

PhD-Proposal:

The Effect of Civic Local Political Deliberation on Public Reason

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Paper Prepared for 'PhD Training School Potsdam (Universität Potsdam, September 13-16, 2016)

1. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Research Objective

The central question this research wants to explore is if – and if so, when – civic local political deliberation effects public reason.

This research objective is based on the assumption that deliberation strengthens the commitment to the common good and particularly stimulates the use of public reason in justifying policy preferences. However, we still lack accurate empirical data on the phenomenon of deliberative democracy for this claim to be empirically valid. Empirical research on deliberative democracy rarely explores justification of preferences thoroughly, has generally broached deliberation as a grand treatment – which makes it unclear in what way deliberation is responsible for the measured outcomes –, and has not yet dealt with the question of the impact of the self-selection effect on the deliberative transformative effect.

The Deliberative Effect

Democratic theorists argue that deliberation is good for democracy, as a process and/or an outcome. Concerning the latter, democratic theorists generally make the claim of the transformative power of deliberation (Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steenbergen, 2004). The reflective aspect of deliberation is claimed to be crucial: deliberative reflection would have the potential to transform preferences/interests/beliefs in a normative welcome way (Chappell, 2012; Dryzek, 2000; Stokes, 1999; Valadez, 2001). More specifically, the deliberative process, contrarily to the way citizen participation in representative democracies is organized, would have the potential to go beyond the mere aggregation of individual interest (Leyenaar, 2007). Some make the claim that there would be a reinforcement of the willingness to take the arguments of other people into account (Christiano, 1997; Fishkin, 1997), while others even assume that deliberation would strengthen the commitment to the common good, to a sense of public-spiritedness (Chappell, 2012; Habermas, 1996; Mill, 1948; Pateman, 1975; Valadez, 2001; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995).

Previous empirical research concluded that deliberation creates more single-peaked preferences¹ (Farrar et al., 2010), that it acts as a buffer against more negative feelings towards the out-group (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps, 2014) and that it makes people more thoughtful (Smets & Isernia, 2014). Other conclusions have been that deliberation stimulates mutual understanding of conflicting viewpoints (Andersen & Hansen, 2007; Hansen, 2004; Luskin, O'Flynn, Fishkin, & Russell, 2014). It has also been derived from earlier research that deliberation leads to a greater cosmopolitan and collective orientation of preferences (Gastil, Bacci, & Dollinger, 2010), as well as to preferences that are more environmentally friendly (Fishkin, 1997).

All of these conclusions are in line with the transformative character argued for and assumed by deliberative theorists. However, there has been disproportionately less attention given to the transformative public-spirited character in empirical research than this has been the case in democratic theory. Besides the lack of focus on public-spiritedness, it is also remarkable that in empirical research on the deliberative effect, studies have generally approached deliberation as a broad deliberative experience.

There are many different empirical, institutional conditions by which a normative basis of deliberative democracy can be shaped. However, if one merely quantitatively explores the changes in preferences, thoughts or beliefs after respondents are invited to take part in a deliberative experiment, after they have been exposed to briefing materials and have informally deliberated the topic in their personal life setting, encountered other citizens, experts and politicians on scene, have been confronted with the presence of an active moderator and the need for particular decision-making (Farrar et al., 2010; Luskin et al., 2014; Smets & Isernia, 2014; Thompson, 2008), it is unclear in what way deliberation is responsible for each of the measured outcomes. Hence, up until today, the most important conclusion drawn from the state of the art of empirical research on deliberative democracy is that we still know little about why and under which circumstances deliberative effects take place (Barabas, 2004; Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004). Indeed, at present day, researchers are therefore explicitly calling to pay sufficient attention to the characteristics of the deliberative process to learn more about the outcomes it produces (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2011; Setala & Herne, 2014).

Apart from the approach of deliberation as grand treatment, one should notice that empirical research on the deliberative effect generally overlooks which kind of citizen takes part in deliberative experiments or policy initiatives, which can be an important factor in the analysis of the deliberative effect.

The self-selection thesis, which opposes the socialization thesis, assumes that political participation is driven by the intrinsic presence of certain norms of citizenship. Some empirical evidence indeed suggests correlation between holding 'public-spirited civic norms' and the likelihood of political participation (institutional and non-institutional, indirect and direct participation); e.g. the less important one evaluates

¹ A set of preferences in which there is a most preferred choice and in which options that are further away from this preferred choice are consistently less favored.

‘civic duty’ as a norm of citizenship, the less likely one will cast their ballot (Blais, Young, & Lapp, 2000), the greater the emphasis citizens place on the norm that it is important to understand the reasoning of people with other opinions, the more likely they participate in non-institutional political participation (Bolzendahl & Coffé, 2013), the more important one finds it to address social needs, the more one is involved in political participation away from elections and parties towards more direct forms of action (‘engaged citizen’) (Dalton, 2008; Hooghe, Oser, & Marien, 2014). However, the specific relationship with deliberative democracy has not yet been directly explored and thus remains unclear (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011). Moreover, other insights on civic norms and political participation precisely contradict the self-selection suggestion.

