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Who Supports Citizens Selected by Lot to be the Main Policymakers? A Study of French Citizens — [Source link](#)

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Who supports citizens selected by lot to be the main policy-makers : A study of French citizens

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Abstract:	<p>Despite their multiplication over the last 15 years, studies on the support for assemblies composed of citizens selected by lot are rare and the few that exist are analysing citizens' attitudes towards such mini-publics as consultative bodies associated to traditional representative institutions. In this article, we examine support for citizens' selected by lot as new policy-makers who would take the most important political decisions instead of political representatives. We contrast support for this radical democratic innovation with support for two other reforms increasing citizen participation: generic support for a greater involvement of citizens in policy-making, and specific support for citizen-initiated referendums. The goal is to understand whether the drivers of support for citizens selected by lot overlap or differ from the drivers of support for other forms of citizens' participation. We rely upon data from the 2017 French Election Study.</p>

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Abstract

Despite their multiplication over the last 15 years, studies on the support for assemblies composed of citizens selected by lot are rare and the few that exist are analysing citizens' attitudes towards such mini-publics as consultative bodies associated to traditional representative institutions. In this article, we examine support for citizens' selected by lot as new policy-makers who would take the most important political decisions instead of political representatives. We contrast support for this radical democratic innovation with support for two other reforms increasing citizen participation: generic support for a greater involvement of citizens in policy-making, and specific support for citizen-initiated referendums. The goal is to understand whether the drivers of support for citizens selected by lot overlap or differ from the drivers of support for other forms of citizens' participation. We rely upon data from the 2017 French Election Study.

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, a growing body of literature has examined democratic reforms increasing citizen participation (Cain et al. 2003; Dalton 2004; Newton and Geissel 2012; Smith 2009). Democratic innovations, such as referendums, citizens' forums, participatory budgeting or mini-publics have burgeoned under different forms across established democracies (Bedock 2017; Morel and Qvortrup 2017; Newton and Geissel 2012; Smith 2009; Zittel and Fuchs 2006).

In this article, we are interested in citizens' support for one specific form of democratic innovation: assemblies composed of citizens selected by lot. The first experiments started in the 1970s with citizens' juries and planning cells, followed in the 1980s by the development of consensus conferences (Grönlund et al. 2014). Assemblies gained a broader audience within academia in the mid-2000s when two Canadian provinces (British Columbia and Ontario) and the Netherlands organised citizens' assemblies on electoral reforms (Fournier et al. 2011). Another landmark was the Irish Constitutional Convention installed in 2012 (Suiter et al. 2014). Since then, many other bodies composed at least partly of citizens selected by lot were created (Reuchamps and Suiter 2016). **Across Europe, since 2000, there have been over 100 cases of assemblies composed at least partly of citizens selected by lot instituted by national or regional public authorities.¹**

Yet, scholarly research on attitudes towards citizens' assemblies remains scarce. The few existing studies present assemblies composed by lot merely as consultative bodies associated to representative institutions. In this article, using the 2017 French Election Study, we take a different approach by studying support for citizens selected

¹ Data from the project POLITICIZE/CureOrCurse. <https://www.ulb.be/en/erc-projects/erc-research-project-cureorcurse-jean-benoit-pilet>

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3 by lot presented as a clear alternative to replace elected politicians to take the most
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5 important political decisions.
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8 This alternative is radical in at least two respects: it would replace elected
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10 politicians by citizens, and these citizens would be chosen not through election, but
11
12 sortition. Such a use of sortition goes beyond most previous instances of citizens'
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14 assemblies composed by lot that have remained consultative and managed by elected
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16 politicians. What makes this topic particularly relevant is that public support for giving
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18 real decision-making power to citizens would reveal a strong desire to move away from
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20 the traditional representative logic based upon election. To understand the specificities
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22 of the support for this form of democratic innovation, we contrast it with two
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24 mechanisms giving a greater role for citizens in policy-making: support for the generic
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26 idea that citizens should make the main political decisions and support for citizens-
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28 initiated referendums.
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34 After presenting briefly the literature on support for increased citizen
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36 participation (Section 1), we review the drivers that may influence the support for
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38 selection by lot to replace current decision-makers (Section 2) and discuss the
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40 specificities of mini-publics compared to other forms of citizen participation (Section
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42 3). We then present the French Election Study and the operationalisation (Section 4).
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44 We then discuss our empirical results (Section 5) before proceeding to the theoretical
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46 discussion and conclusion (Section 6).
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1. Support for increased citizen participation and for specific democratic innovations

Over recent years, several studies across Europe have underlined a growing support among the population for a greater role of citizens in policy-making, without always being specific about the instruments of citizen participation that would be introduced. For instance, Gherghina and Geissel (2017) have shown that a quarter of the German population would like citizens to be the core policy-makers, the same proportion as those who prefer elected politicians. Multiple other studies focus on citizens' preferences about who should govern, and on demands for a greater involvement of citizens in general (Cain et al., 2003; Bengtsson and Christensen, 2016; Dalton, 2004; del Río et al. 2016; Font et al. 2015; Webb 2013).

Next to this first strand of literature, other scholars have examined support for specific ways of involving citizens in political decision-making. The most consolidated body of research focuses on referendums (Bengtsson and Mattila 2009; Bowler, Donovan, and Karp 2007; Coffé and Michels 2014; Schuck and de Vreese 2015). A few other scholars have examined citizens' preferences for mechanisms of deliberative or participatory democracy, most often in relation to broader preferences about who should decide in democracies and how (Caluwaerts et al. 2018; Coffé and Michels 2014; Neblo et al. 2010; Webb 2013).

