Who Are the Citizens of the French Convention for Climate?

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Abstract

We conduct surveys on both participants in the French Citizens Convention for Climate (CCC) and the general public. By comparing the answers of the randomly drawn citizens with those of the general population on identical questions, we assess the representativity of the CCC, study the evolution of the citizens' opinions, and document the perceptions of the CCC. The CCC appeared broadly representative of the French population. Although, the CCC's Citizens seemed to have been somewhat more favorable to climate policies than the general population at the start, a majority support was found for all proposed measures but one. Despite our findings that the CCC correctly represented the population, we document widespread ignorance and mistrust towards the CCC, including a largely shared belief that it was not representative.

JEL codes: Q58; D72

Keywords: Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat; Climate change; Sortition; Citizens Assembly

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1 Introduction

When President Macron announced the creation of the Citizens' Convention for Climate (CCC), the government sought to respond to a crisis of democratic legitimacy as well as to a vocal concern against its climate inaction.[1] The government's bet on sortition had potential benefits beyond acceding to the demands of climate activists:[2] sortition could restore trust in the political process and serve as an experiment aimed at reinventing the institutions. Political theorists have discussed various reasons why an assembly of randomly drawn citizens would be legitimate to write the Law, and might even be no less legitimate than elected representatives for this purpose (Manin, 2012; Landemore, 2020). One fundamental reason lies in its *representativity*: in principle an assembly drawn by lot reflects the population in the actual proportions of its diverse subgroups.

To be precise, the law of large numbers implies that, with respect to any variable in the population, a sufficiently large sample of randomly chosen individuals reflects the distribution of the variable of interest in the general population. This property is what we define as "representativity" in this chapter, and it fully operates if selection is random and participation compulsory. Political theorists refer to the *descriptive legitimacy* of sortition to convey the notion of its ability to represent the population in a miniature model (Burnheim, 2006; Tangian, 2008; Delannoi & Dowlen, 2016).

If participation is not compulsory, uniform draws do not ensure statistical representativity with respect to any variable that is correlated with the individual willingness to participate. This is the reason why, for an assembly gathered through voluntary participation, uniform draws are not fit and are replaced by a mixed system involving both random draws and quotas.

The representativity of randomly drawn citizens is key to its descriptive legitimacy, but is not guaranteed and it requires a trustworthy and balanced process to select the citizens. In particular, when participation is voluntary as was the case with the CCC, representativity is vulnerable to the disproportionate inclination of certain people to participate (Fourniau, 2020). This phenomenon, known as *selection bias*, is mitigated by the quota method which ensures that the assembly's composition reflects the population in terms of certain socio-demographics characteristics. But it is impossible to include quotas corresponding to each relevant personal characteristic, even more so that some per-

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[1]The Yellow Vests protested for more democratic institutions (as exemplified by their demand of a Citizens' Initiative Referendum), and it is well-documented that a majority of French people also support more direct and more representative institutions (e.g. preferences-pol.fr/resultats.php$_e d$). As for climate change, environmental organizations have sued the government for its inaction in the midst of the Yellow Vests movement. The legal remedy was supported by a petition that gathered more than 2 million signatures in less than a month (the largest number on record, cf. laffairedusiecle.net/petition) and eventually led to a conviction of the State for failure to meet its commitments (cf. fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affaire_du_siècle).

[2]In France, the CCC can be traced back to the "Gilets citoyens", a group of media figures who lobbied in favor of such an assembly, several of whom became members of the CCC's governance committee. Extinction Rebellion is another organization that demands such assemblies and that may have actually inspired both the Gilets citoyens and the UK Climate Assembly.

sonal characteristics are not observable and that some groups of people are inherently impossible to reach (those who do not respond to the invitation). It is thus important to assess the representativity of the CCC not only in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, but also in terms of values and political opinions (in particular regarding climate change). Equally important to address the crisis of democratic legitimacy are the public's *perceptions* of the randomly drawn assembly, including perceptions of its representativity.

While assemblies drawn by lot are arguably the most descriptively legitimate way to *propose* new legislation, such assemblies might also fare better than referendums to *make decisions* on legislative proposals. Indeed, despite their exhaustive representation of the population, referendums may not exhibit the same extensiveness and fairness in deliberation as that expected from sortition. Deliberation among the random citizens should improve their knowledge and foster consensus, leading to better informed decision than that the broader public would have made. In this chapter, we test this hypothesized effect of deliberation by comparing the attitudes of the Citizens at the end of the CCC to their attitudes at its beginning, and to attitudes of the general population. But above all, we assess the representativity of the CCC.

This chapter uses two surveys specifically designed in relation to the CCC, in which both participants in the CCC and respondents from the general public were surveyed on their attitudes and opinions towards, broadly speaking, deliberation, climate policy and a range of values. By comparing the answers of the randomly drawn citizens with those of the general population on identical questions, our main goal is to assess the representativity of the CCC, but we also study the deliberation and the perceptions of the CCC. The chapter is organized as follows: in Section 2, we describe how the Citizens of the CCC were recruited; in Section 3, we assess the representativity of the CCC; in Section 4, we study how Citizens' attitudes towards environmental policies evolved during the CCC; in Section 5, we analyze how the public perceived the CCC; Section 6 concludes.

2   Recruitment

The recruitment of "the 150"[3] Citizens drawn by lot was conducted by the company Harris Interactive, under the instructions of the CCC's governance committee. The targeted population consisted of French residents aged 16 and over. The sampling procedure ensured representativity with respect to six quota characteristics: gender, age, socio-professional category, education level, region, and metropolitan area. To put this in perspective, in the United Kingdom, the selection criteria for participating in the Climate Assembly UK also included ethnicity and attitude towards climate change.

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[3]The number of participants slightly varied from session to session but was closer to 160. Yet, the Citizens are commonly referred to as "the 150".

Table 1: Number of people at each stage of the recruitment process

Numbers generated	Numbers contacted	Engagements	Agreements
300,000	96,500	11,400	4,100

In principle, including a relevant attitudinal question as a quota variable could enhance the panel representativity; but in practice it is difficult to find a source for the population frequency of the different answers with a reliability comparable to that of the census for socio-demographic categories. The choice was made at the French CCC not to base the sampling on the ex ante climate attitudes. Five people from overseas collectivities were recruited among those studying in metropolitan France to avoid overseas journeys. In addition, two people in deep poverty were directly recruited through the association "Les petits frères des pauvres." Table 2 details the composition of the Convention's citizens along the different quotas.

Harris Interactive first randomly generated, under the supervision of a bailiff, a database of 300,000 telephone numbers, of which 85% were mobile phone numbers. The agency called these phone numbers during the 6-9pm time slot. During the recruitment process, from August 26 through September 23, 2019, the agency ultimately contacted 96,500 existing numbers and sent over 40,000 text messages. Of these 96,500 contacts, 11,400 people engaged with the agency (by answering the SMS (Yes or No) or by picking up the phone). Of the 11,400 people who who interacted with the recruiters, 700 were not eligible to participate (under 16, living abroad), 6,600 declined to participate (not interested, not available), and 4,100 expressed interest in participating, of which 191 were selected. Approximately 3,910 were not able to complete the process (profiles already represented in the sample, dropped out along the way).

The acceptance rate was heterogeneous, and particularly low among people with lower degrees. The main obstacle to overcome was the availability of people. Different benefits were offered to facilitate broad participation: daily allowance, compensations for lost income, travel and accommodation, childcare and a personalized letter addressed to each participants' employer to ask their understanding

The final sample contained 191 individuals: 150 tenured and 41 substitutes. Of the 191, 16 withdrew at the last minute so 175 were available to participate in the first session. Among these, 150 full members and 15 substitutes were summoned, and 159 citizens actually showed up. The substitutes among them were given tenure.

Finally, 14 additional people were recruited during the process (8 in October, 6 in January) to replenish the pool of alternates.

Selected	Confirmed	Convened	Present
191	175	165	159

3 Statistical representativity

3.1 Sources

In the following, we consider three sources of data: the questionnaires we submitted to the Citizens, an *external* survey we conducted on the population, and recent population surveys from other sources. These surveys all rely on identical questions that allow us to make comparisons.

Questionnaires administered to the CCC participants: During the course of the CCC, questionnaire surveys were conducted among the citizens of the Convention. In this chapter, we primarily use a series of questions asked to the Citizens on October 4, 2019, the first day of the first session of the Convention.

External ad hoc survey: We also exploit the results of an *ad hoc* survey that we developed at the Paris School of Economics (PSE), specifically designed to assess the representativity of the CCC. The survey was conducted in two waves in which the same questionnaire was administered to wave-specific samples of one thousand French people each, representative along the same socio-demographic characteristics as the CCC: gender, age, level of education, socio-professional category, size of agglomeration, and region.[4] Even though the quota method makes the sample already quite representative, observations are weighted to correct for small differences between the sample and population frequencies. The first wave (W1) was administered between April 22 and May 11, 2020, before the CCC's proposals were made public on June 21. The second wave (W2) was administered between October 19 and November 3, 2020, after the CCC's proposals had started being discussed in the general debate.

Other surveys conducted in the general population: We also use data from recent general population surveys conducted by ADEME (the French Agency for ecological transition) and Cevipof (the research unit in political science at Sciences Po) as points of comparison:

- Social Representations of Climate Change, ADEME, October 2019

- Survey of French Mayors, Cevipof, June 2019

- Political Confidence Barometer, Cevipof, April 2020.

