

# 7. Searching for Nordic features: institutional logics of participatory budgeting in local government

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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of democratic crisis and increasing mistrust towards representative systems, new methods of citizen participation are expected. For local democratic governance, the involvement of citizens is an important goal. In fact, participatory forms of governance are gradually being institutionalised in democracies around the world (Escobar, 2022), and local governments have been active in developing new participation methods (Bennett et al., 2022). Participatory budgeting (PB), a budgeting process during which unelected citizens help define policies to be funded and/or allocate resources, is one such method (Bartocci et al., 2019).

First developed in the late 1980s, PB has become a well-known participatory method that local governments across the world are using. Having originated in Porto Alegre, Brazil, PB began to be developed as a counterforce against the inequality of local governance (Ganuza & Baiocchi, 2012). PB is a democratic innovation aiming to enhance citizens' well-being by providing opportunities to participate in public decision-making (e.g., Wampler, 2012). According to estimates, since 1989, PB has spread globally to over 7,000 cities, and interest continues to grow (PB World Atlas, 2023). Its far-reaching aims of strengthening the role of citizens in decision-making, more just redistribution of public money, and fighting against corruption have played important roles in its global expansion. There are several ways to implement PB because it is adaptable to various modifications and context-specific adjustments (Lehtonen, 2022; Sinervo et al., 2024).

However, new participation methods do not necessarily mean wider influence for and from citizens on local government. Here, institutional and organisational settings can play a crucial role. By institutional and organisational

settings, we refer to the practices, processes, and structures in the organisation that is implementing PB. Also, organisational actors, their roles, and their attitudes can be analysed as part of institutional and organisational settings. Although research on PB has steadily increased, prior research calls for more studies on the institutional viewpoint (Bartocci et al., 2019). Moreover, Migchelbrink and Van de Walle (2022) stated that public officials have not received adequate scholarly attention. To meet these calls, in this chapter, we analyse how public officials' roles, practices, and context of working affect the implementation of PB. Specifically, we ask how Nordic institutional features are shown in the implementation of PB in local government. We employ the theoretical lens of neo-institutional theory, specifically the concept of institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Thornton et al., 2012). Based on prior research and case examples, we approach PB in the Nordic local government context (see also Pekkola et al., 2023). Our empirical examples come from two Finnish cities that have implemented PB since 2020. We use interview data and observations from both cities.

The chapter continues with insights from the institutional features of PB in previous literature. In the third section, we turn our focus to prior research on PB in Nordic countries, following the case examples from two Finnish cities. We scrutinise the case examples with the idea of different logics and roles that occur in PB processes. We scrutinise the roles, practices, and atmosphere regarding public officials' planning and implementation of PB to identify typical institutional features of Nordic countries. Our chapter ends with a discussion of the Nordic institutional features in PB as it seems that the administrative roles, rules, and procedures, which often cause difficulties during the process, are emphasised in Nordic PBs.

## INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES OF PB IN PREVIOUS LITERATURE

In this chapter, institutional logics are the lenses that guide us to interpret PB as a local government process. Institutional logics can be defined as the socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organisations provide meaning to their daily activity, organise time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). These patterns affect individual or collective actors, as well as their identities and behaviour. Institutional logics are ideal types that describe socio-cultural, normative, and regulative patterns (Pache & Santos, 2013). In this chapter, we employ the concept of institutional logics to identify these socio-cultural, normative, and regulative patterns that take place in the PB process in a Nordic context.

In several studies on public budgeting, researchers have applied institutional logics (e.g., Ezzamel et al., 2012); they have also done so in studies on participation methods in local government (e.g., Castell, 2016). PB has also been studied previously through an institutional framework (e.g., Aleksandrov et al., 2018). The importance and relevance of institutional perspectives have been highlighted by prior researchers who stated that PB has typically been investigated from the viewpoints of design and results, and much less is known about the underlying institutional logics connected to adopting and implementing PB (Bartocci et al., 2019). Our focus is on public officials' viewpoints.

The conceptual model of institutional framing is used to study how local public administration can provide frames for community-led initiatives (Castell, 2016). Institutional framing refers to how the local authority shapes the conditions for community-led initiatives by frames. Institutional framing involves both formal and informal aspects. Castell (2016) indicated that a strong control orientation and focus on formal procedures may be grounded in a tradition of representative democracy, but also that it may constitute an obstacle to a flexible and supportive approach towards community-led initiatives.

