The G1000

Facts, figures and some lessons from an experience of deliberative democracy in Belgium

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Democracy means many things to many people. For some it means that citizens have the right to express their political preferences through free elections. For so-called deliberative democrats, the strength of any democracy is public deliberation, the frequent and above all reasoned discussion between citizens on political issues. Through talking to each other, citizens identify good reasons and reject bad ones, which eventually leads to well-considered decision making.

In recent years, this ideal of deliberation as the basis for social and political action has gained momentum in political theory and practice. The deliberative turn, as it came to be known, takes a talk-centric approach to politics in which the quality of democratic decisions is determined by the rational process of arguing back and forth (Dryzek, 2000). After all, through deliberating on public issues, citizens adopt a perspective of the common good and they will come to see their 'true' preferences.

However, the rise of deliberative democracy was more than a theoretical endeavor. It also laid the foundations of a positive theory of deliberation. There is an ever-growing experience with organizing so-called mini-publics, whether they be scientific experiments such as Deliberative Polls, or government-initiated projects such as Consensus Conferences. All of these deliberative experiments show that the philosophical assumptions are well corroborated. For instance, the Deliberative Polls show quite clearly that people's opinions shift significantly during deliberation (Luskin, Fishkin, & Jowell, 2002), and other experiments reported an increase in civic-minded attitudes through deliberation (Grönlund, Setälä, & Herne, 2010).

The initiative we are going to discuss in this lead piece is the G1000 in Belgium. Contrary to most other initiatives by researchers or government agencies (Reuchamps, Forthcoming 2013), the G1000 project is a more hybrid type of deliberative event. There are certain characteristics that set it apart from other initiatives, such as the way in which the agenda of the event was set, the scale of the event, and the fact that is was a grass-root initiative by and for citizens. Because of its hybrid form, the G1000 deserves special attention.

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In this chapter, we first sketch the general background against which deliberative democracy in general – and the G1000 in particular – came about, after which we show that there is an ever-growing experience with deliberative events, and we highlight some of the main characteristics of these events. Next, we go into detail on the ideas and the methodological choices behind the G1000 project. And finally, we offer an overall evaluation of the project.

1   The deliberative turn

The rise of deliberative democracy has to be sketched against the political background of the 1990's. In this period, political analysts in all Western European countries discovered the contours of what they thought to be a wide-spread crisis of democracy. The alleged decline of political trust and the rise of electoral volatility pointed out that the gap between politicians and citizens had never been wider. This political climate characterized by a deep-rooted crisis offered an excellent breeding ground for critical reflection on the role, shape and function of democracy in modern societies. It gave rise to a fruitful quest for new and innovative ways of governing a democracy.

It is in this turbulent period that the ideal of a deliberative democracy was developed. A community of international scholars and philosophers were inspired by the work of Jürgen Habermas. They held the conviction that a vibrant democracy is more than the aggregate of its citizens, and that democratic politics should be about more than merely voting. The quality of a democracy and the quality of democratic decisions, according to them, did not depend on the correct aggregation of individual preferences, but rather on the quality of the public debate that preceded the voting stage. Democratic decisions were thus no longer considered a function of mere compliance with aggregation rules. Instead, they are determined by extensive argumentation about political choices before voting on them.

Deliberative democrats therefore took a talk-centric approach to decision making (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). Contrary to many political theorists and practitioners at that time, deliberative democrats did not promote the idea that the solution to the crisis lay in offering citizens more opportunities to vote in e.g. referenda. Deliberativists rather shifted the attention from the aggregation of votes to the transformation of preferences. Talking about political issues, according to deliberative democrats, instigates a more considered judgment; it allows citizens to hear other perspectives to a problem and to broaden and question their own opinions. However, these beneficial effects do not come about easily, because two crucial conditions have to be met.

First of all, deliberation has to be inclusive. Every perspective on an issue of public concern should theoretically be heard in order to come to "good" decisions. This also means that all arguments and counterarguments should be treated with equal respect. Secondly, deliberation should be rational. Arguments offered and positions taken should be justified on reasonable grounds, and when better arguments are brought to the discussion, participants should be willing to yield to the "the unforced force of the better argument" (Habermas, 1999, p. 332). Moreover, these arguments have to be formulated in terms that are expected to be acceptable to others. This means that in a deliberation arguments cannot merely reflect self-interests or group interests, but they should refer to the common good.

Besides its radical shift from voting to talking, deliberative democrats also advocate a strong grass-roots perspective. From its very inception, deliberative democracy took a non-elitist stance, emphasizing the importance of talk in the wider public sphere, and not just among elites. Deliberation should after all be rooted in everyday interactions between citizens (Akkerman, 2007, p. 272; Ikeda, Morales, & Wolf, 2010). Discussion between citizens on all issues politic strengthens political life by allowing citizens to put their ideas to the test.

As such, the process of reflecting on opinions and arguing back-and-forth adds to the value of democracy by enhancing the consideredness of public opinions; it shows citizens what their true preferences are in light of better arguments, or should be in light of the common good. It is through political talk that citizens find out what they value themselves and what is acceptable to others. Informal political talk therefore fosters "representative thinking", i.e. the cognitive incorporation of other citizens' standpoints (Arendt, 2010, p. 303).