Besides the general remark that norms do not (necessarily) lead to corresponding behaviour² (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011; Van Deth, 2007; Zaff, Boyd, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010), empirical research challenges the notion of the ‘engaged citizen’ (Bolzendahl & Coffé, 2013; Oser & Hooghe, 2013). Moreover, Agger (2012) even explicitly advances the idea that when citizens are invited to participate, foremost those who see this participation as an opportunity to fulfil individual needs (e.g. improve the traffic situation around their children’s school) – ‘everyday makers’ – are likely to respond to this. A reasonable insight, but it does challenge the idea of the engaged citizen.

In this way, the literature reasonably suggests that there is a self-selection bias when it comes to political participation, but does not agree on its direction. The question becomes which kind of citizen is attracted by the deliberative form of political participation? Seen the centrality of (the lack of) public-spiritedness in the suggested self-selection biases, the occurrence and direction of it seems consequently of considerable importance in our quest for insights on the effect of deliberative democracy. How does the assumed effect of deliberation on public-spiritedness interact with citizens who are already convinced of public-spirited norms? Is this an essential condition for the socialization effect to come about, or does this precisely minimize the effect – which is greater in interaction with citizens who do not a priori value public-spirited norms?

As to be concluded from the above, the literature lend us some meaningful indications on the deliberative effect on public-spiritedness, but this relation has not yet been thoroughly explored. Yet, empirical validity on this theoretical assumption seems pivotal. The relevance of public-spiritedness is argued by some of our greatest political theorists (Gosseries, 2010), and contemporary institutional and non-institutional participation is increasingly drawn to stimulate public-spirited conceptions of citizenship. Deliberative democracy is to be seen as a specific participatory democratic answer to bring an increasingly alienated citizen back in the limelight of policy-making. Hence, we notice that the more the idea is shared that the way in which Western representative democracies are being put into place alienates the citizen from the policy it produces, the more we see the actual implementation of renewed democratic ideas in which citizens are offered more than the mere possibility to choose, every once in a while, between alternatives

² Expressing that you think it is important to deliberate does not mean that you actually will participate in deliberative practices.

offered by policy makers. Seen its promising normative assumptions, ordinary citizen and local governments are in this respect extensively investing in the practical implementation and support of deliberative practices. Hence, there is a pressing need to contribute to insights on the efficiency of investments in local deliberative democracy, from a public-spirited perspective of citizenship – assumed in this research.

Deliberation and Local Politics

It should not be surprising that the current deliberative practices in Europe and the US are almost exclusively deployed on the local level (Hendriks, Loughlin, & Lindström, 2011). Hence, local policy has – by its own very nature – the ability to effect – directly and tangibly – the day-to-day life of its citizens. Consequently, it is a reasonably and widely shared argument that citizens will participate in the public sphere if they feel it directly affects themselves (Steyvers, Pilet, Reynaert, Delwit, & Devos, 2007) – an argument of which the notion of the everyday maker is to be seen as a specific and rather excessive elaboration (cf. supra). In that way the local level has the unique ability to attract citizens to deliberate in the public sphere who not necessarily would identify it as their civic duty to do so. This makes it particularly interesting in this explorative study on the relationship between public reason and civic norms. Following this reasoning, the local level can be seen as a kind of grand political school, exceeding the strict local level (Hendriks et al., 2011; Kersting, Caulfield, Nickson, Olowy, & Wollmann, 2009; Steyvers et al., 2007). It is John Stuart Mill (1948) who argues that on the local level citizens get acquainted with the political dynamics in general and the public debate in specie. In that way, local participation can give rise to analogous participation on broader levels. It follows from these arguments that the local level is indispensable in encouraging public-spiritedness in the political sphere among citizens.

Additionally, the particularity of the Belgian local context seems specifically fruitful for deliberative research. Whereas the importance of the role of parties in Western democracies in general is unquestionably, Belgian politics are to an even larger extent dominated by political parties as the principal actors in decision-making (De Winter & Dumont, 2003; Deschouwer, 2004). Nonetheless, parties are increasingly struggling in Belgian's political climate (Dassonneville & Baudewyns, 2014; Steyvers, 2014; Studiedienst Vlaamse Regering, 2015; Van Haute, 2015). The confrontation with declining numbers of members, a suspicious public opinion and increasing volatility, is however not unique to the Belgian case (Dalton & Weldon, 2005; Drummond, 2006; Van Biezen, Mair, & Potgunke, 2012). Yet, given the fact that Belgian's parliamentary democracy is more than any other Western democracy characterized by a true domination of parties, this crisis is of particular relevance for this country.

This party crisis as described above is particular situated on the level of the party base. Hence, it is primordial the role of the party as bridge between policy and the people that is put under pressure; citizens are increasingly losing connection with party politics and politics by consequence. In this light, we observe practices by which party members are being more and more involved in intra-party decision-making, through which citizens are progressively engaging in non-institutional forms of political

participation, and governments that are to a greater extent involving citizens on a more direct way in their decision-making. This research can be seen as testing the adequacy of a particular expression of the latter solutions and is consequently of particular interest in the Belgian context.