Bartocci et al. (2019) employed the concept of institutional logics to scrutinise the development over time of the different logics related to the process of adopting and implementing PB and explored the associated links to PB models. The authors indicated that the development of PB over time has been characterised by the spread of emerging managerial and community-building logics that replace or coexist with the initially promoted political logic (Bartocci et al., 2019). In PB, therefore, much of the original political logic has been abandoned to create a useful method of change and innovation in order to improve public sector performance (i.e., upholding a managerial logic). Moreover, PB reflects the need to establish, restore, and increase citizen participation and empowerment (i.e., upholding a community-building logic). The authors claimed that these logics are not mutually exclusive but can coexist temporarily or permanently within governments, with varying degrees of tension, in blended or layered forms, possibly resulting in what can be considered a hybrid logic (Bartocci et al., 2019).

Steinbach and Süß (2018) stated that institutional logics can help to describe and analyse the complex institutional context of citizen participation. The authors analysed the processes and strategies of enactment and institutionalisation that influence how e-participation evolves in the specific institutional context of public officials from three municipalities in West Germany. They found three role identities in e-participation: entrepreneurs; pragmatists; and sceptics. In addition, the authors identified four institutional logics: bureaucratic-legalistic; managerial; participation; and co-production (Steinbach & Süß, 2018). Additionally, Escobar (2022) explored how public officials work to embed participatory forms of governance. Escobar (2022) illustrated that

the work does not operate in an institutional vacuum and showed how cultural change work proliferates across Scotland. Escobar (2022) talked about boundary work that public officials do, which shapes the nature of their activism in the liminal stage where participants stand at the threshold between what they were before the rites of passage and what they become afterwards: 'Public officials are not here, not there, but rather in-between worlds, traditions and identities' (p. 157). Thus, Escobar (2022) presented participatory governance not as an accomplishment but as a contested, fragile, and evolving assemblage that takes constant political work: Institutions are malleable; there is 'a degree of path dependence but actors can shape and bend institutional forces in new directions' (p. 157).

Migchelbrink and Van de Walle (2022) stated that public officials' role perceptions affect whether they use their discretion to limit or increase residents' say in participatory processes. Migchelbrink and Van de Walle (2022) developed a typology of public officials' role perceptions by examining how managers make sense of competing needs in PB: Are public managers more inclined to follow the preferences and interests of residents, local politicians, or their colleagues and their own professional norms and expertise? Migchelbrink and Van de Walle (2022) defined professional roles as socially constructed and dependent on interactions with colleagues, neighbouring administrations, and institutional arrangements. Like attitudes, roles are related to actual behaviour. As a result, the authors provided a typology of four distinct perspectives: a managerial perspective; a citizen-centred perspective; a technocratic perspective; and a sceptical perspective. These findings indicate that public managers' role perceptions in PB vary depending on their attitudes towards residents and local politicians. Additionally, in their study on local public managers' attitudes towards public participation in budgeting in Florida, Zhang and Yang (2009) defined three role perceptions for public managers in PB: citizen leadership; technocratic expertise; and bureaucratic indifference.

Different institutional logics can be identified in PB processes. Prior participation research recognised logics of bureaucratic-legalistic, managerial, participation, and co-production; on top of those, the logics in the PB context include political and community-building logics and a hybrid logic. Moreover, all of these logics include professional roles (managers and entrepreneurs, technocrats and pragmatists, sceptics, and a citizen-centred role). In this chapter, we analyse professional roles, organisational practices, and institutional atmosphere to identify the different institutional logics in PB in Nordic countries. We use the logics of political, bureaucratic-legalistic, and community-building logics identified from the prior PB literature in our analysis.

## PB AS AN INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS: INSIGHTS FROM NORDICS

Reflecting on the historical origins of PB, Nordic welfare states are a very different environment for PB. Nordic welfare states are characterised by high trust in public institutions, a high degree of equality, a high level of taxes, and a high level of public spending on welfare (Legard, 2018; Greve, 2007; Haveri, 2015). Culturally, one vital Nordic feature has traditionally been the consensual nature of decision-making (Haveri, 2015). Local governments tend to have a central role and extensive autonomy in Nordic countries, as they have a comprehensive mandate and extensive responsibility in different policy areas and citizens' welfare. At the same time, many local government responsibilities are widely regulated (Haveri, 2015). From the aspect of citizen participation and democracy, Nordic countries have a long tradition of representative democracy (Haveri, 2015; Häkli et al., 2023). Networks and inclusion of civil society associations can also be seen as characteristic of Nordic countries (Hall et al., 2009). Heavy responsibilities of municipalities affect the ways of governing Nordic local governments, resulting in the extensive size of the administration itself with references, for instance, to red tape and the number of administrative personnel needed. This offers an interesting environment for PB as well.

