

In this thesis questions about online participation are explored through an iterative process in two studies. The first study is of communication practices in a global interest community, which resulted in two prototypes: Actory, a groupware that takes differences rather than equality as the starting point for a collaborative tool, and The Affect Machine, a social network where differences are used as a relational capital. The second study is of communication practices in a local commonality where the art exhibition Performing the Common created a public space and involved participants. This resulted in Njaru, a collaborative tool with integrated decision support and visualization of representativeness.

In summary, these works depart from the notion of the importance of belonging for e-participation, where the individual can be seen as a participant in several performative states, more or less interconnected trans-local publics. This thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of these processes, and discusses how differences in democratic participation can be accommodated with the help of ICT.

Karin Hansson

Accommodating differences

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Power, belonging, and representation online

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Department of Computer and Systems Sciences,
DSV



ACCOMMODATING DIFFERENCES:
POWER, BELONGING, AND
REPRESENTATION ONLINE

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To Patrik, Tove, Noa and Alva

Abstract

What does participation and democracy mean online? New information and communication technologies (ICT) support new types of public spheres, while globalization at the same time challenges the traditional base for democracy, undermining local attempts to support democracy with ICT. Therefore it is important to carefully investigate the participatory processes at stake when creating ICT systems aimed at supporting democracy. But the current e-participatory field lacks coherent theories and concepts to describe democratic e-participation. Most e-participation projects are based on a simplified liberal or deliberative idea of democracy that takes the nation state as its base. How can political participatory processes online be understood in the dynamic, conflicted and highly mediated situations of contemporary society? What does democracy mean in a scenario where inequality and difference are the norms, and where people tend to abandon situations in which they and their interests are not recognized? How can we accommodate differences rather than consensus in a scenario where multiple networks of people are the starting point rather than a single community?

In this thesis, these questions are explored through an iterative process in two studies that have used or resulted in three prototypes and one art exhibition. The first study is of communication practices in a global interest community, which resulted in two prototypes: *Actory*, a groupware that takes differences rather than equality as the starting point for a collaborative tool, and *The Affect Machine*, a social network where differences are used as a relational capital. The second study is of communication practices in a local commonality where the art exhibition *Performing the Common* created a public space and involved participants. This resulted in *Njaru*, a collaborative tool with integrated decision support and visualization of representativeness.

In summary, these works depart from the notion of the importance of belonging for e-participation, where the individual can be seen as a participant in several *performative states*, more or less interconnected trans-local publics. Here the individuals' participation in the local public sphere compete with their participation in other communities and affect the conditions for local democracy. This thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of these processes and discusses how differences in democratic participation can be accommodated with the help of ICT.

Sammanfattning

Vad betyder deltagande och demokrati på Internet? Ny informations- och kommunikationsteknik (IKT) stödjer nya typer av offentliga sfärer, samtidigt som globaliseringen utmanar den traditionella basen för demokrati och underminerar lokala försök att stödja demokrati med IKT. Därför är det viktigt att förstå vilka processer av deltagande som står på spel när vi skapar IKT-system. Men området e-deltagande saknar sammanhängande teorier och begrepp för att beskriva demokratiskt e-deltagande. De flesta projekt bygger på en förenklad liberal eller deliberativ idé om demokrati där nationalstaten är utgångspunkt.

Hur kan politiskt deltagande på Internet förstås i de dynamiska, konfliktfyllda och medierade situationerna som dagens samhälle utgör? Vad innebär demokrati i ett scenario där ojämlikhet och skillnad är normen och där människor tenderar att överge situationer där de själva och deras intressen inte erkänns? Hur kan vi hantera skillnader snarare än konsensus i ett scenario där nätverk av människor är utgångspunkten snarare än en enda gemenskap?

I denna avhandling har dessa frågor utforskats genom en iterativ process i två studier som har resulterat i tre prototyper och en konstutställning. Den första studien gäller kommunikationen i en global intressegemenskap vilket resulterade i två prototyper: *Actory*, som tar olikheter snarare än jämlikhet som utgångspunkt för ett samarbetsverktyg, och *The Affect Machine*, ett socialt nätverk där olikheter används som ett relationskapital. Den andra studien gäller kommunikationen i en lokal gemenskap där konstutställningen *Föreställningar om det gemensamma* skapade ett offentligt rum och engagerade deltagare. Resultatet resulterade bland annat i *Njaru*, ett samarbetsverktyg med integrerat beslutsstöd och visualisering av graden av representativitet i processen.

Sammanfattningsvis utgår dessa arbeten från en idé om vikten av tillhörighet för e-deltagande, där individen kan ses som en deltagare i flera performativa stater; mer eller mindre sammankopplade translokala gemensamheter. Här konkurrerar individernas deltagande i den lokala offentligheten med deras deltagande i andra globalt utspridda gemenskaper, vilket påverkar förutsättningarna för lokal demokrati. Denna avhandling bidrar till en djupare förståelse av dessa processer, och diskuterar hur skillnaderna i demokratiskt deltagande kan hanteras med hjälp av IKT.

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Introduction

Anderson (1991) argues that the nation state was developed and held together thanks to the printing press. This technology enabled the spread of a common culture to a geographically defined language area. This “imagined community” was thus held together by the exchange of information that created a homogeneous culture in areas that previously consisted of culturally distinct village communities. Today imagined communities have a global reach. Thanks to the Internet, shared cultures can hold together more easily and develop without geographical limitations. The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) is changing the view on concepts such as the public and the commons, and undermines the foundation of what is called democracy. Individual nation states are intertwined with the global network of subtle relations maintained through shared communications and culture.

To better understand how to strengthen democracy through ICT, fundamental questions on how a society is composed are needed. Here the nation state cannot be taken for granted as the unit for democracy.

ICT, in the form of text and symbols conveyed through digital monitors, are yet undeveloped means of communication, and these rough simplifications of human communication often create misunderstanding and frustration. Therefore, at its best, the use of email, chat, social media, etc. can make you aware of how the common social space is an evolving set of rules for communication, a game that we are developing together. This means the rules can be identified, challenged, and reconstructed.

Research in the field of e-democracy is greatly contributing to the development of the area and is used as a political tool to change society. A design of a communication tool is always a normative claim, a social engineering, a claim that human communication is done in a particular way and for a particular purpose. When we design software we reproduce norms and create new ones. I do not think that technology alone can transform complex social structures, but I do believe that technology can be a tool to investigate these and also work as manifests to start discussions about the design of the common social space. In this thesis, I use art and technology in this way – as tools to manifest, understand and develop theories about the social, by using them as manuals for computer programs, as rules for card games, or as dramatic conflict in a narrative.

1 Participation, equality, and conflict

The aim with this thesis is to understand how differences in democratic participation can be managed with the help of ICT. The context is the area of e-participation, which in a broad sense means political participation online. In a more common and narrower definition, e-participation often means citizen participation in e-government, but it can also mean political activism in general outside the realm of government. In the literature there is often an underlying idea that participation should be democratic, but the meaning of democracy is seldom defined, whether it means freedom of speech or real power sharing, conflict or consensus. The definition of what is considered political also often lacks definition.

In this thesis I have chosen to define democracy with the help of Dahl (2002) as *the process ensuring that those affected by a decision have a say in making it*. I see e-participation as ICT-supported political participation in the broad sense, where “political” means collective action around common issues and the aim with or level of the democratic participation can vary, from freedom of speech to real power sharing. I also take a radical pluralist perspective on democracy as a process for accommodating differences and conflict rather than reaching a general consensus.

1.1 Problems with e-normative research

Democracy is a belief system that is often taken for granted. It is understood as something unquestionably good, a human right, but also something that will create a more innovative society. I also believe. I have a childhood belief in democracy established in a school system that taught me not so much about society but rather what society ought to be. I am also coming from a research discipline that is not so much about studying society but is instead occupied with what society ought to be and how this ideal can be supported by ICT. Most research areas concerned with ICT and democracy, such as e-democracy, e-participation, e-government, open government, e-collaboration or e-learning, are what I call *e-normative* research. By this I mean that they often share a belief in the possibility of changing social norms and behaviors using ICT. The perspective is often that of a Western society, where belief in democracy is the norm. The researchers are also often part of what is researched, as the innovators of a technology or system, or financed with funding aimed at improving something with ICT.

I think it is a fascinating field in between practice, belief, and science, inhabited by a mix of researchers, social engineers, and bureaucrats. But the belief in the system often diminishes a political reality filled with antagonism and conflict, as if technology would reduce the differences between people just because all users in the data system have the same formal rights to participate. Politics is about managing differences and conflicts. When developing tools for e-participation it is therefore important to also learn from more *e-critical* research fields such as media studies, gender studies, sociology, and political science. As the main focus in this thesis is e-participation, I also think it is important to situate it in the wider context of public participation, not to constrain the research area to digital communication. Parts of the research are also conducted in the area of urban planning where participatory methods have been used since the 60s to involve the public in the planning process.

This quote from the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* captures the political visions of the 1960s and 1970s as well as describing the radical democratic ideology behind the involvement of the public in planning processes:

The essence of politics is who gets what. Or call it distributive justice. The public planning process as a part of the political system is inextricably related to the distributional question facing communities in which planners work. From one point of view there is only one basic criterion for judging the worth of public policy proposals: redistribution. Does the proposed action tend to reduce the differences between those who have much and those who have little? That question overrides every other consideration. In matters of international relations the same standard applies: Will the proposed action tend toward reducing the gap between the rich and the poor of the world? (Davidoff 1975, p. 317)

In this interpretation, political participation is about sharing power: sharing the capacity to impose one's will over other people. It is also about democratic justice, the redistribution of resources from those who have to those who have not.

Today participation is maybe not always used in the radical meaning of the word as in the quote above. Participation has become the norm not only in public planning, but also in many other areas in Western society, but the meaning is not so much about sharing power as sharing information. The conditions for participation in the political process have also changed since the 1960s. At that time the dominant public sphere where most of the political discussion took place in the West consisted of a limited number of newspapers and radio channels. Since then, new communication technologies such as television and the Internet have changed the notion of the public sphere where political participation largely takes place as alternative public spheres have become more visible (McKee 2005). This is

often labeled as fragmentation of the public sphere, as if the public sphere used to be one sphere and technology has created new alternatives to the dominant sphere. But ICT might just have created a visibility for the actual plurality of the public spheres available, and a means to easier access the information and participation in the production of these public spheres (ibid.). This makes it more difficult for those in power to control and stage politics, but it is also more demanding for the “consumers in the political market” (Castells 2007, p. 3). This plurality of public spheres demands a new kind of literacy to navigate and causes a digital differentiation between groups of people that have and do not have this kind of literacy. Research on the development of the global economy points out that the inequalities have increased at the same rate as the ICT-supported global economy, not only among countries but also within the rich countries (Castells 2004; Piketty 2014; Sassen 1996). Therefore the distribution of means to participate in the online public spheres is an important question for democracy.

However, the word “participation” still connotes redistribution of power, not only distribution of means to participate, and in contexts where participatory methods are used to gather information and develop the agenda along with stakeholders, confusion often arises because participants have contradictory or exaggerated expectations of what the process entails. It is, for example, common to talk about “dialogue process” when it actually, at best, is about a consultation regarding an already complete proposal on which the citizens are asked to comment. In these cases the potential to influence is rather limited. To reduce confusion and conflict in a dialogue process, it is instead fundamental to have a common understanding of the preconditions for participation, the relations involved, how information is produced and understood, in other words, the ontological and epistemological foundations of the participatory methods, during the entire process from agenda setting to discussion and decision. Especially to support interdisciplinary research projects that involve different research perspectives and practices, a clarifying of the basic foundation is needed, and a shared understanding of what democratic participation actually means.

The more academic area in the field of e-participation tends, however, to be a bit discouraging in this respect, with quite limited theoretical developments. In their review of e-participation research in six European countries, Freschi et al. (2004) are critical of the lack of real interdisciplinary research in the field of e-participation, where many disciplines are gathered but seldom mix. Several researchers have also recognized the lack of a shared understanding of what actually is meant by democratic participation online. For instance, several overviews of the field of e-participation describe a fragmented field regarding definitions, theories and methods (Freschi 2009; Macintosh, Coleman and Schneeberger 2009; Medaglia 2007; Sæbø, Rose and Skiftenes Flak 2008; Sanford and Rose 2007). A lack of theoretical development can also be seen in related fields.

In Dahlberg's (2011) overview of discourses on e-democracy and in the reviews of the field of e-government by Heeks and Bailur (2007), the authors all point to a lack of nuanced discussion on the underlying concepts of democracy, and to the fact that it is usually an unarticulated liberal or deliberative conception of democracy that forms the basis for technology development. In our review of the open government paradigm, the dominant discourse in these government-initiated projects was the protection of liberal values and enabling of innovation through open data, rather than deliberation and inclusion (Hansson, Ekenberg, and Belkacem 2015).

To support interdisciplinary research projects that involve different research perspectives and practices, and explore a diversity of democracy processes, a clarifying of the basic theoretical foundation is needed to enable a shared understanding of what we actually mean by democratic participation in relation to ICT. Several attempts in this direction have also been made, such as Dahlberg's (2011) four positions for e-democracy and Bellamy's (2000) model for e-democracy. Unfortunately their categories can easily be misunderstood as radical different political positions rather than mutually dependent democratic objectives, which is why they give little guidance when developing e-participation tools and methods.

The research area is also characterized by technical determinism (Macintosh, Coleman, and Schneeberger 2009). An overview of e-participation research in six European countries shows that new media reinforce existing offline patterns of participation, rather than changing them (Freschi et al. 2004). When implemented, e-participation processes seem to follow patterns in offline participation (*ibid.*). Furthermore, research on digital differentiation indicates that technology often increases socioeconomic inequalities rather than reduces them, and it seems that these differences are not primarily about access to technology, but rather about how to use technology to reach out to influential groups. An examination of the access and use of the Internet in 179 nations worldwide shows a social divide between rich and poor within each nation, both in access and in use (Norris 2001). A survey on community engagement and new media use in the USA showed a positive relationship between high socioeconomic status and civic and online participation (Dutta-Bergman 2005). Statistics on Internet use among American adults show a digital production gap and a public sphere where elite voices dominate the digital commons (Schradié 2011). In a study of the "democratic divide" among US citizens, the political users of the Internet tended to be male, highly educated and with high income (Min 2010). Based on the results from an overview of the e-participation field, Macintosh et al. (2009) point out that the unequal distribution of access to the Internet may cause severe problems with regard to strengthening democracy through increased e-participation. Similarly, following a literature review on the field, Sæbø et al. (2008) call for greater

in-depth knowledge of the citizen as an e-participant, especially given the differences in gender, nationality, social grouping, and cultural background. In a recent review of EU-funded e-participation projects, De Marcos, Martí and Prieto-Martí (2012) also point out the importance of looking at the wider participatory situation and putting the concept of e-participation in the context of the field of participation rather than e-government, and developing tools from the perspective of the citizen.

Thus, to further develop participatory tools and methods in the area of e-participation, we cannot assume that there are general and uniform ideas of what democracy online really means. The methods developed in this interdisciplinary context need to recognize these problems and also contain means of clarifying the representativeness in the participative process. In this thesis project, I have examined these issues through the development of one art exhibition and three prototypes for group communication and collaboration. The prototypes are based on two radically different situations: The first situation is a global community of interest. The second situation is a local commonality.

In the following subsection 1.2, I describe the research questions more closely. In subsections 1.3 and 1.4 I discuss theories on democracy in general and how they relate to e-democracy. In section 2 I describe the methodology and data. Section 3 presents the articles included in the thesis, and in section 4 I summarize the lessons learned from the articles in a theory of democratic participation online and propose a map of participatory positions where different tools, power relations, ontologies and epistemologies can be placed as a way to clarify expectation and develop e-participation in interdisciplinary contexts. Finally I suggest future research.

1.2 The lack of transdisciplinarity and coherent theory in e-participation

To support interdisciplinary research projects that involve different research perspectives and practices and explore a diversity of democracy processes, a clarifying of the basic theoretical foundation is needed to enable a shared understanding of what actually is meant by democratic participation in relation to ICT. A research overview of the e-participation field shows that the complexity of the research area and the interdisciplinarity, has resulted in a plurality of definitions of e-participation, from e-participation in government to online political participation in a broad sense, and that there are no unified ideas about what participation online actually means (Freschi 2009; Macintosh, Coleman, and Schneeberger 2009; Medaglia 2007; Sæbø, Rose and Skiftenes Flak 2008; Sanford and Rose 2007). In a literature review of the field, Sæbø et al. (2008) point out a lack of coherent theories and shared concepts in the field as a problem. Macintosh and Sæbø's field overviews show that research on e-participation exists in a diversity of

research fields such as social sciences, sociology, political science and information systems. Despite the diversity of research fields, Freschi et al.'s (2004) review of e-participation research in Europe shows that there is a lack of transdisciplinarity and cross-fertilization between the fields. Several attempts to establish a basic theoretical foundation have also been made, such as Dahlberg's (2011) four positions for e-democracy and Bellamy's (2000) model for e-democracy. Unfortunately their categories can easily be misunderstood as radical different political positions rather than mutually dependent democratic objectives.

In order to support transdisciplinarity in the field of e-participation it is necessary to state the underlying assumptions and ideologies in the concepts, stories and vocabulary used when developing methods for e-participation in public decision-making. Therefore the main aim with this thesis is the development of *a theory of democratic participation online*. To develop this model I first needed to answer some fundamental questions about democratic e-participation, such as: How do people participate online? What does democracy mean in a globally distributed environment? How does ICT affect difference-making processes, by exaggerating them or making them visible?

1.2.1 How do people participate online?

Digital literacy and socioeconomic factors affect people's ability to take part in online political activity, as online participation depends on technical accessibility, education, and having the right social network. But how does this process take place? Why do people participate online? How is ICT part of people's identity and belonging?

Participating online means establishing an online persona that, together with those of others, establishes the worldviews and problems of the participants as the political agenda. Research on online youth culture, for example, shows how participation in the digital age not only means having access to political information, but participating in social and cultural activities online (Ito and Horst 2008). The process of establishing a public presence has been especially important in the creative industry (see, for example, Mathieu 2012). To better understand the role of literacy and socioeconomics in the establishment of an online subject I have therefore looked at the process of creating a professional artistic identity online. Art sociology has shown the importance of differences in production conditions in the arts (Peterson and Anand 2004). The music business (Alexander 2003, Ebare 2004, Zentner 2006) and the visual arts (Dahlgren 2005, Paul 2003) are examples of how technological changes have altered production conditions and production methods, and how the composition of the production conditions structures these changes. But the focus in most of the studies of fine art online I have found is on the production of the artwork, not the communication of the artist. The focus in research in the creative

field is often, not surprisingly, also on what is easy to measure, such as economy and social structure, and less is done on the management of identity. Research on career management also most often presumes clear artistic identities and fields, not the juggling of identities between fields. Therefore it is interesting to see how and why ICT is used by young artists trying to establish an identity.