Overall, this work wants to dwell on the importance of connecting political theory with empiricism by contributing to the knowledge on a subject on which many thoughts and ink have been flown, on which a lot of contemporary political practices are based, but on which there is – proportionally – insufficiently empirically known.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Local Civic Political Deliberation

Many social and political theorists have embarked the Athenian idea of politics as a discussion before an audience (Elster, 1998). John Stuart Mill (1948), Joshua Cohen (1989), John Rawls (1971) and Jurgen Habermas (1996) are only some of the thinkers who were arguably of considerable importance for our social and political development and who also reflected on the notion of deliberation. Theorists do not agree on whether the debate needs to take place between groups of citizens, in the wider public sphere or in the legislature, or whether the normative emphasize lies on the input or the output of deliberation, but they all do centralize reasoned discussion in collective decision-making (Chappell, 2012; Cohen, 1989; Dryzek, 2000; Elster, 1998; Valadez, 2001).

In specifying this rather broad conception of deliberative democracy, political theorists have different interpretations of what particularly counts as deliberation. Some authors define deliberation by the outcomes it produces. The most cited normative interpretation that define deliberation by its outcome concern the endogenous change of preferences that results from the deliberation (Stokes, 1999). Other authors on the contrary, dwell on the deliberative process – irrespectively of the outcomes it produces. According to the latter, the process has to meet certain conditions to be counted as ‘deliberative democratic’ (Elster, 1998).

The essence of this research concerns a definite empirical investigation of the effect of deliberative practices. Practices which cannot be detached from the normative arguments on which they are based, but which can never fully reach the requirements political theorists aim for. One should note that there is no consensus in the literature on the normative – procedural, nor outcome – requirements to which deliberative democracy has to answer. However, that is beside the point in this work. A research that aims at gathering empirical knowledge on the effect of local deliberative practices, does not require normative consensus, nor an ideal type of deliberation. It does need a core normative basis, but it has to leave open the different empirical, institutional conditions through which this normative basis of deliberative democracy can be fulfilled³.

³ Cf. Chappell (2012)

In this work, we go along with the widely shared essence of deliberative democracy as reasoned discussion in collective decision-making – from a perspective of participatory democracy, and therefore – between citizens. With its reasoned discursive character, deliberation differs from other forms of communication in which the exercise of power, manipulation, indoctrination, propaganda or threats dominate. Siu (2008) reasons that giving participants the opportunity to weight competing arguments and consequently to develop or reconsider their own opinions (reasoning), presupposes some limited institutional requirements. Firstly, information and briefing materials are crucial for participants to have access to necessary facts and competing opinions. Without information, participants are not only unable to weigh both sides of an argument, they are as well incapable to correct misinformation. Secondly, moderators are crucial since they can ensure that participants contribute equally to the deliberation. Moderators take on a neutral role to facilitate the group discussions; they ask participants to consider the opposing side and to think through the opposition's arguments. Thirdly, prioritizing the weighing of competing arguments does not by itself involve the need for consensus achievement; the use of the rule of consensus in a deliberative setting pressures people to agree with the majority, independently of one's own ideas.

Because of the indispensability of reason in our approach to deliberative democracy, we undertake these institutional requirements argued for above. Because of the mere indispensability of reason, our approach to the concept does not imply the need to obtain a decision, nor does it involve an explicit orientation to any outcome. As noted above, it is important – in light of the research objective – that the conceptual framework leaves open the different institutional conditions through which this normative basis can be fulfilled.

As a result from the definition of the problem, the focus of deliberation in this research is further confined to deliberation on local policy matters.

Notice, furthermore, that this definition focuses on deliberation among citizens (public deliberation), and thus not between policy makers or in which policy makers as a matter of course deliberate with citizens. Hence, this research is embarked upon the rising questions on the way in which Western representative democracies are being put into place which stimulate the quest for solutions to alternatively involve citizens to decision-making.

With the restriction on deliberation among citizens, the deliberative process is as such approached as a group process. The dialogical is indispensable to the problem posing of this research as introduced above. In this respect one should note that giving their shared essence of the dialogical, 'deliberative democracy' and 'discursive democracy' are often being used interchangeably⁴ (Steiner, 2004).

⁴ Dryzek does make the distinction between 'discursive' and 'deliberative democracy'. However, in doing this, he does not want to include the possibility of monological deliberation; discursive democracy is interpreted as the more critical version of deliberative democracy (critical in its orientation towards the established power structures) (2000).

The public-spirited effect of deliberation is by some assumed to be expressed in the actual support for this or that policy preference (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2002; Fishkin, 1997; Gastil et al., 2010). Others put the emphasis of public-spiritedness more generally on the use of public reason in justifying policy preferences (Chappell, 2012; Valadez, 2001; Van Gunsteren, 1992). Notice that the latter assumption is more far-reaching than the former. One cannot straightforwardly evaluate a policy outcome as embodying ‘the common good’. Even on a pure normative level – leaving aside the complexity of political realities in actual policy-making which can actually not be disregarded –, there are different interpretations of what this actually ought to be (e.g. difference principle⁵ vs. utilitarianism⁶), never mind how this then can be most effectively obtained.