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[4]The questionnaire (in French) can be found here: preferences-pol.fr/doc_q.php_c

Table 2: Composition of the Citizens' Convention on Climate

		French population N=67 million	Participants in Session 1 N=159	Participants in Session 7 N=160
Gender	Female	47.8%	49.1%	48.1%
	Male	52.2%	50.9%	51.9%
Age	16-17	3.0%	3.1%	4.4%
	18-24	10.6%	9.4%	8.8%
	25-34	15.3%	16.4%	15.0%
	35-49	25.3%	21.4%	21.9%
	50-64	24.1%	30.2%	31.9%
	Over 65	21.8%	19.5%	18.1%
Socio-economic group	Farmers	0.9%	1.3%	0.6%
	Small entrepreneurs	3.5%	3.8%	4.4%
	Managers and professionals	9.2%	13.8%	13.8%
	Technicians and associated professional employees	14.3%	17.0%	15.0%
	Clerks and skilled service employees	16.8%	12.6%	14.4%
	Industrial skilled employees	13.3%	8.2%	9.4%
	Retired	27.2%	27.0%	26.3%
	Other non-employed	14.9%	16.4%	16.3%
Highest qualification	No diploma	27.6%	23.9%	25.0%
	Pre-baccalaureate	22.0%	17.0%	18.8%
	Baccalaureate	15.1%	18.9%	17.5%
	Post-baccalaureate	25.9%	28.3%	26.3%
	Currently student	9.4%	12.0%	12.5%
Settlement	Urban	59.0%	61.0%	62.5%
	Sub-urban	24.0%	21.4%	18.8%
	Rural	17.0%	13.8%	15.6%
	Other	0.0%	3.8%	3.1%
Location	Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	11.8%	10.1%	12.5%
	Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	4.4%	1.3%	1.3%
	Bretagne	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
	Centre-Val de Loire	3.9%	4.4%	3.8%
	Corse	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%
	Grand Est	8.6%	6.3%	7.5%
	Hauts-de-France	9.0%	12.0%	11.9%
	Île-de-France	17.9%	25.2%	23.1%
	Normandie	5.1%	2.5%	1.3%
	Nouvelle-Aquitaine	9.1%	8.2%	8.8%
	Occitanie	8.8%	7.6%	6.3%
	Pays de la Loire	5.5%	5.7%	5.6%
	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	7.7%	7.6%	9.4%
	Guadeloupe	0.6%	1.3%	1.3%
	Martinique	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%
	Guyane	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%
	La Réunion	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%

3.2 Method

Our strategy to assess the CCC's representativity consists in comparing the Citizens' answers to those of the population. This strategy relies on the hypothesis that our population samples are indeed representative, otherwise a dissimilarity between the CCC and the population could be attributed to a lack of representativity of the latter, not the former. This hypothesis is somewhat supported by the evidence when we compare the attrition rates: while 64% of people who engaged with the recruitment agency declined to participate in the CCC (not even counting those who dropped out later), only 16% of those who engaged with our *external* survey dropped out before completion. Indeed, participating in the CCC is much more demanding than completing a survey, and it is possible that certain groups of people are only able to achieve the latter. Yet another source of confidence in the representativity of our population sample is that it follows the same methodology as election polls, which appear quite accurate on average (Jennings & Wlezien, 2018).

The Citizens may have taken on a particular role by virtue of their participation in the CCC. This could have influenced their responses, perhaps in the direction of favoring climate action and social justice, as their mandate was to formulate propositions to "reduce the French greenhouse emissions by at least 40% compared to 1990, in a spirit of social justice."Furthermore, the first day's interactions with both the experts and fellow Citizens may have already directly affected their knowledge and opinions on the climate issue. To circumvent these issues, we asked general questions on values, whose answers are less likely to be influenced by the context. These value questions are key to finely assess the representativity of the CCC beyond questions related to climate policy.

3.3 Socio-demographics

The first verification lies in the representativity along the socio-demographic characteristics used to recruit the Citizens. Table 2 confirms that the Citizens' characteristics are broadly in line with those of the general population (taken from INSEE, the official French statistical institute), though not perfectly proportional. Some differences appear: for example, the Île-de-France region is over-represented (23-25% of the Citizens vs. 18% in the population) while those without a Baccalauréat (a secondary-school degree) are under-represented (41-43% vs. 50%). This reflects the difficulty in recruiting certain categories of people who may not feel concerned with the CCC or who live far from Paris.

Unfortunately, we were not able to obtain information on the broad political leaning of the Citizens (in terms of voting behavior or left-right spectrum for example), so we are bound to analyze attitudes on specific policies.

3.4 Attitudes

Origin, consequences, and severity of climate change

Causes and reality of climate change

The Citizens of the Convention think a little more frequently that climate change has anthropogenic causes than do the French (Figure 1), and agreement is relatively broader among them that climate disorders are indeed caused by climate change (Figure 2).
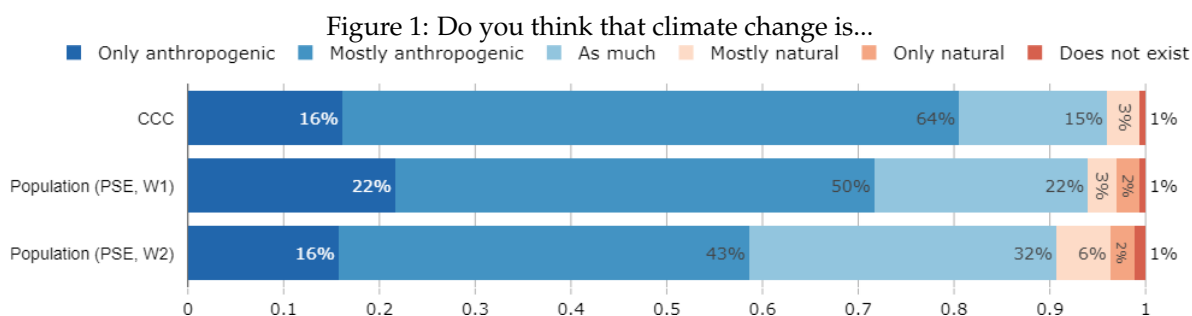
Figure 1: Do you think that climate change is...

Figure 2: Of these three opinions, which one is closest to yours? Climate disorders and their consequences (such as heat waves, storms, floods, melting glaciers, rising sea levels, etc.) are caused by climate change; ... are natural phenomena as they always have been; today, no one can say for sure the real reasons for climate disorders.
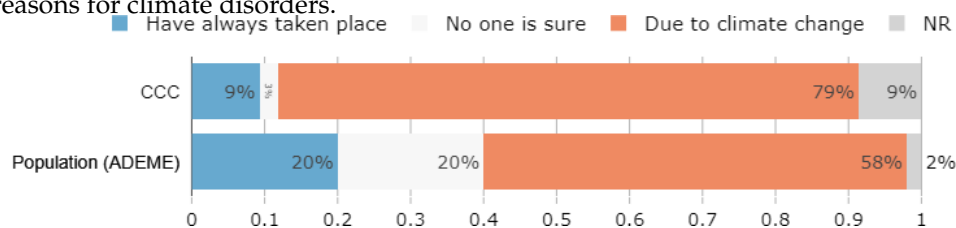
Severity and consequences of climate change

We observe no major difference between CCC Citizens and the French on these points (Figures 3 and 4).

Fighting climate change in general

The Citizens more frequently respond than France must take the lead in climate action than do the French (Figure 5) and they mention much more frequently the harmful role of lobbies in this fight

