



Enraged, engaged, or both? A study of the determinants of support for consultative vs. binding mini-publics

Journal:	<i>Representation</i>
Manuscript ID	RREP-2019-0095.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	mini-publics, political dissatisfaction, cognitive mobilization, political efficacy

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About the Special Issue

Deliberative democracy aims to broaden democratic practices and deepen citizens' engagement in decision making by investing in competent and reflective participation. Democratic innovations following different designs and methodologies aspire to implement and transpose the abstract ideas of deliberative theory to concrete participatory initiatives. The literature has identified a number of important outcomes of deliberative procedures such as opinion shifts, enrichment in participants knowledge betterment of 'civic virtues' of citizens and the potential to reach more legitimate decisions. There is an increasing number of 'experiments' employing a deliberative design and face- to-face deliberation commonly identified as 'mini-publics'. We know a good deal about their internal workings and efficacy but much less about their potential impact on the maxi public and how elites and the public in general perceive and react to these practices. Another critical issue is how to integrate these deliberative procedures especially those that occur in local level in institutional and traditional decision making and, in general, in the formal bodies in which decisions are made in the end (eg Parliament, government etc). This integration and their success seems to rely heavily on the acceptance of these innovations by elected public representatives and in general the public acceptance (or not) of them. Mini public experiments are expected to be able to provide some kind of feedback and influence to policy making. However, their impact on policy making remains unclear and the influence they wield to the policy agenda is not always identifiable. In addition, we should take into account that while all these small-scale innovations build on offline citizens engagement the new communicative environment of the Internet allows these initiatives to expand, and also endorse potentially new features and capabilities.

This special issue will try to understand how participatory spaces and participants in these democratic innovations can actually have an effect on non-participants, how they can induce support and trust in institutions of representative democracy and issues relating to their design and their different types.

Papers in this special issue address, among other topics:

- the determinants of citizens' support for citizens' assemblies selected by lot;
- the capacity of Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) to enhance voters' knowledge and capacity of judgement in ballot initiative processes;

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- 3 -the integration of deliberative mini-publics in collaborative governance;
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- 5 -the influence of mini-publics on public policy:
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- 7 -the concept of representation as this is revisited in light of mini public;
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- 9 -perceived legitimacy among the maxi-public;
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- 11 -deliberating on a hot topic in the real world;
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- 13 -the Institutionalisation of mini-publics.

14 Papers proceed to their analysis both from both a theoretical and empirical perspective and
15 provide a cross-country comparative research”.

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For Peer Review Only

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8 **Abstract**
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10 This article investigates the determinants of public support for consultative and binding mini-
11 publics at the local level in Belgium. The study demonstrates that while enraged (politically
12 dissatisfied) and engaged (politically efficacious) citizens are more supportive of both forms of
13 deliberative mini-public, citizens who are at once enraged and engaged are more likely to
14 support more radical reforms of representative democracy, including binding uses of sortition
15 that would lead to the replacement of elected politicians by citizens selected by lot.
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24 **Keywords:** mini-publics, political dissatisfaction, cognitive mobilization, political efficacy
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Introduction

Instruments of participatory democracy are being introduced more and more often across established democracies. In this article, and in this special issue, we look at one of these instruments: deliberative mini-publics (DMPs). These can be defined as a body of citizens selected by lot in order to mirror, as far as possible, the broader population, and who gather to deliberate on specific policy topics (Ryan & Smith, 2014). The POLITICIZE project has realized an inventory of such bodies set up by regional and national public authorities between 2000 and 2020,¹ identifying 120 DMPs. Countless examples of such instruments are also found at the local level.

This democratic innovation is based on the use of sortition. Despite the multiplication of experiences using sortition in politics, we still know relatively little about citizens' evaluation of this form of democratic innovation (Bedock & Pilet, 2020; Rojon et al., 2019; Vandamme et al., 2018). In this article, we aim to evaluate whether the profile of the supporters of DMPs varies depending on the strength of the policy prerogatives that are awarded to the new body composed by lot.

In most cases, these bodies have a merely consultative role, limited to recommendations or to the evaluation of existing policies, even though there are instances during which the citizens have had a direct impact on public policies and political decisions.² In Belgium, two regional parliaments have instituted permanent mechanisms over the last years directly associating citizens selected by lot with the legislative process. In the German-speaking community of Belgium (OstBelgien), a permanent citizens' assembly has been created to debate on topics that are on the agenda of the elected Parliament.³ In Brussels-Capital Region,

¹ <http://politicize.eu/inventory-dmps/>

² See, for instance, the Participedia database: https://participedia.net/?selectedCategory=case&change_types=changes_public

³ The system set up in the German-speaking community of Belgium combines a semi-permanent panel of 24 citizens selected by lot and sitting for 18 months, which decides on policy topics to be put to public

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3 the parliamentary regulations were modified to include citizens selected by lot as new members
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5 of parliamentary committees. These examples bring DMPs closer to the idea proposed by some
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7 scholars, public intellectuals or social movements of replacing (some) elected politicians with
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9 citizens selected by lot—for example by introducing legislatures (most often second chambers)
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11 composed by lot (Gastil & Wright, 2019; Hennig, 2017; Vandamme et al., 2018; Van
12
13 Reybrouck et al., 2014).
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17 These various uses of sortition in politics have very different implications. Consultative
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19 DMPs do not fundamentally challenge the representative status quo, whereas installing a
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21 second chamber composed of citizens selected by lot would be questioning the role and
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23 prerogatives of existing elected political elites. It is therefore important to analyse whether
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25 different political prerogatives given to bodies composed via sortition have an impact on public
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27 support for these forms of democratic innovation. In this article, we investigate who are the
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29 supporters of two alternative uses of sortition in politics. The first would set up a consultative
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31 deliberative mini-public that is consulted by the local council. The second would replace
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33 elected politicians from the local council with citizens selected by lot. In the latter case,
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35 sortition would be used for a body that would not merely be consultative, but that would have
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37 the same binding prerogatives as the elected local council.
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42 We take advantage of a survey conducted on the occasion of the 2018 local elections in
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44 Belgium in which a representative sample of over 3,000 citizens were surveyed. We identify
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46 three groups of citizens: those who do not support either of the two scenarios; those who only
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48 support the consultative scenario; and those who want to go even further with sortition and
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50 support the replacement of elected politicians. We then analyse the determinants leading to
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52 support for each of these three alternatives.
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58 deliberation. Another DMP composed of 50 citizens, also selected by lot, then deliberates for about a
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60 month on the topic defined by the first panel (Niessen & Reuchamps, 2019).

