



Public Participation Goals and Citizens'
Willingness to Participate in Decision-Making
about Renewable Energy Policies

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Abstract

Public participation in decision-making could help to alleviate the resistance of citizens against renewable energy projects, which are needed to mitigate climate change. However, the willingness to participate is generally low (Hoti et al., 2021). This study was the first to empirically test and compare the effects of three goal descriptions of public participation as described by Fiorino (1990) on the willingness to participate. Among $N = 168$ German participants, neither of the three goal descriptions (compared to no goal description) led to different levels of willingness to participate in the decision-making on a (fictive) national policy on renewable energy (macro-level). Further, neither of the three goals predicted perceived procedural fairness and perceived usefulness compared to no goal description and thus these variables did not mediate the relationship between goal description and willingness to participate. When comparing the three goals directly, there was no significant difference in willingness to participate, perceived procedural fairness or perceived usefulness. However, perceived usefulness significantly predicted willingness to participate. One limitation was that at the time of data collection (April 2022), a gas shortage was expected due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and thus energy in general and the urgent need for more renewable energy was a highly discussed topic in Germany. Recommendations for future research include comparing the effects of different levels of public participation (micro vs. macro-level), controlling for pre-existing beliefs about public participation, testing what factors increase perceived usefulness, and integrating the aspect of decision-making power into the public participation goals.

Keywords: public participation, willingness to participate, perceived procedural fairness, perceived usefulness, macro-level participation, renewable energy

Public Participation Goals and Citizens' Willingness to Participate in Decision-Making about Renewable Energy Policies

To mitigate climate change, a quick shift toward renewable energy is necessary, as fossil energy has a large environmental impact (IPCC, 2022; Owusu & Asumadu-Sarkodie, 2016). However, renewable energy policies and projects often face strong public resistance, which can lead to delays or total stops of implementation (Papazu, 2017; Shaw et al., 2015; Wüstenhagen et al., 2007). Actively engaging citizens in the decision-making process, called public participation, may alleviate strong resistance as it has been shown to increase the acceptability of energy projects (Liu et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the general willingness to engage in public participation is low (Hoti et al., 2021). Despite this, there are few studies researching which factors are connected to a higher willingness to participate and most existing studies are non-experimental (e.g. Hoti et al., 2021; Lee & Kim, 2018; Wijnhoven et al., 2015). Therefore, testing what increases citizens' willingness to participate is valuable information for practitioners and could help to realize the widely argued benefits of public participation. The present study aimed to test the extent to which providing information on different goals of public participation influences people's willingness to participate in decision-making about renewable energy policies and whether this relationship is mediated by the perceived procedural fairness of the decision-making process and the perceived usefulness of public participation. As there is only one empirical study by Bidwell and Schweizer (2021) using the participation goal framework I utilized, this research was exploratory.

Public Participation

In the current study, public participation was defined as citizens taking part in and influencing the decision-making process of projects designed by responsible agents (e.g. the government; Liu et al., 2021). This definition differentiates it from the common practice of

simply investing in a renewable project, i.e. financial participation (Yildiz, 2014), as well as from campaigns organized by the public itself (e.g. Fridays for Future). In the present study, I concentrated further on a form of public participation that has only recently come into focus: upstream macro-level participation.

Simply informing the public after major decisions are already made, thus preventing any opportunity for their input to be incorporated into the process (sometimes called ‘fake participation’) can lead to public resistance (Gross, 2007; Rand & Hoen, 2017). Therefore, consulting the public on issues before any major decisions are made i.e. upstream participation could prevent strong controversies from arising (Rogers-Hayden & Pidgeon, 2007). A second differentiation is whether public participation takes place on a more micro- or macro-level. Micro-level public participation is often used for local projects in the direct environment (e.g. nearby windfarm), while macro-level public participation concerns visions or policies on a national or international level (e.g. national or EU legislation; Perlaviciute & Squintani, 2020). The benefit of public participation on the macro-level is its bigger impact as decisions made on a macro-level often influence and constrict future micro-level projects (Perlaviciute & Squintani, 2020). However, citizens are significantly less interested to participate in macro-level public participation than in micro-level public participation (Perlaviciute & Squintani, 2020). Thus, research is necessary to test which factors influence the willingness to participate in macro-level decision-making. This need is compounded by the fact that many of the (already few) studies researching willingness to participate focus on lower-level participation (e.g. de Jong et al., 2019; Lee & Kim, 2018). The current study aimed to gain insight into this research gap by focusing on what may lead to more willingness to engage in upstream macro-level public participation, by inviting participants to take part in developing and deciding on a national policy about renewable energies.

Fiorino’s Three Goals of Public Participation

Public participation can fulfil different aims. Fiorino (1990) created a framework differentiating three distinct rationales for the use of public participation in decision-making (instrumental, substantive, and normative). These rationales can also be seen as the goals practitioners have when using public participation. The instrumental and substantive goal are more focused on the outcome of the decision-making process (Bidwell & Schweizer, 2021). In the instrumental goal, public participation is used to increase public acceptability of the project, to satisfy legal requirements, and thus make the decision-making process and implementation more efficient in terms of money and time (Bidwell & Schweizer, 2021; Fiorino 1990). Public participation with a substantive goal is interested in citizens' values, concerns, ideas, and knowledge to take into consideration for the decision, thereby increasing the quality of decisions (Bidwell & Schweizer, 2021; Fiorino 1990). Lastly, the normative goal focuses more on the qualities of the process. It is based on the democratic ideal that the public should be directly involved and have some degree of decision-making power in decisions that affect them (Fiorino, 1990).

Public Participation Goals and Willingness to Participate

Not only practitioners but also citizens categorize the various rationales public participation can have into the three overarching goals described by Fiorino (Bidwell & Schweizer, 2021). Bidwell and Schweizer (2021) compiled numerous public participation goal statements taken from different frameworks. They then let participants rate how much these statements should be a goal for public participation. A factor analysis identified three goals¹ that, although named differently, largely resembled the three goals described by Fiorino (1990) which Bidwell and Schweizer noted themselves, too. Further, the mean support for all three goal types was positive, i.e. above the neutral midpoint of their scale.

¹ Bidwell and Schweizer (2021) also included undesirable "goals" of fake participation, which grouped into a separate fourth factor in their factor analysis which they named 'coercive goals'.

Thus, I expected that public participation described with one of the three goals will have a positive influence on citizens' willingness to participate (**H1a**). Theoretically, all three goals can coexist in one public participation procedure, but generally, only one of the goals is used when designing or implementing a public participation procedure (Bidwell & Schweizer, 2021). Hence, given that the substantive goal had the highest level of support, I hypothesized that public participation with a substantive goal will lead to higher levels of willingness to participate compared to the instrumental and normative goal (**H1b**). Nonetheless, it is necessary to test whether the higher support for substantive goals also applies to a higher willingness to participate in a decision-making process with this goal, as supporting something does not necessarily translate to being willing to do it oneself. This is compounded by the acute lack of empirical studies on Fiorino's goal framework and thus the need for more research. In the following, I will explain why I hypothesized that the relationship between the public participation goals and willingness to participate could be mediated by the *perceived procedural fairness* and *perceived usefulness of public participation*.

Perceived Procedural Fairness

Perceived procedural fairness is the extent to which the decision-making is seen as "fair, open, transparent and representing different interests" (Liu et al., 2020, p. 2). Public participation increases perceived procedural fairness compared to no public participation (Liu et al., 2020). In turn, Neblo et al. (2010) found that more people were willing to take part in public participation when there were less rather than more "self-serving officials and powerful special interests" (p. 570). This indicates that higher procedural fairness is related to a higher willingness to engage in public participation. Thus, I expected that procedural fairness mediates the relationship between the three public participation goals and willingness to participate (**H2a**). Furthermore, I argued that the substantive and normative goal have the strongest effect on procedural fairness.

A central aspect of perceived procedural fairness is incorporating public opinion into the decision (Liu et al., 2020) which is emphasized in the substantive and normative goal, so they likely increase perceived procedural fairness. Meanwhile, in participation with an instrumental goal public participation is used as a tool to increase acceptability and make the decision-making process more efficient while citizens' input is not overly relevant. Thus, public participation with an instrumental goal may be seen as mostly benefitting the decision-makers and therefore as less fair. That the benefit is skewed toward the decision-makers could also explain the finding that most practitioners prefer to use the instrumental goal for public participation (Wesselink et al., 2011). Therefore, I hypothesized that public participation with a substantive or normative goal is perceived to have higher procedural fairness compared to an instrumental goal (**H2b**).

Perceived Usefulness of Public Participation

The perceived usefulness of public participation is the extent to which one thinks public participation contributes to the quality of the final decision (de Jong et al., 2019). This concept must be differentiated from the trust in perceived intentions, i.e. whether one thinks the institution is committed to listening and potentially implementing citizens' input. The concept of trust will not be included in this study as de Jong et al. (2019) have found that it had no significant correlation with willingness to participate in offline public participation. The perceived usefulness of public participation has been found to be positively correlated with the willingness to participate in public participation for projects on a provincial level (de Jong et al., 2019). Wijnhoven et al. (2015) also found that participants who were willing to engage in public participation perceived a significantly higher ability of governmental citizen projects to change the environment than participants unwilling to take part. Thus, the perceived usefulness of public participation appears to be a relevant factor when deciding whether to engage in public participation. Taken together, I hypothesized that perceived

usefulness mediates the relationship between the three public participation goals and willingness to participate (**H3a**). Additionally, I argued that the instrumental and substantive goal have a stronger effect on perceived usefulness.