1.2.2 What does democracy mean in a globally distributed environment?

A research overview of the field of e-democracy shows that the field takes a government perspective rather than a citizen perspective (Macintosh, Coleman, and Schneeberger 2009). It is also characterized by technological determinism, especially a belief in the opportunity to strengthen a liberal or deliberative democracy (Dahlberg 2011). In our review of the open government paradigm, the dominant discourse in these government-initiated projects is the protection of liberal values and enabling of innovation through open data, rather than deliberation and inclusion (Hansson, Belkacem and Ekenberg 2015). Something that is less explored is e-democracy in a global context from an actor perspective, in scattered microcultures such as creative collaborative processes online. Unlike nation states, these “states” are built around common denominators other than geography; these may be climate changes, star wars or minimal art music.

Most theories of democracy assume a normative idea of the state as the common and absolute unity for democracy (Cunningham 2002; Fraser 2005; Sassen 1996). Furthermore, e-participation systems are developed as if it is possible to force the liberal idea of equal rights by technical means. But technology does not reduce the differences between people based on class, gender or ethnicity just because all users in the system have the same technical rights to participate. On the contrary, research shows that difference-making processes are reproduced in technology. Discrimination regarding gender, age, and ethnicity is just as common in virtual as in other social contexts. Herring’s (2008) review of research on gender building online shows how gender is relevant even in anonymous text-based chat and discussion forums. Nakamura (2001, 2008) and Wright (2005) show how racial identity is important for participation in interactive online environments. It is also significant that on Wikipedia, 87% of contributors are males, typically around 18 years old, half of the contributors are younger than 23 years old and only 14.7% are parents (Glott, Schmidt, and Ghosh 2010). Moreover, in the ten largest Wikis, less than 10% of the total number of authors are responsible for more than 90% of the posts (Ortega, Gonzalez-Barahona, and Robles 2008).

Therefore it is interesting to ask what a democratic process means in these globally distributed environments, in a community where unequal rights is the norm and the border for the community is unclear and fluid.

1.2.3 What happens if we exaggerate the difference-making processes?

The digital differentiation and information plurality can create problems for local states and traditional liberal democratic institutions. If the dominating public sphere does not recognize everyone's perspectives and if citizens do not share the same public sphere, collective decisions, and consensus become difficult. Government-initiated e-participation projects mostly have an ambition to improve democracy by making it easier for a diverse group of people to receive and give information and enable dialogues and collaborations on a broad scale through the use of ICT. The idea is to diminish digital differentiation and that obstacles can be overcome by better education, smarter interfaces, motivational games, and campaigns. More difficult questions about power and conflicting interests are mostly ignored.

But what would happen if we focused instead on power and conflict, exaggerating the processes of differentiation, making inequality the norm rather than the problem? What could be learned from this? A way of investigating this is to take the role of the modernistic artist as a departure for this line of reasoning and place it within the framework of capitalism. The artist, this peculiar person with special and extraordinary abilities, is often portrayed as the exception, the one outside the system and not like ordinary people. But it is not only artists that are marketed as special and valuable in their own right. More and more professions emphasize special abilities and any worker needs to create a brand for him or herself in a flexible and uncertain labor market. This phenomenon of personal branding can be studied on online social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook, where not only the individual person is on display but their entire network. If I combined this emphasis on singular and relational beings rather than commonalities and commodities with a marketplace that exaggerates the global processes of differentiation, what would this lead to?

1.2.4 What e-strategies accommodate inequality and differences?

Digital differentiation and a lack of broad participation diminish the legitimacy of the local democratic processes. Therefore there is a need for strategies to accommodate differences on a local level and support actual democratic processes. The digital differentiation is one of the threats against attempts to strengthen democracy through e-participation, as the technology tends to reinforce inequalities between different groups (Macintosh, Coleman and Schneeberger 2009; Sæbø, Rose, and Skiftenes Flak 2008). Inequalities in participatory processes are already reinforced by a media landscape that is fragmented and more difficult to overview. This has also

relocated the interest from the economic inequalities between groups to different groups' unequal influence on the media. Digital differentiation is not only about information access but also just as much a matter of the social and cultural capital needed to gain access to the means for information production and dissemination. ICT is also changing the notion of the common public sphere as economies become even more intertwined. Local issues can easily become part of wider global issues and the simple democratic question about who is affected by the decisions taken is obviously not that simple when it comes to issues such as the climate.

How can we, despite these difficulties, support local democracy with ICT? What e-strategies can accommodate the inequality and differences in the participatory process?

1.2.5 How can the difference-making processes be visualized?

As described above, the difference-making processes online create a huge problem when the ambition is to include everyone concerned by the problem at stake in the deliberative participatory process. If a broad participation is not enabled the process will lack democratic legitimacy. Often government-initiated e-participation projects are encouraged as a means to broaden participation by making it easier and more efficient to participate. But this not only contradicts the idea of the slow deliberative consensus process, it also makes it even easier for those already engaged. The results of these processes are thus easy to neglect and reject as lacking representativeness. In our research project on urban planning, officials questioned the importance of public participation on the grounds that it was not representative (Hansson et al. 2013). But just because not everyone participates in the development of discourse and has an opinion on a matter, it doesn't mean that the discourse or opinion isn't relevant, it just means that some groups of people are not represented. Therefore we need means both to analyze debate from a representative point of view and to enhance awareness about the importance of representativeness in the discussions. A visualization of the representativeness in a discussion might enable a more informed understanding of expressed opinions. Here information both of what and who are represented in the discussion and the question of how discussions are structured, are important.

To summarize the research questions: In order to create a theory for e-participation there are some core questions to look into. The first one concerns the practices of online participation: the establishment of a political persona and a political discourse online. The second question is what democracy means in a context outside a clearly defined state, in a globally distributed environment. The third question is what would happen if the inequality online were exaggerated. The fourth question is how this knowledge about the global community can inform a strategy to

accommodate differences. The fifth question is how e-participation can be analyzed and developed from a representational perspective.

Before answering these research questions I will start by describing some general democratic theories and present the research area of e-participation through this theoretical lens.

1.3 Ideas about democracy: From transparency and consensus to hegemony

Democracy is a concept mostly taken for granted in the context of e-democracy. This norm can be confusing as there are many implicit ideas and understandings of democracy, sometimes contradictory. In this chapter I will summarize three different contemporary democratic ideologies that represent different worldviews and attitudes to communication.

The basic assumption in the e-democracy literature indicates a contemporary liberal representative democracy (Dahlberg 2011; Heeks and Bailur 2007). This means an ideal that emphasizes people's right to participate in regular elections of their representatives and participate in a political debate, but where the elected representatives take the decisions. This system requires democratic rights such as the right to vote, right to justice, right to own property, transparency, and free speech. Democracy in this *liberal democracy* ideology is an instrument similar to a market economy, where citizens vote for the political parties of their choice, based on how these satisfy citizens' needs and interests. Here the idea of individual autonomy and transparency is an essential condition for making enlightened choices.

Proponents of a *deliberative democracy* such as Habermas (1996) or Rawl (1993) are critical of this form of instrumental attitude to democracy, where self-interest is the citizens' motivation rather than the common good. In this interest-driven form of democracy they see a lack of community and shared identity, which means that people turn to other forms of communities such as religion or ethnicity, undermining the legitimacy of Western democracies (ibid.). A deliberative democracy can be seen as a return to the classical roots of democracy, where democracy meant collective decision making among equals. The core idea is that a broad public deliberative conversation is essential for reaching a shared understanding of the problem at stake and decisions taken. In this consensus process all facts are scrutinized and weighted up in a rational argumentation that is easy to understand and follow and where personal interests and passions are put aside. This will create what Habermas (1996) calls a "communicative rationality" that finally leads to consensus. The basis for this collective conversation is also liberal: the free citizen, whose right versus the collective is a fundamental principle. Participants should also be governed by the norm of equality, meaning that everyone has the same chance to speak, to question

and to start a debate. The precondition for a deliberative democracy is an autonomous public sphere. Habermas (1989) defines this public sphere as a domain of the social life where a public opinion can be formed. This is the place where citizen can discuss government politics outside the control of the government and economic interests (ibid.). It is not only public places like cafés and streets that are the arena for this public sphere, but also virtual places in communication technologies like television and radio.

The deliberative democracy model has been criticized for different reasons. Mouffe (1999) and Fraser (1985), for example, pointed out the problem with the division that is made between the public and the private, where the public sphere is considered as a political and neutral sphere where conflicts can be solved through deliberation and where identity and passion are placed in a private sphere that is not considered political. Historically this has, for example, meant that women and children have been excluded from the political sphere. In her critique of Habermas, Fraser (1985) points out how the public sphere Habermas refers to as a central part of democracy, historically, and still, is dominated by men. Fraser describes this public sphere as a discussion club:

It designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. (Fraser 1990)

The discussions on the sidewalks, cafes, and in the newspapers were also about the issues this group found interesting (ibid.). Therefore, issues related to traditionally female-dominated spheres such as reproduction, care issues, family, etc. have not been seen as important political questions, but something private. Although gender relations and the work divisions between men and women have changed in many parts of the world, the devaluation of traditionally female-dominated spheres in politics still remains. There is thus always someone that dominates the public sphere, hegemony, and a hegemonic discourse that dictates what is possible to express in this sphere and what is considered as political. Therefore consensus cannot exist, rather it is a “temporary result of a provisional hegemony” (Mouffe 1999, p. 17), and there is a risk that the belief in the idea of consensus can undermine democratic institutions. Mouffe is also critical of the core aim of deliberative democracy to create a neutral sphere beyond self-interest and passion, where “objective” reasoning and consensus are possible. Instead she insists that democracy is about tolerating a plurality of values and identities and should be about turning conflicting interests into competing interests rather than thinking there is one solution that fits all. Furthermore, she claims that politics is a power struggle between different

worldviews and interests, not a conversation between equals. Therefore it is important to acknowledge power and potential antagonism to find ways to strengthen liberal democratic values as autonomy and equality.

Mouffe agrees with proponents of a deliberative democracy that the current model in Western democracies creates an extreme individualization that threatens community, but she doesn't agree with a "communicative rationality" beyond identity and passion as the solution, but rather an "agonistic pluralism" that emphasizes competing identities and excluding differences as a basis for democracy. Without recognizing the identity of the other, or the other's right to an identity, dialogue isn't possible. The form and procedure for deliberative dialogue is also situated in a certain lifeworld that is not a universal culture but a specific form of life. The mastering of deliberative forms of discussing is a form of power. Therefore Laclau and Mouffe (2001) argue that antagonism is an essential part of democracy, not something that should have disappeared. Without antagonism there is only one order, one opinion; anything outside this consensus is erased and there is no need for a free debate. But antagonism doesn't need to mean there are no visions, no peaceful utopias. It is important with a radical imagination but also to have strategies to balance the tension in between the visions and the pragmatic management of society.

Mouffe's description of an agonistic pluralism is rather abstract and it can be difficult to understand how this can be achieved, or what a strategy for democracy may look like in this perspective. As the more influential public spheres are structured by hegemonic discourses that refuse to acknowledge certain groups' worldviews and identities, and an accelerating production of information limits recognition of the other, the conditions both for a broad deliberative debate and for an agonistic pluralism seem rather limited.

Liberal democracy, deliberative democracy and agonistic pluralism can be seen as democratic ideologies that are expressions of different ontologies and epistemologies (Table 1); from a worldview where knowledge is objective and is data that can be extracted in the liberal democracy ideology, to a worldview where knowledge is something that is negotiated and developed in dialogue in the deliberative democracy ideology, to a worldview where there is a plurality of competing knowledge produced and interpreted by a diversity of situated subjects in the agonistic pluralism ideology.

Table 1. Democratic ideologies in relation to different ontologies and epistemologies

Ideology	Ontology	Epistemology
Liberal democracy	Data	Extracting
Deliberative democracy	Dialogue	Negotiating
Agonistic pluralism	Competition	Subjectivity

To conclude, the critique of the contemporary concept of democracy from proponents of a more deliberative democracy is about the lack of community and broad consensus: Equal rights and transparency are not enough; a more participatory deliberative conversation is needed to develop a consensus on how to solve the common problems. But according to proponents of an agonistic pluralism, such a consensus is impossible because of agonistic worldviews and hegemonic discourses. In the following I will describe the underlying difference between these democracy ideologies, namely the difference in their attitude to the subject.

1.3.1 Individual autonomy and unstable identities

The most important difference between a liberal or deliberative democratic ideology and agonistic pluralism is maybe the attitude to the subject. In a liberal and deliberative perspective the political subject is a rational presence with individual autonomy and political agency. The idea of autonomy is a central institution in liberalism, the idea of the self-governed person with an own authentic self with special characteristics, needs, and desires. The opposite of autonomy is oppression, the belief that there are external forces that guide one's person.

The concept of antagonism is grounded in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) theory of subjectivity. They argue (following Lacan) that subjectivity is not a rational presence with political agency but contradictory, incomplete, and decentered. Instead subjectivity is a process of identification that never becomes fulfilled. A political identity, formulated and visible, for example, in the language of the media, functions as a mirror for identification and at the same time alienates as the self-recognition is more or less incomplete. The subject is the result of the conflict between one's perceived complete identity and one's incomplete contradictory self. Antagonism is thus not just something that is between complete identities; this conflict between the unstable self and society's available identities is what constitutes the subject. Scholars from Goffman (1959) to Butler (2004) have also shown that identity isn't something stable but rather something performed and reproduced by constant repetitions. To understand oneself is to perform available roles, rather than creating ones own role, but as the "costume" is based on the society as we know it rather than society as we feel it, the costume doesn't fit perfectly. Language and society's norms and rules place limits on what is conceivable and feasible (Foucault 1982). Antagonism should therefore not only be interpreted as something that constrains our chances to reach an understanding between different groups in society. Instead antagonism is something that exists not only between groups but within groups and within members of these groups.

To conclude, individual autonomy is a basic condition for democracy, but where in a liberal democratic discourse it is treated as a fact, in an agonistic pluralism discourse it is rather seen as an illusion that at best can be used as

an ideology: a norm that says that a person has the right to make their own decisions in matters that concern them. But the individual's choices are not only constrained by structures, but the constraining structures can be contradictory and paradoxical. In the following I will describe how these contradictions can be seen as possible means to change the structures.

1.3.2 Counter publics, series, and publics

It is easy to interpret Mouffe's agonistic pluralism as a rather pessimistic worldview, without individual autonomy and where deep conflicting interests make a broad consensus impossible. In a defense of the liberal value of autonomy and the deliberative form of democracy, Dryzek criticizes Mouffe's perspective, which he believes puts too much emphasis on group identity, which, he means, risks cementing antagonistic differences between groups of people as it can easily be misinterpreted as a defense of identity-based politics. He also points out the paradox in the theory that on the one hand emphasizes the importance of identity and passion for democracy, and on the other hand declares that identities are fluid and contradictory. Dryzek argues that if antagonism is something that exists not only between groups but within groups and within members of these groups, then individuals in different identity groups can share the same interests with people from completely different identity groups. Thus there is democratic potential in the fact that no identity can wholly unify a group and that there are always tensions within groups as well as within people. He also questions the totality of the hegemonic public sphere and suggests that there are alternatives. ICT can also make it easier to participate in multiple spheres where there is someone to identify with that shares the same interests, where the questions the individual considers important are taken seriously, and where the individual can handle what it takes to participate. Deliberation is perhaps not that everyone should participate in the same conversation, but rather about providing space for several parallel discussions. Dryzek (2003) therefore proposes a development of a deliberative democracy model that takes into account the group's antagonism and individual differences in terms of interest and communication skills. He doesn't believe that everyone should talk to each other, or participate in the same discussion, but that several parallel discourses can take place in different spaces, developed and strengthened in conversation with peers. In the long run, strong discourses influence each other and contribute to a relative consensus in the society as a whole. Here, information and communication technology can help to give individuals the opportunity to find others with similar interests to speak with, while also facilitating an opportunity to move from one room and one perspective to another. Fraser (1985) also talks about the importance of sub-alternative public spheres or counter-publics. If the individual does not recognize himself or herself in the dominant political space, he or she can develop

their own discourses in conversation with peers and create counter-publics, which could ultimately affect the conversation in the dominant room. An example of alternative public spheres is diasporas that use media not only to maintain identity but to develop a community. Sinclair and Cunningham (2001) call these “public sphericles,” so as to emphasize the relational aspect of these publics as they are both about debating common issues and creating a community. Diasporas are also interesting as they are not necessarily outside a hegemonic public sphere but rather in between different public spheres, each of which has hegemony in its local context. In their overview of different alternative public spheres online, Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier (2007) suggest that alternative public spheres are not necessarily counter-hegemonic, but are still of significance for different communities as a source for identification.

To conceptualize these processes of identification I find Young’s concept of series and groups useful. Young (2005) refers to individuals’ common denominator as series, as opposed to groups, as something that you belong to without necessarily being aware of it. The idea of belonging to a series instead of a group enables the thinking of individuals as passive members of a variety of interest groups (read publics) with sometimes conflicting interests. A series may be race, gender, locality, language, food preferences, allergy, hair color, and so on, or just a certain childhood memory. These properties can unite individuals who are completely unaware of each other. A series can also be a reason for deliberately forming a group (excluding other people), the reason that you identify a common interest. By talking about series instead of groups it is possible to speak of “women,” “black,” and “lesbians” as community building, even though these series in themselves may contain conflicting interests in the form of other series such as “class,” “age,” and “nationality.” A series can both be seen as a common asset that enables the actor and something that constrains her. A group affiliation is an important part of identity and the feeling of community and can range from a distant interest in, for example, certain types of books, to a strong engagement in a political cause.

Young’s distinction between series and groups is important for understanding how a common identity is formed. This process of becoming aware of and identifying with a group can also be described as seeing the other as a member of a *category* such as age group or class or identifying oneself or others because of a *relationship* such as friend, colleague or family (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). A category is useful for researchers; relationships are what make sense to the actors and are how categories are expressed in practice (ibid.). The actors don’t share a group because of “class,” but because they are friends and feel they belong.

