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## ► To cite this version:

Camille Bedock, Jean-Benoit Pilet. Could Representative Democracy Be Reformed? A Citizens' perspective. ECPR Joint sessions of Workshops, atelier: Can Participatory Reforms Save Representative Democracy?, Apr 2018, Nicosie, Cyprus. hal-03138709

**HAL Id: hal-03138709**

**<https://hal.science/hal-03138709>**

Submitted on 11 Feb 2021

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# **Could Representative Democracy Be Reformed?**

## **A Citizens' perspective**

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### **Introduction**

For several years now, studies have multiplied on the growing dissatisfaction with representative democracy. Within this context, a few studies have tried to understand what alternatives to the traditional model of representative democracy dissatisfied democrats were calling for. The two main groups that have been identified are participatory democrats and stealth democrats. The earlier are calling for more citizens' participation, while the later would prefer a more output-oriented political system with stronger leaders, more technocracy and less political debates (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2005; Webb, 2013; Bengtsson and Christensen, 2014; Font et al., 2015).

However, it is not entirely clear how these demands for reforms articulate with citizens' evaluation of representative democracy. Does support for these alternative models articulate with a radical rejection of representative democracy? Or would they rather be demands to complement and to enrich representative democracy with some elements of greater citizens' participation and/or experts' involvement?

The answer to the central question of this workshop – can participatory democracy save representative democracy? – would receive a very different answer in the two scenarios. In the latter case, adding elements of participatory democracy to representative democracy could be positive and foster public support. However, if citizens perceive the three models as fully distinct models, with logics that could hardly be combined, participatory democracy could only save representative democracy by replacing it. Only the citizens who support this new model would back such a radical change in the way our democratic systems are working. Other citizens, who prefer representative democracy or stealth democracy, would evaluate any move towards a more participatory model as a step in the wrong direction, amounting to a curse rather than a cure for representative democracy.

With this research question it is the broader question of the compatibility between representative democracy and its alternatives that we open (Sections 1 to 3). As several scholars have shown for the combination between direct and representative democracy, models of democracy may be compatible in some case, but they may also compete in others (Peters, 2016; Bauer and Fatke, 2014).

We propose to address these questions in three steps. First, we use a survey conducted on the occasion of the 2017 presidential elections in France (Sections 4 and 5). French citizens surveyed were asked to select which actors they would prefer to take the major decisions for France: citizens (selected by lot), elected representatives, or experts and businessmen. We analyse their answers in order to understand how they articulate with citizens' evaluation of how representative democracy is working in France. We start by examining their general satisfaction of the way democracy is working in France in general, before decomposing their general evaluation of the French Fifth Republic into

different dimensions: support for the ruling elites, for elected politicians in general, and for the core principles of representative democracy. We then re-examine the answers through descriptive statistics and MCA to show that for a vast bulk of respondents, the evaluation of representative democracy is not so clearly related with a given preference in terms of who should make the most important decisions.

That is why as a second step, we propose to dig deeper into this question of the compatibility of representative democracy with the alternatives of participatory and stealth democracy through the analysis of qualitative interviews to approach how French citizens' views on representative democracy articulate with propositions for specific reforms such as citizens juries in the form of mini-publics (Section 6).

### **1. Three models of democracy**

Within a context of eroding political support (Norris 2011; Thomassen 2015), scholarly attention for citizens' views about how democracy should be working has developed. While it appears that most citizens still consider free and fair elections the most important hallmark of democracy (Hooghe, Marien, and Oser 2017), various studies show that, across contemporary democracies, a large share of the population is dissatisfied with the way the representative system works and would be calling for democracy to be reformed (e.g. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Dalton, 2004).

The first element of reflection that emerged within this perspective was that a growing share of the population was calling for enhancing the participatory nature of democracy, to give more opportunities to citizens to get involved in the political process (Cain et al., 2003; Dalton, 2004; Neblo et al., 2010). Other scholars have challenged this view. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), for instance argued that a large share of US citizens were indeed dissatisfied with the way the US political system was working but were actually not calling for more participation. The so-called stealth democrats *"do not want to make political decisions themselves; they do not want to provide much input to those who are assigned to make these decisions; and they would rather not know the details of the decision-making process. (...) This does not mean that people think no mechanism for government accountability is necessary; they just do not want the mechanism to come into play except in unusual circumstances"* (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002: 1-2).

Since then, scholars across Europe have conducted surveys on citizens' preferences regarding how democracy should be organized (Webb, 2013; Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009; Coffé and Michels, 2014; Caluwaerts et al., 2018; Font et al., 2015). They confirm the co-existence of three models of democracy (Bengtsson and Christensen, 2014). In the first model - that Bengtsson and Christensen name the elitist model - elections are the core of democracy, and democracy is primarily a method for citizens to select the leaders who will govern. The expertise/technocratic model refers to the idea of stealth democracy and is based on the idea that efficient leaders selected on basis of their expertise should conduct politics, and that citizens' involvement should be minimal. Finally, the participation model – also referred to as the pluralistic model – sees citizens' participation as central in democracy, and citizens should be given a direct say in major political decisions outside of Election Day

### **2. The link with citizens' evaluation of representative democracy**

The starting point of the literature regarding citizens' preferences about how contemporary democracy should work is rooted in the observation that citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with representative democracy.

The problem is that negative evaluations about representative democracy appear to be associated with demands for any type of reform, in any direction. Higher dissatisfaction with democracy is found among citizens calling for more participation (Cain et al., 2003; Dalton, 2004; Neblo et al., 2010; Schuck and de Vreese, 2015), as well as among stealth democrats (Bengtsson and Mattila; 2009; Coffé and Michels, 2013; Bertson and Pastorella, 2016) Other studies have also shown that dissatisfaction with democracy also explains support for reform that remain within the logic of representative democracy like electoral system reforms (Norris, 2011b; Renwick and Pilet, 2016; Bedock, 2017).

Therefore, although dissatisfaction with representative democracy is clearly key to understand support for alternatives to representative democracy, it does not help at all to explain what type(s) of reform citizens would prefer. Hence, we propose to examine more carefully how citizens' democratic preferences are articulated with their evaluation of how representative democracy is working in their country. Most existing studies rely upon the classical question of satisfaction with democracy. The problem is that this question may be given very different interpretations by respondents (Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001; Linde and Ekman 2003). Some citizens reply to this question by evaluating the performance of the ruling government. Others express their trust in actors of democracy such as political parties and elected politicians, or in institutions like parliament, others still refer to their evaluation of the principles of democracy. Therefore, it is crucial to examine more fine-grained indicators of citizens' evaluation of representative democracy and to link them with their democratic preferences.

First, we propose to look at how they evaluate the performance of the incumbent government. Second, we will examine how they judge elected politicians – the core actor of representative democracy –in general. Thirdly, we will capture their evaluation of the efficiency of the core principle of representation democracy: elections. We believe that these three dimensions of political support may have very different effects on citizens' democratic preferences. Judging that the incumbent government is not performing well should not lead to reconsider radically how democracy should function and that a profound institutional reform should be undergone. By contrast, if a citizen believes that politicians can never be trusted and do not care at all about the will of the people, than demands for new models of democracy based upon other actors than elected politicians could emerge. It would even more be the case for citizens who do not believe at all that elections are appropriate tools to bring about change.

