Democratic Innovations in Political Systems
Till mina barn
Olle och Knut
Democratic Innovations in Political Systems
Towards a Systemic Approach
Abstract

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. 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 consists of one literature review and three empirical case studies, applying a multiple methodological approach. Its novelty lies in 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 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. In conclusion, 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.

Keywords: Democratic innovations, online political participation, political institutions, political trust, political systems

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Förord

Den första tanke som slog mig nu när jag satte mig ner och tänkte försöka summera mina tankar kring avhandlingsprocessen är att jag är tacksam för att jag fått denna möjlighet. Det är i sanning ett stort privilegium att på detta sätt få följa sina intressen och dessutom få det finansierat av våra gemensamma resurser. Så: tack Sverige för denna fantastiska möjlighet!

Ämnet för avhandlingen har utvecklats över tid, men de centrala temat har hela tiden varit vilka former det politiska deltagandet tar sig i den nutida demokratin och hur dessa olika former av deltagande påverkar det demokratiska systemet. Med det sagt bör det också komma på pränt att jag ibland har tagit en del omvägar för att komma fram till den avhandling som du nu har i din hand. Både en och två gånger har jag tvivlat på och laborerat med inriktningen på avhandlingen, men alltid haft god stöttning av mina handledare professor Joachim Åström och professor Jan Olsson.

Både Joachim och Jan har under hela avhandlingsarbetet varit både följsamma och strama när jag har presenterat mina idéer, utkast och blottat mina tvivel. Ni har båda varit både goda påhejare men också viktiga bromsklossar under den här tiden och det är mycket tack vare 'demokratiska innovationer' snarare än politiskt deltagande utanför de formella institutionerna. Jag tackar er stort för er vägledning hela vägen in i mål.

Vad det gäller det dagliga, handfasta arbetet med avhandlingen är det framförallt två personer jag skulle vilja lyfta fram och det är, återigen, Joachim Åström men också Martin Karlsson. Martin och Joachim är dels medförfattare till två av artiklarna i den här avhandlingen, men vi har utöver det varit med i två gemensamma externfinansierade projekt där vi tillsammans skrivit både rapporter och publicerat konferenspapper. Med Joachim och Martin har det här projektet hela tiden varit en intressant mix av diskussioner och samtal som rört allt från vetenskap, musik, politik och populärkultur, till fiske, vegetarianism och familjeliv. Martin, som blivit en riktigt prima vän under de här åren, har också tillsammans med sin familj under flera år öppnat sitt hem för mig där jag kunnat sova i såväl källare som i gästrum. En stor frikostighet som varit ovärderlig för mig under de år jag pendlat och som visar på en stor och öppen själ.

Utöver vår lilla forskargrupp skulle jag också vilja lyfta fram dels mina kollegor i statskunskap, och dels mina kollegor i forskarkollega Teknikburna kunskapsprocesser (TKP) som jag varit knuten till. För att nämna några av de kollegor från statskunskapen så skulle jag vilja tacka Mats Lindberg för att du under den första tiden bidrog mycket till mitt tänkande genom våra långa och breda diskussioner om allt från statskunskapens roll i samhället till Karl Poppers vetenskapsteori. Jag skulle också vilja tacka mina


Tillbaka till den mer jordnära nivån så har mycket av arbetet med avhandlingen skett mellan hemmets fyra väggar, på tåg och i olika offentliga miljöer runt om i Sverige. Jag har under flera år arbetat på distans då jag bott och jobbat i olika städer i Skåne och min familj har därför, på i princip alla plan, blivit involverad i det här arbetet. Jag är oerhört tacksam för det då det har gjort att jag kunnat följa mina båda barns tidigaste år på ett sätt som är få förunnat. Jag är också oerhört tacksam för det stöd jag fått av dig Linnea i den här processen. Du som nu under ett flertal år fått stå ut med dagliga (och ganska långa!) utläggningar om forskningsläget inom fältet demokratiska innovationer, utdragna analyser av svensk inrikespolitik och utöver det även en rad ovidkommande utläggningar om statsvetenskapens framtid och politikens utveckling i stort. Du har varit min intellektuella,
känslomässiga och kärleksfulla partner igenom hela det här avhandlingsarbetet och jag älskar dig för det!

Till sist jag vända mig till mina barn Olle och Knut som tillhör den kommande generationen av demokrater som ska komma att befolka våra gator och institutioner. Jag hoppas verkligen att de prövningar och utmaningar som det demokratiska systemet står inför idag ska mötas med mer och för djupad demokrati, inte mindre demokrati. Detta så att ni får växa upp i ett inkluderande samhälle som ser medborgaren för vad den är: dess fundament. Det har varit roligt att få skriva den här avhandlingen tillsammans med er hemma i huset och det är en tid i livet jag alltid kommer att hålla högt!

Helsingborg i augusti 2018
List of articles


Notes:

a) All papers are reprinted with the authorisation of respective publishers.

b) In 2016 I got married and changed my surname from Jonsson to Adenskog.
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Prologue

At the end of the 19th century, a new art-movement called pointillism started in Paris, France. The movement was at the same time a continuation and critique of the impressionism movement that had only recently revolutionised the European art scene. The pointillist movement has been said to be the first avant-garde movement in painting (Ward, 1996) and one of the central ideas of George Seurat, and later Paul Signac, was to apply contemporary scientific theories of light and colour in their art. Seurat developed the pointillist method of applying small touches of colour that are optically blended when viewed from a sufficient distance (Lee, 1987).

The main idea with pointillist paintings is that when you study the paintings close up, you barely see anything but dots of pure colour, but when you take a step back, you see that the dot is actually a head, a part of a boat or a window in a house. Thus the dots do not resemble anything when studied individually, but when viewed in a context of other dots they have a meaning. The experience of seeing a painting from this tradition is rather baffling when experiencing it for the first time; Market of Verona by Paul Signac could function as an example. Using a magnifier, the flag on the top of the roof of the central building is just a group of dots of pure colour that could be just about anything, but clearly form a flag when put in context.

Contemporary politics can in some sense be compared to a painting in the pointillist tradition. The dots in the political painting are, however, not dots of pure colour, but rather states, international organisations, political parties, terrorist organisations, companies, media and social media organisations, municipalities, neighbourhood organisations, regions, governments, individual citizens’ initiatives and labour unions amongst other things. It is in the context of all these political elements that new dots have their meaning and are to be understood. In recent times, a new kind of political institution – or a new set of dots to maintain the metaphor – has been added to the political landscape: democratic innovations (DIs). DIs are embedded political institutions that aims to directly engage citizens in the decision- and policy-making process to strengthen democratic functions and connect citizens to those processes (Smith, 2009). DIs can be applied both online and offline, and some of the most common forms are e-petition platforms, participatory budgeting, different variations of mini publics and crowdsourcing.

In the last two decades, most empirical studies in the field have analysed DIs in isolation from the political system by applying either an experimental
or semi-experimental approach; they have, to continue the metaphor, used a magnifying glass when studying a pointillist painting. With such an approach, we can learn much about the details in individual institutions, but as it is detached from the political context that provides it with meaning; we do not know whether or not DIs have a systemic effect and, if they do, what kind of effect they have.

This thesis is placed in a new movement which has set out to explore if DIs have a systemic effect, and what such an effect might look like. Its aim is to empirically contribute to this emerging literature, and its main argument is that, just as it could be assumed that a whole new set of dots in an existing pointillist painting could change its composition, a new set of political institutions could change the composition and the functioning of the political system. To be able to see this, we need to take a step back and study these dots in relation to the others dots in the painting.
1. Introduction

Democracy is a contested concept in social and political sciences, as well as in public debate. How to define the concept and specify what constitutes the appropriate channels and levels of citizens’ participation has always been at the heart of the debate. Most modern scholars would agree upon a basic definition such as David Held’s that “[d]emocracy means a form of government in which, in contradistinction to monarchies and aristocracies, the people rule” (Held, 2006, p. 1), but be in disagreement about how to operationalise such a definition. The current debate offer so many alternative schools of thought and varieties of practical arrangements of democracy that it is now commonly argued that ‘the goal of arriving at a single universally accepted measure of democracy is, in some very basic senses, impossible’ (Coppedge et al., 2011, p. 248). As the waves of democratisation have swept over the globe during the political history of mankind, new standards have been created which only a generation later become either standard or totally obsolete. This development is often exemplified by observing that the democratic system in ancient Greece bears little resemblance to what we call a democratic polity today (Dahl, 1998).

The recent interest in and development of ‘democratic innovations’ (DIs) is a continuation of this debate, with a central focus on the role of citizen participation in politics (Smith, 2009). As the political world changes various political leaders and organisations around the world are implementing DIs. As one of his first acts, the then President of the USA, Barack Obama, stated in a memorandum in 2009 that ‘government should be participatory’, followed by an argument that:

‘public engagement enhances the Government’s effectiveness and improves the quality of its decisions. Knowledge is widely dispersed in society, and public officials benefit from having access to that dispersed knowledge’ (Obama, 2009).

One of the first institutional arrangement to realise these ideals was the e-petition system We the People. In the same spirit, the European Commission issued Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate in 2005 (European Commission, 2005), later followed up by the pan-European consultation process, the European Citizens’ Consultation (Karlsson, 2012) and the e-petition platform European Citizens’ Initiative. All three of these novel political institutions can be categorised as DIs.
Political systems are, in their most general understanding, the sum of all political actions and interactions that are more or less directly related to the policy- and decision-making process in the given political unit (Almond, 1956; Easton, 1957). A cornerstone for political actions and interactions are the formal and informal political institutions that each carries various necessary political functions. The government, the parliament, ministries, governmental agencies, and the courts are all formal institutions that carries indispensable political functions, while a free media, a public sphere and civil society organizations are informal political institutions that carries necessary political functions. Given this understanding of political systems, political scientists have placed a lot of analytical emphasis on the working and functioning of political institutions (e.g. Peters, 2012), and political parties as they are the central link between the citizenry and the state in liberal democratic systems (e.g. Mair, 1997; Powell, 1981). During the last four decades the liberal democratic system have faced major challenges that can be summarized in two major trends: changing patterns of political participation and a decline in system support (Dalton, 2004; 2008; Manin, 1997; Norris, 1999; 2011; Hay, 2007; Crouch, 2004; Papadopoulos, 2013). And it is in the wake of these changes and challenges that we should understand the emergence of DIs.

The theoretical literature on DIs provides a set of assumptions that DIs can increase the quality of democracy by re-connecting the citizenry to the decision-making process (Geissel, 2013; Newton, 2012; Smith, 2009). The central idea is thus that the citizenry, in a mix of deliberative and participatory institutions, could reconnect with decision-makers and become co-creators of public policy.

The systemic function, and the interrelationship between DIs and the current political system has priory, however, not been a central focus for researcher of DIs. While there is now a growing interest to study the impacts and effects of DIs (e.g. Christensen et al., 2015; Coleman & Sampaio, 2017; Núñez et. al., 2017), much prior research has mainly focused on the individual outcomes of citizen participation in DIs (e.g. Article I; Pogrebinschi & Ryan, 2017). This research gap is the focus of this thesis and raises questions about what functions DIs can have in a liberal democratic system and how DIs can influence political systems. The overarching aim of this thesis is to empirically study how DIs influence important functions of political systems.
Returning to the discussion on the development of DIs, there is currently, just as in the general debate on the concept of democracy, no agreed definitions of what constitute DIs. It is, however, commonly argued that DIs are founded on a pragmatic and problem-driven approach to democracy (Fung, 2012) that focuses on institutions that directly connects citizens to the policy- and decision-making processes (Smith, 2009). DIs are thought to feature values and functions such as deliberation, participation, aggregation and expertise, and the central purpose of DIs is to empower citizens and expand the representative democratic system by adding participatory channels that are open to citizens between elections (Fung, 2012; Geissel & Newton, 2012; Papadopoulos & Warin, 2007).

The political interest to address issues connected to citizens’ participation is currently great, yet the diffusion and actual implementation of DIs around the world are unevenly spread. While, for example, participatory budgeting is reported to have been implemented in 1,500 cities on five continents (Ganuza & Baiocchi 2012) and e-petitions have been implemented in most European states (Böhle & Riehm, 2013), other DIs such as citizens’ assemblies are still rare and often applied ad hoc to solve a specific problem (Article II; Warren & Pearse, 2008) and deliberative polls are most often conducted in the form of experiments (Fishkin, 2009). Despite the uneven spread of DIs, it is obvious that their actual implementation has spurred an empirical interest to study these political institutions in their real political contexts. Previous research in the field has focused on experimental, semi-experimental or non-institutional spaces when studying participation and deliberation with a focus on either the process itself or the individual outcomes of participants engaged in the process (Article I; Coleman & Sampaio, 2017; Pogrebinschi & Ryan, 2017). The main problem with this approach is that, while the theoretical debates have been extensive and the research on individual gains and outcomes from participating in DIs has been valuable, we still have limited insight into the actual political influence of DIs in real political contexts and on democratic systems (Hess & Thompson, 2016).

As postulated above, this thesis seeks to empirically study how DIs influence political systems, and by doing so contribute to filling the current gap in the literature. To meet this aim, the thesis provides empirical case studies on three illustrative cases posing three central research questions. The first case study was conducted in Estonia, and analyses the Estonian Citizens’ Assembly process (ECA). The ECA provides a unique opportunity to study an ad hoc policy making process that involves the public sphere, multiple DIs and representative institutions, and how such processes can influence
policy outcomes. The second case study was conducted in Sweden and focused on the pioneer e-petition system in the City of Malmö called *Malmöinitiativet*. *Malmöinitiativet* is a unique case in the Swedish context and a generally a revelatory case since and provides an opportunity to study changes and reinforcements of trust in the political system among participating citizens. The third case study was conducted in the city of Reykjavik in Iceland that presented a unique opportunity to study the relationships between the two DIs – *Better Reykjavik* and *Better Neighbourhoods* – and institutional development.

This introductory chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is dedicated to the context in which DIs arise, and focuses on why the current debate about revitalising the democratic institutions is topical. The second is a thorough description of DIs, why they are important as study object, and also an overview of prior research in the field. The chapter ends with a presentation of the research questions guiding this thesis.

**1.1 The representative system under pressure**
In his essay on representative government, J.S. Mill notices something profound about the nature of political institutions:

‘Let us remember that political institutions […] are the work of men; owe their origin and their whole existence to human will. Men did not wake up on a summer morning and find them sprung up’ (Mill, [1861] 2008, p. 207).

While Mill argued for the introduction of representative government, the insight provided in his argument can be equally applied in the case of the rise of DIs: they did not come from nowhere, but are the work of human will. They developed as a response to the challenges that are currently facing the representative democratic system.

There are many indicators that the representative democratic system is currently facing serious legitimacy challenges (Dalton, 2004; 2008; Manin, 1997; Norris, 1999; 2011; Hay, 2007; Crouch, 2012; Papadopoulos, 2013). While the diagnosis differs between scholars, and while some mainstream democracy scholars doubt the depth and breadth of this crisis, it is at least safe to state that the representative system is currently facing serious challenges. The challenges facing the representative system can be divided into two main strands: changing patterns of political participation and a decline in system support.

Formal political participation is often synonymous with institutional participation or electoral participation, and often includes voting, working in
political campaigns and political parties (Åström, 2018). Informal participation is often synonymous with non-institutionalised forms of political participation and includes a wide variety of political acts including demonstrating, signing petitions, boycotting certain goods and discussing politics online (van Deth, 2014). The changing patterns of political participation are often summarised as that there are decreasing volumes of formal political participation and increasing volumes of informal political participation (Dalton, 2004; Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). The former (e.g. voting in national elections) still outnumber the latter, but the trends show a change that formal participation is decreasing from previous levels, while informal participation is increasing. Among the indicators that formal participation is decreasing, are that political parties are losing members and supporters (Biezen, Mair & Poguntke, 2012; Karlsson & Lundberg, 2011) and that voter turnout is at low levels or falling (Franklin, 2004). Among the central indicators that informal participation is increasing is that demonstrations, the signing of petitions and political consumption is increasing (Dalton, 2009; Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). Political participation is, thus, on the whole not decreasing, but the patterns of political participation have changed from formal to informal (Norris, 2002).

Alongside the changing patterns of political participation, support for and trust in the representative institutions and actors is in decline (Armingeon & Ceka, 2013; Dalton, 2017; OECD, 2013). Support and trust for the political system is a wide concept that captures many levels of society, from the legal system and the armed forces to government and political parties (Easton 1975). Norris (2011) defines ‘system supports’ as reflecting ‘orientations toward the nation-state, its agencies, and actors’ and points out that should be understood as a ‘psychological orientation’ among the citizenry (Norris 2011, p. 20). The concept of system support can roughly be divided into specific and diffuse support (Easton, 1975); diffuse support is often measured as ‘national identities’ and ‘agreement with core principles and normative values’, while specific support is often measured as ‘evaluations of the overall performance of the regime’, ‘confidence in regime institutions’ and ‘approval of incumbent officeholders’ (Norris, 2011, p. 24).

Depending on how we define system support, we can see that it fluctuates in various states over time. When we, for example, measure system support as total system support, there is no systematic declining trend over time (Norris, 2011). Yet, if we specifically analyse ‘political trust’ in politicians, government and political institutions, we can see a general decrease (Armingeon & Ceka, 2013; Dalton, 2017; European Commission, 2017; OECD,
2013), or as Dalton (2004) puts it, ‘[b]y almost any measure, public confidence and trust in, and support for, politicians, political parties, and political institutions has eroded over the past generation’ (p. 191). Still, while citizens loose trust in politicians, government, and political institutions in the democratic system, they still agree on democracy being the best form of government (Norris, 1999; Dalton, 2004). The debate is, thus, not about whether or not we should have a democratic system, but how the democratic system should function and what kind of democratic institutions we should have.

Parallel to the development of changing patterns of political participation and the decline in support for the system, the world has entered the era of digitalisation. While the effect of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on politics has been discussed since the earliest days of the internet (Åström, 2004; Bennet & Segerberg, 2012; Castells, 1998; Chadwick, 2006; Chadwick & Howard, 2009; Diamond, 2012) it was only during the 2010s that the use of ICTs in political settings became mainstream. As Farrell (2012) argues:

‘these technologies have become so integrated into regular political interactions that it will be impossible to study, e.g., the politics of fundraising, election advertising, political action, public diplomacy, or social movements without paying close attention to the Internet’ (Farrell, 2012, p. 47).

The virtual and natural worlds are thus blending into each other with online campaigns spilling over in protests in the streets and local issues that spill over online and thereby gain global attention. It is common that politicians use various forms of social media to interact with voters (Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Karlsson, 2013) and governments around the world applies ICTs in their contact with citizens. While government-citizen interaction is currently mostly in the form of e-services, there are (as will be the focus of this thesis) local, regional and state governments that seek to either direct or in-direct involve citizens in in the policy- and decision-making process. Digitalisation may not challenge the current democratic system in the same manner as changing patterns of political participation and decreasing system support, yet it adds another dimension to contemporary politics by creating new channels for political participation that are not controlled by the formal political system.

In recent years, another challenge for the representative system has arisen: the spread and increased support for populist politics. The election of Donald J. Trump as President of the USA, the campaign (and victory) for
the BREXIT alternative in the Great Britain referendum, and the increased support for Marine Le Pen in the French Presidential election being the most recent and, arguably, most important examples of this development. In a European context, some scholars argue that this spread of populist politics ‘may eventually end up transforming the West European party systems in the name of the new structuring conflicts that characterise contemporary European societies’ (Kriesi, 2014, p. 376). While the foundation of the modern political project is, at least theoretically, based on the rational weighing of arguments and societal progress is been deeply connected with the scientific progress, the populist project is founded on emotions, rage and the rejection of scientific knowledge. In stark contrast to the ideals of the enlightenment, the current political context is characterised by concepts such as ‘facts resistance’, ‘post-truth politics’ and ‘alternative facts’ (Lockie, 2017; Suiter, 2016).

To summarise the challenges that are currently putting pressure on the representative democratic system, we can see four major trends. First, we now live in a world characterised by a change in political participation in which political parties and organisations lose members, and where informal forms of participation are increasing. Second, we can also see that trust for political parties, governments and political institutions is decreasing. Third we can see that the use of ICTs in politics has become mainstream, and fourth, we can see that populist politics is spreading across the globe with its centres in Europe and the USA.

As democratic systems depend on how citizens and leaders interact in the system and that the citizens support the system, it is of fundamental importance to get to grips with these challenges. One of the most important issues to resolve is what strategies can be applied to re-connect citizens to the political system. A relatively new and interesting solution to this issue formulated by governments at local and state level around the world is to implement DIps.
1.2 Democratic innovations

1.2.1 Defining democratic innovations

The concept of democratic innovation (DI) is used as an umbrella term that captures novel democratic institutions that directly engage citizens in the formal decision- and policy-making process. While this description of DIs is agreed by a majority of scholars in the field, it is important to discuss the concept of DI in greater detail and how DIs are defined in the current literature.

The most extensive and widely applied definition of DIs derives from Graham Smith’s book entitled Democratic innovations (2009), in which he argues that DIs are ‘institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process’ (Smith, 2009, p. 1). Smith’s definition is broad and points out one of the most central aspects of DIs, namely their goal to increase citizen participation. Grönlund et. al. (2014), on the other hand, focus their definition on another aspect and argue that ‘democratic innovations can be seen as [a] means to increase the responsiveness of policy-making to public opinion’ (Grönlund et al, 2014, p. 1). A third aspect that will be further discussed below is that DIs should be understood as ‘new procedures consciously and purposefully introduced with the aim of mending current democratic malaises and improving the quality of democracy’ (Geissel, 2013, p. 10). A fourth aspect, advocated by Newton (2012), focuses on the implementation of DIs in the formal political structures (Newton, 2012, p. 4). Yet, while there are a few definitions of DIs available in the literature, a recent review study shows that about 85 percent of the studies in the field of DI use the concept ‘democratic innovation’ without defining it (Elstub & Escobar, 2017, p. 4).