The word “group” can also be misleading as it is usually used in a broader sense. Dewey uses the word “public” with a similar connotation as Young uses “group,” as something that is formed when a series of people

recognize each other when they perceive how something affects them collectively, which gives them a reason to acknowledge each other and to come together:

Indirect, extensive, enduring and serious consequences of conjoint and interacting behavior call a public into existence having a common interest in controlling these consequences. (Dewey 2012, p. 124)

A public is not only something that you belong to, “public” is also a property of something you make, which is why it is an interesting term in research as it connotes an action that can be observed as it is made public. It is nothing the actor belongs to, but something the actor participates in. Therefore the discussion of whether identity is something essential or fluid becomes less important as we can only see what the actor makes public. The public, the place where identity and interest become public, is thus both a product of social or political action and a ground for further action. This means that the mode of public expression, whether it’s a conversation, an online chat, a painting or a book, is central for the forming of publics. Following the thoughts of Latour (2005), this means that not only humans are forming publics but also communication technologies have an active part. Today the Internet has become an important medium for the public sphere, which also changes the conditions for participating (Dahlgren 2005; Downey and Fenton 2003; Gimmler 2001; Papacharissi 2002).

However, participating in public spheres, whether it is about informally talking with your family or participating in an online political debate, is about engaging in relations and investing time. Therefore the individual has constraints to how much engagement she or he can have. Engagements in different publics can be seen as sharing her or his attention as in Fig. 1. In this example, “family” craves a lot of participation if you have small kids to care for, while engagement in national community might just demand following local news and maintaining the shared language and customs. Neighborhood community takes more engagement in the example, as it is maintained through interacting with neighbors and solving practical problems together. If people become more aware of their various series, if these series become public and expand in terms of the time and energy used to maintain them, the relative strength in their already established publics will be affected. Here Dryzek (2005) sees ICT as a possible mediator between individuals in different publics that can easily be aware of and connect with members of the same series and thus create belonging to new publics.

To summarize, based on an idea about subjectivity as something contradictory, incomplete, and decentered, there is no total identity with one group of people. The subject is rather distributed between different publics that compete for attention. ICT can enable affiliation with new publics and thus weaken the belonging to others. In the following I describe the implications of this for democracy on a global scale.

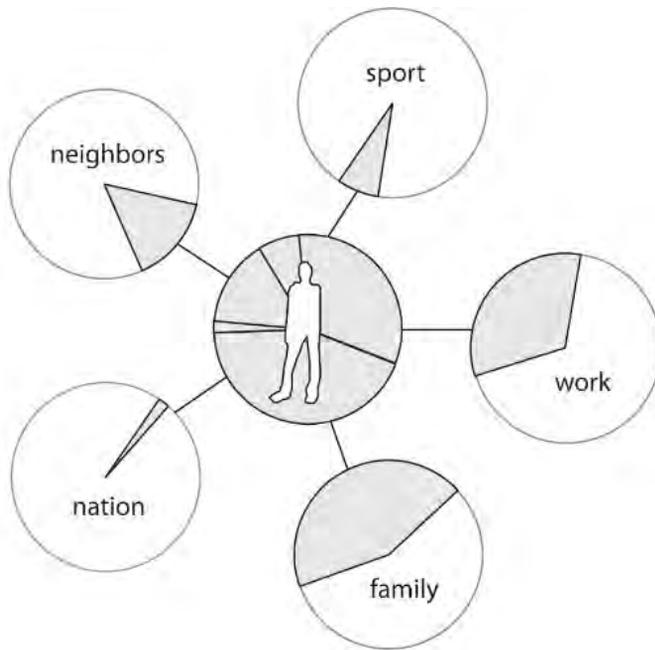


Figure 1. Different group affiliations share the total engagement from the individual.

1.3.3 Pluralism, identity, and participation on a global scale

Dryzek thus sees the possibility of ICT enhancing a broad deliberation as the individual gets access to a diversity of information thanks to participation in a number of public spheres. But this reasoning can also be questioned. According to urban network research, participation in informal networks is structured along parameters such as class, gender or ethnicity, verifying the assumption that equals are looking for equals (Hannerz 1996). People with similar interests or similar problems are simply attracted to each other, as they acknowledge each other's perspectives, codes, and rituals. In this perspective, participation in public spheres is about belonging, shared cultural values, norms, and values developed in interaction between individuals over time. According to Castells (2004, 2007), collective identity and shared norms also become more important in a global networked economy, as this is what is needed to collaborate effectively in this distributed economy. Therefore some cultures thrive better in a nomadic context as they have a system for recognizing each other and excluding outsiders. Following this logic, ICT can simply mean that it gets easier to avoid interaction with people that have different opinions. The equality in these virtual commons can also be questioned. Unlike a local public, a global public is not primarily based on sharing a common space communicating face to face, but on sharing a common interest communicated by books, television, and the Internet, where recognition and acknowledgement of each other are based on this shared interest. It is a virtual place you have chosen to enter, that maybe is also easier to leave, regardless of the physical space. Unlike a physical location and physical bodies, this is a virtual community that participants create together. Without active use of communication technologies there is no common place.

Another implication is that not everyone is part of the process as much as others. Some people invest a large part of their time in this public and therefore have a large influence on the public; others are moderately interested and devote more time to other publics. The difference is maybe not so great between virtual and physical locations; the difference is rather between publics you choose freely and publics that are more compelling.

However, if one sees the individual as a participant in several different publics that are all competing for the individual's attention, it may also be easier to understand the individual's involvement in a certain public. If the alternative benefits are greater in other publics the incentive to participate in the public becomes smaller, as the alternative cost is bigger. Therefore it is interesting to understand the way in which individuals belong to the public and ask questions like: Are there other people who resemble her to identify with? Are the questions the individual considers important present among the local political issues? Can the individual handle what it takes to participate in the global public? These are parameters that altogether create

stronger or weaker reasons to participate in a public sphere. How much participation is required and what does the individual get in return? Political participation can, from this viewpoint, be seen as an individual cost that is not the same for everybody. If there is no one that recognizes the own interests in the available publics, there is also an incentive to create your own discussion space with others that recognize the same interests and where this interest can develop. Fraser (1985) highlights the women's movement as an example of such *sub-alternative public spheres*. The example of the women's movement is also interesting as it shows how ideas about politics and democracy are characterized by norms and hierarchies that are taken for granted. The women's movement has provided a space that attracts people who have not seen their issues represented and treated as important in the dominant public sphere. It also attracts people who do not recognize themselves in this space, where, for example, the newspapers' political pages are still dominated by images of men acting in various ways and where the entertainment pages are dominated by pictures of smiling women waiting for action.

The women's movement also attracts people that in different ways do not feel they can participate in the public sphere. It can be about the timing, when the political conversation takes place, or how much time is required for participation. It can be about how people are treated in the dialogue, whether the others are listening and whether she gets space to develop her arguments. Gender research shows how women generally have less opportunity to speak than men and receive less acknowledgement and feedback in the conversation (Bondestam 2002). Similarly, there are other structures governing the linguistic space in the conversation, such as, for example, age, ethnicity, and class. These processes are mutually reinforcing. If the motivation for individuals to participate in a political conversation is low because they do not feel they belong and that nobody listens to them, simply that they do not recognize themselves, don't think the questions are important or are ill equipped to participate, the risk is that they choose not to participate. This means that there are fewer people like them to identify with, that their questions are even more difficult to get on the agenda and that people like them get even less space in the conversation.

In this perspective, ICT means that it is easier to step out of the political spaces that do not feel urgent. In the long term, this reduces the democratic legitimacy of these political spaces. The question is: How can this process be reversed in order to establish legitimacy in the local political process? What is a radical imagination of global democracy in practice?

Many democracy theories take the nation state for granted as the locus for democracy and see globalization as a threat to this democratic autonomous state (Cunningham 2002). Especially for liberal-democratic theory, the role of the state is central, as it is crucial for structured representation and enforcement of law (ibid.). Therefore I found Dahl's (2002) theory of

democracy interesting because it is also useful without the nation state setting (even though Dahl took the nation state as starting point). Instead the locus for democracy is defined as *the context that includes those affected by its decisions*. Thus it can just as easily apply to members of a family or of a state, as well as participants in a globally scattered public. Democracy is thus a process that is not just about making decisions, but also about defining a “state,” a context that can be either a clearly constrained local context or a more unlimited global one. It is also about defining who is a “citizen” in this shared context. Similarly, Dewey (2012) mistrusts clearly defined constraints of collectivity such as the state or public as there are always individuals acting. Groups only act through individuals. Thus it is the citizen that defines her or himself and recognizes other individuals as citizens sharing the same public. In this perspective a state is a formalized public, or an expression of the deliberation in the public, and the public consists of a plurality of publics (ibid.).

Fraser (2005) suggests three different processes that affect the degree of democratic justice on a global scale. The first process is *recognition*. If individuals do not recognize themselves in their worldviews and the symbolic roles available in a given context, the incentive to participate diminishes. If one’s identity is not acknowledged as political, if, for example, those portrayed as active political subjects in the media reporting are primarily A persons, it can be difficult for B persons to envision themselves in these roles.

The second process involves the *redistribution* of opportunities to participate, like the skills needed and the time required to participate. This involves having both the financial and technical capabilities to participate, as the cultural skills and social networks that enable participation (for example, participating in deliberative discussions on online forums). The third process, *representation*, which those affected by decisions are also involved in, is increasingly relevant for the nation state as the basis for the institutionalization of democracy is questioned.

Pluralism regarding representation, redistribution of means and recognition of identities is thus essential for democracy on a global scale, where the production of media plays a central role.

This overview of the discussion around the concept of deliberative democracy has presented different notions of democracy: liberal democracy with its focus on individual *autonomy* and state *transparency*, deliberative democracy with its focus on structures to achieve broad *consensus*, and emphasis on conflict and *pluralism* in agonistic pluralism. These notions are not necessarily contradictory but can rather be seen as important and mutually dependent aspects of democracy:

- **Autonomy:** Individual freedom and capacity for self-determination or self-governance.

- Transparency: That the rules are clear to everyone, that liberal rights are respected, and that the representatives are made accountable.
- Consensus: The importance of a broad public discussion to develop a shared understanding of the common problem.
- Pluralism: Acknowledgement of different identities and a diversity of intersecting and contradictory interests, providing a plurality of contexts and modalities for participation.

In the following I will present the e-democratic field through this lens.

1.4 Autonomy, transparency, consensus, and pluralism

The young research field of e-democracy consists of different areas with overlapping and sometimes changing meaning, such as, for example, e-participation, e-government, open government, and open data. It is customary to talk about *e-government*, about projects that aim to make government more efficient, transparent, interactive and service oriented with the help of ICT. The field of *e-participation* is primarily one aspect of e-government that concerns the local nation state's relations to its citizens, but it can also signify political activism online in general, not just in relation to a government but also global movements. As ICT has become more prevalent and part of our everyday life, the focus has shifted from the technology itself to how it is used, i.e. the actual participation, and how it changes the notion and functionality of the state. The concept of *open government* focuses on the possible innovation that may be the result of a more collaborative and transparent public sector, where ICT enables the direct involvement of crowds of citizens and officials in the administration of the government. The related concept of *open data* means any kind of freely available data that can easily be used and reused. The emphasis is on availability, access, reuse, and redistribution to enable interoperability. This can either be within the government as a way of sharing data between departments, or in the society as a whole, to enable broad use, exchange and innovation.

As described above, democracy is a process that is not only about information and collective decision-making, but also about who is a representative "citizen" in the corresponding decision-making processes. Central to this process is the aim for *transparency* and individual *autonomy*: that everyone that wants to be involved has a clear understanding of the problems and opportunities as well as the rights to express their understanding and to make their own decision based on this. Thereafter follows public participation in the process of *consensus*, the agenda setting, discussions and voting. Finally, a broad *pluralism* is important, a diversity of conflicting perspectives on different levels, from setting the agenda to discussion and voting. In the following I will describe how these aspects relate to the e-democracy field.

1.4.1 Transparency

The e-democracy literature is dominated by a liberal democracy discourse that emphasizes democratic rights and understanding through *transparency* (Dahlberg 2011; Hansson, Belkacem, and Ekenberg 2015). Bellamy (2000) calls this the *Consumer model*, as it focuses on citizens as consumers of public services and their legal rights versus the state. Dahlberg argues that this is where most of the development of e-democracy is, in projects about giving citizens in a local nation state better service, increased accessibility and information transparency, simply to improve government accountability and “customer service” through flexible information systems and more informed decision making.

Especially in the areas of e-government and open government, transparency is emphasized and concepts such as interoperability and open data are common (Hansson, Ekenberg, and Belkacem 2015). For example, the first two directives of the Obama Administration Report on Open Government (2009) were transparency and participation, with a focus on providing information. Here transparency is put forward as a means to provide citizens with information, while participation concerns improving information with the help of independent citizens and organizations. The focus is thus on information to improve transparency and understanding, and a central precondition for this information exchange is autonomous public participation. The European Commission also talks about accountability through transparency and as a way of creating “personalized” public services (“ICT-Enabled Open Government” 2013). Other documents emphasize broad participation in the information process as a possible way to reduce costs for public services (European Commission 2013). The Obama Administration also points towards efficiency and improved services, and favors a distribution and decentralization of the public sector among several actors, public as well as private. The aim is to decentralize the public sector even further and release public data, making it easily accessible and possible to reuse as well as generally enabling governments to become more efficient in various ways. Hence data interoperability is perceived as important both for accountability and because it can then be used in new and innovative ways. *Transparency* in the context of e-democracy thus means making information produced by the government easily available, but also gathering information with the help of autonomous actors. Citizen-to-citizen and citizen-to-government dialogue enables a bottom-up approach to information production and sharing that enables the public to participate with their time and expertise, motivated by interest. Applications involve supporting the sharing of data between agencies, government to citizens, and citizens to citizens, where the aim is better service, efficiency and innovation, aggregating, competing, informing, petitioning, transacting, voting and controlling. The most common tools for

this kind of e-participation are developed by the private sector, such as photo and video sharing tools like Flickr and YouTube, social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, or micro blogs such as Twitter. But there are also examples of public sector projects that aim to make the public sector more transparent, such as, for example, *Ballotpedia* (n.d.), an online encyclopedia about American politics and elections, *OpenCongress* (n.d.), and more innovative projects such as *Diplopedia* (n.d.), the US State Department's wiki for Foreign Affairs information, *Intellipedia*, a joint information source for US Intelligence Agencies and Departments (Ben Eli and Hutchins 2010), *GCpedia*, the Government of Canada's wiki (Fyfe and Crookall 2010), and *MyUniversity* (n.d.) for educational settings. Other common categories include various wikis and community portals for collaboratively sharing information about local places such as cities (Kassel - Lexikon, n.d., Stadtwiki Karlsruhe, n.d.). In line with this, the state of New York has started to deliver access to public data at data.ny.gov, where people can search, download, reuse and share data from New York State agencies, localities, and the federal government.

1.4.2 Autonomy

Autonomy for the individual and the right to associate as well as disassociate with communities, is an important democratic right (Kukathas 1992). Micro democratic processes in autonomous networks, what Dahlberg (2011) calls an autonomous-Marxist discourse, is also seen as the production principle for a completely new era where reciprocal relationships between equals replace a hierarchical workflow. ICT-enhanced social networks have, for example, received credit for the success the democratic movements have gained in the so-called Arabic Spring in countries like Egypt and Tunisia. This "Cyber-Democratic" model can be seen as the most radical change to traditional democratic institutions (Päivärinta and Sæbø 2006).

Autonomy is also an important aspect of the open data and open government paradigm, where decentralization and sharing of information with a large crowd of independent citizens and organizations is put forward as an innovation strategy. The model is the open-source culture where peers develop software in collaboration motivated by peer recognition or other micro rewards (see, for example, Noveck 2005). Applications are used that support forms of open-source culture where participants typically collaborate motivated by peer recognition or other micro rewards, networking, collaborating, distributing, and sharing. It can, for example, be crowdsourcing projects where the public is asked to perform a predefined task, for example transcription projects like the Australian historic newspapers *Trove* (n.d.), *Citizen Archivist Dashboard* (n.d.), and *DIY History* (n.d.). Other projects are more focused on having a dialogue with the citizens, such as *SeeClickFix* (n.d.) and *FixMyStreet*(n.d.), for identifying neighborhood issues; *Ushahidi* (n.d.), to collect eyewitness

reports of violence; *Peer-to-Patent* (n.d.), to open the patent examination process to the public; and *HM Government E-petitions* (n.d.) to submit and vote on petitions to the House of Commons in the UK.

1.4.3 Consensus

In a more deliberative democracy discourse a broad public deliberative conversation is essential for democracy, both to solve common problems and create a shared understanding of the decisions taken. In the e-democracy field, projects that aim for consensus are typically about changing the representative system by making room for deliberative discussion on various issues and developing public opinion using ICT (Dahlberg 2011). The focus in this “Neo-Republican” democracy is on improving the the quality of citizens’ participation and involvement (Bellamy 2000). This strengthen citizen activity should be supported for the benefit of both the political sphere and the citizens’ well-being.

Consensus in the e-democracy field means tools for collective decisions and information production to develop information and shared understanding: agenda setting, arguing, deliberating, educating, meeting, opinion forming, reflecting, and negotiating. This means tools for information, discussion, and collaboration in social media. This deliberative democratic model is motivated by the belief that this will both enable a more informed understanding from the point of view of the officials and create a better understanding of the decisions that those in power finally make. Support tools for the deliberative process therefore also aim to structure the decision situation and provide information regarding the alternatives and criteria involved (Danielson, Ekenberg, and Riabacke 2009; Ekenberg et al. 2009). Deliberation can also be seen as a culture, a behavior that needs to be established. This is, for example, the ambition in Regulationroom.org, an online experimental e-participation platform, designed and operated by the Cornell e-rulemaking Initiative (Farina et al. 2013). Regulation room is a tool that aims to open up the rule-making process in legislation, by inviting the public to review new regulations. The discussion process is structured according to policies and supported by moderators trained to help users to follow those policies and to foster a deliberative discussion.

1.4.4 Pluralism

An important feature of democracy is tolerance and the existence of a plurality of values and identities. In an e-democracy context this means the formation of a diversity of public spheres that develop their discourses in enclosed counter-publics (Dahlberg 2011; Fraser 1990). This demo-elitist position focuses on how different interest groups are more actively involved in the formation of consensus (Bellamy 2000). Applications should acknowledge diversity, inequality, and conflicts, and support for establishing counter-cultures, and collective actions, community building, campaigning, contesting, organizing and protesting.