Given that both the instrumental and substantive goal focus on the outcome of the public participation procedure, although the emphasis of the former lies in efficiency and acceptability, while the latter focuses on quality, they will likely increase the perceived usefulness of public participation. In contrast, the normative goal emphasizes citizens' influence on the decision-making process. However, Liu et al. (2021) found that laypeople are judged to have less expertise when deciding about renewable energy projects and decisions made only by citizens led to lower public acceptability. Thus, I hypothesized that the instrumental and substantive goals lead to higher perceived usefulness of public participation compared to the normative goal (**H3b**).

The Present Study

The present study tested whether the three different public participation goals influence the willingness to take part in upstream macro-level public participation on renewable energy policies differently. All in all, I proposed three main hypotheses (see Figure 1, Appendix A). First, based on Bidwell and Schweizer's (2021) study on the level of support for the three different public participation goals, I expected that:

H1a. All three goals have a positive influence on willingness to participate.

Further, given that the substantive goal received the highest level of support I predicted that:

H1b. Compared to the normative and instrumental goal, the substantive goal relates most strongly to the willingness to participate.

Second, public participation has been linked to increased perceived procedural fairness (Liu et al., 2020) and higher perceived procedural fairness has been linked to a higher willingness to engage in public participation (Neblo et al., 2010). Thus,

H2a. Perceived procedural fairness mediates the relationship between the three public participation goals and willingness to participate.

Further, I theorized that as the normative and substantive goal emphasize the incorporation of citizens' ideas, while the instrumental goal does not, that

H2b. The substantive and normative participation goal will lead to higher levels of perceived procedural fairness than the instrumental goal.

Lastly, previous studies found that people are more likely to be willing to participate when they view public participation's contribution to the final decision as more useful (de Jong et al., 2019; Wijnhoven et al., 2015). Thus,

H3a. The perceived usefulness of public participation mediates the relationship between the three public participation goals and willingness to participate.

As the substantive and instrumental goal both stress the contribution of public participation to the outcome, I further hypothesized that

H3b. The substantive and instrumental participation goal will lead to higher levels of perceived usefulness of public participation compared to the normative goal.

Altogether, the argumentation for the latter two main hypotheses supports the expectation that the substantive goal leads to the highest level of willingness to participate, as based on the goal's description people will perceive public participation with a substantive goal to be both more useful and procedurally fair.

Expected Gratification and Perceived Decision-making Power

In addition, two factors were explored as they could be related to willingness to participate (de Jong et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020). Expected gratification expresses how much one thinks engaging in public participation will be enjoyable or satisfying. This concept has been found to positively predict willingness to participate (de Jong et al., 2019). Perceived decision-making power is the amount of influence citizens perceive to have in a public

participation procedure. It has been shown to influence public acceptance of renewable energy projects (Liu et al., 2020) and might thus also influence willingness to participate. To ensure the effects found were only due to the proposed independent variable and mediators, these variables were included in the proposed theoretical model as control variables.

Method

Participants

213 adult participants (≥ 18 years) living in Germany were recruited via the platform Prolific. All participants received compensation of 0.88 Euros, based on an hourly wage of 7.50 Euros, assuming the study would take seven minutes to complete. The actual completion time was $M = 6.1$ minutes ($SD = 3.99$). Of the recruited participants, 17 participants were excluded due to not completing the study, 20 participants due to failing the manipulation check, and one participant due to failing the attention check. Another nine participants were excluded as outliers, of which the exclusion criteria and procedure can be found in the Results Section. All in all, this left 168 participants who were not evenly distributed across the groups (control: $n = 47$; instrumental goal: $n = 33$; substantive goal: $n = 43$; normative goal: $n = 45$). The number of participants did not reach the required amount of 189 participants determined by an a-priori power analysis in G*Power (Version 3.1.9.6) for a linear multiple regression with five predictors ($f = .07$; power = .8). Most participants were German (91.1%). The education level of participants was considerably higher than the national average (to compare with the German population, see Destatis, 2020). For an overview of participants' characteristics across groups, see Table 1 (Appendix B). There were no significant differences between the groups (see Table 1, Appendix B).

Design and Procedure

The German questionnaire was translated from English to German by the author (a native German speaker) with DeepL, as well as back-translated and reviewed by one native

German speaker respectively. Further small changes were made based on feedback from the pilot study ($N = 25$). Through Prolific, participants were guided to the survey in Qualtrics. Following their informed consent, they were randomly assigned to one of the four groups. The control group read only the cover story, while the three manipulation groups' goal descriptions were embedded in the same cover story. Participants then answered questions measuring the perceived procedural fairness, perceived usefulness, expected gratification and perceived decision-making power in a random order to avoid order effects. Lastly, the dependent variable willingness to participate was measured, which included an attention check. Subsequently, participants gave their demographics. Finally, we asked how convincing they found specific aspects of the cover story and the general premise of the study, which was followed by a debriefing. Participants had to answer all questions presented and were not able to go back to previous questions. A copy of the full survey can be found in Appendix C, including the three different manipulations, manipulation checks, and questionnaires.

Materials

Cover Story

The cover story used was to measure the public's perception of a new form of public participation. Therein, public participation is collaborative, specifically a decision-making board consisting equally of experts and citizens. This aspect of the public participation procedure was adapted from Liu et al. (2020) because a shared influence on decisions has been used in previous studies (e.g. de Jong et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020), so it made the findings more comparable. Additionally, shared influence has been shown to lead to the highest public acceptability ratings (Liu et al., 2021), and as such is good practice.

Another aspect of the public participation was that it was upstream and on a macro-level: citizens help to develop and decide on a (fictive) new national policy on renewable

energy. To increase experimental realism, I stated that the study was in collaboration with the German national government. The logo of the German Ministry of Economy and Energy was shown on the informed consent and cover story pages to reinforce this. To further increase experimental realism, participants were told they would be given a link at the end of the study to receive more information on how to engage in the described public participation. Overall, an emphasis on the intention to participate was consciously avoided to reduce demand characteristics or a subject-expectancy effect. At the end of the description, they were asked to imagine themselves being invited to participate in this collaborative decision-making board and to answer the upcoming questions.

Manipulation

Within the cover story, the goal description of public participation varied or was absent in the control condition. The different manipulation texts including the manipulation checks can be found in Table 2, Appendix B.

On the next page, a multiple-choice content question with three answer options served as a manipulation check. The control group was asked to recall who is part of the decision-making board. The manipulation groups were asked to recall what one of the main objectives of public participation is. The two incorrect options were carefully chosen to not state content from another participation goal, as to not accidentally activate an additional goal.

Perceived Procedural Fairness

To measure perceived procedural fairness ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.85$, $\alpha = .80$) I adapted the five-item scale by Liu et al. (2020) to fit the context of the study. ‘In the decision-making process, *local* interests are taken into account sufficiently’ was changed to ‘In the decision-making process, *public* interests are taken into account sufficiently’ [italics added for emphasis]. This and all following variables were measured with a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = ‘totally disagree’ to 7 = ‘totally agree’).

Perceived Usefulness

The perceived usefulness of public participation ($M = 5.64$, $SD = 0.78$, $\alpha = .79$) was measured with four items. The first item stems from de Jong et al. (2019), while the other three were constructed for this study. Two example items are: ‘Public participation leads to better solutions for problems in the country’ (from de Jong et al., 2019) and ‘Public participation is pointless’ (self-constructed and reverse-scored).

Expected Gratification

How much participants anticipated to enjoy engaging in public participation was measured with three items ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.09$, $\alpha = .83$). The first two items were taken from de Jong et al. (2019) and the last one was created for this study.

Perceived Decision-making Power

Perceived decision-making power was measured with four self-constructed items ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 0.87$, $\alpha = .79$), for example: ‘Due to public participation the opinion of citizens carries a lot of weight in the final decision’.

Belief in Cover Story

The extent to which participants believed in the cover story was tested with four self-constructed items ($M = 4.84$, $SD = 1.29$, $\alpha = .81$) at the very end of the study. For example, ‘I believed that this study is in collaboration with the German government’.

Willingness to Participate

The participants’ intention to participate ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.39$, $\alpha = .94$) was measured with four items. The first two items were adapted from de Jong et al. (2019) to fit the context of this study: ‘I would certainly think about participating in co-creation’ was changed to ‘I would certainly think about taking part in the public participation on the planned renewable energy policy’. The last two items were self-constructed.

Data Analysis

All data analyses were conducted with SPSS (Version 27). First, participants will be excluded when they are more than three standard deviations away from the mean of one of the continuous variables. Further, I will screen for outliers using Mahalanobis' distance, Cook's distance, and leverage values. Participants who are detected as outliers in two or more of the three tests will be excluded. The mediation hypotheses will be tested by conducting a mediation analysis using the PROCESS plug-in by Hayes (Version 3.5). To compare the three participation goals I will use a One-Way ANOVA and Contrasts.

Results

This study tested whether different public participation goals (independent variables) resulted in different levels of willingness to participate (dependent variable) compared to no goal description (H1a). The independent variable consisted of having either an instrumental, substantive or normative goal, which were contrasted to a control condition. Furthermore, I tested whether this relationship was mediated by perceived procedural fairness (H2a) and perceived usefulness of public participation (H3a) as parallel mediators (for an overview, see Figure 1, Appendix A). Additionally, the covariates expected gratification and perceived decision-making power were included in the model. The study also compared the effects of the three participation goals on the willingness to participate (H1b), perceived procedural fairness (H2b), and perceived usefulness (H3b).