So instead of focusing on various definitions, it might be more fruitful to discuss three of the fundamental characteristics of DIs: that they are formally connected to the decision- and policy-making process; that they aim to improve the quality of democracy in the political unit; and that they are novel applications in relation to the existing representative repertoire (Geissel, 2013; Newton, 2012; Smith, 2009).

The first prominent characteristic of DIs is that they are government-initiated to be an official platform for citizen participation that are directly (or by official proxy) connected to the policy- and decision-making process. Smith argues that two general aspects are critical: that the institutions directly engage citizens and that the innovation concerns an institutionalised
form of participation, in which citizens have a formal role in policy, legislative or constitutional decision-making (Smith, 2009, p. 2). What distinguishes DIs from other participatory activities is the institutionalised and official connection to the decision- and policy-making process. If a citizen creates an online petition on an unofficial website and manages to collect one million signatures for a political cause, the momentum created will raise awareness of that cause and maybe attract attention from the media, political organisations and politicians. Yet there are no formal obligations for either politicians or civil servants to treat the petition as a formal instruction. If the same petition collects 100,000 signatures at ‘direct.gov’ in the UK, the House of Commons must treat the petition as a formal instruction and discuss it in parliament. In that example lies the distinguishing feature between a random participatory platform or participatory process and a DI.

The second prominent feature in defining DIs is normative and can be labelled as the ‘aim to improve the quality of democracy’. Geissel, for example, is a proponent of this feature and argues that we should define DI as ‘new procedures consciously and purposefully introduced with the aim of mending current democratic malaises and improving the quality of democracy’ (Geissel, 2013, p. 10). Geissel’s definition is interesting as it touches upon two aspects frequently mentioned in the DI literature: an empirically identified problem which it will address by designing and implementing normatively better democratic institutions. Smith (2009) concurs with the idea that DIs should improve the quality of democracy and argues that DIs ‘need to show how unequal participation can be overcome; how citizens can be empowered in the decision-making process; how the environment can be structured to enable informed judgments; and how proceedings can be open to participants and observers’ (Smith, 2009, p. 27). These aims are closely related to normative claims in democratic theory and will be discussed further below.

The third feature that characterises DIs is that they are novel and innovative in relation to the existing representative framework. Newton (2012) defines DIs as ‘the successful implementation of a new idea that is intended to change the structures or processes of democratic government and politics by improving them’ (Newton, 2012, p. 4). This definition relates to both those of Geissel (2013) and of Smith (2009) with the emphasis on quality, while adding that it is a new idea intended to change the current institutional structures.

This thesis does not attach itself to a specific definition of DIs, but Newton’s (2012) definition is highlighted in Article II and Article IV. The main
reason why Newton’s definition is most suitable lies in its focus on implementation and institutionalization of DIs into existing political systems. While Smith’s (2009), Grönlund et. al.’s (2014) and Geissel’s (2013) definitions are valuable for shedding light on the different sides and functions of DIs, Newton’s (2012) definition suggests that, fundamentally, DIs are intended to change the structures and processes of current democratic governments. Thus, Newton’s definition carries an element of power and the question about distribution of power when implementing DIs.

1.2.2 Democratic theory and democratic innovations
It seems to be a grand, if not impossible, challenge to come up with one universal definition of ‘democracy’ (Coppedge et. al., 2011). A review of the normative literature on democratic theory supports this conclusion as there are, at least, ten theories of democracy that are treated with more or less seriousness in the academic debate (e.g. Cunningham, 2001; Dahl, 1998; Held, 2006; Teorell, 2006). Given this breadth of normative points of departure, it is important to understand what ‘democracy’ is in the definitions of DI.

DIs are a heterogenic group of institutions when it comes to institutional design. This heterogeneity can be exemplified with three different types of DIs: e-petitions, participatory budgeting and deliberative polls. E-petitions are clearly founded on an aggregative and participatory tradition in which there are no institutional barriers to participation and where the number of citizens signing a petition gives the argument weight in the exercise of agenda-setting power. Participatory budgeting is designed in a participatory, direct and representative tradition, where the connection to the policy-making process is inherent in the design, and most often the amount of money that the citizens can decide on is set in advance. Deliberative polls are designed in a deliberative and representative tradition and strive to create, if only momentarily, an ‘ideal speech situation’ in which a randomised selection of citizens is invited to deliberate on political issues (Fishkin, 2009). While these three political institutions differ in design and normative foundation, all three are categorised as DIs. Given this, it could be said that DIs are not based on one normative democratic ideal, but on features taken from participatory, deliberative, direct and representative democracy (Fishkin, 1991; Fung, 2012; Mansbridge et. al., 2012; Smith, 2009; Warren, 2012).

The most central common feature of DIs is that they are citizen-centric and explore new means of engaging citizens in the decision- and policy-
making process. They feature a plethora of different democratic values that are, in one way or another, echoed in the design of most DIs. Four of these are inclusiveness, policy impact, political knowledge and legitimacy.

Empirical research shows that formal political participation is currently biased towards citizens with resources and those with high socioeconomic status (Brady et al., 1995; Schlozman et al., 2012). This group is often labelled as ‘the usual suspects’ and occupies much of the space in the formal political arena. Both participatory and deliberative democrats find these biases problematic, since democratic policy- and decision-making ought to be a public affair with the inclusion of all citizens in the political unit (Cohen, 1997; Dryzek, 2000; Bohman, 1996; Thompson, 2008). This argument to include everyone is purely theoretical and has been heavily criticised for being a utopian idea in complex large-society real world (Dahl, 1998). Therefore, much of the work in participatory theory is focused, not on including everyone, but on lowering the barriers to make political participation more accessible and thereby more inclusive (Barber, 2003; Pateman, 2012). The application of ICTs as platforms for political participation are probably the most common example of this idea in practice, where the assumption has for a long time been ‘if we build it, they will come’ (Åström, 2004); that is, if the barriers for participation is lowered, citizens will engage in formal politics. While participatory, direct and deliberative democrats have argued for lowering the barriers, representative democrats do not put any normative value on trying to include marginalised groups. On the contrary, representative scholars do, to various degrees, argues that it is better for the democratic system to decrease the opportunities for citizens between elections. The most classic argument in this line of thought is found in Joseph Schumpeter’s 1942 publication, in which he argues that ‘the people’, for numerous of reasons, is incapable of deciding about politics, and that the only function lay citizens are to have is to elect their representatives in general elections (Schumpeter, 1992). In an updated, and slightly different, version of this argument Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, based on empirical findings, argues that ordinary citizens are not, in general, interested in participating in political decision-making and should therefore only have a limited influence on the decision-making process. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse categorise these citizens as ‘stealth democrats’ as they support to live in a democratic system but do not want to actively participate in the political decision-making process (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). Since empirical research shows that self-selected participatory institutions have problems with equality among participants and that the ‘usual suspects’, i.e. socio-economic strong groups
that are already politically active, tend to be overrepresented in such processes, the argument from representative theorists is that participatory institutions, thus, do more harm than good to the democratic system by increasing the inequality of influence in political decision-making processes.

Normative deliberative, direct, participatory and representative scholars thus have different ideals on the role of citizens’ participation in the decision- and policy-making process. These normative ideals are, however, seldom empirically founded, but is often a result of an ideological assumption about the nature of citizenship. While deliberative, direct and participatory scholars assume that citizens, if given time and resources, are willing to actively participating in political decision-making, representative scholars assumes that regardless of time and resources, citizens will not be interested in actively participating in political decision-making processes.

An empirical attempt to answer this question about citizens willingness is delivered by Inglehart and Baker (2000) and by Inglehart and Welzel (2005; 2010), working in a branch of modernisation theory. Based on empirical data, and verified by others (Norris, 1999; 2011), Inglehart has detected a rise of critical or post-materialistic citizens in industrial democracies. The central thesis is that as citizens become more educated and less concerned about materialistic issues, the more self-expressive and individualistic they become, which in turn leads to higher demands and expectations on the democratic system (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Critical citizens demand to be involved in the policy- and decision-making process and therefore prefer individualised modes of political participation (such as signing a petition or demonstrating) over hierarchical and collective modes of political participation (joining a political party or working in a political campaign).

Connected to the issue of inclusiveness is the issue of empowerment of citizens, and the policy impact of DIs. The central issue is political power, and whether the platforms and arenas that governments provide for citizen participation actually have an effect, or if it is just window dressing and Potemkin villages. Participatory democrats (Barber, 2003; Blaug, 2002; Pateman, 2012), and direct democrats (Budge, 1996) place this issue at the top of the agenda. Sherry Arnstein’s (1969) ‘ladder of citizen participation’ is maybe the most typical example, on which citizen participation can be located on a scale, from ‘manipulation’ to ‘citizen control’ (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). From such a perspective, DI can be evaluated as being pure window dressing with instrumental goals, or as a genuinely participatory institution that genuinely involves citizens in decision-making. Normative deliberative
democrats, on the other hand, have not been as focused on the policy impact to the same degree as participatory democrats. Rather, they have largely focused on the process of deliberation itself, trying to figure out the internal power relations in groups of citizens and how an ideal deliberative process might look (Habermas, 1990; Cohen, 1997). Representative democrats put great emphasis on the policy outcomes and effectiveness, but not on citizen participation in that process.

Given the different approaches on citizen participation and their direct connection to the policy-making process, it is important to understand what kind of political participation citizens’ participation in DIs is. Van Deth (2014) categorised different types of political participation and divided it into four categories, depending on its distance from the formal political institutions. Category I is the minimalist definition, and includes formal and institutionalised forms of political participation such as voting and working in a political party. Category II is targeted towards politics, government and the state, but do not target formal institutions. It includes participating in a demonstration or signing a petition in the public sphere. Category III is targeted towards problems and the community, such as social participation, volunteering or the ‘reclaim-the-streets’ rallies. Category IV is made up of essentially non-political acts and individualised actions such as boycotting a certain brand of goods (van Deth, 2014, p. 355). If we return to the difference between the two e-petitions, we clearly see the difference between the two political acts: while the online petition on the social media platform is category II, the online petition created in the e-petition system is category I.

Related to the issue of empowerment is the issue of creating political environments that facilitate the considered judgements of citizens; political knowledge. While representative theory does not prioritise the issue of citizens’ political knowledge and skills, participatory and deliberative theory emphasize it in a democratic society. Following participatory democratic theory, there is an educative effect in active political participation. The idea that participating citizens learn about politics and their political system by actively participating in the decision-making process is present in the reasoning of Rousseau (1968 [1762]), Tocqueville (2003 [1835]) and J.S Mill (2008 [1861]), and is central in modern participatory theory (Barber, 2003; Bengtsson, 2008; Cunningham, 2001; Pateman, 1970). Deliberative democrats have a more rigid and rationalistic view of political knowledge and attach several normative values to the learning process. By creating an ‘ideal speech situation’ (Habermas, 1990) and making room for non-coercive reasoning on political and moral issues, citizens learn in the communicative
interaction with each other and experts (Habermas, 1984; 1990). Information and knowledge are central in deliberative theory (Dryzek, 2000; Goodin, 2000) and a central feature when performing deliberative DI such as deliberative polls and citizens’ assemblies (Fishkin, 2009; Warren & Pearse, 2008). Despite their slightly different approaches, participatory and deliberative theory come together in the fundamental notion that citizens are capable of learning about politics and that active participation and deliberation is essential to this learning process.

Another distinction that is important is between participation as intrinsically or instrumentally good. At the theoretical level, there are two major perspectives: participation as ‘intrinsically good’ or as ‘instrumentally good’. This dimension is strongly connected to the discussion in the paragraph about the educative effect of citizens’ participation and the idea that participating citizens learn about politics and their political system by actively participating in the decision-making process. But it is also about fostering human capabilities and that citizen engagement can contribute to citizens’ wellbeing and in the end their quality of life. What this suggests is that participation is intrinsically good since it allow citizens to develop themselves and by doing so the society around them, and that participation is not merely a means to an end but an end itself. This understanding of an intrinsic value of participation may be contrasted with the OECD’s instrumental view on participation in relation to legitimacy, as it argues that participation in the policy-making process:

‘give[s] citizens the chance to learn about government’s policy plans, to make their opinions be heard, and to provide input into decision-making [... and that this involvement] creates greater acceptance for political outcomes’ (OECD 2001, p. 18).

As Åström argues (2018), the instrumental view of involving citizens in decision-making processes in order to increase their trust and confidence in government has often been linked to an administrative/incumbent perspective. To provide citizens with a voice in planning and decision processes, on the other hand, has been related to a citizen/critical perspective. Given the empirical findings discussed above, with decreasing levels of trust in political institutions and actors, also DIs are seen as having the potential to contribute to increasing trust in the political system (John, 2009). However, there is little empirical research on the relationship between participation in DIs and trust in political institutions (Hess & Thompson, 2016).
When summarising the democratic roots of the concept of DI, it is clear that the concept is a mix of various democratic models and democratic traditions. While the normative debate continues, there is currently a theoretical movement that, instead of debating the pros and cons and different democratic ideals, focuses on what functions these different innovations can serve in a democratic system. Mark Warren (2012) argues that ‘[w]e should […] simply step away from ‘models’ because they increasingly undermine our capacities to think about democratic systems’ (Warren, 2012, p. 1). The core of Warren’s argument is that, rather than the previous intense focus on what ideals and values are most important or should be prioritised, we should instead ask what function a deliberative or aggregative institution can have in a democratic system. Archon Fung argues that:

‘[i]t may well be – indeed it is likely – that some problems of democratic governance are best addressed with deliberative institutions and others with aggregative ones’ (Fung, 2012, p. 611).

This new theoretical movement is often referred to as the ‘systemic turn’ in deliberative democracy in particular, but DI research in a more general sense (Jensen, 2014; Kuyper, 2015; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Owen & Smith, 2015; Warren, 2012). I will develop the discussion on the ‘systemic turn’ in section 2.2 below.

1.2.3 What is innovative about democratic innovations?
This question is central when conceptualising DIs as ‘innovation’ and is a contested concept. Starting with a purely semantic understanding of innovation, the Cambridge dictionaries defines ‘innovation’ as ‘(the use of) a new idea or method’ (Cambridge University Press, 2016a), with an emphasis ‘the use of…’. In comparison with the concept of ‘invention’ that, according to the Cambridge dictionary, is ‘something that has never been made before, or the process of creating something that has never been made before’ (Cambridge University Press, 2016b.). The difference is thus the degree of novelty and application of the idea or method. Given that various models of democratic systems have been applied in societies in the last two thousand years, it is better to discuss these later developments in terms of ‘innovations’ than ‘inventions’.

Jack Walker (1969) defines a political innovation as:

‘a program[me] or policy which is new to the states adopting it, no matter how old the program[me] may be or how many other states may have
adopted it [...] bringing into being workable, relevant solutions to pressing problems’ (Walker, 1969, p. 881).

This is a more nuanced understanding that takes the political context into consideration. By taking this point of departure, social reforms such as universal education and paid maternity leave could be seen as an innovation in some societies, while being a century-old programme in others.

In his discussion on the use of ‘innovations’ in relation to the concepts of DI, Kenneth Newton argues that:

‘[i]nnovations are a special subset of changes that involved deliberate action to introduce new ways of doing things [and] are more than ideas and theories; they are ideas in action’ (Newton, 2012, p. 4).

This notion, that innovations are ideas in action, are also found in the literature on public innovation. Hartley, for example, argues that an “innovation is not just a new idea but a new practice” (Hartley 2005, p. 27), and Ansell and Torfing argues that “innovation requires more than getting a new good idea [...] [t]he good idea must be implemented to order to become an innovation” (Ansell & Torfing, 2016, p. 5). Returning to the field of DI, Geissel (2013) argues in the same vein but adds, along the lines of Walker (1969), that DIs are bound to state borders and that:

‘if a new procedure is tried out in a country, we can call it innovation irrespective of whether the innovation in question has already been tried out in another country’ (2013, p. 10).

My own understanding of how we ought to tackle the term ‘innovation’ in DI research accept Geissel’s (2013) argument that innovation is contextual, but rather leans towards Newton’s definition, however, with a qualification. One of the major concerns I have about the current conceptualisation of DI is that many scholars include ‘direct institutions’, e.g. referendums, in the concept (Smith, 2009; Geissel & Newton, 2012; Gessiel & Joas, 2013; Michels 2011). I have problems viewing referendums as an ‘innovation’, since it is the oldest classic form of democratic decision-making (Held, 2006). While it is true that most representative democracies use referendums with caution, they have still frequently been used during the post-war era in states around the world. What is ‘innovative’, if anything, about using referendums is to apply them in connection to other and, according to my conception, ‘real’ DI. If a government seeks to solve a political problem by first creating a crowdsourcing process to receive ideas on solutions and then follows this up with a referendum on the best solutions (Åström
et. al., 2013b; Landemore, 2014), the process would be considered to an ‘innovation’. When boiling it down, I concur with Elstub and Escoar (2017) whom states that ‘a democratic innovation can only be considered ‘innovative’ in relation to its context’ (Elstub & Escobar, 2017, p. 7). A good example of how to understand such an ‘innovation’ is e-petitions. Petitions are also a traditional form of participation (Van Voss, 2001), but a e-petition platform is considered to be a DI as it is placed online and formally connected to the decision-making process which adds a new value to the institution. This thesis understands the term ‘innovation’ as being a combination of semantic definition and Newton’s definition and see innovations as ‘novel ideas in action’.

1.2.4 Designing democratic innovations

DI are not tied to a specific normative tradition in democratic theory, but can include features from various democratic models. Neither are they tied to a certain institutional design, but are rather a heterogeneous group of institutions with various designs. To further complicate the study of DI, there is a tendency in the literature to label DI with various names, a good example being ‘e-petitions’ that is also being referred to as ‘online petitions’, ‘online initiatives’, ‘digital petitions’ and so on. To sort this out, I will use the opening paragraph to present some suggestions of typology found in the literature and then continue by presenting and discussing the DI in focus for this thesis in depth.

To begin with, it is important to start by acknowledging that the concept of DI includes a wide range of institutions and practices. An attempt to make a, if not exhaustively so at least a fair, list of institutions and practices that is commonly labelled as DI would include: participatory budgeting, deliberative polls, citizens assemblies, citizen juries, citizen dialogues, citizens consultations, e-petitions, crowdsourced policy-making, deliberative surveys, Town Hall meetings, consensus conferences, and deliberation day (e.g. Aitamurto, 2012; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014; Böhle & Riehm, 2013; Coleman & Sampaio, 2017; Elstub & Escobar, 2017; Grönlund, Bächtiger & Setälä, 2014; Geissel & Joas, 2013; Michels 2011, Smith 2009, Warren & Pearse, 2008).

Since the list of DI are rather extensive, some scholars have made attempts to create typologies that clusters these various institutions into larger entities. As discussed above, Smith’s 2009 book is a good starting point given its central position in the field. Smith labels DI as ‘types’ and provide four conceptual groups: popular assemblies, mini publics, direct legislation
and e-democracy (Smith, 2009). In their joint edited book ‘Participatory Democratic Innovations in Europe’, Geissel and Joas (2013) categorises the contributions from the following typology: cooperative governance, deliberative processes, direct democratic procedures and e-democracy. A third attempt could be found in Michels (2011) whom categorizes DIs into: referendums, participatory policy making, deliberative surveys, and deliberative forums (Michels 2011, p. 280). While all these examples of typologies agree about the core values of DIs, they differ in how to conceptualize DIs. In their review, Elstub and Escobar concludes that “all in all, there were few explicit typologies and there is not yet a widely used typology. There doesn’t seem to be disagreement in terms of what should be considered a democratic innovation; the disagreement lies in how to conceptually divide them up.” (Elstub & Escobar, 2017, p. 5).

Since this thesis focuses on a particular set of DIs, the following presentation and discussion will concentrate on: citizens assemblies, participatory budgeting, crowdsourced policy-making, and e-petitioning, as these particular designs are all either directly or indirectly studied in this thesis. I will then continue in 1.2.5. to discuss prior research in relation to these DIs.

1.2.4.1 Citizen assemblies
Citizen assemblies is a specific type of mini-public. Mini publics ‘refers to forums, usually organised by policy-makers, where citizens representing different viewpoints are gathered together to deliberate on a particular issue in small-N groups’ (Grönlund, Bächtiger & Setälä, 2014, p. 1). This should not be seen as an encompassing definition; on the contrary, the field provides a range of definitions that can be put on a continuum from ‘restrictive’ to ‘expansive’ (Ryan & Smith, 2014). Despite the differences in definitional scope, the core of mini-publics is that they target specific issues, usually provide some form of sequential structure with an information-deliberative-voting phase and can span over time from one day to half a year (Lang 2007; Article II).

The two most common forms are deliberative polls (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005) and citizens’ assemblies (Parkinson, 2006; Lang 2007; Warren & Pearse, 2008). Mini-public are based on two central arguments: equality and representation. The fundamental idea with mini-publics is, through random sampling and stratified random sampling, to reduce the participatory biases in politics, and create a venue in which lay citizens have time and resources to delve into a specific policy-issue under structured deliberative and deliberative forms. Deliberative polls have been empirically studied for
two decades, and after deliberative poll event is completed the results could be interpreted as the ‘opinion of the lay-citizens’ when they are given time and resources to really familiarise themselves with the policy-issue at hand. Deliberative polls should therefore be seen as a contrasting traditional poll on policy-issues that only ask citizens to have an opinion on policy-issues off the ‘top of their heads’ (Fishkin, 2009).

Citizens’ assemblies are most often focused on a specific topic. Between the years 2004 and 2007, for example, the governments in the Canadian provinces British Columbia and Ontario, alongside the central government of the Netherlands created and pursued with citizens’ assemblies on electoral reform to redesign their electoral system (Hayward, 2013). Citizens’ assemblies are founded upon the idea of mini-publics and participants and elected in random samples from the entire population. Since these events, just as deliberative polls, are expensive and demand of lot of resources, they are also rather rare and up today seldom used in real political contexts.