2 G1000: a citizens' initiative

It is in such deliberative democracy atmosphere that the idea of a G1000 was born. Much in line with the analyses that were made in the past two decades, the G1000 project also starts from the idea that democracy is in crisis[1] (Caluwaerts, 2011). There is an ever-growing gap between politics and citizens, and the public and political agendas no longer coincide. Politicians take a short-term approach to politics emphasizing the importance of getting reelected, whereas citizens are no longer satisfied with their role as passive subjects. They take a much more active approach to political life, and they long to set out on their own roads.

The reasons for the perceived lack of political legitimacy lie in the changing nature of representative relations. After all, politics is no longer about citizens choosing their

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[1] The manifesto of the G1000 is available at on the website: http://www.g1000.org/.

representatives, and those representatives being held accountable to the citizens. Rather, politics is much more than before an indirect process, in which the ties between citizen and representative are mediated through the mass media and new social media.

This changing interaction fosters nervousness among politicians who feel like they are constantly being monitored, who feel like the media and citizens are constantly looking over their shoulders. That leads to a politics in the trenches, a politics in which the least bit of compromise is immediately magnified and considered treacherous. In such a society, politics is about taking positions and sticking with them for fear of being publicly discredited, and no longer about listening to each other's arguments.

The main diagnosis of the G1000 is thus the conclusion that politicians in such a system have little room to deliberate, between two elections, whereas citizens have more liberty to do so. Citizens are only accountable to themselves; they don't need to worry about reelection. They have the liberty to genuinely talk to each other and they have the openness to change their minds in light of better arguments. That is why the formal representative system could benefit from an injection with bottom-up impulses.

This idea is at the basis of the G1000 project. The G1000 aims to be a citizen initiative that is capable of innovating democracy, a project which attempts not to overthrow the representative system, but to complement it and to breath new life into it. Its aim is to gather ordinary citizens in a setting, which is conducive to open and uncoercive deliberation on possibly contentious political issues, and to let citizens themselves experience democracy and thus the difficulty of building bridges over highly polarizing issues.

3   The three phases of the G1000

In order to live up to its ideals of inclusion and openness, the G1000 was organized as more than a regular deliberative event. The G1000 was a process of public consultation and deliberation consisting of three distinct – but interrelated – phases, namely public consultation, citizen summit (for a large-scale deliberation), and citizen panel (for an in-depth deliberation).

Phase 1: Public consultation

The first phase consisted of a very open process of agenda setting. The agenda of the citizen summit itself was not determined by the organizers; as it is a commonplace practice in

deliberative ventures. Rather, the organizers were convinced of the importance of starting with a very open agenda, which would be determined entirely by the public itself.

In order to guarantee an open process of agenda setting, a large-scale online consultation was organized. In the beginning of July 2011, the organizers launched a so-called idea-box on the website in which every citizen, no matter what his or her opinion or background, could post the questions or problems that should be treated at the G1000 citizen summit. This online consultation resulted in a total of over 2000 ideas, dealing with all kinds of social, political and economic issues. Moreover, those who submitted their questions could also rate the ideas and proposals of others, allowing us to get an accurate reading of the saliency of the issues. In total, more than 6000 people took part in this process.

Because most of the proposals appeared several times in the list, the ideas were subsequently clustered into a top 25 of themes based on the number of times they appeared and on their rating. This list of 25 was once again put online in October 2011, and through the media, citizens were invited to vote for their three preferred themes for the G1000. Eventually, these three issues turned out to be: social security, welfare in times of economic crisis, and immigration[2].

In order to avoid a bias in the results, the 25 ideas appeared in a random order on the screen, so that the organizers had no influence on the final agenda. There was also an *ex-post* IP check to prevent massive voting by a single individual or group. This large-scale public consultation, and the voting tool for the top 25 guaranteed that the agenda of the deliberative event was very open and not inspired by partisan or political ideas.

Phase 2: Citizen summit

After the phase of public consultation, the second part of the project consisted in a process of citizen deliberation, the G1000 citizen summit. Through a mix of random selection and targeted recruitment (as described and discussed in §5.1 below), 1000 citizens were invited to participate in a deliberative event in Brussels. On 11th November 2011, sitting at 100 tables, the participants were invited to reflect, discuss and argue their positions on the three issues that were put on the agenda. The discussion at each of these tables was facilitated by experienced volunteers who received proper training the day before the event. They received the briefing materials and the scenario for the discussion beforehand. Moreover, 30 tables at the G1000 were bilingual, and a translator was assigned to each of these tables.

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[2] All the results are either presented on the website or in the final report of the G1000, which is available for free on the website.

The G1000 event in Brussels was flanked by two side projects: G'Home and G'offs. The G'home was a software application aimed at online discussion, whereas the G'offs gathered citizens all over Belgium to discuss the same issues as in Brussels but at local tables. The participant pool of these G'Homes and G'Offs was based entirely on self-selection, but the possibility to take part in local initiatives or even at home did lower the threshold for participation, and they did allow a much larger group than those gathered in Brussels to gather and simultaneously discuss the same issues. To this end, the event in Brussels was live streamed on the website.

Phase 3: Citizen panel

The G1000 citizen summit took the format of a Town Hall Meeting. It was a large event designed to facilitate the pooling and sharing of ideas and the elaboration of proposals. Given the fact that each round was relatively short and focused on exploring the diversity around the tables, the ideas and proposals that were launched were still very basic. The third phase of the G1000 project, which is also known as the G32, aimed at elaborating these basic ideas, and to further concrete proposals. During three weekends, 32 participants of the G1000 gathered to work out policy proposals.