Finally, we will add a last item to our analyses. We believe that citizens' evaluation of the capacity of citizens to play a role in politics is also crucial to understand their preference about how democracy should be organized. We will therefore also consider both their evaluation of their own political capacity (internal political efficacy) as well as their judgment of the capacities of citizens in general.

### **3. Complementary vs. competing institutions**

Next to linking citizens' democratic preferences to their evaluation of representative democracy, the question we pose is whether these alternative models of democracy are compatible according to citizens.

Existing studies on participatory democracy in particular implicitly assume the compatibility between these models. According to Chambers (2003: 308), "deliberative democracy is not usually thought of as an alternative to representative democracy. It is

rather an expansion of representative democracy". Within that logic, combining the different models would enhance the efficiency but also the legitimacy of the political system as a whole. It would renew and update representative democracy, and not replace it.

However, studies on another model of democracy - direct democracy - have shown that compatibility of representative democracy with other models cannot be taken for granted (Peters, 2016; Bauer and Fatke, 2014). Implementing reforms towards alternatives to representative democracy may convince people already showing skepticism towards the mechanisms and actors of representative democracy that democracy could definitely work without election and representation. If experts or citizens could do the job, why bother keeping politicians? From this perspective, it is not about renewing representative democracy but about replacing it.

The two logics probably co-exist among the public. Some citizens, perhaps those less dissatisfied with representative democracy, could still believe that this logic should remain central in contemporary democracies, but elements of participatory democracy and of expertise could be added. By contrast, other citizens would perceive these models as incompatible. They would stand in favor of one and would reject the others. It is what we will try to capture in the present study.

We also ask the question of the compatibility between stealth and participatory democracy. Previous studies have shown that they share some characteristics. They rely upon dissatisfaction with the way representative democracy is working, and supporters of both models are rather skeptical about the capacity of elected politicians to govern.

However, the two models are also based upon opposite premises. Participatory democrats would insist on the need to open up the political process to citizens. They would dislike the idea of empowering experts. They already feel that elected representatives taking all decisions is rather undemocratic, let alone unaccountable experts taking decisions far from the public eye. Stealth democrats, by contrast, would be even more dissatisfied if citizens were being empowered. They already think elected representatives are unqualified to take complex and messy decisions, let alone the general public, and they dislike political debates, while deliberation lies at the core of most participatory procedures.

#### **4. Surveying French citizens' democratic preferences: a quantitative approach**

##### *4.1 Why study France?*

The case of France complements very usefully what has been shown on the topic in other consolidated democracies. The French model of democracy is very peculiar, with a strong semi-presidential regime dominated by a strong president. Dissatisfaction with politics is high and has been marked by the enduring electoral strength of the Front national since the 1980s. The last presidential elections in 2017 have witnessed several proposals from candidates to reform radically the Fifth Republic, including some proposals to introduce citizens' juries in various forms. The winning candidate, Emmanuel Macron, suggested that a jury composed of citizens selected by lot would audit the President on an annual basis. The candidate of the Parti socialiste, Benoît Hamon, and the candidate of the radical left, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, proposed to reform the French Senate to include citizens selected by lot, as well as to install a constitutional convention that would be composed along the same lines.

Within this context of politicization of the question of how French democracy ought to be organized, it is interesting to see what were the preferences of French citizens about who should be given the central role in the democratic architecture of the country. Our study takes advantage of the 2017 French election study (Gougou and Sauger 2017), a post-electoral survey coordinated by Nicolas Sauger and Florent Gougou 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. Presentation of the variables

This survey asks a question that is particularly interesting for the topic at stake, asking respondents to select between three actors that types of actors who should be given the central role in deciding what is best for the country: elected politicians (MPs or the President), citizens selected by lot, or experts and successful businessmen. This question is used to build up our core dependent variable (see table 1).

**Table 1.** *Answers of the respondents to the question ‘Who should decide what is best for the country’? (valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Citizens selected by lot	302	17.7
Politicians	728	42.7
Experts	674	39.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>1704</i>	<i>100</i>

The most popular option among the respondents is to leave the most important decisions to elected politicians (42.7%), however, a roughly similar proportion of them would prefer experts (39.5%), while only 17.7% were in favour of leaving citizens selected by lot decide. In other words, when forced to choose between one of the three options, there is only a relative majority of French respondents who support the representative option. The stealth democratic orientation also appears quite widely supported. By contrast, only a minority of citizens would like citizens selected by lot to be the central actor in political decision-making.

In the next sub-section, we will link answers to this question to a series of indicators capturing French citizens’ evaluation of representative democracy. We will start with the standard question about how satisfied they are about how democracy is working in France. We then dig into their evaluation of representative democracy on basis of three elements: (1) the evaluation of regime performance, (2) the evaluation of elected politicians, and (3) the evaluation of the very principle of representative democracy and election<sup>1</sup>.

The two variables evaluating the performance of the regime were the following: first, a variable asking respondents the satisfaction of respondents about the actions of President François Hollande during the preceding term, which we recoded in three categories (‘Satisfied’, ‘Not satisfied’, and ‘Not satisfied at all’), second, a variable on the state of the economy asking respondents whether they thought that the economy got ‘better’, ‘stable’, ‘worse’, or ‘a lot worse’ in the last year.

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<sup>1</sup> Descriptive statistics may be found in appendix.

We included three variables evaluating how respondents view politicians, each of them recoded as a dummy variable (agree/disagree). The first one asked respondents whether they think that 'Most politicians do not care about the people', the second whether 'Most politicians are trustworthy' and the third one whether 'The politicians are the main problem in France'.

Regarding the support for the principle of election, we have constructed an additive scale aggregating the answers of the respondents to two separate questions regarding the uselessness of elections to bring out political change. The first one asked them whether 'people in power are able to bring out political change', the second one whether 'who people vote for can make a big difference to what happens'.<sup>2</sup> The scale ranged from 0 when the respondent strongly agreed to both statements to 8 when he strongly disagreed with both, and therefore did not believe in the election mechanism.

We also include in our analyses variables asking respondents to evaluate the ability of actors other than politicians to make political decisions, namely their fellow citizens and themselves. We have constructed an additive scale of the perceived incompetence of other citizens aggregating their answers on two items<sup>3</sup>: 'generally, people don't know what's good for themselves' and 'generally, people don't know what's good for France'. Regarding their own perceived political competence, we recoded as a dummy the item asking respondents whether they felt that 'politics is too complicated for people like me'.

Finally, the following analyses include a series of sociodemographic and political control variables that have been shown to be significant determinants of citizens' democratic preferences: gender, age, education, left/right orientation and voting habits (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009; Coffé and Michels, 2013; Webb, 2013; Dalton, 2017; Caluwaerts et al., 2018). They will not be commented due to space constraints.