1.2.4.2 Participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) refers to institutions that involve ordinary citizens in having a ‘direct say in public budgets that impact them’ (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014, p. 30). The aim with PB is thus to provide an arena in which citizens decides over the allocation of public expenditures. It is usually a given sum of money that is to be allocated and not the whole municipal or regional budget.

The origins of PB is found in Brazil and the Workers Party in the 1980’s. Wampler (2012) argues that the “founding principles” for PB are “voice, vote, oversight, social justice” (Wampler, 2012, p. 2). The central idea is thus that the citizens should actively participate in the decisions about the budget, but also vote and thereby have an actual decision-making role when taking the budget.

The design of PB differs depending on political context and choices. Two common features, however, is that the process in most cases is open to anyone in the given political unit, i.e. self-selection of participants, and also that it is similar to a regular budget cycle that spans over one year. PB is mostly applied in local settings. It is now spread around the world and is reported to be applied in 1,500 political units (Ganuza & Baiocchi, 2012).

In recent years, there has been attempts to scale up the PB process by taking it online (e.g. Article IV; Coleman & Sampaio, 2017). Since online processes can involve larger numbers of participants, the central idea with
electronic participatory budgeting (e-PB) is to lower the barriers for political participation.

1.2.4.3 Crowdsourced policy-making
Crowdsourced policy-making is a novel online democratic innovation that in recent years has become rather common (Aitamurto, 2012). It can be described as online space in which governments invite citizens to provide ideas and opinions about a specific problem. The idea is to shift the focus from experts and essentially capture the ‘wisdom of the crowd’ (Brabham, 2008) and tap into the ‘collective wisdom’ (Landemore & Elster, 2012) of the citizenry.

As the use of ICTs in political processes is mainstream in the current political landscape and social media is a well-developed channel for political communication, a question arises about the line of demarcation between a discussion in social media and a crowdsourcing policy-process. The answer is that a crowdsourced policy-process is by definition connected to the formal policy-making process. A discussion on social media or online forum could, hypothetically, have an effect on a policy-making process, but it is not guaranteed by the formal political institution to have that. A crowdsourced policy-process is in some form sanctioned and formally connected to the formal institutions.

1.2.4.4 E-petitioning
E-petitions are one of the most common DIs to be implemented in governments around the world. As Wright (2012) notices, e-petitions are “one of the most prominent and widely used e-democracy tools” (Wright, 2012, p. 453), and it exists in one form or another in almost all European countries (Böhle & Reihm, 2013). The central idea with e-petitions is to, via self-selection, invite citizens to participate by allowing them to create policy proposals and collect signatures for these at an official government website.

Petitions can also be seen a tool or a channel for subordinates to demand a favour or make a claim. Petitions date back to Egyptian building workers in pharaonic times (van Voss, 2001), but what is innovative about e-petitions is that they are available for all citizens once posted online, that it is possible to add features (such as a discussion forum or space for briefing material) to the petition system, and that they are formally connected to the political system. Such differences show that e-petitions are:
‘not just a technical innovation to make a petition system more user–friendly by adding a submission channel. The important point is that the petition process goes public and may actively involve citizens.’ (Böhle & Riehm, 2013, p. 4).

Due to design, e-petition platforms have various features but it common to have a numerical threshold, like for example that if a petition collects 100 signatures it must be processed by the local government or the like. Since signing petitions in general, i.e. not just e-petitions, has become one of the most common forms of citizen participation in recent years (Hansard Society, 2012), this DI holds a great promise in increasing citizen participation in formal politics.

1.2.5 Prior research on democratic innovations
The empirical research on DIs are mainly founded on two strands of research, deriving from two normative ideals: participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. While the empirical research on the former dates back to the 1960s (Arnstein, 1969) and is characterised by empirical field studies on small scale democratic entities (Pateman, 1970; Olsson & Montin, 1999), the latter can be dated to the early 1990s (Fishkin, 1991; Price & Cappaella, 2002) and is characterised by research on deliberative or democratic quality, the design of deliberative institutions, and individual outcomes in controlled environments (Article I; Grönlund et. al., 2010; Fishkin & Luskin, 2005). The analytical and evaluation frameworks founded on these traditions are therefore highly normative. While deliberative democrats evaluate the deliberative aspects of both formal and informal institutions, participatory democrats mainly evaluate values such as policy impact, and the inclusion and equality among participants.

One of the most cited and used frameworks for evaluating participatory processes is by Rowe and Frewer (2000), which focuses on a mix of democratic values and process values (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Rowe and Frewer divide their evaluation framework into two categories: acceptance criteria and process criteria. The acceptance criteria are essentially democratic values, so when applying this evaluation framework, researchers should evaluate: a) the representativeness of participants; b) the independence of the participants; c) their early involvement in the policy-making process; d) the influence on final policy; and e) the transparency of the process to the public. The process criteria direct researchers to study: f) resource accessibility; g) task definition; h) structured decision making; and i) cost-effectiveness (Rowe & Frewer, 2000, pp. 12-17). The central focus with this framework
is thus to evaluate how the process or institution meets democratic and process values that are most often drawn from theoretical literature and practitioners’ perceived problems.

The deliberative strand places the focus on deliberative quality. These analytical and evaluative frameworks guide studies to focus on whether deliberation exists or not and, if it does, what kind of quality of deliberation there is. To research these questions, scholars have conducted studies in non-institutional, institutional and experimental settings by analysing the quality of discussion though a coding scheme based on normative deliberative theory (Article I). These analytical frameworks are often tied to the Habermasian ideal of deliberation. Lincoln Dahlberg’s (2001) contribution can function as a good example on the criteria that researchers focuses on: a) exchange and critique of reasoned moral-practical validity claims; b) reflexivity; c) ideal role taking; d) sincerity; e) discursive inclusion; and f) equality and autonomy from state and economic power (Dahlberg, 2001, p. 623).¹

The literature review undertaken for this thesis shows that almost half (46%) of the studies on online deliberation take this approach, while about a 23% focus on how deliberation influences the decision and policy-making process (Article I).

The field of DI research encompasses both of these strands of research, and borrows and blends features from these two ideals and traditions. One of the most central sub-fields in DI research is that on individual gains in semi-controlled or experimental settings. The main idea with this approach is to test the most central arguments about deliberative and participatory theory and DI in ideal environments. Most common are studies on knowledge gains, opinion change, and the quality of deliberation among participants. As we will see below, the bulk of research has so far produced important results that supports many of the claims made in the normative literature.

One such claim in deliberative theory is that if citizens are given ideal conditions (time, information material and help by professional moderators) they will gain political information and change their opinions. When Fishkin and Luskin (2005) concluded the results from deliberative polls conducted from the late 1990s to 2004, they verified that citizens do change their opinions and gain political knowledge from participating in deliberative polls. When it comes to opinion change, Fishkin and Luskin state that:

¹ For other examples see also: Graham & Witschge, 2003; Jansen & Kies, 2005; Papacharissi, 2004; Steenbergen et al., 2003; Wright & Street, 2007
‘there is usually some statistically significant net change [in opinions, and that] well more than half of the policy attitude items we have posed have shown statistically significant net change, as have a still larger fraction of the much smaller number questions about vote intention.’ (Fishkin and Luskin, 2005, p. 290).

On the claim that whether or not participants do gain information, Fishkin and Luskin state that ‘the results show impressive information gains [with] Mean gains of around 10% are extremely common’ (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005, p. 291). The result that citizens do gain knowledge as an effect of participating in DIs has later been found in empirical studies of various forms of DIs (Lang, 2007; Fiket & Memoli, 2013; Putini, 2013; Talpin & Wojsik, 2010; Grönlund et. al., 2009).

While the experimental approach is beneficial when researching how participation in DIs impact individual citizens, it is less beneficial when it comes to researching how citizens’ participation in DIs affects the political system. Two main problems with the experimental approach are that it is stripped from the boundaries, complexity and limitations of real world politics, and that it focuses mainly on micro settings. Experimental settings with moderators, briefing materials and time for reflection might give a hint that various theoretical claims are valid, yet it does not prove that it would produce the same results in a real political setting without moderators, briefing materials, with a scarcity of time to reflect and with real political issues at the table. It is therefore problematic to transform results from experimental studies and to understand what role DIs can have, and how citizens’ participation in DIs affect the political system.

In the ongoing debate, many scholars agree that much of the prior research has focused too much on individual outcomes and internal process outcomes, and not enough on the possible effect of DIs on the political system. The main conclusion of the literature on online deliberation included in this thesis (Article I) that, ‘more attention is paid on deliberation per se, rather than the political and democratic consequences of deliberation’ (Article I, p. 11), is echoed by Pogrebinschi and Ryan as they state that:

‘[w]ith few exceptions, studies on democratic innovations focus on outcomes internal to the procedure and participants, and not on policy responsiveness.’ (Pogrebinschi & Ryan, 2017, p. 3).

The results of Article I are also discussed and verified in the recently published *The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy* in which Strandberg and Grönlund (2018) examines the current state of the field of online
deliberation. In their overview they categorize the field according to the ‘arenas’ (non-institutional, institutional and experimental) as suggested by Article I, and conclude that in relation to the outcomes of online deliberation:

"there is still a general dearth of studies or experiments in which online deliberation has been linked to societal decision-making" (Strandberg & Grönlund, 2018, p. 273).

Coleman and Sampaio (2017) reach the same conclusion as they argue that while DIs:

‘might create conditions for more sophisticated modes of deliberation and preference formation, there is scarce evidence of such exercises having had a significant influence on the shaping of policy outcomes.’ (Coleman & Sampaio, 2017, p. 754).

Bächtiger et al. (2014) summarise this line of reasoning with some wit as they argue that DIs have so far taken the ‘role of academic toys that delight rather than political devices that ‘bite’’ (Bächtiger et al. 2014, p. 226).

As a response to much of the previous research, scholars in the field have started to turn towards a systemic perspective in the analysis of DIs. This turn is, however, mainly theoretical at the moment and debated mostly in rather abstract terms (Jensen, 2014; Kuyper, 2015; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Owen & Smith, 2015; Warren, 2012). As an illustration of the scarcity of empirical research in this new approach, the programme for the ECPR Conference in Prague in September 2016 could stand as an example. Out of a total of twelve panels with the sole focus on DIs, only one was devoted to the systemic impacts of DIs. The description of this only panel is illustrative about the state in the field:

‘… we now know a good deal about how deliberative processes work and in particular their impact on participants individually - the micro impacts, and on participants as a group - the meso impacts. What we don’t know as much about is their impact on the broader democratic system in which they operate - the macro impacts and how these impacts can be operationalised [...] what does impact on representative democracy actually mean? What does impact on the broader community mean?’ (Hess & Thompson, 2016).

One of the reasons we know so little about the systemic impact of DIs might be that there are currently relatively few DIs embedded in real political systems and therefore the data is scarce. John Parkinson addressed this
issue in 2006 when, in particular reference to deliberative DIs, he argued that that:

‘[a]nyone attempting to connect deliberative democratic theory and practice must, however, face up to a serious difficulty: it is hard to ask empirical questions about fully deliberative institutions when such institutions do not exist in the real world’ (Parkinson, 2006, p. 8).

This observation was later echoed by Newton, whom simply stated that evidence about the impact of DI is ‘hard to come by’ (Newton, 2012, p. 13). Another reason might be that researchers and theorists has been caught up in thinking about democratic models instead of democratic systems, as discussed above in relation to Warren’s (2012) critique of contemporary democratic theory.

The spread and implementation of DIs around the world has changed the conditions for researching DIs in real political contexts, and this is also becoming visible in the empirical research. Due to the extended implementation of DIs and the ongoing theoretical discussion in the field, there is now a bourgeoning body of empirical research that ought to be labelled as ‘systemic’. While not all researchers explicitly label their research a part of the ‘systemic turn’, the themes that are explored at the moment are of a systemic character. This branch of empirical research focuses on system support, including issues concerning trust and legitimacy, inclusiveness and policy effect.

Starting with the empirical research on how participation in DIs affect system support, the research is scarce and the findings are mixed. The literature does not, at the moment, suggest that there is a clear-cut answer to the question. Michels and Graaf’s (2010) study, for example, suggests that citizens increased their legitimacy after participating in two local participatory projects in Eindhoven and Groningen in the Netherlands. In their experimental study, Grönlund et al. (2010) found effects on increased legitimacy and argue that:

‘[t]his increase is a result of deliberation, and it supports our theoretical expectation that deliberation makes people more trusting toward representative actors and institutions.’ (Grönlund, et. al., 2010, p. 109).

Similar results were found in experiments in Italy where increased satisfaction with democracy, interpreted as perceived legitimacy, appeared after a deliberative poll in Turin in 2007 (Fiket & Memoli 2013). Christensen et al. (2015), by contrast, found that a real-world crowdsourcing platform in
Finland has not had a positive impact on legitimacy, but still suggests that it has strong potential.

A second systemic issue that has received some attention is how DIs interact with established political institutions and how these are connected to the actual policy-making process. Despite being the *raison d’être* of DIs, the research so far points out that the impact of DIs on policy-making is mixed. Geissel, for example, plainly states that ‘many participatory innovations have had little or even no impact on public policies’ (Geissel, 2012, p. 211). Other studies, however, show the opposite results. In their systemic study of the effect of participatory processes in Spain, Font et al., (2016) found that policy effect differed, but that almost a third (31.3%) of all proposals were fully implemented without major change (Font et al. 2016, p. 18). Michels (2011) showed that a reasonable part of the DIs studied did have a policy effect. Most favourable were referendums, with 93% implementation, followed by participatory policy-making (66%), deliberative forums (38%) and deliberative surveys (33%) (Michels 2011).

A third systemic issue is how DIs impact the institutional framework over time? Returning to the discussion above, we can trace the different values embedded in DIs to different normative ideals and various organisational designs. Due to the design of DIs, it is reasonable to assume that their implementation in a political organisation also introduces certain challenges for the governmental organisation, as the institutional logics embedded in DIs are different from a traditional strict representative logic (Åström, 2004; Åström & Grönlund, 2012; Fountain, 2011). As DIs until recently has been applied ad-hoc or as one-off experiments, it is reasonable to assume that their effect on governmental organisations has been limited. Yet, given the change with the implementation of DIs over longer periods of time, we can ask whether or not DIs actually do affect governmental organisations. When reviewing the field at the moment, the only answer to that question is that we do not know since there, since there are very few empirical studies on this matter.

1.3 The aim of this thesis

The overarching aim of this thesis is to contribute to the emergent empirical scholarship on how DIs influence political systems. By conducting three empirical studies on DIs in three different political contexts and applying a systemic approach, this thesis intends to contribute to the current research gap in the literature. The thesis poses three empirical research questions that is answered in the case studies (Article II; III; IV).
The research questions relate both to traditional and contemporary systemic theory. The first research question concentrates on a central concept in traditional system theory: system support (Easton, 1957; Norris, 2011). The second research question focuses on a question posed in contemporary deliberative systemic theory: the function of DI in the policy-making process (Mansbridge et al., 2012). The third question relates to traditional systemic theory and focuses on institutional change and development over time (Peters, 2012).

This thesis poses the following empirical research questions.

RQ 1: What is the relationship between democratic innovations and system support?

RQ 2: In relation to other political institutions, what specific functions can democratic innovations fulfil in a policy-making process?

RQ 3: When implemented in governmental organisations, how do democratic innovations relate to long-term institutional development?
2. Analytical perspective

Recently, DI researchers have started to move towards a systemic and contextual focus. This move is sometimes referred to as the ‘systemic turn’ and is foremost located in the literature of deliberative democracy (Jensen 2014; Kuyper, 2015), but is also discussed in a wider perspective, in which the theorists suggest the use of the more inclusive concept of ‘democratic systems’ (Owen & Smith, 2015; Warren, 2012). While there are suggestions available on how a systemic analytical framework could look (Dryzek, 2010; Mansbridge et al., 2012) there is currently no unified view on how such a framework are to be designed. Neither is there a unified view on how to empirically study DI from a systemic perspective, which has resulted in few empirical studies applying a systemic approach. This chapter will introduce the systemic perspective and present how it will be applied in this thesis.

2.1 Analytical background

2.1.1 System theory in the social sciences

At the core of system theory is the age-old discussion on the whole and the parts in social and political analysis (Langlois, 1983; Pickel, 2007). Beginning with the semantic understanding of the concept of ‘system’, we can see that it has various meanings in various context. According to the Cambridge Dictionary the first, and most general, definition is that a system is ‘a set of connected things or devices that operate together’ (Cambridge University Press, 2016c). This definition points at one of the major challenges for using the term ‘system’ in social and political analysis: that the language is borrowed from the natural sciences as it often speaks about physical ‘things’ and ‘devices’. The concept of a ‘system’ thus implies that there exists something that can be viewed as, at the most abstract level, a unit that is ordered and that can be analysed as such.

On a more philosophical level, the discussion on system theory is rooted in the debate between the schools of methodological individualism and methodological holism. On the one side, scholars arguing for methodological individualism are aiming to reduce the social world into isolated elements, to understand these elements in detail and from that derive generally applicable laws. On the other side we have scholars arguing for methodological holism, whom are aiming to understand the social world by taking
social and political systems and the relationships in and between these systems as the object of analysis (List & Spiekermann, 2013).

The systemic approach certainly carries historic baggage. One of the earliest protagonists of systemic thinking in the social sciences was the sociologist Talcott Parsons (Parsons, 2005). The framework presented by Parsons is often labelled as *structural functionalism* and essentially departs from the idea that a system is defined as:

‘elements or the relationship between those elements. If an element or a relationship changes, it will influence the system, and for the system to function it is crucial that each element fulfills its functions in the right way’ (Schirmer 2014).²

Parsons’ systemic theory is thus focusing on what is to be considered ‘right’ and ‘necessary’ for a system to function. The main problem with this systemic framework is, according to contemporary theorists, that it is plagued by the moralism of the day, and is therefore seen as obsolete as a framework for analysis today (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993).

Contrary to Parsons’ normative system theory, contemporary system theorists are more interested in the complex structure of social and political systems. One approach that has received attention is the ‘complexity theory’ (Mitchells, 2009) that borrows and blends theories from the natural sciences on as diverse topics as how ants organise themselves in superorganisms to how the immune system functions. The fundamental move in modern systemic theory is the move away from particularism and towards a holistic view. The metaphor of a ‘microscope or telescope, in which we zoom in to analyse individual components or zoom out to see the system as a whole, sums up this shift of approach’ as Paul Cairney (2012 p. 346) argues. According to him:

‘a complex system cannot be explained merely by breaking it down into its component parts because those parts are interdependent: elements interact with each other, share information and combine to produce systemic behaviour.’ (Cairney, 2012, p. 348).

Although this thesis seeks to contribute to a move towards a systemic approach to the study of DIs, it does not intend to contribute to or participate in this grander scientific-philosophical discussion. As the development of an all-inclusive and universal or abstract theory has been considered as unattainable by empirical methods, political scientists have often adopted a

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² This citation is originally in Swedish, my own translation.
limited perspective of ‘systems theory’. What this means is that instead of applying an all-inclusive theory, this thesis will pose system-related research question, and by doing so shed light on the role, functions and effects DIs can have on political systems.

2.1.2 System theory in political science

The study of the interactions between institutions and actors in political systems and how these interactions affect political outcomes is fundamental to political science. Political scientists and political sociologists have analysed political systems with varying frames of references and different goals, both on conceptual and empirically (Easton, 1957; 1965; Almond, 1956). The main bulk of empirical research has focused on particular political systems, such as particular states or international organisations (Easton, 1981) or comparative research that focuses on the structures, functions and outcomes in different political systems (Hague & Harrop, 2001). There are numerous reasons why this is the case, and as Almond (1997) discusses, one of the main reasons is the intellectual trend of rational choice theory that shaped political science during the 1970s and 1980s (Almond, 1997).

As this thesis will apply a limited perspective of systemic theory that will empirically analyse various forms of systemic functions and influence of DIs, I will focus the discussion on political systems on David Easton’s framework that still functions as a foundation for understanding political systems. In his widely spread depiction of a political system, Easton (1957; 1965), argues that:

‘[t]he boundary of a political system is defined by all those actions more or less directly related to the making of binding decisions for a society; every social action that does not partake of this characteristic will be excluded from the system and thereby will automatically be viewed as an external variable in the environment’ (Easton, 1957, p. 385).

Taking a closer look at Figure 1, Easton’s main argument is that society at large (the environment) creates input in forms of demands and support for the political system. These demands and support is then channelled via various political ‘institutions’, and for definitional purposes, Easton conceptualises both groups such as political parties and interest groups, and formal institutions such as the government and parliament as ‘political institutions’ (Easton, 1975, p. 385). The political system then acts on this input and through its workings produces outputs in forms of decisions or policies. The outcomes are then out in the ‘environment’, and are brought back to the
input-side via a ‘feedback loop’. In this way, the outcomes are available for the environment to evaluate and scrutinise, and to create new demands or support for the system.

**Figure 1 - David Easton’s Model of a Political System**

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 From Easton’s 1957 article An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems, p. 384
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This model is, of course, at the highest level of abstraction and is, in Easton’s own words, to be understood as ‘primitive’ (1957, p. 384). Still, it is a great guide to illustrate the broad strokes on how policies and decisions are invoked, handled and executed in a political system. Easton’s system theory departs from the idea that:

‘...there is already implicit the notion that each part of the larger political canvas does not stand alone but is related to each other part; or, to put it positively, that the operation of no one part can be fully understood without reference to the way in which the whole itself operates’ (Easton 1957, p. 383).

So, while studies on particular political phenomena could be of great importance for research, they most often do not elevate the analysis to include how these instances affect the political system. It is the relationship and interaction between the parts in the system and the effect of these relationships
and interactions that is the central interest for a systemic analysis, and not the actors or institutions in themselves.