These 32 citizens was randomly selected from a pool of 491 names. These 491 people were participants of the G1000, G'Offs or G'Home who agreed to be considered as potential G32 participants, which meant a significant commitment to participate in each one of the three weekends. The random selection of the 32 was done with a control for diversity in terms of gender, language, region and age.

The G32 will take the form of a citizen panel (also called consensus conference), which is a design often used in policy processes throughout the world. Such a deliberative design is much more intensive since participants endeavor to propose specific policies and actions. It is also more open than a citizen summit since the participants have a much greater say in the process itself. In fact, the citizens do have the lead on what precisely they wish to work on (i.e. the choice of the specific questions they want to tackle), on how they want to work (i.e. the choice of the experts and stakeholders they wish to question) and above all on what they decide and bring to the public debate.

4   The funding

The main difference between the G1000 and many other deliberative projects is that it was not funded with public nor research money. The G1000 was an initiative by citizens for citizens. As an independent organization, it relied on crowd funding, especially for its first and second phase. The first two phases were entirely funded by private donations without any return for the funders (so it was not sponsoring). In order to guarantee our independence, each individual donation could only amount up to 35000 euro (or 7% of the budget). So, for the first two phases, we did not ask for public money. However, for the third phase, we opened up the funding to public money as we believed that such deliberative democracy initiative should also be supported by public institutions, once it was launched. Thus, the three weekends of the G32 were organized in three parliaments in Belgium: in the Flemish Parliament, in the Walloon Parliament and in the federal Parliament.

Nonetheless, this choice for limited private and public donations had important consequences for the project. It required a non-relenting flow of energy towards finding money, which also conditioned some methodological choices as we explain in the next section.

5   The methodology

From the beginning, we were convinced that the G1000 should respect three important principles: diversity, inclusion and independence. These three principles are reflected in each of the methodological choices we had to make notably concerning the recruitment of the participants and the design of the script (as well as in the agenda setting process of the first phase, as we have described it before). Nonetheless, beside these three overarching principles, methodological choices are also unavoidably driven by practical considerations, which need to be stated openly.

5.1.   The recruitment

The key question when gathering citizens to discuss political issues at a deliberative event concerns the selection of the participants. There are many techniques available for recruiting participants (Caluwaerts & Ugarriza, 2012; Reuchamps, 2011). Many deliberative events, especially when they are initiated by government organizations, rely on self-reporting (Ryfe, 2005). This means that there is an opt-in possibility by which volunteers can answer a broad call for participation. Often this technique also relies on snowball sampling in which organizers rely on the participants to bring along others they know. Another technique often used is drawing

samples from existing panels (Caluwaerts, 2012a; Price & Capella, 2002). Especially when the groups are small, and guaranteeing representativeness is not the main aim, members of panels are often called upon.

Random selection

However, normatively and methodologically, the most appealing technique for recruiting participants of deliberative events is random selection (Bohman, 2007, pp. 351-352; Fishkin & Farrar, 2005). The reason why randomization is so normatively appealing is because it gives every citizen an equal chance of being selected to participate. Moreover, randomization ensures that the multitude of public opinions is present in a group and it thus "produces discussion among people who think and vote differently and would not normally be exposed to one another" (Fishkin, Luskin, & Jowell, 2000, p. 660).

This is also the reason why the G1000 opted for random selection. Besides methodological soundness, the recruitment procedure aimed at maximizing the diversity of opinions among the participants, in order to avoid "informational inbreeding among likeminded citizens" (Huckfeldt 2001, p. 426). Citizens can, after all, only find themselves in a situation of genuine deliberation when they are faced with competing claims and opinions (Caluwaerts & Ugarriza, 2012). When everyone at the table shares the same opinion, there is very little contestation within the group, and under such circumstances, deliberation does not lead to well-considered opinions and well-argued positions.

Nonetheless, we did not seek for representativeness. In fact, we did not put forward any claims to representativeness because when 1000 people are invited, if one does not show up, there is no statistical representativeness anymore. Rather, diversity – and not representativeness – was the central principle governing the G1000, and the random selection of participants from the population was generally considered to be the most promising technique for ensuring this diversity.

Because it proved very difficult, too lengthy and much too expensive for our crowd funded budget to draw a sample from official census lists, we asked an independent recruitment agency (GFK Significant) to contact participants through Random Digit Dialing. This technique generates random phone numbers for fixed and mobile lines and in Belgium that, in total, has a penetration rate of 99%. Every inhabitant – who has a fixed or a mobile telephone – thus had an equal chance of being selected for participation in the G1000. However, for such invitations, the "yes" response rate is always very low: around 1%, so 100 phone calls for 1 yes. This figure may

be surprisingly very low, but it should be qualify. Indeed, response rate for a telephone political survey ranges from 10% to 50% (on the Internet, it's a bit higher because the respondents are slightly different from the overall population) and for such survey, no commitment is asked from the respondents. In the case of an invitation to participate to a deliberative experience, the commitment is much higher: ordinary citizens are asked to spend one (or sometimes more) free day to discuss topics for which they often have no clue and possibly no interest. So for the recruitment of the G1000 participants, we expected a normal response rate of 1%. In fact, it went up to 3% because the experience was quite well known. In addition to the phone calls by the independent recruitment agency, we also organize a follow-up call or visit (it was up to the participant) by one of our many ambassadors, who were other citizens interested in the G1000 and willing to spend some of their free time in its organization. The task of the ambassadors was to answer the questions of the participants and above all to reintroduce a human face to the event.