Furthermore, even if there would be a normative consensus on what is the best for the common good and on how this ought to be obtained, support for this does not necessarily imply a true commitment to the common good. Self-interest motives do not as such exclude the support for policies that are satisfying for the common good. On the contrary, the theoretical assumption that deliberation stimulates the use of public reason in justifying policy preferences is as such unambiguously and thus more far-reaching. It does not depend on an exceptional chain of events in which self-interest and common interest accidentally overlap. It is about the expectation that deliberators learn more about the perspectives, beliefs and interests of others in a much greater extent than they otherwise would, which would make them truly more other-regarding (Chappell, 2012; Valadez, 2001). They would consequently be more likely to actually take the interests of others into account in the formation and argumentation of their policy preferences. The assumption of the reciprocal quality of deliberation is grounded in the idea that in a public, political forum citizens are compelled to justify their preferences in a way that others can understand, if not necessarily can accept (Chappell, 2012). Public reason is then to be found in the articulation of one’s own evaluation of policy in terms that are relevant for others as well (Van Gunsteren, 1992). Hence, public reason in this research is an interpretation of the civic duty of public-spiritedness, expressed in the justification of preferences on local policy matters. It is based on the expectation that deliberators would be stimulated to take each other’s interests, perspectives and beliefs into account in their preference formation. Contrarily to a ‘public-spirited preference’, being able to justify your preferences in an extra-personal manner, in a manner that is relevant for other as well, is as such truly other-regarding.

Theorists stress that this assumption of other-regardingness does not imply that all arguments presented during the debate have to refer to the common good (Chappell, 2012). Regardless of its idealistic character, it would be furthermore impossible to take the interests of others into account if we do not get to know their perspectives, beliefs and interests. Deliberators should be perfectly free to express their

⁵ The common good is to be expressed according to what improves the lives of the least advantaged.

⁶ The common good is to be expressed in what is the best for the greatest number of people.

personal preferences. The deliberative, interactive setting would, however, stimulate the need for extra-personal justification of those personal preferences.

In the first part of this paper, we discussed the disproportional attention that has been given to the transformative public-spirited character in empirical research. By consequence, it is evident that this specific interpretation of the deliberative effect as presented above has not yet been directly or fully explored.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The first question on which this research wants to formulate an answer is whether local political deliberation effect public reason. We are particularly interested in the empirical validity of the assumption of the deliberative transformative effect on the extra-personal character of reasons people hold to justify their respective policy preferences.

RQ1: Does civic local political deliberation effect public reason?

Empirical literature already suggested the empirical validity of the public-spirited effect of deliberative democracy, from particular interpretations of the dependent and independent variables, from various research objectives and accordingly diverse operationalized designs. However, the effect on justification of preferences has not yet been thoroughly, nor directly studied. Given its reasonable theoretical explanation and some meaningful empirical indications in previous research of which the designs adjoins the objective of this work (cf. supra), we could expect that deliberation actually stimulates public reason.

H1: The justification of policy preferences of deliberators will evolve in a more extra-personal manner.

The objective of this research is, however, not limited to the contribution of empirical knowledge on the mere outcome of deliberative practices. This work is also characterized by the ambition to discover some meaningful insights on the explanation of the measured deliberative outcome. “We consider it to be very much an open question just how well deliberation works, by what mechanism, under what circumstances” (Page & Shapiro, 1999)⁷. Indeed, at present day, researchers are therefore still explicitly stressing the need to come to a deeper understanding of the deliberative outcomes (Setala & Herne, 2014).

RQ2: Under which conditions does civic local political deliberation effect public reason?

⁷ P.111

We will particularly involve the type of the deliberating citizen into our analysis. The literature suggests that particular kinds of citizens would be more likely to take part in participatory initiatives. The relevance of public-spiritedness in these – opposing – claims on the civic norms participatory citizens hold, turns these claims into assumptions of remarkable significance for this research. Research indicates on the one hand that citizens who already value a public-spirited approach to citizenship a priori are more likely to actually take part in deliberative practices, while on the other hand it explicitly denies this claim and even suggests that participative citizens are driven by a fulfilment of individual needs – which precisely indicates that deliberators would rather adhere a self-interested approach to citizenship. The local context of this research, which has – more than any other political level – the ability to affect – directly and tangibly – the day-to-day life of its citizens, provides us with the best opportunity to try to find out the difference in impact of civic norms on the deliberative outcome.

In our quest to explore the relationship between deliberation and public reason more deeply, it is of considerable importance to analyse the occurrence and direction of this suggested self-selection bias. The question becomes how the assumed effect of deliberation on public reason interacts with citizens who already are convinced of public-spirited norms? Is this an essential condition for the effect to come about, or does this precisely minimize the effect – which is greater in interaction with citizens who do not a priori value public-spirited norms?

H2a: There is a correlation between distinct civic normative orientations to public-spiritedness and the deliberative effect on public reason.

