Who wants to pay for deliberative democracy? The crowdfunders of the G1000 in Belgium

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Abstract:

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Over the last decades, in the wake of the initial theoretical insights, the field of empirical research in deliberative democracy has been kicking and striving, with a strong emphasis on analysing the design features of this form of democracy (for overviews, see Ryfe 2005, Thompson 2008, Bächtiger et al. 2010). More recently, in the quest of understanding the implications for the maxi-public of democracy, empirical works have started to delve into the question of the support among the general public (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, Mutz 2006, Neblo et al. 2010, Webb 2013). In the intersection between the study of the design and the study of the support for deliberative democracy, there is one major question that still needs to be tackled: who wants to pay for deliberative democracy? This is the research question at the heart of this article.

While a large number of deliberative mini-publics have been funded with public money, an increasing number of deliberative events are funded bottom-up. Such grassroots initiatives are free of any governmental ties, which has important implications for the effect they might have in terms of legitimacy (Caluwaerts and Reuchamps 2015). After all, bottom-up funding may possibly mean a more open agenda, and a more transparent and inclusive process. This question also relates to the support for deliberative democracy in a more specific fashion. To what extent are citizens willing to financially support mini-publics? It is of course one thing to claim one is in favour of this type of democratic initiative, it is indeed much more demanding to go into one's wallet to contribute to its organization. There is therefore a need to understand who are the people who want to pay for deliberative democracy and why they are willing to do so.

In order to appreciate this twofold question, the G1000 Citizens' summit organized in Belgium in 2011 offers a meaningful case study as this large-scale deliberative mini-public was fully funded by crowdfunding. At a time when Belgium was in the midst of her longest government-formation crisis, a group of citizens sought to initiate a bottom-up deliberative mini-public that would bring together one thousand randomly selected inhabitants to deliberate over major issues for the future of the country. This project came as an outlier in the deliberative democracy universe in that its organizers explicitly chose to stay independent from public authorities and thus rejected publics funds (G1000 2012). Instead, they used the technique of crowdfunding. "Our strategy, the organizers contend, was very simple: to generate maximum media attention and hope for sufficient support" (G1000 2012: 31). In the end, they achieved to secure their 300,000€ budget in less than six months from over three thousands crowdfunders. It is these money-givers that form the central actors of this article, and we investigate their support for deliberative democracy on the basis of an original dataset.

The first section of this article lays the ground to the study of the financial support for deliberative democracy, which comes at the intersection of research on public support for deliberative democracy, political participation and philanthropy. On this basis, the original G1000 crowdfunding dataset is presented and the method of analysis is explained. In the following section, the crowdfunders' profiles and their attitudes towards current and alternative forms of democracy are discussed. Finally, the conclusion brings them back in light to question of the support for deliberative democracy.

The uncertain demand for deliberative democracy

The impetus for deliberative democracy came firstly from philosophical circles, where the notion of deliberation (re)emerged in the 1980s as an appropriate solution to several structural stakes facing Western societies such as globalization, generalization of uncertainty, new

modes of governances in network but also the increase of social inequalities (Dryzek 2000, Gutmann and Thompson 2004, Fishkin 1995). This deliberative turn brings about the idea to anchor democracy on a new legitimacy not on the aggregation of interest through voting anymore but rather on deliberation towards the public good (Habermas 1996, Cohen 1989, Manin 1987). Della Porta (2005: 340) has nicely summed up the aim of this proposition: it is to construct a democracy in which, under conditions of equality, inclusiveness and transparency, communicative processes based upon reason are able to transform individual preferences to reach decisions oriented towards the common good.

This theoretical development have – more or less directly – inspired several democratic innovation around the world (Smith 2009, Geissel and Newton 2011). Among these, mini-publics have become the most prominent instrument of deliberative democracy in practice (Grönlund et al. 2014). In a seminal article, Goodin and Dryzek (2006: 220) have caught their peculiar nature: "mini-publics are designed to be groups small enough to be genuinely deliberative, and representative enough to be genuinely democratic, even though rarely will they meet standards of statistical representativeness". Various mechanisms have flourished around the world but the most common forms are *planning cells* (Garbe 1986), *citizens' juries* (Crosby and Nethercut 2005), *consensus conferences* (Joss 1998), *deliberative polls* (Fishkin 1992) and *citizens' assemblies* (Warren and Pearse 2008). Much emphasis has been put on the study of their design (Ryfe 2005, Fung 2007) but there is an ongoing debate about the role of mini-publics in the maxi-public. Whereas some argue that the multiplication of mini-publics is key to improve future evolution of democracy because they allow a broader participation of the people (Fung and Cohen 2004, Brown 2006), others are more critical about their effective deliberative (Niemeyer 2011) or even democratic potential (Pourtois 2013, Chambers 2009).