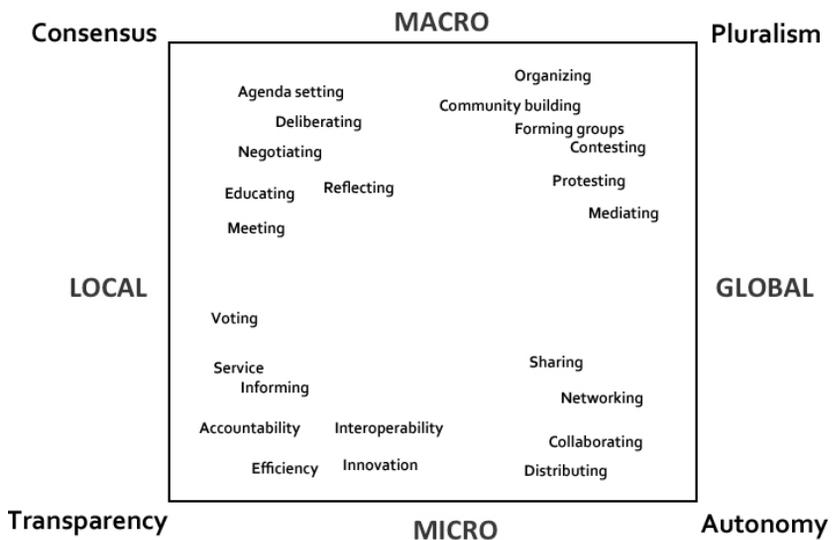


Figure 2. Map of e-democratic aims in relation to democratic aspects, local/global locus and macro/micro focus.

Strong interest groups are seldom addressed as a problem in the e-normative e-democracy field, and if they are, it is rather treated as a fact or an opportunity, not a problem. In the document from the Obama Administration, for example, to “involve everyone” is a way to “develop more complete pictures” (*Open Government Progress Report to the American People* 2009). In the European Commission’s “Vision for public service” (European Commission 2013), questions about diversity, inequality or inclusion are excluded and citizens and the public are treated as one voice. In other documents, diversity is touched upon as a design question that can be overcome, for example to produce more “personalized public services that better suit the needs of users” (“ICT-enabled open government” 2013, p. 2). The downside of a more participatory government is that those who are involved are often groups of people who are already relatively influential. Most people may not have the motivation to participate. They have other more pressing interests to engage in and may not see any benefits in getting involved in the issue. It takes a certain kind of cultural and social capital for the involvement to be rationally justified and meaningful. It is also a question of belonging, feeling ownership in a question and feeling at home in the social context of the participation.

1.4.5 An e-democracy map

This presentation of the e-democratic field through these four aspects of democracy shows that the main research and development of e-democracy relates to the aspect of transparency. If I place these four different aspects of democracy (transparency, autonomy, consensus, pluralism) on a map of different foci (micro, macro) and loci (local, global) of democracy I describe a field where different types of e-democracy projects and applications can be placed. This map (Fig. 2) is structured between a macro perspective, where the focus is society as a whole system, and a micro perspective where the focus is society from the individual’s perspective, between a constrained local locus and a global one without clear boundaries. By locus I mean the situation: whether it’s a local constrained situation, such as the citizens in a nation state, or if the locus is more fluid and unlimited, such as the soccer community, where everyone that has an interest in soccer has a part. Research overviews have shown that there is lack of research concerning an understanding of why people participate in, and tools that support, autonomous movements and the peer-communication within. The map of the e-democratic field shows that this means that there is a *lack of research at the micro-global level* concerning an understanding of why people participate.

It is foremost a transparency that is put forward where accountability and service are the goals. Even when a more deliberative ideology is present there are seldom any more advanced tools for structuring the consensus process that is in use, but primarily simple standard discussion forums on social media. This means that there is also *a lack of research and*

development at the macro-local level concerning tools for decision support and analysis. Finally, there is a huge interest in combining these two aspects of democracy, autonomy and consensus, and using crowds to make the government more innovative and efficient. This combining of a global and micro, and local and macro perspective means combining two different ways of looking at identity and power that call for an interdisciplinary elasticity to be made possible.

So why do people participate online? How can a plurality of autonomous movements be supported by the help of ICT? How is peer-communication supported? Another way to see this is how a local constrained locus is related to the globally distributed locus, and that this knowledge might help develop tools for consensus on the micro-global level. In what follows I describe a methodology for how these issues can be examined.

2 Methodology

To understand how the local space is related to the global in participatory processes and how this knowledge can develop democratic e-participation, I have looked in this thesis project at communication structures in two different situations. The first situation is a global community, namely the global art world. This has been investigated by studying how art students develop an identity in this sphere and explored further in two prototypes developed through participatory design and artistic methods. Here ICT means that it is easier to step out of situations that do not feel meaningful and at the same time that the individual to a greater extent is the co-creator of this social room. The second, more experimental, prototype combines two different tools for online collaboration, one that represents global economic processes and one that represents the social sphere, to explore what an integration of those systems could lead to if there were a cultural and legal support in place. Here the method is to explore this in detail through various prototypes and scenarios. The second situation I have looked at is a local commonality. In an interdisciplinary research project with, among others, artists and urban planners we have looked at the information structures in Husby in Stockholm and developed a tool for deliberative processes that measure representation.

2.1 Qualitative methodology

Methodologically I place this work in a qualitative epistemological position that acknowledges the importance of situating research within a particular social, cultural, and historical context. This means that I stress the importance of the qualitatively defined basis for different methods, quantitative as well as qualitative, and I see the researcher as a co-creator in the development of the social world under study. In my perspective the interpretations, structures, theories, and other systems used by the researcher also affect the socially constructed worldview that is investigated. Consequently, the researcher is responsible for the worldview that is created. Here I do not mean that the researcher must change the world, but rather that the researcher is always changing the world to a certain extent and therefore a reflection on the ideologies that are reproduced in the research is important in order to have a critical perspective.

I am also interested in identifying theoretical perspectives that can be useful tools, not only for understanding but also for changing the world. Therefore, I am interested in how the singular actor creates meaning, but also in understanding how the actors are co-creators of the structuring processes. Haug (1999) argues that an actor perspective implies an emancipatory aspect, as it visualizes how the individual is a co-creator of the social world and therefore can also stand for change. Therefore I think it is interesting to combine a macro perspective that highlights overall social structures with a micro perspective that illuminates the social creation of meaning that motivates the single actor. I have chosen a mix of research methods that in different ways focus on this relationship, from established qualitative ethnographic methods to more unexplored participatory research methods, as well as exploratory design methods, and artistic methods.

2.1.1 Mixed methods to explore contradictions

Following the arguments of thinkers like Feyerabend (1998; n.d.), Harding (1995) and Haraway (1988), I have come to the conclusion that the “reality” is somehow out there and at the same time “in here.” But it is extremely complex and dynamic and is therefore not possible to understand using just one theory or just one standpoint, and it is also mediated through our human understanding. Therefore, what we at least can do, as a collective, is to create a rough sketch of our shared understanding. By a sketch I don’t mean a painting or drawing, rather a clay sculpture. As everyone that has ever tried to create a three-dimensional model of reality knows, one perspective is not enough. For example, when modeling a living human body, you have to constantly circulate around the model while rotating the clay sketch. To capture the whole requires distance; in order to understand the design of the details one must be close. The interaction between bone, muscle, skin and fat gives a shape that is sometimes soft, sometimes tense or stiff. To understand the balance and the weight of it or what happens when the body gets tired or angry, I use my own body. So by acting like a sculptor, I am using a mix of methods that involve all my senses, logic, experience and social relations, in order to maintain an understanding of a complex and dynamic reality.

In this thesis I have mostly used distinctive qualitative methods and looked for heterogeneity rather than for statistical relationships, but I do set these qualitatively oriented studies in relation to more quantitative studies. Also, in my own studies I try to twist and turn the material to illuminate it in several complementary ways. It may, for instance, be a matter of collecting qualitative data using open interview responses and then quantifying the results by, for example, counting how many people interviewed emphasize a particular subject. Or it can be about letting the statistical results of a survey form the basis of an interview question to see how the informants explain this information. This way of using a mix of approaches to illuminate a

phenomenon is usually referred to as triangulation, integrating, combining methods or mixed methods and simply means that you mix different approaches, quantitative and/or qualitative.

Many researchers use a mix of methods without consciously linking these to a particular worldview, such as letting a questionnaire consist primarily of closed questions but finishing with some more open discussion questions. In an overview of mixed method research, Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher, and Pérez-Prado (2003) point to a positive relation between the quality of the research and the researchers' awareness of the ontology and epistemology behind the choice of methods and approaches, thus showing the importance of understanding why different methods are used and what happens if they are combined. There are a number of reasons to choose a mix of methods. In their review of 56 mixed method studies, Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) list five main reasons; to triangulate different methods in order to obtain confirmation of these; to gain complementarity and clarify the results from one method with the results from another method; to use the results of one method to inform and develop another method; to discover paradoxes and contradictions and recast the questions from one method with questions or results from another method; to seek to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods. My focus here has not been to gain complementarity and confirmation but rather to use different methods as a way to discover paradoxes and contradictions, and as a way to recast questions from one method with questions or results from another method.

2.2 Researcher's position in qualitatively oriented studies

Within quantitative research, *reliability* is central to the assessment of research quality, the idea of replicability or repeatability of research results if the same research instruments and methods are used. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that in qualitative research the researcher is the instrument, therefore it is the *credibility* of the researcher that should be examined, and how trustworthy the study is on completion, rather than its replicability. This can be achieved if the researcher clearly states how the investigation is conducted, to give the reader an opportunity to assess the credibility of evidence. Methodologically this qualitative approach means that the researcher's position is crucial, as the empirical data is defined and interpreted by the researcher's experience and developed through her relations. It is therefore important to reflect on the meaning of who the researcher is. Feminist scholars particularly emphasize the importance of "situated knowledges" (Haraway 1988) and the representation of diverse people and perspectives in research. As the researcher always has a limited range of experiences and is situated in a certain cultural and socioeconomic context, it is important to involve a diversity of people in the research to get as many perspectives as possible.

This situatedness is also one of the rationales behind the use of different types of participatory methods in this thesis. Participatory methods might clarify and reduce the strength of the unequal power relations in the science-making practice. This means that I try to reflect on how the researcher and a dominant epistemology influence the outcome of the research and I focus on how the research situation always contains a power dimension that affects the questions asked and how they are interpreted.

Changing power relations between researcher and participants may, for example, be about having an open discussion in a group instead of having the questions in an interview situation decided in advance by the researcher, thus limiting what the conversation will be about. Changing power relations may involve taking into consideration the differences in the opportunity to speak in a group discussion and in finding ways to change this. This is about different degrees of participation, and as e-participation is the topic for the thesis, examining and developing participatory practices in the research situation are also close at hand. Therefore I have been looking into the use of participatory methods in research, art and design.

2.2.1 Participatory research, art, and design

Participatory research is a general term for the use of participatory methods to change the way research is conducted, especially in development and health research. It emerged as a response to a research paradigm that alienates the researcher from the researched. Instead participatory researchers aim to change the power relations between researcher and participants and to create knowledge that clarifies these relations (see, for example, Cornwall and Jewkes 1995; Cornwall 2003; Wallerstein 1999). The rationale behind participation is that this will enable change, as those that are affected by the “problem” have been involved, meaning the implementation will be more effective and sustainable. This is also the rationale in other participatory approaches such as participatory urban planning and participatory design, where participatory methods are used as a way to create a more informed planning and design process. The political grounds for these approaches are a basic democratic idea that all, regardless of age, gender or level of education, have a right to participate in decisions that claim to generate knowledge about them (Gaventa and Cornwall 2006; Reason and Bradbury 2008), or that affect the way they live (Ansell and Gash 2007) or the way they work (Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2010; Dearden and Rizvi 2008).

Participatory methods have become an important part of the research and design processes in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), and in fields such as art and urban planning and design. But just as in the e-participatory field, there are no unifying ideas on what participation actually entails and there is often an underlying liberal notion of democracy, where the individual’s right to participate is emphasized and unequal power

relations in the participatory situation are neglected. An overview of the critique against participatory approaches in development studies shows how unspoken norms of community and an ignorance of the different interests and diversity found in most groups become problematic when translated from one cultural context to another (Cooke and Kothari 2001). There is also a tendency to ignore the fact that unequal power relations in a group of participants can actually be meaningful and motivating (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell, and Blake 2010). In general, the understanding of people's motivation to participate in participatory design is also vague. In an analysis of discourses in design policies, Gidlund (2012) calls it a "holy grail" of participatory design, something that is taken for granted in the participatory design discourse and also in the field of e-government. One thing that used to be emphasized as crucial for the incentive to participate is ownership. Ownership in participatory processes can be seen as something fluid that is established and strengthened by participants' self-definition, autonomy, belonging, recognition, and reputation (Light et al. 2013).

There is also an excessive focus on the method in participatory approaches, while the role of the artist/designer/researcher is dimmed. Light (2010) suggests that the designer using the method should be an equally important object of study, as participatory methods depend on the person enacting them. However, an overview of participatory design in international development efforts shows that as participatory methods have become more mainstream, issues of technology have been emphasized at the expense of concerns about relationships between people (Dearden and Rizvi 2008). Within the arts there is also a criticism that claims that participation has been reduced to an aesthetic that acts more in an excluding than an including way, as it lacks a clear subject to address (Bishop 2004; Foster 1996).

In order to strengthen motivation in participation, in my research I have especially explored participatory methods with a focus on relations, empowerment, and ownership. Just as a mixing of methods can give a more complex image of reality, a mix of participatory methods changes our relations to reality and thus the way it is produced and understood. By changing the power relationship in the research situation and going from one position to another, it becomes possible to ask other questions and receive other interpretations of the results. The aim is not primarily to create a more "democratic" research situation, but to mess around and get new perspectives. This mix of participatory methods will hopefully create a larger, more complex picture of the world than we had before.

In the following I discuss how different positions, or levels of participation, can be described.

2.2.2 Levels of participation

Two useful references to articulate the level of participation are Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation in urban planning and Wulz's (1986) stages of participation in design. Arnstein's ladder of participation describes seven stages of participation focusing on how the participant is used in urban planning and the aspect of power and domination of the participant. Wulz's stages partly overlap Arnstein in range, but have a designer perspective, from an abstract representation of a user in the designer's imagination to the user as the designer. Another way of looking at the participant in the design and research process is introduced by Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) in an article on participatory methods in health care, where they suggest different views on the participants depending on the mode of participation, from the participant as a passive research object to an active agent. A functional mode of participation is where the participant is viewed as an *object* that is involved to secure compliance and lend legitimacy to the process. In an instrumental mode of participation, participants are *instruments* and participation is a way to make projects or interventions run more efficiently, by enlisting contributions and delegating responsibilities. In a consultative mode of participation, participants are viewed as *actors* and participation is a way to get in tune with public views and values, garner good ideas, defuse opposition and enhance responsiveness. Finally, in a transformative mode, participants are *agents*, with political capabilities, critical consciousness and confidence.

These scales (summarized in table 2) of different relations between participants and designer/researcher are of course a simplification and should rather be seen as a scale of dynamic positions. In some projects the roles are more in constant negotiation and it is not clear who is leading the design or research.

Table 2. Comparison between Arnstein's (1969) ladder, Wulz's (1986) stages of participation and Cornwall and Jewkes' (1995) modes of participation

Arnstein's ladder	Wulz's stages	Cornwall and Jewkes' modes of participation
Participants' power position	Designer's attitude to participants	
Citizen Control	Self-decision	Agents
Delegated Power	Co-decision	
Partnership	Alternative	Actors
Placation	Dialogue	
Consultation	Regionalism	Instruments
Informing	Questionnaire	
Therapy	Representation	Objects
Manipulation		

It is also important to remember that artifacts such as sketches and prototypes are a central part of participatory design, and also something with

agency, relations and power (Gartner and Wagner 1996). Houde and Hill (1997) show, for example, how different modalities and materializations of prototypes change the way they are perceived and used in the research and design process. A prototype can, for example, be a simple and abstract sketch that invites participation as it is open for development, unlike a detailed CAD drawing that almost looks like a finished product but is easier to criticize, or a computer program that needs a certain expertise to read. Artifacts are also interpreted differently depending on their symbolic value: a sketch by a singular artist, for example, is interpreted differently than a data sheet with values generated by computer scientists.

In the studies described in this thesis the ambition has been to move from the bottom towards the top of Arnstein's Ladder, Wulz's stages and Cornwall's modes, and to move from artifacts that signify commonality and authority to artifacts as individuals' creative expressions. This thesis contains an exploration of all these types of participation. I have gone from looking at the participants as rather passive objects to treating them as active agents. Initially, to investigate presence on the Web for a student group, I began to gather information available online. Here I observed the students' expressions on the Web and relations in social media. The informants were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the results, but in practice did not have much to say. I went on to conduct individual interviews, where I, as a researcher, asked questions and collated and interpreted the results. The participants were treated as instruments that should confirm or question my online findings. To deepen this investigation and to change the power structure of the situation where I as the researcher decided the agenda, I went ahead and explored more participatory methods such as a research circle where the informants were treated more as actors and stakeholders in the research and the group together created the agenda. Here, democratic meeting techniques were used to enable a situation where participants had a more equal distribution of time and information. The research circle developed into a participatory design project that explored additional perspectives on the situation with the ambition of changing it. Here the role of the informants was more as agents in a transformation of the situation.

In a subsequent art project a collective writing about memories was conducted with a group of artists as a method for gaining deeper understanding of a common theme. Here I regarded my informants as co-researchers and experts on what was being investigated. My role as researcher in this context was more like that of a secretary and moderator of discussion and the link to a larger scientific context. In the art project I went beyond these models, towards a situation where I as a researcher was also a participant. The aim of the art project was to connect a certain situation with the subjective position of the participating artists, in order to develop a multifaceted image that could expand the discussion to a wider group of

people. Here the participants had become artists and the researcher a curator or director of a cultural event.

Combining the scale of different types of participant with the scale of different types of views on the researcher, we get a field (Fig. 3) where one can place uses of participatory methods – uses corresponding to different epistemologies, from seeing the researcher as someone who is coming up with general theories looking at informants’ common behavior (commonality) to ideas of particularity and subjectivity as a basis for knowledge production (singularity). Mixing participatory methods is a matter of taking different positions in this field and using the tension and contradictions between these positions as a source of knowledge. In this thesis I have gone from a position of commonality towards a position where I focus on singularity, meaning that I started by looking for general patterns in larger amounts of data and moved towards studies that focused on understanding single perspectives. One reason for this was to motivate participation through ownership.