Another way by which this work wants to discover some meaningful insights on the understanding of the relation between deliberation and public reason, is by overtaking deliberation as grand treatment. As to be concluded from the above, there are many different empirical, institutional conditions by which a normative basis of deliberative democracy can be shaped. In this research, we want to pay attention to the characteristics of the concerned deliberative process to learn more about their effects. Since such a ‘middle ranged’⁸ or ‘disaggregated’ approach⁹ is rare, little is known on the effect of specific components which shape deliberation (Setala & Herne, 2014). Yet, given the wide-ranging possibilities to construct the normative interpretation of deliberative democracy in this work, we expect them to respectively effect ‘the deliberative outcome’ differently.

H2b: There is a correlation between specific deliberative characteristics and the deliberative effect of public reason

4. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Deliberative Effect

The first question on which this research wants to formulate an answer is whether civic local political deliberation effect public reason. As stated above, this research is aimed at gathering empirical knowledge

⁸ Cf. Mutz (2008)

⁹ Cf. Thompson (2008)

on the effect of institutional practices of local participatory democracy that answer to the bare normative requirement adopted in this work. With the upcoming Ghentian Citizen's Cabinet (2017-2018) an opportunity that answers this call opens up.

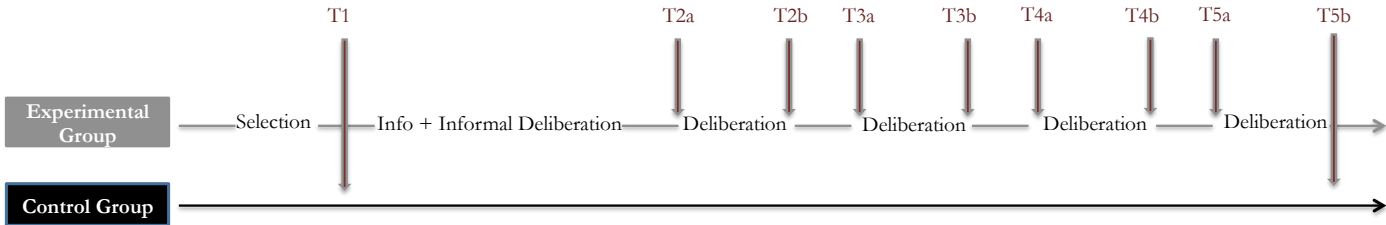
In February 2016, the city council of Ghent¹⁰ approved a hotly debated circulation plan for the city. This new plan goes into effect in April 2017 and divides the city in seven zones. One of them will be reserved for pedestrians only. Between the six other zones, motorized traffic will be impossible; all through traffic will be diverted to the ring road around the city. This circulation plan reflects the majority's strategic vision on mobility; to make mobility by pedestrians, as well as by bike and public transport, more accessible. Seen its far-reaching implications, the plan has been extensively debated and has even not rarely been questioned. When the city council voted a proposal for referendum about the circulation plan down, the idea of a Citizen's Cabinet has been put forward. This idea is one of the instruments by which the city council wants to engage in dialogue with its citizens concerning this specific policy. The Citizen's Cabinet will consist of approximately 150 citizens who will be asked to deliberate on issues in regard to the adjustment and/or evaluation of the plan (e.g. accessibility of the pedestrian zone, approachability of the inner city, comfort and security of cyclists in the inner city, experience with the congestion of public transport). From June 2017 on, the Citizen's Cabinet will deliberate at least four times (every three or four months).

The city council wanted to answer the call for referendum by implementing real reasoned discussion between the citizens of the city. With the translation of it into a deliberative setting in which briefing materials and the presence of a moderator are viewed as being crucial, and with the (mere) objective of deliberating different topics related to the circulation plan in light of adjustment and/or evaluation of the plan (instead of striving for consensus or any other specific outcome), the Ghentian Citizen's Cabinet answer the interpretation of deliberation as developed in this work. Moreover, the mayor of Ghent explicitly stated that the new circulation plan is not about self-interest, it is about collective interest; "if we all give in individually, the collective will broadly benefit" (Termont, 2016). Even though the city council is not angling for a specific outcome, it is not far-fetched to assume that when the majority votes down a call for referendum by calling to consider the collective interests instead of polarization and thereby advancing a Citizen's Cabinet (Termont, 2016), it presumes that their deliberative setting will be able to stimulate public-spiritedness. In that way, the Ghentian Citizen's Cabinet opens up as an exceptional opportunity to investigate whether civic local political deliberation does indeed effect public reason.

In order to find out, we will present the deliberators surveys at different moments of the deliberative trajectory in which we will ask the deliberators to report their personal preference/vision on the circulation plan and the specific issues subject of the deliberation (cf. figure below). As argued above, we are not as such interested in those concrete preferences, but we will consequently ask them to think about why they hold this preference/vision and to report this in the most concrete way possible. To do so at

¹⁰ The capital of the East Flanders province and the second largest municipality of Belgium.

different stages of the deliberative trajectory, we will be able to investigate the assumed enforcing effect on public reason, as well as to separate it from the impact of information and informal deliberation in the private sphere. Moreover, we will establish a control group, to compare the evolution in public reason with the deliberating group.