Two elements are still missing in the existing literature. First, support for the inclusion of citizens selected by lot as alternative policy-makers has not been studied directly. This democratic innovation is very specific, as the political socialisation of citizens revolves around voting. Replacing voting by random selection would be a radical paradigm shift for most citizens. Secondly, the few existing studies trying to capture support for citizens selected by lot are all considering this form of democratic

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3 innovation as a mere complement to representative institutions. Indeed, so far, all
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5 citizens' assemblies have been consultative. They have never been granted the capacity
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7 to have the final say in passing new laws and regulations.
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11 However, it would be misleading to conclude that citizens' assemblies are
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13 inconsequential. In several cases, the recommendations that were formulated had major
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15 political consequences (Reuchamps and Suiter, 2016). For example, elected authorities
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17 decided to submit the recommendations provided by citizens' assemblies organized in
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19 Ireland, British Columbia and Ontario to referendums (Fournier et al. 2011; Suiter et al.
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21 2016). Some scholars are debating about the opportunity to introduce legislatures –
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23 most often second chambers – composed by lot juxtaposing elected and non-elected
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25 bodies (Gastil and Wright 2019).
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30 In this study, we go further by studying public support for citizens' assemblies
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32 composed by lot replacing elected politicians. Although such a radical reform goes way
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34 beyond the prerogatives of former and current citizens' assemblies, and the experiments
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36 discussed by academics, it is a very relevant question to draw comparisons with support
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38 for other consequential instruments of citizen participation such as referendums.
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40 Quoting Craig (1980), these two instruments are 'elite-challenging', because they
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42 contest elected politicians' dominance over policy-making. Comparing a non-
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44 challenging instrument such as consultative citizens' assemblies with an elite-
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46 challenging instrument such as citizen-initiated referendums would probably have
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48 produced different findings. We chose to focus on reforms truly limiting the power of
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50 elected politicians.
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2. Factors driving support for citizens selected by lot

In order to build our hypotheses on support for citizens selected by lot, we proceed in two steps. First, we rely upon the literature on support for a greater involvement of citizens in policy-making and for specific mechanisms of direct and deliberative democracy. These explanations focus on three dimensions of trust: trust in oneself, political trust, and trust in other citizens. In the next section, we elaborate on the specific features of support for citizens selected by lot.

2.1. Trust in oneself - The cognitive mobilization hypothesis

Schuck and De Vreese (2015) identify two main hypotheses explaining which citizens are in favour of direct democracy: cognitive mobilisation and political dissatisfaction.

The earlier hypothesis is anchored in a traditional explanation of political participation: citizens with more resources and more (perceived) ability to participate support more opportunities to have a say in politics (Almond and Verba 1963; Brady et al. 1995). These citizens have been labelled ‘post-materialists’ (Inglehart and Welzel 2005), ‘critical citizens’ (Norris, 1999, 2011) or ‘assertive citizens’ (Dalton and Welzel 2014).

The opposite could be true. For instance, studying Canada, Anderson and Goodyear-Grant (2010) have shown that highly informed citizens are more sceptical of referenda because they are more concerned about minority rights. Similarly, for assemblies composed via sortition, one may expect that resourceful citizens would not want to leave decision-making into the hands of others, as the chance to be part of the assembly would be very limited indeed.

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3 Yet, even if the odds of being selected are very low, the prize at stake is high.
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5 When one is selected, not only would he/she have a much greater impact on policy-
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7 making than via election or referendums, but he/she would also take part in a much
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9 richer form of political participation with intense deliberation among participants. This
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11 idea is central in the argument made by Dalton and Welzel (2014) who argue that
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13 assertive citizens are not only calling for more opportunities to participate but also for
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15 richer modes of participation. Overall, we tend to believe that the second interpretation
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17 is more convincing and formulate our hypotheses accordingly.
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22 In concrete terms, this general expectation about the role of political resources
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24 can be interpreted in two ways. First, it states that objective resources such as education,
25
26 money or age (Brady et al. 1995) foster demands for more citizens' participation.
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28 Participatory democrats tend to be found among people with a higher level of education
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30 (Bengtsson and Mattila 2009; Coffé and Michels 2014; Dalton 2017; Webb 2013).
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32 Several studies show that older citizens are more attached to the representative model
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34 (Dalton and Welzel 2014; del Río et al. 2016; Tiberj 2017; Webb 2013) as they have
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36 been socialised in a political environment characterised by elite-directed participation
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38 (Dalton and Welzel 2014; Norris 1999; Tiberj 2017). On their study on sortition within
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40 a bicameral system, Vandamme et al. found that younger respondents are more
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42 supportive of sortition (2018).
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48 *H1.1: The more an individual has objective resources encouraging political*
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50 *participation, the more likely he/she is to support decision-making by citizens selected*
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52 *by lot.*
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55 The second dimension of the 'cognitive mobilisation hypothesis' is that those in
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57 favour of a greater role for citizens in policy-making are generally more politically
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59 interested (Schuck and De Vreese, 2015) and efficacious (Kahne and Westheimer
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2006). Neble and colleagues (2010) showed that political interest is the strongest predictor of citizens' willingness to take part in democratic innovations involving deliberation. Citizens' trust in their own competence can also be captured via the concept of internal political efficacy, defined as the idea that one feels 'competent to avail himself of the opportunity to use institutional channels' (Craig, 1979: 229). For instance, Webb (2013) found a strong positive effect of political efficacy on support for more citizens' participation.

H1.2: The more an individual believes he/she is competent politically, the more likely he/she is to support decision-making by citizens selected by lot.

2.2. Political trust - The dissatisfaction hypothesis

Going back to Schuck and De Vreese (2015), the second main line of explanation to understand public support for referendums is the 'dissatisfaction hypothesis'. Citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with representative democracy, and their trust in the core actors, institutions and procedures of representative democracy is shrinking (Cain et al. 2003; Dalton 2004; Webb 2013). As a consequence, they want representative democracy to be reformed. Some authors rely on the generic 'satisfaction with democracy' item (Bengtsson and Mattila 2009; Schuck and de Vreese 2015; del Río et al. 2016); others use a battery of items measuring trust for the main actors and institutions of representative democracy (Bertsou and Pastorella 2017; Coffé and Michels 2014; del Río et al. 2016; Jacquet et al. 2015).

H2.1: The more an individual is dissatisfied with representative democracy, the more likely he/she is to support decision-making by citizens selected by lot.