While the discussion about prior systemic theories and the grand debate about the parts and the whole, this thesis will follow the tradition in empirical political science by taking a limited version of the systemic theory. Therefore, this thesis poses research questions that investigate some of the systemic outcomes the DIs can have when implemented in governmental structures. This distinction for this thesis is thus that it pose questions about systemic outcomes, i.e. takes on a systemic approach, but do not apply a systemic analytical framework to do so. Instead this thesis apply analytical framework from different traditions to be able to analyse the systemic impact of DIs implemented in various political systems. I will use the rest of this chapter to explain this position in length.

2.2 A systemic approach to democratic innovations

As the literature review on online deliberation in this thesis (Article I) and other scholars (Hess & Thompson, 2016; Pogrebinschi & Ryan, 2017) suggest, the field of DIs and its subfields puts emphasis on empirical research on micro-deliberation and participation, and neglects the macro effects of deliberation and participation. One reason for this is that empirical research has been closely connected to theories that puts emphasis on participation and deliberation in micro settings. In recent years the ‘systemic turn’ has provided us with a foundation for discussing the macro effects of participation and deliberation (Mansbridge et. al., 2012; Jensen, 2014; Kuyper, 2015; Owen & Smith, 2015; Warren, 2012). This debate is welcome, but we are still faced with a conceptual and analytical problem: what we mean by a systemic approach in relation to democratic innovations and, how we are to empirically study the systemic impact of DIs. This part of the chapter will discuss the theoretical development of the field of participation and deliberation and how the ‘systemic approach’ can be applied in DI research.

In a sharp interpretation of both deliberative and participatory democratic theory, it could be argued that both traditions are founded on a notion of societal change and development. A deliberative democratic society is not only a society in which some few individual political institutions are deliberative, but one in which citizens act and think in deliberative terms. The same goes with participatory democracy in which citizens are supposed to take more responsibility and engage in both local and global politics (Barber, 2003). In the development of these two literatures, the definition of the
two concepts ‘deliberation’ and ‘participation’ has been frequently discussed over the last three decades (Almond & Verba, 1963; Bohman & Rehg, 1997; Elster, 1998). This discussion has been, and still is, important for both of these fields and the field of DI as it points out the current understanding and interpretation of the concepts. This background is important to acknowledge when discussing the ‘systemic turn’ as the debate is centred at the heart of this conceptual debate.

A difference between a traditional view of deliberation and participation and the theory of deliberative and democratic systems is that political action, political events and politics institutions ought to be analysed from functional perspective, and by doing so complement the value-driven perspective. A value-driven and normative analysis is most often founded on a research question such as whether a political event, action or institutions is in itself ideally deliberative or participatory. A functionality-driven or systemic analysis of a political event, action or institution is perhaps also interested in the research question posed above, but is mainly focused on how the event, action or institution can contribute to macro deliberation and participation in the democratic system. While such an analysis might be less detailed, the scope is greater.

With such a macro-approach, the interpretation of the concept ‘deliberation’ does not necessarily have to focus on the deliberative quality in a given institution or action, but can view the institution or event as being deliberative because it adds new perspectives or new knowledge into the democratic system (Dryzek, 2010; Mansbridge et. al., 2012). The critique of such an interpretation and definition of ‘deliberation’ is that if everything can be defined as ‘deliberation’, then what are we really studying? (Bächtiger et. al., 2010). John Parkinson delivers a great response to this critique when he argues that:

‘[a] system with a division of labour is deliberative to the extent that it increases the pool of perspectives, claims, narratives, and reasons available to decision-makers, and whether those perspectives are generated deliberately or not is neither here nor there so long as the decision-makers processes themselves are deliberative’ (Parkinson, 2012, p. 154).
What this actually suggests is a structure close to the ‘two-track model’ of deliberation suggested by Habermas (1997), but still with more a closer connection between the citizens and the decision-makers.

The current debate on how we should understand a systemic approach in DI research could be divided into two strands: deliberative systemic theorists, and democratic system theorists. The former (Dryzek 2009; Kuyper, 2015; Mansbridge et al., 2012) argue that different institutions, forums and arenas in the political system can provide different deliberative functions such as inclusiveness, fairness, knowledge and opportunities to the system. ‘The core questions’ for the deliberative systemic approach, Dryzek (2015) argues, ‘concern the deliberative qualities of larger-scale systems of governance, to which particular forums might contribute’ (p. 750), and he continues by stating that the key matter in judging if a forum has a systemic impact is its connection to the policy- and decision-process (ibid. p. 751). This position is familiar to traditional deliberative theory and is mainly an upscaling of already established values. The key change in the systemic turn, however, is that systemic theorists also include non-deliberative institutions and actions in their analysis (Dryzek, 2010; Mansbridge et al., 2012). From this perspective, non-deliberative actions include protests but also hate speech, as these kinds of activities contribute to meta-deliberation in a political system. The fundamental critique in the field against this position is that it contributes to what Neblo (2007) labels as concept stretching, i.e. that the lack of clear conceptual boundaries and the inclusion of non-deliberative features in the analysis tend to stretch the concept of deliberative democracy to include too much (Smith, 2016; Owen & Smith 2015).

On the other side of the debate, the democratic systems theorists argue that, instead of viewing deliberation as the most important feature and value of democracy, systemic theorists ought to move beyond thinking about ‘models’ and view systems as encompassing various democratic values (Owen & Smith, 2015; Warren, 2012). ‘The systemic question’ Owen and Smith (2015, p. 232) argue, ‘thus becomes one of the role of deliberation within democratic systems, rather than whether democratic systems are deliberative in nature’. By turning the focus away from specific values as the

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3 The ‘two-track model’ suggests that society is divided into two separable realms: the ‘public sphere’ and the ‘political institutions’. In the public sphere, the will-formation of the public is shaped in ‘a wild complex that resists organisation as a whole’ (Habermas, 1997, p. 307). The political institutions are where decision-makers weigh the wills articulated in the public sphere and make legitimate decisions (ibid. p. 304-308)
unit of analysis, we can focus on problems to which ‘deliberation, or any other means, mechanism, device, or institution, could be the answer.’ (Warren 2012, p. 5). The main distinction between the two approaches is that the deliberative systemic approach asks if the system is deliberative, while the democratic systemic approach asks whether it includes deliberative, participatory or aggregative features, and if so, what democratic functions they provide to the system.

The current theoretical debate poses a challenge for empirical researchers in transposing these theoretical frameworks to analytical frameworks, and empirically studying the systemic effect of DIs. There are several analytical frameworks that focus on various parts that could be argued take a systemic approach (Geissel, 2013; Rowe & Frewer, 2004; Smith, 2009) and which are based on some of the central claims about the possible effect of DIs. Smith (2009, p. 12-26) lists four dimensions that ought to be evaluated when analysing the design of DI: inclusiveness, popular control, considered judgement, and transparency. Smith labels these as ‘democratic goods’ and each category holds a number of questions. ‘Inclusiveness’, includes both equality in representation of groups and citizens and equality of voice in these processes. ‘Popular control’ concerns how DIs ought to be judged to the extent they increase the influence of citizens in the decision-making process. ‘Considered judgment’ concerns how DIs are structured to realise a ‘enlarged mentality’ (p. 24) for the citizens. Lastly ‘transparency’ concerns how the process is open for the public to scrutinise or not (Smith, 2009). In the framework developed by Brigitte Geissel (2012), four main categories are: input-legitimacy, democratic process, effectiveness, and civic education (p. 170). Three of these could be viewed as systemic categories: ‘democratic process’ concerns the quality of deliberation; ‘input-legitimacy’ concerns inclusive participation and perceived legitimacy; and ‘effectiveness’ concerns identifying and reaching collective goals. The fourth – ‘civic education’ – concerns gains in skills and knowledge, and can be viewed as being on the individual level.

These two frameworks point towards a systemic analysis of DIs, but both are rather vague on how to actually empirically study these systemic effects. This situation creates somewhat of a vicious circle, in which only few researchers are actually taking an empirical approach to DIs in real political settings, and those who are conducting empirical research rarely use the analytical frameworks that are being developed (e.g. Elstub & Escobar, 2017). Instead, as we saw in Chapter 1, empirical scholars interested in systemic issues often focus on one or a few of the central claims in the DI-literature.
(Aitamurto & Landemore, 2016; Carman, 2010; Christensen et. al., 2015; Lindner & Rheim, 2009; Michels & Graaf, 2010; Putini, 2013).

2.3 Applying a systemic approach in this thesis

In this thesis, I view a systemic approach to DI as a shift in research perspective rather than a specific analytical framework. The analytical frameworks applied in this thesis draws on three theoretical branches in political science and is chosen in accordance to the research questions, and the frameworks are thus interconnected as they target systemic issues. The rationale behind this is that researchers interested in studying the effect of DIs on political systems can benefit from consulting established traditions and analytical frameworks, especially since there currently are few analytical frameworks available for empirical analysis and no commonly agreed upon framework (Article 1; Elstub & Escobar, 2017).

This thesis applies a systemic approach by applying three different analytical frameworks from three different fields in political science. The first study is conducted by applying and testing the analytical framework for deliberative systems developed by Mansbridge et al. (2012). The second is conducted by connecting theories on political system support to political participation in DIs. The third is conducted by connecting an analytical framework from institutional logics to the DI literature. This section will in short present the three theoretical and analytical frameworks.

2.3.1 The function of democratic innovations in the policy-making process

One of the central arguments for the systemic approach is that researchers are to analyse the parts in relationship to the whole, rather than the parts in isolation. With such an approach, it is of great interest to ask what function democratic innovations can have in a policy-making process in relation to already existing political institutions. To be able to answer this empirical question we need to use an analytical framework that allows us to pinpoint the role of DIs in a political system and the policy-making process. One of the central frameworks that urges researchers to take this approach is the deliberative systems framework developed by Mansbridge et al. (2012), with its focus on democratic functions.

Article II is an early attempt to operationalise the deliberative system framework developed by Mansbridge et al. (2012) and apply it in empirical research. This deliberative systems framework puts emphasis on two related aspects: the interrelations between political institutions, and the deliberative
functions each can fill and how they complement each other in a political system. The central idea is that institutions and practices that previously have been treated as non-deliberative from another perspective can carry deliberative functions. One of the most discussed examples (Owen & Smith, 2015; Smith, 2016) is that extreme speech-acts can be positive for a deliberative system as it serves the function of bringing in more discourses into the public debate.

The framework focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of three deliberative functions: epistemic, ethical and democratic. In their description, Mansbridge et al. (2012) open up many interpretations of how to operationalise the framework. The epistemic function of a deliberative system, Mansbridge et al. (2012) argues, is to ‘produce preferences, opinions, and decisions that are appropriately informed by facts and logic’ (p. 11). This implies that even if some instances in a system are considered to be non-deliberative, the system as a whole can be evaluated as having an epistemic function. The ethical function of a deliberative system concerns the aspect of how the system promotes mutual respect among citizens (Mansbridge et al., 2012, p. 11). This is important, as respect for other citizens and non-coercion and non-domination is central in deliberative and participatory theory. Finally, the democratic function of a deliberative system is viewed as the system promoting an equal, inclusive political process in which multiple and plural voices, interests, concerns and claims are acknowledged and taken seriously (Mansbridge et al., 2012, p. 12). The idea that DIs ought to engage citizens and groups of citizens that currently do not participate in the political process is central for the systemic approach.

When beginning to operationalise the framework, the central idea was to make it as broad as possible, so that it could be used to study other cases of DI, but at the same time very specific to avoid the problems of the original text. The operationalisation therefore came to be founded on two major pillars: (1) to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each institution or arena (public sphere, DI, representative institutions) in relation to each function (epistemic, ethical, democratic) that is supposed to be found in the system; and (2) to examine in what way the institutions complement each other in systemic manner by weighing the strengths and weaknesses.
2.3.2 Democratic innovations and system support

Political support is, as discussed above, a central question for political system theorists (Easton, 1957; Norris, 2011; Dalton, 2008). A central assumption, and in many cases hope, among politicians and civil servants that hosts DIs is that the citizens participating in them will increase their support for the political system (e.g. Carman, 2014; John, 2009; OECD, 2001; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007). The relationship between citizens’ participation in DI and changes in citizens’ support for the political system is therefore a central research question, yet it has received little empirical attention (Christensen et. al., 2015; Geissel, 2013). In fact, empirical scholars in the field argues that “research on the impact of participation on trust is almost nonexistent” (Gabriel, 2017, p. 229). One of the mayor challenges in studying this relationship lies in how to measure changes in how citizens trust the political system, and how to interpret these changes systematically.

While the main argument in this thesis is that the systemic approach turns the focus away from individual citizens and towards political systems, it is difficult to measure the effect of DI on citizens’ support for the political system without studying the attitudes of participating citizens, as to be able to study the effect of participation in DIs on system support, we need to be able to see the systemic effects.

Theoretical and empirical studies on political trust holds that citizens who are satisfied with the political systems are more trusting in political institutions. The assumption has also been that political outcomes, rather than the processes leading up to those outcomes, are important for citizens to build trust in political institutions (Allen & Birch, 2015). Given the negative development of trust in political institutions and the changing patterns of political participation, DIs are supposed to contribute to ‘curing the democratic malaise’ (Newton, 2012) by including groups of citizens that are currently not participating, and also increase citizens’ trust in the political system (Carman, 2014; John, 2009; OECD, 2001; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007).

To study these assumptions empirically there is a point to combining them and see how DIs can function as bringing disenchanted citizens back in to the political system, and how citizens’ pre-dispositions change the effect of participation on trust. To be able to interpret the findings from our empirical study in systemic terms, we conduct this study in three steps. The first step is to describe the predispositions of the participants by categorising them into four citizens’ types: ideal citizens, stealth citizens, critical citizens,
and disenchanted citizens. This is important, since it provides us with information about satisfaction with democracy and prior political participation. The second step is to examine how citizens evaluate the process. This step is crucial to understanding how generally satisfied and dissatisfied citizens compare in evaluating the process. The third step is to test if the predispositions and process satisfaction can explain changes in trust towards political institutions.

By connecting the theories and analytical strategies from the research on political trust and participation in DI, and analysing these results from a systemic perspective, we are able to find two possible sorts of systemic effect. The first can be found in the analysis of who participates. This is important since one of the central assumptions that needs empirical scrutiny is whether or not DI attracts new groups of citizens or not. The second is the answer to the major question, if participation in DI can generate trust in the political system.

2.3.3 Democratic innovations and long-term institutional development

Institutional change and institutional development are among the most traditional areas of political system theory. As Almond (1956) argues, scholars interested in political systems are interested in political action, and “is concerned with norms and institutions in so far as they affect behavior” (Almond, 1956, p. 393). Political institutions can change rapidly in revolutions, but also gradually as new practices are introduced over time (Peters, 2012). To understand if, and if so how, DIs is related to long-term institutional change is therefore of great importance.

Only five years ago DIs were almost exclusively performed as experiments or ad hoc processes (Parkinson, 2006). Coleman and Sampaio (2017) also acknowledge this, and argue that:

‘[while] most of these democratic innovations have an ephemeral existence, adopted typically as pilot studies, later to be abandoned in favour of politics as usual […] [d]emocratic politics depends on predictable mechanisms rather than exceptional bursts of innovation’ (Coleman & Sampaio, 2017, p. 755).

The current development shows that more and more DIs are being implemented in local and national governments around the world, and thus embedded in the representative democratic system. Still, there are only few empirical studies that address these issues.
One central research question that are to be raised therefore concerns how DIs relate to the institutional development of governmental organisations when embedded in the representative institutional framework? As the majority of DIs are founded on a participatory logic that values engagement and formal citizen participation, there is an implied clash between two institutional logics. While it can be assumed that experiments such as deliberative polls and ad hoc applied participatory process have little or no effect on the institutional logic as they are not embedded into the institutional framework, and can likewise be assumed that DIs that are implemented over longer periods of time and embedded into the political system do affect the institutional frameworks.

The study of institutional change and institutional development is, as presented above, a strong tradition in institutional theory. To turn to ‘institutional theory’ for applicable analytical frameworks is not a straightforward process, as it is divided into at least four schools with different emphases and focuses (Peters, 2012). To choose which institutionalist direction to take, it is important to weigh the theoretical approach to citizens’ and institutional behaviour with the characteristics of the case that will be studied.

The case of implementing DIs in Reykjavik (Article IV) has three distinct features that guide which direction in institutional theory to take. First of all, there is an ongoing process and therefore needs to be studied in its current stage and analysed from these circumstances. Secondly, the political context of Reykjavik is the aftermath of a political crisis. Thirdly, the DIs have been operating for five years, and can therefore be viewed as institutionalised and embedded in the political system.

These three features provide a range of possible institutional analyses. One of the most central theoretical tools for analysing political changes in relation to political crisis is punctuated equilibrium theory (PET) (Baumgartner et al., 2014; John & Bevan, 2012). The main problem with applying PET in the case of Reykjavik is that one equilibrium is assumed to be replaced by a new one (a new dominant form of institutional logic) after a political crisis (Peters, 2012). The problem with such an approach is that it does not provide any structure for analysing or understanding what happens between these two equilibriums. There are more recently developed perspectives that challenge the idea of the creation of new equilibriums, and assert that organisations and systems can live with multiple and competing institutional logic while remaining in a perpetual state of flux (Aagaard, 2016; van Gestel & Hillebrand, 2011). This new perspective is captured by the framework conceptualised as institutional logics.
Institutional logics is a sub-field in institutionalism. The core assumption is that organisations (which can be a society as a whole or a single organisation) constitute institutions that incorporate competing institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). An example of how grand institutional logic competes in society can be found in Alford and Friedland’s 1985 book, in which they describe ‘capitalism, state bureaucracy and political democracy as three contending institutional orders which have different practices and beliefs that shape how individuals engage political struggles’ (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 101). Taking institutional logics down to the level of individual governmental organisations, the contending institutional logics could instead be a Weberian-style bureaucratic tradition, new participatory ideals among civil servants, and a new public management way of taking care of day-to-day business.

In their analytical framework founded on the theory of institutional logics, Van Gestel and Hillebrand (2011) outline three types of institutional outcomes due to competing institutional logics. The first is closely related to the old PET analysis and simply states that after a short period of struggle between the two competing logics, a period of stability occurs in which ‘the dominant logic is unquestioned’ (van Gestel & Hillebrand, 2011, p. 233). The second outcome is that multiple forms of logic co-exist in some way. These challenges punctuated equilibrium theory by suggesting that there is no guarantee that a new stable equilibrium is created, but that competing institutional logics can co-exist in the organisation for longer periods of time. The third is that the organisation is characterised by ongoing change and is constantly in flux. Thus the organisation is:

‘characterised by constant struggles between competing logics and, even though a settlement may be reached, other logics remain in the background, to be revived whenever the opportunity arises’ (ibid, p. 246).

Rather than being dominated by one form of institutional logic, or torn between two co-existing ones, this outcome leaves the possibility that the organisation will remain in a vulnerable position due to institutional instability. By applying this framework, we can understand if, and if so how, DIs can affect the political system by challenging the dominant representative institutional logic.
2.4 Locating this thesis in the debate

As this thesis is an early attempt to apply a systemic approach to the study of DI, it is important to place it in the ongoing debate about the systemic approach. The field is currently divided into deliberative systems and democratic systems approaches, with the central point in the discussion being whether or not to place deliberation as the centre value. As this thesis applies three analytical frameworks, of which one is an outspoken deliberative systems’ approach it is appropriate to summarise this chapter with a discussion on where to place the overall approach of this thesis.

As described above, this thesis is problem-driven and take its departure in three system-oriented research questions. The central reason for the first research question is a combination of my own understanding of the research field, and a real change in the political world coincided during the work with this thesis. When I was working on the finishing of Article I (in late 2012), the results of that study showed the need for a move towards actual existing political institutions, and the theoretical framework of deliberative systems (Mansbridge et al. 2012) were drafted in its existing form. At the same time, the ECA took form in Estonia. This political real-time development coped with the findings of Article I and the emerging of the deliberative system approach called for the writing of Article II, as the unfolding of the ECA turned out to be a unique case for conducting a systemic analysis of how DIs can affect the political system. The choice of the deliberative system approach is thus a combination of earlier research, theoretical development in the field and a problem-driven approach to analyse an ongoing political event.

As a result of Article II, I understood that the deliberative system approach developed by Mansbridge et al. (2012) was successfully applied in a case such as the ECA, but that it was difficult to find a case that matched it. The conceptual debate about deliberative and democratic systems took form and, I would argue rightly, suggested that there is essentially no need to narrow the discussion down to deliberative systems; it is much more useful to discuss the current development in terms of democratic systems (Warren, 2012). By addressing this discussion, other systemic values such as trust could enter the analysis and complement the parts of the framework that Mansbridge et al. (2012) did not put any specific focus on.

As the opportunity to study the development with e-petitioning platform in Malmö arose, a likewise great opportunity to further explore how to apply the systemic approach in DI research also arose. As this thesis is problem-driven, the most interesting feature with the case of Malmö was that
the e-petitioning system had been operating for about five years, which is unique in a Swedish context. The system was thus not a temporary experiment, but more of an embedded political institution. This setting opened up for the possibility to empirically analyse the relationship between participation in DIs and its impact on political trust. What this meant in practice was that we got the opportunity to study a DI from a systemic perspective that expended the scope from Mansbridge et al. (2012), and addressed the ideas argued for by Warren (2012) that we are to study the democratic functions of DIs. This theoretical move made the thesis move from a deliberative system approach towards a democratic system approach.

Parallel to the work with Article III, the work with Article IV began. The case of DIs in Reykjavik was somewhat similar to the case of Malmö, but there was one crucial difference: the way in which the DIs were implemented. One of the core questions in political science is that of institutional design, and this is of great relevance when it comes to the implementation of DIs, as they are embedded in already existing governmental organisations. By taking an additional step away from the deliberative system approach by simply not focusing on the deliberative qualities at all, Article IV instead focused on what functions and impact DIs could have on governmental organisations.