Figure 3: Do you think that climate change will be limited to an acceptable level by the end of the century?
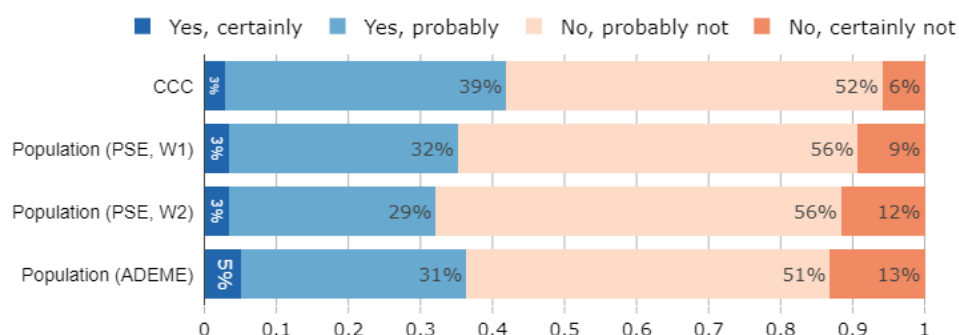
Figure 4: If climate change continues, in your opinion, what will be the consequences in France over the next 50 years or so?
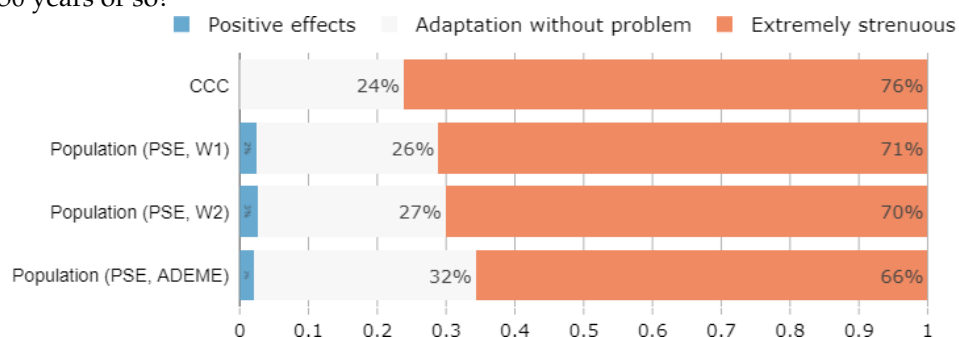
(Figure 6). On the other hand, the responses of CCC Citizens are close to those of the French on the need to change lifestyles and on the importance of policies in fight climate change (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 5: Do you think that France needs to get ahead of other countries in the fight against climate change?
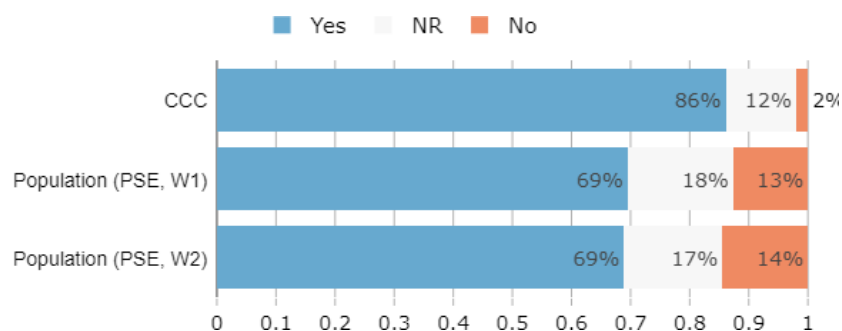
Figure 6: Responses 1 or 2 to the question: What do you see as the obstacles to fighting climate change? Rank the following barriers (1 = most important barrier; 7 = least important)
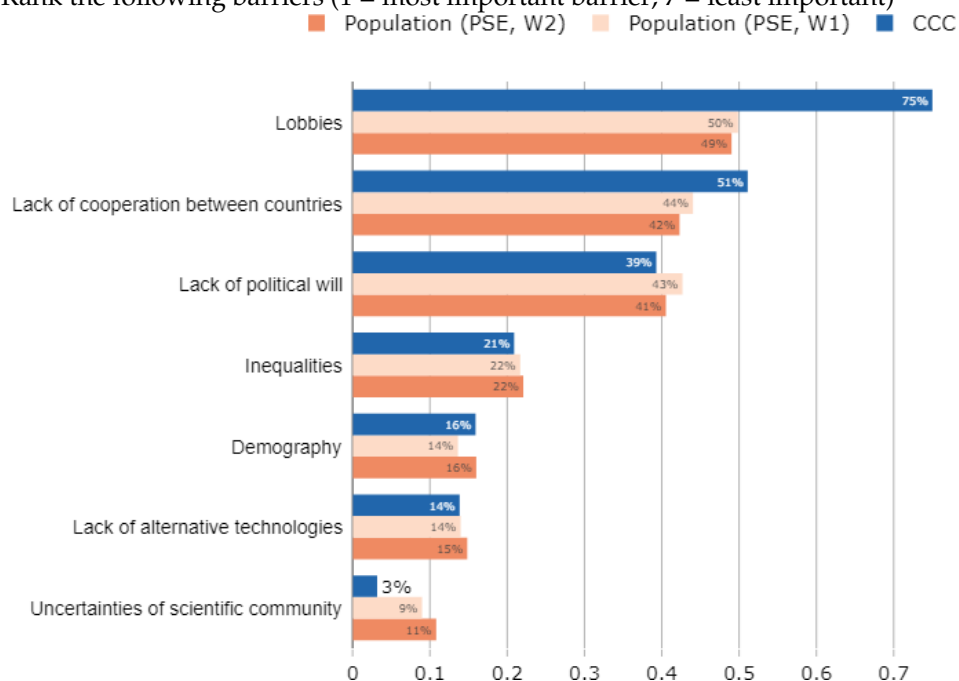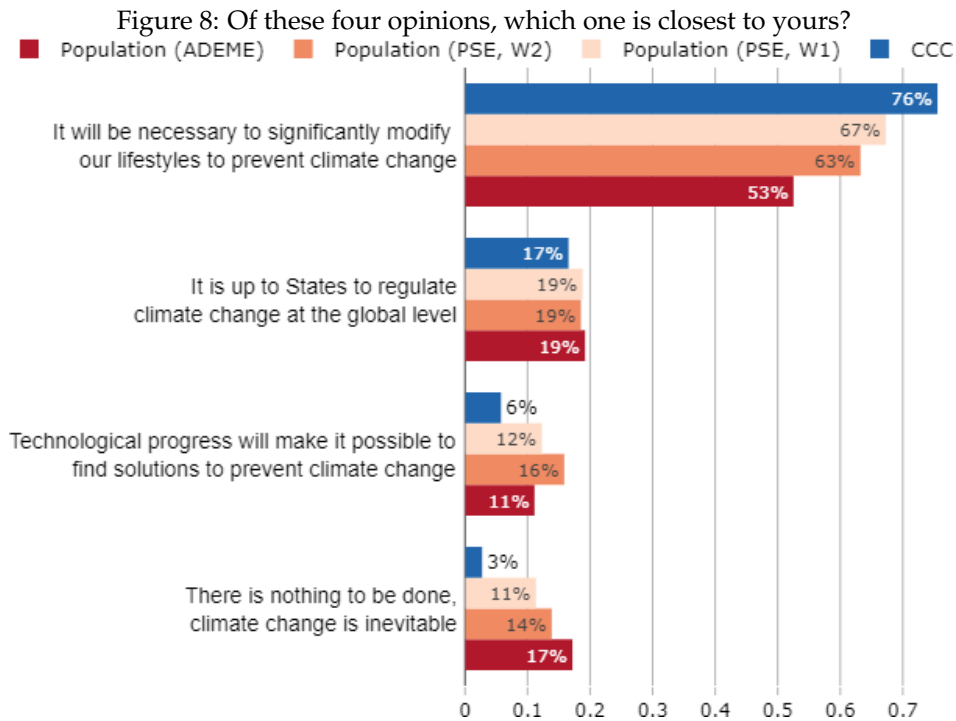

Figure 7: At what scale do you think climate change requires public policies to address it?
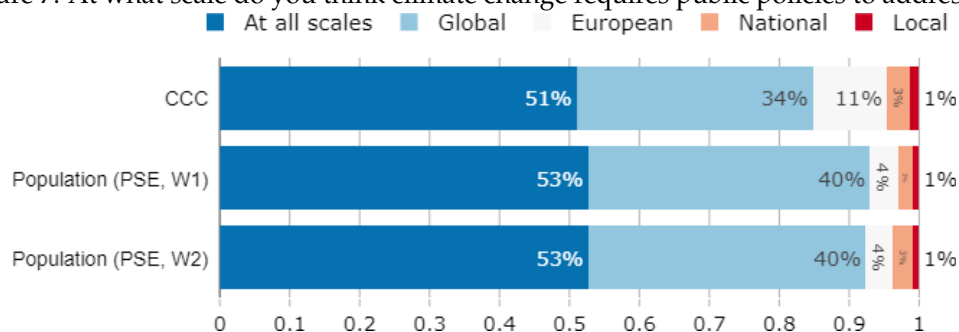
Specific climate policies

On specific climate policies, the results show majority support for the CCC's proposals, with the exception of the 110 km/h limit on highways (or 68 mph, the current limit being 130 km/h or 81 mph), and a similar ranking in the degree of policy support between the Citizens and the French.

Indeed, we asked the same question about desirable measures (to limit greenhouse gas emissions) to CCC Citizens and to individuals in PSE external survey ("For each of the measures that could be adopted to limit greenhouse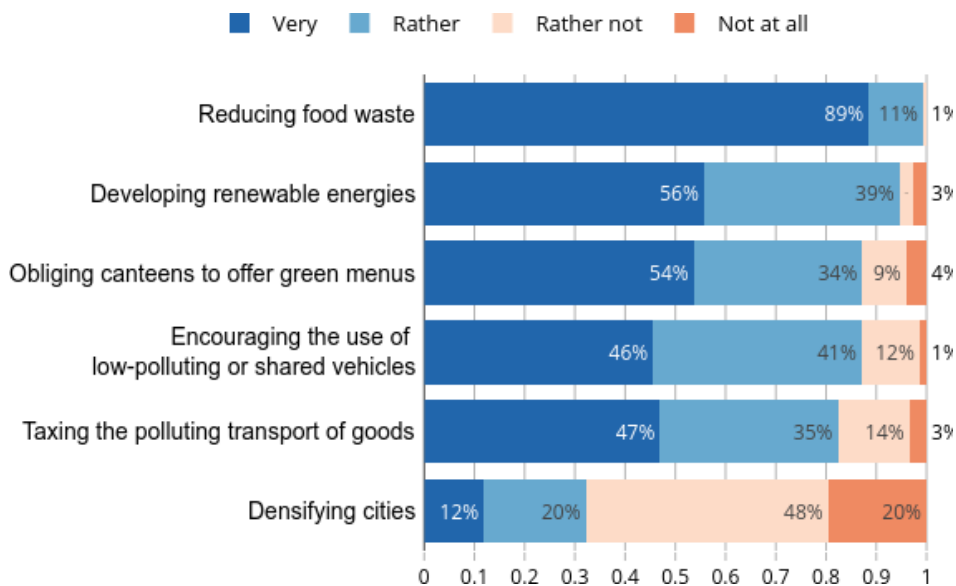 gas emissions, say whether or not it seems desirable to you"). Responses are reported in Figures 9 (for CCC Citizens) and 10 (for individuals in our external survey). Of these measures, three are clearly part of the CCC's final proposals: encouraging the use of low-polluting

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Figure 8: Of these four opinions, which one is closest to yours?