Although there is some knowledge concerning PB in Nordic local governments, a systematic picture concerning diffusion, timeline, and features seems to be lacking. Sweden was one of the first to introduce PB with 'citizens' budgets' in 2006 (Legard, 2018). The estimation is that, so far, Sweden has had altogether 18 to 24 PB processes, Denmark 5, Finland 20 to 25, and Iceland 6 (PB World Atlas, 2023). Additionally, some PB processes have been conducted in Norway (Legard, 2018). At a general level, it can be said that even though the rationales differ from that of the original PB, the Nordic version seems to be loyal to the original idea of inviting and encouraging people from different backgrounds to take part in local decision-making processes (Legard, 2018). Thus, typically in Nordic PB, citizens seem to have a real say over real money, as opposed to consultative PB.

### **Examples from Local Government**

In recent years, Finnish municipalities have been widely interested in PB for several reasons. As part of societal development, municipalities have increased the diversity of citizen participation methods in recent decades. From a regulatory perspective, there is an obligation for municipalities to organise possibilities for citizens to participate (Local Government Act 410/2015), and the

law lists possibilities of the different ways, one of which is to invite residents to participate ‘in the planning of the municipality’s finances’ (§22). In many municipalities, this is an incentive to organise PB. Many Finnish municipalities are active in different networks, sharing their experiences with citizen participation projects. PB in the capital city of Helsinki with a biennial 8.8 million euros is regarded as a ‘flagship’ of Finnish PB. However, the variety of PB processes is wide, and there are plenty of smaller PB projects in Finland. One of the smallest is the PB in Inari, a remote municipality in Lapland, with a budget of 10,000 euros.

Here, we concentrate on two Finnish municipalities that have conducted PB processes: Tampere and Lahti. There are many similarities in the two case examples of PB. Both have their initial origins in smaller-scale neighbourhood PB. In 2020, both started a citywide PB with a mid-sized budget in the Finnish context. Additionally, both have substantially similar process structures.

### **PB in Tampere**

Tampere is a city of approximately 250,000 residents. The first citywide PB, called ‘Mun Tampere’ (loose translation: My Tampere), was organised in 2020 with a budget of 450,000 euros (see the key figures in Table 7.1). Here, we focus on the implementation of the first edition of PB that was thematically framed to improve the well-being of adolescents. After the first edition, city-level PB was implemented a second time when security was chosen as the core theme. In Tampere, the mayor and elected officials shared the common will to start developing PB. PB was included as part of the city’s efforts in advancing the means of citizen participation at the local level. One of the aims of PB was to strengthen trust between city administration and residents.

The PB in Tampere consisted of six phases: in the innovation phase (1), people submitted ideas on how to advance the well-being of Tampere residents under the age of 18. In the pre-examination phase (2), the submitted proposals were evaluated by city officials to determine their feasibility, such as whether

*Table 7.1 Key figures of the PB in Tampere*

Budget	450,000 euros
Budget, euro per resident	2,000
Number of proposals	380
Number of voters	2,927
Number of projects being implemented	12
Size of PB core group of employees	3–4

*Source:* Data source in the city of Tampere.

the proposals fit the given budget or the city's jurisdiction. In the co-creation phase (3), ideas were further developed in local workshops between the city officials and residents. In six workshops, each proposal that was accepted in the pre-examination phase was discussed and developed further. During the cost-evaluation phase (4), the costs of carrying out the proposals were estimated. Residents selected the winning proposals in the voting phase (5), which was followed by the implementation phase (6). The PB process took approximately eight months, from April 2020 to November 2020 (see the key figures in Table 7.1).