Outliers

As outlined in the data analysis plan, five participants were removed because they were more than three standard deviations away from the mean of perceived procedural fairness, perceived usefulness, or expected gratification. Furthermore, four participants were removed as outliers because they fell outside two or more of the three following tests: Mahalanobis' distance, Cook's distance, or leverage values (the specific cut-off scores can be found in Table 3, Appendix B). Hence, the final sample consisted of 168 participants.

Assumptions

Neither the assumption of normality nor homoscedasticity were met. First, a visual inspection of the QQ-plot and histogram of the dependent variable indicated that the assumption of normality was violated, as the distribution had a negative skew (see Figures 2 and 3, Appendix A). As the independent variable was categorical, the assumption of normality was tested within each group (Field, 2018). The Shapiro-Wilk test supported the indicated non-normality, as it was significant for three of the four groups. Only the instrumental goal group was non-significant (see Table 4, Appendix B). However, this violation of the assumption of normality can be disregarded due to the sufficient sample size which should ensure the central limit theorem (Islam, 2018). Further, due to the use of bootstrapping in the mediation analysis, the confidence intervals were not affected by non-normality (Field, 2018).

Second, the assumption of homoscedasticity was violated (see Figure 2, Appendix A). To mitigate the negative effects of heteroscedasticity in the mediation analyses, I applied the heteroscedasticity-consistent standard error estimator HC4. I specifically used HC4 because Hayes and Cai (2007) recommend it “when there are cases with high leverage” (p. 712). In this sample, four participants who scored above the leverage cut-off score were included as they did not fall outside either of the other two outlier tests. However, to compare the effects of the experimental groups in Hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 3b, I had to use the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test instead of the initially planned one-way ANOVA and contrast analyses.

Zero-order Correlations

In addition to the dependent variable, the assumption of normality did not apply to the variable expected gratification for the control group (see Table 4, Appendix B). Moreover, if testing for non-normality without separating the experimental groups, all variables except perceived procedural fairness were non-normal (see Table 4, Appendix B). Thus I chose to

use non-parametric correlations. Spearman's zero-order rank correlation showed that all variables measured were significantly positively correlated with each other², except for perceived procedural fairness and willingness to participate (see Table 5, Appendix B).

Fortunately, the tolerance and VIF scores of the variables included in the mediation analysis did not indicate that multi-collinearity was high enough to overly influence the regression analysis (see Table 6, Appendix B).

Hypothesis Testing

In the mediation analysis, so for Hypothesis 1a, 2a, and 3a, each of the three public participation goals was compared to the control group ('indicator coding'). First, I tested the effect of each public participation goal (i.e. the instrumental, substantive, and normative goal) on willingness to participate compared to no goal description (H1a) and tested whether there was a significant difference between the three goals' effects on willingness to participate (H1b). Regarding hypothesis 1a, the total effect of each goal compared to the control group on willingness to participate was not significant (see Table 7, Appendix B). Thus, in this study, specifying the goal of the public participation procedure did not influence the willingness to participate compared to a general description of public participation without specifying a goal, so I rejected H1a. Regarding hypothesis 1b, the Kruskal Wallis test showed that there were no significant differences between the three participation goal groups' influence on willingness to participate ($H(2) = 1.41, p = .49$). Unexpectedly, the substantive goal did not lead to a higher willingness to participate than the instrumental or normative goal and thus H1b was rejected as well.

Second, I tested whether perceived procedural fairness acts as a mediator (H2a) between each goal (compared to no goal description) and willingness to participate and

² As one can see, belief in the cover story was significantly correlated with all the other variables. Thus I included belief in the cover story in the regression model and tested whether it was a significant predictor of willingness to participate. This was not the case ($b = 0.01, t(159) = 0.22, p = .82$) and thus belief in the cover story was not included as a covariate in the mediation analysis.

whether its' level differs between the three participation goals (H2b). However, neither hypothesis was supported. Concerning hypothesis 2a, there was no mediation of perceived procedural fairness for any of the three participation goals and willingness to participate, as their relative indirect effect on willingness to participate was not significant (X1³ indirect = 0.04, *SE* = 0.04, 95% CI [-0.02; 0.13]; X2 indirect = -0.02, *SE* = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.10; 0.04]; X3 indirect = -0.02, *SE* = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.10; 0.03]). Regarding hypothesis 2b, comparing the three public participation goals showed that there were no significant differences in their influence on perceived procedural fairness ($H(2) = 2.03, p = .36$). Thus, there was no significantly higher level of perceived procedural fairness for the substantive and normative goal compared to the instrumental goal.

Third, I tested whether the perceived usefulness of public participation acts as a mediator between each goal (compared to no goal description) and willingness to participate (H3a) and whether its' level differs between the three participation goals (H3b). Both hypotheses were not supported. Concerning hypothesis 3a, for none of the three goals did perceived usefulness mediate the relation to willingness to participate (see Table 8 and 9). Consequently, all relative indirect effects of the three goals (compared to the control group) on the dependent variable were not significant (X1 indirect = -0.01, *SE* = 0.04, 95% CI [-0.08; 0.08]; X2 indirect = 0.01, *SE* = 0.04, 95% CI [-0.05; 0.11]; X3 indirect = -0.02, *SE* = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.10; 0.05]). Although none of the paths were significant, path b was significant, meaning that perceived usefulness significantly predicted willingness to participate (see Table 9, Appendix B). Regarding hypothesis 3b, there were no significant differences between the three goals' influence on perceived usefulness ($H(2) = 0.80, p = .67$).

³ Here, and later on, X1 conveys comparing the instrumental goal with the control group, X2 stands for the substantive goal comparison, and X3 for the normative goal comparison.

Contrary to my hypothesis, there was thus not a significantly higher level of perceived usefulness for the substantive and instrumental goal compared to the normative goal.

Neither of the proposed mediators significantly mediated the relationship between the three participation goals and willingness to participate. Thus it is not surprising that when the mediators were included in the model (path c') there was no change in the non-significant effect of the participation goals on willingness to participate (see Table 9, Appendix B). Overall, of all the hypothesized predictor variables only perceived usefulness significantly influenced willingness to participate (see Figure 4, Appendix A).

Looking at the two covariates expected gratification and perceived decision-making power, they both significantly predicted willingness to participate (see Figure 5, Appendix A). Especially expected gratification had a strong effect on willingness to participate, whereby perceived decision-making power was only a significant predictor when the two mediators were not controlled for. Expected gratification also significantly predicted perceived usefulness (see Figure 5, Appendix A). Meanwhile, perceived decision-making power was a significant predictor of both perceived procedural fairness and perceived usefulness (see Figure 5, Appendix A).

Discussion

This study investigated how the willingness of citizens to engage in upstream, macro-level public participation on renewable energies can be increased. This study was the first to empirically test and compare the effects of the three goals (instrumental, substantive, normative) practitioners have when designing and implementing public participation on willingness to participate. I found that none of the three goals (compared to no goal description) led to different levels of willingness to participate and that there was no mediation of this relation by perceived procedural fairness or perceived usefulness. Because of their influence on willingness to participate, the two covariates expected gratification and

perceived decision-making power were included in the model. Comparing the three goals directly, there was also no significant difference between their effect on neither willingness to participate, perceived procedural fairness, or perceived usefulness. Therefore, none of the hypothesized relations were supported.

An important consideration when interpreting the findings of this study is the point in time of data collection (April 2022), which might have influenced my findings. Due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the dependence of Germany on Russia for energy has by then become an obvious liability (Martin & Wrede, 2022). Thus, the need for more renewable energies has become clearer and more urgent for citizens (Carrel & Thomasson, 2022). How this might have influenced participants' responses will be discussed below. Furthermore, due to budget constraints, this study was underpowered; accordingly, all nonsignificant findings may have been significant given a bigger sample size.

General Findings

First, willingness to participate was surprisingly higher than in other, similar studies (cf. Hoti et al., 2021). However, other than in Hoti et al.'s study (2021) participants could only rate how much they wanted to actively participate, so the willingness to participate might have been higher in this study due to not offering less effortful participation alternatives. Further, due to the cover story participants might have rated their willingness to participate somewhat higher than it truly was to express their support of the idea, despite not wanting to participate themselves. This will be discussed in the limitations section. Lastly, participants in this study were more highly educated than the national average. Higher education levels have been linked to a higher willingness to participate (de Jong et al., 2019; Perlaviciute, 2022) and thus the true willingness to participate of the German population is likely lower than what I found.

Second, although my main hypotheses were not supported, the zero-order correlations demonstrate that perceived usefulness, expected gratification, and perceived decision-making power are positively correlated with willingness to participate. This shows that these factors play an important role for the willingness to participate in public participation on a macro-level, which is an important finding as most studies have been conducted on a lower level (e.g., de Jong et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Neblo et al., 2010).

Public Participation Goals and Willingness to Participate

First, I found that describing either of the three goals did not lead to a higher willingness to participate compared to no goal description i.e., the control group. Further, the three goals did not differ in their effects on willingness to participate. Both findings were not in line with my hypotheses. One potential reason for these nonsignificant findings is that when thinking about whether to participate, the expected gratification had such a strong influence that it completely overshadowed the more subtle effects of the goal description. The second possibility is that participants may have had a strong preconceived idea about public participation. This would have weakened my manipulation considerably, and thus affected all hypotheses. To elaborate, one participant in the pilot study commented how badly public participation has been implemented so far in Germany and that they wanted more details before believing or feeling able to judge the described public participation neutrally. Thus, the manipulation may have not been strong enough to change these already formed beliefs. Although I measured participants' belief in the cover story and overall premise, I did not specifically ask how credible they found the stated participation goals. Future studies should incorporate this question and test whether pre-existing beliefs act as a moderator on willingness to participate. Given this possibility, it is unclear whether the manipulation did not lead to significant differences because of disbelief, pre-existing beliefs, or because it truly does not affect people's willingness to participate (nor the two mediators).