#### *4.3 Multivariate analyses*

The goal in this subsection is to analyse the link between democratic preferences and the evaluation of French representative democracy via a series of logistic regressions. For each, the dependent variable is what actor they declare to be their preferred actor to be in charge of taking the main decisions for the future of France.

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<sup>2</sup> The reliability of the scale is the following : Cronbach's Alpha = 0.81.

<sup>3</sup> Cronbach's Alpha=0.88

**Table 2.** *Determinants of the preference for the mode of political decision (Satisfaction with democracy and controls)*

	Citizens drawn by lot		Politicians		Experts	
<b>Satisfaction with democracy (ref. cat: very satisfied)</b>						
<i>Satisfied</i>	<b>2.95 +</b>	(0.91-9.62)	0.88	(0.55-1.40)	0.88	(0.55-1.40)
<i>Not satisfied</i>	<b>5.01 **</b>	(1.56-1.66)	<b>0.58 (*)</b>	(0.36-0.93)	1.02	(0.63-1.65)
<i>Not satisfied at all</i>	<b>13.70 ***</b>	(4.12-45.61)	<b>0.33 (***)</b>	(0.19-0.57)	0.71	(0.41-1.23)
<b>Gender (ref. cat: male)</b>						
<i>Female</i>	0.90	(0.68-1.19)	<b>0.82 +</b>	(0.66-1.01)	<b>1.30*</b>	(1.05-1.60)
<b>Age</b>	<b>0.98***</b>	(0.97-0.99)	<b>1.01 **</b>	(1.00-1.02)	1.00	(0.99-1.01)
<b>Level of education (Ref. cat.: tertiary)</b>						
<i>None</i>	<b>2.84 **</b>	(1.43-5.65)	1.00	(0.56-1.77)	<b>0.51*</b>	(0.28-0.95)
<i>Primary (CEP)</i>	<b>1.70 +</b>	(0.93-3.13)	1.23	(0.81-1.88)	<b>0.60 *</b>	(0.39-0.93)
<i>Lower secondary (BEPC)</i>	<b>1.83 *</b>	(1.04-3.20)	0.87	(0.57-1.33)	0.82	(0.54-1.25)
<i>Lower secondary vocational (CAP-BEP)</i>	<b>1.46 +</b>	(1.00-2.14)	<b>0.79 +</b>	(0.60-1.04)	1.03	(0.78-1.35)
<i>Upper secondary (Bac)</i>	1.29	(0.86-1.95)	0.94	(0.70-1.27)	0.93	(0.69-1.24)
<b>Left/right orientation</b>	<b>0.92 **</b>	(0.86-0.98)	0.99	(0.95-1.05)	<b>1.06 *</b>	(1.01-1.11)
<b>Type of voter (ref. cat.: Permanent voter)</b>						
<i>Intermittent voter</i>	<b>1.34 +</b>	(0.97-1.86)	<b>0.79 +</b>	(0.61-1.03)	1.05	(0.81-1.37)
<i>Non-voter</i>	<b>1.85 *</b>	(1.05-3.24)	0.81	(0.48-1.34)	0.79	(0.47-1.31)
Constant	<b>0.11 ***</b>	(0.03-0.41)	0.84	(0.45-1.55)	<b>0.53+</b>	(0.29-0.98)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	10.0		3.8		1.36	
Number of Observations	1546		1546		1546	

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

Coefficients in odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals in parentheses

For the first series of multivariate analyses, we limit the evaluation of representative democracy to the standard question ‘satisfaction with democracy’. Results show that the level of satisfaction with democracy is strongly related with preferences for decision-making made by citizens by lot and by elected politicians, but in an opposite direction (see table 2). In comparison with respondents who are ‘very satisfied’ with democracy, respondents who are not satisfied at all are almost 14 times more likely to prefer decisions made by citizens by lot. On the contrary, respondents who are ‘not satisfied at all’ with democracy are almost 70% less likely than respondents who are ‘very’ satisfied with democracy to support politicians to make the most important political decisions. Satisfaction with democracy, however, is unrelated with the preference for expert decision-making all other factors being held constant.



We have then run a second series of logistic regressions (see Table 3) in order to illuminate what lies behind satisfaction with democracy.

First, evaluation of the regime performance does not appear to be strongly statistically related with the preferences for elected and non-elected politics. Only do we observe that being not satisfied at all with President Hollande increases the likelihood to support a participatory model, and that individuals who feel that the state of the economy has gotten a lot worse are 32% less likely to support decision-making made by experts. Yet, this last effect is at the margin of statistical significance.

By contrast, citizens' evaluation of elected politicians appears to matter a lot in shaping democratic preferences. We observe two groups: (1) respondents who are negative about politicians that are much more likely to support decision-making by citizens or experts, and (2) citizens who are positive about elected politicians and who, logically, support keeping them in charge.

The same line of division is found for citizens' evaluation of the principle of elections itself. The more individuals are convinced that elections cannot bring out political change, the more likely they are to support political decisions made by citizens or experts. Compared to individuals who feel that elections can bring about political change, individuals who are the most convinced about the inability of vote and people in power to change things are nine times more likely to support citizens to make the most important political decisions, and around eight times more likely to support experts. Conversely, individuals who are the most convinced that elections can bring about political change are around seven times more likely to want politicians to stay in charge.

These findings go in the direction that the main divide about democratic preferences is between satisfied and dissatisfied citizens. But it does not help understanding what would differentiate between participatory and stealth democrats.

What could help differentiating between these two groups actually lies in how they evaluate citizens' political competence. Citizens who are the least convinced about other citizens' competence are around seven times less likely to support citizens selected by lot and eight times more likely to support experts. Respondents who are not confident about their own political skills are 40% more likely to entrust experts with the most important decisions.

**Table 3.** *Determinants of the preference for the mode of political decision (Evaluation of representative democracy and controls)*