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3 The aim of the article is to position ourselves in a central debate in political science on
4 the determinants of support for more citizens' participation. Studying demands for direct
5 democracy, Bowler et al. (2007) argue that these demands come from two categories of citizen:
6 'engaged citizens', who feel competent enough to have a bigger say, and 'enraged citizens',
7 who no longer trust elected politicians. Their findings have largely been confirmed since, but
8 not applied specifically to citizens' support for political bodies composed via sortition, such as
9 DMPs. The originality of this article lies in examining how the two variables contribute
10 separately and in conjunction to explain support for two different uses of sortition in politics.
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21 In the first section, we briefly review the extant literature on public support for greater
22 citizen participation and for deliberative mini-publics. We then build on scholarly work on
23 political participation and support for referendums to develop hypotheses that could
24 differentiate citizens opposing and supporting the introduction of consultative and binding
25 deliberative mini-publics. The third section presents our data and variables. The fourth section
26 examines variations in levels of public support for consultative mini-publics and binding mini-
27 publics replacing elected politicians. Finally, in the last section, we compare the determinants
28 explaining why respondents support neither of the two types of DMP, only the consultative
29 form, or only the binding one. Our main finding is that internal political efficacy and
30 dissatisfaction with parties and politicians do not only have independent effects on support for
31 different forms of mini-publics: these effects are cumulative when we examine who supports
32 both forms of DMP.
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49 **1. The Determinants of Support for Greater Citizen Participation and Mini-Publics**

50 ***1.1. Support for Greater Citizen Participation***

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52 The literature on public support for democratic innovations giving a greater role to
53 citizens in policymaking has developed significantly over the last two decades. However,
54 studies looking specifically at citizens' attitudes towards deliberative mini-publics—or, more
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3 broadly, towards the use of sortition in politics—remain scarce. Most of the extant literature
4 builds on classical theories of political participation (Brady et al., 1995; Teorell et al., 2007) in
5 order to explain generic support for greater citizen participation, but without specific reference
6 to precise instruments. Gherghina and Geissel (2017), for example, show that a quarter of the
7 German population would like citizens to become the core policymakers, the same proportion
8 as those who prefer elected politicians. Similar proportions have been observed in Finland
9 (Bengtsson & Christensen, 2016), Spain (Font et al., 2015), Belgium (Caluwaerts et al., 2018)
10 and the UK (Webb, 2013). Regarding support for specific instruments of citizens' participation,
11 the most consolidated body of research focuses on referendums. Several studies show that a
12 vast majority of citizens are in favour of direct democracy (Bowler & Donovan, 2019; Donovan
13 & Karp, 2006; Schuck & de Vreese, 2015).

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Most existing studies do not specify the exact role citizens would play. We believe that the exact weight given to the outcome of instruments fostering citizen participation could greatly impact how citizens evaluate them, following the recent example from Rojon and colleagues (2019). They studied US citizens' support for referendums and open deliberative forums. For both of the instruments, Rojon et al. (2019) contrasted a situation in which the instruments were given a consultative or a binding role, and found that US citizens were less in favour of binding instruments. We apply the same kind of logic to contrast public support for two political bodies composed via sortition: an advisory deliberative mini-public and one that would replace elected politicians by citizens selected by lot in the local council. Consultative mini-publics entail that elected politicians still steer policymaking and simply introduce a new way to listen to citizens' demands. Replacing elected politicians with citizens selected by lot would, by contrast, significantly shift the balance of power and give real policy prerogatives to citizens at the expense of representative institutions.

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3 **1.2. Factors Driving Support for a Greater Role for Citizens in Policymaking: The Role of**
4 **Trust and Political Competence**
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8 Our goal is not only to examine whether levels of support for sortition in politics differ
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10 according to the role of the instrument, but also to understand what factors may divide citizens
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12 in their support for these models. Two strands of literature on related topics prove useful in that
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14 respect: the literature on the drivers of support for referendums and the literature on citizens'
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16 willingness to participate politically.
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19 Within the first strand of literature, two main lines of explanation are provided to
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21 account for public support for referendums (Donovan & Karp, 2006; Grotz & Lewandowsky,
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23 2019). They are summarized by Bowler and colleagues (2007), who contrast engaged citizens
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25 and enraged citizens. Schuck and de Vreese (2015) reframe this opposition in line with two
26
27 main hypotheses: cognitive mobilization (engaged) and political dissatisfaction (enraged).
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31 The first hypothesis states that citizens who are more politically interested (Schuck & de
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33 Vreese, 2015) and politically efficacious (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Webb, 2013) are more
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35 supportive of referendums. The second line of explanation stresses the role of political
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37 dissatisfaction (the 'enraged' citizens). Citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with representative
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39 democracy (Cain et al., 2003; Dalton, 2004; Webb, 2013): as a consequence, they want
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41 representative democracy to be reformed, and favour alternatives that shift power away from
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43 elected politicians.
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47 These pieces of work suffer, we believe, from two shortcomings. Firstly, they aim at
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49 understanding which citizens are calling for more opportunities to participate without taking
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51 into account the exact design and function of the democratic innovation at stake (Jäske &
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53 Setälä, 2019), whereas Rojon and colleagues (2019) show that support for advisory and binding
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55 democratic innovations are not driven by the exact same factors.
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3 Secondly, existing works analyse the cognitive mobilization hypothesis and the political
4 dissatisfaction hypothesis as two parallel lines of explanation. However, the two lines of
5 explanation may not be independent from one another. For example, Schuck and De Vreese
6 (2015) conclude their study on public support for referendums by claiming that
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13 In general, we do not believe that these two perspectives should be seen as mutually
14 excluding explanations (...) In this perspective, referendum support would not be
15 driven by sore ‘losers’ in the political process or generally disengaged outsiders but
16 by critical and concerned citizens who are dissatisfied with the way politics is run
17 but care about the whole (2015: 156).
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26 Classic works in sociology on political mobilization suggest that there is an interaction
27 between the level of political efficacy, the level of political trust, and the preferred forms of
28 political participation (Craig, 1980; Gamson, 1968). For Gamson (1968: 48), “a combination of
29 a high sense of political efficacy and low political trust is the optimum combination for
30 mobilization—a belief that influence is both possible and necessary”. Following this logic, we
31 believe that the cognitive mobilization and the political dissatisfaction mechanisms work in
32 interaction when it comes to support for sortition in politics. The two logics of incorporation of
33 sortition into local politics are very different in their degree of newness or radicalism. The
34 introduction of consultative mini-publics at the local level is already frequent; in contrast,
35 replacing elected representatives by citizens selected by lot in the local council would reshuffle
36 the system. The replacement of politicians by citizens selected by lot would radically question
37 the very principles of representative democracy, according to which popular sovereignty is
38 exercised by competent citizens that have been selected and elected by citizens to rule on their
39 behalf (Manin, 1997). We expect that feeling politically competent is a precondition to be in
40 favour of any reform that would introduce sortition into local politics. Yet, among the
41 politically mobilized, there may be a distinction between those who still trust elected politicians
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3 and those who do not. The former could be interested in deliberative mini-publics but without
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5 calling for the replacement of elected politicians. In contrast, citizens who feel politically
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7 competent and who no longer trust politicians could be in favour of a more radical use of
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10 sortition, such as the replacement of elected politicians by citizens selected by lot.