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3 To test for this second hypothesis, it is important to disentangle the different
4 dimensions of dissatisfaction with democracy. Political trust may be expressed towards
5 different objects: the political community, regime principles, regime performance,
6 political institutions and political actors (Norris 1999; Thomassen 2015). Citizens may
7 express strong distrust towards one object, for instance political actors, while remaining
8 very supportive of the principles of representative democracy (Dalton 1999).
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Consequently, in line with Gherghina and Geissel's recent study on support for increased citizens' participation in policy-making (2018), we propose to go back to Easton (1965) and to distinguish between diffuse support for the principles of the political system and support for specific actors. For specific support, we examine two dimensions: satisfaction with the incumbents and the evaluation of elected politicians in general. For diffuse support, we examine support for the general principle of election on which representative democracy relies. Selection by lot of ordinary citizens goes very strongly against the elective logic. Moreover, previous findings on France have shown that individuals who endorse a minimal definition of democracy mostly based on the centrality of elections are less likely to criticize the level of 'democraticness' of their political system (Bedock and Panel 2017). We therefore formulate a second sub-hypothesis:

H.2.2: The more an individual is dissatisfied with the general principle of election, the more likely he/she is to support decision-making by citizens selected by lot.

2.3. Trust in others – The evaluation of citizens' competence hypothesis

Beyond the hypotheses outlined above, we argue that there is a third dimension of trust that should be taken into consideration. Participatory instruments imply that (at

1
2
3 least some) traditional prerogatives of professional politicians are transferred to lay
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5 citizens. A question that could be easily raised is whether those citizens are up to the
6
7 job. As Manin (1997) argues, election and representation rest upon the idea that election
8
9 selects the best and more motivated individuals. Participatory and direct democracy
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11 instruments go against this logic. A few studies, using in particular qualitative methods,
12
13 show that individuals are often sceptical about the abilities of their fellow citizens to get
14
15 involved in politics (García-Espín and Ganuza 2017; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002).
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17 In particular, citizens tend to consider that citizens on the other side of the political
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19 spectrum lack political competence (Achen and Bartels 2017; Cramer 2016). Del Río
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21 and his colleagues (2016) have shown that support for a greater involvement of citizens
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23 was linked to a positive evaluation of the capacity of other citizens to play a role in
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25 politics.
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31 *H3: the more an individual thinks that other citizens are politically competent, the more*
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33 *likely he/she is to support decision-making by citizens selected by lot.*
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39 **3. The specificities of support for citizens selected by lot**

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42 So far, we built our hypotheses using studies on support for a greater role of
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44 citizens in policy-making in general and direct democracy. We believe that support for
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46 citizens selected by lot as main policy-makers involves four fundamental differences
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48 compared with other instruments of citizens' participation.
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52 First, replacing elected politicians by citizens selected by lot would put lay
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54 citizens as the new centre of democratic politics. This is particularly disrupting in
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56 France, a very centralised political system without a solid culture of interest group
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58 participation. We expect that only a relatively low number of citizens who express
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3 strong political distrust in general and in elected politicians in particular would support
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5 such a radical move.
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8 Second, this reform replaces the principle of election by the principle of
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10 sortition. The two models rest upon very different premises. The contemporary
11
12 representative model is based on distinction and selection through competence (Manin,
13
14 1997). The premises of selection by lot are similarity (Courant 2019) and radical
15
16 egalitarianism (Vandamme 2018). The legitimacy of this procedure relies on the idea
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18 that the decisions taken by citizens selected by lot would be similar to the ones that
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20 citizens would make themselves. Therefore, we expect that support for this mechanism
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22 is to be found among citizens who disagree with the core principle of representative
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24 democracy, namely election.
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29 Thirdly, citizens' juries composed by lot are more demanding than most other
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31 forms of citizens' involvement in policy-making. Citizens are not only asked to cast a
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33 vote in a referendum, but to attend meetings for several days or weeks and to deliberate
34
35 in public on complex policy issues. As a consequence, one may expect that only the
36
37 more politically motivated citizens, with objective and subjective political resources
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39 would support this reform. Achen and Bartels (2017) actually criticised deliberative
40
41 forums composed of lay citizens as they would increase even further the political
42
43 dominance of competent citizens.
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48 Fourthly, we expect that trust in the political competence of other citizens is
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50 more important for the support of sortition than for other forms of citizen participation,
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52 because key political decisions are handed over to a very limited proportion of citizens
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54 - especially in a large country such as France - whereas in referendums and elections,
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56 everyone has the potential to have a say by voting.
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4. Data and operationalization

4.1. The French National Election Study

France offers a fertile ground to investigate our research question and test our hypotheses for three reasons. First, France is one of the West European countries where political distrust is among the highest over the last decades (Bedock 2017: 15). Secondly, this high level of dissatisfaction has translated into demands for democratic reforms altering representative democracy at the national level. In the ‘Yellow Vests’ mobilization, demands concerning citizen-initiated referendums and citizens’ assemblies have been central (Collectif d’enquête sur les Gilets jaunes 2019). During the last presidential elections in 2017, several candidates including Emmanuel Macron (En marche), Benoît Hamon (Socialist Party) and Jean-Luc Mélenchon (France insoumise) proposed to introduce citizens’ juries in various forms, from an annual audit of the president to the introduction of citizens drawn by lot in the French Senate. In fall 2019, a convention composed of 150 citizens drawn by lot has been put in place to make proposals about climate change, in the aftermath of the ‘Great Debate’ organised after the Yellow Vests’ crisis. President Macron declared that some of the proposals of the convention would be put to a referendum and that citizens’ assemblies should become institutionalised. Thirdly, France is an interesting case because these demands fundamentally clash with the current organisation of political power at the national level which is characterised by its centralisation, its verticality and the power of the president of the Republic (Grossman and Sauger 2009).

Our study takes advantage of the 2017 French Election Study (Gougou and Sauger 2017), a post-electoral survey conducted a few days after the second round of the presidential election in May 2017 and undertaken by Kantar-TNS-Sofres, with 1830 respondents (face to face interviews).

4.2. *Dependent variables*

The core dependent variable for our study is support for citizens selected by lot. It is captured via a question asking respondents to select what types of actors should be given the central role in deciding what is best for the country. Five options were offered: MPs, the President, citizens selected by lot, experts, and successful businessmen. We built a dummy variable opposing respondents in favour of citizens selected by lot to respondents who have chosen another alternative.