The key question that follows is whether among the general public there is a willingness to support the development of deliberative mechanisms to transform the current system of government. In their book about Americans' beliefs on democracy, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) are quite sceptical about the existence of deliberative democrats and argue that citizens are rather stealth democrats, that is they are in favour of less involvement rather than more involvement since they expect democracy to be barely visible in their daily life and thus not demanding any citizens' participation. From a social psychology perspective, Mutz (2006) has gone one step further in arguing that there is a fundamental opposition between participatory democracy and deliberative democracy since most citizens may be tempted no to participate in a deliberation in a way to avoid political conflicts.

However, this fairly pessimistic approach was not left unchallenged. Recent empirical research has delved further into the support for different model of democracy. In the American context, Neblo and his colleagues (2010) have shown that there is more support for deliberation than expected. According to them, people who do not possess the required skills and resources, and feel disconnected from the political system have more incentives to defend deliberative innovations (Neblo et al. 2010). In the United Kingdom, Webb (2013) has identified two distinctive profiles: on the one hand, dissatisfied democrats who are politically interested, efficacious and in favour of participation in deliberation forum and, on the other hand, stealth democrats who generally show opposite characteristics but who are in favour of direct democracy, due to the populist nature of this mode of participation. More generally, a recent series of studies have identified the multidimensionality of support for different kind of political decision-making process (Font et al. 2015, Bengtsson and Christensen 2014, Coffé and Michels 2014). They all show that three major orientations – participatory, expert-based and representative – structure citizens' democratic preferences. This new trend in the

literature has thus demonstrated that different groups are potentially attracted by different models of democracy.

Deliberative activists: the case of G1000's crowdfunders

The aim of this article is to go beyond the analysis of the diffuse support for different models of democracy. Previous research endeavours have captured the potential attitudes towards a more deliberative or participatory democracy but they remain at a hypothetical level. In other words, we do not hitherto know who *in concreto* support deliberative democracy in, for instance, organizing or paying for these new forms of governance. It is indeed one thing to agree with a potential change; it's quite another one to commit oneself to make it happen. The potential normative orientation toward a political issue is not necessarily translated into real political action (McHugh 2006). We have therefore to analyse separately the population's hypothetical views on deliberative democracy and those who act as deliberative activists. Back in the early 2000s, in a fictive dialogue, Young (2001) had portrayed the encounter between two kinds of political participants: a deliberative democrat and an political activist. The former takes part in a dialogue with other people to deliberate to find the common good in a spirit of cooperation. The latter is a more traditional militant who signs petition, joints demonstrations or becomes member of a union to defend a specific vision of society in a more agonistic atmosphere. If we consider the recent development of democratic innovations, this raises a third figure: activist for deliberative democracy. Indeed, some people act politically to support this new political form such as deliberative mini-publics. Who are these activists and why do they support deliberative mini-public?

To answer this twofold research question, the G1000 deliberative mini-public held in Belgium in November 2011 provides a meaningful case study. The G1000 is a large-scale deliberative project that takes a particular place in the world of deliberative experiments. Unlike most deliberative mini-publics which are organized for research purposes, or funded by government institutions, the G1000 was a completely grassroots organization. The organizers relied on several hundred volunteers for everything from simultaneous translation to cooking (G1000 2012). What's more the event was not financed by public money; it relied on crowdfunding, i.e. small donations from citizens, private companies, associations or foundations. But it was not sponsoring either since the donors' name and their donations were not made public. They also set a limit to a maximum of 35,000€ for each donation in order to prevent one donor to buy off the initiative.

The reason why the organizers did not apply for public money is because they sought to keep by all means the independence of the process and in particular they opted for a very open agenda setting. This was important because the main argument for organizing the G1000 was the generally held belief that there is an ever-growing gap between politics and citizens, and that the public and political agendas no longer coincide. Accepting financing from public institutions would thus prioritize the political agenda once more. Instead the G1000 aimed at gathering ordinary citizens in a setting, which is conducive to open and uncoercive deliberation on contentious political issues that the citizens themselves found important (G1000 2012).

On 11 June 2011, the organizers launched along the publication of their manifesto a public call for crowdfunding. On 11 November 2011 the day of the G1000 Citizens' Summit, they had successfully gathered their 300,000€ budget from 3,059 donators: "with no less than

3,018 gifts of 1 to 500 euro and 41 gifts of more than 500 euro (of which a third came from citizens, a third from organisations and another third from private firms)" (G1000 2012: 32).

Who wants to pay for deliberative democracy?

