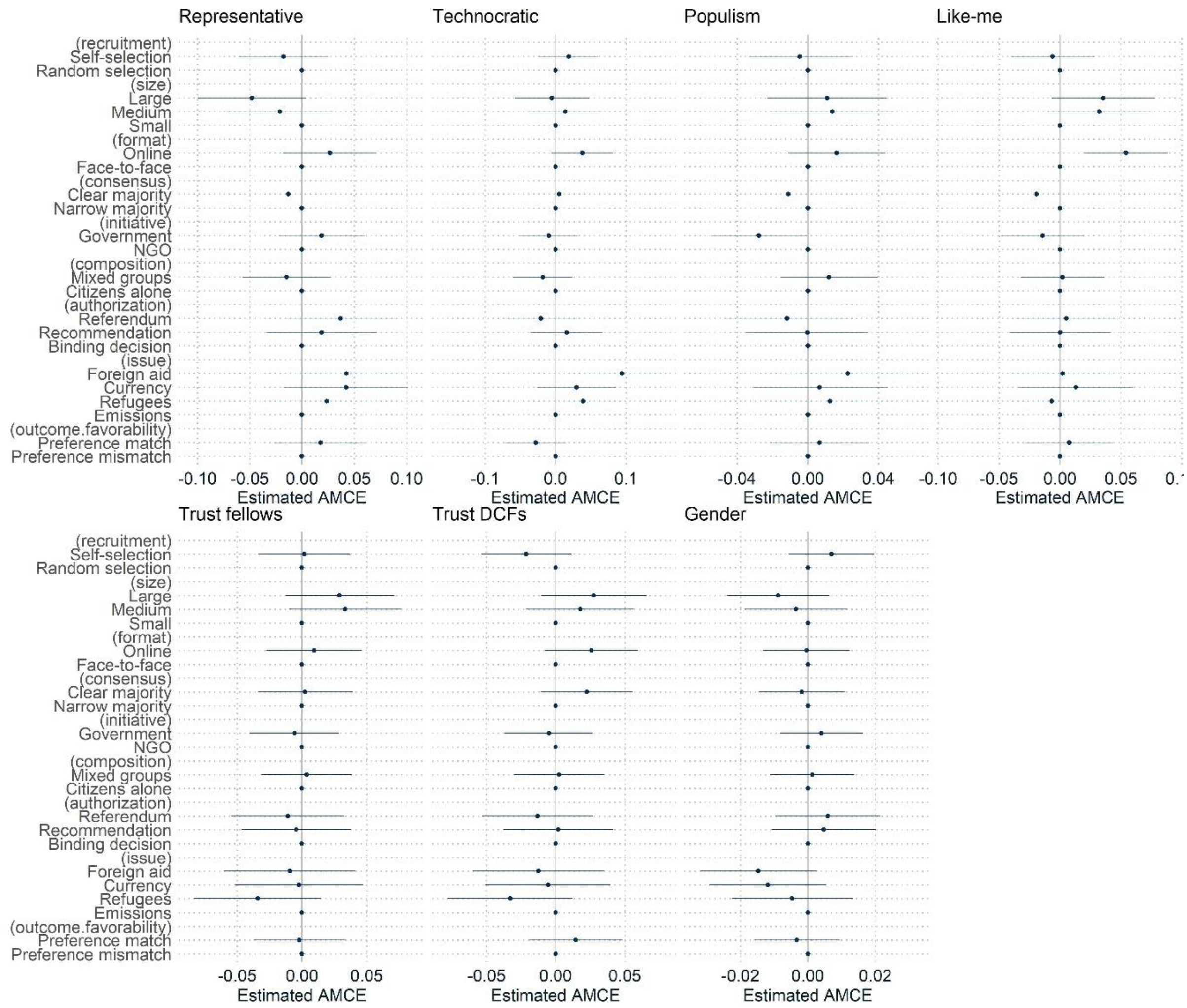
Note: The figure shows display frequencies of attribute values for the main study (left) and the pilot study (right).