Legend: Population (ADEME) · Population (PSE, W2) · Population (PSE, W1) · CCC

It will be necessary to significantly modify our lifestyles to prevent climate change
- CCC: 76%
- Population (PSE, W1): 67%
- Population (PSE, W2): 63%
- Population (ADEME): 53%

It is up to States to regulate climate change at the global level
- CCC: 17%
- Population (PSE, W1): 19%
- Population (PSE, W2): 19%
- Population (ADEME): 19%

Technological progress will make it possible to find solutions to prevent climate change
- CCC: 6%
- Population (PSE, W1): 12%
- Population (PSE, W2): 16%
- Population (ADEME): 11%

There is nothing to be done, climate change is inevitable
- CCC: 3%
- Population (PSE, W1): 11%
- Population (PSE, W2): 14%
- Population (ADEME): 17%

or shared vehicles, obliging canteens to offer green menus, and taxing the polluting transportation of goods. Both figures show a similar ranking of different climate policies, although CCC Citizens rate these measures more favourably than the general population.

Figure 9: [CCC Citizens] For each of the measures that could be adopted to limit greenhouse gas emissions, say whether or not it seems desirable to you:

Legend: Very · Rather · Rather not · Not at all

Measure	Very	Rather	Rather not	Not at all
Reducing food waste	89%	11%	1%	
Developing renewable energies	56%	39%		3%
Obliging canteens to offer green menus	54%	34%	9%	4%
Encouraging the use of low-polluting or shared vehicles	46%	41%	12%	1%
Taxing the polluting transport of goods	47%	35%	14%	3%
Densifying cities	12%	20%	48%	20%

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Figure 10: [Population of the external PSE survey] For each of the measures that could be adopted to limit greenhouse gas emissions, say whether or not it seems desirable to you:
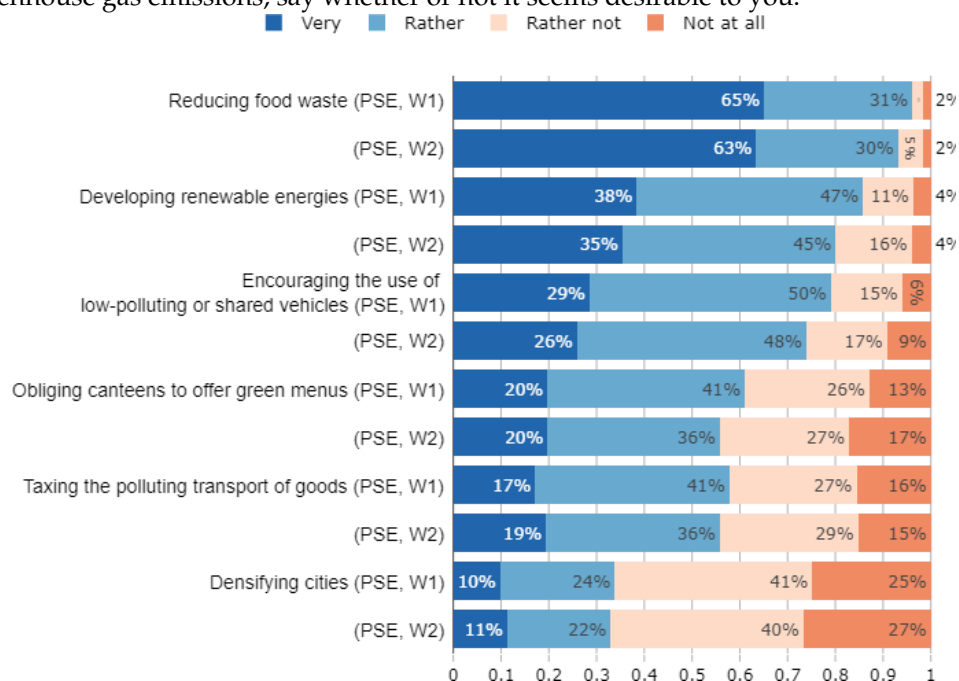
Moreover, in our external survey, we asked respondents about their support for a number of environmental policies. With the exceptions of the tax on red meat and the contribution to a global fund, all the measures in Figures 11 and 12 are part of CCC's final proposals. These figures show the distribution of responses and highlight that the general population supports the CCC proposals, with the exception of the highway speed limit.[5]

Values

In terms of values, CCC Citizens exhibit more trust in one another and more confidence in the ability of randomly drawn citizens to effectively deliberate on complex policy issues. They are also slightly less supportive of redistribution, attach slightly more value to associative action and environmental protection, and to personal autonomy over obedience.

Trust

We first compare answers to a question about trust (given to people in general) and mistrust. CCC Citizens are more confident, and less distrustful, than the French people questioned in our

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[5]This measure was hotly debated within the CCC itself, and was only adopted on the last CCC weekend in June 2020 with 59.7% of votes cast in favor, well below the approval rate for other measures.

Figure 11: [Population of the external PSE survey] Would you support the following environmental policies?
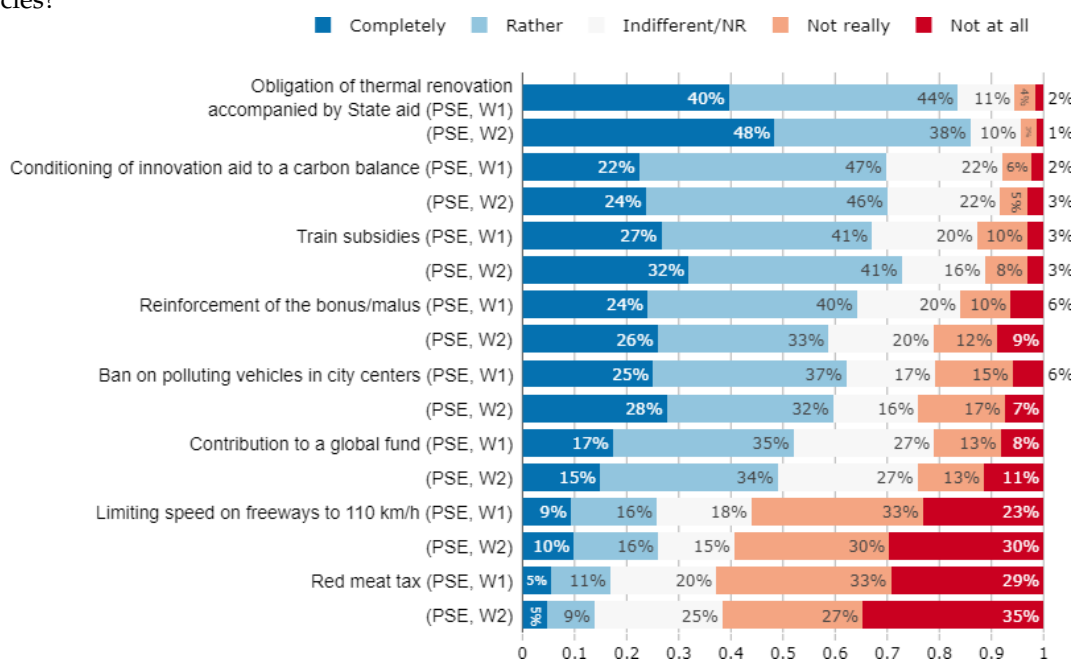
Figure 12: [Population of the external PSE survey] If there was a referendum on the following measures, what would you vote for each of them?
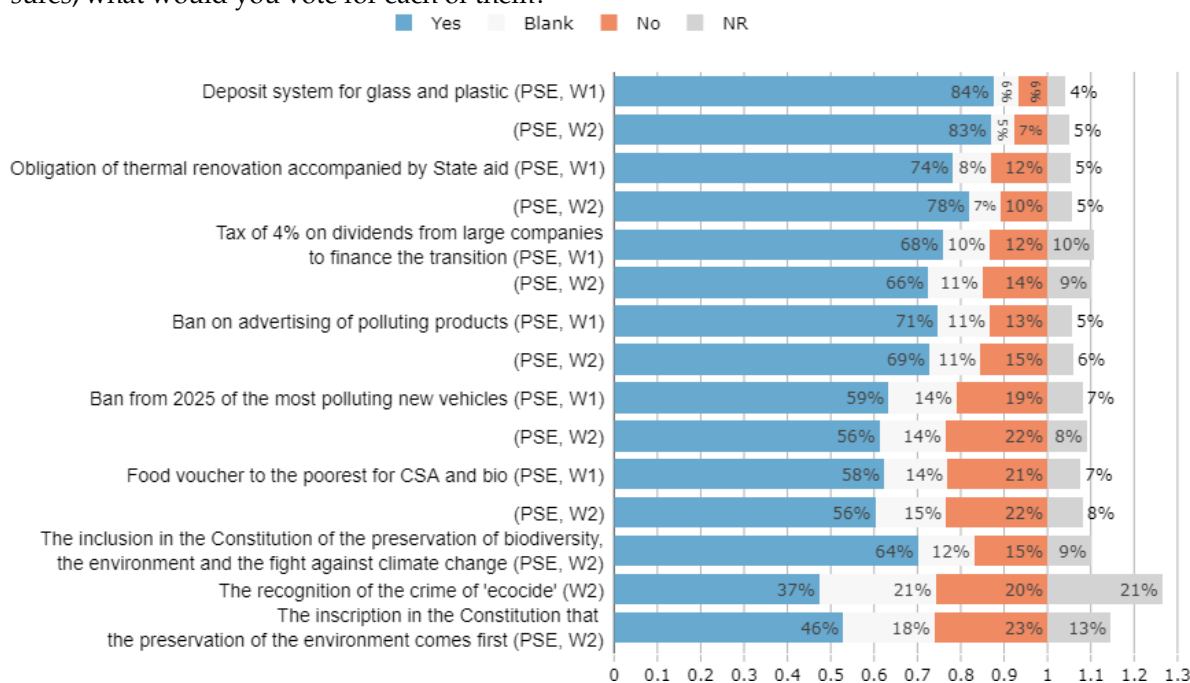
external survey or in a national Cevipof survey (Figure 13). Similarly, when asked whether they have confidence in the ability of randomly selected citizens to deliberate productively, CCC members show a much higher degree of confidence than the general population (Figure 30).