Bidwell and Schweizer (2021) conducted the only other empirical study about Fiorino's three goals. They found that the substantive goal led to the highest level of support, followed by the normative and instrumental goal. Looking at the rankings of the three goals for willingness to participate provided by the Kruskal-Wallis test, this study found the same order, albeit that the differences were not large enough to be significant. Still, the predicted trend was there; and the differences between the goals could possibly be greater when controlling for pre-existing beliefs. Nonetheless, the results of this study suggest that, at least for upstream macro-level public participation in renewable energy policies, specifying the goal in the public participation description does not seem to overly affect citizens' willingness to participate.

Perceived Procedural Fairness

For none of the goals compared with the control group did perceived procedural fairness mediate the influence on willingness to participate. Neither was there a difference between the three goals' influence on perceived procedural fairness. To interpret these findings it is vital to explore why the correlation coefficient for perceived procedural fairness and willingness to participate was positive while the coefficient in the mediation analysis was negative. According to Falk and Miller (1992), this difference in sign is an indicator for a suppressor effect, meaning that a predictor variable suppresses the effect of another predictor variable, i.e. perceived procedural fairness in this model. Statistically, I assume the suppressing variable is perceived decision-making power as it had a strong correlation with perceived procedural fairness and both had higher multi-collinearity than the other predictor variables. This assumption is supported by previous findings. In Liu et al.'s study (2021) perceived procedural fairness fully mediated the relation of citizens' decision-making power and public acceptability of a local renewable energy project. It is possible that perceived procedural fairness also functioned as a mediator of decision-making power in this study:

Perceived decision-making power was no longer a significant predictor of willingness to participate when perceived procedural fairness and perceived usefulness were controlled for, which is often seen as a sign of mediation (Field, 2018). Thus, I theorize that due to controlling for the perceived decision-making power, fairness no longer had a (possibly significant) effect on willingness to participate.

The influence of perceived decision-making power on perceived procedural fairness could explain why perceived procedural fairness did not differ between the three goals. In this study, all groups had the same level of decision-making power, as it would have been unclear whether any differences between the goals were due to differences in power or the goal description, and more importantly, as Fiorino (1990) did not describe any power differences. However, Stirling (2006, 2008) builds on Fiorino (1990) and argues that a central and differentiating aspect of the participation goals is the different levels of decision-making power they afford citizens. Thus, unlike in this study, decision-making power should be part of the goal descriptions, which will also make them more realistic. As described above, there is a possible mediation of perceived procedural fairness between perceived decision-making power and willingness to participate. Combined with the finding of this study that perceived decision-making power predicts perceived procedural fairness, future studies should test whether public participation goal descriptions which include different levels of decision-making power lead to significant differences in perceived procedural fairness.

Unlike Neblo et al. (2010), this study did not find a significant effect of perceived procedural fairness on willingness to participate. This might be due to them using a strongly worded manipulation for procedural fairness which implied differing decision-making power levels (more or less “powerful special interests”, p. 570), while I only measured it and did not include different decision-making power levels. Thus, in this study, the differences in perceived procedural fairness were likely less extreme than in the study of Neblo et al.

(2010). The difference in magnitude of perceived procedural fairness' effect compared to Liu et al.'s findings (2020) is likely due to the different outcome variables: willingness to participate versus project acceptability. Another possibility lies in the different participation levels. This study focused on national policies, while Liu et al. (2020) looked at a local renewable energy project, and Neblo et al. (2010) looked at public participation with U.S. state representatives.

Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness did not mediate the three goals' influence (compared to no goal descriptions) on willingness to participate. Neither did the three goals differ in their effects on perceived usefulness. However, the direct effect of perceived usefulness on willingness to participate was significant. This indicates that participants who perceive public participation as more useful are more willing to participate. Given that usefulness was not significantly influenced by the goals, future studies should research what factors increase the perceived usefulness of a public participation procedure to increase citizens' willingness to participate. One option could be giving evidence about the usefulness of previous public participation procedures, as suggested by de Jong et al. (2019), but this remains to be tested. Additionally, perceived decision-making power predicted perceived usefulness, so increasing the decision-making power could also lead to higher perceived usefulness. This could also be tested by including the differences in decision-making power in the goal descriptions.

Still, the effect size of perceived usefulness' influence on willingness to participate was smaller than in the study of de Jong et al. (2019) who also included expected gratification in their model (see Table 9, Appendix B). This might be due to two reasons. First, the topic of renewable energy combined with the point in time this study was conducted might explain the lower effect size. Due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there was an obvious need for more renewable energy and a quick push for them from politicians (Carrel

& Thomasson, 2022). Consequently, participants might have felt that the input of citizens would be useful due to anticipated unpopular measures, even if they did not want to participate themselves due to other factors such as low expected gratification. This possibility is supported by the fact that usefulness was rated highest of all variables. On top of that, it had the lowest standard deviation, showing a homogenous agreement on the high usefulness of public participation. Second, perceived usefulness may be less predictive of willingness to participate on a national i.e. macro-level, as de Jong et al.'s study (2019) was on the lower municipality level. Future studies are needed to test the effect size of perceived usefulness on willingness to participate and compare whether it differs depending on the level of public participation.

Limitations

Although this study advances the field of public participation, three limitations must be considered. First, I already described that the manipulation may not have worked due to pre-existing beliefs about public participation.

A second limitation lies in the cover story, which may have led people to rate their willingness to participate higher than in other studies (cf. Hoti et al., 2021). In the cover story, I introduce the study as being in collaboration with the German government to measure citizens' opinions on a new form of public participation in policy making. Although participants might not have been interested in participating generally or on this topic, they might have expressed a higher willingness to signal their general support for this practice, fearing that it would otherwise not be implemented or continued. Future studies could measure how supportive participants are of the suggested practice in general to explore and/or control for this potentially influencing factor.

Lastly, this study only measured the willingness to participate instead of actual behaviour and as such no concrete conclusions on actual attendance can be made. Although

intention is one of the best predictors of behaviour (Armitage & Conner, 2001), there is often a gap between the two. For an estimation, Neblo et al. (2010) found that just 34% of the participants who were willing to participate in principle showed up in person. In this study, 49 participants rated their willingness to participate as 'agree' or higher, thus, if the ratio is like Neblo et al.'s (2010), only 16 out of the 168 participants would show up. This shows the necessity of research about what factors increase the willingness to participate.

Recommendations

Along with previous suggestions for future research, three further recommendations can be made. First, the finding that describing different goals did not lead to different levels of willingness to participate emphasizes that practitioners and future researchers cannot rely on merely describing the goals; they must find other or additional ways to convince participants of a participation goal. There is no research on how this may be achieved yet. Although one may suggest using a more captivating manipulation method, such as a video, I argue that future manipulations should be similarly text-based. This is because text-based manipulations have the best real-world applicability as invitations to public participation procedures are usually conveyed through some sort of written text – be it a flyer, e-mail, or letter (UN Economic Commission for Europe, 2013). One promising approach to make text-based manipulations more effective is to incorporate the different levels of decision-making power associated with the three participation goals in the description.

Second, I propose field studies comparing how public participation procedures implementing each of the three goals influence participants' gratification and overall experience differently. Wesselink et al. (2011) argue that since different forms of public participation procedures do not significantly differ in their influence on the gratification of participants, the main reason for discontent is differing expectations. Thus, clearly communicating the goal of the participation procedure may help to increase the gratification

of participants during public participation procedures by managing expectations (Wesseling et al., 2011). This also relates to willingness to participate, as higher gratification felt during a public participation procedure was connected to a higher willingness to participate again (Mannarini et al., 2009).

Third, the high predictive power of expected gratification appears promising for future research, as expected gratification has not been the focus of a study on public participation yet. Here, it would be interesting to assess what influences whether one expects to feel gratified when engaging in public participation. Perhaps certain demographics or innate factors influence expected gratification. This is important information, as public participation has a known problem of mainly attracting a specific demographic group: well-educated men with a high income (de Jong et al., 2019; Liu, 2022; Perlaviciute, 2022). Depending on whether expected gratification is influenced by internal or external factors, this could either reinforce or help to combat this issue.

Overall, the general lack of studies on public participation, and even more so on citizens' willingness to participate, makes it difficult to identify the exact reasons for why my findings differed from previous studies, which underlines the need for more, and more diverse, research on public participation. To improve this, I recommend future studies to measure pre-existing beliefs about public participation and the believability of the specific participation goal, compare different levels of public participation, integrate the differences in citizens' decision-making power into the goal descriptions, as well as to collect data at a point in time when renewable energies are not a major talking point in politics and the news.

Conclusion

This study was the first to test whether descriptions of the three different public participation goals according to Fiorino (1990) influence the willingness to participate differently. Although no significant differences were found, it is unclear whether this was due

to no effects, current events, or the manipulation used. However, my study showed that perceived usefulness, perceived decision-making power, and expected gratification predict willingness to participate on a macro-level. Thus, future studies should test what factors increase these variables to ultimately increase willingness to participate. Prominent avenues for future research are how public participation levels differ and what the relationship between perceived decision-making power and perceived procedural fairness is.