In order to guard over the quality of the participant sample, the random selection was checked for certain predefined population quotas. More specifically, our selection guaranteed that the sample resembled the population with regard to gender, age and province. This last quorum was considered crucial in order to guarantee a proportional representation of both linguistic groups.

In the end, these quota seem to be well respected in the group of final participants. 52% of the participants was female, 48% was male, which is a perfect reflection of the gender composition of the population, and which was rather unexpected since women are found to be more likely to drop out of such deliberative events (Ryfe, 2005). Moreover, 61% of the participants were Dutch-speaking versus 39% of the French speakers, which is also an accurate reflection of the population. And there was a large diversity in age groups, with the youngest participant being 18, and the oldest one being 85.

Targeted recruitment for difficult-to-reach groups

Despite the careful process of random selection, however, we knew that there was possibly a stronger dropout among the groups who traditionally feel less at ease with politics, or with social and political participation. Moreover, some people are simply much harder to reach which further contributes to self-selection effects.

This consideration urged us to slightly expand our recruitment strategy. Because we valued the diversity at the table so much, and because we wanted to optimize the possibilities for social

learning and creative thinking, we reserved 10% of the places to persons who were least susceptible to answering positively to our invitation. In order to reach these groups, we contacted numerous grass-root organizations dealing with socially vulnerable people such as homeless people or people from a foreign origin. The other 90% of the participants were selected by random recruitment.

This strategy of relaying our invitation through intermediary social associations is often suggested because of the bond of trust these organizations have with the underprivileged groups (Ryfe, 2005). Moreover, our strategy of recruiting specific target groups seems to have worked since the diversity at the tables was one of the main points of praise the G1000 project received from the international observers[3].

Dropout

Despite all recruitment efforts and despite all the hard work of the volunteers to keep the participants motivated, we knew that it was very likely the G1000 would not reach its symbolic target of 1000 participants. As is common in deliberative practice, we experienced a dropout rate of about 30% among the people who had confirmed their participation shortly before the event, with the final number of participants amounting to 704. This has to be put into perspective, however. Unlike many other events, the participants for the G1000 did not receive any financial compensation for their participation. For instance, in Deliberative Polls, which are comparable events, the participants receive a flat fee of up to 300 euro simply for attending the event. In the case of the G1000, we could only compensate the transportation of the participants by train. Moreover, the 11th of November was a very sunny holiday and there was a train strike, which was announced to last until 10 o'clock in the morning. This puts the dropout rate of 30% into perspective.

5.2. Managing group dynamics: the script

Since deliberative events are always social events, in which citizens are gathered, who formerly did not know each other, the group dynamic aspect of these events is crucial for its success. In order to manage the group dynamics, and to give everyone the liberty to utter his or her opinion, we designed a clear script of the different rounds (see appendix A with the script of the citizen summit).

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[3] This report is in appendix of the G1000 final report.

The first important choice we made to improve personal relations around the table was to organize an introductory round at the beginning of the day so that the participants had an opportunity to get to know each other. Group deliberation is after all a very unusual and sometimes frightening setting, with which some feel more at ease than others (Caluwaerts, 2012b). It was therefore crucial, from a group dynamic point of view, to get the participants acquainted with each other, with their tasks and with the environment (Krueger, 1998). Once again, the main argument of the organizers was to give equal consideration to all opinions represented at the table, and to guarantee the openness towards and inclusion of all opinions around the table.

After the introductory round, the participants discussed the three issues at their tables. The central aims of these discussions were to come to clear problem definitions, to suggest solutions, and to take stock of the different ideas and perspectives the participants had on the themes. Each of the three themes on the agenda was dealt with in three sequential rounds. In each round, the theme was first introduced by two experts on the subject. These experts offered their takes on the problems and proposed possible solutions. In each round, the experts came from different sides of the linguistic border. After all, it was crucial to guarantee a balanced presentation, in which the views of both linguistic groups were represented but also on different perspectives. Nevertheless, as the international observers rightfully pointed out, the experts might have not shown or represented the full spectrum of perspectives on the issues at stake. Of course, one can always argue that experts because of their status of experts have always an influence on the participant's opinions. The lead facilitators have repeatedly told the participants, however, that they should not take for granted the suggestions brought in the debate by the experts; i.e. they should keep a critical attitude and deliberate them. To apprehend this possible bias, we have asked the participants in the posttest whether their opinions had been influenced by the experts (see below). In the G32, the choice of the experts was mainly done by the participants themselves.

In order to facilitate the process of perspective-taking and information pooling, these discussions were highly structured: there was a detailed script which the facilitators were supposed to follow, and which clearly stated the outputs that were expressed in each phase of the discussion. Moreover, in order to support the natural group dynamics, different interaction styles were used. Sometimes the participants had to discuss in pairs of two to lower the threshold of speaking in public; at other times, they discussed the issues with everyone at the table. Sometimes the tasks were very simple like expressing their feelings towards an issue such as immigration, but at other times, the expected outcomes were more complex and the cognitive investment was much larger.