11 12 **2. Hypotheses and Variables**

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14 Based on this literature review, our first hypothesis is that there is a crucial difference
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16 between engaged and disengaged citizens. Citizens should therefore be separated according to
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18 their level of cognitive mobilization (in the words of Schuck and De Vreese). The notion of
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20 citizens' political competence (or cognitive mobilization) is quite broad. In most previous
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22 research, it is associated with the concept of internal political efficacy, defined as the idea that a
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24 person feels "competent to avail himself of the opportunity to use institutional channels"
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26 (Craig, 1979: 229). It could also refer to the level of interest expressed in political matters.
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28 Indeed, several studies show that political interest is a key predictor of a willingness to take part
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30 in democratic innovations (Neblo et al., 2010) or to support citizens as the key decision-makers
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32 (Gherghina & Geissel, 2019). We expect that citizens with lower levels of internal political
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34 efficacy and who are less politically interested are not supportive of any form of deliberative
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36 mini-public. We formulate two hypotheses:

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42 **H1a: Support for sortition in politics is higher among citizens who feel politically**
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44 **competent.**

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51 **H1b: Support for sortition in politics is higher among citizens who are politically**
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53 **interested.**

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55 The next line of explanation argues that 'enraged citizens', who are politically
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57 dissatisfied, support more participation in policy-making. Again, political dissatisfaction can
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59 refer to either the general functioning of the political regime or the judgement of the main
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61 actors of representative democracy (parties and politicians) more specifically. The way it has

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3 been operationalized varies a great deal in the literature. Some authors rely on the generic
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5 ‘satisfaction with democracy’ item (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; del Río et al., 2016; Schuck &
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7 de Vreese, 2015); others use a battery of items measuring trust in the main actors and
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9 institutions of representative democracy (Bertsou & Pastorella, 2017; Coffé & Michels, 2014;
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11 Jacquet et al., 2015). More recently, Gherghina and Geissel (2019) have proposed going back to
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13 Easton’s (1965) classical distinction between diffuse and specific support, and distinguishing
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15 between diffuse support for the principles of the political system and support for specific actors.
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17 Following these distinctions, we formulate two sub-hypotheses:
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21 **H2a: Support for sortition in politics is higher among citizens who are dissatisfied with**
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23 **the working of their political system.**

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25 **H2b: Support for sortition in politics is higher among citizens who distrust the main**
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27 **actors of representative democracy (parties and politicians).**

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30 We do not believe that the effects of political dissatisfaction and cognitive mobilization
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32 are independent. We expect that citizens who are trustful and politically efficacious and
33
34 interested are more supportive of consultative mini-publics because these provides them new
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36 opportunities to be politically active without challenging the system. In contrast, these citizens
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38 would not support replacing elected local councillors with citizens selected by lot, as that would
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40 be perceived as too disruptive.
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44 **H3: Citizens who are more politically efficacious and interested and more politically**
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46 **trustful are more likely to support consultative mini-publics only.**

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49 In contrast, the combination of high political efficacy/political interest and low political
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51 trust should lead to a preference for the binding scenario. For distrustful citizens who feel
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53 competent politically, such a use of sortition in politics would be perceived as a real challenge
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55 to established political elites and representative institutions. We expect that citizens who are at
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57 once engaged and enraged are more likely to support the replacement of elected politicians by
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3 citizens drawn by lot. The consultative scenario may still be appealing as a way to increase
4 citizen participation and make politicians more accountable, but the binding one would go
5 further by allowing disruption of the balance of power between citizens and politicians.
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10 **H4: Citizens who are more politically efficacious and interested and less politically trustful**
11 **are more likely to support binding use of sortition.**
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14 **3. Data and Method**

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16 Our data are taken from the Belgian Local Election Survey 2018 coordinated by the
17 research consortium EOS-Represent. The survey was conducted online between 29 October and
18 27 November 2018, between two and six weeks after the local elections on 14 October 2018.
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22 **Participants were recruited from within the Belgian electorate by Qualtrics Inc. Strict quotas**
23 **were applied for gender, age, education and region of residence (Flanders, Wallonia and**
24 **Brussels). In total, a sample of 3,142 respondents—eligible voters in the local elections—were**
25 **surveyed. The sample representativeness is rather good, as confirmed by a comparison between**
26 **its socio-demographic composition and that of the Belgian population (see Appendix 1). We**
27 **note just a small overrepresentation of respondents with a higher education degree and a small**
28 **underrepresentation of younger citizens in the region of Brussels.** We conducted two types of
29 analysis: a descriptive analysis of supporters of the introduction of sortition at the local level
30 and a multinomial regression analysis of the determinants of support for consultative and
31 disruptive uses of sortition. The following question was included in the questionnaire:
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48 Could you tell us whether you would be very much in favour, rather in favour, neither in
49 favour nor against, rather against or very much against the following political
50 mechanisms for your municipality:
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54 - a body of citizens selected by lot that would be consulted by the local council
55 composed of elected politicians;
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3 - a body of citizens selected by lot that would replace the current local council
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5 composed of elected politicians.
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9 After the descriptive analysis of these questions, we recoded the variables into three
10 groups: one with citizens who opposed both scenarios; one with those who supported the
11 consultative scenario only; and one with those who supported the replacement of elected
12 politicians by citizens drawn by lot. As we will discuss in the next section, these three groups
13 reflect the distribution of respondents. There were very few respondents who were supportive
14 of replacing politicians but who were against consultative mini-publics. For our analyses
15 (multinomial regressions), we use these three categories as dependent variables.
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19 Belgium and local politics are very appropriate for examining public support for such
20 democratic innovations. Participatory democracy is gaining ground in Belgium. In recent years,
21 citizens' assemblies composed by lot have been tested by regional parliaments across the
22 country. At the local level, several municipalities have also tested such instruments. Belgian
23 citizens are therefore more likely than citizens in many other countries to have heard about
24 deliberative mini-publics. These elements do not neglect the fact that a good share of the
25 population, especially among the least politically interested citizens, is not familiar with
26 sortition in politics, but Belgian citizens are more likely than citizens in most other countries to
27 have heard about these mechanisms. The principle of sortition is not too hard to apprehend.
28 Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that this is a limitation when studying public support for
29 DMPs.
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33 There are three other potential limitations of our data. Firstly, results may have differed
34 had we tested this idea on the national level. On the one hand, we know from previous studies
35 that public trust and satisfaction with politics are a little higher at the local level in Belgium
36 (Hennau & Ackaert, 2014). This could limit public support for alternative forms of
37 policymaking in Belgian municipalities. On the other hand, the local level may be the most
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3 appropriate to introduce bodies composed via sortition, as local political issues are perhaps a bit
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5 easier for citizens to apprehend and DMPs may be easier to organize at a smaller scale. These
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7 elements of reflection should be kept in mind later when we discuss the implications of our
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9 findings.