It is important to note that these questions were asked to CCC Citizens after the CCC began, not before. Interpreting these results on trust is therefore complex. On the one hand, they could mean that there is a selection bias in the recruitment of CCC Citizens (in other words, among French citizens who were offered the opportunity to participate in the CCC, it was those who were most confident in the people and in the ability to deliberate who agreed to participate in the CCC). But on the other hand, this result could also mean that participating in the CCC for one day (taking part in exchanges with other Citizens, etc.) made these people more confident. These two explanations are not mutually exclusive.

Figure 13: In general, would you say that ...? You can trust most people / You can never be too careful when dealing with others
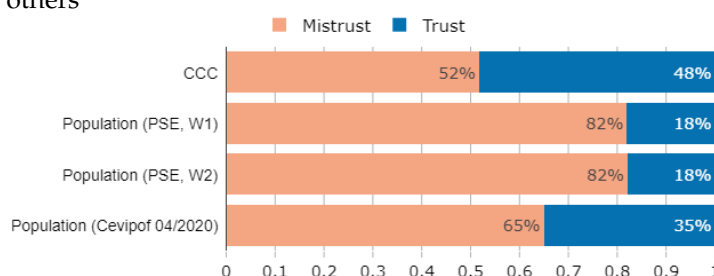
Figure 14: How confident are you in the ability of randomly selected citizens to deliberate productively on complex policy issues?
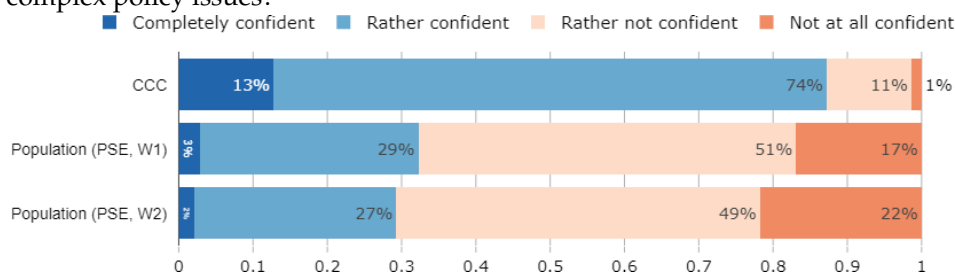
Challenges and life satisfaction

When asked how often they personally experience significant difficulties that the public authorities or the media do not really see, citizens in the Convention and the external survey give quite comparable answers (Figure 15). Similarly, we do not observe any major difference in terms of life

satisfaction between the Citizens of the Convention and the French people questioned in the June 2019 Cevipof survey (Figure 16).

Figure 15: Do you feel that you are personally confronted with important difficulties that the public authorities or the media don't really see?
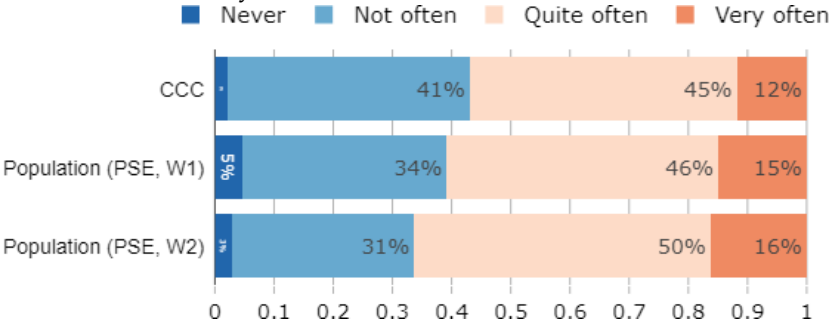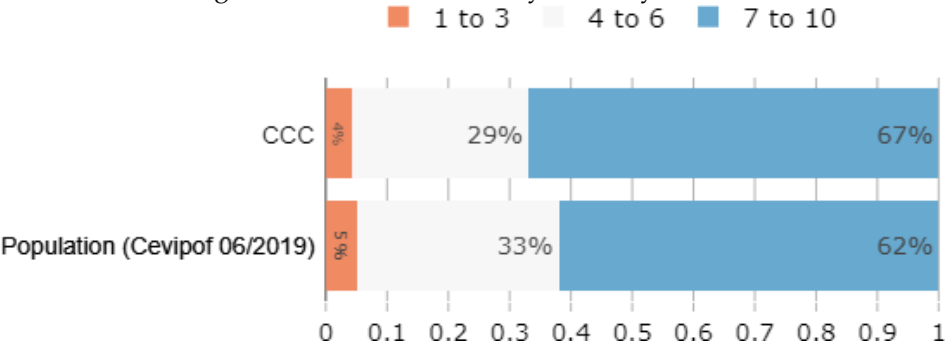

Figure 16: How satisfied are you with your life?

Redistribution

A question on social justice reveals that CCC Citizens are slightly less in favour of redistribution of wealth than the French in our external survey (Figure 17).

Figure 17: What do you think of the following statement: "To establish social justice, one should take from the rich to give to the poor"? [scale from 0 (Strongly disagree) to 10 (Strongly agree)]
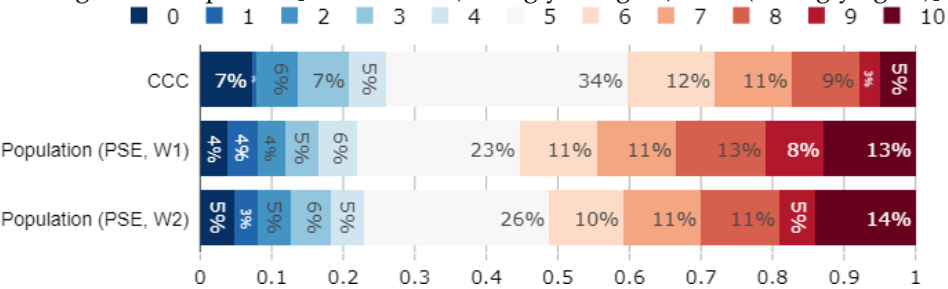
Qualities to encourage in children and school goals

When asked which qualities to encourage in children, both CCC Citizens and respondents answered that the three main qualities are "tolerance and respect for others", "responsibility," and "determination and perseverance" (Figure 18). Nevertheless, some interesting differences emerge: CCC Citizens value highly traits like imagination, independence, and self-expression, and value less obedience and assiduity at work, than do external respondents.

These differences are reflected in the responses to the question about school, which shows that CCC Citizens are more likely to think that "school should primarily educate people to be alert and critical," and symmetrically, are less likely to respond that "school should above all give the sense of discipline and effort," than the general population (Figure 19).

Figure 18: This is a list of qualities that are often encouraged for children. In your opinion, which ones are the most important? (Check no more than five items)
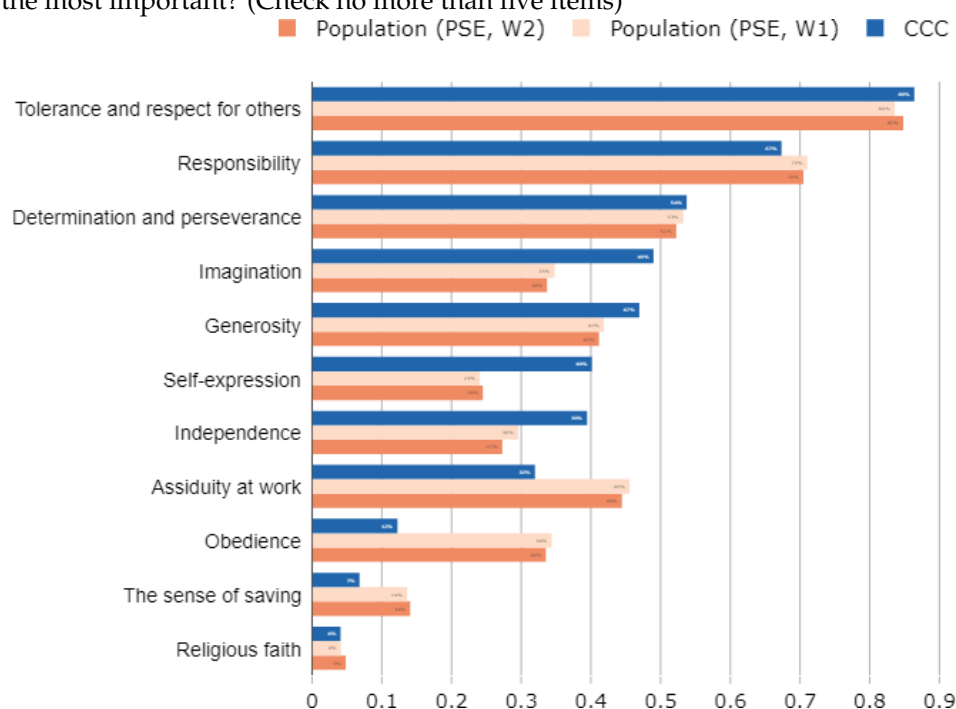
Importance of social and associative action, improvement of living standards, and environmental protection

Some questions focus on the importance given to social and associative action, the improvement of living standards and comfort, and the protection of the environment (Figures 20, 21, and 22). CCC Citizens attach more importance to social and associative action and environmental protection than the French. Responses on improving the standard of living and comfort are quite similar between CCC Citizens and the general population.