The scenario for each of the discussion rounds and for each of the themes was thus construed in such a way as to maximize the inclusion of all and the process of information sharing, and to minimize the social thresholds for fully participating in the discussions. Even though the final evaluation of the G1000 made clear that we expected a lot of input and effort from the participants in very – maybe too – little time, it was this built-in alternation between complex and easy tasks, which made the discussions very effective in bringing out the cognitive diversity of the group.

Finally, because the results of the discussions were very tangible, the participants remained motivated throughout the day. At multiple times during the discussions, we asked concrete inputs from each of the tables. Sometimes this was a mere Post-it with feelings or key words, but most of the time ready-made templates were used.

These templates were subsequently sent to the central desk, which was the key information processing office. This central desk consisted of six experienced academics who collected the data from each of the tables and who sorted out and analyzed the proposals. This process of aggregation resulted in a list of ideas or solutions on each of the topics the participants discussed, which were then resubmitted to the individual vote of the participants at the end of each round. Using voting equipment, the participants could express their opinions and preferences on each of the solutions that circulated in the discussions. Even though it was strictly speaking not necessary to have this final vote, it made the results of the discussions very tangible to the participants, and it also gave them the opportunity to see where they situated themselves in the larger group of participants (for the results of the vote, see appendix B).

## 6   Lessons from the participants

Even though the G1000 was not conceived a scientific experiment, we did manage to gather some crucial information in a pretest and posttest questionnaire, beside the results of the votes which are available on the website. Based on earlier research (Caluwaerts, 2012a), we gathered information about how the participants experienced their participation in the event. These are good indicators for the overall satisfaction with deliberation itself.

The posttest survey shows that the participants felt like they had sufficient opportunities to express their opinions and that they could participate without restraints. They were not afraid to utter their opinion and they really put a lot of effort into arguing their positions and elaborating their arguments. This extensive process of justification and the openness towards new ideas and perspectives is also what they appreciated in the other participants. Well over 90% of all

participants claimed that others showed sincere interest in what they were saying. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of 75% of the participants felt like they were treated with much respect during the discussion. The respect accorded to others in the discussion is one of the most important indicators for the quality and intensity of the deliberation.

Beside their perception of the deliberative process, we also surveyed the participants about the role of the experts. Every theme was introduced by two experts – one Dutch-speaker and one French-speaker – as we explained above. These experts gave their take on the issue under discussion, and attempted to offer different perspectives on the problem and its solution. Of course, one of the big risks in deliberative events, as we mentioned earlier, is that experts, with their expertise, influence the citizens in one direction – and other experts would have influenced in the opposite direction. Did they participants retain the critical attitude towards what they heard during the presentations by the experts? No one can know it for sure. What we know, however, is that we asked the participants to retain their critical attitudes towards the arguments of the experts but also towards the arguments of the other participants. From the feedback we have collected from the participants, it seems to have been the case in most tables. Above all, we surveyed directly the participants on this issue in the posttest. Overall, we notice that the impact of the experts was mixed on the opinions of the participants (Figure 1). About 50% of them claims that the experts had no influence whatsoever on their own opinions, whereas only 23% of the participants responded that their own opinions did change because of the experts. The experts thus did not have an all-encompassing effect, even though – let's not be naïve – they had an impact in the discussion; that's also part of the deliberative process at stake.

Figure 1

In general, the experts who spoke at the G1000 have influenced my opinion.
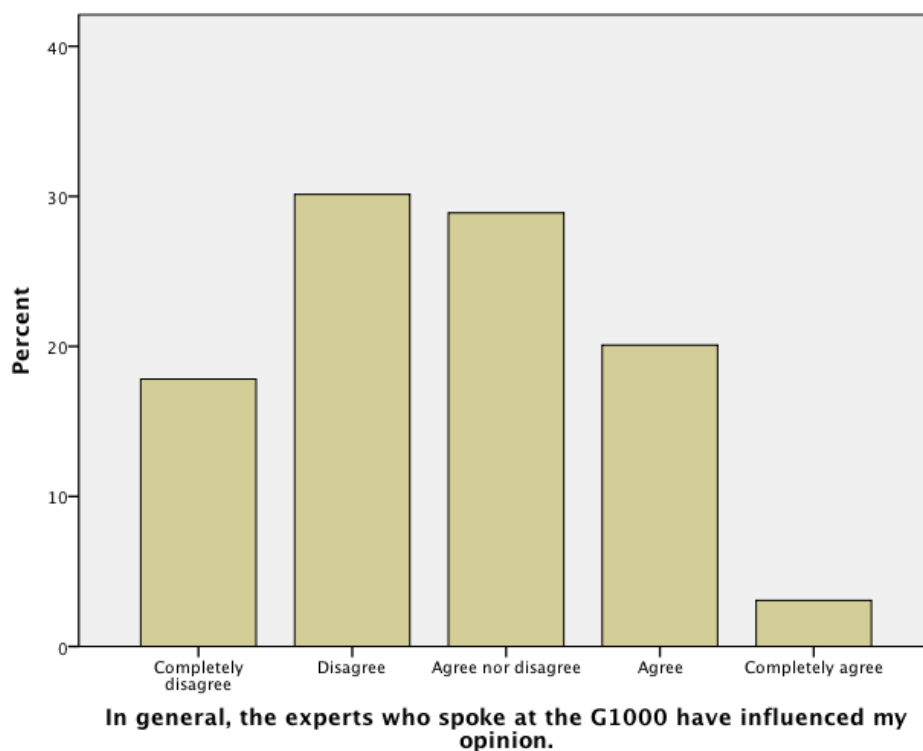
We not only asked the participant about how they perceived the process, and how they felt about deliberation. We also asked them about their opinion on the final votes that were taken at the end of each round. As Figure 2 indicates, more than 75% of all the respondents felt that good decisions were made at the G1000. The question was quite broad since we did not qualify which decisions were meant. It was up to the respondents to decide whether decisions meant the discussions at the tables, the propositions, the results of the votes, or – more likely – a mix of everything. Nonetheless, these results indicate an overall high level of satisfaction with the G1000 in terms of the outputs of this day of deliberation.