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12 Secondly, the idea of replacing the elected local council with a body composed of
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14 citizens selected by lots would be a radical reform. Ideally, it would have been interesting to
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16 propose a third model, a body composed via sortition that would act as a sort of second
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18 chamber of the elected local council (Gastil & Wright, 2019). Such a question was not included
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20 in the final questionnaire. Nevertheless, there have been ongoing discussions and debates on the
21
22 role of the local council. Local politics is widely dominated by the local mayor and the local
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24 executive of aldermen. In addition, the publication of the book *Contre les élections (Against*
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26 *Elections)* by David Van Reybrouck (2014) launched a quite visible public debate on the idea
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28 of replacing the second chamber of the parliament in Belgium with an assembly of citizens
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30 selected by lot. In that respect, the idea of replacing the local elected council with a body
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32 composed via sortition would not appear totally unrealistic for respondents.

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38 Finally, a last limitation in our data concerns the way the Belgian Local Election Survey
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40 was organized. It was an online self-administered survey. The sample is overall rather
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42 representative of the Belgian population, but we cannot fully dismiss the bias introduced by
43
44 self-selection.

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47 We capture internal political efficacy via a scale built upon four items (see section 3):
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49 (1) I consider myself capable of participating in politics; (2) I think I would do an equally good
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51 job compared to most elected politicians; (3) I think I am better informed about politics and the
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53 government than most people; and (4) I think I have a pretty good understanding of the
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3 important issues facing our society.⁴ The scale computed is reliable (Cronbach's alpha=0.77).
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5 Political interest is measured on a 0 to 10 scale ranging from 'not at all interested' to 'extremely
6
7 interested' (see Appendix 2).
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10 The second set of independent variables relate to political dissatisfaction. We work with
11
12 two alternative scales. The first combines various questions capturing citizens' (dis)satisfaction
13
14 with the way democracy works in Belgium. This political (dis)satisfaction scale is built upon
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16 three items: (1) To what extent are you satisfied with Belgian politics in general? (2) To what
17
18 extent are you satisfied with the policies that have been implemented over the last years in
19
20 Belgium? and (3) To what extent are you satisfied with the formal rules of Belgian politics?⁵
21
22 The scale computed is very reliable (Cronbach's alpha=0.90). It relates to political support
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24 towards the political regime, political institutions and regime performance (Dalton, 1999;
25
26 Norris, 2011). In addition, because we are examining the introduction of sortition at the local
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28 level, we also include a variable capturing citizens' satisfaction with politics in their
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30 municipality as a control variable.
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35 As Schuck and de Vreese (2015) show in their study of support for referendums, what
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37 seems to matter most is how citizens evaluate elected politicians and political parties. The two
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39 authors use the concept of "political cynicism" that they define as "the (perceived) gap between
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41 voters and their elected representatives. It implies that the self-interest of political actors is their
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43 primary goal and that the common interest is secondary at best" (Schuck & de Vreese, 2015, p.
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45 151). Building on the same logic, we use a scale of distrust in parties and politicians based upon
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47 six items: (1) during the elections, each party promises more than the next, but ultimately this
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49 results in little; (2) political parties do not offer the people really differing policy alternatives;
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51 (3) parties make too many promises that they cannot keep; (4) most politicians are out of touch
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57 ⁴ For each item, respondents were asked to declare whether they totally disagree, rather disagree, neither
58 agree nor disagree, rather agree or totally disagree with the claim.

59 ⁵ For each item, respondents were asked to declare whether they were very dissatisfied, dissatisfied,
60 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, satisfied or very satisfied.

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3 with the people's problems; (5) politicians let campaign advisors and opinion polls determine
4 their views on political issues; and (6) politicians are more interested in the battle between
5
6 persons than the confrontation of ideas (Cronbach's alpha= 0.81).⁶
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10 We add four socio-demographic control variables: gender, age, education and
11 socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is measured by introducing a dummy for blue
12 collars and another dummy for respondents who are unemployed or unfit to work (Appendix 1).
13
14 Various researchers have shown that these four variables tend to affect citizens' attitude
15 towards instruments of citizens' participation in policymaking in general and towards
16 deliberative mini-publics in particular (Ceka & Magalhaes, 2019; Dalton & Welzel, 2014; del
17 Río et al., 2016; Tiberj, 2017; Vandamme et al. 2018; Verba et al., 1997; Webb, 2013). We also
18
19 control for the potential effect of the size of the municipality.
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28 **4. Descriptive Analysis: Variations in Support for Democratic Innovations**

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30 In this section, we examine the extent to which Belgian citizens support the two
31 scenarios (consultative and binding) using sortition in local politics (see Table 1).
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36 [Table 1 near here]
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39 Three elements stand out. Firstly, the public is quite torn about the opportunity of
40 introducing sortition in local politics. A little less than half of the respondents declare
41 themselves in favour of consultative mini-publics, whereas almost a third support the
42 replacement of elected local councillors by councillors selected by lot (31%). Considering the
43 radical character of this last proposal, this level of support is far from anecdotal. By way of
44 comparison, 41.5 per cent support the introduction of binding referendums at the local level,
45 which would constitute a less radical reshuffle of political power at the local level. Overall,
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⁶ For each item, respondents were asked to declare whether they totally disagree, rather disagree, neither agree nor disagree, rather agree or totally disagree.

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3 Table 1 shows evidence of broad demands to increase the role of citizens in local politics in
4
5 Belgium.