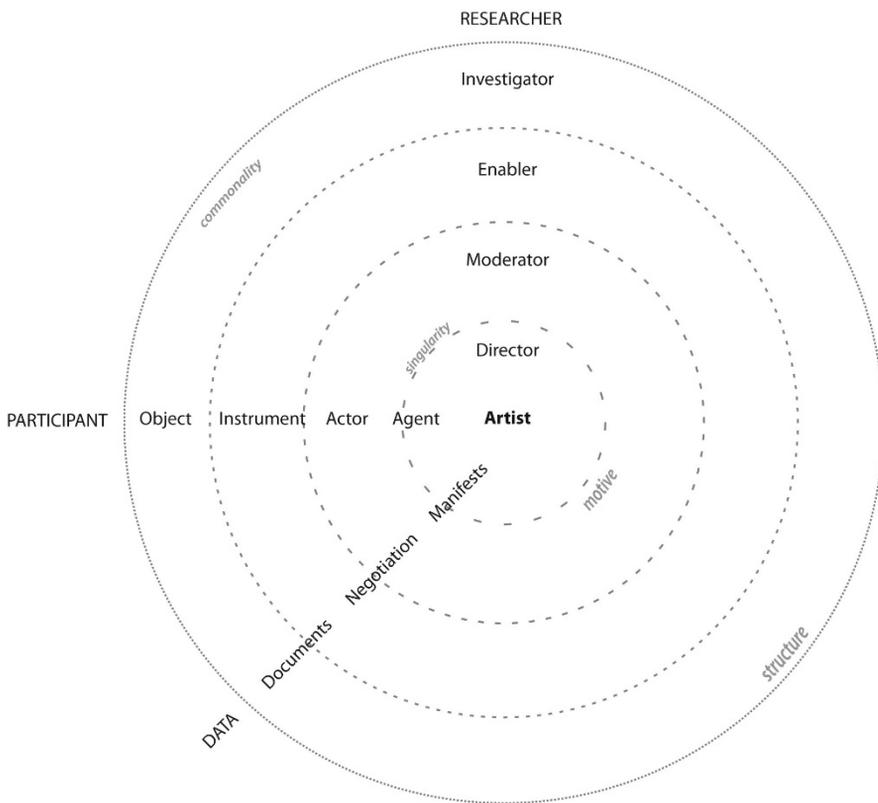


Figure 3. Positions for the researcher, the participants and the data in relation to different epistemologies.

2.2.3 Ownership, belonging, and recognition

There are, of course, many motives to participate or not in collaborative research or design. But when working in informal settings, outside organizations, one intangible but important motivator is ownership (Light et al. 2013). Ownership in this sense is not primarily about legal ownership; rather it means having influence and control over decisions. Light et al. (2013) describe ownership in the design process as having a stake in the outcome, but also having a feeling of ownership, in terms of identity, responsibility and artistic creation. Mkabela (2005) points to the relational aspect of motivation and argues that it is ownership based on the social community that motivates participants to put time and engagement into the process. In line with this, Rodil, Winschiers-Theophilus, and Jensen (2012) define a truly participatory process as something collectively owned. In my own work in nonprofit and artistic collaborations, the sense of ownership is essential for motivating participation. But unlike the above researchers that emphasize power over the participatory process, I emphasize an ownership that is not so much about control over process, but rather about having a personal connection to the issue at hand, that is something that engages deeply and has an impact on your understanding of self. This reading of the concept is close to the concept of recognition discussed in the theory chapter, to recognize oneself in the worldviews expressed in the context. It is also close to the concept of belonging, to have a rightful place and to want to be part of a context. This is the kind of ownership that is aimed for in the cases described in this article – ownership based on belonging and motivated by recognition.

To understand ownership and motivation I have in this research project explored participatory methods from different fields and epistemological positions, to change power relations among actors. My role as a researcher has gone from being an investigator of objects to the moderator in the discussion, to a director in dialogue with other artists. In the following sections I describe my methods in more detail.

2.3 Digital ethnography to understand participation in the public sphere

I define participation not only as the ability to express oneself, but also to feel recognized in the public sphere: on Web pages, in newspapers and on online social networks. Therefore, in order to set the design of e-democratic tools in a larger information structure, I have in this thesis conducted an analysis of e-participation by combining a broad content analysis of large amounts of online visual and text-based data with deeper interviews with smaller groups of informants as well as conducting participant observations. I call this a digital ethnography as it concerns the human-technology interactions through the use of mainly qualitative research methods. My aim

is to understand how ICT is part of the making of meaning in the culture and how the communication structures relate to the individuals' worldviews.

2.3.1 Studying my own context at the Royal Institute of Art

The first digital ethnography was conducted at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. This is an important place for maintaining the global art world as it is a working place not only for students but also alumni and other artists, and the professors are not employed for longer than 5–10 years and are recruited from an international pool of artists. Therefore, this was an interesting starting point when studying the information structures of a global community.

The school was partly my working place during the three years between 2009 and 2012 as a PhD student and teacher, and as I was also a student in the arts program from 1988 to 1994, my knowledge of the institution was good. As, at the same time, I worked at the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV) at Stockholm University, and I have a long experience of working in similar academic settings, the comparison between the institutions was interesting. Becker and Faulkner (2008) believe that being part of the world you want to study can be both a hindrance and an important advantage. For example, it may be difficult to ask colleagues things that are obvious to those who are part of the culture, and the field's values and culture are a norm that can be difficult to see when you are the one reproducing them. But at the same time there are benefits. It is easier to be accepted and trusted, it is easier to understand what is happening and to ask questions that are meaningful in the respondents' opinion. That I am influenced by the field's values has been a problem I have tried to solve by inviting co-researchers from outside this field who have been good at highlighting and challenging these values. The collaborative research methods, both in terms of involving informants and co-researchers, increased the transparency of the research process and allowed it to be challenged by everyone involved. Here, methods, concepts and beliefs that are considered self-evident in the field of art have been strongly questioned by participants from other fields such as sociology and computer linguistics and vice versa.

A culture is created by a myriad of subtle actions, from the way people dress to how they organize their bodies and design their space. My position between two very different institutions also helped me to understand their respective cultural particularities. These institutions can be seen as opposites in their demographics and ways of conducting education and research. The Royal Institute of Art, with its approximately 230 students, is the most prestigious Swedish art school and was founded in 1735. Students are enrolled based on their artistic portfolio and they have usually studied at several art schools before. The Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV) was established in 1966 and is, with its roughly 5800

students, the biggest department at Stockholm University. Students are usually young and unlike students at the Royal Institute of Art, they represent a diversity of backgrounds. The teaching tradition is also diametrically different. While the focus at the Royal Institute of Art is the individual's personal artistic development and seminars are seldom with more than a handful of students, DSV courses shouldn't have fewer than 40 students at undergraduate level (and can in practice have several hundred) and the objective is always clearly defined and thoroughly examined.

In the first year at the Royal Institute of Art I wrote a research diary, but beyond these rather brief reflections I didn't take any systematic notes, which is why my participation in the context of the Royal Institute of Art can't be described as participatory observations in the strict meaning of this methodology. But as part of my teaching practice I undertook more systematic observations. Together with the students, for example, I conducted observations of the context as part of courses I developed such as "Artistic development project" and "Liberating artistic practices." In these courses we looked at information structures by, for example, analyzing the information flow at the school using feminist theory and analyzing our own development as artists. This structured dialogue with students, summarized in meeting notes and online discussion forums, has been a useful source of information when formulating my research questions and especially for identifying questions that were relevant for the group under study.

2.3.2 Qualitative content analysis

As a way to explore the information structures at KKH in a more systematic way and understand students' participation in a public sphere in news media and on the Internet, a primarily qualitative content analysis was carried out on students' online presence.

To understand e-participation it is both necessary to see the visual discourses that express a particular identity and the actual technical means of production the individual should be proficient in to master communication. There is a certain type of labor for example in maintaining a blog as in fig. 4. All aspects are an important part of the person's capacity to participate online. Basically it is about the person's media literacy, their ability not only to understand the media but also to understand and control the subtle cultural nuances that are important. Lankshear, Knobel, Bigum, and Peters (2007), among others, talk about a "new literacy" as the capacity to participate actively in digital cultural production. Here communication is about the character of the image, color, and typography on the web page, whether it is a free blogging service or their own web page, whether it is on Facebook or MySpace, if the image of the person is coherent or fragmented and so on. Also, the technical aspects of the information, whether it is a photo of a painting or an interactive video, are treated as expressions of the identity and thus a part of the whole. In order to investigate how anyone

participates online it is not enough to look at the information available. Interactivity is required for a deeper understanding of the interactive and social dimensions of social media (see, for example, the discussion by Doostdar 2004; Murthy 2008). Therefore I created active user identities for myself in the most used social networks, such as Facebook, MySpace, and Flickr.

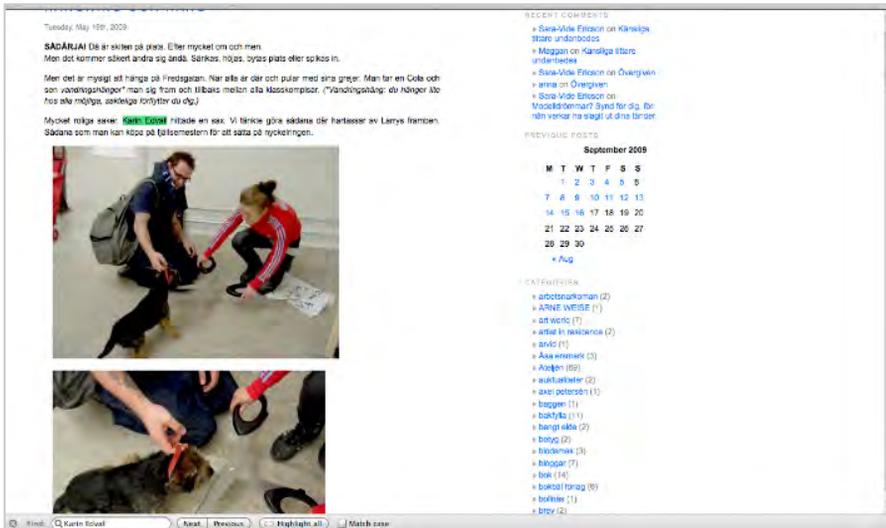


Figure 4. Screenshot of an artist's blog that was part of the data in the digital ethnography.

2.3.3 Ideal types connecting the actor to the structure

With the concept of ideal types, Schütz (1953) wanted to bridge the tension between seeing the situation from a structural perspective and viewing it from an individual perspective. He argues that to understand the social world the researcher must not only understand themselves but also the reasons behind the behavior, the very meaning-making that takes place in different situations. The social world is the sum of the players' actions and the researcher should therefore start from the actor's perspective. But Schütz points out that the risk of a too-intrusive study of the actor's perspective is that you do not catch sight of what constitutes the social common. Since it is impossible to fully understand another human being, much less to do this on a larger scale, the social world has to be simplified and typified. As a solution to the problem of seeing the situation from the actor's perspective while ensuring the actor is part of a structural whole, Schütz (1953) suggests the creation of ideal types. The research method can be seen as oscillating between a subjective position where the variables and categories are identified qualitatively and a position where the empirical data is systematized through the categorization and creation of ideal types. An ideal type is formed by the properties and components of the given phenomenon,

but is not intended to correspond to any characteristics of any particular case. It is not intended to refer to the ideal case, or the statistical average values, but rather to emphasize certain elements common to the majority of cases of the given phenomenon.

There is a risk that the ideal type becomes a sort of stereotyping, which reflects the researcher's presumptions more than the reality being described. Therefore it is important to really base ideal types on empirical data from the context under investigation. In the initial work described in article 1, I analyzed how 50 art students "perform" in newspapers, blogs, web pages and images and from this material I constructed a number of ideal types. These ideal types then guided the selection of informants to semi-structured interviews where the students' online behavior was discussed and related to the students' other contexts. The ideal types were thus a way of identifying a diverse group of informants.

2.3.4 Interviews

The analysis of the online content was the starting point for additional semi-structured interviews that were used as a way to gain a greater understanding of the user perspective and as a way to explore a variety of possible aspects of the question. Ten semi-structured interviews (40–80 minutes long), one from each year group and ideal type, were conducted to get perspectives from a diverse group.

Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to both keep a more open communication with the informant and still get answers to specific questions and are therefore useful when developing hypotheses (Schensul 1999). The interview is not an interrogation, which should lead to some underlying truth, instead the interview creates new knowledge through its dialogic form (Hollway and Jefferson 2000). The semi-structured interview method is similar to a funnel, starting with an open question that can be broadly interpreted and then narrowing down the conversation to ensure that specific issues are answered. If the questions are too specific, there is a risk that the answers just mirror the researcher's assumptions and by keeping the interview partly open, new views on the issue can be brought in, which is difficult to obtain if the questions are too structured.

To give informants the opportunity to think at their own pace, the initial questions were e-mailed to informants a few days before the interview. This was not just to give the participants time to reflect and develop their thoughts on the matter, but to create a sense of security in the interview situation by giving participants more information and control.

2.3.5 Content analysis of news reporting

Three years after the initial digital ethnography I compared the results of this first study with a quantitative content analysis of the informants' presence in daily newspapers, to see whether their communication strategies seemed to

have affected their careers. Here I looked for different types of information, such as notices or reviews, the types of exhibiting galleries and art halls and also looked at how the information was produced and by whom. Unlike the initial, more qualitative content analysis, this quantitative content analysis was a way of answering questions generated from previous empirical research.

2.4 Understanding the public spheres in Husby

In article 6, understanding what images form the public opinion about Husby, we have looked at the dominating public sphere of news media and compared this with local informants' descriptions of how they know what they know about Husby. This study departs from a long-term engagement in cultural activities in Husby. Two of the researchers/artists have been working in the area for several years, which is why there was an established network in place when we engaged a group of 15 artists to work with the place in a two-year-long commitment (more about this in section 2.5).

During the research project we organized a one-year and a three-month course in the area with students from the Royal Institute of Art. In relation to the art project and course evaluations we organized public seminars. Some of the questions that were raised in this context were the ground for more structured investigations such as a content analysis of the news reporting and interviews.

2.4.1 Content analysis of news reporting

One of the participating artists in the art project came from Georgia and before visiting Husby for the first time he searched online to find information such as images and maps. He assumed he should be able to get a good image of the site in online news media and on social photo sites such as Flickr. But together we found out that Husby actually wasn't very present online at this time, or at least people tended not to categorize images taken here as "Husby." Not even Google Maps had a street view of Husby, probably because of the fact that the center of Husby is built almost without roads for car traffic.

To investigate this lack of images of Husby in a structured way I therefore chose to look closer at how the place was reported on in dominating news media. The public sphere, of course, does not only take place in newspapers and magazines, but I assumed that the dominating discourses about Husby would be expressed in these contexts. I therefore examined the 99 articles and notices available from the year 2011 related to the suburb Husby in Stockholm, by searching in Swedish local, daily, and evening papers collected in the database Mediearkivet. This quantitative content analysis was a way to test previous theories and also opinions expressed by our informants. Herein, I focused on representation and identity. I did not review more closely the kinds of identities that are

recognized in news articles; however, I did calculate how different age groups and professional identities were represented and I looked at how they were represented as subjects or objects. In this way, I was able to quantify indicators of representation, without being immersed in a more detailed analysis of the discourse.

2.4.2 Interviews

To identify local information strategies and to find alternative public spheres, informal networks important for information exchange and debate locally, we conducted one-to-two-hour-long semi-structured interviews with eight people who live and/or work in Husby that we have come into contact with when working in Husby with various cultural projects. They ranged in age from 26 to 83 years, three women and five men, and five of the eight were born outside Sweden. Two people were government representatives, two ran their own media channels and the others were active in community programs or were information brokers in different ways. All were thus special and had a deep knowledge of Husby, but were not in any way representative of all residents. However, by contrasting their thoughts about the information structures supporting their image of Husby with the images in the traditional media, we got an idea of how the individual information distribution related to the dominant media. Most importantly, they shared and developed their own ideas and experiences of how participation in the common room could be strengthened.

2.5 Collaborative research methods

Even though we discussed our findings with the participants in the studies above and gave them the opportunity to challenge our results, they did not have the same information overview as the researcher and therefore could not so easily question our conclusions. Nor had they invested as much time as my colleague and I and sometimes did not really care. Despite my ambitions, I often made up my mind in advance, backed up as I was with established social theories that supported my interpretation of the material. At the same time, my informants did come up with relevant critiques that made me change some of my conclusions. That is why I thought there was potential for an extended kind of exchange, where the informants could act more as co-researchers. Therefore I also looked into alternative ways of conducting research, where the participant acted more as a co-researcher, co-designer and fellow artist than an informant.

2.5.1 A research circle to engage participants in the research

In the second study in this thesis I use a so-called “research circle.” As a way to take the research in the first study of the art students further, I looked for alternative ways of conducting research that were more collaborative and engaged participants more on equal terms. The ambition was not only to

understand the structures and what motivated the structures, but to find means to change. Therefore a research circle was interesting. Research circles are an action research method for empowerment and workplace development in Sweden developed together with the unions, mostly used in pedagogy and work life research in the Scandinavian context (Härnsten 1994; Persson 2009).¹ A research circle can be described as a study circle² in which experts are involved. The aim is to change the power relation between researchers and the researched by bringing the expertise and experience of the participants to the inner circle of research, not only as informants but as co-researchers and workplace developers. The methodology questions the idea of the independent researcher that studies reality at a distance from the situated context. Instead, the belief is that the researcher is an influential part of the contextual structures where dominant views of the situation hinder a more objective picture. To change the power dynamics of the research situation, the hierarchies between the researcher and researched have to decrease and be replaced by a more democratic research, where the participants are more on equal terms and also act as co-creators of the scientific analysis. The main difference from, for example, a focus group is that the researcher shares all his/her information, including theories and earlier research, to enable a more collaborative research. An important difference is also that it is the group that defines the “problem” they see in their own situation. Ownership of the agenda setting is thus an important aspect of research circles. Participants’ role in the process is thus on the higher steps of Arnstein’s ladder, as some power is delegated to the participants and they take part in the decision process. The researcher’s attitude towards participation is thus something that enables co-decision in the design, making the participant an actor.

The group was formed by students and project students³ who answered an open invitation to participate. The starting point was to meet in a group of five to seven people on a monthly basis and discuss communication structures and the role of the artist by sharing experiences and theories. Each meeting followed the same democratic meeting form: an initial round where everyone got the opportunity to introduce themselves and jointly set the agenda; discussion of the agenda; and a final round as a reflection upon the meeting. The researcher functioned both as a participant and as a moderator to ensure that everyone got to speak and documented the meeting by taking

1 The practice of research circles is not well documented in research, and publications are mainly in Swedish. See, for example, Holmstrand 2003; Härnsten 2001; Lundberg 1990; Lundgren, 2000.

