

Discussion:

The case for fiscal openness



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Objective: Good Government



Re-emergent role of government to address problems of the “public good”, beyond the old debate of markets versus state

- Political agents who pursue “good” public policies
- Bureaucracies that are capable of, and accountable for, implementing good public policies

Means: Fiscal Openness



Review asks: what is the impact of “government openness in the budget process”?

- Participation in budget process: direct democracy
- Information in budgets to change behavior of government agents: representative democracy

Who uses information available from fiscal transparency; for what actions; to influence whose behavior in positions of public office?

Limitations of fiscal openness



- Need for *technocrats* to determine public policy; role of trust in professional bureaucracies (rather than participation)

Eg: COVID-19; climate change

- *Budget* information may not help to select political leaders who would pursue “good” public policies

Eg: identity politics

Research Agenda on Government



- Needs to move beyond one type of *means* (fiscal openness) to focusing on *objectives*
- *Mechanism design*: how should agency relationships be designed to achieve the objectives of good government?