	Citizens drawn by lot		Politicians		Experts	
<b>Evaluation of Hollande (ref. cat: satisfied)</b>						
<i>Not satisfied</i>	1.02	(0.64-1.63)	0.89	(0.66-1.22)	1.11	(0.82-1.51)
<i>Not satisfied at all</i>	<b>1.56*</b>	(0.94-2.59)	0.91	(0.63-1.30)	0.82	(0.57-1.17)
<b>State of the economy (ref. cat.: better)</b>						
<i>Stable</i>	1.15	(0.68-1.95)	1.24	(0.89-1.74)	0.80	(0.57-1.11)
<i>Worse</i>	1.17	(0.68-2.01)	1.25	(0.87-1.80)	0.77	(0.54-1.10)
<i>A lot worse</i>	1.51	(0.84-2.73)	1.14	(0.74-1.74)	<b>0.68+</b>	(0.45-1.03)
<b>Politicians don't care</b>	<b>1.82**</b>	(1.22-2.70)	0.94	(0.72-1.22)	0.84	(0.65-1.08)
<b>Politicians are trustworthy</b>	<b>0.61*</b>	(0.38-0.99)	<b>1.83***</b>	(1.39-2.44)	<b>0.59***</b>	(0.44-0.79)
<b>Politicians are the main problem</b>	<b>1.59**</b>	(1.15-2.21)	<b>0.55***</b>	(0.43-0.71)	<b>1.35**</b>	(1.06-1.77)
<b>Uselessness of Election scale</b>	<b>1.14***</b>	(1.07-1.22)	<b>0.87***</b>	(0.82-0.92)	<b>1.05+</b>	(0.99-1.10)
<b>Incompetence of other citizens scale</b>	<b>0.93*</b>	(0.87-1.00)	0.98	(0.92-1.03)	<b>1.07*</b>	(1.01-1.13)
<b>Politics is too complicated for citizens like me</b>	0.76	(0.53-1.07)	0.85	(0.65-1.10)	<b>1.37*</b>	(1.06-1.77)
<b>Gender (ref. cat: male)</b>						
<i>Female</i>	0.78	(0.58-1.06)	0.95	(0.75-1.19)	<b>1.21+</b>	(0.97-1.50)
<b>Age</b>	<b>0.98***</b>	(0.97-0.99)	1.00	(1.00-1.01)	1.00	(1.00-1.01)
<b>Level of education (Ref. cat.: tertiary)</b>						
<i>None</i>	<b>2.44*</b>	(1.15-5.18)	1.33	(0.71-2.50)	<b>0.44**</b>	(0.23-0.83)
<i>Primary (CEP)</i>	1.53	(0.79-2.97)	<b>1.80**</b>	(1.12-2.90)	<b>0.44***</b>	(0.27-0.71)
<i>Lower secondary (BEPC)</i>	<b>1.76+</b>	(0.96-3.20)	1.00	(0.63-1.59)	0.74	(0.47-1.16)
<i>Lower secondary vocational (CAP-BEP)</i>	1.28	(0.84-1.95)	1.07	(0.78-1.46)	0.82	(0.61-1.11)
<i>Upper secondary (Bac)</i>	1.17	(0.77-1.83)	1.00	(0.73-1.38)	0.91	(0.67-1.24)
<b>Left/right orientation</b>	<b>0.89***</b>	(0.84-0.95)	1.00	(0.95-1.06)	<b>1.08**</b>	(1.02-1.14)
<b>Type of voter (ref. cat.: Permanent voter)</b>						
<i>Intermittent voter</i>	1.26	(0.90-1.78)	0.82	(0.62-1.10)	1.02	(0.78-1.35)
<i>Non-voter</i>	<b>1.67+</b>	(0.92-3.00)	0.99	(0.58-1.71)	0.70	(0.41-1.17)
Constant	<b>0.24***</b>	(0.107-0.57)	1.02	(0.56-1.86)	<b>0.36***</b>	(0.19-0.64)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	12.8		7.6		3.5	
Number of Observations	1451		1451		1451	

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

Coefficients in odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals in parentheses

At this stage, some preliminary conclusions could be drawn. First, the idea that the main line of division regarding democratic preferences is between satisfied and dissatisfied

democrats is confirmed. We observe two groups of citizens. Some citizens still believe in the principle of election and still trust elected politicians. Therefore, they prefer elected politicians to remain the core of the system. By contrast, other citizens distrust strongly politicians, and even sometimes question the principle of elections itself. These negative evaluations of representative democracy lead to them to support other actors than politicians to be in charge. Among these dissatisfied democrats, the preference for citizens or for experts depends on how much they trust citizens' political capacities.

Coming back to the question of the compatibility between the three models, these findings already provide some interesting elements of reflection. First, representative democrats with positive evaluation of politicians still exist. Such citizens would not accept a radical shift of political power to other actors, be they citizens or experts. The question is whether these citizens could accept instilling elements of participatory and stealth democrats into representative democracy. That question remains open at this stage.

Second, there is also a group of very dissatisfied democrats. They deeply distrust politicians but they also believe that the mechanism of election is flawed. It translates into demands for alternatives to representative democracy. It would be surprising that citizens holding such strong views would still accept any role for traditional actors of representative democracy such as elected politicians.

Finally, the compatibility between stealth and participatory models is also not really supported by our findings. Stealth democrats in particular appear to be rather skeptical about citizens' capacities to govern. They do not trust elected politicians any more but it is not obvious that they would trust citizens.

#### *4.4. Going beyond multivariate regressions*

However, these conclusions based upon the main findings of our multivariate regressions are based on the assumption that all respondents perfectly divide along the main independent variables that are shown to produce statistically significant effects. The rather low adjusted  $R^2$  for our various models show that it is not the case. There are also many respondents with more ambivalent evaluations of representative democracy who do not lean clearly towards clear preference for elected or non-elected politics. . There is a need to go back to the data in order to examine more carefully what lies in between the clear lines that are drawn by the multivariate regression.

First, we can go back to the descriptive statistics and to the bivariate relations between our dependent variables – democratic preferences – and the elements of evaluation of French representative democracy. We can start by a cross-tabulation of democratic preferences with the generic 'satisfaction with democracy question' (see table 4).

**Table 4.** *Satisfaction with democracy for the three models of democracy (N= 1667)*

Satisfaction with democracy	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Total (in %)
Main decisions taken by...	6.5	55.3	31.8	6.5	100 (N=713)
... Elected politicians					
... Citizens selected by lot	1.3	30.7	39.5	28.4	100 (N=296)
... Experts	5.6	46.4	35.7	11.7	100 (N=658)
TOTAL	5.1	45.5	35.4	12.0	100 (N=1781)

Figures from table 4 confirm that satisfaction with democracy divides between citizens willing to maintain elected politicians at the centre of the political system, and those preferring citizens or experts to be in charge. But it also shows that many respondents do not fit with this general pattern. We do not observe, on the one hand, (fully) satisfied democrats who are all in favour of keeping elected politicians in charge and, on the other hand, (fully) dissatisfied democrats who are all in favour of giving the keys of French politics to either citizens or experts. These groups with extreme views exist, but they account to a minority.

For the majority of respondents, the picture is mixed. First, even among those who prefer elected politicians to remain in charge, many are not satisfied with the way democracy is working (38,3%). They could therefore be open to some reforms, although they still believe that the core model should remain representative democracy. We also observe a good share of citizens satisfied with the way democracy is working among those who would prefer experts or citizens to be the focal point of French democracy. It could be interpreted as a sign that they would not reject entirely all aspects of the current system of representative democracy, although they call for its reform.

The same is observed for other variables capturing how French citizens evaluate their political system (see table 5). Citizens still in favour of elected politicians to take the main decision for the future of France tend to be more positive about politicians and about the principle of elections than citizens in favour of citizens or experts. Yet, radical views are held by a minority of citizens.