Figure 19: Thinking of school, which of these two opinions do you agree with the most? (1) School should above all give a sense of discipline and effort; (2) School should above all train people to be alert and critical; (3) Don't know or don't want to answer). [This question was asked at the entrance of the second session of the CCC (128 respondents).]
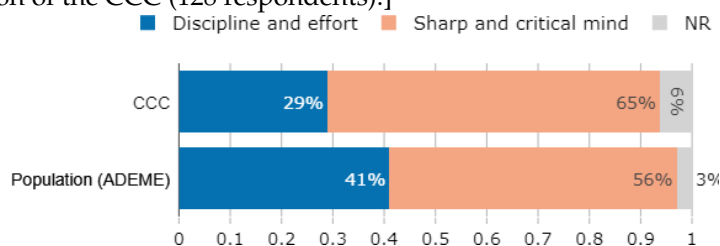

Figure 20: For each of the following things, say how important it is to you: Social and associative action. [scale from 0 (Not at all important) to 10 (Extremely important)]
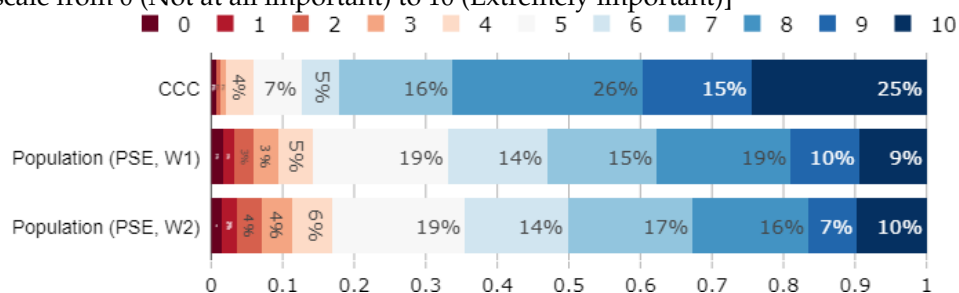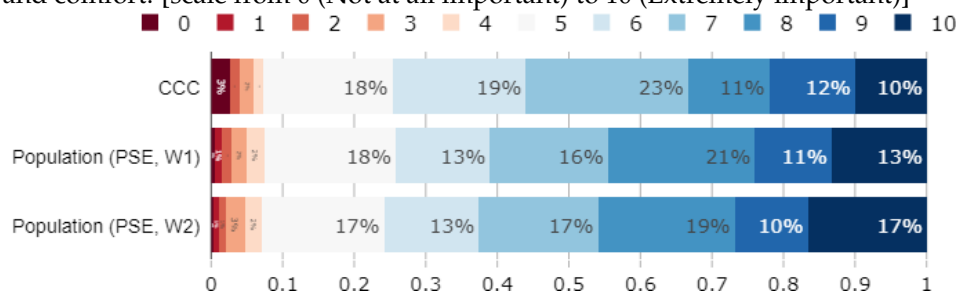

Figure 21: For each of the following things, say how important it is to you: Improving my standard of living and comfort. [scale from 0 (Not at all important) to 10 (Extremely important)]


4 Deliberative citizens

One of the rationales for citizen assemblies is that they derive their legitimacy from citizen's opportunity to extensively deliberate (compared to referenda).

To assess the effects of deliberation, we analyze the evolution of Citizens' opinion across sessions. In particular, we compare their answers to questions about their position towards six environmental policies that were asked both when they entered the convention in Session 1, and three months later in Session 4. These questions (already displayed in Figure 9 above) include their opinion about reducing

Figure 22: For each of the following things, say how important it is to you: Protecting the environment. [scale from 0 (Not at all important) to 10 (Extremely important)]
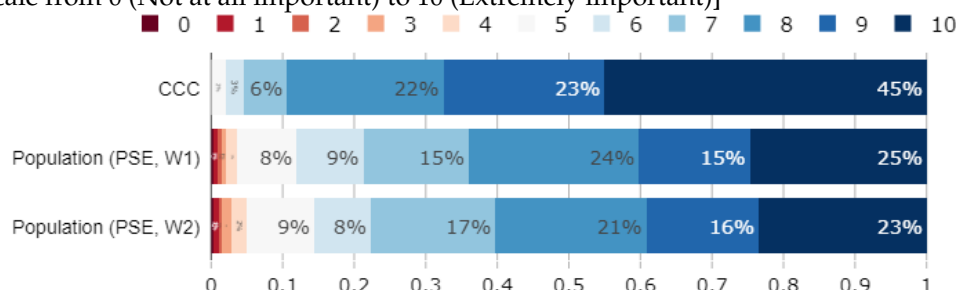
food waste, developing renewable energies, obliging canteens to offer green menus, encouraging the use of low-polluting or shared vehicles, taxing the polluting transport of goods, and densifying cities. Respondents were specifically asked whether these policies seemed desirable to them, and they could pick one of four responses for each of them: "Very," "Rather," "Rather not," and "Not at all."

Unfortunately, the response rate to the questionnaire was low in the fourth session. In total, 28 respondents answered at least one of these six questions both in Session 1 and Session 4 (and 16 answered all 6 of them in both sessions). Still, analyzing the evolution of the opinion of these respondents should already provide some insights about the effect of deliberation among the Citizens of the assembly. Indeed, as can be seen from Table 3, relative to the full sample, these 28 respondents appear close both in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and values.

Comparing the responses in Sessions 1 and 4, the first thing we notice is that many respondents changed their position in one direction or the other. On average, over the six policies, 46% of respondents changed their response and 13% of them shifted from approving to disapproving or from disapproving to approving between the two sessions. Looking at the net aggregate effect, we also see that on average the approval rate increased by 8 p.p.. This effect however is mostly driven by respondents' attitude towards one specific policy: while 28% of these respondents were initially favorable to densifying cities in Session 1, they were 60% in Session 4. For the other policies, the effect ranges from -4 p.p. (encouraging the use of low-polluting or shared vehicles) to +13 p.p. (taxing the polluting transport of goods), and the average change across the six policies (considering only absolute values) is 9 p.p. Considering the share of people "very" favorable to the policies, the effect is similar with an average change (taking absolute values) of 7 p.p.

To put these numbers in perspective, we also analyze the change in approval between the two waves of the external PSE survey. Considering the six same policies, we find quite stable positions despite the fact that the individuals surveyed are different across the two waves. The share of people favorable slightly decreased for each of the six policies between the two waves, the biggest change being for developing renewable energies (-6 p.p.). Looking at the share of people "very" favorable,

Table 3: Specificity respondents policy questions Sessions 1 and 4

		in Session 1	in sub-sample policy questions Sessions 1 and 4
		N=159	N=28
Gender	Female	49.1%	46.4%
	Male	50.9%	53.6%
Age	16-17	3.1%	3.6%
	18-24	9.4%	10.7%
	25-34	16.4%	3.6%
	35-49	21.4%	14.3%
	50-64	30.2%	46.4%
	Over 65	19.5%	21.4%
Highest qualification	No diploma	23.9%	25.0%
	Pre-baccalaureate	17.0%	10.7%
	baccalaureate	18.9%	21.4%
	Post-baccalaureate	28.3%	28.6%
	Currently student	9.4%	14.3%
Settlement	Urban	61.0%	64.2%
	Sub-urban	21.4%	21.4%
	Rural	13.8%	10.7%
	Other	3.8%	3.6%
Inter-personal trust	Trust	48.2%	50.0%
	Does not trust	51.8%	50.0%
Trust citizens' capacity	Yes, completely	12.8%	17.9%
	Rather yes	74.5%	64.3%
	Rather not	11.4%	17.9%
	Not at all	1.3%	0.0%
Life satisfaction	Average	6.9	6.6
	25th percentile	6	6
	50th percentile	7	7
	75th percentile	8	8
Favorable to redistribution	Average	5.2	6.0
	25th percentile	4	5
	50th percentile	5	6
	75th percentile	7	7

the effect ranges from +2 p.p. (taxing the polluting transport of goods) to -3 p.p. (developing renewable energies). On average, the absolute value of the change of approval and strong approval (very favorable only) are therefore low, at 4 p.p. and 2 p.p. respectively.

On top of the six policies previously mentioned, respondents were asked their position towards six other policies in both Sessions 1 and 4. We treat these questions separately as they were not asked twice in the same way in our external survey, so that we do not have a benchmark to assess the change in opinion over these policies. For these six additional items, we observe a similar pattern in the evolution of opinions. The share of people approving grows by up to 17 p.p. (reinforcement of the bonus-malus on vehicles) and down to -14 p.p. (developing smart meters), and taking absolute values the average rate of change in approval is 10 p.p. At the respondent level, we also observe that 50% of the responses change between the two waves, including 26% switching from approving to disapproving or from disapproving to approving. It is also interesting to note that the two perhaps most controversial policies – namely the carbon tax and the 110km/h speed limit – have witnessed a significant polarization in opinions. While the approval rate goes slightly up from 52% to 57% for the 110km/h speed limit between the two waves, the number of people strongly supporting and strongly opposing this policy both went up, from 1 to 6 and from 1 to 4 respectively. The same pattern is also observed for the carbon tax although opinions shift significantly towards opposition. While the number of people strongly supporting and strongly opposing were respectively 1 and 3 in Session 1, they went up to 2 and 8 in Session 4.

Overall, these results suggest that Citizens' opinions about environmental policies evolved during the CCC more than they would have had they not participated. These changes in opinions could result from the additional information theses Citizens received, as well as from the deliberation process that unfolded during the three months separating Sessions 1 and 4. As we have also shown in Section 3.4 that the Citizens of the CCC show on average higher levels of interpersonal trust and believe more strongly in the capacity of citizens to deliberate on complex policy issues, the effect of deliberation on changing their opinions could be stronger than what it would be for the general population.