To explore this new form of support for the deliberative democracy, the research question is structured in two dimensions. The first strand seeks to grasp who these deliberative activists are. In other words, we need to investigate their socio-demographic profile. To be sure, citizens have lots of possibilities to participate in democracy and these practices of engagement vary in space and time (Barnes and Kaase 1979, Van Deth 2014). Depending on the form, political scientists have shown that participation is unequally distributed among the population (Verba et al. 1995). The more an action demands time, energy, civic skills and money, the more it is mobilized by the socially advantaged group of the society (Marien et al. 2010). Men tend to participate more in traditional forms of participation and activism differs along life cycles and generations (Burns et al. 2001, Norris 2002). Education plays also a crucial role. According to Verba and colleagues (1995: 433), "education has a significant direct role with respect to each of the participation factors. It affects the acquisition of skills; it channels opportunities for high level of income and occupation; it places individuals in institutional settings where they can be recruited to political activity: and it fosters psychological and cognitive engagement with politics". Several recent studies have confirmed this social inequality in both conventional and unconventional modes of political participation (Bovens and Wille 2010, Armingeon and Schädel 2014). The form of action considered in this article is giving money. Nonetheless, this form of participation has received little attention in political science. This specific question has however been largely investigated in the literature on philanthropy, demonstrating the same patterns of inequality (Smith 1994, Brooks 2005, Brown and Ferris 2007, Reed and Selbee 2001, Schervish and Havens 1997, Uslaner and Brown 2005).

But is giving money to organize a mini-public followed the same patterns? Based on the existing scholarship, a first opposed set of hypotheses can be identified. On the one hand, some researchers consider that deliberative democracy offers a new and alternative way of doing politics. One of the major goals of democratic innovation is to reintegrate people excluded from the current political process and to develop more inclusive decision making process (Barber 1984, Landemore 2015, Ryfe 2002). Neblo and his colleagues (2010) argue that the people who are less likely to participate in traditional partisan politics are the more likely to support deliberative democracy because they consider this form of action as an alternative to politics as usual which they dislike. We can then hypothesise that deliberative events attract the opposite citizens that the ones who are already active in traditional politics. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is that *younger citizens, less educated, unengaged in traditional politics are more likely to support deliberative democracy (H1a)*.

One the other hand, supporting deliberative democracy, and in particular paying for, can be interpreted in light of political participation literature. Giving money to a mini-public corresponds indeed neatly with the patterns traditionally attached to unconventional and non-institutionalized form of participation (Stolle and Hooghe 2005): it takes place in a horizontally structured and flexible association; the act of giving money is individual and does not require an intensive and stable engagement; and the issue at stake relates to ideals of post-modernization (Inglehart 1997). The literature on these forms of participation has shown that these unequal patterns also explain the use of unconventional modes of participation (Marien et al. 2010). Research on philanthropy for both political and non-political purposes also shows

a similar demarcation line (Bekkers and Wiepking 2007). This shapes the ground for an alternative hypothesis: *older citizens, better educated, engaged in political and social participation are more likely to support deliberative democracy (H1b)*.

The second strand of the research question taps on the crowdfunders' democratic preferences: this is the why question. The last decades have witnessed a growing interest in the study of citizens' opinion and participation in light of the rising dissatisfaction towards public authorities (Norris 1999, Dalton and Welzel 2014). In the context of this research, this raises a key issue about the reason why someone would pay for deliberative democracy. Are crowdfunders rejecting the current representative model of democracy and instead calling for alternative models? Democratic innovations are typically presented as opportunity to cure the democratic malaise (Geissel and Newton 2012). The development of mini-publics is part of a larger democratic renewal intended to create a more participatory and deliberative style of democratic legitimacy (Fung and Cohen 2004, Barber 1984). In Belgium, the G1000 was born in the midst of a crisis of representative government because parties were unable to find an agreement to form a new government (Van Reybrouck 2011). The organizers argued that "it is clear that our society would benefit from the use of more forms of citizens' participation. A healthy democracy has to be earned anew every day; this responsibility is shared between citizens and their political representatives" (G1000 2012: 8).

But the question that remains open is whether the – financial – supporters of the G1000 were also reasoning along these lines. We therefore propose to investigate the degree of crowdfunders' (mis)trust towards the current representative actors and the reason why they support deliberative democracy. A first hypothesis comes from the literature on changing political values (Inglehart and Catterberg 2002, Dalton and Welzel 2014). This thesis claims that social modernization, through the rise of education levels and the development of postmodern ideals, has led citizens to become more distrustful towards traditional authorities, and to support more direct and less hierarchical forms of political engagement. A growing part of the population is thus more reluctant to delegate power and wants to challenge political elites. We therefore propose the following hypothesis: *supporters of deliberative democracy tend to be distrustful of political actors, to reject the representative system (H2a)*.