This thesis makes a case for a democratic system approach, but at same time contributes to both strands of the debate by empirically applying the deliberative system approach in one of the studies. So far, the deliberative systems approach has mostly rendered a theoretical debate that focuses on the concept of deliberation and the problems that arise from that (Kuyper, 2015; Owen & Smith, 2015; Smith, 2016). To be able to build a coherent field of research that works in a more cumulative way, it might be better to turn to democratic systems approach. Instead of a single deliberation as a central concept that most probably only will confuse the debate about what deliberation means, there might be a point in focusing on democratic functions and how these functions can be related and influenced by DIs.
3. Research design

As this thesis is a part of bourgeoning field of research and studies novel political institutions implemented in existing political systems, there are strong reasons to choose cases that can be illuminating of how DIs influence political systems and adjust choices of method and gathering of data to these cases. This thesis is a compilation of four empirical studies applying a multi-method and multi-data approach, mainly drawing on data collected by the author, either alone or in collaboration with my research colleges. Other data is acknowledged where appropriate. The research design is problem-driven, and adjusts cases, methods and the data gathered to the research question posed, and not the other way around. Here I concur with Flyvbjerg (2006)\(^4\), who argues that:

> ‘good social science is problem driven and not methodology driven in the sense that it employs those methods that for a given problematic, best help answer the research questions at hand’ (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 242).

This chapter consists of three parts. First, the overall analytical strategy of case study research for this thesis will be presented and discussed. Second, the cases will be discussed in depth with focus on choices, methods and the data collected. Third, ethical considerations and the handling of the collected data will be presented.

3.1 Analytical strategy: case study research

This thesis applies an analytical strategy of case study research. As all research designs have their relative strengths and limitations, the merit of each research design is dependent on how well it suits the research problem and the research question at hand (Reis, 2009). The choice of case study research as an analytical strategy for this thesis was thus carefully chosen as each case provided an opportunity to study specific empirical questions raised in the field of DI.

Case studies have different connotations in different strands of the scientific community (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991; Yin, 2013). A common critique of single case studies is that they cannot produce general knowledge

\(^4\) The choice of citing Bent Flyvbjerg for describing my position for conducting problem-driven empirical research should not be understood as an underlying epistemological position for this thesis. While Flyvbjerg elsewhere argues for a ‘phronesis’ approach to social science (e.g. 2001), this quotation revolves the issue of problem-vs. methodological-driven research in social sciences.
as they, by definition, only include one case. Within political science, there has long been a common critique that a study that ‘focuses its attention on a single example of a broader phenomenon is apt to be described as a “mere” case study’. (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). The design of the case study, the argument goes, can therefore not be strictly compared with other cases and due to its limited scope will not produce generalisable results as large sample studies can. The debate about generalisability is often set between statistical generalisation and analytical generalisation, and I will use this section to discuss these two forms of generalisation and conclude with an argument for analytical generalisation.

Statistical generalisation is mainly used in large N-studies that seek to explain patterns that represent a larger group than the group that is studied. Lindsay (2012) highlights that it is important that the proportion of participants in the sample reflects the proportion of some phenomenon occurring in the population,

“[as] [t]he wider population must be properly defined prior to selecting a sample. Even when a sample is selected using random sampling methods, the ability to produce a representative sample depends on the adequacy of the sampling frame and any bias is from the selected sample units. (2012, p. 2)

Statistical generalization is therefore a preferred type of generalisation when studying larger populations that share a certain set of characteristics, and the results from such studies often have high external validity.

Analytical generalisation is mainly used in small N-studies and aims to contribute to our scientific progress by empirically studying analytical and theoretical concepts and frameworks when applied in real or experimental contexts. Yin (2013) argues that analytical generalization can focus on corroborating, modifying, rejecting or otherwise advancing the theoretical concepts that are outlined in the design of the case study or provide new concepts that arise upon the completion of the case study. The most important point with analytical generalization is that the generalization will be at a higher conceptual level than the particular case (Yin, 2013). Since case studies aim to explore phenomena that are bound to a certain context, it is difficult to generalise findings in small samples to represent larger groups. Given the contextual and reality-rooted understanding, studies aiming for analytical generalisation most often have high internal validity but lack high external validity.

Given the differences between statistical and analytical generalisation, it is important to discuss each approach in relation to the research problem
and the research question. To exemplify the difference between statistical and analytical generalisation, let us take an example from political science and compare two fields of study: ‘electoral behaviour’ and ‘democratic innovations’.

In the former field, ‘electoral behaviour’, political scientists have been conducting longitudinal empirical studies on a long-lasting and (rather) stable institution for decades, that is, the field is mature. The object of study is also stable and the population is properly defined, as the sample is ‘citizens in a political community’. Given this background, it makes perfect sense to conduct large N-studies to understand how various groups in society behave when, for instance, voting in national elections. Electoral behaviour is thus a field for which statistical generalisation is well suited.

In the latter field, ‘democratic innovations’, the opposite is true because few researchers have studied the (rather) short-lasting and (rather) unstable institution over relatively brief periods of time. This field is thus immature and it therefore makes perfect sense to conduct in-depth case studies that aim to understand this new phenomenon in context. As Tellis (1997) argues, single case studies are ‘ideal for revelatory cases where an observer may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible’ (Tellis, 1997, p. 3). The field of DI is thus suitable for studies aiming at analytical generalization to take the case to a conceptual higher level than the particular case and by doing so make scientific progress in the field.

In order to achieve analytical generalisation, the strategic selection of cases becomes paramount. Cases are often categorised into five categories: (1) the critical case, (2) the unique case, (3) the typical case, (4) the revelatory case and (5) the longitudinal case (Bryman, 2008, p. 55). The critical case is often the choice when researchers have a well-established theory and the case can facilitate understanding of the central hypothesis set up by the theory. The unique case refers to cases characterised by extraordinary circumstances, providing insights and understanding of novel developments. The representative case is chosen for the opposite reason, as the case is typical of a certain societal phenomenon and can therefore provide vital knowledge to the field of research. The revelatory case is a case that has previously been inaccessible for research and is therefore of interest for the field. Lastly, the longitudinal case is a case with two or more junctures that provides understanding of changes over time (Bryman, 2008). In novel fields of research or fields that are being developed in new directions, the choice of case is crucial as empirical data is scarce. Stake (2000) argues that we
should choose cases that give the best opportunity to learn the most about a case to contribute to theory development.

The cases in this thesis are founded in the discussion above and were chosen to address important theoretical and analytical issues in the DI literature. In one sense, all three cases can be categorized as both ‘unique’ and ‘revelatory’ cases as they represent either novel opportunities to study the specific research question at hand or were chosen for being novel in implementation. The case of the Estonian Citizens’ Assembly process (ECA) is both a unique and a revelatory case, since it provides a unique opportunity to study a real political process with multiple DIs and multiple political actors in the midst of a political crisis. The case of the e-petition platform Malmöinitivet in the city of Malmö in Sweden is also both unique and revelatory in the context of Sweden, since it is the longest-running DI and the study is based on a census survey. Finally, the case of Reykjavik is also both a unique and a revelatory case since the implementation of DIs was the consequence of a deep political crisis and that it therefore presented an excellent opportunity to study the question of institutional change in progress.

3.2 The cases, methods and data

This section will present the cases that are the foundation of this thesis. As this thesis applies multiple methodological approaches and multiple sets of data, the description below will focus on each case study on its own.

3.2.1 Article I

Article I is a co-authored literature review of the field of online deliberation, applying quantitative citation analysis. Citation analysis is not a unified method, but can be conducted in various ways. What researchers try to achieve using citation analysis is to identify the leading edge of research in the field. One of the most common ways of conducting a literature review using citation analysis, is to identify the top-ranking journals in a specific field by using the impact factor of the journals as an indicator, and from those journals retrieving the most cited studies and authors (Pendlebury, 2009). Another way is to use a meta-strategy that uses concepts and key words to establish an overview of the field. As Webster & Watson (2002) argue:
‘[a] complete review covers relevant literature on the topic and is not confined to one research methodology, one set of journals, or one geographic region’ (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xv).

The maturity of the field is crucial to the choice of method. More mature fields often carry with them a set of intra-field classics that has been cited frequently over decades, while less matured and rather newly established fields of research are constituted by a large number of publications with few citations, due to the fact that citations are often lagging one or two years from publication.

Since online deliberation is a rather young and not so mature a field, it is as important to find the publications and establish a structure as it is to identify the central contributions in the field. To manage this, the software Publish or Perish\(^5\) and the data base ISI-Web of Knowledge was used to find relevant studies. As online deliberation is not the only concept used in the scientific debate on the subject, the search also included other closely related concepts.\(^6\) As the field is young, the only criterion for a study to be reviewed in a first round was that it had one citation.

Citation analysis does have limitations. One major problem discussed by MacRoberts & MacRoberts (2010) is that the studies that are most cited are not necessarily the same as those that have most influenced research. If we want to know what studies that have been cited, we can turn to the major databases, but ‘if one wants to know who contributes to science and how information is used and moves through the system, then another course is necessary’ (MacRoberts & MacRoberts 2010, p. 7). This critique might be correct, and especially in a multidisciplinary research field such as online deliberation, yet with the lack of prior systematic reviews, a concept-centric review spanning all available journals and over a long period of time is an effective way to establish a valid picture of the state of the research field.

Since a literature review examines prior research, the data used in this study was published scientific articles, books, and reports. The timespan for the retrieved was 1990 to April 2012 and Publish or Perish and the database

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\(^5\) There is a misprint in the published version of Article I (p. 2) suggesting that the name of the software is *Publish and Perish* (which would be an utterly confusing name on a scientific database). The correct name of the software is *Publish or Perish*.

\(^6\) Other concepts included in the search: internet deliberation, e-deliberation, eDe-liberation, web deliberation, digital deliberation, online political deliberation, online deliberation, computer-mediated deliberation, and computer-mediated political discussion.
ISI-Web of Knowledge were used. The total number of items retrieved in the first gathering was 788. All items were analysed using abstracts and keywords as guidance for relevance. From these, a total of 130 were considered to be relevant, and thus selected for further analysis. The criteria for being considered relevant were a specific focus on some aspect of online deliberation, and that the item was cited at least once. The data collected was then analysed with descriptive statistics.

3.2.2 Article II
The most important reason to conduct an empirical study on the Estonian citizens’ assembly (ECA) process was that case provided a unique opportunity to study the application of DI in a real political context from a systemic perspective. The ECA is still, to my knowledge, one of the best examples of an explicit ad hoc policy-making process that includes multiple DIs and has produced actual, and traceable, policy outcomes.

The case study applied a mix of qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) and quantitative methods (descriptive statistics). Since the ECA was a process that lasted over a year and had a large number of stakeholders (NGOs, media, politicians and citizens) it was impossible to capture the larger picture by only applying one method or research strategy and the choice therefore fell to applying a mix of methods.

The central method for the study are interviews. The main reason why the choice fell on semi-structured interview as the foundation of the study is the flexibility in the interview process (Bryman 2008, p. 439). The interview is basically conducted from an interview guide, consisting of some general topics to be covered, but also leaves space to add questions and perspectives as the interview goes along (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This approach suited the research questions well, since the implementation of DIs in Estonia at the time were novel and it was therefore important to be able to adjust the questions and add follow-up questions to the questionnaire as the interview proceeded. The interviews were analysed through qualitative text analysis. As some interviewees wished to be anonymous, they are always referred to according to their institutional or organisational affiliations instead of their names. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed into clean text (rather than verbatim CA-style).

The second qualitative method was the use of focus groups. Focus groups can be used for various purposes in qualitative research, and one of the most central characteristic of a focus group is that it is a selected group of persons, that informally discuss a given topic with a designated moderator.
Focus groups are especially “appropriate for the generation of new ideas formed within a social context” (Breen, 2006 p. 466) and to provide a contextual understanding of a case. The level of recording of data is closely tied to the weight of the focus group data in the study. If focus groups are used as a complement to individual interviews, for example, focus groups can be good to ensure that the study is grounded in the perspectives of the participants and the context of the case (Wibeck, 2010, p. 70). The central reason for conducting these focus groups in this case were to provide a contextual understanding of the development of the ECA process and to provide complementary understanding of the process in relation to the narrative that was provided in the interviews. These focus groups were recorded with notes, and are therefore not directly referred to in the study, but functioned as a backdrop to the general understanding of the case.

A third method that was applied was descriptive statistics. The data were gathered to examine the socio-economic background and prior political participation of participants, and was then compared to a randomised survey at the national level. The data were then analysed in cross-tabulations with significance levels using bootstrapping. The main reason to use descriptive statistics was to provide a deeper understanding of the participants in the ECA. By adding individual data on the participants with the interview data from the central actors in the organisation of the ECA, it was possible to paint a broader picture of the process and its outcomes.

The data was collected from five sources. The first and main source was the interviews. A total nine deep interviews were conducted. The interviews took place in three different environments and all interviews were semi-structured. Six were conducted with key stakeholders in the ECA in Tallinn in September 2013. The interviewees were selected by a snowball method; all held central positions in their organisations, and all organisations were central to the ECA. The interviewees represented: the presidential office, the political parties, the NGOs organising the event, the whistle-blower who ignited the process, and the committee in the parliament which handled the proposals from the ECA. These interviews were spread over two days and took place at each respective interviewee’s office or workplace. One additional interview was conducted online (through Skype) in December 2013. The final two interviews were held during two workshops in 2013 organised in a research project focusing on the development of DIs in Estonia, Iceland and Sweden.
The second source of data was the survey that was sent out to participants in the crowdsourcing part of the ECA. The survey was sent out by the NGO PRAXIS Centre for Policy Studies, that we had the opportunity to influence by adding our own battery of survey questions. The survey was conducted in May 2014. The survey targeted citizens that participated in the crowdsourcing part of the process. The survey was sent online by Praxis Center for Policy Studies to all participants registered on the site (N=2,042) and received 848 answers. The response rate (41.5%) was good. The survey included questions about the ECA process, experiences of political participation, trust in political institutions and satisfaction with democracy; and a number of questions relating to sociodemographic background. This data were collected by the Praxis Centre for Policy Studies with the permission of the respondents. Praxis collected and handled the data in Estonia, and we received a dataset without personal information about the informants. We have, thus, not handled any personal data in this case.

The third source was the European Social Survey (ESS) data that were used for the comparative table. This data was collected by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data and made accessible for public use by the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys (ESS, 2016).

The fourth source were three focus groups focusing on the ECA. The first occasion was a gathering with the project team\(^7\) in Tallinn, Estonia, in 2013. The purpose of this gathering was to discuss the final draft of the joint report (later published as Åström, et. al. 2013a) and the then topical ECA process that took place in Estonia just months before the gathering. This focus group were of great interest for the general understanding of the ECA as it painted a vivid picture of the current events and developments. The session with the focus group lasted for two hours. Much of the discussions and joint work was also published in a peer-reviewed conference paper\(^8\) (Åström, et. al., 2013b). Additional to this, we were specially invited to a workshop with civil society organisations in Tallin in 2013 that aimed at the ECA process. In this occasion, I did not have the role as discussion leader, but was participating in the discussions in the role as a researcher.

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\(^7\) The ‘project team’ refers to the participants in a externally funded project, and is furthered explained and discussed below in section 3.3.

\(^8\) The conference paper titled ‘Crisis, Innovation and e-Participation: Towards a Framework for Comparative Research’, was also awarded as the Outstanding Paper Award for the most interdisciplinary and/or innovative research contribution at the ePart conference in Koblenz, Germany in 2013.
This occasion lasted for three hours and provided a holistic picture of the ECA, as the participants were either direct or indirectly involved in the ECA process.

The fifth source was a survey conducted by Praxis Centre for Policy Studies in Estonia. This data was collected on site in April 2013. The total number of participants was 314, with a response rate of 95% (N=298).

3.2.3 Article III
As it is assumed that DI can help restore trust and increase support for the political system, it is important to find cases that enable us to investigate this claim. To be able to study perceived changes or reinforcements of trust due to participation in DI, two criteria should be taken into consideration: the political culture and context in which the DI is set, and for how long the innovation has been implemented. It is preferable that the political context is distinct (e.g. either stable or unstable over time) and that the DIs have been implemented for a longer period of time.

The case of the e-petition platform *Malmöinitiativet* in Malmö in Sweden met both these criteria and therefore provided a useful case for studying this question. In a Swedish context, the case of Malmöinitiativet provided a unique and revelatory case, and this for two reasons. Firstly, that the political context in Sweden is characterised by relative stability and high levels of trust among citizens. It is therefore of great interest to study the possible effects on citizens’ perception of changes in trust due to participation in the e-petition system. Secondly, the e-petition platform has been operating since 2008 and is considered to be a pioneer in Sweden when it comes to introducing DI into the municipal institutional arrangement. It is the longest running DI in Sweden.

Two methodological challenges stood out when setting up this study. The first relates to surveying the population at hand, and the second concerns the problem of establishing causality. The first challenge was that we only had access to a list of e-mail addresses of people who had registered for the e-petitioning and had given their permission to be contacted. To avoid problems with sampling, we made a census sample, i.e. sent out a survey to everyone that had ever registered in the system and agreed to be contacted.

The second challenge revolved around measuring changes in trust. In all studies measuring change in political trust, as Kampen et al. (2006) argue, it is important to measure respondents’ generalised attitude to government, which tends to bias their statements. While the ideal would be to use a pre-
test–post-test design, this is simply not possible in a population of self-selected participants; since participants are unknown before they enter the platform, it is not possible to measure the pre-test condition. To solve this problem, this study applied the perceived change method. The ‘evaluators ask the participants to estimate, after the intervention, the amount and direction of change they have undergone’ (Lam & Bengo, 2003, p. 69) and thus relied on the participants’ self-reported perceived change. This is an established method for conducting retrospective research (Hill & Betz, 2005; Kline, 2009; Lam & Bengo, 2003; Pratt, Mcguigan, William, & Katzev, 2000).

The study of Malmöinitiativet applied two quantitative methods: descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression analysis. Binary logistic regression analysis calculates odds ratio for occurrences in a dataset. The odds are calculated by the probability that something occurs, divided by the probability that it does not (King, 2008, p. 365).

The main source of data in this study derives from a survey that was constructed by our research team, and sent out by the City of Malmö to participants in Malmöinitiativet. The survey were conducted as an online survey with Survey Monkey, and collected 1,470 responses in total. A survey was conducted among all 7,024 participants of the Malmöinitiativet which reached a moderate response rate of 21%. The low response rate is problematic, yet its implications are limited as the survey targeted a census rather than a random sample of participants. The problem with low or moderate response rates is not unique to this study, but is rather a broader trend in the social sciences (Curtin, Presser, & Singer, 2005; Fan & Yan, 2010; Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). An online link to the survey was sent via e-mail to the list of participants by the City of Malmö in April and May 2014 and collected over three weeks. The list of e-mail addresses was provided to us by the City of Malmö. All participants that were contacted had ticked in a box during their registration agreeing to be contacted for evaluative purposes.

The other source of data in Article III was from the SOM Skåne survey that was collected by Göteborg University and made publicly available by Svensk nationell datatjänst (SND, 2016).
3.2.4 Article IV

One of the central questions in the systemic turn that has received little or no empirical attention is how DI affects the working and structure of governmental organisations. The case of the introduction and sustaining of DI in Reykjavik presented an excellent opportunity to study this question and represented both a unique and a revelatory case in the literature, as it had been centrally placed in the governmental organisation and also used as an argument by the government for democratising the political system.

The central method applied was semi-structured interviews. As discussed in more detail above, the main argument for using semi-structured interviews are the flexibility afforded by the interview process (Bryman 2008, p. 439). A common template questionnaire was used in all interviews, and a battery of follow-up questions was also applied. Since the interviewees had different relationships to BR and BN, the questions had to be customised to their position and knowledge of BR and BN.

Additional to the interviews, focus groups were conducted at three occasions. As in the discussion about Article II above, focus groups can be used for various purposes in qualitative research, and one of the most central characteristic of a focus group is that it is a selected group of persons, that informally discuss a given topic with a designated moderator (Wilkinson, 1998). The level of recording of data is closely tied to the weight of the focus group data in the study. If focus groups are used as a complement to individual interviews, for example, focus groups can be good to ensure that the study is grounded in the perspectives of the participants and the context of the case (Wibeck, 2010, p. 70). The central reason for conducting these focus groups in this case were to provide a contextual understanding of the implementation of BR and BN, and to provide complementary understanding of the challenges that was discussed in the interviews. These focus groups were recorded with notes, and are therefore not directly referred to in the study, but functioned as a backdrop to the general understanding of the case.

The interview data was gathered in two rounds. The first initial round of group interviews was conducted in 2012 (N=3) in Reykjavik, and a second round of individual deep interviews (N=8) was conducted in Reykjavik in October 2014 by the author. At the first round of group interviews, the Better Reykjavik platform had been running for three years, and the administration had just finished the first round of Better Neighbourhoods. At this stage, the group interviews were mainly focused on the broad aspects of the two DIs and the attitudes among civil servants and politicians. The data
collected from these group interviews was written down by hand, capturing the central ideas and attitudes among civil servants and politicians. The second round of interviews was structured and focused on key individuals in the development of Better Reykjavik and Better Neighbourhoods. The deep interviews lasted 50 – 70 minutes, and were taped digitally and later transcribed.

The focus groups were three in total. The first occasion was at the research projects first gathering in Örebro, Sweden, in 2012. This session mainly focused on the case of BR and BN in Reykjavik. The event was divided into two blocks of which one was the presentation of BR and BN by the civil servant representing the City of Reykjavik, and one block was for discussing BR and BN in the group. The discussion lasted for two hours and involved all partners in the project and illuminated BR and BN from various perspectives. The second occasion was a similar gathering in Tallinn, Estonia, in 2013 (the same as reported about in 3.2.2 above). The third occasion took place in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 2014. This was the last joint gathering for the research project and the focus was to evaluate the project and to follow up on the developments of the BR and BN, but also discuss the development of BR and BN in relation to the ECA. The focus group lasted for two hours.

3.3 Ethical considerations and the handling of data
This thesis follows the guidelines on research ethics for social sciences and humanities that are outlined by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). As the thesis is mainly based on data collected by the author or by the author in cooperation with the research group, it is important to clarify how the surveys and interviews were conducted, and how the data was handled.