**Table 5.** *Evaluation of representative democracy for the three models of democracy (N= 1667)*

		Elected politicians	Citizens	Experts
<b>Evaluation of Hollande</b>	Very satisfied	0.4	0.0	0.9
	Satisfied	22.5	12.5	17.8
	Not satisfied	45.0	34.0	47.1
	Not satisfied at all	32.1	53.5	34.2
	Total	100%	100%	100%

<b>Politicians are trustworthy</b>	Agree	1.8	2.0	0.9
	Somewhat agree	30.6	7.3	16.8
	Neither/nor	24.7	14.0	21.9
	Somewhat disagree	30.2	41.7	40.7
	Disagree	12.7	35.0	19.7
	Total	100%	100%	100%
<b>Vote can make a difference</b>	Agree	20.6	6.6	9.4
	Somewhat agree	13.3	7.2	10.7
	Neither/nor	20.6	18.0	23.0
	Somewhat disagree	20.3	32.1	30.8
	Disagree	25.2	36.0	26.1
	Total	100%	100%	100%

It appears clearly for the evaluation of the usefulness of elections. It is true that it is among citizens in favor of elected politicians that we find more citizens believing that voting can make a difference. Yet, we also observe that there is still a significant share of respondents believing in the usefulness of voting among citizens in favor of participatory or stealth democracy models.

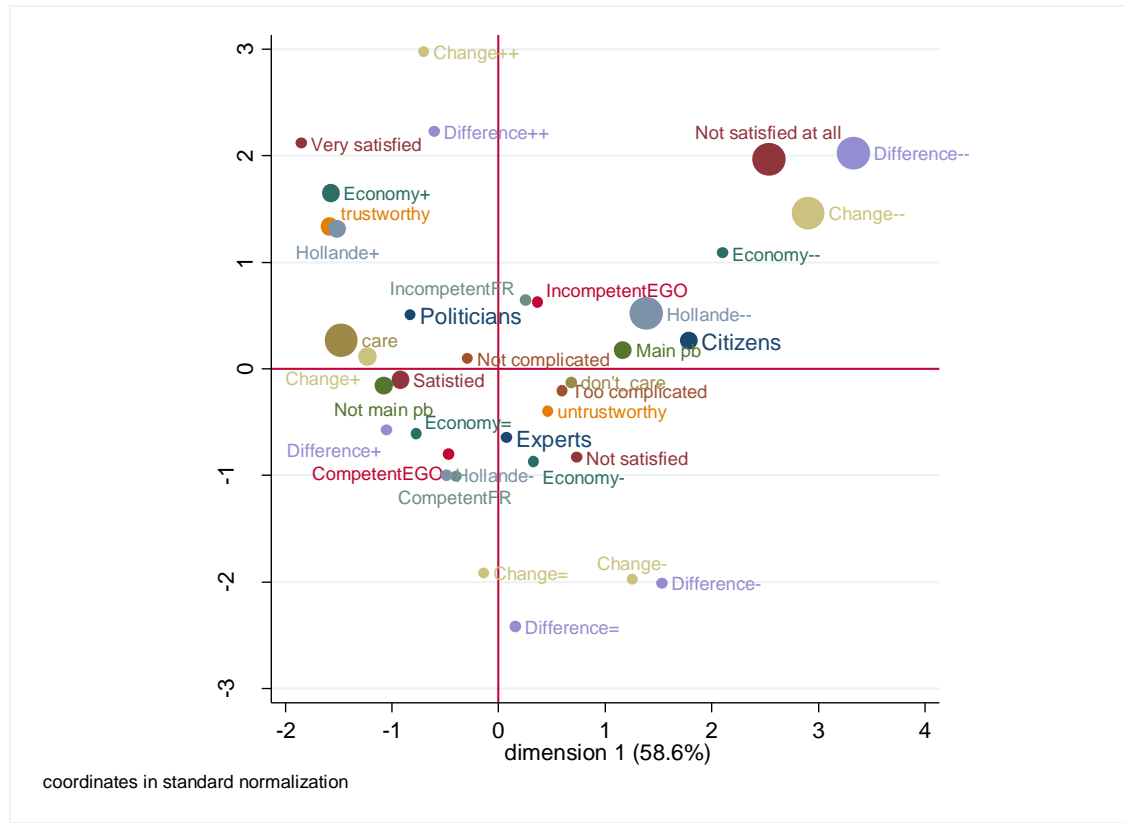
The descriptive crosstabs presented above show that the relationship between a critical vision of representative democracy and the preference in terms of decision-making is not as straightforward as the multivariate regressions were showing. In order to illustrate graphically the fact that many citizens with similar democratic preferences can lean towards distinctive evaluations of French representative democracy, we have constructed a multiple correspondence analysis reported here graphically using the same variables as in the regression<sup>4</sup> (Figure 1). This descriptive method enables to examine graphically the relationship between categorical variables (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010) projecting geometrically points and items into a multidimensional space.

The first dimension, the horizontal axis, accounting for 58.6% of the variance, is structured around the division between satisfied and dissatisfied individuals. The second, vertical axis, only accounts for 9.6% of the variance and opposes individuals who consider that elections can bring forward change and hold an intermediate position relative to the ability of elections to change things.

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<sup>4</sup> To replace the scale about the perceived incompetence of other citizens, we have included the two variables used to construct the scale as dummies.

**Figure 1.** Multiple Correspondence Analysis, coordinate plots of the two main dimensions



**Note:** the bigger circles correspond to the variables contributing more than average to the first axis

In the top right quadrant, a first group of items reunites respondents who are very dissatisfied with the way democracy is working, who feel that elections make no difference (change and difference) and who are very dissatisfied with Hollande. This group of items is located closer to the preference for citizens. Conversely, in the top left quadrant, we find respondents who strongly believe in the ability of elections to bring forward political change, who are happy with the state of the economy, who consider politicians as trustworthy and care about ordinary citizens. They are located closer to the item “politicians”. These two groups are very distinctive.

What we can also learn from the MCA, is that democratic preferences for citizens or elected politicians cannot be limited to citizens with such radically positive or negative evaluations of French representative democracy. The coordinates for these two models of democracy are also located close to coordinates of more moderate evaluations of French representative democracy. Moreover, regarding the coordinates of citizens willing experts to take over are located at a rather intermediate position between the preferences for politicians and for citizens, but also intermediate regarding most independent variables.

From all these elements, we can propose the following intermediary conclusion. Satisfaction with representative democracy, and in particular, with elected politicians and with the usefulness of election do separate citizens between those still backing a model centered around elected representative actors, and citizens willing to give a

central role to citizens or experts. There is also a clear divide between participatory and stealth democrats regarding how they evaluate citizens' capacities to govern.

Yet, these lines of division are not totally waterproof. There are indeed groups of core representative, participatory and stealth democrats. They hold very strong views about politicians, representative democracy and citizens, and they are unlikely to welcome hybrid reforms that would try to combine the logics of the various democratic models. However, there are also citizens with more moderate and sometimes ambivalent evaluations of both representative democracy and its alternatives. They are the ones who would be more likely to consider that the different models of democracy could be combined.

## 6. Exploring further the compatibility question: a qualitative approach

### 6.1. Profile of the interviewees and presentation of the interview guide

In direct relation with the above conclusions, we have decided to dig deeper into the question of the compatibility between models of democracy. We have conducted in depth qualitative interviews with French citizens about their visions of the political system, with individuals of various social backgrounds, generations, levels of diploma, places of residence, ideological preferences and political engagement to uncover the diversity of discourses formulated about the French political system.