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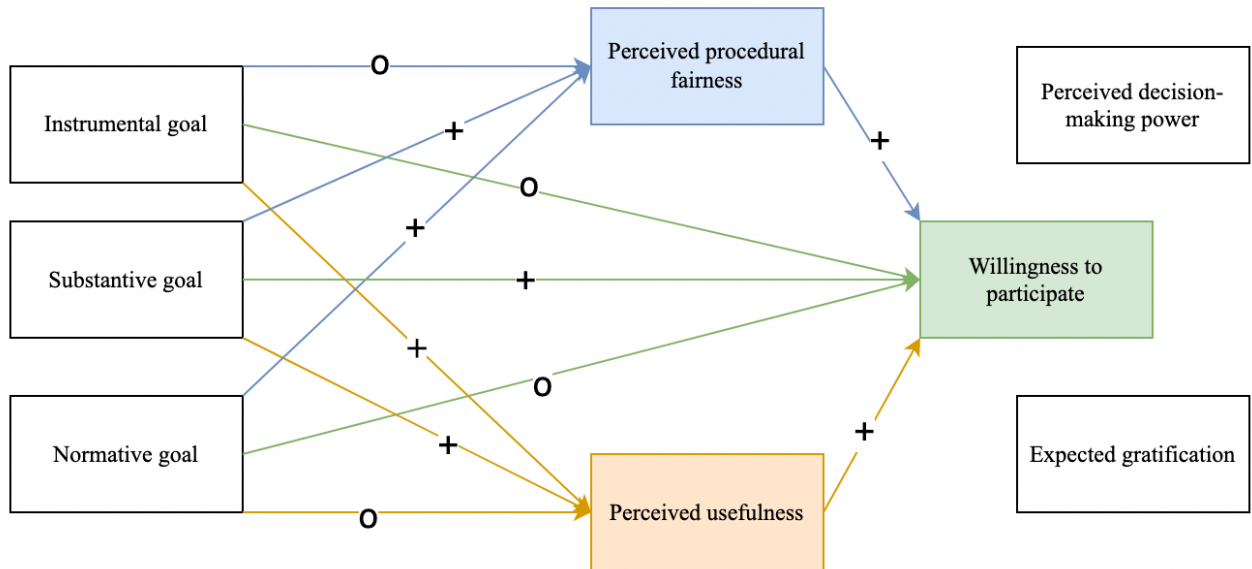
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Appendix A - Figures

Figure 1

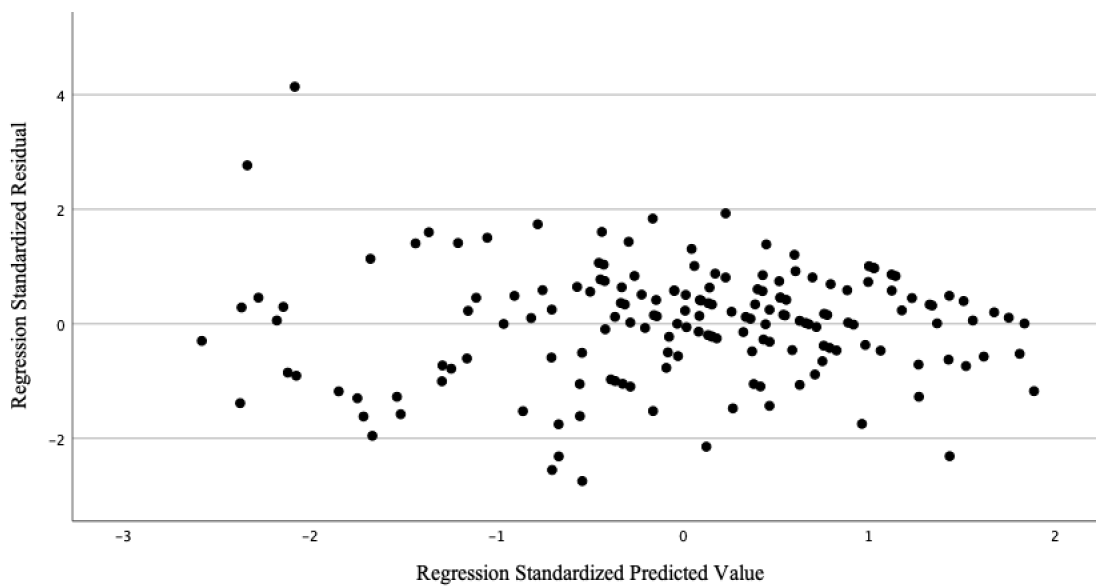
Model of Hypotheses



Note. The symbol ‘o’ indicates no hypothesized direction of the effect. The green lines represent the first main hypothesis, the blue lines represent the second main hypothesis, and the orange lines represent the third main hypothesis.

Figure 2

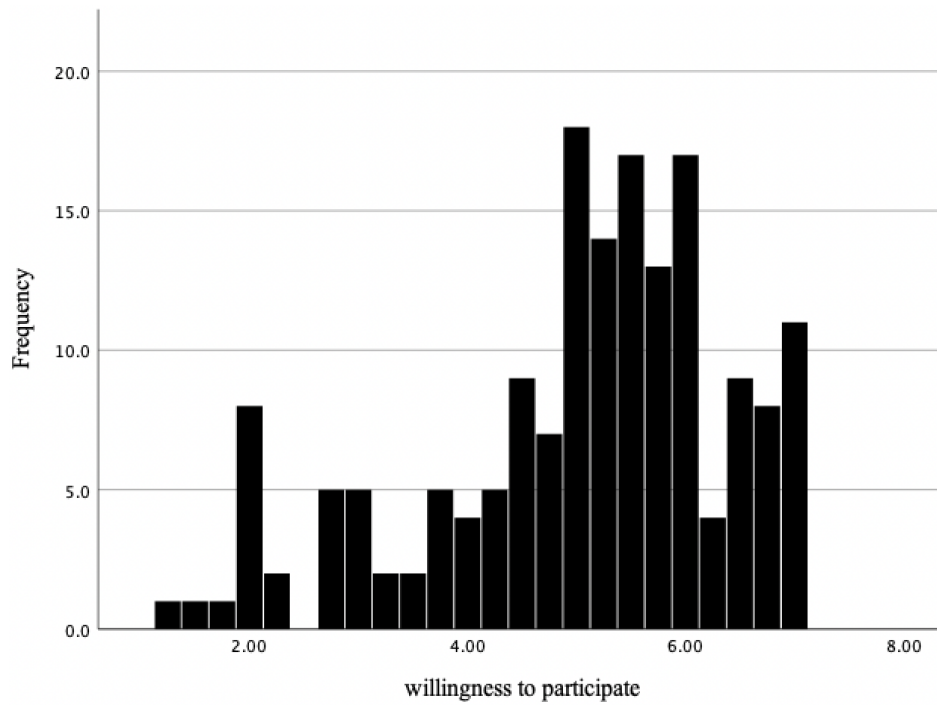
QQ-plot of the residuals of willingness to participate



Note. $N = 168$.

Figure 3

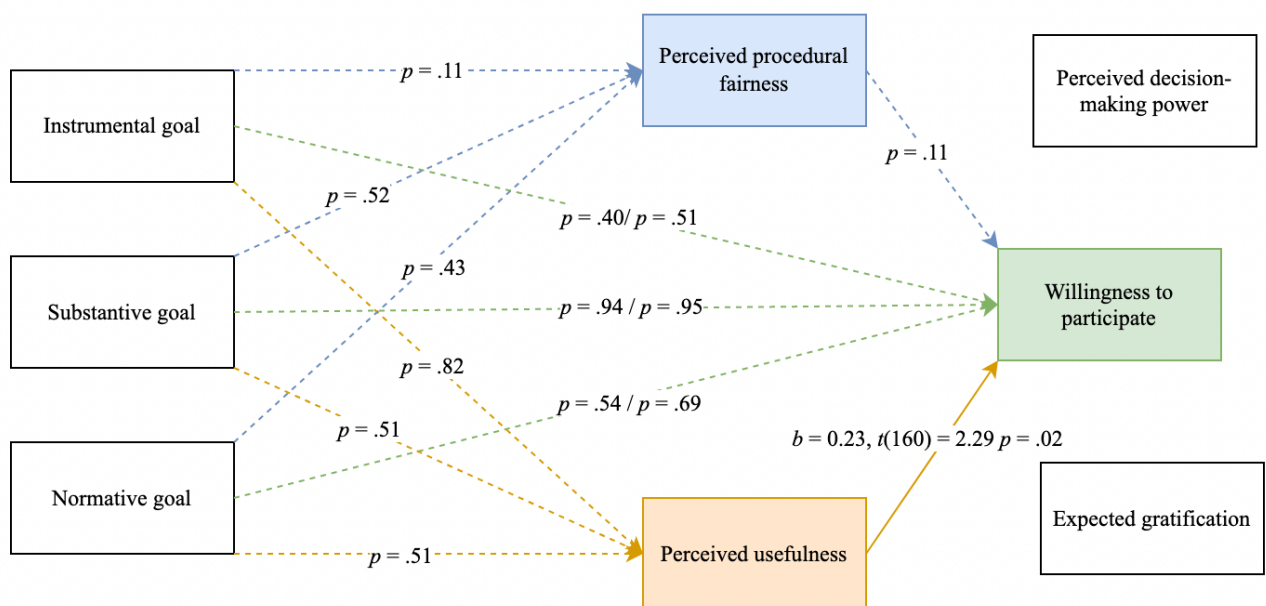
Histogram of willingness to participate



Note. $N = 168$.

Figure 4.