All data collected in interviews and surveys was collected with consent from the respondent. When contact with the respondents was made, it was made clear that participation was voluntarily. No coercion, nor any forms of persuasion was used, and all interviewees were offered anonymity; those who requested it were granted it.

In 2011 our research group got funded by Vinnova (Sweden’s innovation agency) for the three year project ‘Citizen-centric e-participation: A trilateral collaboration for democratic innovation’⁹. The project was a triple helix construction consisting of the university, various municipalities, NGOs

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⁹ Reference number for the project at Vinnova: 2011-03523
and a company. The partners in this collaboration project was: Örebro University (Sweden), the company ImCode AB (Sweden), the Municipality of Borås (Sweden), the Municipality of Haparanda (Sweden), the City of Reykjavik (Iceland), the NGO Citizens Foundation (Iceland), and the NGO/Think tank Praxis Center for Policy Studies (Estonia). The project aimed at creating a network for Nordic-Baltic relations in the field of democratic innovations. This network became very important for this thesis as it provided a lot of contacts that was of great value for the data collection in this thesis.

As all documentation at Swedish universities is public, the data collected in this thesis falls under Arkivlagen (1990:782) and Arkivförordningen (1991:446) in handling of the data. All data in this thesis was handled and registered according to the local regulations (ORU, 2015). The local regulation explicitly says that all documentation should be saved forever, 10 which means that all interview data should be printed on material suited for archiving11 and kept safe. All data in this thesis followed these regulations.

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11 My own translation from the Swedish ‘arkivbeständigt skrivmaterial’
4. Article summaries

This thesis consists of four studies: one literature review, and three empirical case studies. All four studies are published in international peer-reviewed journals (Article I, II, III\textsuperscript{12} and IV\textsuperscript{13})\textsuperscript{14} and I will use this section to summarize the results from each of these studies.

4.1 Article I

Article I is a systemic literature review of the field of online deliberation. The study had three aims: 1) to sort out and examine the most important features of the developments in the field; 2) to identify and categorise significant research themes and issues; and 3) to pinpoint some research gaps. To meet these aims, we analysed the field from three aspects; the discipline to which the researcher belonged, the arena on which the study was focusing, and the methods used to measure or understand the different aspects of online deliberation. The study made three central findings.

1. The field of online deliberation consists of researchers from several different disciplines and these researchers are studying online deliberation in a variety of arenas with the help of a wide range of methods.
2. The field struggles with a highly diversified concept of deliberation and newer theoretical developments are underused in the operationalisation of theoretical concepts for empirical analyses, which suggests that there is a rather low degree of cumulativity in the field.
3. More attention is paid to deliberation, rather than the political and democratic consequences of deliberation.

That the field consists of researchers from several fields that study online deliberation in various arenas with various methods contributes in contrasting ways, and is related to both the second and third conclusions. It

\textsuperscript{12} Acknowledgement: This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in \textit{International Journal of Public Administration} in 2017, available online: http://www.tandfonline.com/, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2016.1162801


\textsuperscript{14} See Appendix 3 for a description of the division of work in the articles.
emphasises that the field is enriched by multiple perspectives and diversity in the research, but the results were less rigorous if they could not be compared to previous research. The problem of diversity in interpreting the concept of online deliberation is problematic for the cumulatively of the field, and not unique to research online deliberation in social science research.

The last and, for this thesis, most central finding was that more attention is paid to deliberation per se than the democratic consequences of online deliberation. The early Habermasian framework (1984; 1990) is still rather dominant in the field, at the expense of the later Habermasian framework (1997) and the researchers working in that tradition (Dryzek, 2009; Parkinson, 2006). The field of online deliberation could thus be subjected to the standard criticism of deliberative democracy; that there is no mechanisms for linking deliberation to collective decision-making. As Dryzek summarised, ‘we deliberate, and then what?’ (Dryzek, 2000, p. 78).

These findings painted a picture of a field in need of redirection towards a greater conceptual definition, and a turn away from the focus of deliberation per se towards a focus on the democratic effect of online deliberation.

4.2 Article II

Article II sought to answer research question ‘In relation to other political institutions, what specific functions can democratic innovations fulfil in a policy-making process?’ (RQ 2), and focused on the Estonian Citizens’ Assembly process (ECA). The ECA originated in the wake of a political scandal involving a scheme for illegal party financing exposed in May 2012. It represents a unique case in the research on DIs, given its combination of online and offline approaches, the implementation of both self-selected and randomly selected participants, its connection to the representative institutions in Estonia, and its impact on policy outcomes.

The ECA was not designed as a unitary political process with a beginning and an end, but rather a dynamic process built as it went along involving various stakeholders from various parts of society. In the autumn of 2012, the public reacted to the scandal by protesting in the streets. At the same time an online petition circulated and collected 18,000 signatures. The government was under pressure, but did not act. Instead, the President stepped in and chaired a meeting to which he invited representatives of civil society, political parties, and experts. The decision was taken to create an inclusive decision-making process by applying two DIs: crowdsourcing and a citizens’ assembly.
As the ECA consisted of multiple DIs, the public sphere and the representative institutions, it was possible to study numerous systemic aspects during the process. One such aspect was whether or not the process contributed to the inclusion citizens and groups of citizens that otherwise do not participate in politics. As the study showed, the crowdsourcing part of the ECA suffered from social domination, as a strong majority of the participants were highly educated, professional, male and ethnically Estonian. Another systemic aspect that could be studied was how DIs can function as spaces for citizens’ collective formulation of political demands. The study showed that online crowdsourcing can facilitate such space and attract citizens who provide original ideas and deliberation on common ideas. Another finding was that DIs, by interacting with representative institutions, can affect policy outcomes as the policy proposals proposed by the citizens in the crowdsourcing process, formulated by experts and voted on in the citizens’ assembly, via the President reached the parliament and (in a few instances) were implemented.

All in all, Article II shows that, if we are focusing on the strengths of DIs, the DIs in the ECA filled at least three important political functions. First of all, DIs filled an ‘epistemic function’ since plural forms of knowledge and information were added due to citizens’ participation in them. Secondly, the DIs in the ECA also filled an ‘ethical function’ since it contributed to mutual respect among the participating citizens, both through the crowdsourcing and the Rahvakogu. Lastly, the DIs in the ECA also filled a ‘democratic function’ as they provided a mix of self-selected and random sampled citizens, and by doing so, to a certain extent, contributed to the equality of participating citizens.

From a theoretical perspective, the ECA can be viewed as a revelatory case that reveals the analytical benefits and weaknesses of applying the systemic approach by highlighting how the public sphere, DIs and representative institutions can perform different functions and the interplay in the creation and shaping of policy. From a strict systemic analytic perspective, this study offers two possible interpretations of the ECA. The more affirmative is that it constituted a deliberative process, as it did perform the three main functions fulfilled by different arenas and institutions. The more critical interpretation is that the ECA failed to be an ‘ideal’ deliberative process due to social domination and decoupling of institutions. The overall result of the ECA study was that it showed how DI can facilitate systemic deliberative functions in the democratic system.
4.3 Article III

Article III sought to answer the research question ‘What is the relationship between democratic innovations and system support?’ (RQ 1). One central assumptions among politicians and civil servants that implements DIs is that DI helps to restore trust in formal political institutions. The research on trust in politics is often conducted in a pre-test/post-test design. This case study was not designed in that way, but was based on a post-survey with citizens’ own perception of change of trust due to participation in the e-petition system. With its design and scope, the case study contributed to a nuanced test of the relationship between DI and trust.

The case is based on an analysis of Malmöinitiativet, that is the official e-petition platform in Malmö, the third biggest city in Sweden, and a landmark in the development of DIs in Sweden. It is by far the most successful democratic innovation in Sweden when measuring number of participants, and it is therefore an important case to study to understand if, and if so how, DIs can affect change in trust towards local governments. The empirical analysis proceeded in three steps. First, to contribute to the research on inclusion in DIs, we investigated who participated in Malmöinitiativet. Second, we examined how citizens evaluated Malmöinitiativet. Third, we tested whether the levels of process satisfaction, and general attitudes towards democracy could explain modifications in trust.

Beginning with the first empirical question, that addresses the issue of DIs attracting otherwise marginalised groups, the results showed that prior political participation was significantly higher in the group participating in Malmöinitiativet (3.0 activities on average over the preceding 12 months) than the general population (0.6 activities). We may therefore conclude that Malmöinitiativet has not succeeded in significantly widening the pool of politically engaged citizens. Yet, Malmöinitiativet did succeed in attracting citizens that were significantly less satisfied with how democracy worked than the general public (27% in the general public were dissatisfied, while 44% of the respondents were). It can therefore be claimed that Malmöinitiativet did play a role in attracting citizens that were far from the political mainstream.

The establishment of a link between participation and support fuelled the debate on how various decision-making processes actually matched citizens with different attitudinal predispositions. The classification and interpretation of these predispositions is done in various ways, but they often relate to political support and participation. This case study applied four citizen
categories commonly found in the literature: traditional ideal citizens, stealth citizens, critical citizens, and disenchanted citizens.

In answering the second empirical question, we can see that citizen groups evaluated both the implementation of the process and the outcomes of the process differently. When it came to implementation satisfaction, all groups were harshly critical of the process (ranging from traditional and stealth at 13% to critical citizens at 8%), but only minor differences between the groups can be found. When it came to the evaluation of the outcome satisfaction range, the rates were generally higher, and there was great variety between the groups. While 56% of the ideal citizens and 52% of critical citizens evaluated the outcomes as positive, only 34% of stealth citizens and 24% of the disenchanted citizens did so. It could therefore be argued that prior-held attitudes towards democracy and political activity mediate effects on how to evaluate the outcomes of the e-petition system.

The answer to the third empirical question was divided into two, with one methodological and one empirical part. The methodological part concerned the creation and use of a new dependent variable to measure changes in trust. A methodological problem often discussed when measuring trust is the need for a pre-post survey design. To measure change, the argument goes, there is a need to measure at T1, let citizens participate, and conduct a post-measurement at T2. As Malmöinitiativet has been running for a number of years when we started this study, it was impossible to recreate a T1, and we therefore needed to come up with a solution to the problem. The solution was the creation of a new dependent variable that measured citizens’ own perceived change in trust due to their participation in Malmöinitiativet, in retrospect. By using this new dependent variable, we could study how trust towards local political institutions had changed due to participation in Malmöinitiativet. The first results show that 40% of the participants reported modifications in their trust (20% lost trust, while 20% gained trust) and 60% did not report any changes in trust. A first general and important conclusion that can be drawn is thus that DI can influence public trust, even though the net change in this case is zero.

Among the citizens that did change their trust, the results indicate that citizens’ predispositions were mediating differential effects. Among traditional ideal citizens and critical citizens, the percentage that increased trust was 20% and 19%, but only 9% among stealth citizens and 12% among disenchanted citizens. With negative changes, it spanned from 15% among traditional ideal citizens to 47% among disenchanted citizens. It could thus,
be argued that the more distant citizens are from the political mainstream, the more negatively trust is affected by participating in *Malmöinitiativet*.

Perceived change in trust does not necessarily have a given direction as there is no control for citizens’ predisposition. Perceived change can thus be both a reinforcing of their already held position, or a change in position. When looking at the results from the perspective of reinforcement and change, the share of participants experiencing positive changes in trust perceptions (18.9%) was higher than the share of participants with negative changes in trust (14.7%). When it came to modifications in trust perceptions that should be interpreted as reinforcement, that is, the share of participants with negative predispositions that experience negative modifications in trust (27.1%) and the share of participants with positive predispositions experiencing positive trust modifications (19.9%), the pattern was reversed. This tells us that while negative reinforcement of trust perceptions is more common than positive reinforcement, changes in trust are more often positive than negative.

### 4.4 Article IV

Article IV sought to answer the question ‘When implemented in governmental organisations, how do democratic innovations relate to long-term institutional development?’ (RQ 3). Article IV departed from the observation that although DIs are spread all over the world, there is little research conducted on the institutional outcomes of implementing DIs in governmental organisations in general and local governmental organisations in particular. This study on the implementation of two DIs in Reykjavik therefore contributes to the burgeoning field of research.

To be able to study the possible effect on governmental organisations, it must be assumed that time is an important factor. If DIs are applied ad hoc or for shorter periods of time they can be assumed to have some effect on policy outcomes (Article II), but it is highly unlikely that they will have a profound impact on the governmental organisation. If DIs are implemented and formally connected to the policy-making process over a longer period of time, it could be expected that it is more likely that DIs will have an effect on governmental organisations.

The study drew on observations conducted over three years (2012-2014) in a research project and two rounds of group and individual interviews (N=13) with key stakeholders in the implementation process. The aim was to analyse how the competing participatory institutional logic of DIs can
influence local governmental organisations, such as the local government in Reykjavik.

The development of DIs in Reykjavik provides an interesting case for analysing institutional outcomes, partly because the DIs were implemented as a direct response to a political crisis, and partly as the DIs became an integrated part of the municipal system and formally connected to the policy-making process from the initial implementation in 2011. Reykjavik has two official DIs: the e-petition platform Better Reykjavik and the online participatory budget platform Better Neighbourhoods. Both are formally connected to the policy- and decision-making process as the ideas, priorities and suggestions that meet the criteria set up by the municipality end up in the committees responsible for that specific policy area. The contextual setting and the formal connection to the policy- and decision-making process creates a new situation for politicians and civil servants as they have to adjust their working processes to these new institutions.

As the field of research has not focused on the institutional outcomes of implementing DIs, there are no specific analytical frameworks available for such an analysis. There is thus a need to either develop such a framework or to apply analytical frameworks developed in other fields of study. In this study, the latter option was chosen and, as the tradition of institutionalism offers a great variety of analytical tools for analysing institutional development and change, a framework in this tradition was applied. The final choice of framework fell on an analytical framework developed by van Gestel and Hillebrand (2011) that focuses on how the introduction of competing institutional logics can produce different institutional outcomes, and how these outcomes can be explained.

Van Gestel and Hillebrand (2011) identified three institutional outcomes for organisations when exposed to competing institutional logics: the dominant institutional logic prevails, multiple institutional logics co-exist, or the organisation is characterised by being in constant flux. To be able to understand why organisations exposed to competing institutional logics produce different outcomes, van Gestel and Hillebrand identified four factors: power shift, dissatisfaction, negative choice and deliberate ambiguity (van Gestel & Hillebrand, 2011, p. 241-6).

When analysing the case of Reykjavik with this analytical framework, it would seem that the institutional outcome is an organisation in which multiple forms of logic co-exist in a constant state of flux and that the three factors explaining this outcome is: a populist power shift, dissatisfaction and deliberate ambiguity.
Taken together, the three factors influencing the institutional outcomes paint a coherent picture: the two DIs implemented in Reykjavik are institutions customised to meet the challenges of a political crisis; but as the heat of the crisis has faded and society has returned to ‘politics as usual’, they seem oversized and unfit. However, instead of developing and adjusting the DIs to the current political situation, they have been left untouched: resulting in mounting frustration in the organisation.

The broader implication here is that the local government has not entered into a new form of political equilibrium; but ended up in what van Gestel and Hillebrand (2011) define as an organisation in a ‘state of flux’. It is apparent from the data that politicians and civil servants alike are torn between the two competing forms of logic and that this creates tensions. There is a clear understanding that participatory channels are important and good for democracy and do not challenge the power of the political parties, but Better Reykjavik and Better Neighbourhoods are not functioning well, and not providing the value which was intended.

The findings in this study suggest that the prior dominant logic of representative democracy is incessantly challenged by the participatory logic as long as the DIs studied in this case are designed in the way they are and formally connected to the policy process. By pointing out the factors leading to institutional development and change and the institutional outcomes of the implementation of DIs over time, this study contributes to the ongoing discussion about the role and functions of DIs in political systems.
5. Contributions and conclusions

The overarching aim with this thesis is that it seeks to empirically study how DIs influence political systems, and by doing so contribute to filling the current gap in the literature. By taking an explorative approach to three cases in which DIs were implemented in real world political contexts, this thesis shows that DIs can influence political systems in at least three aspects, which will be reviewed in this chapter. First, the central empirical conclusions of the thesis will be presented and discussed. Second, the methodological and theoretical implications of the thesis along with a critical reflection on its limitations will be presented and discussed. Thirdly, the broader implications of the findings in this thesis will be discussed and the future direction for further research will be pointed out. The chapter will end with some concluding remarks.

5.1 Conclusions

This thesis poses three empirical research questions. In this concluding part of the chapter, I will discuss these research questions departing from the results presented in the previous chapter.

5.1.1 The relationship between DIs and system support

This thesis initially posed the research question ‘What is the relationship between democratic innovations and system support?’ (RQ 1) Article III focused on this question by empirically investigating how citizens that have been participating in Malmöinitiativet perceived changes in trust towards the local government and political parties. The findings indicate a rather complex relationship between participation in DIs and impact on trust.

The central finding from this study is that participation in Malmöinitiativet did influence citizens’ perceived trust towards local political institutions. Given these findings, it is interesting to discuss the broader implications of these findings as trust is equally important as both a dependent and independent variable in relation to who participates in democratic innovations, and the actual effect of their participation. The first point for discussion concerns how these findings relate to other findings in the field, and the second concerns the applicability of the findings in the actual development of future DIs.

To begin with, our findings about the importance of process implementation evaluation and process outcome evaluation do concur with the findings in other studies in the field (Carman, 2010; Christensen et. al., 2015).
Christensen et al. (2015) conclude in their study of Avoin Ministeriö (‘Open Ministry’) in Finland that:

‘[p]rocess satisfaction, or the extent to which the participants thought Parliament handled the matter in an appropriate fashion, affected both political trust and satisfaction with democracy.’ (Christensen et al., 2015, p. 39).

Carman (2010) concludes his study of the Scottish Parliament e-petition system with a reflection that:

‘[i]t appears that in adopting transformative democracy reforms designed to (re-)engage the public and foster a political culture that values participatory democracy, great care and attention must be devoted to public perceptions of these programmes. If the programmes are actually going to fulfil their promise of reconnecting publics with political institutions and increasing relative levels of political support, it is important that people who actively engage with these programmes see them as being ‘fair’ and politically neutral’ (Carman, 2010, p. 747).

It could be concluded that similar results have been found in Scotland, Finland and Sweden, three states that are categorised as stable European democracies. These three studies do indeed differ in methods and scope, but still end up in the same conclusions. By attaching the findings in this thesis to this emerging body of empirical results, I argue that this thesis does contribute to our understanding of how DIs can influence political systems, and thereby also contributes to the empirical development of the field.

The second point for discussion concerned the possible application of our results in the future development of DIs. Two findings are to be highlighted: that predispositions and prior engagement mediates the direction of change in trust, and that DIs mainly attract the already politically active. These two findings are of importance when designing new DIs, as there are ways to address these shortcomings.

First of all, that predispositions and prior engagement mediates the direction of changes in trust is of crucial importance. What this suggest is that citizens do not enter DIs as neutral actors, but evaluate the institution partly as a mirroring of their predisposition. If designers of DIs are being aware of this, DIs could be adjusted to meet these citizens’ demands and also make civil servants and politicians more prepared for the task that lies ahead. If, for example a local or national government with low levels of trust are to implement DIs, it could be advisable to put even more effort into issues concerning transparency and communication with citizens, as their predisposition presumably is more distrusting. That in turn can change the design
of DIs in the future and play a role in the development of democracy in liberal industrialised democracies, as they are customised to the political context.

Secondly, given that DIs seek to include citizens that do not usually participate in the political processes, it is problematic that DIs tend to attract the already politically active. Two studies (Article II and III) in this thesis investigate this claim, but not as a main research question. As concluded in Article II, the crowdsourcing process of the ECA was, despite the inclusive design of self-selection, biased towards ‘the usual suspects’, i.e. educated, professional, already politically active, men from the ethnic majority. These patterns were to some degree also found in Malmöinitiativet (Article III), but not to same extent. The participants were indeed more highly educated than the general population and more politically active, but it was dominated by this group in the same sense as the ECA. To summarise these findings, these two cases of DIs did not attract the politically marginalised groups of citizens that are supposed to participate in DIs due to lowered thresholds. What is interesting, however, is that critical citizens are overrepresented in the Malmöinitiativet. While dissatisfaction with democracy in the general public (in Scania) is 27%, the corresponding number among the respondents in Article III is 44%. These findings suggests that e-petitions can have a vital role in bringing citizens outside the political mainstream back into the political system.

Returning to the research question, what is the relationship between democratic innovations and system support?, the conclusion of the findings presented in this thesis is that citizens participation in DIs indeed can have impact on their support and trust for the political system and that the design of the DI is an important factor. Given the findings that citizens’ pre-disposition and prior engagement mediates the direction of change, and that already politically active citizens choose to participate, it could be suggested that DIs could be designed to fill various functions within the political system.

5.1.2 The function of DIs in the policy-making process

The results of Article II contribute to the emerging field of research by showing that DIs can influence the policy-making process and contribute with policy outcomes when integrated with formal political institutions. The research question ‘In relation to other political institutions, what specific functions can democratic innovations fulfil in a policy-making process?’ (RQ 2).
The answer provided by Article II is that DIs in interrelation with representative political institutions and by involving different groups of citizens can create policy outcomes, and that the broad visible support can have an agenda-setting function.

The key feature for DIs to influence the policy-making process is the design of the process and the political willingness of the representative actors. As Article II shows, DIs can fulfil multiple democratic functions described by Mansbridge et al., in their analytical framework (2012), and intertwine actions in multiple political arenas. Article II shows that DIs filled at least three political functions in the ECA. First of all, DIs filled an ‘epistemic function’ since plural forms of knowledge and information were added due to citizens’ participation in them. Secondly, the DIs in the ECA also filled an ‘ethical function’ since it contributed to mutual respect among the participating citizens, both through the crowdsourcing and the Rahvakogu. Lastly, the DIs in the ECA also filled a ‘democratic function’ as they provided a mix of self-selected and random sampled citizens, and by doing so, to a certain extent, contributed to the equality of participating citizens.