Hence, firstly we will survey the participants by using open-ended questions. Hence, (specific) justifications of preferences – particularly on actual policy-making, seen its comprehensive implications –, can take numerous forms. This does not mean that one cannot categorize the most expected and relevant justifications of the deliberative issues. However, in that way we would solely depend on the self-assessment of the participants on what they think which suggested categories fit the concrete, personal justifications they may hold regarding a policy matter in the best possible way. Furthermore, not only the reasons people may hold for this or that policy preference are potentially very discrepant, the way these reflect and – the extent to which – these incorporate an extra-personal character, can also be equally diverse. For these reasons we judge that this open-ended methodology – with manual encoding¹¹ – is highly recommendable in view of the research question at hand.

For this analysis, we will use an operationalized coding category of the above-mentioned DQI. The DQI is initially developed to measure (parliamentary) deliberative speeches, but has – as scientifically valid and widely used methodological medium – a specific indicator to explicitly measure public reason, which makes it an appropriate instrument to evaluate the public-spirited character of post-deliberative justifications of focus in this research. The DQI’s ‘content of justification’ concerns a coding category that captures whether appeals are made in terms of narrow group interest (if one or more groups are mentioned in a speech), in terms of the common good (there is an explicit mention of the common good, conceived in utilitarian terms or in terms of the difference principle) or when appeals are neutral (no explicit reference to group interests or the common good) (Bächtiger, Shikano, Pedrini, & Ryser, 2009; Steenbergen, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steiner, 2003; Steiner et al., 2004). In this research, it is of little importance to dissect if appeals are either utilitarian or according to the difference principle. We therefore congregate the wide range of macro level statement about benefits of costs (‘good for the city’, ‘the best for society’, ‘best for the most people’), as well as explicit references to a particular group – analogous to the specific issue at hand – that is among the least advantaged. This coding category will be used to analyse the reasons deliberators express a priori to the on-site deliberation.

¹¹ The Krippendorff’s alpha will be used as reliability measurement (2004).

Besides directly investigating the justification people hold for their policy preferences, it is arguably also relevant seen our objective to deeply study the effect on public reason, to explore whether people are more aware of reasons people may hold who disagree with them (irrespectively whether these arguments are incorporated in their personal justification of preferences). The ‘Argumentative Repertoire’ is a tool by which through the use of open-ended questions people are not only asked for the reasons for their own opinions, by also for those of others who disagree with them (Cappella & Nir, 2002; Siu, 2008). Although an increased spectrum of competing reasons would not as such confirm H1, it does grant us a more profound and nuanced insight on the deliberative effect on public reason. Therefore, we will not only ask the participants to justify their policy preferences (and investigate its extra-personal character), will also quantitatively investigate their awareness of competing justifications.

Next to the use of the open-ended questions as outlined above, we will also confront the participants in the survey with closed-end questions in order to answer RQ1. The use of open-ended questions in a survey always comes with a greater risk of blank answers. In this case, we also have to take into account that people, definitely in a pre-deliberative stadium, do not always feel able to freely express their opinion on the issue at stake, let alone its justification. Furthermore, we must consider the possibility that the way participants freely provide their personal reason may not always indicate the (extra-)personal character it may embody. None of these situations, however, do as such exclude meaningful insights to discover regarding the deliberative effect.

Participants will be provided with statements people could potentially hold as reason for the issues at hand¹². Statements indicating a clear self-, group-, or common good interested orientation, or which rather imply a neutral orientation towards public reason. In order to obtain an insight on their justification that is as sound and accurate as possible, we will both ask the participants to evaluate each of the statements separately (0 to 7 scale: not at all important – very important) as well as to select their first, second and third most and respectively less important statements.

This survey, with open- and closed-ended questions, has the objective to gather data on the justification of a large group of deliberative participants’ preferences and the importance they (do not) attach to common good justifications in the most accurate and efficient way possible. Presenting the deliberators the same survey before and after the different deliberations – and thereby also before and after the overall deliberative trajectory and the comparison of it with the control group –, allows us to analyse the deliberative effect on personal justification.

Notice the relatively demanding frequency of surveying (the deliberators will be surveyed all along the deliberative trajectory, cf. figure supra). However, this demand will be balanced by providing minimalistic surveys; containing only a few questions, the surveys will be able to provide us with detailed information on the deliberative effect on public reason.

¹² Including the possibilities ‘if other, please specify’ and ‘don’t know’

A second, additional way in which we will approach the first research question is through a discourse analysis of the deliberation itself. A pre-post shift in the extra-personal justification of an in an isolated context surveyed deliberator, does not necessarily imply that this shift in justification has also been observable during the deliberation. Just as well does the absence of such a shift in a pre-post survey analysis not necessarily exclude the actual presence and/or evolution of one's justification in a more extra-personal manner during the deliberation. Seen the interpretation of deliberation in this work, the presence and/or evolution of (extra-)personal character of justification during the deliberation is to be seen as a feature of the deliberative effect of public reason.