² The study circle is an important part of the Swedish labor movement. It is a form of adult education common in Sweden where a group of people with a shared interest meets regularly to discuss a common theme. Most common are book circles around a shared reading list.

³ A project student is an artist that for a particular purpose gets the opportunity to work in the workshops for a shorter period, such as a year.

notes and these documents were open for the participants to comment on and correct. The idea of the research project was also emancipatory; the belief was that a better understanding of the communication structures in the art context would provide tools for change. Unlike regular action research, there were no pre-identified “problems” to be solved, as the study was more open-ended.

The initial group of seven was a heterogeneous group of people taking into consideration gender, age and artistic genre. The average age gap was five years; the youngest was born in 1983 and the oldest in 1951, which is why they all represented different generations of artists. The initial group thus contained a combined experience of the development of the art concept and how this has influenced the educational environment at Swedish art schools from the political action-oriented figurative painting of the 1970s to the performative acts of the 2010s. The participants’ different strategies in the art world, different perspectives on the concept of art and personal relationships to the artist’s identity were rich resources for comparison and the empirical ground for the study. The theories that were discussed were introduced primarily by the researcher but also by the participants: from anthropological network theory, the sociology of art and different feminist approaches. Each meeting generated new questions and thought tracks that developed a shared understanding of communication structures and the role of the artist, and his/her obstacles and opportunities.

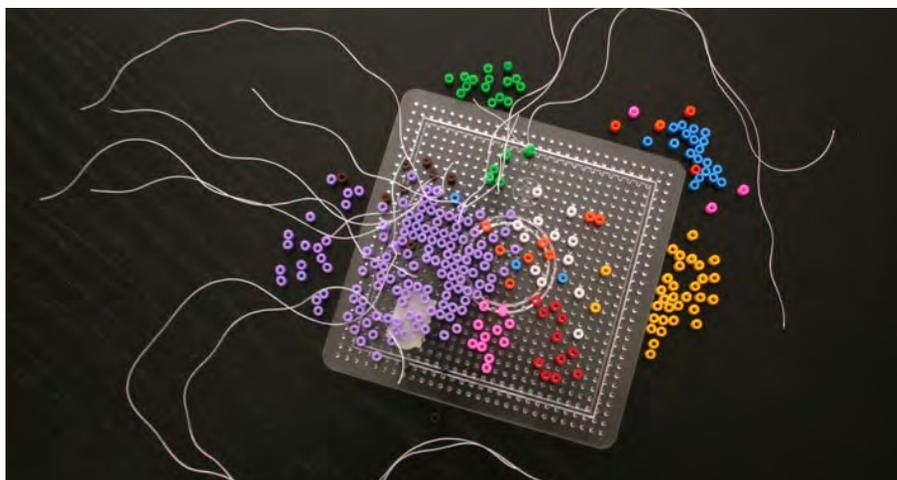


Figure 5. Visualizing a social network.

But simply reading and discussing has its limitations. Not everyone has the same opportunity to get acquainted with the literature or to put it into practice at a seminar. Therefore the texts were sometimes exchanged for more practical assignments, such as visualizing one’s social network (Fig. 5). But the work was still highly individual. To change this, the idea was

raised of creating a collaborative tool online, where a larger group of participants could also be invited as co-designers.

2.5.2 Design as a collaborative research method

Similar to the practice of research circles, cooperative or participatory design grew out of political ideas. When computers were introduced at workplaces the organizations changed. Based on a Scandinavian tradition of workplace democracy, it was important to involve the workers in the design to ensure that both their rights and expertise were acknowledged in the process. The user context was thus both a political process and a starting point for the design (Greenbaum and Kyng 1991). Methods developed in accordance with this tradition are now common in ICT design in various sectors. It is especially important in this tradition to engage users with different kinds of prototypes, to explore different aspects of the design, but also to use ethnographic research methods to understand the wider context of the design (Ehn et al. 1987; Floyd et al. 1989). This was the case in the development of Njaru described in article 8, where we involved the communication department at the municipality in the design process, a process grounded in a case study based on interviews and participatory observations.

But participatory design is not only concerned with the workplace, but all aspects of society from the public sphere to private everyday life and the focus has shifted from designing tools primarily for work to tools for communication and entertainment (Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2010). The attitudes towards the user have also changed from the user as someone the designer collaborates with, a certain person, to the user as an ideal type, someone to get ideas and inspiration from (Bødker 2006). This doesn't mean that questions about democracy and power relations in the design of ICT are less relevant. There is innovative and commercial potential in inviting a diversity of possible consumers in the actual development of the design. Björgvinsson et al. (2010) also argue for the importance of looking at design processes as public spaces. Based on long experience with participatory design in bottom-up long-term collaborations amongst diverse stakeholders, they propose that design can be seen as a public space where antagonistic interests can meet and be negotiated (*ibid.*).

The research circle developed into a design project where different participatory design methods were used, not primarily to design something but as a way to enhance the deliberative aspect of the research and to formulate a common theory. To increase collaboration between participants in the research circle and make abstract theories more concrete, we wanted to translate the theories and personal experiences of the art world in a collaborative "design" of an artist (or rather the system that makes the artist an artist). The research circle that initially focused on reading and seminar discussions thus evolved into a participatory design project. At first this

was mainly a way to get away from too much focus on texts and seminar skills. Seminars suit some people better than others and so do texts as artifacts of communication. Designing something together also meant that we had to reach some sort of conclusion and a coherent idea. The initial aim was to translate the principles of the art world into a digital system of cooperation. Here, we used various participatory design methods such as sketches, prototypes, case studies, and scenarios to concretize our collective image of the art world (Fig. 6).

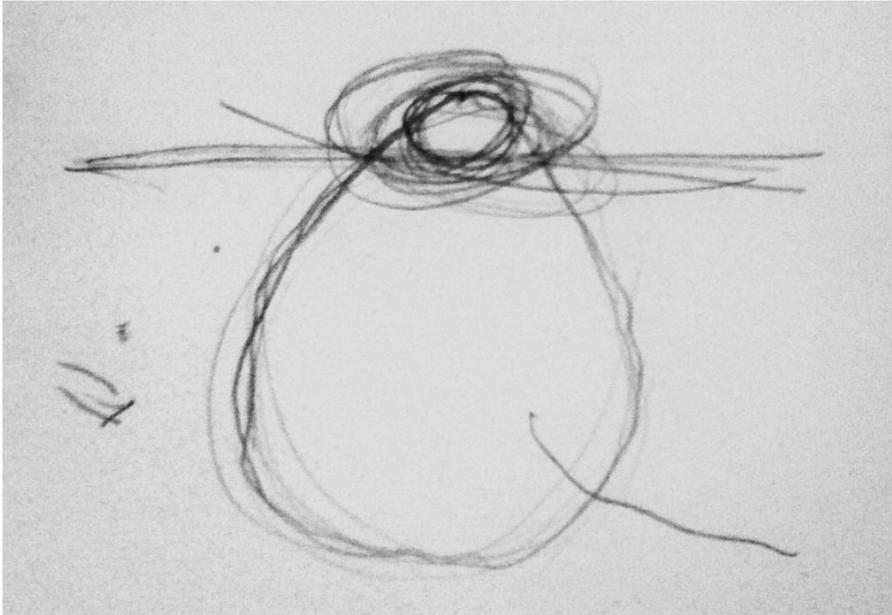


Figure 6. Sketch of the art system by David Larsson (2011) as an egg or iceberg, where only the top is public. The underlying collaborative work, which makes art into art, is far more important than the public outcomes in the form of art objects and artists, according to participants in the design process.

Buchenau and Suri (2000) argue that the reason for using prototypes and scenarios in a design process is to understand the existing user experience and context, explore, and evaluate design ideas and communicate ideas to an audience. Experiences with simple prototypes or sketches do not happen in a vacuum but in a dynamic relationship with other users, situations and objects. By testing on users and in different situations, we can test our idea and get valuable feedback and either reject or develop the idea. Participatory design is basically about using different design methods to involve stakeholders in the design process. This approach has a political dimension, in that it is about giving users empowerment and a democratization of the design process. But mostly it is about making a more enlightened design, or it is a means of introducing new systems. In

this work, participatory design methods were used as a way of exploring one's own culture, primarily with an emancipatory purpose. Initially the aim was not to design something but to perform an act of design, as a sort of role play. By changing the context from the open seminar form to a more concrete goal-oriented approach, we hoped to change the balance of power in the situation between those that could easily relate to the artifact of the seminar and those who were better at building design artifacts. From sharing a social situation, the seminar, we also shared a thing, an artifact we had a collective ownership in. The design artifact allowed for a different conversation than a conventional text seminar. It translated theory into a practical system that was tested in scenarios and prototypes. This more practical approach to the theories highlighted these and became a way of understanding their limitations. Here we started from the requirements of the developer in order to finally reach a clear specification of the system. Then we used these requirements to ask more specific questions about our theories.

In order to test the design model in practice it was introduced to design researchers at Stockholm University and developed in a functional prototype with the help of a programmer. Here the technical aspects of the design took over from the development of the concept and this created a negotiation process between the programmer, who wanted simple solutions and clear directives, and the group of art students and artists who wanted the system to mirror the complexity of the dynamic decision process in the art world.

The result of the process not only became a theoretical model but also a technical system. The design process clearly shifted *the privilege of interpretation* from the researcher to the participants, who were transformed into co-designers rather than informants. That meant that the group had to negotiate sometimes agonistic ideas and that some participants were more successful in influencing the group decision. When the process reached the implementation phase the participants with the most technical expertise became more dominant as they could control the artifact and argue better for their ideas with the programmer. The design process thus revealed the agonistic worldviews, experiences, and interests in the group.

2.5.3 Evaluation of the design

The design of the tool was also tested on different groups of users. In article 3, as a part of the evaluation of a prototype, we tested the system in two ways. The first evaluation workshop with five users over 40 min was carried out primarily on what Houde and Hill (1997) call "role" and "look and feel," meaning what role the tool can have in a situation and how its interface communicates this role in its aesthetic. The second usability test was in a group of 12 users that used the tool for three months to develop an art project; here the focus was mainly the implementation of the system and usability over time.

For the workshop we invited art students and artists at the Royal Institute to test the software. We had three different aims with this testing. First, we wanted to test the look and the feel of the basic interface. Secondly, we wanted to see how much the users understood the core concept and the role of the tool and to understand their attitude towards the general concept. Each user test took approximately 30 minutes and consisted of an initial questionnaire, where we asked questions about users' previous experience with computer-mediated communication. After this the informants were introduced to the system and given three scenarios to act on. After the test we had some final questions. Two facilitators organized the event and guided the informants through the process.

The second usability test was in our own research group, where 12 artists and a researcher developed and discussed texts and the development of an art project. Over three months the group posted around 30 posts and 150 comments. The evaluation was done as one of the assignments in the tool, where users answered some open questions about usability. Some problems with the interface were also addressed directly during the test. The tool was also discussed in an additional seminar.

2.6 Art as methodology

Just as design can be looked upon as a public space, there is a growing interest in art as a method for public dialogue and as a means to create more unconditional platforms for dialogues. The changes in the public room are frequently debated on the international art scene. Seminars and exhibitions that deal with and criticize the changing public space are, for example, described by Binter and Belting (2011), Miessen (2010), and Phillips and Miessen (2011). Art as a means for civil dialogues and community building has recently been explored, problematized, and developed in a number of projects (see, for example, Jackson 2011; Metzger 2010; Stimson and Sholette 2007; Widoff and Lobell 2011), but the role of the method and the role of the artist in these contexts are seldom described with any clarity. In participatory design, different artistic methods, such as probes, scenarios and role playing, have more been used as ways to get the user involved in the design. In the Presence project, for example, artists and designers worked with participatory methods inspired by the Situationists (Gaver, Dunne, and Pacenti 1999). Performance as a way to develop designs in collaboration with the user also uses a range of artistic genres: improvisation theatre (Gerber 2009), dramatized scenarios (Kuutti, Iacucci, and Iacucci 2002), forum theatre and role playing (Simsarian 2003), participatory film and performance art (Iacucci, Iacucci, and Kuutti 2002). But even though artistic methods are used in participatory research and design, the most important part of the artistic methodology is often ignored, namely the artist.

2.6.1 The role of the artist when creating a public sphere

Artistic methodology is not in itself a specific genre, nor a particular material, color or shape. What is considered a work of art and what is regarded as an artistic material differs from one context to another. Five hundred years ago art was primarily a craft and the aim was to be good at dealing with color and form (Becker 1982; Bourdieu 2000; Zolberg 1990). Craft skills are still important, but now it is not just a matter of creating objects but also of being skilled in theory. Art education in Western art colleges in my experience has to do both with being able to give artistic expression to something and positioning it in a wider theoretical context. It is thus difficult to speak of a specific artistic method.

Art as a research methodology might sound like a contradiction, as art and science are often defined in opposition to each other (Hansson 2013). But instead of claiming that art is something entirely different from science and, accordingly, that artistic research is entirely different from scientific research, I would like to emphasize the similarities. Haraway (1997) speaks, for example, of the cultural expressions of doing science as “narrative practices,” which, by using certain vocabularies and practices, narrate stories about “objectivity.” From this perspective, scientific research is also a sort of art. It is art when it is a matter of imagining something previously unknown and expressing this in a way that makes it possible to converse with each other. It is art when it is divided into different genres in which legitimacy can sometimes be created by comparing and referring to other research in the genre. It is art when it is largely governed by fashion and power. By this I mean, in line with feminist theorists of science, that if we are going to be able to see beyond our own perspective, we need to acknowledge ourselves and others as individual and identity-creating subjects (Haraway 1991; Harding 1995). Therefore, the visual arts have developed methods for self-reflection that science definitely needs.

How, then, can one describe an artistic methodology without basing the description on the notion that art is not a science? Here I choose to use the concept of methodology not in the sense of using specifically artistic methods like visual images, music, photography, belly dancing or etchings, but in the sense of an approach, the aim that one has in using the method and how one relates to the results.

There are innumerable researchers who use artistic methods as a way of catching the attention of the people they are trying to inform (see, for example, Finley 2003; Gauntlett and Holzwarth 2006; Gaver et al. 1999; Knowles and Cole 2008; Singhal, Harter, Chitnis, and Sharma, 2007). This does not make the process art or artistic research. What is specific to an artistic methodology, in my view, is that the point of departure is not limited to other people’s experiences of a phenomenon, but that one’s own experience is central. The aim is to understand this experience by engaging

others in it and by linking what has been experienced to the overriding structure.

In an artistic methodology the very concept of art is also an important tool; that is, the collective notion that art is something special and important that deserves extra attention. Art means making a phenomenon important, distinct and special and in this way creating a more concentrated focus for what one wants to talk about. Here the artist's role is also important along with the myths surrounding the artist and the work of art, as well as all other works in the history of art. Thus art is a matter of creating a context that makes art credible as art and that charges the art object with a variety of narratives. Therefore I focused on the role of the artist in the art and research project *Performing the Common*, assuming that a clear artistic subject is an important key to public participation. It is because of the subjectivity of the artist, that it is a singular person who expresses a situated viewpoint, that a conversation with other subjects is made possible. This conversation between mutually recognized subjects is the starting point for any public sphere. This doesn't mean that the artist always makes the situation "public" in the sense of being accessible and open. As Deutsche (1996) points out, the artist can also contribute to a dominant and excluding discourse where only a few "experts" express opinions. There is nothing essential in the artist's role, it is a role constructed in the relations between the artist and a diverse public with a variety of ideas and attitudes towards art. These relations are the conditions for how the art will be received and whether it will contribute to an inclusive public sphere for some people or not.

The rationale for *Performing the Common* was a need for further research focusing on how to offer means for general stakeholders (such as the public and NGOs) to provide their views, concerns, and opinion, not only to provide well-informed decision-makers but to actually take part in the decision-making process in creative ways. To investigate this without the constraints of our own pre-understanding of the concept of democracy, decision-making or community and as a way of questioning the expertise of the researchers, we invited a group of artists to explore the theme of democratic participation together with the group of researchers. Just as in the design project, where the aim was to create an artifact to involve a wider group of people in a crowd design, the idea was to use an art exhibition in the public room as a starting point to engage a wide group of people in the research project. The artists were invited as experts in "alternative" communication, but also because they had worked with similar issues earlier.

The participating artists were also invited for this reason, to teach, to give their particular perspective on the situation. As researcher and designer of the overall art exhibition, my role was to act more as a director than a moderator, to organize the different art projects into an orchestra of subjective perspectives. The starting point was not the overall theme, but

how the theme related to each artist's personal conflicts and interests. In the initial discussion the question was about each individual's particular story and subjective interpretation of the dilemma. This artistic practice, to find one's own perspective on a problem or situation, is a way of establishing ownership. This narcissistic appropriation of the situation for one's own purpose and self-understanding is also a way of describing a structural problem through the individual narrative and a way to connect a common history with a private memory.

As shown earlier, art as a participatory method has been thoroughly investigated in the field of participatory design. What is primarily addressed in this literature is how different visualizations and ways of expression open up for other types of conversations and insights. Hannula (2009) also describes art as an "impassioned" participatory praxis, something whose primary aim is to communicate with others. In this perspective, art is a form of dialogue, a participatory methodology. By art as participation I mean not just what is termed participatory art, but everything that can be included in the concept of art.

In participatory art, the general public is involved directly in the creative process, as an agent or collaborator (Bishop 2006). Other interpretations and titles for art of this type are socially committed art, community art, dialogue-based art, relational aesthetics, and an art as conversation, depending on which aspects of participation we mean (Bourriaud 2002; Finkelppearl 2001; Homi K. Bhabha 1998). Kester (2005) proposes the term "dialogical aesthetics" to describe art that is rooted in a historical and social context. Here the artist is engaged in a collaborative dialogue with the context, a dialogue that also questions the authority of the artist. The importance of the artist's subjective experience is minimized and the artist is rather seen as a moderator, while art is viewed as a platform for discussion rather than the expression of someone's experiences. There has been a lively discussion in art about the artist's role in this type of participatory art (see, for example, Bishop 2004, 2006; Miessen 2010). There is a tension between the desire to sustain the autonomy in the arts and the wish to engage more directly in the real world. There is also a question about whether the aesthetic judgments have been overtaken by ethical criteria and whether the role of the artist really should be the same as that of a social worker.

I try not to overemphasize this division into participatory and non-participatory art, shared experiences and individual experiences. Traditional painters also engage themselves in the world around them. People viewing a work also take part in creating it through their specific interpretation. Art that uses more traditional forms of expression can also be experienced as less frightening and more comprehensible to a public that may sometimes feel uncomfortable in the less defined spaces of relational aesthetics.