Figure 2

I think that good decisions were made at the G1000.
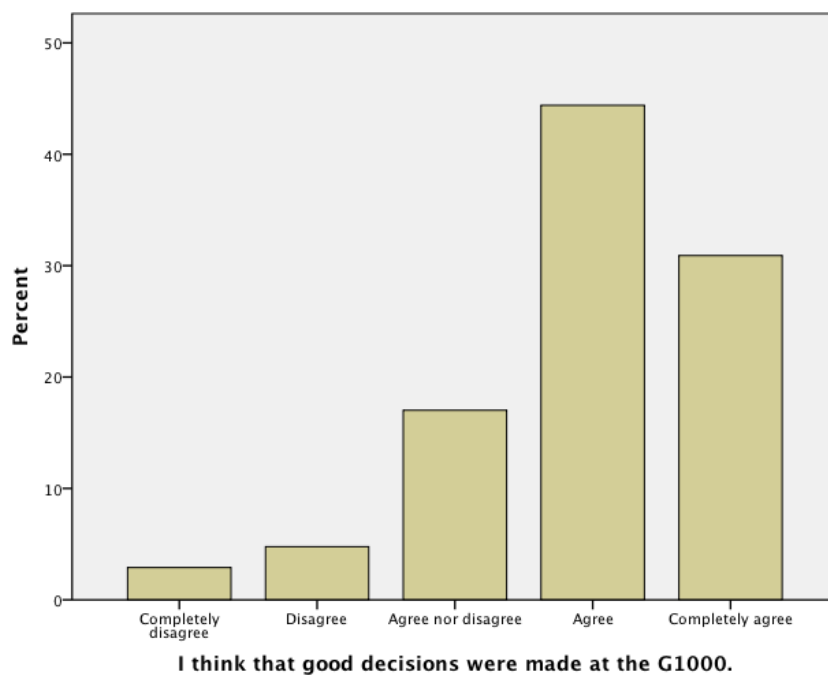
7   Evaluation

Despite the choices we had to make and the justified criticism we might get for that, the G1000 project did succeed in one important thing: its ideas and its methods stirred public opinion and set in motion a debate about the quality and organization of democracy. It instigated a public discussion on what it means to be a citizen in modern society, and on how politics should be

shaped in order to meet the demands from the citizens. And even more than that, it showed us the wisdom and the passion of the crowd. Many citizens arrived at Tour & Taxis on that 11th of November with skepticism, but at the end of the day, the motivation among the participants and the pride of being part of the event set the tone.

The citizen panel of the G32 went one step further. During three weekends, the three-dozen participants tackled the question: how shall we deal with work in our society? This topic was a sub-topic of the issue of social security, one of the three main themes of the citizen summit. The participants chose themselves to dig into this issue and selected the experts and the stakeholders they wanted to meet in order to sharpen their recommendations. At the end of the third weekend, they delivered publicly 20 recommendations related to several topics related to work[4]. As such, the contribution of the G1000 to the public debate was in terms of both results and processes.

However, as in any debate, many objections were formulated: the G1000 was an anti-political project, the G1000 wanted to replace representative democracy, the G1000 was against referenda, the G1000 cost too much, there were too few toilets at the event… Nevertheless, we can say that whether they were for or against deliberative democracy, critics did contribute to its success by publicly contesting the premises and choices of the G1000 project.

Despite these critical reflections, we are convinced that the main contribution of the G1000 lay in its ability to offer a new way of thinking about politics. To us, it is not necessarily the substantive results that are the crucial determinant of the success of the G1000. They are important, and they deserve to be considered by politicians when thinking out future policies, but the added value of the G1000 project was also the fact that it proposed a new way of doing and living politics. In a sense, the G1000 can be considered a learning school for democracy, a setting in which ordinary citizens could meet and learn about each others' preferences, intentions and arguments. The discussions at the G1000 and the public debate surrounding the G1000 proved to be a crucial factor in deepening and rejuvenating a democracy that risked turning its back on citizens. Of course, this new page of democracy still needs to be written; the G1000 only offered the first draft of the first lines.

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[4] The recommendations and all the preliminary work of the citizens is a core section of the G1000 final report.