Nonetheless, the support of deliberative democracy could find its roots not so much in mistrust towards the current democratic system but rather in the will to deepen it. The representative government, as Manin argues (1997), has been able to transform itself to accommodate new political dynamics. Deliberative event can be seen as a way to improve the representative and electoral process (Brown 2006, Warren 2008, Gastil 2000). Supporters of deliberative democracy are accordingly not necessarily to be found among more distrustful democrats (Webb 2013) but among satisfied democrats who believe deliberative democracy would help reinvigorate our current representative democracy. An alternative hypothesis to H2a can therefore be voiced: *supporters of deliberative democracy trust political actors and support the current representative system (H2b)*.

Finally, the direction of the change has also to be investigated; that is the question whether supporters of deliberative democracy see this form of governance as the unique best solution or as one among many others. Recent empirical research on democratic preferences have shown that citizens do not hold one single democratic preference, exclusive of the other forms, and that some categories of individuals support at the same time expert-based and more participatory forms of governance (Bengtsson and Christensen 2014, Font et al. 2015). A first hypothesis is therefore: *the support of deliberative democracy is not exclusive and*

goes along with expert-based democracy (H3a). Yet, some theorists see deliberative democracy as the best and unique way to deeply transform democracy opposed to every form of elitist delegation (Fishkin 1995). This leads to the formulation of an alternative hypothesis: *the support of deliberative democracy is exclusive to any other types of democratic preferences (H3b)*.

H1 – The crowdfunders of the G1000

Among the three thousands crowdfunders of the G1000, about two thousands of them contributed with a text message worth 1€ (Table 1). For privacy reasons, we received no data about them, but we have the address of the 1,058 remaining crowdfunders who sent their contribution by bank transfers. Each of them was individually sent a questionnaire by mail in the months that followed the G1000. Their anonymity was of course guaranteed and this explains why any re-call was impossible. In order to maximize response rate – the only gap in a survey in which the whole population is contacted (Groves et al. 2009) –, a pre-paid enveloped was joined in the mail. In total, 542 completed questionnaires were sent back, that is a quite impressive response rate of 51 per cent in a single wave.

Table 1. Summary of donations

	N	% (incl. SMS)	% (excl. SMS)
1€ by text message (SMS)	2,001	65.4	
1€ up to 50€	694	22.7	65.6
51€ up to 100€	201	6.6	19.0
101€ up to 1000€	129	4.2	12.2
1000€ or more	34	1.1	3.2
Total	3,059	100.0	100.0

The questionnaire was made of five parts: opinions about the G1000 and the reason of their donation, political attitudes, support for democracy, participatory practices, and socio-demographics. In order to appreciate who is willing to pay for deliberative democracy, we can compare the crowdfunders' socio-demographic and political profile with the Belgian population, as measured in the run-up to the 2009 elections by the Belgian inter-university consortium PartiRep that provides a representative sample of Flemish and Walloon voters. Besides gender, age, education and political interest, both questionnaires surveyed the political participation in the two same ways. On the one hand, respondents were invited to indicate how often they had over the past twelve months "Been active in a political party", "Taken part in demonstrations", "Boycotted products" and "Signed a petition" with the possible answers from "often" (4) to "never" (0). On the other hand, they were invited to signal if they were "current member", "member in the past" or "never been member" of 15 different kinds of organisations[1].

Table 2. Socio-demographics and political profile of the G1000 crowdfunders

	G1000 crowdfunders n = 542	Belgian population n = 2331
Gender		
Men	66.9%	49.2%
Women	33.1%	50.8%

Age			
	18-34	10.8%	25.9%
	35-59	55.5%	46%
	60+	33.6%	28.1%
Political interest (0-10)			
	Mean	7.87	4.59
	S.D.	1.59	2.82
Education			
	None or primary	0.8%	11.9%
	Secondary	13.9%	57%
	Higher (non university)	28.2%	21.8%
	Higher (university)	57.1%	9.3%
Political participation over the last 12 months (often and sometimes)			
	Been active in a political party	16.2%	2.8%
	Taken part in demonstrations	29.8%	3.5%
	Boycotted products	58.1%	12.1%
	Signed a petition	70.9%	15.2%
Member or ex-member of voluntary associations			
	Minimum of 3 associations	93.9%	49.8%
	Minimum of 5 associations	74.3%	19%
	Mean	6.21	2.81
	S.D.	2.48	2.11

Notes: The data on the G1000 crowdfunders have been collected by the authors; the data for Belgium come from the PartiRep voter survey 2009 (www.partirep.eu).