One could argue that citizens do not have well-formed preferences on this issue or on democratic processes in general. However, Goldberg et al. (2019), who tested whether the preferences of German citizens on democratic procedures change when they are exposed to a deliberative treatment show that these attitudes are much more stable and coherent than initially assumed, even though this is more true when respondents are exposed to mechanisms they are more familiar with (Bengtsson 2012).

The formulation of the question has two consequences for the findings. First, only citizens familiar with this form of democratic innovation can be expected to tick this option as their preferred one. Those who are unfamiliar or unsure about this idea had the opportunity to choose another political actor or to refuse to answer.² Second, the question does not explicitly refer to the replacement of elected politicians. Yet, we assume that respondents know that the current baseline model in France is representative democracy and that empowering citizens selected by lot would radically question this logic. Therefore, we argue that this variable identifies radical supporters of citizens selected by lot.

² There are 6.9% of respondents who either refused to answer or answered 'don't know' for that particular question.

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3 One of the core goals of this article is to discuss support for citizens selected by
4 lot as the main policy-makers, in contrast with other instruments giving citizens a
5 greater weight in policy-making. The 2017 French Election Study asks respondents
6 whether they agree with the idea that ‘the people, and not politicians, should make our
7 most important policy decisions’. We recoded this question into a dummy variable.
8 Comparing a specific instrument with this generic question should be made with
9 caution. Bengtsson shows that this item captures ‘positive attitudes towards more
10 citizen involvement, but without implying attitudes in favour of a democratic system
11 where citizens should be responsible of all political decisions’ (2012: 58). This item is
12 interesting to compare our results with several studies using the same type of generic
13 question to measure support for increased citizen participation (del Río et al. 2016; Font
14 et al. 2015; Gherghina and Geissel 2017; Webb 2013).

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31 Finally, we compare selection by lot with support for direct democracy taking
32 advantage of a question asking respondents whether they agree with the idea that ‘we
33 should be able to organise a referendum if a high number of people ask for it’.³ We
34 have recoded this question into a dummy variable.

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41 Selection by lot is the most ‘extreme’ option as it replaces politicians by
42 citizens’ rule. The idea that citizens should decide rather than politicians is a less
43 explicit form of citizens’ rule, in which citizens deserve the final say without
44 necessarily being responsible for all political decisions. Finally, citizen-initiated
45 referendum is a more conventional political institution and the least radical option of the
46 three.

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³ France already uses binding referendums initiated by the President. Shared initiative referendums also exist since 2008 and require the support of one fifth of the parliament and 10% of the electoral body. To this day, this second type of referendum has never been organised.

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3 17.7% of respondents choose citizens selected by lot over other alternatives to
4 make the most important political decisions. By contrast, more than half (53%) consider
5 that citizens, not politicians, should take the most important decisions, and 86% agree
6 with citizen-initiated referendums. As expected, citizens selected by lot are clearly seen
7 as the most 'radical' alternative. One could argue that few citizens support citizens'
8 assemblies selected by lot. Rather, we insist on the fact that full sortition to replace
9 elected politicians is more radical than any existing political experiment or than most
10 reform proposals discussed by academics. Therefore, one could reasonably argue that
11 support for citizens' assemblies selected by lot would be significantly higher if these
12 were consultative, or if they took the form of a second chamber deliberating alongside
13 the elected assembly. A survey of Belgian citizens showed that 39% of respondents
14 were in favour of a second chamber exclusively composed of citizens selected by lot,
15 and 47% of a second chamber mixing elected politicians and citizens selected by lot
16 (Vandamme et al., 2018: 127).
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39 ***4.3. Independent variables: trust in one's own competences***

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41 The objective political resources included in our study are age, education and
42 income. We differentiate between three levels of education: lower secondary or less,
43 vocational and upper secondary, and tertiary. Age and income are continuous variables.
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48 The cognitive mobilisation approach also expects that one's subjective perceived
49 political competence affects support for citizens' participation in policy-making. We use
50 a question measuring internal political efficacy, asking respondents whether they felt
51 that 'politics is too complicated for people like me'.
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4.4. *Independent variables: political trust*

To test for the political trust hypothesis, we include a series of indicators capturing French citizens' evaluation of representative democracy, distinguishing between specific and diffuse support (Easton, 1965; Gherghina and Geissel, 2018).

In terms of specific support, we use one question asking respondents how satisfied they were about the actions of President François Hollande during the preceding term (recoded into three categories:⁴ 'Satisfied', 'Not satisfied', and 'Not satisfied at all'). The second dimension of specific support relates to how French citizens evaluate elected politicians in general. We use five questions: 'How widespread is corruption such as bribe taking among politicians in France', 'Most politicians are trustworthy', 'Most politicians do not care about the people', 'The politicians are the main problem in France', and finally, 'The majority of the politicians is only interested in the rich and the powerful'. A factor analysis shows that all five items are loading on the same dimension (See Table 5 in appendix). We built an additive scale ranging from 0 to 8 capturing citizens' evaluation of elected politicians (Cronbach's alpha = 0.76). The higher the score on this scale, the more distrustful respondents are about elected politicians.

To measure diffuse support for the principles of representative democracy, the FES offers two relevant questions capturing whether French citizens still believe in elections as a principle of government. The first one asked respondents whether 'who is in power can make a big difference and really change things', the second whether 'who people vote for can make a big difference to what happens'. The two indicators encompass some classical elements of external political efficacy (Davis and Hitt 2017;

⁴ The items 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' have been merged into a single category as only 0.5% of the respondents were very satisfied with Hollande's actions.

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3 Finkel 1985; Karp and Banducci 2008), and also measure the perception of current
4 procedures. We built an additive scale aggregating the answers to the two questions
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6 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81). The scale ranges also from 0 when the respondent strongly
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8 agreed to both statements to 8 when he strongly disagreed with both.⁵
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12 Finally, we ran a principle component analysis which confirmed that the three
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14 dimensions are distinct in the eyes of the respondents (see table 6 in Appendix).
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18 19 20 ***4.5. Independent variables: trust in the competence of others***

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22 To measure the perceived political competence of other citizens, we use a
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24 question asking respondents whether they agree with the idea that 'in general, people
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26 know what is good for France'.
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30 Finally, in line with several previous studies on support for democratic
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32 innovations (Bengtsson and Mattila 2009; Bertou and Pastorella 2017; Jacquet et al.
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34 2015; Schuck and de Vreese 2015; Webb, 2013), our analyses include two control
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36 variables: gender and left-right orientation.
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42 43 **5. Empirical results**

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45 In this section, we test the three sets of hypotheses for the three dependent
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47 variables.
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50 [TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]
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53 We hypothesized that support for a greater involvement of citizens in policy-
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55 making is found among citizens with more political resources (H1.1) and more trust in
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59 ⁵ The two additive scales that we have constructed have been built into 0-8 measures in order to
60 facilitate comparison between the effects of the two scales in our multivariate models.