Significance of effect sizes

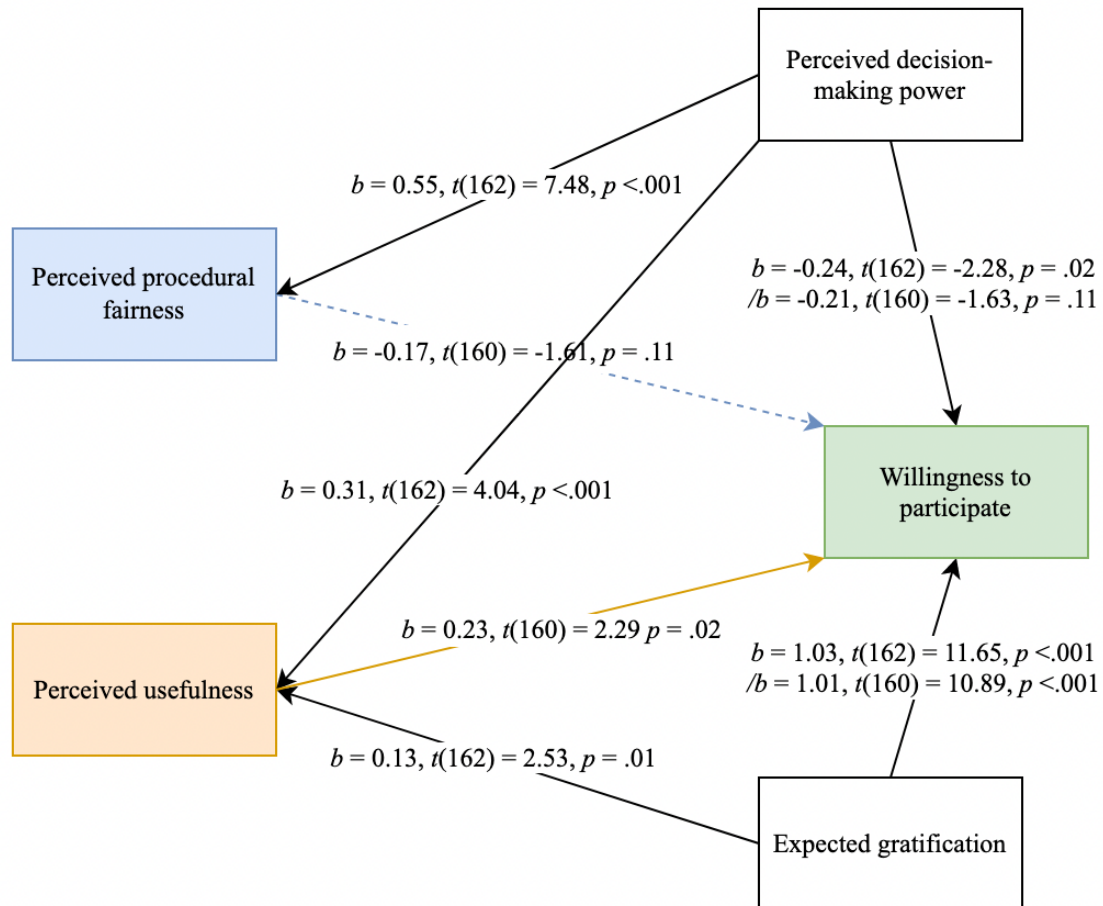


Note. $N = 168$. The dashed lines represent non-significant effects, while the straight lines represent significant ones. Regarding the paths with two values, the first value denotes the

significance of the total effect i.e., when not controlling for the mediators, while the second one denotes the significance of the effect size when including the mediators in the model.

Figure 5

The effect sizes of the covariates



Note. $N = 168$. The dashed lines represent nonsignificant effects, while the straight lines represent significant ones. Regarding the paths with two b-values, the first b-value denotes the total effect, i.e. when not controlling for the mediators, while the second one denotes the effect size when including the mediators in the model.

Appendix B - Tables

Table 1

Demographics of participants across groups

	Control group	Instrumental goal	Substantive goal	Normative goal	Total	χ^2 (df)	p
Gender						5.57 (6)	.47
Male	20	19	23	21	83		
Female	27	14	19	22	82		
Other	0	0	1	2	3		
Mean Age (SD)	29.74 (9.51)	29.55 (8.81)	31.86 (11.69)	31.55 (9.37)	30.73 (9.92)		
Educational Level						6.02 (6)	.42
10 th Grade	4	5	5	7	21		
High School	16	14	11	19	60		
University	27	14	27	19	87		
Nationality						1.40 (3)	.71
German	42	30	41	40	153		
Other	5	3	2	5	15		

Note. $N = 168$ (control: $n = 47$; instrumental goal: $n = 33$; substantive goal: $n = 43$; normative goal: $n = 45$). Participant age did not differ by condition.

Table 2

Cover story and manipulation of public participation goals

Manipulation	Text
Control group	<p>Please read the following text carefully, you will be asked about it later. This study is in collaboration with your national government. The government wants to develop a new national policy on renewable energies. They have decided to invite the public to join a collaborative decision-making board to develop this policy. The board will consist of 50% experts and 50% representatives of different citizen groups, such as families, students, and elderly people. This decision-making process involving citizens is called public participation. <i>[here the manipulation texts are inserted]</i></p> <p>Imagine that you, as a citizen, are invited to take part in the decision-making board on the new policy for renewable energy. As this public participation procedure is quite novel, we are interested in your attitude towards it and will ask you some questions about this. At the end of the survey, you may choose to give us your e-mail adress, so that you may receive more information on how to take part in the public participation procedure.</p>
Instrumental goal	<p>By engaging the public, legal requirements will be satisfied. Public participation will also help the government to increase public acceptability of the planned renewable energy policy. Overall, public participation can lead to faster and less costly decision-making and implementation.</p>
Substantive goal	

Citizens voicing their ideas, concerns and experience can lead to incorporating crucial knowledge that experts may otherwise miss, ultimately leading to a more rounded and **well-informed decision**.

Normative goal

By involving diverse citizens to help decide on the contents of the new renewable energy policy, **democratic ideals** are upheld. Thus, public participation will help to **protect the people's rights in influencing decisions that affect them**.

Table 3

Cut-off scores for cook's distance and leverage values

	Formula	Computation
Cook's distance	$4/(n - k - 1)$	$4/(172 - 4 - 1) = 0.024$
Leverage values	$(2k+2)/n$	$(2*4 + 2)/172 = 0.058$

Note. N = number of participants; k = number of continuous predictors (perceived procedural fairness, perceived usefulness, expected gratification, and perceived decision-making power).

Table 4

Shapiro-Wilk test for normality

	Control group		Instrumental goal		Substantive goal		Normative goal		All group
	W	p	W	p	W	p	W	p	
Perceived procedural fairness	.98	.71	.97	.39	.98	.72	.98	.72	.99
Perceived usefulness	.97	.24	.97	.57	.95	.09	.98	.62	.98
Expected gratification	.95	.03	.95	.13	.97	.21	.96	.16	.96
Perceived decision-making power	.96	.12	.96	.30	.97	.26	.98	.64	.97
Willingness to participate	.92	.004	.95	.14	.90	.002	.89	<.001	.93

Note. N = 168 (control: n = 47; instrumental goal: n = 33; substantive goal: n = 43; normative goal: n = 45).

Table 5

Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Perceived procedural fairness	-					

				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Instrumental goal	-0.25	-1.62	.11	-0.56	0.06	-0.04	-0.23	.82	-0.34	0.27
Substantive goal	0.10	0.65	.52	-0.20	0.40	0.06	0.67	.51	-0.22	0.35
Normative goal	0.11	0.78	.43	-0.17	0.40	-0.09	-0.66	.51	-0.37	0.18

a. $df = 162$

Note. $N = 168$. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. To test the effects of the experimental groups, the effect of each participation goal group was compared with the control group ('indicator coding').

Table 9

Mediation model coefficients – path bs and c's

	Willingness to participate (direct effect)				
	b	t ^a	p	95% CI	
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Perceived procedural fairness	-0.17	-1.61	.11	-0.39	0.04
Perceived usefulness	0.23	2.29	.02	0.03	0.42
Instrumental goal	-0.17	-0.85	.40	-0.57	0.22
Substantive goal	0.01	0.07	.94	-0.35	0.38
Normative goal	0.12	0.62	.54	-0.26	0.51

a. $df = 160$

Note. $N = 168$. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. To test the effects of the experimental groups, the effect of each participation goal group was compared with the control group ('indicator coding').

Appendix C – Entire Questionnaire

Start of Block: Language Selection

Da die Einsichten dieser Studie für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet werden, bitten wir Sie, diese Studie ernst zu nehmen und unsere Fragen ehrlich zu beantworten.

Wir empfehlen Ihnen diese Studie auf einem großen Bildschirm auszufüllen, allerdings ist dies keine Voraussetzung.

End of Block: Language Selection

Start of Block: Information

Q2

"ÖFFENTLICHKEITSBETEILIGUNG IN GESETZEN ÜBER ERNEUERBARE ENERGIEN" (research code: PSY-2122-S-0267)

Warum erhalte ich diese Informationen?

Erstmal, vielen Dank für Ihr Interesse an unserer Studie. Sie sind herzlich eingeladen, an der folgenden Studie teilzunehmen, wie jede*r 18 Jahre und älter. Diese Studie ist Teil der Masterarbeit in Umweltpsychologie von Luna Anhalt. Alynda Kok von der Fakultät für Verhaltens- und Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Groningen ist die Betreuerin der Studie.

Muss ich an dieser Studie teilnehmen?

Die Teilnahme an der Studie ist freiwillig. Ihre Zustimmung ist jedoch erforderlich. Lesen Sie sich daher bitte diese Informationen sorgfältig durch. Stellen Sie alle Fragen, die Sie vielleicht haben, z. B. weil Sie etwas nicht verstanden haben. Erst danach entscheiden Sie, ob Sie teilnehmen möchten. Wenn Sie sich gegen eine Teilnahme entscheiden, müssen Sie dies nicht begründen, und es wird keine negativen Folgen für Sie haben. Dieses Recht steht Ihnen jederzeit zu, auch nachdem Sie in die Teilnahme an der Studie eingewilligt haben.