For this analysis, we will also use the DQI. Notice that, as marked above, we will not use this index to measure how close a deliberative practice approaches a deliberative procedural ideal. We will rather use the DQI as an instrument to measure the deliberative effect. Again, we will make use of the 'content of justification'-indicator to measure the public-spirited character of reasons deliberators use. Notice that contrarily to the pre-deliberation survey in which we explicitly ask the participants for reasons why they are holding this or that policy preference, we are in the deliberative setting dependent on the use of justifications at all in the deliberative speeches by the participants. In that way, we will also code the speeches with the 'level of justification'-indicator ("To what extent do participants use reasons for arguing their statements at all coding the speeches?"). Hence, if it is one's goal to strive for profound insight on public reason as a deliberative effect, it is important not to merely investigate the public-spirited character of reasons, without taking into account the overall amount of reason-giving during the deliberation.

Besides these two justification-indicators, the 'respect' dimension of the DQI is another coding category that is relevant for and consequently will be used to analyse the deliberative discourse. This dimension relates to a coding category in which respect towards the needs and rights of different social groups – affected by the concerned policies –, towards the demand of others and towards counterarguments are respectively analysed (Bächtiger et al., 2009; Steenbergen et al., 2003; Steiner et al., 2004). Regarding our focus on public reason, we will take on the indicator of respect towards the demands of others and counterarguments. The former differentiates between explicit respect for the demands of others (which differs from a bargaining situation in which one gets something in return, but in which there is no need to make any positive statement about the demands of others), no respect (code assigned if there are only negative statements on the demands of others) and a neutral category (no explicit negative, nor positive statement on the demands of others) (Bächtiger et al., 2009; Steenbergen et al., 2003; Steiner et al., 2004). The latter is used in the situation where counterarguments come into play or are anticipated. Counterarguments can be ignored (all counterarguments are ignored), they can be included but degraded (counterarguments are acknowledged, but no positive statement on these are made and at least one of these are explicitly degraded), counterarguments can be included and neutral (acknowledgment of counterarguments but no explicit negative, nor positive statement is made), or they can be included and valued (counterarguments are acknowledged and at least one of them is explicitly valued).

With a respective focus on these three dimensions of a well-known deliberative measuring instrument, next to the comparison between actual pre-post justification between the different respective deliberations, as well as between the beginning and the end of the participatory trajectory as a whole, we will be able to gather elucidate empirical data on the assumed deliberative evolution of justification in a more extra-personal manner.

In a second stadium of this research¹³, we will examine these results side by side with a likewise discourse analysis of city council's deliberation on the circulation plan. Hence, politicians are making decisions on behalf of others, which by definition requires justification; public control requires that the reasons why representatives act in this or that way are made clear and available for the represented (Lord & Tamvaki, 2012). Even though an answer on our (first) research question as such does not need this comparison, it seems more than merely interesting to determine the relative share of the deliberative effect of an alternative approach to democracy – which is upcoming as a reaction on the way in which Western representative democracies are being put into place that increasingly alienates the citizen from the policy it produces – in light of the broader picture of democratic decision-making.

Self-Selection Effect

Regarding the exploration of the second research question on the level of the individual conditions, we will add questions in the pre-deliberative trajectory survey (T1) that measure the norms of citizenship participants hold. For this we will take on the widely duplicated operationalization of the citizenship dimension of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP, 2013). Seen the specific local restriction of this research, the questions of the ISSP will be accordingly adapted where there is an explicit extra-local focus*:

Participants will be asked to evaluate nine items separately from (1) not important at all, to (7) very important according to what they think is important for a person to be a good citizen: (a) never try to evade taxes; (b) obey laws; (c) try to understand the reasoning of people with other opinions; (d) buy or boycott goods for political/ethical/environmental reasons; (e) help people in the local community* who are worse off than yourself; (f) always vote in elections; (g) be active in social and political associations; (h) keep a watch on the actions of local government* (ISSP, 2013). In this research, we will additionally ask the participants to select what they think is the first, second and third most and respectively less important norm, which can grant us additional accurate data on which distinctive civic orientations participants actually hold.