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9 The second main conclusion is that support is significantly higher for consultative
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11 DMPs than for replacing elected politicians by citizens selected by lot: there is a 19.5
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13 percentage point gap between the two. Thirdly, a significant share of the sample declare
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15 themselves neither in favour nor against the two mechanisms (around 35%). It is hard to know
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17 whether the ‘neither/nor’ answer actually indicates an intermediate position or if it shows that
18
19 some respondents have no real opinion on the issue. As we explain above, we should keep in
20
21 mind that some citizens may not be familiar with the use of sortition in politics.
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25 Table 2 presents how respondents are distributed when we combine their attitudes
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27 towards consultative and binding DMPs. Three main sets of attitudes emerge. The first
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29 accounts for 44.5 per cent of the respondents. It is composed of all of those who are not in
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31 favour of either way of introducing sortition into Belgian local politics. The second set of
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33 attitudes (24.4 per cent of the respondents) corresponds to individuals who are in favour of
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35 consultative DMPs but against a more disruptive use of sortition that would replace the local
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37 elected council. Finally, a third set of attitudes corresponds to those who support both uses of
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39 sortition (25 per cent of all respondents). The fourth set of attitudes—not in favour of a
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41 consultative DMP but in favour of a local council composed via sortition—appears to be very
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43 sparsely populated (6%). Therefore, for our later analyses, we use dependent variables
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45 reporting three more frequent attitudes: being against any use of sortation, being in favour of
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47 consultative DMPs only, and being in favour of a local council composed of members selected
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49 by lot.
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55 [Table 2 near here]

56 57 58 59 **5. Drivers of Public Support for Sortition**

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3 In this fifth section, we use one dependent variable dividing those who reject both types
4 of DMP, those who are only in favour of the consultative type, and those who are in favour of
5 the replacement of elected local councillors by citizens selected by lot (see section 4). As this
6 dependent variable violates the proportional odds assumption required for running ordered
7 logistic regressions, we use a multinomial regression model using respondents against both
8 DMPs as the reference category. We first introduce the independent variables separately
9 (Model 1) before testing for two interaction models (Models 2 and 3): the interaction between
10 distrust of parties and politicians and political efficacy, and the interaction between distrust of
11 parties and politicians and political interest. Coefficients are reported in relative risk ratios.
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26 [Table 3 around here]
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28 Table 3 confirms several of our hypotheses. Respondents are more likely to support
29 consultative forms only, or binding forms of mini-publics when they are more politically
30 efficacious (H1a), more politically interested (H1b), and more distrustful of parties and
31 politicians (H2b). However, H2a is rejected: those who express a higher level of dissatisfaction
32 with the political system are not more likely to favour consultative mini-publics or binding
33 mini-publics.
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43 [Figure 1 near here]
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46 Figure 1 reports the effect of internal political efficacy. For respondents with a lower
47 level of internal political efficacy, the predicted probability of being against both types of DMP
48 is 57 per cent, whereas it drops to 34 per cent for more politically efficacious individuals. The
49 predicted probability of being in favour of consultative forms of DMP rises from 19 per cent for
50 the least politically efficacious to 28 per cent for the most politically efficacious. The effect is
51 more striking for binding DMPs, with predicted probability rising from 23 per cent to 38 per
52 cent.
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[Figure 2 around here]

Regarding political interest (Figure 2), we find similar patterns. The probability of being in favour of consultative DMPs rises from 18 per cent for the least politically interested to 31 per cent for those who express the strongest interest in politics. For binding forms of DMP, the predicted probability rises from 25 per cent to 35 per cent. Political efficacy has a stronger effect on the probability of being in favour of binding DMPs, whereas the effect of political interest is more pronounced for the probability of being in favour of consultative forms of DMP only.

[Figure 3 near here]

The effects of distrust of parties and politicians on the probability of supporting the three alternatives are particularly striking. The probability of being opposed to both forms of DMP is 80 per cent for the most trusting respondents, dropping to 27 per cent for those who are the most distrustful of parties and politicians. The probability of being in favour of consultative forms of DMP remain relatively stable whatever the level of distrust for parties and politicians (between 16 per cent and 24 per cent). In contrast, the probability of being in favour of binding forms of DMP increases tenfold if we compare the most trusting respondents with those who are the most distrustful of parties and politicians (from 5 per cent to 50 per cent).

We hypothesized that support for consultative mini-publics only is higher among citizens who are at once politically efficacious/interested and politically trusting (H3). In contrast, we expected support for replacing elected local councillors with citizens selected by lot to be higher among citizens who are at once more politically efficacious and politically dissatisfied (H4). Given the fact that dissatisfaction with the political system is not statistically significant in the first model, we examine the interaction between distrust of parties and politicians and political efficacy (Model 2) and political interest (Model 3). In order to

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3 understand the effects of these interaction terms better, we also produced Figure 4, which
4 shows the effect of the level of internal political efficacy on the marginal effect of distrust of
5 parties and politicians.
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11 [Figure 4 about here]
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14 The first finding is that the interaction between political interest and distrust of parties
15 and politicians is neither statistically significant for support for consultative DMP nor for
16 support for a local council composed via sortition (Model 3). In contrast, the interaction
17 between political distrust of parties and politicians and internal political efficacy is statistically
18 significant for the support of binding forms of DMP (Model 2).
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25 These findings in Models 2 and 3, as well as the effects that are plotted in Figure 4, lead
26 us to conclude that H3 cannot be confirmed. Being politically engaged (high political efficacy
27 or high political interest) and at the same time remaining faithful to parties and politicians does
28 not lead to greater support for consultative DMPs. Rather, the mechanism that appears is that
29 support for consultative DMPs is fed either by lower levels of trust in parties and politicians or
30 by higher political efficacy. In Figure 4, we see that there is a small but non-significant
31 relationship between respondents' level of political efficacy and the marginal effect of distrust
32 in parties and politicians on support for consultative DMPs. Figure 4 suggests that political
33 efficacy annihilates the impact of distrust: when a respondent is more politically efficacious, the
34 impact of lower trust in parties and politicians on support for consultative mini-publics
35 disappears.
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50 In contrast, when we turn to H4, we can see that our expectations are confirmed.
51 Support for the replacement of elected local councillors by citizens selected via sortition is
52 stronger when distrust in parties and politicians is combined with higher levels of political
53 efficacy. The interaction term is statistically significant and positive in Model 3. When
54 respondents are more politically efficacious, the marginal impact of distrust in parties and
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3 politicians on the probability of supporting the replacement of elected local councillors by
4 citizens selected by lot becomes stronger (Figure 4). In other words, citizens who are both
5 engaged and enraged are more supportive of the replacement of elected local councillors by
6 citizens selected by lot.
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12 Finally, we can say a few words about the control variables introduced into the models.
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14 Older respondents are more likely to support only consultative forms of mini-publics than to
15 reject both forms of mini-publics, whereas younger respondents are more likely to support
16 binding mini-publics. People who do not have a degree are less likely to support binding forms
17 of DMP than to reject both forms of DMP. Blue collar workers and people who are
18 unemployed or unfit to work are less likely to support consultative forms of mini-publics
19 compared to the baseline category (those who reject both DMPs). Individuals who are more
20 supportive of the local incumbents are more likely to support consultative forms of mini-
21 publics only than to reject both. Finally, women appear to be less likely only to support
22 consultative forms of mini-publics.
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35 In line with Ceka and Magalhaes (2019), our findings show that we should pay more
36 attention to the effect of social and political inequalities when analysing support for democratic
37 reforms rather than focusing only on values and political attitudes. Our results suggest that,
38 even controlling for political efficacy, political interest and political distrust, individuals who
39 are socially or politically more alienated (be they women, younger people, unemployed
40 individuals or people with a lower socioeconomic status) are less likely to support consultative
41 DMPs only—that is, mini-publics that would not radically challenge the institutional status
42 quo. This effect does not hold, however, when examining support for a more radical use of
43 sortition. Is this a sign of a strong rejection of milder forms of political participation, or rather
44 of a radical unwillingness to endorse any institutional mechanism that maintains the
45 prerogatives of elected politicians? Future studies may seek to understand what is at play here.
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Conclusion