Table 6 presents the main socio-demographic characteristics of the 32 interviewees. They are not fully representative of the French population: there is a gender imbalance in favor of men, individuals between 18 and 24 years old and people over 65 years old, people with a university degree and executive and professionals. This imbalance can be explained by the theme at stake, presented to the interviewees as 'the view of citizens about French politics'. This can be intimidating for individuals lacking interest in politics and coming from a social and educational background who tend to lack a 'sense of empowerment' in expressing opinions about the political world (Gaxie, 2007).

**Table 6.** *Summary of the main socio-demographic characteristics of the 32 interviewees*

Gender	14 women, 18 men
Age	18-24 : 12; 25-34 : 2; 35-49 : 6; 50-64 : 3; over 65 : 9
Level of education	None/primary : 2; secondary : 12, tertiary: 18
Occupation	Farmers, craft workers, shop owners, firm managers: 3; executive and professionals: 10; service workers: 3; industry workers: 4; intermediate occupations: 9; students: 3
Type of municipality	0-2.000 inhab.: 8; 2.000/20.000 inhab.: 9; 20.000/100.000 inhab.: 7; 100.000+ inhab.: 8

In order to ensure as much diversity as possible, we have multiplied the ways of contacting potential participants to include people who do not have a strong interest in politics as well as more politicized individuals: a *Mission locale* in a small city helping young people with a primary or secondary diploma to find jobs, a hunting association, a salsa association; a choir; acquaintances of acquaintances; a conservative political student organization; a home for young workers; a bar in a small village; or contacts

obtained through other interviewees themselves. The vast majority of interviews have been conducted in Gironde around Bordeaux, Libourne and Coutras, and a couple of them in the North of Ardèche between October and December 2017. All 32 interviews have been fully transcribed and coded manually and inductively using the Nvivo qualitative analysis software, in order to identify and analyze the themes spontaneously evoked by interviewees when presented with the topic.

We focus here on the part of the interview during which interviewees were presented short descriptions of institutional reforms that have been adopted in France or other countries, and were asked to react about them. We focus here on their discourses about one institutional reform promoting participatory democracy, namely the citizens' assembly currently organized in Ireland since 2016, and one reform embodying stealth democracy by giving power to experts, namely the *Autorité de la concurrence* (Competition Authority). Both devices were chosen because they constitute archetypical examples of reforms giving more weight to citizens or experts and technocrats.

The Citizens' Assembly in Ireland has been set up in 2016, is composed by 99 citizens drawn by lot and one chair coming from the civil society. The assembly has been deliberating over the last year about various topics including abortion, aging of the population, climate change, or the possibility to organize more referendums. It formulates recommendations that are voted upon during a plenary meeting. The government is then free to follow up these recommendations with a law or a referendum. The *Autorité de la concurrence* is an independent administrative authority that has been created in 2009 in order to ensure free and fair economic competition. It is composed of 17 members (academics, economic experts and senior civil servants) nominated for five years by the Minister of the economy and non-revocable. It acts in the name of the state but is independent from the political power, can be referred by a plaintiff or choose to intervene itself. After a collegial procedure, it pronounces injunctions, advice and financial sanctions to firms that have not respected the principles of free competition.

The analysis of the interviews confirms that, for a few interviewees, the introduction of institutional devices encouraging more citizen participation or expert decisions challenges representative democracy and that the different models should be seen as alternatives rather than elements that could be combined (Peters, 2016; Bauer and Fatke, 2014). However, for the majority of interviewees, the cohabitation of alternative models of democracy and modes of decision-making is not seen as inherently problematic. The role of politicians is seen as unavoidable and necessary by most interviewees. Still, the almost universally perceived lack of ability of politicians to listen to ordinary citizens implies that most of the interviewees see either citizens, experts, or both, as actors who are legitimate in becoming involved in the political process. When asked about their assessment of citizens' juries, citizens positioned themselves around two cleavage lines: the perceived political competence of ordinary citizens, and the necessity of the political system to better integrate citizens' inputs. When it came to the role of experts, the interviewees reflected upon the competence, the integrity, the impartiality and the independence of experts, but almost never challenged the opportunity to limit the sphere of intervention of the political sphere to give formerly 'political' topics to other actors.

## 6.2. Discourses about citizens' juries: political competence and responsiveness



Regarding citizens' juries, there were three distinctive positions among the interviewees. Some interviewees, firstly, considered that elections and citizens' juries were at odds, due to the incompetence of their fellow citizens and the delegitimization of the vote implicitly carried by modes of decision-making not based on elections.

For instance, Interviewee 14 argued:

"Is it very interesting to have 99 citizens drawn by lot, among which a part has manifestly not the competences of comprehension and analysis on the topics on which we will debate? Is it very interesting to have people who don't give a shit? Who will be flattered to be asked for their opinion and will repeat what their neighbour told them the night before? What I say is not politically correct. That is to say that I divide citizens in two clans: those who I reckon can understand, and citizens who I reckon cannot understand. (...) And how can we determine people who have had this personal reflection, and who are able to express themselves correctly, in good conditions and in understandable French? Those are people who are engaged in politics!"

*Interviewee 14, male, 65, former lieutenant-colonel*

Similarly, Interviewee 13 (23, male, student in political administration) argued that running for election shows that 'he wants to do it and feels able to do it. The guy drawn by lot, could be that he does not even vote!' Interview 6 (55, female, archaeologist) makes a similar argument when she said: 'we will also draw people who are not interested in much, or who... Well, I think that we need people who are interested in doing this job to begin with', or interviewee 24 (20, male, waiter), when he argues that individuals who are not interested in politics could only give 'a completely neutral advice'. This discourse is structured by a form of elitism that is at the centre of the representative government project (Manin 1996), considering quite explicitly that there is a hierarchy between ordinary citizens and professional politicians who have proved their value and competence through their political engagement. This view goes hand in hand with the will to delegate political decisions to those who know best, rather than treating equally the political opinion of someone 'who does not even vote' and of a professional politician.

The second, but also the most frequent opinion by far expressed about citizens' juries deemed citizens competent enough to have an opinion and deliberate, while still believing that politicians were indispensable mediators in the political process. This intermediary position therefore considered that citizens' juries could be incorporated to current modes of political decision-making, mainly as a way to better integrate citizens' inputs in the political process. Politicians are granted more political competence than citizens to make decisions, but do not listen enough to ordinary people who are able, even when they are not politically interested, to formulate preferences that should be listened to and incorporated by professional politicians. In other words, citizens' juries are devices enabling to centralize ordinary citizens' opinions on important topics to orient politicians and make them more responsive. Interviewee 31 argued that:

"I still think that we need a political opinion, yeah. Because being a citizen is all well and good, but we don't realize all the things going on behind. (...) No, politicians, let's face it, they have studied, it doesn't count for nothing! So we need a backup."