5   Perceptions of the CCC by the general public

Even though an assembly drawn by lot could fare relatively well in terms of representativity or quality of the deliberation, what matters to obtain the population's trust is its perceptions of such institution. In France, where mistrust in the governments is well established (Algan & Cahuc, 2007; Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2016), it is particularly important to assess the public's perceptions of the CCC.

Despite broad media coverage, a majority of people do not really know what the CCC is and does, as Figure 23 shows. The share of people stating that they know "very well" or "fairly well"

what the CCC is raised from 22% to 42% after the CCC's measures were unveiled. Answers to an open questions asking the respondent who at least had heard of the CCC to describe what they know about the CCC however suggest that people tend to overstate their knowledge.

Figure 23: *[Knows_CCC]* Have you heard of the Citizens' Convention on Climate? (Yes, I know very / fairly well what it is / I have heard of it but I don't know very well what it is / No, I have never heard of it)
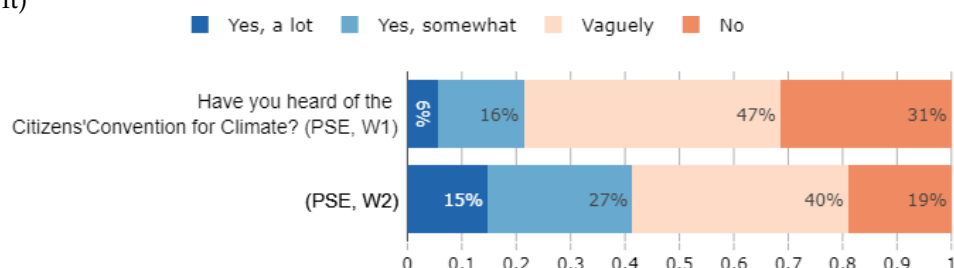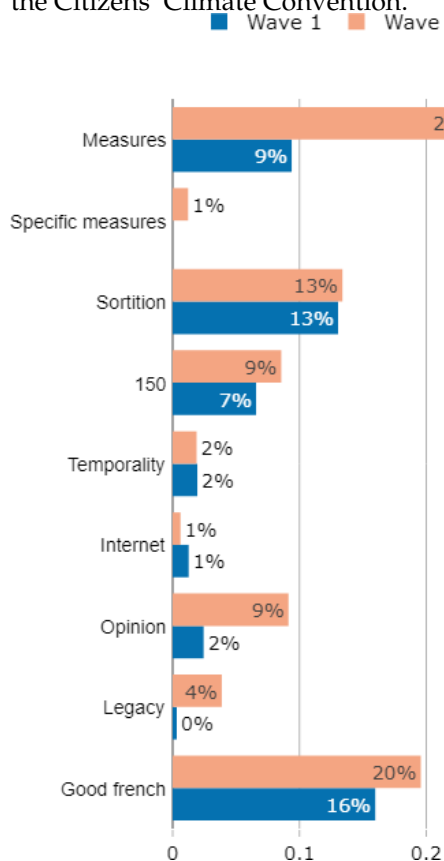

Figure 24: Tags of responses to the open field: "Describe what you know about the Citizens' Climate Convention."

To analyze the open field answers, we read these answers one by one and tagged them according to several criteria:

- Measures: mentions that proposals are to be made / have been made.

- Specific measures: mentions specific measures proposed by the CCC.

- Sortition: mentions sortition.

- 150: mentions the number of CCC members.

- Temporality: shows some knowledge of the temporality of the CCC.

- Internet: the answer has been copy/pasted from some webpage like Wikipedia.

- Opinion: expresses an opinion (almost always critical) regarding the CCC.

- Legacy: refers to the future of the proposed measures.

- Good French: no spelling mistakes, correct grammar, elaborate sentence (i.e. not just "I don't know").

As shown in Figure 24, only a minority demonstrates some basic knowledge of the CCC in their answers. Although one needs to be cautious as many people may know more than what they express, we classified the response according to the knowledge they demonstrated:

- Good: Usually contains several well-articulated elements (measures, sortition, 150, temporality) demonstrating that the respondent knows the CCC. E.g. "*150 randomly selected citizens, 149 proposals.*"

- Vague: Contains one or even a few elements (measures, sortition) but poorly formulated or with imprecision. Suggests that the respondent knows but does not say all that he/she knows. E.g. "*150 measures taken by mostly incompetent citizens.*"

- Too vague: Either the answer could have been deduced simply from the name "Citizens' Convention for Climate", so it is impossible to know what the respondent really knows; or the respondent knows things halfway, makes mistakes. E.g. "*All*" ; "*a gathering of people giving their opinions*"

- None: either the answer is empty or expresses that the respondent doesn't know. E.g. "*idk*"; "*nothing to report*"

- Wrong: the answer contains a wrong statement. E.g. "*It is a meeting of several countries that talks about the state of the climate*"

- Irrelevant: the answer hardly relates to the question. E.g. "*Tocsik gas*" ; "*everyone must make an effort*"

As shown in Figure 25, this classification confirms that only a few people do really understand what the CCC is, as we observe no more than 7% (in Wave 1) to 10% (in Wave 2) with "good" knowledge. These people with so-called "good" knowledge, while in about the same proportion as those stating that they know "a lot" about the CCC, seem actually to grasp only the basics of the CCC. Similarly, the vague or empty answers of the bulk of respondents who stated that they "have heard of [the CCC] but don't know very well what it is" suggest that they are only familiar with the name of the CCC but do not have any specific idea of what it is, as they do not mention sortition nor the proposition-builder role of the CCC. Granted, it might be that these respondents are not school-minded and answered hastily instead of trying to recall all they could about the CCC. But even if their knowledge of the CCC is not as scant as their answers suggest, shoddy answers are indicative that these respondents probably reason with cues and do not form their judgments about the CCC in a conscientious fashion.

Figure 25: *If not "No" to knows_CCC.* Knowledge classification from the open field: "Describe what you know about the Citizens' Convention on Climate."
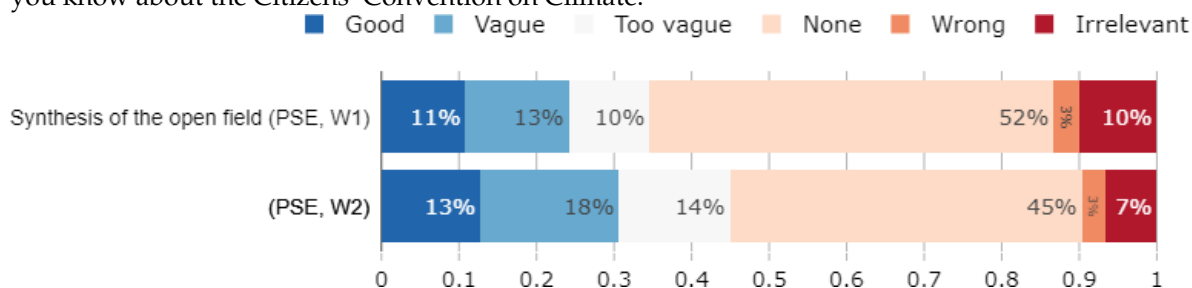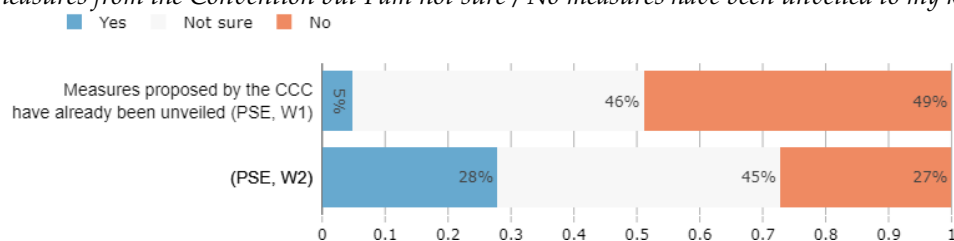

Figure 26: *If not "No" to knows_CCC.* Do you know if any of the measures proposed by the Citizens' Climate Convention have already been unveiled? *Yes, measures have already been unveiled / I think I have heard of measures from the Convention but I am not sure / No measures have been unveiled to my knowledge*

As it presents a closed knowledge question, Figure 26 comforts the simple interpretation that people just lack knowledge of the CCC. Indeed for each wave, about half of the sample is unsure whether measures had been unveiled. In the second wave, only 23% knew that the measures had been unveiled and as many thought that this was not the case.

Despite their lack of knowledge, the 69% (W1) to 81% (W2) of respondents who have at least heard of the CCC all express one or several opinions relative to the CCC (Figure 27). Over the two waves, 58% of the respondents agree with a greater number of negative opinions than positive ones (10% agree with as many negative as positive opinions). The critics essentially view the CCC as a masquerade set up by the government to close the Yellow Vests' episode with a reconciliatory communication, pretending that the demands for more democracy and climate action had been met. The criticism increased between the waves as it became clear that the government would not take back "unfiltered" the CCC's measures, breaking President Macron's promise.

On the representativity issue, the population's judgment is rather pessimistic, as 49% (of those who have at least heard of the CCC) believe that the CCC was not representative (Figure 28). Among them, two thirds think that the CCC over-represents environmentalist or pro-government people (Figure 29).