The aim of this article was to study what weight Belgian citizens are ready to give to deliberative mini-publics at the local level. Having identified three groups (those who reject both forms of DMP, those who are only ready to give DMPs a consultative role, and those who are ready to support the replacement of local elected councillors by citizens selected by lot), we investigated how political competence and political dissatisfaction influence support for various uses of sortition in local politics.

In doing so, we have sought to fill two important gaps in extant literature. Firstly, while knowledge about public support for greater citizens' participation or for specific instruments like referendums is fairly solid, we still lack empirical evidence regarding how many and what kinds of citizens would be happy to give a greater role in politics to bodies composed via sortition. Secondly, existing work has often failed to consider the crucial difference between consultative and binding deliberative devices.

Our first finding is descriptive. Based upon data from the 2018 Belgian Local Election Survey, we can see that DMPs enjoy quite significant support among the Belgian population. Around half of the respondents support consultative forms of mini-publics, and almost a third would be ready to go as far as replacing elected politicians at the local level with citizens drawn by lot. The supporters of the two models do not fully overlap. The vast majority of supporters of replacing elected politicians with citizens selected by lot are also in favour of consultative DMPs, but the opposite is not true. About a quarter of the citizens are willing to introduce consultative mini-publics in Belgian municipalities but are reluctant to fully replace the elected local council with an assembly composed of citizens selected by lot.

Secondly, we investigated the determinants of support for the two models. In line with earlier research on direct democracy, we show that support for sortition in politics is higher among citizens who feel more politically competent—who are more politically efficacious and

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3 interested—and among those who are dissatisfied with parties and politicians. However, what is
4
5 more interesting is when you differentiate support only for the consultative and support for the
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7 binding scenario by introducing interactions. Individuals who are at once more politically
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9 efficacious (engaged) and politically dissatisfied (enraged) are more supportive of a radical
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11 reform such as replacing elected politicians in the municipal council with lay citizens selected
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13 by lot. We do not find the same mutually reinforcing effect for political interest and distrust for
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15 parties and politicians. In order to support a radical reshuffle of the political system and more
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17 challenging forms of democratic innovation, one needs to be at once convinced of one's own
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19 political capacities and sceptical about the abilities of the main political actors (politicians and
20
21 parties) to do what is right.
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27 These findings have interesting implications for the broader debate about what forms
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29 citizens' participation could take in order to address the erosion of public support for
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31 representative democracy. Our study shows that citizens who both feel politically efficacious
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33 and distrust the main political actors are willing to accept reforms that would truly challenge
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35 the existing political order, up to the point of replacing elected politicians with randomly
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37 selected citizens. If, as expected by many authors, citizens tend to become more critical and to
38
39 feel more competent to participate politically over time, this may suggest that less challenging
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41 reforms limiting the input of citizens to the moment of consultation may not be enough to
42
43 restore faith in politics. As the number of citizens who are both enraged and engaged rises, the
44
45 gap between the democratic innovations that are actually implemented—typically, consultative
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47 and one-off deliberative mini-publics meant to complement representative democracy—and the
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49 aspirations of citizens may become wider and more problematic.
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54 These findings also have to be considered in relation to the context of data collection.
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56 We focus on the local level, which may have implications for our findings. As Belgian citizens
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58 are more satisfied with local politics than with national politics, the level of support for
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3 consultative DMPs may be higher, and support for the replacement of elected politicians by lay
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5 citizens may be lower than would have been registered at the national level. Citizens may be
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7 more open to democratic innovations that complement rather than challenge local
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9 representative institutions at the municipal level, since citizens' participation may appear easier
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11 to implement on the level of municipalities.
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14 In contrast, at the national level, two scenarios appear equally plausible. Citizens who
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16 are both enraged and engaged may be even more likely to support the replacement of elected
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18 politicians at the national level, as trust in national politicians in Belgium is very low. For the
19
20 other citizens, the national level may appear to be less relevant for the introduction of DMPs, as
21
22 national politics may appear to be too large a scale for such a form of democratic innovation, be
23
24 it in a consultative or a binding format. This article calls for further investigation comparing
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26 countries and levels of power, but opens avenues of research by showing that distrust of the
27
28 main representative actors and political efficacy are not separate lines of explanation of support
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30 for radical democratic reforms, but mutually reinforcing ones.
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Table 1: Support for direct and participatory instruments for the local level in Belgium (%)

	Consultative mini-publics	Mini-publics replacing local council	Introducing binding referendums
Strongly against	6.3	14.9	6.5
Somewhat against	9.2	19.3	10.3
Neither	35.2	34.9	41.6
Somewhat in favour	29.4	18.4	24.5
Strongly in favour	20.0	12.7	17.0
<i>Total in favour</i>	<i>49.4</i>	<i>31.0</i>	<i>41.5</i>
N	3142	3142	3142

For Peer Review Only

Table 2. Attitudes towards consultative and binding DMPs (% of total sample)

		Binding use of sortition	
		Not in favour	In favour
Consultative DMP	Not in favour	44.5	6.1
	In Favour	24.4	25.0

For Peer Review Only

Table 3. Multinomial regression of the determinants of support for deliberative mini-publics