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3 their own political skills (H1.2). Overall, support for this line of explanation is rather
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5 mixed.
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8 For all three dependent variables (and in particular for citizen-initiated
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10 referendums), older citizens are less supportive of citizens' participation. For the other
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12 objective resources variables, findings are going in the opposite direction than
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14 hypothesized. Income has a negative effect on support for citizens selected by lot and
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16 for the idea that citizens should take the most important decisions, but not on the
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18 support for citizen-initiated referendums. Education has a negative effect on support for
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20 referendums and citizens' participation in general. For instance, individuals who do not
21
22 have university education are almost twice more likely to support citizen-initiated
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24 referendums. Yet, there is no statistically significant effect of education on support for
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26 citizens selected by lot. Overall, objective political resources such as income and
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28 education tend to limit support for citizen participation.
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34 For the effect of subjective political resources (H1.2), the direction of the effect
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36 is in line with our expectation – individuals who disagree with the idea that politics is
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38 too complicated for people like them are more likely to support sortition - but the effect
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40 is just above the threshold of statistical significance. For the other two mechanisms,
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42 H1.2 is not confirmed. Overall, internal political efficacy does not appear to be a key
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44 driver of support for increased citizens' participation.
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48 To better understand which of our three lines of explanation has the greatest
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50 impact on the support for each mechanism, we ran models in which the variables were
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52 introduced separately (see tables 3, 4 and 5 in appendix). They show that the
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54 contribution of objective resources and internal political efficacy to McFadden's R^2 is
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56 stronger for support for citizen-initiated referendums. Using the average probability for
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58 each of the dependent variable as a setoff point to evaluate the number of correctly
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3 classified cases, models including only cognitive mobilisation variables and controls
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5 correctly classify between 60.6 and 72.9% of the cases.
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10 Next to the role of political resources, our second line of expectation was about
11 the role of political (dis)satisfaction. Three findings can be underlined. First, distrust of
12 elected politicians plays a significant role in explaining support for all three dependent
13 variables (see figure 1). For citizen-initiated referendums, the effect of distrust of
14 politicians is rather linear and rises from 52% for respondents who fully trust politicians
15 to 96% for respondents who are the most distrustful of elected representatives. A
16 moderate level of distrust already increases support for this reform. By contrast, for
17 support for citizens selected by lot and for the idea that citizens should take the most
18 important decisions, the effect is exponential. Respondents who trust the most
19 politicians only have a 1% probability of supporting citizens selected by lot to take the
20 most important decisions whereas this proportion rises to 38% for the most distrustful
21 (respectively 5% to 85% for the idea that 'citizens should decide'). The effect of distrust
22 of politicians on support for these reforms becomes only significantly higher among
23 respondents deeply dissatisfied with elected politicians. Support for the replacement of
24 politicians by ordinary citizens or the notion that citizens should decide is fostered by a
25 radical discontent with current policy-makers.
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48 The second finding is in line with this conclusion. As we expected, the effect of
49 trust in the principle of elections differentiates support for citizens selected by lot and
50 the two other dependent variables (H2.2.). When respondents are the most confident
51 about the ability of elections to bring about change, only 13% of them support citizens
52 selected by lot as their preferred alternative to take political decisions. This proportion
53 rises to 25% for individuals who are the least convinced about the ability of elections to
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3 bring about change. The effect is linear, which means that as soon as individuals start to
4 express doubts about the election mechanism, this fosters support for sortition. These
5 results confirm our expectation that this mechanism is different from other forms of
6 citizens' participation as it is linked with the rejection of the core principle of
7 representative democracy: representation via election.
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15 Thirdly, we observe that there is no substantial effect of the support for the
16 incumbent president Hollande for any of the three dependent variables. At best can we
17 see that the effect is statistically significant for the idea that citizens should have the
18 final say for individuals who are 'not satisfied at all' with Hollande's performance.
19 Dissatisfaction with the incumbent authorities is not sufficient to trigger support for a
20 radical move from representative democracy such as sortition. This could be explained
21 by the fact that Holland and more generally all presidents since 2002 have experienced
22 steep declines in their levels of popularity (Grossman and Sauger 2014).
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34 Overall, the models including political trust variables (see Appendix 3 to 5)
35 appear to contribute the most to the variations in support for our three dependent
36 variables. McFadden's R^2 increases strongly with the addition of this block of variables,
37 in particular when it comes to support for citizens selected by lot, and for citizens'
38 participation in general. The number of correctly classified cases also rises (between
39 69.3% and 73.5%).
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48 Our third hypothesis stated that support for citizens selected by lot is driven by
49 how much confidence one has in the political capacities of other citizens. That
50 hypothesis is confirmed by the data, although the effect of this variable should not be
51 overstated. Indeed, McFadden's R^2 and the proportion of correctly classified cases only
52 marginally increases by adding this variable (See Appendix 3 to 5). However, the role
53 of trust in other citizens is crucial to differentiate support for citizens selected by lot
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3 from the other two dependent variables. This variable has a positive and statistically
4 significant effect on the support for sortition. Respondents who disagree with the idea
5 that other citizens are incompetent are 55% more likely to support citizens selected by
6 lot to replace elected politicians. By contrast, it has no statistically significant effect on
7 support for referendums or on support for the idea that citizens should take the most
8 important decisions.
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17 Next, examining the control variables, **plotted probabilities show that female**
18 **respondents have a 15% probability to** support citizens selected by lot (19% for men).
19 They are also less likely to support the idea that citizens should take the most important
20 decisions. This result is puzzling insofar as we control for objective and subjective
21 measures of political competence. It may be due to the strong internalization of
22 gendered norms limiting the direct involvement of women in the political sphere
23 (Bargel 2005; Verba et al. 1997). **The more left-wing respondents have a 24%**
24 **probability to support sortition, as opposed to only 11% of the more right-wing**
25 **respondents.** The effect of political orientation does not hold when it comes to the two
26 other dependent variables.
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41 **We should also stress that the explanatory power of our models remains modest**
42 **for all three dependent variables. For the sake of comparability, we operationalised our**
43 **dependent variables as dummy variables (in favour or against the three forms of**
44 **democratic innovations), leaving other preferences merged into one broad and**
45 **heterogenous group. For example, for support for citizens selected by lot, we separated**
46 **French citizens in favour of this form of democratic innovation from citizens supporting**
47 **four other very different alternatives: MPs, the President of the Republic, businessmen**
48 **and experts. In future studies, more fine-grained data would allow to dig deeper into the**
49 **logics of support for different alternatives.**
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6. Conclusion and discussion