23

Figure 27: *If not "No" to knows_CCC.* Do you think that the Citizens' Climate Convention is ... ?
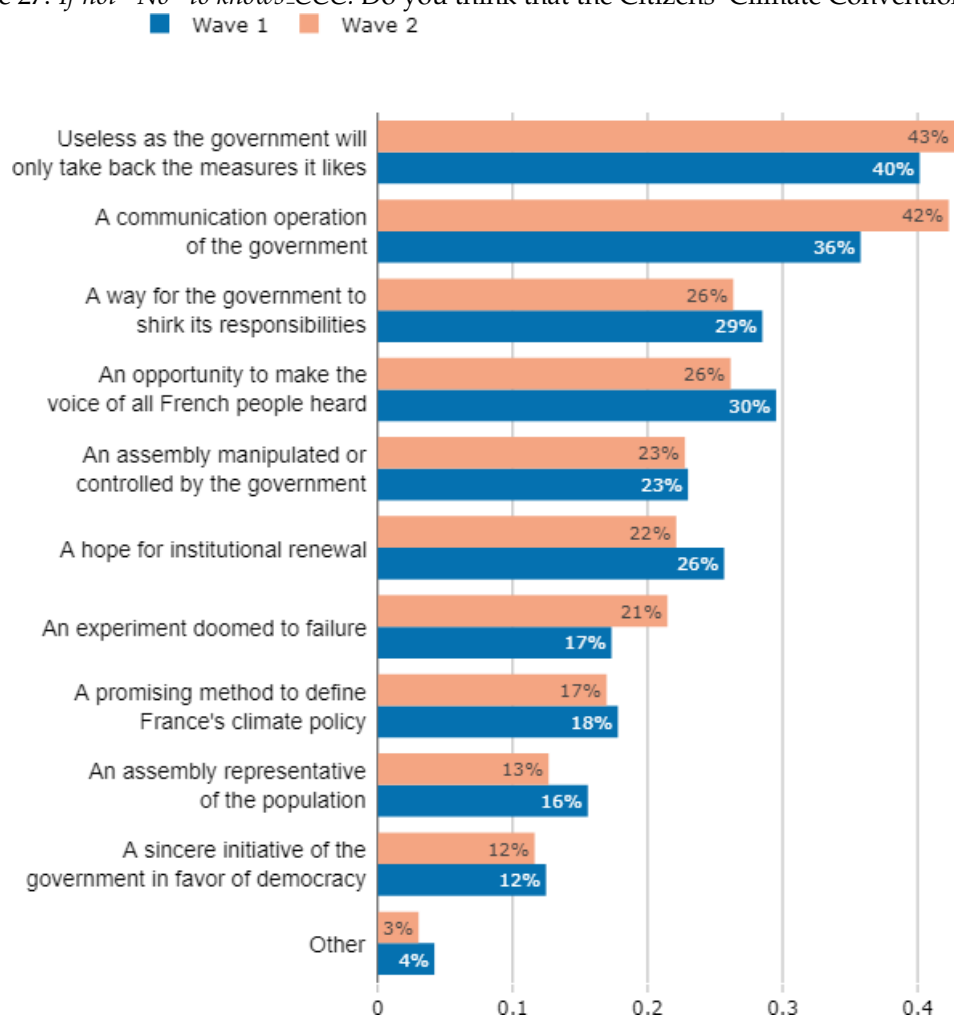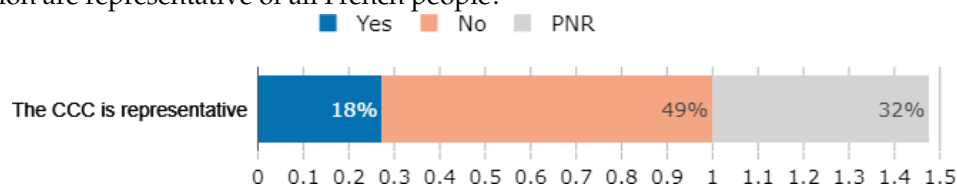

Figure 28: *If not "No" to knows_CCC., Wave 2.* Do you think that the members of the Citizens' Climate Convention are representative of all French people?


Beyond the criticism directed to the government, only 3 out of 10 people are confident that randomly selected citizens can deliberate productively on complex policy issues (Figure 30). This is in stark contrast with the Citizens, who are 87% to think so. It is unclear, however, to what extent the difference can be attributed to an *ex ante* bias of the voluntary Citizens in favor of sortition, as wishful thinking may have also played a role on this question. Despite a widespread distrust on the ability

Figure 29: *If "No" to the previous question.* How do you think these citizens differ from the average French person? (Several answers possible)
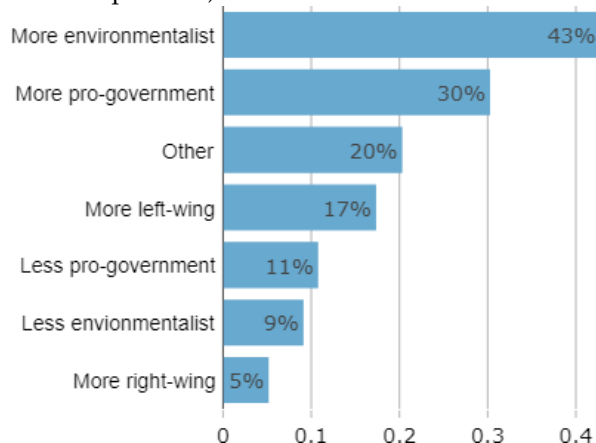
of random citizens to produce meaningful deliberation, half of the population supports "an assembly of 150 citizens drawn by lot with a veto on the texts voted in the Parliament" while less than 3 in 10 oppose it (Figure 31). The majority support for sortition is consistent with other surveys of the French population and can be interpreted in two ways. Even if random citizens are not deemed sufficiently competent to write the law by themselves, they can serve as a useful watchdog for the Parliament and ensure that it does not pass legislation opposed by a majority. Or, even if many people lack of confidence in their fellow citizens' abilities or in a novel type of institution, they may be even more distrustful of the Parliament to faithfully represent them.

Figure 30: What is your level of confidence in the ability of randomly selected citizens to deliberate productively on complex policy issues?

Figure 31: Support for sortition.
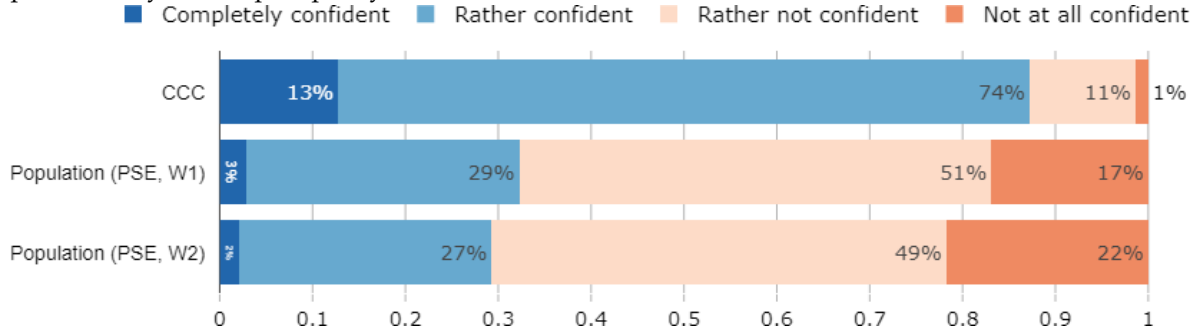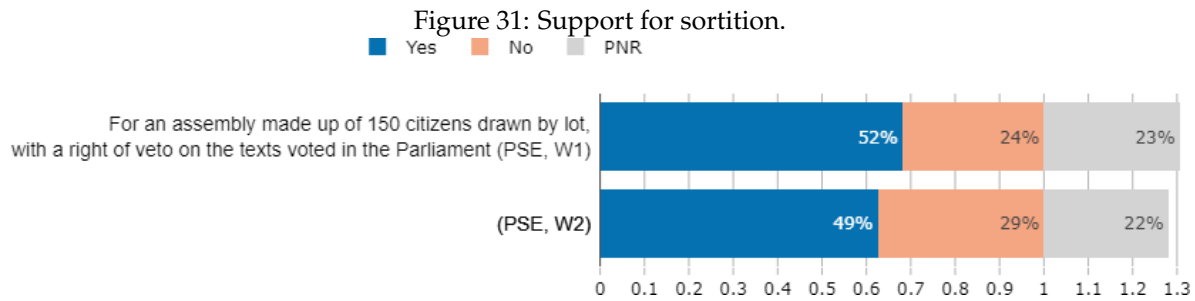
6 Conclusion

Despite some selection bias that led to an over-representation of people with high interpersonal trust, which is probably inevitable as soon as participation is voluntary, our analysis suggests that the CCC was broadly representative of the French population. Admittedly, the CCC's Citizens seemed to have been somewhat more favorable to climate policies than the general population at the start. That being said, the majority support found in surveys for all proposed measures but one shows that the CCC met the public's expectations and confirms that the CCC correctly represented the population.

Obviously, this is even more the case if one considers that the descriptive legitimacy should be assessed not only against a perfectly representative hypothetical assembly, but rather against the current Parliament, which is representative neither demographically nor politically (due to the two-round single-member district system) and which often enacts legislation opposed by a majority (the carbon tax is a perfect illustration). However, this chapter has shown that even with a popular support of its outcomes, the objective representativity may not be enough for sortition to be felt as legitimate: this representativity still needs to be trusted by the population. We document widespread ignorance and mistrust towards the CCC, including a largely shared belief that it was not representative. Such a lack of trust and awareness are plausibly due to novelty of the process and the broader lack of trust in governments and institutions. At this point, it can be said that the CCC did not fully deliver in reconciling the French people with their institutions, but that was clearly a hard task. Yet as our study of the representativity and public perception of the CCC points out, communication about a Citizens' Assemblies proceedings can be instrumental is generating broader support around it.

26

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