A.Figure 82: Balance testing for enlightenment and political satisfaction



Note: The figure compares various covariates across attribute values. There appears to be no imbalance in the majority of cases. The confidence intervals are close to the zero line for most of the attribute values

A.Figure 83: Balance testing for democratic conceptions, populism, social trust, and gender



Note: The figure compares various covariates across attribute values. There appears to be no imbalance in the majority of cases. The confidence intervals are close to the zero line for most of the attribute values.

Appendix D: Information packages

D1: Pilot study

D1.1. Introduction

Translated version.

Political decisions can be made in different ways. One currently much-discussed option is for citizens to be increasingly involved in political decision-making processes in the form of organized dialog formats. In such "citizens' forums", citizens discuss a political issue with each other and make recommendations. In practice, such formats can take different forms. In the following, we present a glossary that summarizes the most important features.

D1.2. Info treatment and glossary

Translated version.

Note, respondents in the information group were presented with the whole text. Respondents in the glossary group were presented with the first part only.

Please read the descriptions carefully and take as much time as you need! You will be rewarded with an extra euro for reading the glossary. You will have the opportunity to access the glossary at any time during the survey.**1. How participants are selected: Recruitment**

There are two basic methods for selecting participants: Random selection and self-recruitment. In random selection, participants are chosen by drawing lots. In self-recruitment, participants decide for themselves whether they want to participate following an open invitation or a public call. The different selection methods can also be combined to achieve a particularly large group of participants with a heterogeneous composition.

While self-recruitment can often lead to a bias of participants in favor of groups with more resources (e.g., people with high education, high income, a lot of time) and affected groups, random selection usually contributes to a plural composition of participants with different interests and opinions. However, random selection may not allow interested citizens to participate, even though they would like to.

2. How the group of participants is composed: Actors

Citizen forums can be designed in such a way that only citizens are involved or that state representatives from politics (e.g. from the municipal council) and administration (e.g. from the affected offices) also actively participate.

The fear when representatives from politics and administration are present is that they could dominate or control the discussions. However, there are also examples where exactly the opposite is true, namely that state representatives participate constructively or even stay out of the discussion altogether and take on the role of passive observers only.

3. How many participants take part: Group size

Citizen forums differ in terms of the number of participants. The group size can be small (e.g. 20), medium (e.g. 100) or large (e.g. 500).

While smaller groups require considerably fewer financial resources for both planning and implementation, the more participants there are, the greater the chance that the most complete possible picture of opinion can be represented. But even in small groups, very different points of view can be represented.

4. How the process takes place: Online vs. offline

There are various ways engage in dialog with each other. In an online discussion, the participants engage in an exchange on the Internet via chats or forums. Discussions can be organized synchronously (i.e., just in time, as in chats) or asynchronously (i.e., time-delayed, as in forums). Offline or face-to-face formats take place at a specific location at a specific time; in this case, the participants sit together at a table.

Online discussions are appealing primarily because of their high flexibility. Participants spend less time (e.g., because they are not tied to a specific location), and online methods are also more cost-effective for organizers because, for example, travel costs are eliminated. In addition, a higher perceived anonymity in online procedures contributes to the fact that participants are more likely to dare to be honest. However, anonymity also leads to more loose contacts, whereas face-to-face discussions are more likely to create a sense of community. Nevertheless, the use of hardware and software depends on the skills and knowledge of the participants. This may mean that certain groups (e.g., the elderly) cannot participate. In

addition, access to technical equipment (e.g. smartphone or computer) is dependent on financial resources, which is why certain groups of people (e.g. people with low incomes) may also be excluded.

5. How decisions are made: Decision-making

Citizen forums differ in terms of the majorities needed to reach a decision within the group. Different outcomes are possible. A distinction can be made between votes with a narrow majority (e.g. slightly more than half of the participants), a clear majority (e.g. two thirds of the participants) and a vast majority (e.g. over three quarters of the participants).