In Tampere, the PB staff consisted of a 'My Tampere' team (3–4 civil servants) that was responsible for planning and organising the process. The team worked in cooperation with a PB working group that had 15 members from the city's different service areas (youth services, cultural services, sport and exercise services, and urban environment and infrastructure services). A vast group of over 40 civil servants in service areas worked as pre-examiners who evaluated whether the submitted proposals were feasible for further development in PB. Overall, more than 100 people working in the city organisation took part in implementing the PB process.

Despite the city's enthusiasm to develop PB, the implementation of the PB process in practice experienced diverse challenges. These were particularly (1) a lack of shared understanding of the PB inside the city organisation, (2) a lack of clearly defined responsibilities and priorities, and (3) resource intensity and unclear future costs (see also Lehtonen, 2022).

### **PB in Lahti**

In Lahti, there are approximately 119,000 residents. As a citywide process, 'Oma Lahti' PB was introduced in Lahti (loose translation: My Own Lahti) in 2020 with a budget of 100,000 euros from the annual budget. The second round was organised in 2021 with a budget of 200,000 euros (see the key figures in Table 7.2). The themes of PB were well-being, community spirit, environment, and children and young people. Here, both of these rounds are scrutinised (see also Pulkkinen et al., 2023).

Initially, the decision to conduct PB was made in the municipal council, giving political and strategic support for the process. The Department of Citizen Participation played a key role in planning and implementing the process. In the second round, due to administrative reform, the department was relocated within the Education Division. However, the process influenced all organisational divisions in the city.

From the beginning, the aims of the PB in Lahti were citywide and focused on strengthening citizens' participation in the city's operations. Before the PB round was implemented, it had been extensively planned (including field trips, benchmarks of other Finnish PB processes, and networking with other

Table 7.2 Key figures of the PB rounds in Lahti

	First round	Second round
Budget	100,000 euros	200,000 euros
Budget, euro per resident	833	1,666
Number of proposals	713	957
Number of voters	3,896	4,691
Number of projects being implemented	10	33
Size of PB core group of employees	6.5	2

Source: Data source, City of Lahti.

municipalities and research institutes). The first round of PB was affected by the outbreak of COVID-19, which altered the original implementation plans. The process was carried out fully online. COVID-19 also affected the second round to some extent, but four of the co-creation events were organised face-to-face in different city districts and an online event.

Regarding organising required PB resources, in the first round, in addition to the 100,000 euros, a budget of 60,000 euros was allocated for the administration of the PB process. In the second round, the budget was doubled to 200,000 euros, but the operating budget remained the same or even diminished. Communications resources were smaller due to a staff change resulting in not having a communications expert in the PB core group in the second round.

In both rounds, the basic structure of the process included six phases. The process began with a brainstorming phase (1) for residents to create ideas, followed by the implementation and cost-evaluation phase (2), in which city officials examined the feasibility of the ideas. The co-creation and planning phase was conducted with the citizens and the public officials (3), followed by a voting phase (4), an idea implementation phase (5), and an evaluation phase (6), which included the further development of the PB model. From the beginning, the PB process was scheduled to fit into the annual meetings timetable set for the different divisions in the city operations.

The PB process in both rounds was managed and operated by a relatively small number of public officials (2–6 persons). The PB core group consisted of two participatory operations coordinators, other municipal employees, and, in the first round, a communications expert. To communicate PB internally and externally, both of the rounds involved specifically assigned PB guardians and coaches. The PB guardians were volunteer residents who helped with organising the PB process within their own communities and neighbourhoods. The

PB coaches were public officials of the city organisation. They helped with the PB operations, such as cost evaluations. The purpose of the PB guardians and coaches was to help the citizens and city employees in the implementation of PB. Citizens were relatively active in submitting ideas and voting in Lahti PB, and after the first round, the interest seemed to rise as votes increased in the second round (see Table 7.2). This can be seen as one of the most important successes in both PB rounds. However, there were also challenging organisational issues in both rounds. First, PB caused a heavy workload and tight schedule, especially for evaluating the residents' ideas in different units of the organisation. Second, there was a lack of collaboration inside the organisation for planning and creating the roles, rules, and practices for the PB process. Third, to some extent, there were unclear rules and criteria for acceptance/rejection of the ideas (cf. Pulkkinen et al., 2023).

## INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS IN PB

Next, we scrutinise the institutional logics in Nordic PB, and, accordingly, we identify typical professional roles and organisational practices in different PB logics. Moreover, we identified from our case examples an institutional atmosphere (cf. Anderson, 2009) typical of Nordic local government that also played a role in PB (see Table 7.3).