Our first set of hypotheses concern the socio-demographic and political profile of the G1000 crowdfunders, and how they differ from the wider Belgian population. Table 1 shows quite clearly that the G1000 crowdfunders are far from representative of the whole population. First of all, there are more men, which might be a bit surprising. Non-institutionalized forms of participation are often seen to be more egalitarian concerning this dimension (Marien et al. 2010, Stolle et al. 2005). But in this case, it appears that paying for deliberative democracy is more appealing to men as in more traditional form of political participation. Research on philanthropy shows mixed results about this question and in fact it largely depends on the goal of the donation (Bekkers and Wiepking 2007). There are also less young people and more people of middle age. This can be explained by the specific nature of this form of participation: money giving. Active people are more likely to have financial means to spend (Bekkers and Wiepking 2007). But the most impressive difference is the overrepresentation of higher educated among the G1000 crowdfunders. Education is the variable that seems to set the contributors apart from the general population most strongly. More than 50 per cent of them hold a university degree, compared to 9 per cent in the population. Supporters of deliberative mini-publics tend thus to be drawn disproportionately from more advantaged, well-educated groups.

Most of G1000's crowdfunders are involved in several voluntary associations, which is a typical indicator of high social capital (Castiglione et al. 2008). What's more, the crowdfunders' level of political participation is high. For each of the four forms of political participation indicated in Table 2, G1000 crowdfunders participate significantly more than the

Belgian population. It is the case for non-institutionalized forms of participation like demonstrating, political consumerism or signing petitions (Marien et al. 2010). But more surprising, there is also an overrepresentation of people who have been active in political parties (16 per cent vs. 3 per cent in the Belgian population). Deliberative mini-publics are considered as innovative form of polity but this case suggests otherwise, giving ground to H1b rather than H1a. Crowdfunders are from better-educated groups, interested in politics and very active in the current political system in both conventional and unconventional forms.

Nonetheless, the very nature of crowd*funding* might explain this elitist support of deliberative democracy as giving money is easier – albeit not necessarily (Bekkers and Wiepking 2007) –, when one is rich than when one is poor, to put it bluntly. No comparative dataset are available to test this pattern in the whole population, but in our dataset we first see that most of the donations (65.6 per cent) are less than 50€ and furthermore we can also test for the amount of the donation, looking for correlations between socio-demographics and political attitudes and the sum of money that has been given to the G1000. We did however not find any significant correlations for any variables of interest. The amount of the donation does not discriminate between – financial – supporters of deliberative democracy. What matters therefore is to understand why they do support deliberative democracy and to make sense of their financial contribution to such democratic innovation.

H2 – Between critical and trustee support

A preliminary way to explore the meaning of the G1000's support is to look at the answers to the open question "In a few words, could you explain why you have made a donation to the G1000?" We have inductively coded the different reasons and created the following typology (Table 3). It follows from this that G1000 crowdfunders justify their donation from different and non-exclusive perspective. In line with the organizers' discourse, a very large majority explain that it is important to renew the democratic process to give more voice to lay citizens. Some also relate this narrative with a criticism of the current political actors. But also, responses to this open question reveal more original motives of actions as civic duty, curiosity or sympathy for organizers. Finally, a group of donors relate explain that the G1000 organized at the level of the whole country is a good means to maintain unity in divided Belgium. It shows that some donors make sense of mini-publics through the national context while others mobilize a more abstract motive.

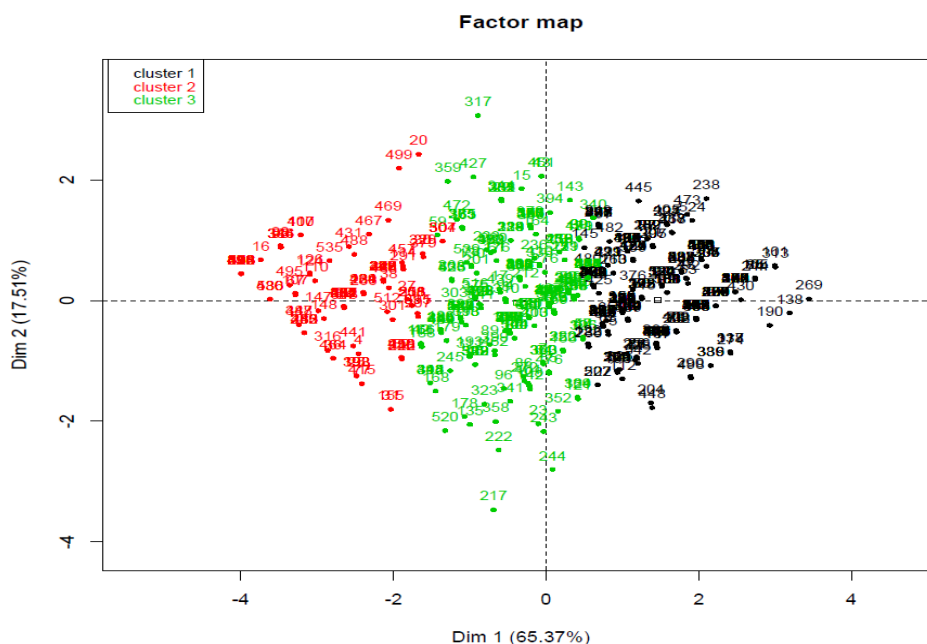*Table 3*. Expressed Reasons for donation of the G1000 crowdfunders