When I emphasize that art is a participatory practice I do not mean that it has to be concerned with participation or be interactive in a situation where



*Figure 7. Performance by Nomeda och Gediminas Urbonas with Giacomo Castagnola et al. at the art exhibition *Performing the Common*, where the artists first forced a full-size model of a car through the narrow pedestrian streets in the crowded center of Husby, then burned it and cooked a meal in the afterglow. Photo by Åsa Andersson Broms.*

a work of art is created by a group of participants. My point is that it is precisely the artist's position as an individual subject that makes further dialogue with the situation being investigated a possibility. If the researcher/artist is a person who is committed, with clear views and an ability to express them, one can meet and criticize her. Unlike ordinary research data, the artist's results are communicated more directly, as a reaction to the situation, and this creates the conditions for further dialogue. Here an individual work of art can be the starting point of the dialogue, or the dialogue can be the starting point for the work process itself.

In the field of participatory art, the aim is sometimes also to diminish the authority of the artist and designer, to make the participant a co-designer. In the art project *Performing the Common* I rather wanted to emphasize the authority of the artist/designer as a precondition for dialogue; the artist as someone who tells her or his story, as an invitation to others to tell theirs. Participatory methodologies always entail unequal power relations. Artistic practice is no exception, but involves a different kind of relationship, which allows other types of conversations. The modern art concept is in a way anti-authoritarian, as it doesn't pretend to report the truth about a phenomenon, but just the expression of one or a few individuals' subjective perspective. At the same time art and the artist are highly authoritarian. One of art's most important claims is that it is different and special, valuable



Figure 8. Public seminar in Husby art hall during Performing the Common. Photo by Åsa Andersson Broms.

enough for museum collections, something unusual that requires extra concentration and ability. The artist is a co-creator of this aura and is also expected to have specific characteristics, a particular sensitivity, and expression. Here there are similarities with the designer and the researcher who, like the artist, is expected to be someone who stands outside the politics and social and economic relations of the situation. But when the designer legitimizes her/himself by referring to design expertise and user studies, the artist never represents anyone but herself, which means there is *another* kind of opportunity for others to disagree, think the opposite, or ignore this person.

Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas' work of art is an example of this (Fig. 7). Their contribution to the exhibition was a subjective investigation of the site using visual images, interventions, discussions, and study visits. They formulated and shared their experiences in a guided tour through Husby, in a symbolic burning of a car model outside the art hall and in a communal meal. Fictional narratives were mixed with affirmations and exaggerations in a sort of concretization of a dream of the suburb, a dream in which the image of burning cars is mixed with utopian ideas about community. Just as conflicts in Husby pertaining to increased rents and cuts in social services strengthened the local sense of community, the ritual conflagration of the car provided a cooking stove and a gathering place. The guided tour created

a narrative that bound together contradictory images of the place and turned the spectators into tourists visiting a social system in a state of transition.

In the research context the artists' various individual projects created a more complex and nuanced picture of the place and the conditions for communication. Instead of just observing the place, the artwork helped to create an active dialogue with citizens by materializing impressions and conclusions. In this way the artistic works worked as a participatory method and a public sphere for the issues that emerged in the research project as a whole. In parallel with the art projects we conducted public seminars and also more conventional qualitative and quantitative studies that together with the art projects gave an understanding of site-specific communication structures (Fig. 8). The art was used as a participatory practice, not primarily by involving a variety of participants in artistic production, but participation was enabled because the artists were clear about their own motives, ideas and conclusions. By communicating this directly as a reaction to the location and the theme, either in the exhibition or in the work, the art established a public sphere for dialogue. Here the artist's persona was important as a personification of ideas and someone to engage in dialogue with directly or indirectly.

One important aspect of artistic methodology is self-reflection, which is constantly posing questions such as "How does this urban planning affect me?", "Why do I choose to paint that wall white?" and "What am I doing here?" In my own work of art *The Affect Machine* I took the role of the artist in the context of Husby as the starting point (article 4). The place investigated is virtual, a social space that runs through the locality – in this instance Husby – dividing it into parallel layers based on subtle differences in how we behave and whom we mix with. The form for communication was a game most children in elementary schools in Sweden know and a social network online that a large part of the population uses.

2.6.2 Materializing theories, moving rules, and shifting focus

In science, artistic methods can be seen as one of many qualitative methods (Knowles and Cole 2008). Artistic practice is based on a view of art as a reflective process in which the art works are both means and ends in themselves. Here the picture is a way of having a conversation with oneself and with others, a way of acquiring knowledge. The picture may be a way to reduce what is central to a train of thought. Making an image can help us see a phenomenon through different perspectives and find ways to break with one's own pre-understanding. Artistic methods used to establish conversation are often about ways of accessing the norms and conventions, different ways of examining one's own presumptions and beliefs. Common creative approaches in the visual arts are, for example, practices that exchange various objects, colors or gender. It can also be about detecting what is not in an image.

Similes and metaphors are another way of developing ideas and images. Different techniques, perspectives or depth of field help to delude our own conception of how reality is made. De Bono (1993) systematized this kind of method, which can also be called creative as it is about seeing things in new ways and finding other solutions to problems. By provoking and challenging ingrained ideas and knowledge, and by moving, for example, one rule or shape to an area where it does not belong, one can see things in new ways.

For example, in article 2 the participants in the research group together with the design researchers create a collaborative system that, instead of being simple and easy to use, is intended to be as complicated as possible, in order to explore the complexity of the social system being studied. This means that we do not primarily strive to do something that works technically; a total dynamic system that estimates all elements in the system whenever a change is made in a small part of the system is, for example, very slow and in practice unusable. Instead, we do this in the hope that such exploration can lead to a place that gives a different kind of perspective on the social situation under study.

Another artistic method used is to materialize the situation in detail, to sketch scenarios in which I design each function with extreme care in order to see what it leads on to. By “queering” discursive practices by moving a principle to an “incorrect” context and in this way twisting the context, I loosen the foundation of my own understanding and can see other possible readings. Giving expression to my notions of the site helped me to proceed with working on my ideas and finding links between disparate cultural phenomena. In the work *The Affect Machine* in article 4, Husby functioned as a concrete case, a way of getting beyond the art work’s limited field of production and abstract ideas about community and finding other ways of describing and investigating the social situation. By investigating a phenomenon such as crowd financing and by using these principles on another phenomenon such as social networks online, marketplaces for social relations are created in which one can buy and sell shares in people, much in the same way as with Pokémon cards, but with flesh and blood avatars who relate to each other through a sophisticated points system. This was communicated in ads and games towards different demographic groups (Fig. 9), told as a fairy tale, and materialized in detail in a prototype.

Just as materializing the situation in detail can be a means for exploration, materialization of theories has been another important method in this thesis. Theoretical models are often seen as the result of research and the materialization of this result is seen as carrier of the theory. For me, working with visualizations of theories has been an important method in its own right. The models and maps presented in this thesis are the results of a visual exploration of how to communicate abstract ideas, explorations that have developed these theories further. For example, by describing two different



Figure 9. The Affect Machine materialized as Pokémon cards

research paradigms as two vertical lists left and right I describe these as distinct and opposite, with the one on the left to precede the one on the right as we in the West read from left to right (Fig. 10). Just by switching place between positivism and interpretivism I question this order and introduce space for questioning. If, instead of a list, I describe these paradigms as circles the reading becomes different as exclusion (A is A because it is not B) isn't emphasized as much as in a list and I can also place one circle inside the other (Fig. 11). This means that the relation between the two instead of exclusion is described as an inside and an outside (B is inside A and thus part of A). In this example this means that I describe another understanding of two research paradigms as coexisting rather than opposite, where the data that is extracted in the quantitative paradigm has a clear relation with a qualitative whole.

In Fig. 12, the quantitative paradigm is central, which might give the impression that this has a central position in research, where an exact science analyzes data from the unknown outside. In Fig. 13 I have switched places and placed the qualitative paradigm in the center to emphasize the holistic approach within that takes one or a few situated subjects as its starting point, while quantifying the data fragments of the external structures that the situated subjects co-create. This visual exploration of relations between abstract concepts is important as a way to develop concepts and new connections between old concepts. The illustrations in this thesis are thus not only represented thoughts but a way of developing these thoughts further.

2.6.3 Generating knowledge collectively in a group exhibition

It is a common practice in contemporary art to position an artistic investigation at a specific place and/or within the framework of a particular theme. What distinguishes this project from other art projects more closely run by curators is the emphasis on knowledge being created within the group of participating artists, a methodology that I developed together with Åsa Andersson Broms and Nils Claesson in earlier projects (such as *Best before* 1991, *Pengar* 2001, and *Re.produktion* 2005). In this particular project we devoted an unusual amount of time to this process of knowledge creation. As a curator I focused on the collective creation of knowledge that takes place in a group exhibition and I tried to encourage this in various ways. In a thematic exhibition the artists relate to a common theme and, at times, to shared experiences, while contributing their own personal perspectives. The individual art works are also developed collectively since the artists meet regularly and reflect on the project as well as share information. This information can be in the form of interesting texts that deal with the subject, or as practical questions such as how the local administration works or why a particular building is sited at a particular place.

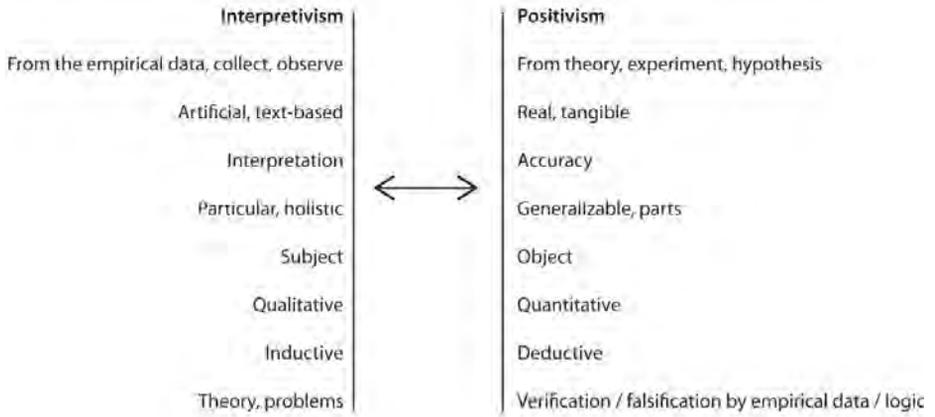


Figure 10. A visual comparison of two distinctive research paradigms.

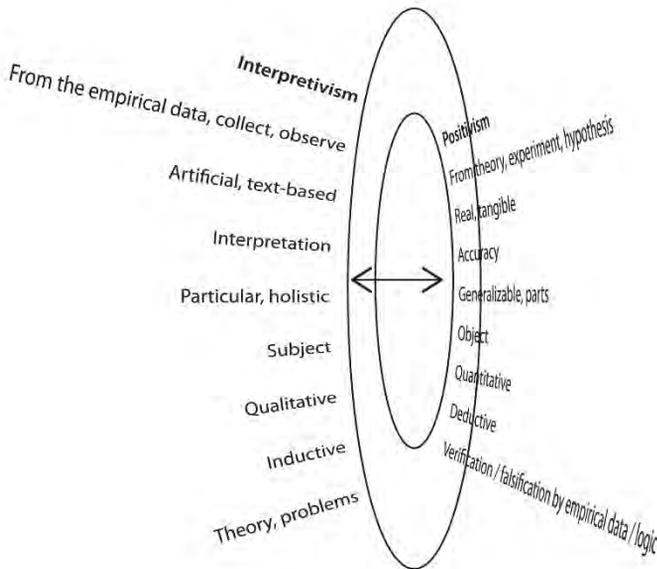


Figure 11. Visual description of two related research paradigms.

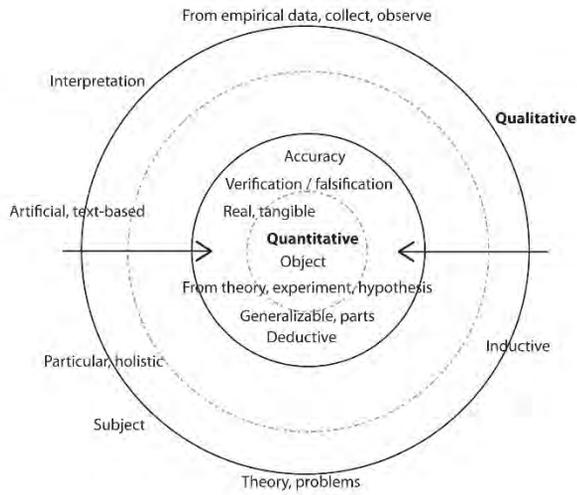


Figure 12 *Quantitative paradigm inside qualitative.*

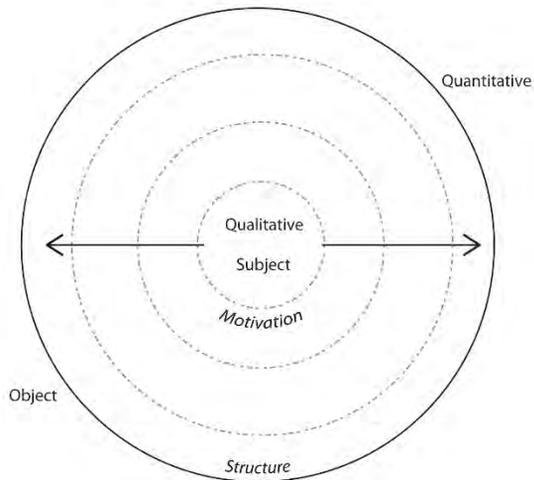


Figure 13. *Qualitative paradigm in the center and quantitative on the outskirts.*

Although the exhibition at Husby was based on a predetermined theme, it developed thematically through the work and reflection of the artists in dialogue with different points: the artists' ongoing project, the overall discussion of the theme, and the various structures that were made visible through the shared work.

This collective approach to work touches on what is known as "memory work," a qualitative feminist model in which the participants collectively or individually analyze their own memories pertaining to a particular subject (Evans Hyle 2008). In its feminist understanding of knowledge, memory work is reminiscent of the artistic methodology in that it is concerned with founding an understanding for overriding social structures in one's own personal experience. Precisely for this reason we made use of memory work in this project as a method of penetrating and developing the subject through our collective experience. The artists and the researchers from KTH and from Stockholm University discussed their own experiences of place and community in order to develop the common theme and to root abstract ideas in situations that we had experienced ourselves.

Memory work means that the researcher herself, or several researchers/informants in a group, research their own memories within a selected theme. A memory work starts, for example, with a group that decides to write down memories around a certain theme that is then collectively analyzed in the group (Willig 2013). The memory-work method was developed by a team of researchers around the sociologist Haug (1999). The method is primarily derived from two theoretical traditions within the interpretive paradigm: hermeneutics, by assuming a constructive interactive process of knowledge, and phenomenology, by emphasizing the importance of lived experience for understanding (Markula and Friend 2005). The ambition is to reach a general understanding of a phenomenon by starting the investigation from an understanding of the individual's experiences. To achieve this, you begin by describing conscious individual memories. The collective analysis of each memory is then intended to detect the underlying conflicts and to identify the cultural norms and behaviors involved – the reason for the memory becoming a memory. The method focuses on Husserl's idea that memories are often just memories because of strong experiences of encountering different structuring norms. The memories are not interesting in themselves, but as examples of situations that contain various kinds of structurally determined conflicts. Although the memory starts with the individual memory, it is important to emphasize that it is not this subjective memory that counts, but the intersubjective process of knowledge that the work with the memories creates in the group (Onyx and Small 2001). An important aspect of the memory-work method is empowerment and the work focuses on strengthening the participants by showing how their individual experiences are formed by structures that are collectively reproduced. In the art and research project the memory work

was used as a way to develop the theme of the art projects. Eleven of the artists and researchers met regularly in workshops and on an online forum over a period of three months.

To conclude, to investigate participation online I have looked at communication structures in two different situations, using a mix of participatory methods. The mix of methods has been a way to discover paradoxes and contradictions and a way to recast questions from one method with questions or results from another method. In the following section I have summarized the results of these investigations presented in eight articles.

3 Results: Summary of articles

How is the local space related to the global in participatory processes and how can democracy online be understood? How can unequal public spheres become more egalitarian inclusive communities? To explore these questions, I have created various manifests, in the form of models, prototypes, and art works, as a way to understand and communicate theories and experiences of communication structures. I call these artifacts *manifests* to point to their agency: a manifest is an expression of an opinion and it is produced to change something in the world:

- *Actory* is a concretization of decision-making processes in a global community of interests and the results of an exploration of what a system that focuses on inequality would entail.
- The second manifest, *The Affect Machine*, is an exploration of what would happen if we reinforced a system that creates inequality with a capitalist institution.
- *Performing the Common* is an art exhibition that explores communication structures at the local site of Husby by looking at the boundaries between the public and the commons.
- *Njaru*, one of the outcomes of the investigation of Husby, is a collaborative system that combines deliberative methods with analysis of structure and representation. The purpose here is to address inequality and digital differentiation and support discursive processes.

The first article in this thesis describes the background to *Actory*. It is a study of the art world from the perspective of the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. Here art students' use of ICT is studied empirically as a way to understand how belonging to the art world is generated and materialized online. In the second article the development of *Actory* is used as a participatory methodology to further investigate these processes of inclusion and exclusion. The result is a groupware that, unlike most collaborative tools, does not assume that the participants are equal, but different, and that membership is determined dynamically in an iterative process where the boundaries of the community are in constant renegotiation. The third article overlaps the second, but describes more technical aspects of the tool. The fourth article does not attempt to solve any problems, but is about

understanding the problem by exaggerating it. Here I have focused on the difference-making processes in the network and created a system that amplifies these to see what this could lead to. The article describes how the functionality of online social networks can be seen as the embryo of a new kind of state in which local place and social identity do not necessarily need to be linked and where the public sphere is not opposed to the private. Through a synthesis of a social network and services for stock trading online in the tool *The Affect Machine*, I here explored the possible implications of a networked society in relation to humanistic values.

The fifth article presents how I used art as a participatory methodology in the art project *Performing the Common* and how this artistic research relates to the scientific field. In the sixth article, where the art project creates a participatory framework for the investigation, the question is how the common place is mediated by technology and how ICT is used locally. The outcome of the investigation is manifested in an information strategy to strengthen existing democratic structures at the local site. The seventh article is a review of the field of open government from a democratic perspective to identify useful tools and strategies, especially regarding the development of tools for deliberation and representation. The eighth article describes the development of *Njaru*, a collaborative tool with integrated decision support and visualization of representation, which is based on some of the problems identified above regarding the lack of tools supporting deliberation and representativeness analysis. Here we recognize the legitimacy problem with unequal representation and create a tool that addresses this problem. The following subsections present a more detailed description of each article.