The goal of this article was twofold: first, to examine who supports citizens selected by lot to replace elected politicians; secondly, to evaluate whether these supporters differ from those who support an enhanced role of citizens in political decisions more generically and direct democracy. There are three take away messages at the end of this study.

Firstly, citizens with more objective political resources are less supportive of increased citizens' participation, contrary to our expectation, whereas subjective political competence does not appear to be a central driver. These results open space for discussion. First, the negative impact of objective political resources (age, income, education) on support for the three forms of citizens' participation gives credit to the findings of Ceka and Magalhaes (2019) who explain that individuals who have acquired a privileged position in society have an interest in defending the institutional status quo. The Yellow Vests crisis provides additional evidence, as the more mobilised individuals belonged to the working class and the lower middle class (Collectif d'enquête sur les Gilets jaunes 2019). Regarding subjective political competence, the very limited effect of internal political efficacy on support for citizens selected by lot tends to contradict the idea of authors like Dalton and Welzel (2014) or Norris (2011) who argued that citizens who want more opportunities to participate also demand 'richer' ways of participating.

Secondly, the main driver of support for all forms of empowerment of citizens is trust in elected politicians. The principle of delegation in representative democracies is built on the division of labour between elected representatives and the rest of society (Manin 1997). Elected politicians are supposed to embody the general interest, to connect citizens' demands to the political system to produce decisions, and to be more

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3 competent than lay citizens. Distrust for politicians undermines the very principles on
4 which politicians build their legitimacy from and fosters support for enhanced citizen
5 participation.
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10 The third and final key message is that one cannot simply generalizes findings
11 from the literature on public support for more citizens' participation in general, or
12 specific instruments such as referendums to understand support for citizens selected by
13 lot. This last form of democratic innovation has some specific drivers. The role of
14 political distrust is very important: supporting sortition requires to consider not only that
15 politicians cannot be trusted, but also that election as an institutional mechanism is
16 unable to produce meaningful change. The other characteristic of support for sortition is
17 the role of one's trust in the political skills of fellow citizens. Respondents are more
18 likely to endorse this preference if they disagree with the idea that other citizens are
19 politically incompetent. One of the key conditions to entrust other citizens is the belief
20 that they are sufficiently 'equipped' to take political decisions for other people.
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36 This study allows us to advance our knowledge of public support for
37 deliberative mini-publics composed of citizens' selected by lot, a form of democratic
38 innovation that has been gaining ground across democracies in recent times. It is
39 important to discuss to what extent insights from the French case may be applicable to
40 other countries. Across Europe, several democracies have or are introducing bodies
41 composed at least partly of citizens selected by lot. It has been the case at the national or
42 regional level in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the
43 Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK. The data collected in 2017 in France remains
44 very relevant ; since then, mini-publics remained high on the agenda following the
45 Yellow Vests crisis to which President Macron responded by launching a public 'Great
46 Debate' followed, in fall 2019, by a Citizens' Assembly on Climate change.
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3 The French case appears as intrinsically important to understand support for
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5 democratic innovations in general, and for citizens' assemblies composed via sortition
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7 in particular, in a context of deep distrust in elected representatives. This context can be
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9 compared with the ones leading to the launch of citizens' assemblies in the UK and
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11 Scotland, or a few years earlier in Ireland, Iceland, Belgium, the Netherlands and
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13 Canada. Another element that increases our confidence in the validity of our findings in
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15 other West European countries is that the characteristics of French respondents are not
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17 fundamentally different from those of citizens in other countries where citizens'
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19 assemblies are also discussed or implemented at the national level, or with countries
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21 where such democratic innovations have been tested at a smaller scale such as Spain,
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23 Italy, Portugal or Austria. Our findings are more likely to make sense in these countries
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25 that in other settings such as Central and Eastern Europe where citizens' relationship to
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27 politics is very different and where the very concept of sortition remain completely
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29 absent from the political agenda.
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36 Nevertheless, we must also acknowledge that some elements may limit the
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38 exportability of our findings. The obvious one is that France has a very peculiar political
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40 regime compared to most other European democracies. In particular, the centrality of
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42 the President of the Republic is very different from what is observed in most other
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44 European countries, even taking into consideration the process of presidentialisation of
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46 parliamentary systems over recent years.
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50 Finally, and probably most importantly, our study focuses on radical supporters
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52 of citizens selected by lot, i.e. on those who would be willing not only to involve lay
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54 citizens in assemblies deliberating alongside elected representatives, but who would be
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56 ready to do without politicians. In other words, our findings are applicable to
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58 individuals who want to fundamentally alter the current organisation of political power.
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3 These citizens appear to be particularly distrustful of elected politicians and of the
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5 elective mechanism, while being at the same time confident in other people's political
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7 competence. Supporters of less disruptive mechanisms involving citizens selected by lot
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9 (consultative assemblies, citizens' assemblies associated to parliament, citizens'
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11 assemblies followed by referendums, and so on) ought to be more numerous and less
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13 fundamentally dissatisfied with the current representative model. Following recent
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15 studies (Rojon et al. 2019), future works should investigate to what extent the profile of
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17 the supporters of various forms of citizens' assemblies drawn by lot is affected by the
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19 design and function of these innovations, and with their link with existing representative
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21 institutions.
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Table 1. Determinants of the preference for the mode of political decision