Reason	Examples	Frequency
Democratic renewal	Je trouve la démocratie importante mais ça ne marche plus si bien. Il est temps pour une transformation. Pas seulement en Belgique mais dans le monde entier, tout du moins dans les pays occidentaux; Car je crois dans l'importance de passer d'une démocratie représentative en une démocratie participative.	258
Criticism of elite	Pour soutenir une réflexion citoyenne nationale indépendante des partis politiques; J'espérais voir le G1000 constituer un sursaut démocratique face à l'oligarchie actuelle; Pour donner plus de participation à la population et pour rappeler aux politiciens que le peuple a aussi un avis, qui n'est pas forcément le même que le leur ; Pour obliger les politiciens à écouter les citoyens	74
Civic Duty	Mijn taak als burger; L'idée et l'action du G100 nous parait très importante et nous estimions de notre devoir de citoyen d'y participer	12
Support the organisation	Pour aider à couvrir les frais de fonctionnement; Parce que ce type d'initiative doit être soutenu; Important de rassembler des dons individuels à la place d'aller chercher des subsides publics; Parce que j'avais confiance dans l'organisation (via leur bonne communication); Pour soutenir une initiative émanant de la société civile	166
Belgian context	Pour trouver une solution à la crise communautaire; Pour rapprocher les deux communautés du pays	44
Sympathy for organizers	Parce que je connais X et qui m'a invite a le faire; Parce que mon fils et ma fille ont été fortement impliqués	40
Curiosity	Sympathie, curiosité envers l'influence que cela pouvait avoir; Par curiosité, pour donner une chance à cette initiative et voir ce qu'elle pouvait apporter	5

Notes: The data on the G1000 crowdfunders and coded have been collected by the authors

Nevertheless, these answers give only a first insight to understand the financial support for deliberative democracy. We need a more systematic measure to explore crowdfunders' reasons. Do they trust the current political system and its actors? Firstly, their attitudes towards political actors in Belgium are mixed. On an 11-point Likert scale, the mean is 3.91 (SD=2.01) for political parties and 4.21 (SD=2.10) for politicians. This low level of trust gives weight for the hypothesis H2a but a significant group of crowdfunders seems also to trust – with a score of 5 or more – political parties (24.5 per cent) and politicians (29.5). Secondly, we can look at the external political efficacy, that is their attitudes towards the electoral mechanism and its ability to give voice to ordinary citizens, measured by two items: "There is no point in voting; parties do what they want anyway" and "Before the elections parties make a lot of promises, but eventually little ever comes of them", on an ordinal scale ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (5) 'strongly agree'. Whereas 73.7 per cent of the crowdfunders (strongly) disagree with the first proposition and are not willing to abandon elections, their position on the second item is much more diversified, with a fifty-fifty distribution on the scale. Extra investigation is therefore needed to disentangle between H2a and H2b since crowdfunders do hold diverging views vis-à-vis the current democratic representative system.

We have accordingly conducted a clustering analysis to distinguish different groups of crowdfunders (Husson et al. 2010). The aim is to gather the 542 individuals into smaller groups of similar patterns. We have first conducted a principal component analysis (PCA) with the four previous items and perform a hierarchical clustering with the individuals' score on the first three dimensions from the PCA (cumulative percentage of variance = 95.4). The "optimal" level for division suggested by the hierarchical tree (Husson et al., 2010: 4)[2] gives a partition in three clusters. The factor map (Figure 1) shows that the three groups characterised themselves on the first dimension. This dimension is highly structuring in the data (Eigenvalue 2.62, with 65.7 per cent explained variance) and positively correlates with the trust in political parties and politicians as well as external political efficacy (Cronbach's α of four items = 0.8). The more a crowdfunder scores high on this dimension, the more she is confident about the actual functioning of the current electoral and partisan democracy.