*Interviewee 31, 20, female, engineering student*

While admitting that politicians are more qualified to make decisions, many interviewees argued that even individuals who are not politically interested have

important things to say, and considered that such devices could foster citizens' political competence. Interviewee 25 (23, female, childcare assistant student) argued that:

"We could draw people who are not interested, but maybe, precisely, that giving them the possibility to express themselves will interest them in the end. Because I think people who say... For instance, those who are not interested in politics, it's because they haven't found their place in politics and they may not have had the opportunity to express themselves on the topic'.

In this perspective, citizens' assemblies are a way to concretely give an opportunity for citizens' opinions to be heard and re-centred democracy on the people. Many have raised the idea that these points of view are more 'concrete', more 'representative', more 'grounded' than issues carried out by politicians who live in 'their own cocoon' (Interviewee 28, male, 21, unemployed). However, more or less explicitly, the use of participatory devices is made necessary by the inability of elected politicians to be good representatives, for many reasons: because they are caught up in party logics, or because they are too different from ordinary people. For instance, Interviewee 15 (38, female, unemployed) argued that 'if you don't represent us, in that case, I'll tell you what I think directly. Whereas elected politicians are supposed to represent us, and ordinary citizens were supposed to elect the person closest to their demands'.

Finally, a handful of interviewees considered that citizens, not politicians, should be at the centre of the political process. They considered ordinary citizens as competent as political actors, and less contaminated by self-interested motivations. Several of them reacted to the reform card by imagining other institutional devices going further than the Irish citizens' assembly and giving a much more central say to citizens, through direct democracy or by using citizens' juries to replace the national assembly altogether. Interviews defending this position tended to consider that elected professionals have neither the legitimacy nor the political competence to make the most important decisions, and their relative monopoly on decision-making is unfounded. Interviewee 32 (69, female, former bar and snack manager) argued that citizens 'are as competent as politicians. And then, they don't have a spot to defend. Because they are independent. (...) There is no personal interest'. To prove the competence of all citizens and to challenge the monopoly of elected politicians, several individuals have referred to *Cour d'assises* trials. Interviewee 5 (75, male, former English teacher) said: 'one of the arguments opposed to the idea of stochastocracy is to say, ah, but we can't give an important political mandate to any idiot drawn by lot. But we do it for juries in courts!' Strikingly, several interviewees spontaneously considered that such devices could act as a 'pre-chamber', or be completed by direct democracy devices including a series of *referendums* held regularly online to gather citizens' opinions on the most important topics, leaving only the concrete details to politicians or technocrats.

To conclude, the position of interviewees on citizens' juries depends on whether they admit or not the implicit hierarchy at the centre of delegation through election, giving the monopoly of political decisions to motivated, competent and responsive politicians. It is also seen as a possible solution to the flaws of representative democracy, under the condition for most interviewees that politicians remain in charge. In other words, discourses about citizens' juries show that most interviewees see them as a useful complement of representative democracy, even though election remains at the heart of the political process. Participatory democracy is therefore mainly seen as a corrective to the flaws of representative democracy. However, two groups of citizens see citizens' juries as incompatible with the representative logic. First, some individuals support a

‘radical’ version of participatory democracy in which citizens replace politicians, as a consequence to the grievances addressed to elected politicians but also to the uselessness of election as a means to bring about meaningful political change. Others who are core supporters of the representative model do not believe about the ability of citizens to provide inputs in the political process.

### 6.3. Discourses about the Competition authority: independence and competence of experts

The discourses of our interviewees regarding the French Competition Authority and the delegation of some elements of policy-making to experts revolved again around three positions: those who resolutely rejected experts who were considered as incompetent and/or illegitimate compared to citizens and politicians, those who agreed with the principle of delegating some decisions to experts on the condition that steps were made to ensure their independence, and finally, those who fully trusted experts and the mode of nomination procedure. What is striking is that contrary to citizens’ juries in which interviewees implicitly or explicitly opposed citizens and politicians, most interviewees do not question the legitimacy of experts *vis-à-vis* elected politicians.

Firstly, a small minority of the interviewees rejected the principle of expert decision-making, either because they did not accept the idea that experts are more competent than ordinary citizens, or, in only two instances, because they felt that they would delegitimize elected politicians or endanger democracy. Interviewee 27 (69, male, former company head) expressed his scepticism towards experts as such: ‘expert! For a start, what is an expert? It means that because he is an academic, he can be an expert?’ Interviewee 12 (65, male, former music teacher) dismissed experts as ‘know-it-all’ with a ready-made answer for any problem, and considered that citizens are as competent as experts. Interviewee 13 (23, male, student in political administration) is one of the few explicitly considering the incompatibility between experts and politicians, arguing that:

‘I can’t conceive that one could be independent from the people’s suffrage. It bothers me quite a lot. The principle bothers me from a democratic point of view. (...) Why wouldn’t the president meddle in this? There is no reason’.

As a consequence, several interviewees put forward alternatives to experts involving more heavily ordinary citizens: one referred to ‘soviets’ and collective committees implanted in the whole territory, two of them to consumer associations led directly by citizens.

Most interviewees, however, accepted the idea that experts can be involved in political decision-making *in principle* but consider that there are major difficulties *in practice* to ensure the independence of experts *vis-à-vis* politicians and special interests, their impartiality and their integrity. Interviewee 2 (69, female, former biology researcher) clearly formulates the problem:

‘The issue is to make sure that these experts are at the same time competent experts, but also experts who are completely free of conflicts of interests. And experience shows this is not obvious. So, it’s true that in principle I quite agree, but putting this in place, I think it’s not easy. (...) Their professional competences do not guarantee their morality. And yet there are many people who tend to confuse expertise with rectitude and impartiality.’

Many interviewees referred to the link between experts and lobbies, or between experts and elected politicians, underlining the fact that experts are potentially corruptible

individuals. Consequently, many put forward a series of conditional conditions necessary to entrust experts with important decisions: first, to ensure that experts are not linked with special interests, secondly, that they are independent from the political power, thirdly, that they are given time and resources to perform their mission efficiently and transparently. For instance, interviewee 30 (49, female, medical secretary) said: 'we should trust them. But... There, we all know, eh! We know that... There are important economic issues at stake, and that... There... Monsanto, lobbies, all of that...' Similarly, several expressed serious doubts about the fact that the minister for the Economy directly appoints the members of the Competition Authority. In other words, for the majority of the interviewees, the support for experts in decision-making is conditional, but is not considered as endangering for representative democracy in itself. In this second discourse, experts are seen as a good alternative in an ideal world, but as a potentially problematic choice in the 'real' world if no steps are taken to ensure the integrity and independence of experts.