Warum diese Untersuchung?

Wir interessieren uns für Ihre Einstellung zur Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung, d.h. zur Teilnahme von Bürger*innen an der Entscheidungsfindung über eine neues Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien.

Was verlangen wir von Ihnen während der Studie?

Zuerst bitten wir Sie um Ihre Zustimmung zur Teilnahme an der Studie. Dann werden Sie gebeten, einen kurzen Text zu lesen, in dem Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung detaillierter erklärt wird, und anschließend mehrere Fragen zu beantworten. Das Teilnahmeentgelt basiert auf dem deutschen Mindestlohn (9,82 Euro pro Stunde). Das Ausfüllen der Fragen wird etwa 7 Minuten in Anspruch nehmen.

Was sind die Folgen der Teilnahme?

Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist mit keinerlei negativen Folgen oder Risiken verbunden.

Wie werden wir Ihre Daten behandeln?

Ihre Daten werden völlig anonym erhoben, da Ihre IP-Adresse unterdrückt wird und Ihnen keine potenziell identifizierenden Fragen stellen werden. Die anonymen Daten werden auf unbestimmte Zeit gespeichert und können zu wissenschaftlichen Zwecken an andere Forscher*innen weitergegeben werden.

Was müssen Sie noch wissen?

Sie können jederzeit Fragen zur Studie stellen: jetzt, während der Studie und nach Abschluss der Studie. Sie können sich dazu per E-Mail (l.anhalt@student.rug.nl) an eine der beteiligten Forscherinnen wenden.

Haben Sie Fragen/Bedenken zu Ihren Rechten als Forschungsteilnehmer*in oder zur Durchführung der Forschung?

Sie können sich auch an die Ethikkommission der Fakultät für Verhaltens- und Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Groningen wenden: ec-bss@rug.nl.

*Als Forschungsteilnehmer*in haben Sie das Recht auf eine Kopie dieser Informationen. Sie sind dazu eingeladen, einen Screenshot des obigen Textes zu machen.*

End of Block: Information

Start of Block: Consent

Q3

"ÖFFENTLICHKEITSBETEILIGUNG IN GESETZEN ÜBER ERNEUERBARE ENERGIEN"

(research code: PSY-2122-S-0267)

- Ich habe die Informationen über die Untersuchung gelesen. Ich hatte ausreichend Gelegenheit, Fragen dazu zu stellen.

- Ich verstehe, worum es bei der Forschung geht, was von mir verlangt wird, welche Folgen die Teilnahme haben kann, wie mit meinen Daten umgegangen wird und welche Rechte ich als Teilnehmer*in habe.

- Ich verstehe, dass die Teilnahme an der Untersuchung freiwillig ist. Ich selbst entscheide mich für die Teilnahme. Ich kann die Teilnahme jederzeit beenden. Wenn ich aufhöre, muss ich nicht erklären, warum. Ein Abbruch hat für mich keine negativen Folgen.

- Im Folgenden gebe ich an, womit ich mich einverstanden erkläre.

ConsentA Einwilligung in die Teilnahme an der Forschung:

- Ja, ich stimme der Teilnahme zu; diese Zustimmung ist zeitlich unbegrenzt gültig (1)
- Nein, ich bin mit der Teilnahme nicht einverstanden (2)

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Prolific ID



ID Was ist Ihre Prolific ID?

Bitte beachten Sie, dass dieses Feld automatisch mit der richtigen ID ausgefüllt werden sollte.

End of Block: Prolific ID

Start of Block: Control text

Q6

Bitte lesen Sie sich den folgenden Text sorgfältig durch, denn Ihnen werden dazu später Fragen gestellt.

Diese Studie wird in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie durchgeführt. Die deutsche Bundesregierung plant ein neues, **bundesweites Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien** zu entwickeln. Sie hat beschlossen, die Öffentlichkeit zur Teilnahme an einem Entscheidungsgremium einzuladen, um dieses Gesetz zu entwickeln. Das Gremium wird zu **50% aus Expert*innen** und zu **50% aus Vertreter*innen verschiedener Bürgergruppen** wie Familien, Student*innen und älteren Menschen bestehen. Dieser Entscheidungsprozess, welcher Bürger*innen involviert, wird als **Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung** bezeichnet.

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass Sie als Bürger*in eingeladen sind, am Entscheidungsgremium für dieses Gesetzesvorhaben für erneuerbare Energien teilzunehmen. Da dieses Verfahren der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung bei der Entwicklung eines Gesetzes recht neu ist, wurde das Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie angehalten eine Studie dazu in Auftrag zu geben. In dieser Studie interessieren wir uns für Ihre Einstellung zu dem beschriebenen Verfahren und werden Ihnen dazu einige Fragen stellen. Am Ende der Umfrage werden wir Ihnen einen Link geben, auf den Sie klicken können, um weitere Informationen über eine mögliche Teilnahme an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu erhalten.

Page Break

AttentionCheck3 Wer wird das neue Gesetz über erneuerbare Energien entwickeln?

- Nur Bürger*innen (1)
- Nur Expert*innen (2)
- Ein Entscheidungsgremium bestehend aus Bürger*innen und Expert*innen (3)

End of Block: Control text

Start of Block: Instrumental goal text

Q7

Bitte lesen Sie sich den folgenden Text sorgfältig durch, denn Ihnen werden dazu später Fragen gestellt.

Diese Studie wird in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie durchgeführt. Die deutsche Bundesregierung plant ein neues **bundesweites Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien** zu entwickeln. Sie hat beschlossen, die Öffentlichkeit zur Teilnahme an einem Entscheidungsgremium einzuladen, um dieses Gesetz zu entwickeln. Das Gremium wird zu **50% aus Expert*innen** und zu **50% aus Vertreter*innen verschiedener Bürgergruppen** wie Familien, Student*innen und älteren Menschen bestehen. Dieser Entscheidungsprozess welcher Bürger*innen involviert, wird als **Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung** bezeichnet. Durch die Einbindung der Öffentlichkeit werden **rechtliche Anforderungen** erfüllt. Die Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung wird der Regierung auch dabei helfen, die **allgemeine Akzeptanz** des neuen Gesetzes für erneuerbare Energien zu erhöhen. Insgesamt kann die Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu einer **schnelleren und mit weniger Kosten verbundenen Entscheidungsfindung** bzw. Umsetzung führen.

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass Sie als Bürger*in eingeladen sind, am Entscheidungsgremium für das neue Gesetz über erneuerbare Energien teilzunehmen. Da dieses Verfahren der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung bei der Entwicklung eines Gesetzes recht neu ist, wurde das Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie angehalten eine Studie dazu in Auftrag zu geben. In dieser Studie interessieren wir uns für Ihre Einstellung zu dem beschriebenen Verfahren und werden Ihnen dazu einige Fragen stellen. Am Ende der Umfrage werden wir Ihnen einen Link geben, auf den Sie klicken können, um weitere Informationen über eine mögliche Teilnahme an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu erhalten.

Page Break

AttentionCheck2 Was ist eines der Hauptanliegen beim Einsatz der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung?

- Um den Oppositionellen die Möglichkeit zu geben, unpopuläre Entscheidungen zu verzögern (1)
- Um die allgemeine Akzeptanz des neuen Gesetzes zu erhöhen (2)
- Um das politische Interesse der Bürger*innen zu erhöhen (3)

End of Block: Instrumental goal text

Start of Block: Substantive goal text

Q8

Bitte lesen Sie sich den folgenden Text sorgfältig durch, denn Ihnen werden dazu später Fragen gestellt.

Diese Studie wird in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie durchgeführt. Die deutsche Bundesregierung plant ein neues, **bundesweites Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien** zu entwickeln. Sie hat beschlossen, die Öffentlichkeit zur Teilnahme an einem Entscheidungsgremium einzuladen, um dieses Gesetz zu entwickeln. Das Gremium wird zu **50% aus Expert*innen** und zu **50% aus Vertreter*innen verschiedener Bürgergruppen** wie Familien, Student*innen und älteren Menschen bestehen. Dieser Entscheidungsprozess welcher Bürger*innen involviert, wird als **Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung** bezeichnet. Durch die Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung kann die **Qualität** des geplanten Gesetzes für erneuerbare Energien verbessert werden. Wenn **Bürger*innen ihre Ideen, Bedenken und Erfahrungen einbringen**, kann dies dazu führen, dass wichtiges Wissen einbezogen wird, das Expert*innen andernfalls möglicherweise übersehen würden, was letztlich zu einer fundierteren und **umfassender informierten Entscheidung** führt.

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass Sie als Bürger*in eingeladen sind, am Entscheidungsgremium für das neue Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien teilzunehmen. Da dieses Verfahren der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung bei der Entwicklung eines Gesetzes recht neu ist, wurde das Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie angehalten eine Studie dazu in Auftrag zu geben. In dieser Studie interessieren wir uns für Ihre Einstellung zu dem beschriebenen Verfahren und werden Ihnen dazu einige Fragen stellen. Am Ende der Umfrage werden wir Ihnen einen Link geben, auf den Sie klicken können, um weitere Informationen über eine mögliche Teilnahme an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu erhalten.

 Page Break

AttentionCheck2 Was ist eines der Hauptanliegen beim Einsatz der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung?