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Appendix A – The G1000 script of the Citizen summit

1   AIMS AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SCRIPT

Substance	1. Exchange ideas about the three central issues, which were determined in the first phase.
	2. Determine the "appreciation" of the participants on these issues, and their reasons.
	3. Testing the legitimacy of different policy options and solutions.
Procedure	1. We aim to give everyone the word during the discussions.
	2. Participants can utter their opinions on the issues they are concerned with.
	3. Promoting deliberation as a means for policy formulation and implementation

2   PROGRAMME

1) Introduction round

Aims
❑ The participants know the context and aims of the G1000
❑ The expectations regarding the G1000 are set right
❑ The participants get to know each other

Approach
- ❑ Welcome by David and Paul
- ❑ Lead moderators explain:
    1. The context of the G1000, and the use of the results of the G1000 for feeding the G32
    2. The process: how will we work? Who are the different persons (facilitators, translators…)
    3. Structure of the day
    4. House rules: sharing an opinion, listening to each other, no need for consensus, difference of opinion is good.
- ❑ Getting acquainted (25 minutes):
    - o Some general questions: who are you? Where are you from? Why are you here? Why did you say "yes"?
    - o The facilitator notes down the reasons for participation and notes them down on the template in the last 4-5 minutes.
    - o Templates are collected and brought to the central desk.
- ❑ Lead moderators introduce the voting application (15 minutes):
    - o Exercise based on demographic and substantive questions:
        - ▪ Gender
        - ▪ Age
        - ▪ City or village
        - ▪ How early did you get up this morning
        - ▪ How did you get here?
        - ▪ How interested are you in politics?

Central desk
- ❑ As soon as templates enter, the central desk starts clustering and reducing the list to the +/- 10 most important reasons.

2) First discussion round and votes introductory round

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Aims

- ❑ Exchange of arguments on the question: **what do we think about the social security in our country and how can we improve it?**
- ❑ Specific outputs:
  - o A score per subdomain (health insurance, unemployment benefits, child allowance and retirements) of what people think about this domain
  - o For the two worst scoring domains, arguments that explain these scores.
  - o For these domains, also 3 possible improvement measures

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Approach

Plenary

- ❑ Lead moderators recapitulate the theme and aims
- ❑ Experts give their presentations on the different subdomains.

Tables

- ❑ Step 1:
  - o Facilitator asks everyone to give a score on each of the subdomains and one or two reasons why this score is given (5-6 minutes)
  - o Facilitator collects the scores, notes them down on a flipchart, and determines the lowest scoring domains. He also notes down the 3 most important reasons, and sends them to central desk.
- ❑ Step 2 :
  - o The facilitator asks the participants to note down some measures – in pairs of two – that would improve the worst domains on post-its. (10 minutes)
- ❑ Step 3:
  - o When everyone is finished, the facilitator collects the post-its, and clusters them per subdomain.
  - o Table discussion about why and how the measures would contribute. The facilitator asks for more information and reasons, and asks if the group would like to add measures.
  - o These measures and reasons are noted down on the templates and taken to the central desk. The facilitator thanks the participants for their contributions.

Plenary

- ❑ Lead moderators present results of the introductory round (= motives for participation)

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Central desk

- ❑ Continue to cluster and prepare slides for first round.
- ❑ Begin processing results first round:
  - o Input average scores
  - o List arguments for high/low scores
  - o Cluster and list measures

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4) Second discussion round

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Aims

- ❑ Exchanging arguments about the following question: **The financial crisis costs the state and society much money. Which measures does government have to take to continue to care for a just distribution of our welfare?**
- ❑ Specific output:
  - o Prioritizing a number of potential measures.

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Approach

Plenary (20 minutes)

- ❑ Lead moderators introduce the theme, the structure of the round, and the presenters.

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- ❑ Presentation by two experts

Table (10 minutes)
- ❑ <u>Step 1</u>: (10')
  - o The participants discuss in pairs about the listed measures that are preferred. They note this measure and two arguments down on a template
- ❑ <u>Step 2</u> : (30')
  - o Facilitator opens up the discussion by asking the first duo what their favorite measures are, and to give their arguments.
  - o Then he/she asks if anyone else at the table has chosen this measure.
  - o A discussion follows on the measures and the arguments.

- ❑ <u>Step 3</u> : (10')
  - o The facilitator leads the table to a conclusion on which measures are most valued, and which are least valued. For each measure, two arguments are formulated and written down on a template.
  - o Templates go to the central desk.

Plenary (20')
- ❑ Lead moderators do a short energizer.
- ❑ The results from the first round are presented, and vote takes place on the measures for each domain.
  - o The average scores are presented, with the arguments.
  - o Vote per subdomain. Everyone chooses 2 measures.

<u>Central desk</u>
- ❑ Continue clustering data first round and preparing slides
- ❑ Process templates second round.

5) Third discussion round

<u>Aims</u>
- ❑ Exchange arguments about the question: what should be the most important principles for our national immigration politics?
- ❑ Specific outputs:
  - o 3 principles that should determine immigration politics

<u>Approach</u>
Plenary (25')
- ❑ Lead moderators introduce the theme, the structure of the round, and the presenters.
- ❑ Presentation by two experts who bring novel approaches to the issue under discussion

Table
- ❑ <u>Step 1: expressing feelings</u> (15')
  - o Each participant gets a sheet with emoticons to express his or her feelings towards immigration
  - o Facilitator notes down emotions and reasons for these emotions on a flip chart.

- ❑ <u>Step 2: exchange convictions and principles</u> (40')
  - o In pairs of 2 the participants reflect about the following questions:
    - ▪ The essential criteria for decisions in immigration policy
    - ▪ What should politicians be more attentive to on migration issues?

- o The facilitator starts the discussion by inviting a someone to state his principles.
- o These principles are written down on the appropriate templates.