The factor map from the clustering analysis clearly reveals three groups of crowdfunders: one very critical about the current political system (cluster 1, on the right), one more confident (cluster 2, on the left), and a more moderate (cluster 3, in the middle). For the first group, the support to the G1000 can be interpreted as a means to find radical alternative to the current political system and their actors that they do not trust. But, by contrast, for more moderate and especially confident crowdfunders, their support translates a will to deepen and enhance the democratic quality of the current representative system, rather than a will to radically change it. This raises a final question: what do G1000 crowdfunders want from democracy?

H3 – Deliberative democracy vs. other new forms of democracy

In the current and on-going debate about the future of democracy, three main models are typically presented as alternative or complement to representative democracy: direct democracy, expert-based democracy or also called technocracy and participatory democracy. The usual phrasing for these models were used in our survey: "In general, it is a good thing that citizens have an influence on the decision-making process through referendums" (direct democracy); "Citizens should participate in the decision-making process themselves instead of letting politicians do the job" (participatory democracy); "Having experts not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country, is a good way of governing this country" (technocracy). As hypothesised (H3b), it would be fair to assume that people who support deliberative forms of governance based on the random selection of participants consider positively citizens' participation in society and tend to reject expert-based governance. But our findings highlight that the puzzle is more complex.

As shown in Table 4, a very large majority of crowdfunders (strongly) agree that citizens should be able to participate in public decisions rather than to let politicians make decisions. This is a rather straightforward sentence but this item is interesting to measure the positive attitude towards participation instead of delegation to elites. What's more, 72.4 per cent of the respondents consider positively referendums (even though such decisional referendums are

not allowed in Belgium and consultative ones can only be organized at the local level[3]). The support for these two models tends to underlie the participatory nature of the support for the G1000. But the last column of Table 4 nuances this view. Only 43.6 per cent of the crowdfunders (strongly) disagree that instead of having a government, it would be preferable that they be experts who govern according to what they think is best for the country. From a theoretical point of view, participation of lay citizens in deliberation is based on an inclusive model of democracy whereas the active engagement of citizens is valued against the government of a few and technocracy (Held 2006). Our data show that people who support mini-publics by giving money are not necessarily opposed to a more elitist form of governance.

Table 4. Support for models of democracy

	Direct democracy	Participatory democracy	Technocracy
Strongly disagree	3.0	1.3	17.3
Disagree	13.5	8.0	26.2
Neither agree nor disagree	11.1	6.7	19.7
Agree	47.0	50.5	28.4
Strongly agree	25.4	33.6	8.4

Notes: All figures are percentage. N = 542

Moreover, the spearman correlation among the three scales is always significantly positive: direct-participatory (.265); direct-technocracy (.139); participatory-technocracy (.141). In order to better understand the support for these different models of democracy, we have conducted three separate ordinal logistic regressions (Table 5). The dependent variables are the ordered categories from (1) "Strongly disagree" to (5) "Strongly agree" for each of the three models of democracy. The independent variables are political interest (0-10), the sum of voluntary association (0-15) and the sum of form of political participation (0-4) as well as the three clusters of citizens (critical, moderate and confident). Age, gender and level of education are included as control variables.

Table 5. Ordinal logistic regression models of democratic preferences

	Democratic models		
	Direct democracy B (S.E.) p	Participatory democracy B (S.E.) p	Technocracy B (S.E.) p
Gender (ref = male)	n.s.	n.s.	**.452(.188)***
Age	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Education (ref = university)			
None or primary	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Secondary	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Higher education (non-university)	n.s.	n.s.	**.490(.203)***
Confidence (ref = moderate)			
Critical	**.578(.264)***	**.502(.271)***	**.864(.256)***

Confident	**-.648(.198)***	**-.693(.205)***	**-.587(.192)***
Political interest	n.s.	**.134(.062)***	**-.175(.059)**
Membership voluntary organisations (0-11)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Political participation (0-4)	**.188(.084)***	n.s.	**-.309(.082)***
-2 Log likelihood	1138.716	993.910	1289.895
Cox & Snell R2	.089	.076	.176
McFadden R2	.035	.034	.063

Notes: n.s. = non-significant. ***p ≤0.001, **≤p 0.01, *≤0.05

The aim of these three ordinal regressions is not to fully explain the support for these three normative orientations but to stress the influence of the key variables. The most impressive finding is the fact that the typology of citizens concerning their degree of criticalness significantly explains the support for each of the three models in the same direction. Compared to the moderate group, critical citizens favour more direct democracy, participatory democracy but also technocracy. It is the opposite for the confident crowdfunders. Thus the more crowdfunders dislike politicians and parties and the less they believe in the democratic potential of electoral system, the more they tend to support any alternative mechanism to the current model. In this sense, technocracy and more participatory tools are part of the same group of alternatives. Contrariwise, people who are more confident in the current system tend to be more moderate in their support of democratic alternatives.