	Citizens drawn by lot		Citizens should decide		Citizen-initiated referendum	
Age	0.98**	(0.97-0.99)	0.99*	(0.98-1.00)	0.97**	(0.96-0.98)
Income	0.99**	(0.99-1.00)	0.99**	(0.99-1.00)	0.99+	(0.99-1.00)
Level of education (Ref. cat.: tertiary)						
<i>Lower secondary or less</i>	1.44	(0.88-2.36)	1.87**	(1.27-2.73)	1.98**	(1.18-3.30)
<i>Vocational or upper secondary</i>	1.04	(0.71-1.51)	1.42*	(1.08-1.89)	1.61*	(1.10-2.34)
Politics is too complicated for citizens like me (ref. cat. : agree)						
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	1.19	(0.73-1.93)	0.71	(0.50-1.01)	0.63	(0.36-1.10)
<i>Disagree</i>	1.37	(0.95-1.97)	1.14	(0.86-1.51)	0.72	(0.47-1.11)
Distrust of politicians scale	1.64**	(1.45-1.85)	1.82**	(1.66-1.99)	1.50**	(1.34-1.68)
Inefficacy of Election scale	1.11**	(1.04-1.18)	1.02	(0.96-1.08)	1.06	(0.97-1.15)
Evaluation of Hollande (ref. cat: satisfied)						
<i>Not satisfied</i>	1.01	(0.63-1.60)	1.00	(0.73-1.38)	0.97	(0.65-1.44)
<i>Not satisfied at all</i>	1.47	(0.91-2.36)	1.47*	(1.03-2.10)	1.08	(0.67-1.74)
Incompetence of other citizens (ref. cat.: agree)						
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	1.15	(0.75-1.76)	1.24	(0.91-1.70)	1.07	(0.69-1.66)
<i>Disagree</i>	1.55*	(1.08-2.22)	1.29	(0.97-1.73)	1.04	(0.70-1.53)
Gender (ref. cat: male)						
<i>Female</i>	0.72*	(0.53-0.97)	0.78*	(0.62-0.99)	1.36	(0.98-1.88)
Left/right orientation	0.90**	(0.84-0.96)	0.95	(0.90-1.00)	1.05	(0.96-1.14)
Constant	0.03**	(0.01-0.08)	0.07**	(0.02-0.15)	2.37	(0.76-5.16)
Mc Fadden's R ²	15.0		18.0		16.0	
Number of Observations	1461		1517		1501	
Correctly classified cases	71.3%		70.0%		74%	

Note: P<0.05 * P<0.01** .

Coefficients in odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals in parentheses

The correctly classified cases are measured using the average probability at the cut-off point.

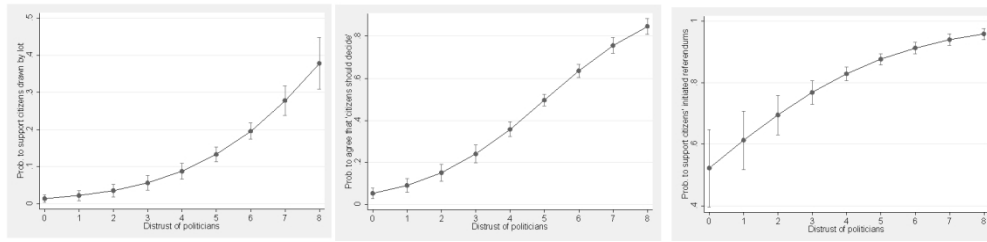


Figure 1. Predicted probabilities for different modes of political decision according to the level of distrust of politicians

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APPENDIX

Table 3. Determinants of the preference for citizens drawn by lot (separate models)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Age	0.98***	(0.97-0.99)	0.98***	(0.97-0.99)	0.98***	(0.97-0.99)
Income	0.999**	(0.99-1.00)	0.999*	(0.99-1.00)	0.999**	(0.99-1.00)
Level of education (Ref. cat.: tertiary)						
<i>Lower secondary or less</i>	2.27***	(1.46-3.52)	1.36	(0.84-2.21)	1.44	(0.88-2.36)
<i>Vocational or upper secondary</i>	1.56**	(1.11-2.19)	1.01	(0.70-1.47)	1.04	(0.71-1.51)
Politics is too complicated for citizens like me (ref. cat. : agree)						
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	0.93	(0.59-1.45)	1.19	(0.73-1.93)	1.19	(0.73-1.93)
<i>Disagree</i>	1.26	(0.92-1.74)	1.45*	(1.02-2.06)	1.37+	(0.95-1.97)
Distrust of politicians scale			1.64***	(1.45-1.85)	1.64***	(1.45-1.85)
Inefficacy of Election scale			1.10**	(1.03-1.18)	1.11**	(1.04-1.18)
Evaluation of Hollande (ref. cat: satisfied)						
<i>Not satisfied</i>			0.95	(0.60-1.49)	1.01	(0.63-1.60)
<i>Not satisfied at all</i>			1.37	(0.87-2.18)	1.47	(0.91-2.36)
Incompetence of other citizens (ref. cat.: agree)						
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>					1.15	(0.75-1.76)
<i>Disagree</i>					1.55*	(1.08-2.22)
Gender (ref. cat: male)						
<i>Female</i>	0.85	(0.64-1.11)	0.73*	(0.54-0.99)	0.72*	(0.53-0.97)
Left/right orientation	0.92**	(0.86-0.97)	0.90***	(0.84-0.96)	0.90***	(0.84-0.96)
Constant	0.74	(0.40-1.36)	0.03***	(0.01-0.09)	0.03***	(0.01-0.08)
Mc Fadden's R ²	5.0		15.6		16.0	
Number of Observations	1565		1476		1461	
Correctly classified cases	64.4%		71.1%		71.3%	

Note: P<0.1 + P<0.05 * P<0.01** P<0.001 ***.

Coefficients in odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals in parentheses

The correctly classified cases are measured using the average probability to support citizen selected by lot at the cut-off point.