If DIs are successful in providing important democratic functions and provide a bridge between the public sphere and the formal political institutions, the possibilities for actual policy effect increases if there are mediating institutions involved in the process. A mediating institution could be a formal institution, such as the Public Petition Committee in Scotland or an appointed ombudsman, or politician or political party.

What the ECA shows is that the rigidity of the process forced the parliament to act on the proposals coming out of the process. By involving NGOs, citizens in a targeted crowdsourcing process, experts working pro bono to formulate the ideas into policy proposals, and end the whole process with a deliberative day, enabled a great political pressure on the representative institutions. That the President brought the proposals and championed them in parliament, which was the strongest factor, since he alone was the connection with the policy-making process. The President could be seen here as a mediating institution, as the office allowed him to reach out to civil society and at the same time speak in parliament. But even if we take the role of the President away and contrast the actual proceedings of the ECA with a more common design of a participatory process, such as an NGO hosting an e-petition that is delivered to parliament, there are reasons to assume that the policy effect would not have been as strong as in this case.
Recent research shows findings are mixed, as DIs sometimes do and sometimes don’t affect the policy-making process and create policy outcomes. In their large study on participatory processes at local level in Spain, Font et al., (2016) found that, out of 611 proposals, 31.3% were fully implemented without change and 31.6% partly implemented with some changes (Font et al., 2016, p. 18). What is interesting in that study is that DIs that are being institutionalised (participatory budgets) doubles the odds of providing policy outcomes, while one-off occasions, such as the ECA, has lower odds (ibid., p. 18). This, to some degree, echoes the findings of Michels (2011), whom found that referendums had a 93% impact rate, followed by participatory policy-making 66%, deliberative forums 38% and deliberative surveys with 33% (Michels 2011, p. 284). It seems, thus, that the closer DIs are connected to, or embedded in, the formal political institutions, the better are the odds for the process to produce policy outcomes.

To summarise, it seems that the empirical findings in the field are pointing in the same direction. DIs that are embedded in the formal political system and ad-hoc DIs that are facilitated by a mediating institution increase the chances of having an effect on the policy-making process. The major contribution with the ECA study is that it increases our understanding of the importance of a rigid design when applying ad-hoc DIs, and that we could only understand this chain of events by adopting a systemic approach.

5.1.3 DIs and long-term institutional development

Research question three (RQ 3) posed in this thesis was: ‘When implemented in governmental organisations, how do democratic innovations relate to long-term institutional development?’ The answer to this question was provided by the study Reykjavik in Iceland (Article IV).

Based on the empirical analysis, it would appear that civil servants and politicians in Reykjavik perceive their organisation to be in some state of flux when it comes to the relationship to Better Reykjavik (BR) and Better Neighbourhoods (BN). By applying the theory of institutional logic and the analytical framework developed by van Gestel and Hillebrand (2011), this study was able to investigate the influence of implementing DIs in a local governmental organisation. The implementation of competing participatory institutional logic generated a sense of dissatisfaction among civil servants and politicians in Reykjavik, as both are normatively convinced that DIs contribute to vitalising the democratic system, but they are at the same time sceptical of the current solution. This resulted in a state of deliberative ambiguity and uncertainty, leading to a lack of development of the DIs.
This development is of great interest if it is connected to the arguments of participatory theorists that focus on power and the sharing of power in participatory processes (Arnstein, 1969; Blaug, 2002). As Reykjavik shows, DIs are difficult to implement into existing governmental organisations, even when a new leadership is voted in because they promised to make the democratic process accessible and transparent.

BR was designed by a grass-roots organisation (Citizens’ Foundation) and adopted by another grass-roots organisation (The Best Party) that metamorphosed into a political party and took office in the local government. Following Blaug’s argument that ‘top down’ democratic renewal is merely a façade used to silence critical democrats and protect elite institutions (Blaug, 2002, p. 114), BR ought to be the perfect example of a DI that has taken the other way in via protests and radical visions of democratic governance. In the initial wake of the crisis, both civil servants and politicians in the interviews we conducted were positive about the development of BR, but over time a sense of ambiguity and dissatisfaction was created among civil servants and politicians, as BR did not meet expectations. By designing BR after the level of participation during the crisis, the design became problematic when politics were back to the usual lower levels of participation, and the local committees still needed to put five suggestions in each category each month up for discussion. Following Blaug (2002) and Arnstein (1969) and their discussion about the difference between politicians and civil servants actually sharing power with citizens as opposed to merely putting up a façade of participation, what happened among civil servants and politicians in Reykjavik is a mix of an initial strong normative will to enrich the democratic process, but a lack commitment when it comes to sharing the actual power they have vested in the decision- and policy-making process.

Novel research on the relationship between implementing and developing DIs once in government can help us shed new light on this development. In their study Núñez et al. (2017) concluded that:

‘some political parties support reforms that would increase citizens’ participation in the day-to-day decision-making process, but that these parties are those that are mostly excluded from government. Yet bringing them to government does not guarantee that change will occur […] Strategically, political parties might publicly display their readiness to implement reforms in order to regain legitimacy and attract votes. […] But, once in power, they may be far less inclined to implement changes that would lessen their capacity of control over the decision-making process’ (Núñez et. al., 2017, p. 12).
The Best Party to some degree follows this development. While the Best Party indeed did introduce BR and later further developed it, the only reasonable conclusion from this study is that the Best Party, and Reykjavik, did introduce BR and BN but did not a plan or the will to develop and advance these two DIs. So, instead of taking a step up the ladder towards what Arstein (1969) would call ‘citizen control’, the local government in Reykjavik stagnated and chose to leave BR and BN as they were originally designed.

The second conclusion is closely interrelated with the first. The major consequence of this state of deliberative ambiguity and uncertainty which led to that organisation is perceived as consisting of two competing forms of institutional logic, and is thus in a state that could be interpreted as a permanent ‘state of flux’. The development in Reykjavik has not followed the punctuated equilibrium theory (PET) idea that a new equilibrium will be created in the wake of the perishing of the old equilibrium (Peters, 2012, p. 78-83). The major questions are, of course, whether or not this is a problem, and how we are to understand this mix of institutional logics in governmental organisations.

In his study on the Danish Crime Prevention Council, Aagaard (2016) applied the theory of institutional logics and post-transformational leadership theory (PTL), and argued that:

‘[w]e know today that actors inside public organisations have no reason to buy the whole package of either NPM, NPG, neo-Weberians, etc. There is no single universal model for public management. The leaders of public organisations can and must mix different institutional logics through a process of PTL’ (Aagaard, 2016, p. 1178).

Departing from the findings in this study and the line of reasoning of Aagaard (2016), we need more studies that takes this focus to be able to establish a firm body of research. The question about trying to understand how politicians and civil servants adjust to, and navigate in, this new organisational environment is of great interest. Another question that ought to be of interest for further research is about system stability, and the role that DIs can play in a vulnerable political system. We need to learn more about the potential destabilizing function of DIs, as that knowledge can be of great importance in an even more populist future.
5.2 Methodological and theoretical contributions and limitations

While the aim with this thesis is to empirically contribute to the field of DI, this thesis raises questions and suggests solutions to both methodological and theoretical issues tied to the empirical research of DIs. In this summarising discussion, I will briefly present and discuss the methodological and theoretical implications of this thesis and some of the possible obstacles and solutions in future research.

One methodological discussion that this thesis raises is the technique for measuring perceived changes in trust due to participation in DIs. Prior research on changes in trust have encountered the major challenge that DIs in real political settings are products of real political problems, and not designed for the purpose of research. The standard technique for measuring changes in trust, knowledge and opinions as a consequence of participating in DIs is the pre-test/post-test design. This design is straightforward and follows four steps. Researchers (1) invite citizens to participate in an experimental or semi-experimental DI test participants via a survey or interview, and by doing so establish T1. They then (2) conduct a controlled participatory process, be it a deliberative poll or participatory budget process, and then (3) test the participants after the process using the same survey or interview, and by doing so establish T2. They can then (4) analyse the differences in trust, knowledge or opinions between T1 and T2.

The pre-test/post-test technique is great when applicable, as it isolates the conducted activity as the (at least theoretically) only variable for causing the change. The challenge with this technique, however, is that is impossible to apply when researching DIs in which citizens self-select their participation, because there is no T1, and that as time passes, it is impossible to isolate ‘participation in DI’ as the key variable to explain any change. As suggested in Article III, one possible solution to this problem is to change from this technique altogether when studying DIs in real political environments and instead focus on how citizens perceive their trust to have changed in relation to their experiences from participating in the DI. By conducting a post-survey of the participants and asking how they perceive their own changes in trust after participating, we can better understand how citizens weigh their participation in DIs and how this participation influences their levels of trust in the political system. The methodological contribution of this thesis is thus that it presents an alternative technique for studying perceived changes in trust, a technique previously not used in DI research but more common in other social scientific disciplines (Hill & Betz, 2005; Kline, 2009; Lam &
Bengo, 2003; Pratt, Mcguigan, William, & Katzev, 2000). It would be beneficial for the field if this methodological technique could be applied, and evaluated in further studies so that we can better understand how this technique stands in comparison to a traditional pre-test post-test approach.

Theoretically, this thesis shows that a systemic approach can be linked several established theoretical traditions, and via this linking develop to a more specialised theory focusing on various systemic aspects, rather than all systemic aspects at once. The systemic approach to DIs is currently under-developed and labelled as a ‘work in progress’ (Hendricks, 2016, p. 43). As most of the theoretical development is conducted in the domains of deliberative democracy (Mansbridge et al., 2012; Jensen, 2014; Kuyper, 2015), and the few attempts to broaden the perspective have pursued an abstract theoretical approach (Owen & Smith, 2015; Warren, 2012), the empirical work in this thesis contributes to the theoretical development of the systemic approach as it both contributes to the expansion of, and the narrowing of the scope of the systemic approach to DIs.

The expansion of the systemic approach is currently ongoing. In recent years there have been a number of empirical studies that have focused on systemic issues in DI research (Christensen et al., 2015; Coleman & Sampio, 2017; Font et. al., 2016; Hendricks, 2016). Article II, III and IV all contribute to this empirical wave of systemic research, and by doing so provide a foundation for a further theoretical discussion. While these research questions were guided by the then-available theoretical literature, the coming theoretical frameworks needs to take these findings into consideration and broaden the scope of the systemic approach.

When I argue for a narrowing down of the scope, I will develop this argument even more below. The central point is that I think that the future for the systemic approach is not to create grand analytical schemes in the same vain as e.g. Dryzek (2009) or Mansbridge et al. (2012), but rather to deal with one or a few systemic aspects in each study. Single case studies is still be of importance for the development of the field, but as the numbers of DIs in the world grows, it should be possible to conduct more comparative research that places specific systemic aspects in focus and compares local governments, both in the same states but also with other states, and national governments in various political contexts. If we want to understand how DIs is related to and impact the political system, a comparative approach posing research questions to comparable political entities is very relevant. As the studies in this thesis show, the political context is a part of the
design of DIs, and therefore of importance when comparing the consequences of implementing DIs.

This thesis consists of three empirical case studies and a literature review, all taking on different aspects of the influence of DIs in political systems. The main question, as I see it, concerning the ways forward to develop the field is whether we should aim for the development of a grand analytical framework, or for a specialisation that takes on certain systemic aspects.

To cover all systemic effects of the implementation of DIs in national, regional or local political systems in one analytical framework would be difficult. The systemic approach is too broad for that, as it spans everything from studying changes in citizens perceptions to policy impact and institutional change. To create an analytical framework that covers all of these aspects would be difficult.

What we do need, however, are more comparative studies on specific systemic aspects. As DIs are spreading, the possibilities for comparative research increases. Given that the field turns towards a specialisation, rather than towards grander analytical frameworks, it would be easy to conduct studies in which the implementation of DIs in, for example, four cities has affected the institutional framework, or a study that compares citizens’ changes in trust after having lived with DIs for a number of years. By going that way, we can reach a new level of generalisability in the field. There are currently some studies that have taken this approach on, for example, policy effects (Font et. al., 2016), but more work needs to be done. What would be of great importance would be to study the influence of DIs on political trust over time in multiple states and multiple DIs. If such a study could be performed on DIs that have been operating for a number of years, we could start to build a more systematic understanding of how DIs do influence political systems.

5.3 Broader implications

Departing from the empirical findings in this thesis, DIs can have an effect on the political system. This thesis shows that DIs can affect citizens’ trust in political institutions (Article III), have a function in the policy-making process (Article II), and also affect the institutional development of governmental organisations (Article IV). I will use this last section for a broader discussion about DIs and their role in the political system. I will depart from the findings in this thesis, but also allow myself to draw on recent research in the field and by doing so outline the broader strokes for further research and development of DIs.
5.3.1 Democratic innovations as the first encounter with the political system?

As DIs in general are implemented to re-connect and re-engage citizens with the political system, the findings in this thesis can be used a backdrop to a broader discussion on what role DIs can take in current political systems for achieving these goals. Two of the great challenges that faces the representative system is firstly citizens’ decrease in trust and changing patterns of political participation, and secondly the rise of populist politics in Europe and the USA. I will use this space to discuss the results from this thesis and other findings from the field in relation to these two challenges.

One of the main findings of this thesis is the results from the study of Malmöinitiativet that showed that 40\% of the participants in that DI did change their levels of trust to the city and the local government. What this suggests is that there is something at stake when a political unit, be it a local, national or supranational government, implements DIs. The question to be asked is what role DIs can have in a political system for re-connecting citizens. Following Carman’s (2010) argument in his analysis of the Scottish Parliament e-petition system, it could be reasoned that:

‘as most individuals do not interact with their parliaments on a regular basis, it is likely that individuals will have a relatively small set of interactions on which to base institutional evaluations. Interaction with the petitions system may serve as a cue, providing information on which to update prior beliefs about the parliament.’ (Carman, 2010, p. 737).

What this suggests is that DIs can actually be the first encounter with the formal political institutions for many citizens, and that the perception of how this institution function can make citizens update their either already negative view to a positive view, or downgrade their positive view to a negative view. Our findings in Malmö do to some degree support this argument, but it should be noticed that many of the participants in Malmöinitiativet were already politically active and did interact either directly or indirectly with the local government. This does not weaken the argument, but shows that even though the participating citizens are used to interacting with the local government and the city, they still update their beliefs in these political institutions.

To be able to re-connect citizens to the political system by implementing DIs, politicians, civil servants and developers of DIs (be they NGOs or companies) need to be aware of what is at stake, and also adhere to the findings in the field that highlights the importance of procedural satisfaction and
procedural outcomes. As Article III shows, participants who were satisfied with the implementation of the process were almost three times as likely to experience an increase in their level of trust, and less than half as likely as other participants to decrease their level of trust. Likewise, participants who were positive in this regard were two and a half times as likely to increase their levels of trust, and about half as likely to experience a drop. Other studies have also found that procedural satisfaction is of crucial importance for citizens when evaluating DIs, among them Carman (2010) and Christiansen et al. (2015). The broader implication of these findings is that it suggests that DIs can no longer be treated as something governments do ‘on the side of ordinary politics’ as a façade, or a gesture to keep up a good appearance to the public. Rather, it seems that citizens quickly see through such attempts and as a consequence update their beliefs about the political system. Departing from Article III, it seems that governments that implement DIs should focus on:

1. information and dissemination of this information to the public and to the participants;
2. the ease of use and availability of the system;
3. transparency in the work with the implementation of approved petitions
4. explaining and communicating how decisions about petitions were made;
5. explaining the link between the DI and how it influence the political agenda; and
6. explaining the link between the DI and how it contribute to better decisions and efficiency in government.

Since citizens who evaluate these aspects positively are those who are more likely to gain trust, and there are reasons for governments to adhere this and work with these issues when developing new or updating existing DIs.

Given this background we can discuss the possible role of DIs in meeting the challenge of populist politics. The core of populism is the division of society in a ‘real demos’ and an ‘elite’ (Mudde, 2004). While ‘political elite’ is a term in political science vocabulary (i.e. the formal governmental positions in which the actual power is vested), the ‘elite’ in populist rhetoric is broader and includes the media, the arts, and also to some extent intellec-
tuals. From a populist point of view, these societal ‘elites’ form the ‘establishment’ that, directly and indirectly opposes the ‘real demos’ and runs society in its own interests. This is the basis for populist politics (Mudde, 2004). Given this description, the question of what role DIs might play in meeting this challenge is very interesting, as DIs by definition involve the ‘elite’ as it is connected to the formal political system.

The findings in Article II could be of interest in this discussion, as the ECA provides an example of how DIs can applied to, at least temporary, bridge the gap between the ‘people’ and the ‘elite’ and metamorphose the energy from the protests into new legislation. In the case of the ECA, the President acted as a mediating institution between the ‘people’ and the ‘elite’, and without this link, the ECA would most probably not have been that successful. DIs must, therefore, be implemented with care and adjusted to the current situation to be able to translate protests on the streets to actual policy-making.

Another perspective that is important to discuss about the possible role of DIs and populism is the dual nature of populism. While many of the contemporary populist movements defies scientific knowledge, opposes ‘mainstream media’ and, in many cases, expresses xenophobic attitudes, populism is at the same time at the very heart of the democratic process as it organises citizens in collective action in opposition to the power-holding elite. Populism is thus more than a pejorative term used to label certain political camps.

Given this distinction, one of the debates that is currently going on about citizens’ view and trust in ‘elite expertise’ is of interest. DIs come with different designs and have different functions in the political system. On the hand you have mini-publics, for example, that are founded on the assumption that the use and integration of expert knowledge in participatory and deliberative processes increases the quality of decision-making among lay citizens (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Grönlund, Bächtiger & Setälä, 2014). The problem with this design, if connecting it to the rise of populist politics, is that ‘[m]ini-publics rely on information presented by experts; populism rejects the knowledge of experts’ (Parry, 2016). In a political context in which concepts such as ‘facts resistance’, ‘post-truth politics’ and ‘alternative facts’ (Lockie, 2017; Suiter, 2016) have entered the public debate, it becomes difficult to foresee what function such an institution could have in meeting the populist challenge and if it can re-connect citizens that have lost their trust in the political system. On the other hand you have e-petition systems that, at least in theory, have a theoretical edge in meeting the populist challenge.
as they do not directly involve experts, but instead add a mechanism for direct participation and agenda-setting that are open to all citizens interested in participating.

If DIs are to be the first encounter with the political system, and this institution is perceived as fair, transparent and meaningful by the participants, e-petitions could play a role in meeting the populist challenge. By developing the link between DIs and the formal decision-making process, citizens that have previously lost their trust in the political system and its actors might be re-connected as their participation and efforts are being acknowledged.

5.3.2 Societal collaboration for a sustainable democracy

The challenges that face the representative democratic systems can be seen as the backdrop to the arguments championed in this thesis. As citizens in western liberal democracies in increasing numbers feel excluded from the policy-making process, it is of great importance that we keep on exploring new channels for re-connecting citizens to the political system. As the political system currently looks, there are few options available for citizens whom want to formally engage in politics, and there are few reasons to believe that in the near future there will be a surge of citizens joining political parties and political organisations. On the contrary: we must seriously think about the role of the political parties in our future political system and how DIs can be a complement to the political parties.

The findings in this thesis underscore that there is a great opportunity to open up a multitude of ways for citizens into the formal political system, and this is important for the democratic process in at least two ways: citizens that are satisfied with the decision-making process tend to increase their support for the political system, and that decision-making processes that involve multiple stakeholders create a stronger case for new policy proposals. We can see the process in the ECA as a very early model of this kind of multi-channel process. In the centre of the ECA there was a policy problem that the political parties were unable to solve, in this case how to regulate party financing. In the ECA, the political parties themselves didn’t create a participatory process, but the President in collaboration with civil society did. The pressure that was building up during the year that the ECA was running, and this forced the political parties to take notice of the policy proposals coming out the ECA. The ECA changed the political parties into subordinates in this policy-making process, as they did not actively participate but did have to adhere to the outcomes. The ECA was not a perfect
vehicle, but it might be carrying the keys to the future of policy- and decision-making processes.

It is also possible to think about an even wider form of inclusion that is not only involve lay citizens, but also organisations, universities and companies in an open policy-making infrastructure. Local governments, for example, must not only cooperate with the regional and national government, but also adjust to the EU and other international organisations, and, to some extent, take in demands from social movements, companies, NGOs, think-tanks and others. Today, these processes are not regulated, but are mainly conducted via lobbying and other informal networks. Companies, NGOs and think-thanks today have better resources to influence policymakers via lobbying than do lay citizens. If the model of DIs could be translated into also opening up the relations between other societal actors and policy-makers, and make that process transparent, it can be assumed that the political system would benefit from that.

With a systemic approach, we can better understand the function of various actors in our society, and how they can contribute to the public discussion. When Wampler (2012) summarised his analysis after spending more than a decade studying participatory budgeting in Brazil, he argued that:

‘what occurs in a specific meeting is important, but what is more important is what happens in subsequent meetings and in parallel meetings. Deliberation is not a ‘single shot’ event, but it is a continuum of interactions’ (Wampler, 2012, p. 9).

Wampler is not a ‘systemic theorist’ in any defined sense of the concept, but an empirical scholar with great experience of the field. The insights delivered in this conclusion are of great importance for everyone interested in our field of study. Societal participation and deliberation cannot be organised as one-off events, but is rather as a mindset, an approach to democratic life, or simply an alternative vision of politics that champion inclusion and fights exclusion. Given the current development in the western world, there are plenty of reasons for those who champion the political model of exclusion (traditional representative democracy) to be self-critical. What we have here is an alternative to that. It is surely not a panacea, but as the empirical evidence piles up, process satisfaction and citizens’ perception of being included in the political system is gaining weight.
5.3.3 DIIs and long-term institutional change

DIIs have, up until recently, been neither implemented nor studied over longer periods of time, with notable exceptions such as the participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre and Bela Horisonte. This has rendered a vacuum in which the discussion of the relationship between implementation of DIIs and institutional change has been neglected.