6. How the results are processed further: authorization

The results of the participation process can be used in various ways. Frequently, the participants make a recommendation to elected representatives who determine whether they proceed further with the recommendations or not, or whether the recommendations are put to a referendum. However, results can also be adopted without follow-up, i.e., citizen forums make a binding decision with their results.

Often, recommendations are ineffective, meaning they are not adopted by political representatives or are modified to such an extent that participants do not find themselves reflected in the outcome. This can lead to frustration among those involved. On the other hand, binding decisions can mean that non-participating citizens have to live with decisions that they would not have made themselves. Recommendations followed by a vote can increase the acceptance of decisions, but participation in direct democratic voting is also very selective and often low.

D2: Main study

D2.1. Introduction

Translated version.

We are now concerned with a special kind of political decision-making: Citizens' Forums. A citizens' forum is a group of selected lay citizens (similar to a jury) in which participants

discuss an issue and make a joint recommendation to policymakers. In principle, citizens' forums can also make binding policy decisions.

D2.2. Video and glossary

Translated versions.

Video voice over

This is a citizens' forum. What do citizens’ forums do? They make recommendations to policymakers or sometimes decisions themselves. But not every citizens' forum is the same. There are features that make each one different – such as the size, the goal, and who convenes it. And then there's recruitment – the way in which those participating in a citizens' forum are selected. One way of selecting participants is by drawing lots for invitations. Another option is self-recruitment – i.e., participation by accepting an opportunity open to everyone. Another element of a citizens' forum that varies is how it is composed. It can be made up exclusively of citizens or comprise a mix of citizens, administrators, and politicians. And last but not least: authorization. Authorization means how binding the outcome of a citizens' forum is: a recommendation to political actors is more on the advisory side. The recommendation can also be decided upon via a subsequent referendum in which all citizens are free to participate. Another option is for the forum to make a binding decision. This would mean directly integrating the citizens' forum into legislation. Implementing the outcome would be mandatory.

Glossary

1. Topic: What measure is at stake?

Citizen forums take place for very different topics. Examples include climate change, refugee policy, currency systems or development cooperation.

2. Initiative: Who convenes the citizen forum?

A citizen forum can be initiated in several ways. It can either convened from a civil society initiative, for example through NGOs such as Greenpeace. Another possibility is that the citizen forum is initiated directly by the government.

3. Recruitment: How are the participants selected?

Random selection: Individuals are selected by lot. Participants are drawn to meet certain demographic criteria (e.g., to ensure gender balance). Self-recruitment: all individuals, e.g. in a municipality, receive an open invitation. Anyone who wants can participate. Participation is usually encouraged by advertisement through various channels (e.g., mail, social media, and posters).

4. Group size: How many citizens do participate?

Citizen forums vary in the number of participants. In practice, group sizes vary from 10 to several hundred participants, depending on the format.

5. Group composition: How is the group of participants composed?

Citizens alone: The group of participants is composed solely of citizens. Mixed groups: In addition to citizens, other stakeholders participate in the discussions, such as politicians, administrative staff, or stakeholders.

6. Output: What is the result of the citizen forum?

In simple terms, a citizen forum can come out either in favour or against the measures discussed on an issue.

7. Degree of consensus: By which majority did the participants decide?

Finally, the citizen forum has to reach a conclusion. This can be either quite clearly for or against a measure (for example, if almost all participants agree) or very close (for example, if only just over half of the participants agree).

8. Dialogue format: How do participants discuss?

Face-to-Face: The citizen forum takes place at a specific location (e.g., city hall) at a specific time. In this case, participants sit together at a table. Online: The citizen forum takes place virtually on the Internet, for example synchronously in interactive chats or asynchronously in forums.

9. Authorization: How decisive is the result?

Recommendation: the output of the citizen forum is a non-binding recommendation to elected political representatives. Recommendation followed by referendum: The output of the citizen

forum is a recommendation that is subsequently decided in a direct democratic vote (e.g., referendum). Binding decision: The result of the citizen forum is binding, i.e. must be implemented politically without a final decision by elected politicians.