Finally, a third position emerges from the interview transcripts, with individuals who quite instinctively trust experts and their ability to act efficiently and diligently thanks to their competence. Interviewee 8 (24, female, administrative assistant) told us that 'one is never better advised than by experts, necessarily', even if she could not fully elaborate on the reasons why this seemed so obvious and natural. These individuals consider that the political world is increasingly complex, therefore requiring involving more knowledgeable people in political decisions. Interviewee 15 (38, female, unemployed) argued that 'the economic world is, unfortunately... Well, unfortunately, inseparable from the financial world, and is so complex that laymen cannot understand much of it. (...) So, getting those who know involved in the arbitration of this matter seems quite fair to me'. Experts, in this perspective, are considered as people who know better, who are 'on the ground', who are able to get an instant grasp of complex matters thanks to their professional experience and who are the most susceptible to provide a distant, appeased view about the issues at stake. Interestingly, in this perspective, the notion that politicians should be stripped of certain issues they previously dealt with is not seen as problematic, and is justified by the notion certain issues are 'not political'. For instance, Interviewee 29 (24, male, unemployed) argued: 'politicians should not meddle in this because this has nothing to do with politics', or interviewee 31 (20, female, engineering student) that they have 'other fishes to fry'.

As a conclusion, the discourses on the Competition authority show, firstly, that the opposition drawn between experts and elected politicians is much more weakly articulated than the opposition between elected politicians and citizens. People who support expertise tend to express disappointment with elected representatives, but still consider that the inclusion of expertise could improve and complement other forms of decision-making. Stealth democracy does not seem to be seen as inherently incompatible with the election logic, except, again, for a small group of interviewees who reject experts and support citizens, rejecting the idea of a hierarchy in the level of competence between citizens and other actors.

## **Conclusion and the start of a new project**

To conclude, the combination of methods allows to draw a more accurate and balanced picture of democratic preferences of French citizens, but also to address, from a citizens' perspective, the question of compatibility between the three main models that we have studied – representative, participatory and stealth democracy.

First, both analyses from the survey and from interviews confirm that how citizens evaluate the current state of French representative democracy is a major determinant of their democratic preferences. Dissatisfaction with representative democracy is clearly a major line of division to understand support both for participatory democracy and for stealth democracy. Interestingly, we see that the core element of dissatisfaction is the evaluation of elected politicians, but it does not stop there. It may translate into questioning the usefulness of elections, and therefore into questioning one of the core principle of representative democracy itself.

A second important finding is that democratic preferences are also linked to how citizens evaluate the capacity of their fellows to govern. This line of division is especially important to understand the choice between a model based upon citizens or experts. Supporters of the later tend to be sceptical not only about elected politicians, but also about their fellow citizens.

Last but not least, the two lines of division that we have isolated are not as clear-cut as often seen in previous studies. There are indeed small groups of core representative, core participatory and, although to a much lesser extent, core stealth democrats. These groups hold firm views on how representative democracy is working. It works quite well for core representative democrats. And it works very badly for core participatory and stealth democrats. These opposite evaluations of representative democracy translate into firm views on what model of democracy is the best, but also into firm negative views towards alternatives

However, most citizens hold more moderate and sometimes ambivalent views both about how representative democracy is working as well as about what model of democracy is preferable. Such citizens often consider that politicians currently in power are not satisfactory and that the mechanics of election does not work properly. They would also find some interest in associating experts and citizens to political decision-making, but without getting rid of elected politicians. The exact balance between the three actors – citizens, politicians and experts – may vary. What they are calling for is an update of representative democracy, for a representative democracy 2.0 that combines elements of citizens' participation, of experts' involvement and of traditional representative logics.

Coming back to the question of compatibility, these elements concur to argue that for most citizens, at least in France, the three models are compatible and should indeed be combined. A model of representative democracy 2.0 is what they aspire to. It would correct the main problems of representative democracy, namely the unresponsiveness and the lack of efficiency of elected politicians.

However, it also appears that for other citizens the compatibility between the models is a real issue. Core representative democrats would be hostile to reforms giving a greater role to citizens, as they do not believe that most citizens would have the necessary skills. Core participatory democrats are too sceptical about elected politicians but also about the mechanism of election to accept that politicians remain at the centre of the French

political system. Core stealth democrats no longer trust politicians but also do not believe that most citizens are capable of governing.

The analysis presented in this text on the case of France is the starting point for a new project that will be starting in September 2018 and that has recently obtained an ERC consolidator grant for 5 years. The question posed by the project – titled CureOrCurse? – is to study how citizens would react to reforms that are delegating traditional prerogatives of representative institutions to either participatory and experts bodies.

The goal is to examine carefully the compatibility between these models from a citizens' perspective. The study will be comparative, across 10 European countries. It will question citizens on basis of a common survey that will go along the same lines that what we have proposed in this paper.

First, we will question in details how citizens evaluate representative democracy along three dimensions: the incumbent government, the traditional actors (politicians and parties) and institutions (parliaments, governments) of representative democracy, and the principles of elections and representation themselves. In addition, we will also question citizens in details about how they evaluate non-elected actors that may receive new political prerogatives: citizens and experts.

These elements of evaluation would then be linked to citizens' views and preferences regarding how democracy should work. We will combine generic preferences about who should govern (like in the 2017 French election study) with other questions asking respondents to react to actual examples of institutional reforms of representative democracy, towards participatory democracy, or towards stealth democracy (like in the qualitative interviews).

All these elements will be associated to address the broader question of the compatibility between different models of democracy.

## Annex – Descriptive statistics of the independent variables

**Table A.1.** *Answers of the respondents to the question ‘How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country?’ (valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Very satisfied	91	5.1
Satisfied	847	45.5
Not satisfied	631	35.4
Not satisfied at all	214	12
<i>Total</i>	<i>1781</i>	<i>100</i>

**Table A.2.** *Answers of the respondents to the question ‘How satisfied are you with François Hollande’s actions during his presidency?’ (valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Satisfied	345	19.3
Not satisfied	794	44.4
Not satisfied at all	648	36.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>1787</i>	<i>100</i>

**Table A.3.** *Answers of the respondents to the question ‘Would you say that over the past twelve months, the state of the economy in France has gotten better, stayed about the same, gotten worse, or gotten a lot worse?’ (Valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Better	278	15.8
Stable	567	32.3
Worse	569	32.4
A lot worse	342	19.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>1756</i>	<i>100</i>

**Table A.4.** *Answers of the respondents to the question “Most politicians do not care about the people” (Valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Disagrees	560	31
Agrees	1247	69
<i>Total</i>	<i>1807</i>	<i>100</i>

**Table A.5.** *Answers of the respondents to the question “Most politicians are trustworthy” (Valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Disagrees	1400	77.8
Agrees	399	22.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>1799</i>	<i>100</i>

**Table A.6.** *Answers of the respondents to the question “the politicians are the main problem in France” (Valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Disagrees	937	52.7
Agrees	840	47.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>1777</i>	<i>100</i>

**Table A.7.** *Scale of perception about the uselessness of election to bring out political change (Valid answers only)*

Variable	Cases	Mean	S.D	Min / Max
Uselessness of election to bring out change	1797	3.1	2.3	0 / 8

**Table A.7.** *Scale of perception about the competence of other citizens (Valid answers only)*

Variable	Cases	Mean	S.D	Min / Max
Incompetence of other citizens	1775	4.8	2.1	0 / 8

**Table A.9.** *Answers of the respondents to the question “Politics is too complicated for people like me” (Valid answers only)*

	Cases	Percentage
Disagrees	1179	64.8
Agrees	641	35.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>1820</i>	<i>100</i>



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