



**MAGNUS ADENSKOG** (b. 1985) started his doctoral studies in political science at Örebro University in 2011. His research has revolved around the relationship between the implementation of democratic innovations and how democratic innovations influence political systems. Magnus have worked within the framework of the research school Technology-mediated Knowledge Processes, a joint initiative of Örebro University and Dalarna University. This is his doctoral thesis.

Democratic systems are dynamic and in constant development. There are many indicators that the representative democratic system is currently facing serious legitimacy challenges. Two central indicators of these challenges are changing patterns of political participation and a decline in system support. Against this backdrop, a growing number of governments claim that democratic innovations (DIs) could reconnect institutions with citizens and promote increased cooperation with the system by adding participatory channels that are open to citizens between elections. This thesis focuses on online DIs implemented in real political contexts, and the overarching aim of the thesis is to contribute to the emergent empirical scholarship on how DIs can influence political systems. In the last two decades, most empirical studies in the field have analysed DIs at the micro level. This thesis takes a different stance by posing system-related research questions to the implementation of DIs and, by doing so, showing how DIs are interrelated with, rather than isolated from, the political system and that DIs can influence political systems.

The thesis presents three main empirical findings that contribute to the development of the field. First, it shows that participation in DIs can influence citizens' perceived trust towards local political institutions. In addition, the results suggest that predispositions and prior engagement mediate the direction of change in trust amongst citizens. Secondly, the results show that DIs can perform different political functions, such as facilitating spaces for citizens to provide original ideas and deliberation, while also having an agenda-setting function. Thirdly, the results also suggest that long-term institutional change is complex and that the implementation of DIs can create a situation in which civil servants and politicians perceive their organisation to be in some 'state of flux', as they are torn between two competing institutional logics.

This thesis should be understood as a piece in a broader movement that works towards a systemic approach to the study of DIs, and that by showing these empirical findings, the thesis contributes to deepening our understanding of what influences and functions DIs can have in political systems.

ISSN 1650-1632  
ISBN 978-91-7529-261-8

MAGNUS ADENSKOG Democratic Innovations in Political Systems

ÖREBRO  
STUDIES IN  
POLITICAL  
SCIENCE  
42

2018



MAGNUS ADENSKOG Democratic Innovations in Political Systems

Doctoral Dissertation

# Democratic Innovations in Political Systems Towards a Systemic Approach

MAGNUS ADENSKOG  
*Political Science*

Örebro Studies in Political Science 42 | ÖREBRO 2018