Table 4. Determinants of the preference that “citizens should decide, not politicians” (separate models)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Age	0.98***	(0.98-0.99)	0.99*	(0.98-1.00)	0.99*	(0.98-1.00)
Income	0.999**	(0.99-1.00)	0.999*	(0.99-1.00)	0.999**	(0.99-1.00)
Level of education (Ref. cat.: tertiary)						
<i>Lower secondary or less</i>	3.13***	(2.25-4.36)	1.90***	(1.30-2.77)	1.87***	(1.27-2.74)
<i>Vocational or upper secondary</i>	2.14***	(1.67-2.74)	1.43*	(1.08-1.90)	1.42*	(1.07-1.89)
Politics is too complicated for citizens like me (ref. cat. : agree)						
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	0.71*	(0.51-0.97)	0.75	(0.52-1.08)	0.71+	(0.49-1.01)
<i>Disagree</i>	1.13	(0.88-1.43)	1.20	(0.91-1.58)	1.14	(0.86-1.51)
Distrust of politicians scale			1.79***	(1.64-1.96)	1.82***	(1.66-2.00)
Inefficacy of Election scale			1.01	(0.96-1.07)	1.02	(0.96-1.08)
Evaluation of Hollande (ref. cat: satisfied)						
<i>Not satisfied</i>			1.00	(0.73-1.36)	1.01	(0.73-1.38)
<i>Not satisfied at all</i>			1.46*	(1.03-2.06)	1.47*	(1.03-2.09)
Incompetence of other citizens (ref. cat.: agree)						
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>					1.24	(0.91-1.70)
<i>Disagree</i>					1.29+	(0.97-1.73)
Gender (ref. cat: male)						
<i>Female</i>	0.95	(0.77-1.16)	0.78+	(0.63-1.01)	0.78*	(0.62-0.99)
Left/right orientation	0.98	(0.93-1.02)	0.95+	(0.90-1.01)	0.95+	(0.90-1.01)
Constant	1.97**	(1.23-3.14)	0.08***	(0.04-0.18)	0.07***	(0.03-0.15)
Mc Fadden's R ²	5.0		17.6		18.2	
Number of Observations	1634		1534		1526	
Correctly classified cases	60.6%		69.3%		70.0%	

Note: P<0.1 + P<0.05 * P<0.01** P<0.001 ***.

Coefficients in odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals in parentheses

The correctly classified cases are measured using the average probability to support citizen selected by lot at the cut-off point.

Table 5. Determinants of the preference for the prevalence of citizens' initiated referendums (separate models)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	0.97*** (0.96-0.98)	0.97*** (0.96-0.98)	0.97*** (0.96-0.98)
Income	0.999** (0.99-1.00)	0.999* (0.99-1.00)	0.999+ (0.99-1.00)
Level of education (Ref. cat.: tertiary)			
<i>Lower secondary or less</i>	3.09*** (1.93-4.94)	1.96** (1.18-3.26)	1.98** (1.18-3.29)
<i>Vocational or upper secondary</i>	2.21*** (1.57-3.12)	1.56* (1.08-2.27)	1.61* (1.10-2.34)
Politics is too complicated for citizens like me (ref. cat. : agree)			
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	0.64* (0.53-1.00)	0.68 (0.39-1.16)	0.64 (0.38-1.10)
<i>Disagree</i>	0.68* (0.46-0.99)	0.77 (0.50-1.17)	0.72 (0.47-1.11)
Distrust of politicians scale		1.49*** (1.33-1.66)	1.50*** (1.34-1.68)
Inefficacy of Election scale		1.04 (0.96-1.14)	1.06 (0.97-1.15)
Evaluation of Hollande (ref. cat: satisfied)			
<i>Not satisfied</i>		0.97 (0.65-1.44)	0.97 (0.65-1.44)
<i>Not satisfied at all</i>		1.05 (0.65-1.70)	1.08 (0.67-1.74)
Incompetence of other citizens (ref. cat.: agree)			
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>			1.07 (0.69-1.66)
<i>Disagree</i>			1.04 (0.70-1.53)
Gender (ref. cat: male)			
<i>Female</i>	1.50** (1.11-2.03)	1.38* (1.00-1.90)	1.36* (0.98-1.88)
Left/right orientation	1.06+ (0.99-1.13)	1.05 (0.97-1.14)	1.05 (0.96-1.14)
Constant	21.79* (10.49-45.28)	2.43+ (0.91-6.53)	2.37+ (0.86-6.52)
Adjusted R ²	10.1	15.2	16.0
Number of Observations	1632	1519	1501
Correctly classified cases	72.9%	73.5%	74%

Note: P<0.1 + P<0.05 * P<0.01** P<0.001 ***.

Coefficients in odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals in parentheses

The correctly classified cases are measured using the average probability to support citizen selected by lot at the cut-off point.

Table 6. *Principal component analysis of the five items on citizens' evaluation of French politicians*

Component	Eigenvalue	% Variance
1	2,593	51,869
2	0,775	15,506
3	0,606	12,126
4	0,56	11,209
5	0,465	9,291

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test: 0,804. Bartlett' sphericity test: approx. Khi-square: 1950,526, ddl: 10, p. < .000

Item	Component 1
How widespread is corruption such as bribe taking among politicians in France	0,659
Most politicians are trustworthy	-0,694
Most politicians do not care about people like us	0,715
Politicians are the main problem in France	0,738
The majority of politicians is only interested in the rich and the powerful	0,739

Table 7. *Principal component analysis for the three dimensions of political support*

Component	Eigenvalue	% Variance
1	3,167	39,583
2	1,271	15,892
3	0,857	10,712
4	0,773	9,663
5	0,596	7,449
6	0,554	6,925
7	0,461	5,758
8	0,321	4,017

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test: 0,787. Bartlett' sphericity test: approx. Khi-square: 3375,082, ddl: 28, p. < .000

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
The majority of politicians is only interested in the rich and the powerful	0,742	-0,226	0,15
Politicians are the main problem in France	0,692	-0,24	0,079
Most politicians are trustworthy	-0,672	0,142	-0,107
Most politicians do not care about people like us	0,658	-0,299	0,025
How widespread is corruption such as bribe taking among politicians in France	0,606	-0,256	0,169
Who people vote for can make a big difference to what happens	0,576	0,709	-0,006
Who is in power can make a big difference and really change things	0,594	0,691	0,072
Evaluation of F. Hollande	-0,447	0,083	0,885

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