VARIABLES	Outcome: Only consultative DMPs			Outcome: Binding DMP		
	(Ref.: opposed to both types of DMP)					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Satisfaction with the political system	0.962	0.962	0.961	0.966	0.967	0.967
	(0.0201)	(0.0202)	(0.0202)	(0.0194)	(0.0195)	(0.0195)
Distrust of politicians and parties	1.062***	1.137**	1.103***	1.156***	1.046	1.118***
	(0.0151)	(0.0520)	(0.0315)	(0.0163)	(0.0384)	(0.0267)
Internal political efficacy	1.053**	1.187*	1.052**	1.065***	0.873	1.066***
	(0.0186)	(0.0968)	(0.0185)	(0.0173)	(0.0626)	(0.0173)
Political interest	1.122***	1.123***	1.294*	1.097***	1.098***	0.942
	(0.0246)	(0.0248)	(0.132)	(0.0216)	(0.0216)	(0.0901)
Distrust politicians * efficacy		0.995			1.008**	
		(0.0034)			(0.0030)	
Distrust politicians * political interest			0.994			1.006
			(0.0042)			(0.0040)
Age	1.008**	1.008**	1.008**	0.992**	0.992**	0.992**
	(0.0030)	(0.0030)	(0.0030)	(0.0028)	(0.0028)	(0.0028)
Education (ref. university)						
1. None or elementary	0.847	0.849	0.845	0.466**	0.463**	0.467**
	(0.205)	(0.206)	(0.205)	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.123)
2. Secondary, incomplete	0.941	0.938	0.939	0.829	0.832	0.834
	(0.159)	(0.159)	(0.159)	(0.137)	(0.137)	(0.138)
3. Secondary, complete	0.924	0.923	0.920	0.963	0.962	0.966
	(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.137)	(0.136)	(0.137)
4. Higher, non-university	0.910	0.905	0.907	0.986	0.990	0.990
	(0.141)	(0.140)	(0.141)	(0.145)	(0.145)	(0.145)
Blue collar	0.527**	0.530**	0.526**	1.071	1.060	1.072
	(0.111)	(0.111)	(0.111)	(0.174)	(0.172)	(0.173)
Unemployed	0.728*	0.725*	0.723*	1.204	1.209	1.210
	(0.115)	(0.115)	(0.115)	(0.159)	(0.160)	(0.160)
Support for local incumbents	1.049*	1.048*	1.048*	0.966	0.968	0.966
	(0.0208)	(0.0209)	(0.0208)	(0.0176)	(0.0177)	(0.0177)
Female	0.725**	0.723**	0.726**	0.984	0.994	0.984
	(0.0714)	(0.0714)	(0.0716)	(0.0917)	(0.0928)	(0.0917)
Size of the city	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	(6.21e-07)	(6.20e-07)	(6.20e-07)	(5.11e-07)	(5.10e-07)	(5.11e-07)
Constant	0.0542***	0.0111***	0.0231***	0.0150***	0.159*	0.0327***
	(0.0257)	(0.0121)	(0.0169)	(0.0070)	(0.141)	(0.0207)
Observations	2,906	2,906	2,906	2,906	2,906	2,906

Note: Standard errors in parentheses, coefficients in relative risks ratios, *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, *

p<0.05

Appendix 1. Comparison between the sociodemographic composition of the panel and of the Belgian population

Category	Flanders		Wallonia		Brussels	
	Sample	Pop.	Sample	Pop.	Sample	Pop.
Men	48.5%	49.5%	47.4%	48.8%	47.8%	48.9%
Women	50.9%	50.5%	52.3%	51.2%	52.2%	51.1%
No higher education	59.8%	68.6%	63.7%	72.6%	51.2%	60.8%
Higher education	40.2%	31.4%	36.4%	27.4%	48.8%	39.2%
Age 18–29	17.5%	17.7%	19.3%	19.3%	32.0%	23.5%
Age 30–44	23.3%	24.2%	23.6%	24.7%	25.6%	33.0%
Age 45–64	34.7%	34.5%	35.9%	34.2%	26.9%	31.2%
Age 65+	24.7%	23.6%	21.3%	21.8%	15.6%	12.3%

Appendix 2. Descriptive statistics of the variables included

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Scale of internal political efficacy	3,042	12.4	3.5	4	20

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Scale of satisfaction with the political system	3,105	6.8	2.7	3	15

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Scale of trust in parties and politicians	3,011	22.9	4.2	6	30

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Political interest	3,077	5.4	2.9	0	10

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
None or elementary	146	4.68
Secondary, incomplete	503	16.13
Secondary, complete	1,176	37.72
Higher, non-university	808	25.91
University	485	15.55
Total	3,118	100.00

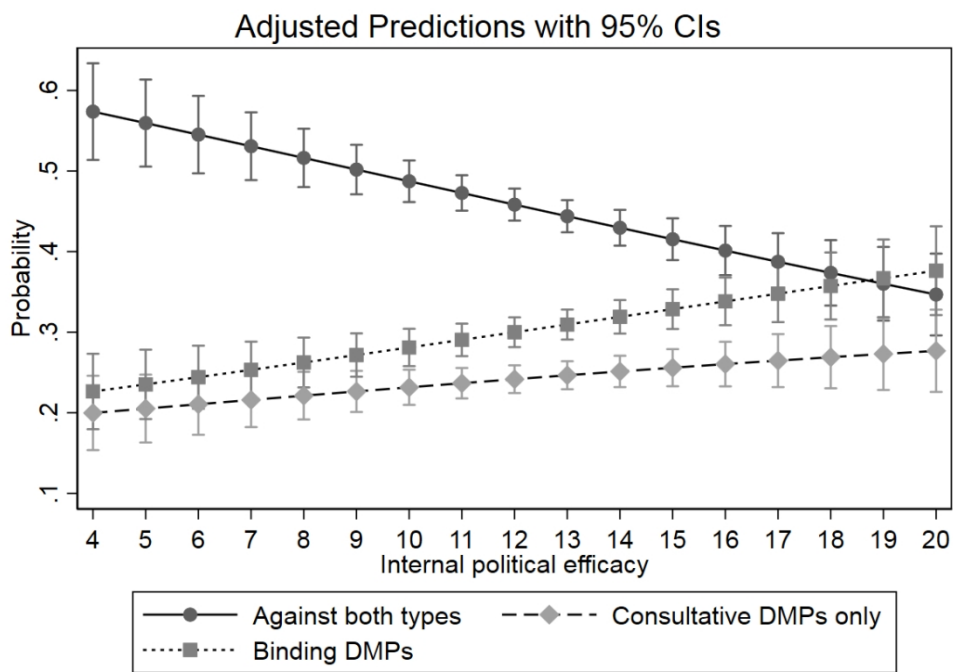
Blue collar	Frequency	Percentage
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No	2,879	91.63
Yes	263	8.37
Total	3,142	100.00

Unemployed or unfit to work	Frequency	Percentage
No	2,701	85.96
Yes	441	14.04
Total	3,142	100.00

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Satisfaction with local incumbents	2,987	5.1	2.7	0	10