  - ❑ Step 3: Prioritizing (5')
    - o Everyone gets 3 stickers which they stick to the template in order to express their relative importance.
  - ❑ Templates are sent to central desk.

Plenary
- ❑ Lead moderators present the results from the previous round:
  - o The measures formulated and the arguments
  - o Vote on which measures are preferred.

Central desk
- ❑ Continue processing the results of the second round and preparing slides.
- ❑ Begin processing results of the third round
  - o Cluster principles for migration policy

6) Open round and vote on results from the third round

Aims
- ❑ In this open round, we want to give the participants the opportunity to choose from the top 10 themes.
- ❑ It is the last round, so the pressure for strong outputs is lower.

Specific outputs
- ❑ Determine the relative importance of each of the issues.
- ❑ Around the table a couple of proposals are elaborated.

Approach

Plenary (2')
- ❑ Lead moderators explain the process and structure of the round, and present the 10 themes.

Tables (35')
- ❑ Selection of issues at the table. Each participant has 3 votes to give to each of the themes. The one with the most votes is selected for discussion.
- ❑ Facilitator opens the general discussion based on the following questions:
  - o Why did you pick this issue, why is it important?
  - o What should be done?
  - o What should be reached?
  - o Who has to take responsibility and who has to take action?
- ❑ Proposal is written down on a template and sent to the central desk.

Plenary (7')
- ❑ Lead moderators thank the participants for their inputs.
- ❑ Vote on the different principles for migration policy.
- ❑ After the break, vote on the proposals of the open round.

Central desk
- ❑ Process results of the third round and prepare slides.
- ❑ Process results of the open round
    - o Rank the issues by importance
    - o Cluster the proposals per issue

Appendix B – Proposals per round and results of the vote

Introduction round

Motivation to participate	- I want to show my personal involvement as a citizen - I am worried about the political crisis and the crisis of democracy - Our democracy needs rejuvenation - I am curious and wouldn't want to miss this experience - I find the process of dialogue and diversity important - I want to contribute to the restoration of the dialogue between the communities in Belgium	63% 52% 43% 35% 29% 21%

Note: each participant could vote for each proposition

Round 1: Social security

Average appreciation per domain	- Healthcare - Child allocations - Unemployment - Retirement	6,7/10 6,0/10 5,2/10 5,3/10

Note: each participant gave was a score for each domain; at the tables, the scores were merged; eventually, the central desk merged the scores from the tables

Unemployment	- Limit unemployment benefits in time - Individualized assistance in finding a job - Making work attractive by raising minimum wages - Fighting fraud - Making daycare for children more affordable - Guaranteed basic income for everyone	36% 35% 38% 16% 9% 15%

Note: each participant could vote for up to two propositions

Retirement	- Facilitating the end of career, making retirement a gradual process - Starting from a basic retirement, but considering the individual career - Revise or abandon the system of early retirement - Harmonizing the workers' statutes and making the system more transparent - Stimulating different ways of financing a retirement (legal pension, 2nd pillar, 3rd pillar…) - Take into account special situations (hard manual labor, women staying at home…)	18% 18% 15% 23% 10% 16%

Note: each participant could vote for up to two propositions

Child allocations	- Higher allocations for families with low incomes - Equal allocations for all children - Replace child allocations by child cheques to cover the costs of raising children	31% 45% 24%

Note: each participant could vote for one proposition

Health care	- Guarantee equal access to the health care system - Higher taxes for the pharmaceutical sector - Abolish the renumeration per prestation - Reduce medical overconsumption by putting the doctor central - Smaller packaging and sensibilization against overconsumption - Simplify the granting of pharmaceutical licenses, and allow for more citizen participation in this system	35% 27% 17% 31% 21% 14%

Note: each participant could vote for up to two propositions

Round 2: Welfare in times of economic crisis

Proposals			
	-	Reforming corporate taxes: lower them but eradicate all possible legal loopholes	43%
	-	Lower taxes on work, in particular for specific groups	27%
	-	Tobin tax on financial transactions	31%
	-	More "green" taxes: tax things that pollute the environment	15%
	-	Split up business banks and savings banks	19%
	-	A European financial policy as a counterweight to international financial groups	16%

Note: each participant could vote for up to two propositions

Round 3: Immigration

Principles			
	-	Duty to integrate	31%
	-	Speedy procedures and clear and objective criteria	26%
	-	Development cooperation	20%
	-	Improve possibilities to integrate	21%
	-	Stricter policy (limit and sanction more)	18%
	-	Build bridges between cultures	14%
	-	Harmonize migration policies at European level	25%
	-	Immigration following the needs of the labor market	8%
	-	Send back criminals	13%

Note: each participant could vote for up to two propositions

Round 4: Open round

Issue			
	-	How to develop a sustainable energy policy?	16
	-	How many levels of government does Belgium need?	14
	-	How can we rejuvenate and broaden democracy?	7
	-	How can we solve the problems with mobility?	6
	-	How should education and labor market interact?	12
	-	How can our government become stronger and more efficient?	0
	-	How can we stimulate knowledge and innovation as the basis of our economy?	5
	-	How do we deal with multilingualism in this country?	9
	-	Do citizens have to be able to vote for politicians of the other linguistic group?	6
	-	What role and future for Brussels?	2

Note: the number indicates the number of tables who chose this item