First, when it comes to *professional roles* in PB, it became apparent that PB organising teams represented especially strong administrator roles. It was seen as important that PB teams needed to be familiar with how the process could be implemented in the legalistic context of local governments, and they had to have knowledge of how to run things in the bureaucratic processes as administrative procedures. Additionally, PB teams highlighted the juridical understanding of what could be, for instance, possible for PB proposals. Moreover, the PB teams were active in formulating and setting rules for the processes reflecting the regulator's role. Interestingly, in both cases, there was a bureaucratic take on running the process. The limited time and rapid pace for the PB process left few possibilities for new and innovative practices. Instead, administrative roles were emphasised, and a settling to existing practices was required.

In both case examples, PB had been accepted in the political decision-making process, and the processes had political support. Perhaps this was the reason PB teams did not really illustrate the promoting roles. Additionally, they mainly worked as coordinators and felt that they did not have the position of promoters, and it seems there was little space for this type of agenda-setting role. However, because there were a lot of difficulties in the process, stronger promotion, for example, by managers, would have been needed, at least inside the organisations. The number of ideas and voting turnout reflected that PB

Table 7.3 Contesting institutional logics and features in PB processes

	Political logic	Bureaucratic-legalistic logic	Community-building logic
Professional roles	Promoter, agenda setter	Administrator, regulator	Bridge builder, activist
Organisational practices	Networks, communication	Rules, administrative procedures, resource allocation, division of responsibilities, formal representation of organisational divisions and units	Co-creation phase, community agents
Institutional atmosphere	Value of direct participation, willingness to experiment, flexibility	Hierarchy, <i>ex ante</i> working culture, preparation, annularity and cyclicity, strong expert agency, control	Empowerment, engagement, inclusion

Source: Author's own illustration.

was surprisingly well known and accepted by citizens. PB teams in both cities recognised the need for promoting PB and putting PB on the agenda more widely in the organisations.

The role of community builders was relatively invisible in the PB processes examined. The fact that this was in the first round of PB could explain the emphasis on administrative and bureaucratic-legalistic roles. In both case examples, it was seen as important, for instance, to co-create ideas with citizens. This could reflect the community builders' role and the unique feature of the Nordic context in consensus seeking. There were also activities aimed at building bridges over administrative divisions and engaging people in the process. In Lahti, PB coaches and guardians provide a good example of the community-building activities. Also here, the need for stronger activism inside the organisations was recognised but missed in both PB processes.

Second, the *organisational practices* underline the administrative procedures, such as rules for citizen participation. Additionally, the resource allocation for PB originated from annual budgets, which had to follow the cost centre's requirements and operating time. Furthermore, it was regarded as important that different organisational divisions and units were represented properly. However, it was experienced that PB was organised as an extra task that had to be taken care of on top of other work duties. Naturally, this clashed with the organisational practices suited for the annual administrative cycle of planning, implementing, and evaluating. It also meant that practices were created on the way as the PB process proceeded. During the PB process, we identified confusion about responsibilities related to pre-examination of PB proposals and their cost evaluation. Some service units of the city experienced challenges in adjusting PB as part of the annual working cycle of the city organisation. For example, PB was experienced in service units as a sudden project that caused an extra burden. They were expected to be able to adjust PB proposals to their daily work and re-evaluate the priorities of their work tasks, although at least some of the service units generally plan their annual working cycle well beforehand. The general guidelines of their work, annual investment budget, and projects to be implemented were often already planned and decided. In service units, PB was experienced as an obligation that was organised from above, as an element that was expected to be taken as one priority but without clearly defined responsibilities or priorities.

We distinguish PB as a resource-intensive process that lacks clarity in terms of possible future costs. For instance, in Tampere, the PB team developed a model for the equal distribution of PB funds. In the model, the city was divided into five districts that were assigned 70,000 euros each for district-level proposals, and the whole city received 100,000 euros for citywide proposals. The model was believed to serve inhabitants in different parts of the city in an equal manner. However, several service units pointed out that this funding

does not necessarily cover the future costs that the proposals may initiate for the city. Therefore, the costs of implementing PB may become much higher than publicly communicated to residents, in the amount of 450,000 euros. As a resource-intensive process, PB cross-cuts diverse service areas and units that need to devote working hours to PB in different phases of the process. Especially in the first round of PB, the workload was difficult to estimate as people did not have prior experience with the process and the resources it requires, particularly working hours in different phases of the process. Additionally, the duration of the PB process in Tampere was challenging and required resources from service units for several months.