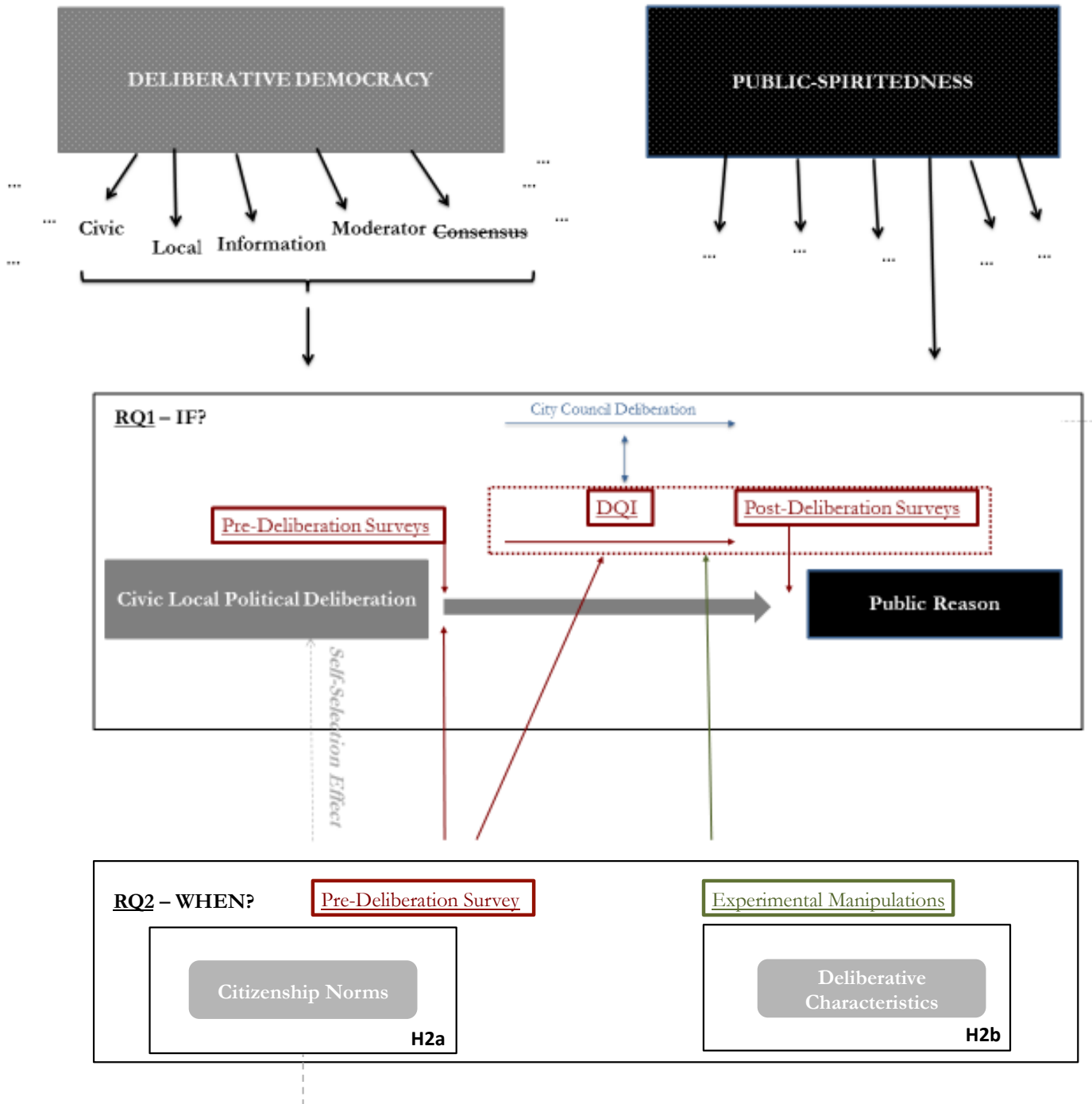
¹³ Even though the comparison with the civic deliberation can and will only be done in a second stadium of this research, the descriptive analysis of this deliberation in the city council will mark the first methodological analysis of this project. Hence, it is only after April 2017 that the first civic deliberation will come into being. Moreover, the discourse analysis of the city council's deliberation, can be used for the development of the close-ended questions in our survey (in which participants of the Citizen's Cabinet will be asked to evaluate and range different reasons people could potentially hold on the issues at hand, cf. supra)

Hence, regarding H2a, we are interested in participants who have a distinctive civic orientation towards public-spiritedness – of which the literature suggests deliberators are characterized; in casu norm (e). Additionally, we will focus on norm (c) in our analysis. This norm is labelled as corresponding to the citizenship category of ‘autonomy’ (not ‘solidarity’) (Dalton, 2006). We notice however, that in other categorizations of citizenship norms, this norm is often being replaced by the norm of ‘engagement in political discussion’ or ‘the formation of one’s own opinion, independently of others’ (Dalton, 2006; Hooghe et al., 2014; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2009; Zmerli, 2009). From the perspective of the specific nature of our dependent variable, the latter is not an equivalent of the former, since the former has not just a deliberative democratic character, but already incorporate a clear public-spirited character. We will explore how the deliberative effect of public reasons relates with participants who attach either great or precisely little importance to these (correlated?) norms.

Institutional Effect

Regarding H2b, by surveying the deliberators on different moments in their participatory trajectory, we will be able to separate the effect of information and informal private deliberation, with the impact of the actual on-site public deliberation (cf. figure supra).

However, this deliberation as such does also consist of different features which can respectively have a different impact. Therefore, through an analysis of the institutional characteristics of the Citizen’s Cabinet, combined with specific literature on the (effect of) deliberative conditions, we will – in a third stadium of this research – set-up own deliberative experiments, in which we specifically will focus on the manipulation of deliberative conditions and its effect on the deliberative outcome on public reason. In that way, we will be able to bypass the deliberation as grand treatment.



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