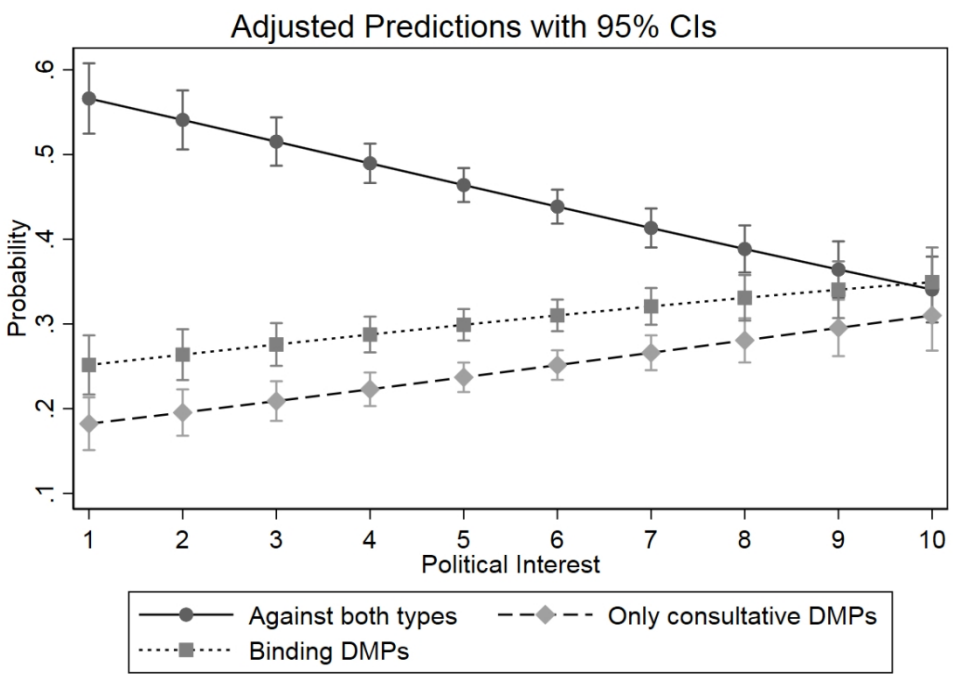
Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Size of the municipality	3,133	67420	89656	2128	502604



Effect of internal political efficacy on support for deliberative mini-publics

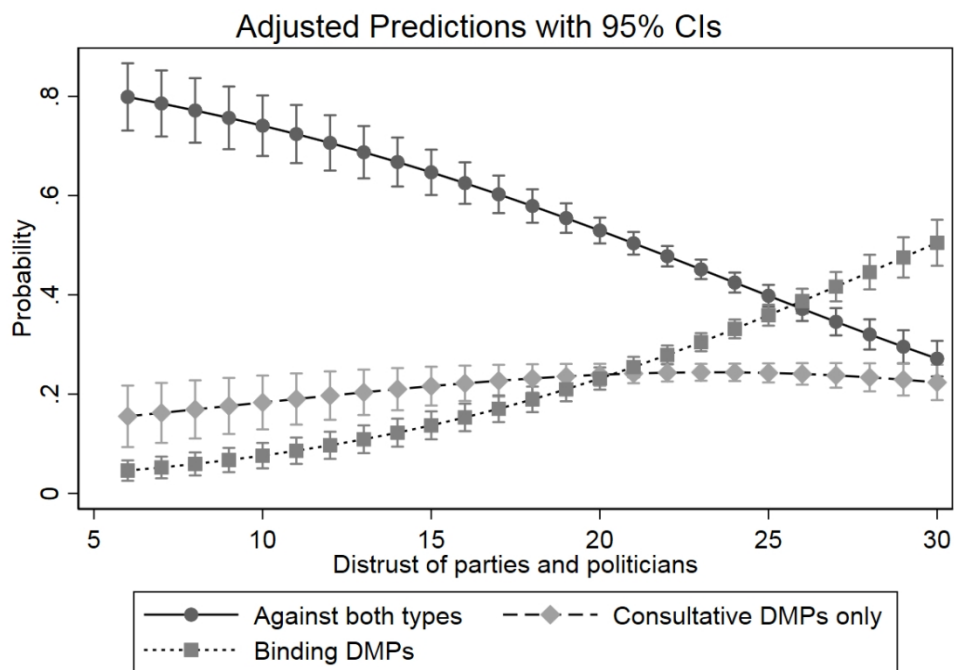
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Effect of political interest on support for deliberative mini-publics

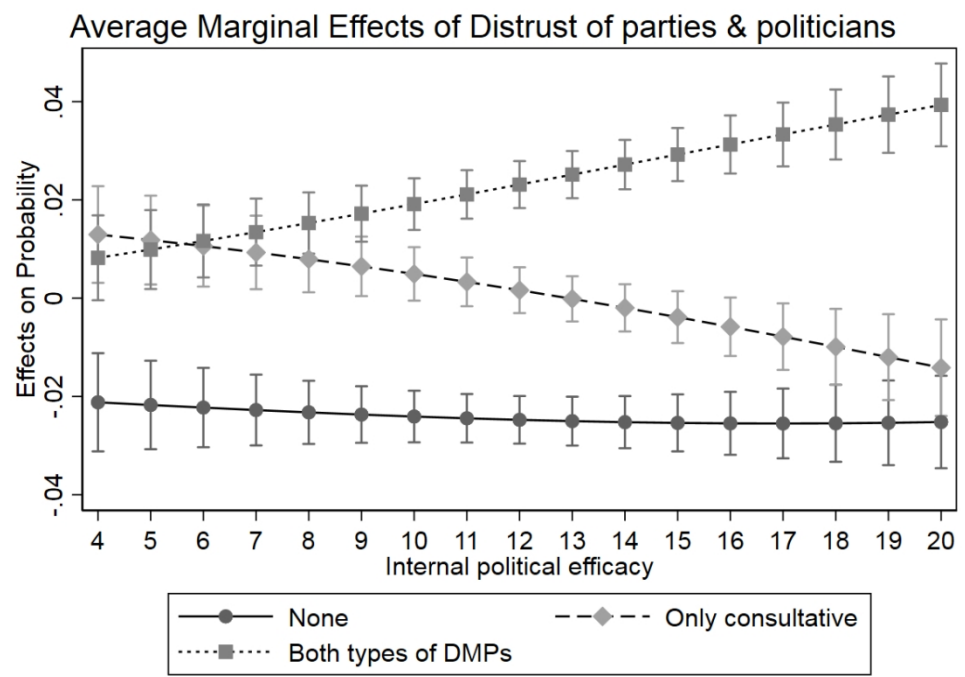
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Effect of distrust of parties and politicians on support for deliberative mini-publics

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Effect of internal political efficacy on the marginal effect of distrust of parties and politicians on support for deliberative mini-publics

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