Interestingly, both PB processes included a co-creation phase, which was seen as important in the aims of inclusion and citizen engagement. Additionally, there were activities to create networks inside city organisations. However, the activities were not adequate in the end because there was a lack of commitment and support from cities' top and middle management. Moreover, there was little room for practices of political and community-building logics, such as networking and communicating the word on PB, which was stated as valuable for the success of the process.

Third, different institutional logics include different *institutional atmospheres* that reflect the attitudes, values, and climate for PB. In PB processes, there were problems caused by lack of commitment to the process, as not all service areas of the city shared a common understanding of the PB process and its core idea. They struggled with the idea that PB was decreasing their power to execute decisions and set priorities for city development (cf. Lehtonen & Radzik-Maruszak, 2023). Additionally, the fact that PB was organised as an extra task caused several difficulties. For example, the pre-examination and cost-evaluation phases were delayed. Practices were created on the way as the PB process proceeded. This illustrates the atmosphere in which PB was implemented: PB with surprising elements and a fast pace trying to settle in the bureaucratic and hierarchical culture of local government. However, the aims of inclusion were held high during the processes, illustrating the atmosphere needed for community building.

## DISCUSSION: ARE THERE NORDIC INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES IN PB?

Based on our study on PB execution in Nordic countries, according to prior research and with illustrative case examples, we discuss our findings to reflect whether there are Nordic institutional features in PB. In PB, there seems to be an emphasis on the administrative processes, highlighting the importance of public officials' roles, practices, and working atmosphere in Nordic countries. We identified three main institutional logics that all appeared during PB

processes: political; bureaucratic-legalistic; and community-building logics (cf. Bartocci et al., 2019; Migchelbrink & Van de Walle, 2022; Zhang & Yang, 2009). Diverse simultaneous logics cause tensions and difficulties in implementing the PB process in local government.

Originally, PB started as a counterforce to unequal local governance. Since then, PB has evolved and been adapted to specific contexts and their needs. It seems that in the Nordic context, the institutional features highlight conventional administrative characteristics. This might be because of the rather extensive responsibilities of local governments in the Nordic welfare state context, which highlights the importance of strong administration (e.g., Haveri, 2015).

Although PB processes are carefully planned, processes are unexpected by nature, which creates difficulties in organising local governments that are typically relatively hierarchical and bureaucratic-legalistic in nature. In difficult situations, Nordic PB processes tend to rely even more heavily on administration and bureaucratic expertise when explaining why something is or is not possible. This can be seen as an emphasis on the viewpoints of local government instead of citizens.

Typically, Nordic countries are characterised by high trust in governments and public institutions, the consensual nature of decision-making, avoidance of conflicts, long traditions of representative democracies and networks, and civil society as part of governance (see, e.g., Haveri, 2015). These characteristics can be identified in PB processes: processes are carefully planned; rules are set; equality of representativeness is highlighted; and aims of inclusiveness are carried out. Additionally, political support is expected for PB processes. However, as Castell (2016) put it, a focus on formal procedures may also constitute an obstacle to a flexible and supportive approach towards citizen participation processes. This can be seen in the difficulties in organising PB.

We found evidence for the kind of internal activism by public officials that Escobar (2022) described as public officials being in between worlds, traditions, and identities. The different roles that public officials illustrate during the process underline the 'being in between', taking care of the PB as an administrative procedure, and simultaneously building networks and spreading the word on PB. These kinds of actions exhibit the role of public officials acting between different institutional logics.

To conclude, we argue that attention to the institutional environment is important when participation methods are used (Edelenbos, 2005). Our case examples interestingly show that the difficulties lie in the implementation and organisation of PB. There is a risk that this will eventually result in the overall success of PB. These issues are connected to well-functioning structures, organisational culture, and resources that enable influential citizen participation (Kurkela, 2022). With its special, and somewhat unique, features, the

Nordic context offers an interesting setting for PB research. Therefore, we call for more research that combines PB and Nordic features of governance, for example, comparative studies between Nordic PB processes.

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