In some basic sense, DIIs in some manner put demands on the institutional arrangement to change when implemented. In a traditional representative and rationalistic governmental organisation, the division of labour is hierarchical, strict and based on professional knowledge. City planners are experts in planning and should therefore, in the frames set by the politicians, plan how the city should look. Citizens can, to some degree, stall the process by making complaints and giving voice in the public sphere, but there are few formal ways to participate, and those that exist are weak and insignifiant. Politicians are elected by the citizens and charged to make decisions in their name over a particular period. In a participatory organisation mostly found in civil society and in the public sphere, hierarchies are blurred, and expert knowledge questioned and problematised.

In all three case studies, DIIs were implemented as a response to the challenges facing the representative system. Both in Estonia and in Reykjavik, there were a political crisis that triggered the development, and in Malmö, like Sweden in general, trust in political parties and representative institutions are low. So, when politicians and civil servants, with the intention of increasing legitimacy and re-connecting citizens with the political system by introducing democratic institutions mainly founded on a participatory and deliberative institutional logic, it should not come a surprise that citizens actually interpret this implementation as a softening of the strict representative democratic model and expect the institution to be a channel for political participation.

The debate on the crisis in democracy in the industrialised states is somewhat tidal. Once in a while the debate runs high, often in connection with an outburst of public engagement in some ‘western’ democratic state, just to moments later hit the low again. The debate in Sweden is an example. In a repeated national survey on trust, the political institutions in Sweden turn out relatively well over time. According to the survey conducted in 2017, 34% of the population place ‘great trust’ in the parliament (The Riksdag), and 31% ‘great trust’ in the government. These figures do, however, fluctuate over time and is currently at low levels. One political institution that does not fluctuates that much, however, is the political parties. Since the
start of the survey in 1997, the political parties have had an all-time high of approximately 20%, and for a few years have been stuck around 15% in ‘great trust’ (Medieakademin, 2017). What this suggests is that the central actors in the political system are deeply distrusted, but that the trust in the democratic system is rather stable, which concurs with global trends (e.g. Norris, 2011).

The response from the political parties and individual politicians to this development is rather confusing. There has been both a scholarly debate (Amnå, 2006; Premfors, 2000) and two official reports from the Swedish government (SOU 2001:1; SOU 2016:5) on the need for more participation in the Swedish political system that most of the political parties agree with by stating that a developed democracy is of importance. However, there are still a few examples of DIs applied in practice in Sweden. As a measurement of the degree of unwillingness to implement DIs in Sweden, it could be observed that there are no DIs at national level. This development is quite in line with Núñez et. al.’s (2017) argument that political parties can strategically display their will to reform and deepen the democratic system, but that once in power they do not prioritise these issues (Núñez et. al., 2017, p. 12).

Given the findings in Article II and IV, the discussions above and the results provided by Núñez et al., (2017), there seems to be a great degree of democratic traditionalism and conservatism involved in the relationship between the implementation of DIs and actual institutional change. While the politicians interviewed in Reykjavik (Article II) did not see the DIs as threats to political parties, the participatory logic the participatory logic is not entirely implemented.

We still do not know how the future relationship between DIs and institutional change will look. In a recent study, Coleman and Sampaio (2017) touched on this relationship, and suggest that ‘[d]emocratic politics depends on predictable mechanisms rather than exceptional bursts of innovation’ (Coleman & Sampaio, 2017, p. 755). It will be interesting to follow the development of DIs and see what roads they might take before being fully embedded in the democratic structure.

5.4 Concluding remarks

While groups of social science scholars have identified “bad collective decision-making” to be ranked as the third most important problem for social sciences to deal with, topped only by “world peace” and “population growth and sustainability” (Muresianu, 2011, p. 3), DI research is, by and large, still considered as something in the margins of the political system.
and as a small sub-field in the wider democratic literature. It is therefore of great importance to point out that research on DIs are research on how to better understand the mechanisms behind collective decision-making and how we can use these insights to improve our political systems.

DIs are often viewed as a small-scale institutions that are mainly interesting in local political settings. By showing how the implementation and development of DIs can influence and produce outcomes in political systems, my hope is that this thesis could contribute to raising DIs on both the research and the political agenda. DIs are not the only answer to how to bridge the gap between politicians and citizens, or improve the quality of the collective decision-making process, but they hold the potential of being a part of the answer.

If we return to the opening metaphor of this thesis, the pointillist painting can be used to understand the problem of DIs in the general debate even better. If the researchers interested in this field have been standing too close to the painting and therefore have not understood what the dots represent, the opposite seems to be true when it comes to politicians, NGOs, companies, civil servants and the media: they have been standing at so great a distance that they have not understood that there are dots in the painting. For most of these actors, the pointillist picture is just a boat, a square or a tree or whatever it might resemble. This fundamental mismatch between our academic knowledge about DIs and the practical development of DIs has resulted in a situation in which DIs are developed without considering the learnings from empirical research. While our scholarly knowledge is rapidly maturing, the development of DIs in states, regions and municipalities are still at the do-it-yourself, listen-to-what-others-have-done, or trial-and-error levels.

Given the findings in this thesis, and the findings that are currently being published around the world, there is a great opportunity for us as researchers to join forces with the developers of DIs (be it local or national politicians, NGOs, companies, or civil servants) and, together with them, study and discuss the pointillist paintings that now hang on our walls, and by doing so develop even more effective DIs in the future. It might be so that we together actually might change democratic politics for the better, and that must at least be one of our goals.
References


APPENDIX 1: Interview Guides

Interview Guide 1: The ECA (Article II)

THEME: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Q: Describe yourself.
Q: Describe your organization.
Q: Describe your role in the organization.
Q: Describe your role in the citizens’ assembly process.

THEME: THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN ESTONIA

Q: Your interpretation of why the crisis happened just now?
Q: Describe the general sentiment of public opinion before these events?
Q: Was this a crisis for the legitimacy of the Estonian democracy?
Q: Did conflicts of interest remain unchanged during this crisis?

THEME: POLITICAL SYSTEM & CULTURE

Q: How are crisis handled normally in Estonia? How different was this?
Q: How would you characterize the role of political parties in Estonian democracy?
Q: Are these events characteristic of the Estonian political culture? Political participation, public dissatisfaction, anti-party sentiment
Q: What is the role of the president more generally?
Q: How influenced have been on other participatory initiatives? Where have you looked?
Q: Many other countries have tried similar solutions, Estonia is not the first place to think about when it comes to radical democratic designs. Why did it happen here?

THEME: THE ECA

Q: What was the main reasons, in your opinion, for this issue turning into a public consultation?
Q: Who initiated the process (government, civil society…) and why?
Q: Who implemented it? How many people were involved in managing the whole process?
Q: What was the objective and what topics the population was being consulted about?
Q: Who were the main actors?
Q: Why did the president step in?
Q: What was the role of civil society?
Q: How did the political parties react? What role did they have?
Q: Why involve the citizens directly, and not go through the political parties?
Q: Did you miss any actors/perspective in the process?
Q: What were the challenges of such mechanism? What obstacles were found in the implementation of the consultation?
Q: Was it any conflicts that led to compromises within the process? Could you carry out the process as you thought...?
Q: The heated discussions – was it any particular aspect of the process you remember that there was a heated discussion about that could be...?
Q: Was it a discussion about making this binding or how to make the Parliament binding to the results – was that part of the discussion?
Q: It seems that some of the stakeholders think that the process in itself is a good thing, that success is not only the proposals. What do you think?

THEME: POST-ECA

Q: Was the result satisfactory?
Q: What was the role of the media? And of new media?
Q: Will the outcome of the consultation process lead to a substantial change?
Q: What long and short term changes do you see in the political climate/system?
Q: How do you think that ordinary people should participate in events like this? When and how should they participate?
Q: How has the process been discussed in the media? Positive or negative? And how is it now?
Q: What do you think about the role of whistleblowers?
Q: Impact on legitimacy?
Q: Impact on participation?
Q: Impact on processes?
Q: How did you participate in the design of the process? Who else did? How important was that?
Q: What do you think about the whistle-blower?
Q: What circumstantial factors contributed to the participatory initiative?
Q: Did conflicts of interest remain unchanged during this crisis?

**Interview Guide 2: The City of Reykjavik (Article IV)**

**THEME: PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

Q: Describe yourself and your role in the organization? (Name, position, political party, experience. Years working in the branch/with the project)
Q: Describe your role in BR?
Q: Have your official position changed in relation to the development of BR?

**THEME: IMPLEMENTATION OF BETTER REYKJAVIK**

Q: BR has been in use for more than four years now. Now I have some questions about the institutionalization and the implementation of BR into Reykjavik political practice.
Q: Starting with the implementation of BR. How did that happen? Can you walk me through it?
Q: Who was the central actors? And are there any central events?
Q: What have been done to implement BR into the policy making process?
Q: What have been done to communicate BR to the citizens? To involve the citizens?
Q: Do you consider the implementation of BR as successful? If yes/no, why? What could have been made different?
Q: Why has BR been so un/successful? Is it because of central people within the organization (forcing it in), a “idea whose time has come” or a collaborative process?
Q: Most e-participatory initiatives encounter problems along the way from idea to implementation. Four general problems are: questions about power (is it a threat to the current model/institutions or a complementary institution/norm?), the perspective on knowledge (is the politicians and civil servants, i.e. the experts, the ones with the knowledge, or the citizens?), resources...
(are there resources allocated to the initiative?), and **perspectives on participation** in general (is there a deeply rooted engagement to these issues or is it merely surface?).

Q: Starting with the issue of power. How has the administration dealt with the issues of power in relation to BR?
Q: Has there been any conflicts? Open or in-house. What have these conflict looked like? Or is everyone “on board”?
Q: How are the issues on BR treated within the organization? Is there a threshold that you need to pass, and if so, when it becomes an official errand, how do you handle it?
Q: From a strict representative perspective, there seems to be problematic to implement features such as BR. How has these discussions been?
Q: Do you see it as a threat to existing institutions (such as the political parties)?
Q: Iceland was internationally known for the deregulations of financial markets and neo-liberal policies before the crisis. How have you dealt with the transition to this participatory focus?
Q: Has there been any formal problems with the implementation of BR? National municipal laws? Municipal policies regulating new committees/processes? Or any other form of formal problems?

Q: The perspective of knowledge is crucial in participatory processes. Who is deciding about what should count as legitimate knowledge in policy-making process is vital to the process. How has these issues been discussed within the city hall?

Q: How do you, personally, perceive it? Should it be that experts make the decisions or the citizens? Or a collaborative process with both?
Q: Experts might feel threaten that their “final word” on what is knowledge is challenged. Is this the case with BR? Have you experience of these discussions within city hall?
Q: Have you any personal experience of cases in which citizens has contributed with “new” knowledge, before unheard of in city hall?
Q: Has these participatory knowledge ideals had any impact on other parts of the administration? Any spill-over effects? Is there some form of mainstreaming, or is the plan to keep it as a separate committee?

Q: Participation and the involvement of citizens demands more resources. BR was taken in at a time when Iceland experienced a financial meltdown. How have this effected the implementation?

Q: Are there special resources allocated for BR, and if so, are they “new” i.e. increase of income that is used for BR or is a prioritization, i.e. some other committee gets less resources?

Q: Have you have need for new competences? Did you have to hire new civil servants to manage it?

Q: Has there been any discussions about this within the city hall?

Q: What is the purpose right now with BR, resource-wise. Will it remain a platform as it looks now, or will it develop in any direction?

Q: What is, regarding resources, the key to why BR works? The main thing.

Q: Perspective on participation. Participation is a broad term and spans from rhetorical figures like “participation is good” to actual involvement of citizens in the policy-making process.

Q: How would you describe BR in relation to that spectrum?

Q: Real involvement demands a lot from civil servants and political parties. Can you give an example of cases/issues that has been co-developed due to the implementation of BR?

Q: What have been done within city hall? Has there been workshops, or educational days or how have you worked with issues concerning participation?

Q: Is there some form of policy on how to handle/work with these issues?

Q: What if a new political coalition in the near future challenge BR, what will be the main arguments to keep/develop it?
Q: BR started as a civil society, grass rot initiative and has turned into a part of the institutionalized system. Has that change affected BR in any way?

Q: Has there been discussions/pressure in city hall how to change/develop the platform so that it is more turned into a formal channel for participation?
Q: BR is a particular form of platform for citizen participation. Has there been any systemic overviews of alternatives to/complements to BR?
Q: Critics (e.g. Blaug 2002) argue that innovations can loose their ‘radical edge’. What would you respond to such an argument?
Q: Has there been any discussions on the design?
Q: Do you consider it as ‘the only game in town’, is it that institutionalized?
Q: So, then, what would happen if BR was taken away tomorrow? Would that effect your day-to-day duties, and what would (probably) be the reaction (in-house/public)?
Q: All in all, BR and the participatory culture must be considered to be a change from the old paradigm. What properties within the organisation do you think is the main reasons for being so flexible towards change?

THEME: FUNCTIONS OF BR

Q: If we see BR as a part of the political system, we can discuss what functions BR serves in the system.
Q: In general; how do you see the role of actors in BR? What role should each actor have?
Q: Citizens / Civil servants / Politicians (political parties).
Q: What essential functions would you say that BR has in the political system as a whole?
Q: Epistemic. Contribute with information, ideas and knowledge from citizens. Input.
Q: Ethical. Contribute to create mutual respect among citizens, and among citizens-politicians.
Q: Democratic. Contribute to create equal participation.
Q: Legitimacy. Contribute to create legitimacy for the current political system.
Q: How are these functions manifested? How is the system designed to create space for:
Q: Epistemic, ethical, democratic, legitimacy.

**THEME: GENERAL ABOUT BR**

Q: There is a risk for innovations such as BR to become overloaded with hope/expectations from both citizens and civil servants/politicians. Do you think that this is the case for BR?
Q: What have been done to make sure that BR is not overloaded?

Q: Put in a broader context. What function/role do you think that BR have now in the political system?
Q: The possibility to discuss on BR. Is that an important feature?
Q: Aggregation vs. deliberation. Many systems lack that opportunity.
Q: A thought experiment: if there was two initiatives, one with few votes but a lot of discussion and well-reasoned, and one with little discussion but a lot of votes; how would you judge these two?

**THEME: BR IN RELATION TO ICELANDIC POLITICS**

Q: Has Iceland political landscape changed in general?
Q: The constitutional process and the ice-save referendums. What is your opinion?
Q: Is BR a part of the same “movement”?

Q: Formative moment? The concept refers to situations in which the political system is incapable of handling a crisis, and that political actors has a genuine opportunity to change the political system in the ground. Do you think that this is a part of a formative moment in Reykjavik/Iceland? Or is it a detour towards “politics as usual”?
Q: BR and innovations as a part of the political system. How do you see the future?

Q: Development of the same platform?
APPENDIX 2: Survey Questions

Survey Questions 1: The ECA (Article II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English translation</th>
<th>Response alternatives</th>
<th>Use of question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you, during the last 12 months…</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a. Contacted a politician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Worked in a political party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. Worked in an organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d. Signed a petition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e. Wore campaign badge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1f. Demonstrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1g. Boycotted certain goods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Device or machine operator, motor vehicle driver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Manual laborer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Does not work, I’m a student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Does not work, I’m retired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a.</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b.</td>
<td>If other, what?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>In politics, talk about left and right. Where would you put yourself on this scale?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0. Left</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What is your nationality?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Estonian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Russian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>What is your highest level of education completed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Elementary school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Vocational secondary education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Higher education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Belonging to political ideology.
For description of socioeconomic background.
For description of socioeconomic background.
## Survey Questions 2: Malmöinitiativet (Article III)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English translation</th>
<th>Response alternatives</th>
<th>Use of variable (operationalization)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey question</td>
<td>Response alternatives</td>
<td>Index variable based on three items, measuring modifications in trust. Each on a scale from −3 to 3, in which 0 indicates stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How has your confidence for the municipal institutions and actors been influenced by your participation in the e-petition system?</td>
<td>My confidence has decreased (1) 2 3 My confidence is unchanged (4) 5 6 My confidence has increased (7)</td>
<td>−9 to 9 α: .913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ia. The municipality in general</td>
<td>Not satisfied (1) Not particularly satisfied (2) Pretty satisfied (3) Very satisfied (4)</td>
<td>Scale 1-4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ib. Political representatives in the municipality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ic. Civil servants in the municipality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way Swedish democracy functions today?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There are various ways to seek to accomplish political change in society. Have you, during the last 12 months, done any of the following activities?</td>
<td>0 = No 1 = Yes</td>
<td>Index based on 11 items measuring participants’ activity in the following forms of participation (each measured on a scale from 0 = no to 1 = yes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. Contacted a politician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b. A public servant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c. An organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d. Worked for a political</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Note: The table content is formatted to reflect the structure and details provided in the text.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>α: 0.737</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3e.</td>
<td>An action group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f.</td>
<td>An interest organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3g.</td>
<td>Participated in a demonstration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3h.</td>
<td>A labor strike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3i.</td>
<td>A boycott</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3j.</td>
<td>Worn a campaign button</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3k.</td>
<td>Contributed financially to a political cause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **What is your age?**  
   Number of years  
   Description of socioeconomic background.  
   Scale: 13-88

5. **Are you a man or women?**  
   0 = Man  
   1 = Women  
   Scale: 0 - 1

6. **What is highest level of education?**  
   1. Elementary school  
   2. Upper secondary school  
   3. Post-secondary education  
   4. University or college degree  
   1-2 coded as 0. 2-3 coded as 1.  
   0 = No post-secondary education  
   1 = Post-secondary education  
   0–1

7. **Politics is often discussed in relation to a left – right spectrum. Where would you place yourself on this scale?**  
   Most Left 1  
   2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
   10 Most Right  
   Scale: 1-10

8. **How well do you think that the municipality have succeeded with the e-petition system when it comes to...**  
   8a. ... information to the public that the system exists?  
   Very poor (0)  
   1 2 3  
   Very good (4)  
   Additive index based on participants’ satisfaction with the following aspects (each measured on a scale from 0–4).
8b. ... information to participants about how the system works?
8c. ... to what extent participation is made easy and accessible?
8d. ... how citizens input is used in the municipal policy process?
8e. ... to explain the decisions that derives from petitions to citizens?

| 9. Here follows a few statements about the e-petition system. We want you to indicate to what extent you agree with these statements. |
|---|---|---|
| 9a. E-petitions give citizens more influence over the local political agenda. | Do not agree (0) | Additive index based on perceptions about whether e-petitions aspects (each item was measured on a scale from 0–4). |
| 9b. E-petitions contribute to better decisions and efficiency in local government. | 1 2 3 Totaly agree (4) | Scale: 0-8 |
| 9c. | Scale: 0-8 \( \alpha: .825 \) |

| 10. What of the following activities have you done on within the e-petition system? |
|---|---|
| 10a. Read petition | 0. Never |
| 10b. Discussed petition | 1. Once |
| 10c. Signed petition | 2. More than once |
| 10d. Created petition | Additive index based on activity in aspects. |

Scale: 0–2
\( \alpha: .742 \)
APPENDIX 3: Division of work in articles

ARTICLE I

Article I is co-authored with my supervisor prof. Joachim Åström. The work was distributed as follows. Magnus: collected all the data, wrote the introduction, wrote the method section, wrote the conceptual background, coded the data, constructed the major part of the analytical framework, did the descriptive analysis of the data, and the major part of the final analysis. Joachim: edited the text into an article format, contributed to the analytical framework, and co-wrote the final analysis. The work was, in general terms, divided 90% Magnus and 10% Joachim.

ARTICLE II

Article II is single authored. While the construction of the questionnaire and the conducting of the interviews in Tallinn were made together with my supervisor prof. Joachim Åström, the rest of the work was done by me alone.

ARTICLE III

Article III is a collaborative article with my supervisor prof. Joachim Åström and Ph.D. Martin Karlsson. The distribution of work was evenly divided. To be precise we: constructed the survey on our own, collected the data, analyzed the data, and also co-wrote the final analysis.

ARTICLE IV

Article IV is single authored. I constructed the questionnaire, I collected the data, I analyzed the data, and I did the final analysis.
Bro, Anders. Från hälsovård till miljöskydd. En historisk institutionell analys av kommunal ansvarsutveckling. 2000


Pincus, Ingrid. The Politics of Gender Equality Policy. 2002


Johansson, Anders. Offentlig kultur i omvandling? Om prestation-finansiering och konkurrensutsättning av offentlig serviceverksamhet. 2003


Åström, Joachim. Mot en digital demokrati? Teknik, politik och institutionell förändring. 2004


Larsson, Josefin. Aiming for Change. Intentional Communities and Ideology in Function. 2004

Gossas, Markus. Kommunal samverkan och statlig nätverksstyrning. 2006


Sedelius, Thomas. The Tug-of-War between Presidents and Prime Ministers. Semi-Presidentialism in Central and Eastern Europe. 2006

Eriksson, Cecilia. ”Det borde vara att folket bestämmer”. En studie av ungdomars föreställningar om demokrati. 2006
27 Hysing, Erik. *Governing towards Sustainability – Environmental Governance and Policy Change in Swedish Forestry and Transport*. 2010
32 Eriksson, Gunilla. *The Intelligence Discourse – The Swedish Military Intelligence (MUST) as a producer of knowledge*. 2013
33 Karlsson, Martin. *Covering distance: Essays on representation and political communication*. 2013


37 Sohl, Sofia. *Youths’ Political Efficacy: Sources, Effects and Potentials for Political Equality* 2014


40 Chatty, Meriam. *Migranternas medborgarskap: EU:s medborgarskapande från Romförhandlingarna till idag.* 2015

41 Andersson, Renée. *Gender mainstreaming as feminist politics. A critical analysis of the pursuit of gender equality in Swedish local government.* 2018

42 Adenskog, Magnus. *Democratic Innovations in Political System – Towards a Systemic Approach.* 2018