- Um den Oppositionellen die Möglichkeit zu geben, unpopuläre Entscheidungen zu verzögern (1)
- Um wichtiges Wissen von Bürger*innen einzubeziehen, das Expert*innen andernfalls möglicherweise übersehen würden (2)
- Um das politische Interesse der Bürger*innen zu erhöhen (3)

End of Block: Substantive goal text

Start of Block: Normative goal text

Q9

Bitte lesen Sie sich den folgenden Text sorgfältig durch, denn Ihnen werden dazu später Fragen gestellt.

Diese Studie wird in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie durchgeführt. Die deutsche Bundesregierung plant ein neues **bundesweites Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien** zu entwickeln. Sie hat beschlossen, die Öffentlichkeit zur Teilnahme an einem Entscheidungsgremium einzuladen, um dieses

Gesetz zu entwickeln. Das Gremium wird zu **50% aus Expert*innen** und zu **50% aus Vertreter*innen verschiedener Bürgergruppen** wie Familien, Student*innen und älteren Menschen bestehen. Dieser Entscheidungsprozess welcher Bürger*innen involviert, wird als **Bürgerbeteiligung** bezeichnet. Indem diverse Bürger*innen an der Entscheidung über den Inhalt des neuen Gesetzes für erneuerbare Energien beteiligt sind, werden **demokratische Werte** aufrechterhalten. Somit wird die Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung dazu beitragen, das **Recht der Bevölkerung auf die Beeinflussung von Entscheidungen, die sie betreffen, wahrzunehmen.**

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass Sie als Bürger*in eingeladen sind, am Entscheidungsgremium für das neue Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien teilzunehmen. Da dieses Verfahren der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung bei der Entwicklung eines Gesetzes recht neu ist, wurde das Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie angehalten eine Studie dazu in Auftrag zu geben. In dieser Studie interessieren wir uns für Ihre Einstellung zu dem beschriebenen Verfahren und werden Ihnen dazu einige Fragen stellen. Am Ende der Umfrage werden wir Ihnen einen Link geben, auf den Sie klicken können, um weitere Informationen über eine mögliche Teilnahme an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu erhalten.

Page Break

AttentionCheck2 Was ist eines der Hauptanliegen beim Einsatz der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung?

- Um den Oppositionellen die Möglichkeit zu geben, unpopuläre Entscheidungen zu verzögern (1)
- Das Recht der Bevölkerung auf die Beeinflussung von Entscheidungen, die sie betreffen, wahrzunehmen (2)
- Um das politische Interesse der Bürger*innen zu erhöhen (3)

End of Block: Normative goal text

Start of Block: Usefulness

usefulness

Wir sind an Ihrer Meinung über Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung interessiert. Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den einzelnden Aussagen zustimmen.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ab (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme voll und ganz zu (7)
Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung führt zu besseren Lösungen für Probleme im Land (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung ist sinnlos (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung ist ein nützlicher Bestandteil der Entscheidungsfindung (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung führt NICHT zu guten Entscheidungen (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Usefulness

Start of Block: Procedural Fairness

Fairness Wie nehmen sie den Entscheidungsprozess wahr?

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ab (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme voll und ganz zu (7)
Die Meinungen der Öffentlichkeit werden im Entscheidungsprozess ausreichend berücksichtigt (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Der Entscheidungsprozess ist frei von Voreingenommenheit (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Im Entscheidungsprozess werden die öffentlichen Interessen ausreichend berücksichtigt (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Entscheidungen werden auf der Grundlage präziser Informationen getroffen. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Der Entscheidungsprozess hält ethische und moralische Standards ein (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Procedural Fairness

Start of Block: Personal Gratification

Gratification

Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den einzelnden Aussagen zustimmen.

Die Teilnahme an der Entscheidungsfindung für das geplante Gesetz über erneuerbare Energien...

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ab (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme voll und ganz zu (7)
würde mir Spaß machen (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
würde mir ein zufriedenes Gefühl geben (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
würde mir ein Erfolgs Erlebnis vermitteln (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Personal Gratification

Start of Block: Perceived power

Power Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den einzelnden Aussagen zustimmen.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ab (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme voll und ganz zu (7)
Durch die Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung haben Bürger*innen einen großen Einfluss auf die endgültige Entscheidung (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wenn sich die Mehrheit der Bürger*innen im Rahmen der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung stark gegen etwas aussprechen würde, würde es nicht in die endgültige Fassung des Gesetzes aufgenommen werden (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Durch die Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung hat die Meinung der Bürger*innen auf die endgültige Entscheidung einen großen Einfluss (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Bürger*innen haben NICHT viel Mitspracherecht bei der endgültigen Entscheidung (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Perceived power

Start of Block: Willingness to participate

Willingness Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den einzelnden Aussagen zustimmen.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ab (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme voll und ganz zu (7)
Ich denke, ich würde gerne an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung über das geplante Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien teilnehmen. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich werde auf jeden Fall darüber nachdenken ob ich mich an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zum geplanten Gesetz für erneuerbare Energien beteilige. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Um zu zeigen, dass Sie die einzelnen Aussagen aufmerksam lesen, klicken Sie hier bitte 'Stimme zu'. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich möchte NICHT an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zum geplanten Gesetz für erneuerbaren Energien teilnehmen (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich beabsichtige an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung für das geplante Gesetz über erneuerbare Energien teilzunehmen. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Willingness to participate

Start of Block: Demographics



Age Wie alt sind Sie? (Bitte geben Sie nur die Zahl an)

Gender Was ist Ihr Geschlecht?

- Männlich (1)
- Weiblich (2)
- Nicht-binär / andere (3)
- Möchte ich lieber nicht sagen (4)
-

Nationality Was ist Ihre Nationalität?

- Deutsch (2)
- Eine andere, nämlich (3) _____
-

Education Welches ist Ihr höchster abgeschlossener Bildungsgrad?

- Kein Abschluss (1)
- Mittlerer Schulabschluss (10. Klasse) (2)
- Abitur (3)
- Universitäts- oder Hochschulabschluss (7)
-

Previous Haben Sie schon einmal an einer Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung teilgenommen?

- Ja (1)
- Nein (2)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: How realistic was the scenario?

ManipulationCheckB Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den einzelnen Aussagen zustimmen.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ab (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme voll und ganz zu (7)
Ich habe geglaubt, dass diese Studie in Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Wirtschaft und Energie durchgeführt wurde. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich habe geglaubt, dass ich die Möglichkeit haben würde, mehr Informationen über die Teilnahme an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu erhalten. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich habe geglaubt, dass ein neues Gesetz über erneuerbare Energien geplant sei. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insgesamt fand ich die Aussagen in der Studie glaubwürdig. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: How realistic was the scenario?

Start of Block: Debriefing

Q13

Sehr geehrte*r Teilnehmer*in,

Sie haben soeben an einer Studie teilgenommen, die angeblich in Zusammenarbeit mit der deutschen Bundesregierung im Hinblick auf ein geplantes Gesetz für erneuerbaren Energien durchgeführt wird. Diese Erklärung war jedoch eine Irreführung, denn diese Studie ist nicht in Zusammenarbeit mit der deutschen Regierung entstanden und meines besten Wissens ist keine Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung bei Gesetzgebungsvorhaben geplant. Diese Täuschung war notwendig, um das Szenario realistischer zu gestalten und herauszufinden, ob Sie ernsthaft in Erwägung ziehen würden, an der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu einem solchen Gesetz teilzunehmen.

Mit dieser Studie wollen wir testen, ob unterschiedliche Ziele der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung zu unterschiedlichen Beurteilungen der Verfahrensgerechtigkeit und Nützlichkeit und damit letztlich zu einer unterschiedlich hohen Beteiligungsbereitschaft führen. Daher waren die Beschreibungen der Ziele der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung nicht für alle Teilnehmer gleich.

Indem wir herausfinden, welches Ziel der Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligung die meisten Menschen bevorzugen, hoffen wir, dass mehr Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligungsverfahren mit Hinblick auf dieses Ziel organisiert werden, so dass mehr Menschen an Verfahren teilnehmen, die sie bevorzugen. Dies ist wichtig, da die Bereitschaft an Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligungen teilzunehmen im Allgemeinen recht gering ist. Indem wir mehr Menschen motivieren, an Öffentlichkeitsbeteiligungen teilzunehmen, hoffen wir, dass Bürger*innen in der Lage sein werden, weitreichende Entscheidungen, die sie betreffen, zu beeinflussen.

Bitte teilen Sie die Täuschung oder den wahren Zweck der Studie nicht mit anderen Personen die möglicherweise noch an der Studie teilnehmen werden, da dies ihre Antworten ernsthaft beeinflussen kann.

Nochmals vielen Dank, dass Sie sich die Zeit genommen haben und bei der Studie mitgemacht haben. Wenn Sie gerne weitere Informationen über die Studie erhalten möchten, können Sie mich gerne kontaktieren:
l.anhalt@student.rug.nl

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,
Luna Anhalt

Wichtig: Natürlich können Sie immer noch von der Studie zurücktreten, ohne dass dies negative Folgen hat. Sollten Sie nicht mehr mit der Verwendung Ihrer anonymen Daten einverstanden sein, kontaktieren Sie mich bitte diesbezüglich und geben Sie Ihre Prolific ID an.

End of Block: Debriefing

Start of Block: Block 17

comments Falls Sie Kommentare oder Anmerkungen zu dieser Studie haben, können Sie uns diese gerne hier mitteilen:

End of Block: Block 17

Start of Block: Back to prolific

Q42

Bitte klicken Sie den folgenden Link um zurück zu Prolific geleitet zu werden. Dies zeigt Prolific, dass Sie erfolgreich an der Studie teilgenommen haben.

<https://app.prolific.co/submissions/complete?cc=28ED74D8>

End of Block: Back to prolific