These findings also help to capture the differences in the support for the three models of democracy. Political interest is positively connected with the support for participatory democracy and negatively with the support of technocracy. The level of political participation is negatively associated with the support for technocracy. It means that the participatory and technocratic orientations are driven by the same distrust in the current political system but that the latter is mainly favoured by crowdfunders who are less politically active and with a lower interest in politics. Finally, education has little effect, except in the support of technocracy which is more supported by people holding a non-university higher education degree in comparison with university graduates. This goes along the finding that both political interest and political participation levels shape the support for such mode of expert-based democracy who is favoured by those who feel less able to participate in democracy.

Conclusion

Crowdfunding is sometimes presented as the most suitable means to finance bottom-up democratic innovations because it shares the same logic of bottom-up participation. But who are these crowdfunders, and why do they want to pay for deliberative democracy? This article brings offers two major answers to this question. Firstly, the *ex-ante* support for deliberative mini-publics mainly comes from the more advantaged groups of the society. Crowdfunders have a higher degree of education but also they are more men, more active in social associations and participate much with unconventional and conventional forms of political actions. This finding echoes some criticisms against deliberative democracy portrayed as reinforcement of political inequalities because of the high level of resources and skills needed (Sanders 1997, Young 2000). The more marginalised public that the G1000 – and more broadly democratic innovations – wished to reintegrate in the political process was absent of

its financing. It does not however imply that the inclusive aim of such deliberative process cannot be operationalized in the composition of the mini-public itself but that this bottom-up initiative was mainly supported, in the beginning at least, by already active groups, and not marginalised ones.

Secondly, the political meaning of the act of giving money to the G1000 is more nuanced. Our research offers an interesting perspective to understand the ambiguity of democratic innovation projects. The analysis of the G1000 crowdfunders shows that the support for such innovation is more complex and heterogeneous than the justification of their organisers. Some supporters are really critical about the current political and electoral system as well as towards its actors. For this group of crowdfunders, the support of G1000 can be understood as a means to reject the current political arrangement in which parties do not represent the people anymore. It is a radical call for a new form of democracy. But our results show that the direction of this change is not straightforward.

Crowdfunders who are more critical about the functioning of the current democratic system tend to favour more citizens' participation in the political process but also more technocratic form of government where expert make decisions themselves – especially for crowdfunders who participate less and who are less interested in politics. The G1000 offered an alternative among other forms of democracy, and these crowdfunders support any alternatives to the existing system. This kind of citizens dissatisfied with the representative governance and concerned with the search of alternatives identified in other studies (Coffé and Michels 2014, Webb 2013, Font et al. 2015) are therefore part of the people who are willing to pay for deliberative democracy. But, one the other hand, there are also crowdfunders who trust politicians and political parties and who demonstrate a strong attachment to elected institutions. A quite large number of crowdfunders are even members of political parties. For them, supporting the G1000 can be interpreted as a means to deepen the current democratic system in which there are already active. This article has shown that grassroots mini-publics are also funded by citizens active in conventional politics, but who want to support new modes of citizens' engagement and consultation.

This research demonstrates the multiplicity of the support for deliberative democracy. Depending on the nature and on the design of democratic innovations different goals can be reached such as inclusivity, effectiveness of public action, considered and informed choices, justice, popular control (Smith 2012, Fung 2006). But the objectives of the organisers may differ from those who support them. Based on an original dataset, we have sought to address the key question of who wants to pay for deliberative democracy. The G1000 has attracted the support of citizens for different reasons and federated people with diverging political profiles and democratic preferences. This sheds light on the complex intertwining between views on the ideal democratic system and the attitudes towards the current situation, and above all on the links between a mini-public and the maxi-public.

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Notes

[1] A youth group or movement; A nature or environment protection association; General rescue services or population assistance association (e.g. Red Cross, voluntary firemen, etc.); A leisure or artistic club (e.g. cooking, theatre, dancing, singing, etc.); A women's association; A socio-cultural association; A sports club or association (e.g. soccer, basketball, chess, walking club, etc.); A political party or association; A religious or parish/Church association; A district/local community committee, a consultative local council, or a school council, etc.; An association campaigning for international peace or for the development of the Third World (e.g. Amnesty International, Oxfam, etc.); A trade union, a professional union, or an employers' organisation; A health-oriented association (e.g. Act Up, Braille League, etc.); An organisation of retired people; A family-oriented association (e.g. Family League, etc.).

[2] Hierarchical clustering on Principal Components; Distance = Euclidean, Method=Ward, consolidation=K-means.

[3] Since 2014, the Belgian constitution has been revised to allow consultative referendum at the regional level.