3.1 Controlling Singularity: The role of online communication for young visual artists' identity management

This article is based on a study at the Royal Institute where I received my training as an artist over 20 years ago. I was fascinated by the fact that so few students used the opportunities ICT offers to communicate their art more directly to a potential audience. Looking at the developments in neighboring fields in the music industry, the Internet and file sharing has meant a radical change in production conditions. In visual art, I rather experienced a greater conservatism and less playfulness and a fetishization of analogue techniques. To investigate the students' ICT use more systematically, I went through 50 students' online mediation to see how they used technology in their identity management. I looked at what types of tools they used, such as websites, blogs, and social media and how they used these tools. I also looked at how information was produced and by whom. The results of the content analysis were discussed in seminars at the Royal

Art Institute and ten of the students were interviewed about communication strategies in general.

The results showed that it was primarily the symbolic meaning of ICT that was important in the creation of a career. To gain recognition as an artist is not just about communicating the art to a narrow audience in intimate social gatherings, it is also about showing belonging to this restricted group through the choice of communication modes. It is important to have the correct form of online address, the right aesthetics on websites and to express yourself in the third person instead of directly, in the texts that describe the art. It should preferably be someone else who stands for the presentation. Thus, even though the technology provides endless opportunities to communicate directly, and to many, it is not used in this way. Rather limiting ideas about how an artist should be constrains the artist's communication. Those students who still took advantage of communication opportunities to organize and communicate their art more directly had in common that they belonged to several different artistic fields and they also came from families with large economic and cultural capital.

In a comparison of students' communication strategies with how successful they were three years later, it turned out that the more traditional artist type in terms of communication was the most successful in a restricted artistic field.

The results thus show how ICT was used as a way to reproduce a group's identity and to hold together a shared culture. By communicating a certain style that signals a certain belonging, the individual is recognized and acknowledged by others who share the same values. ICT is used as a way to communicate belonging to a constrained interest group through style, rather than as a way to communicate the art to a broad audience. The individuals who had the ability to question this constrained identity and who used ICT to communicate more directly, came from families with larger economic and cultural capital.

What was interesting for me with this study was understanding the paradoxes of the arts where values of innovation and originality are celebrated, but where there is an underlying conservatism that forms the informal rules that dictate what is considered art or not. Participants in this context are there because they share similar values and they simply ignore the ones that do not express the same belonging. Participation online is thus about expressing these values, to be included in the right network. The locus for the participation is thus not in a certain place, but in the performance of the participants. Without participants' practices there are no shared locus.

But this is, of course, an extreme simplification guided by my own beliefs in the ideas of the arts. There were, of course, other commonalities that the art students were involved in that enabled or constrained their practices in a way I couldn't understand as I probably just didn't see them. Furthermore, global doesn't mean that there are no limitations or connection with a real

constrained space. The art students all shared the art school building and economic structure of the Swedish educational system. Even though they did not agree with all the participants in this space they couldn't totally ignore them for practical reasons, as they shared the same room and resources.

However, participants in this room were there because they had actively chosen to apply to this school and they had thereby accepted (but not always understood) certain values. They were not there mainly for the physical resources but to get access to the knowledge needed to maintain these values and the legitimacy the school offered.

3.2 Reflexive technology for collaborative environments

In order to deepen the study of art students' use of ICT, presented in the previous article, I started a research circle with a group of students to study the artist's identity construction and information processes in the art world in a collaborative research setting. As a way to gain a detailed understanding of these processes, we developed a collaboration tool together with researchers at DSV that would reflect the functionality of the art world. The design principles were based on studies of the art world and they described a system in which: decisions are decentralized; voting takes place everywhere and at all times; communication is asynchronous; status is important; and co-branding is important.

Table 3. A summary of how the theoretical and empirical findings from the art world influence general design principles, which lead to concrete system specifications that could be used in the system development

Summary of findings	Design principles	System specifications
Anyone can join Ongoing discussion Asynchronous communication Decentralized system	A discursive forum	A Wiki-like groupware. Users have the right to edit their own posts and to delegate this right. Linking structures the information.
Constantly ongoing decision-making	Ubiquitous voting	Linking, commenting, liking/disliking and rating. All actions in the system create a score.
Status counts Co-branding	Counting activity	The user's total score depends on own activity and the score others give the user's activity.
Information about the important informal hierarchy lacking	Visualized status	Transparency and visualization of how score is gained clarifies user strategies, system rules, roles and rights.
	Motivating game	Hierarchy as a way of communicating the system and motivating participation.

This translated rather abstract theory into a practical system that was tested in scenarios and prototypes. This more practical approach to the theories highlighted these and became a way of understanding their limitations. We started from the requirements of the developer in order to finally reach a clear specification of the system; and we used these requirements to ask more specific questions about our theories (Table 3).

Unlike other groupwares where the starting point for participation is that all users are equal, or that all users have clearly defined positions, we assumed that everyone was different and that the tool would reflect this. In the art world everyone is included, but everyone is not equal. Membership is therefore not absolute, but relative and fluid. This way of looking at the participants' "rights" in a context is interesting if you look at the democratic rights from a global perspective.

In a global perspective, democracy is not just about the fact that everyone in a community will have an opportunity to develop an agenda together and participate in the decisions. Equally important is defining who actually takes part and how participants will be selected. The groupware reflects the informal and dynamic process of collaboration and makes this process of differentiating and community building visible. This is interesting from a radical democratic perspective, as it questions the implications of the liberal equality idea. Although there is an aim towards more equal rights there are still large differences between people and groups and sometimes consensus just isn't possible because of agonistic interests. But by identifying and visualizing the difference-making processes it might be possible to raise awareness and provide tools to counter them.

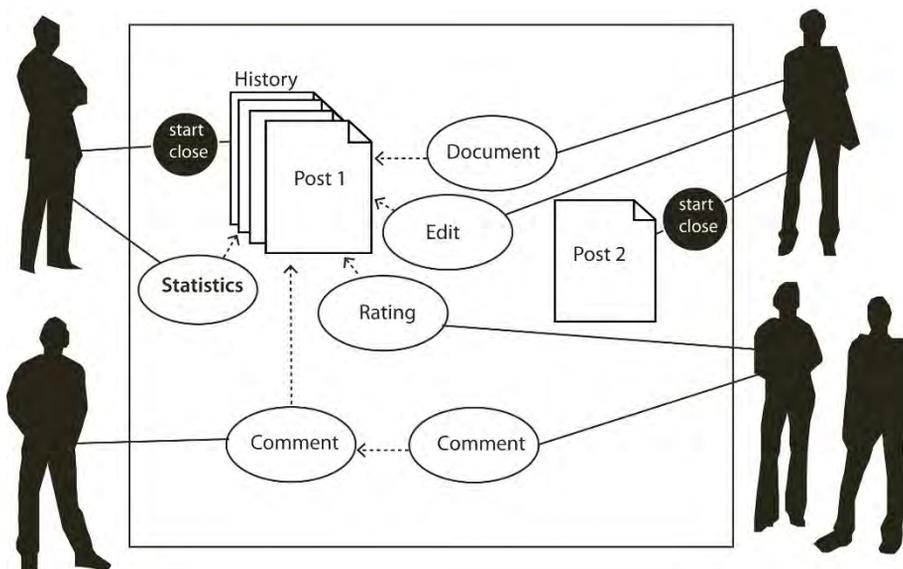


Figure 14. Basic functions in the Actor system.

3.3 Reputation, inequality, and meeting techniques:

Visualizing user hierarchy to support collaboration

This article describes the same tool in the previous article but goes more into the technical aspects of the tool, especially the reputation mechanism. The focus is thus on illuminating power imbalance in a collaborative tool. User activities and interactions are measured in a variety of ways and can be seen as an ongoing voting system, where users continuously pay attention to each other's activities. The user's direct activity can provide scoring, e.g. by her acting in the system by creating new records, editing, voting on, liking, and commenting on others' suggestions.

Scores are also given indirectly when other users vote and comment. The overall score provides users with a relative status in relation to one another and this also means that the user's status can be reduced over time if other users' status increases. Users' status can also influence how much impact they have in the system; for example, comments and votes from users with higher status can give higher scores than if they are from users of lower status.

The calculations and criteria for calculation can be made transparent to the user and can also be changed by users. Hierarchical roles that reflect levels of play can be attached dynamically to individual users or user groups. In this way, collaboration may take the form of a game where users

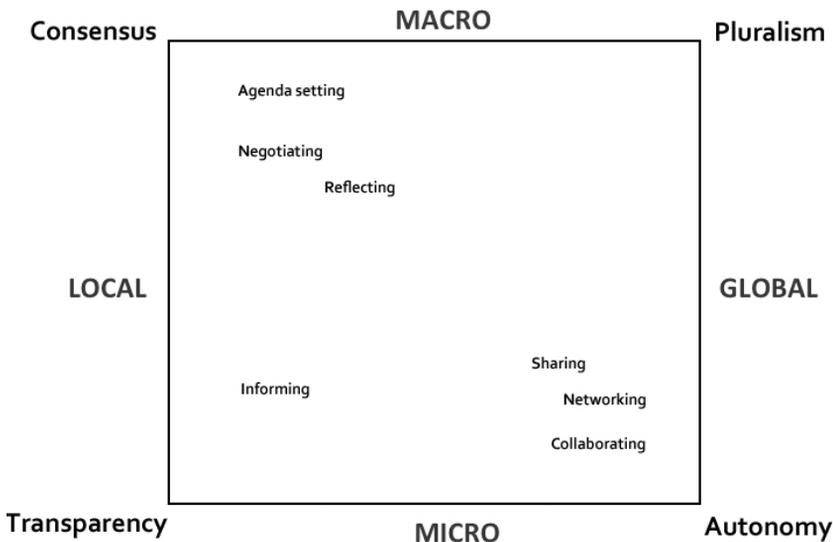


Figure 16. Map of the democratic processes supported by the Actory tool in relation to democratic aspects, local/global locus, and macro/micro focus.

can level up and gain more rights, but where users also need to work on maintaining their status for fear of falling down in the hierarchy. By changing how different activities are valued in the system, the system can be adapted to different purposes and also used as a tool for research on collaborative processes. Fig. 17 shows how user reputation can be used to calculate the differentiated values of documents. Fig. 18 shows how the user total score is relative to the score of the overall system.

The result is a method for visualizing the presence of structuring factors through a reputation system that measures participants' activity in relation to each other's actions. By framing the groupware as a strategic game using hierarchy as a way to motivate participation, complex processes are communicated through practical action.

This social engineering of complex social interactions is, of course, an extreme simplification and the ambition is not to make it a perfect mirror of social interaction, rather the ambition is to create a tool that focuses on the interaction to create awareness and open up a conversation about all kinds of social rules. But as the evaluations showed this isn't obvious and there is a risk that the system is interpreted as the norm, rather than a norm that can be changed and tweaked. More work is therefore needed to visualize and explain how the tool can be used to test out different rules, to play around with social rules rather than to enforce them.

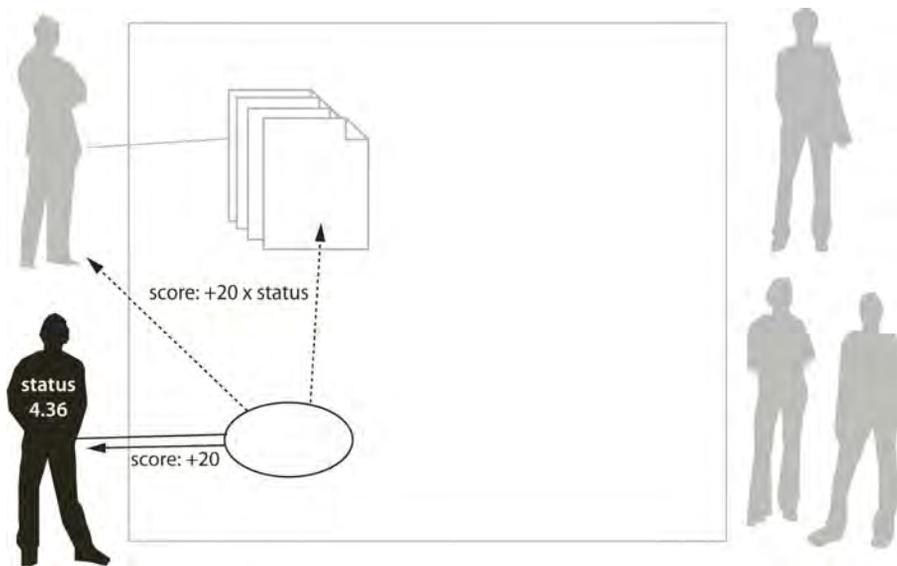


Figure 17. The value of an action depends on the status of the user making the action. In this illustration a user with a status value of 4.36 makes a comment on a post. The post owner thus gets the score for creating a post multiplied by the user's status value.

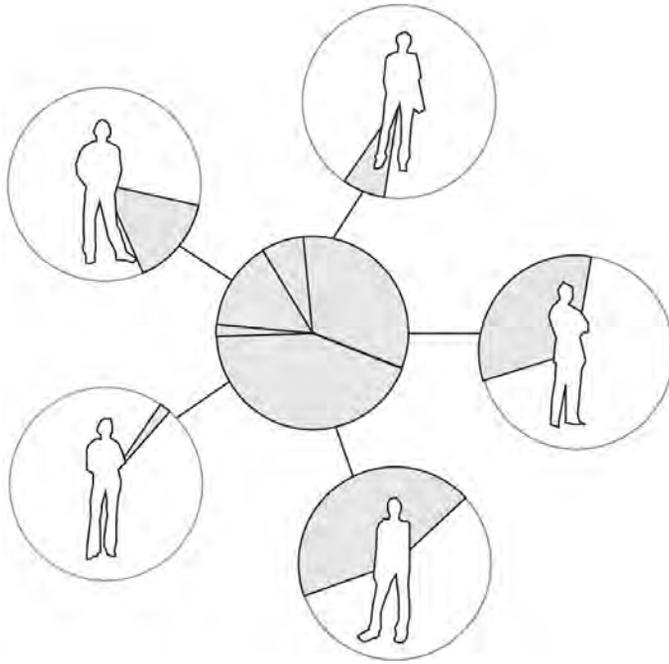


Figure 18. User status relative to the total score in the system.

3.4 The desires of the crowd: Scenario for a future social system

In the preceding articles a situation was studied where a difference between individuals was assumed and accounted for and a system was created to reflect this, but also as a method to counteract this differentiation. In this article I examine what happens if, instead of counteracting the structure, the system exaggerates and supports it.

In e-democracy research the government perspective dominates. It has been suggested, for example, that a crowd of citizens could make public administration more innovative and democratic. The opposite, that a crowd of administrations should make the individual more innovative and democratic, is an alternative scenario. Today, artists often walk from one administration (of scholarships and grants) to another to request money for projects. This is often a lengthy process where bureaucracy demands transparency and development of project applications. Microfinance is a new (and old) way to fund artists. By collecting small contributions from a large crowd, artists can not only finance their art, one can also see it as a way to get directly in touch with a wider audience and an opportunity to involve the audience directly in the development of the arts.

It is interesting from a democratic point of view that it is not just art bureaucrats and art collectors that can have a direct impact on art, but that even small collectors can be with the artist for a while and get to help develop the arts. Many crowd-funding sites give funders an opportunity not only to donate money, but to discuss the art directly with the artist and get special perks such as exclusive screenings and other events. Unlike if they buy a finished artwork at a market, or pay admission to an art gallery, they are involved in the creative process from the beginning and can follow and participate in the inception of the work. The sponsors can also be a direct help, by means other than money and thus develop a more direct relationship with the artist.

This type of financing has gained popularity in the creative industries, in industries where singularity and personal brands are essential, but it might also be interesting to see what the consequences would be for a more far-reaching crowd-funded labor market. While the art system seems to go from a commodity-based to a relational-based economy, the logic also works the other way. Relationships will, in a clearer way, be a kind of currency, a commodity that enables an extended social economy and can be seen as a capitalization of the private social sphere.

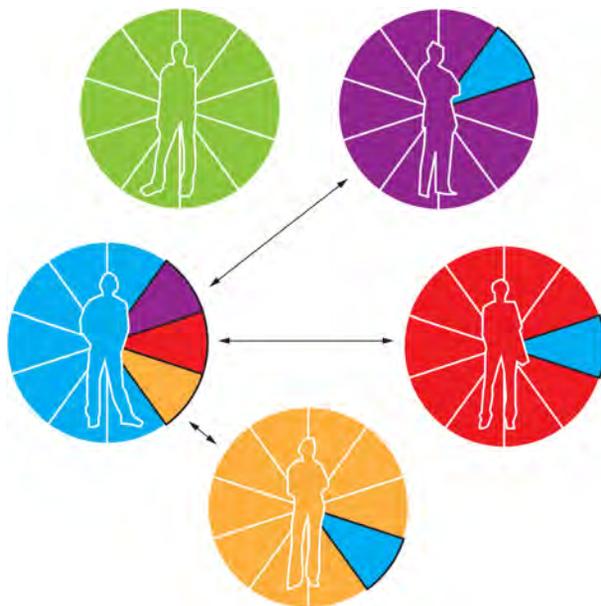


Figure 19. Basic principle for networked economy. Investments are mutual.

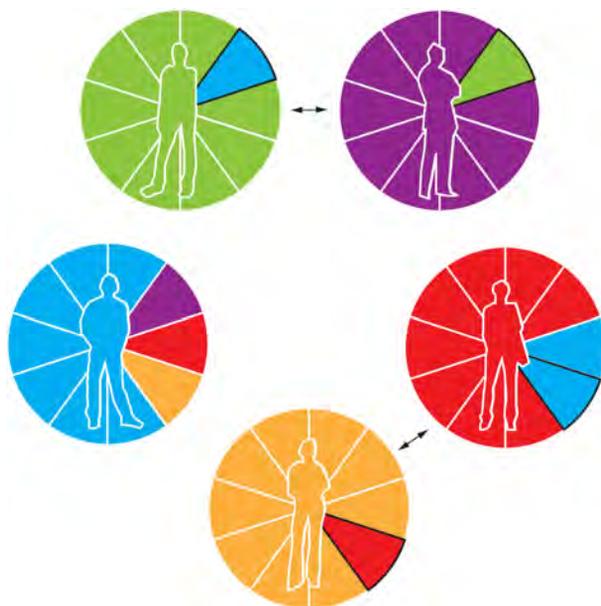


Figure 20. Investments are mutual, but can be delegated, which creates more flexible relations and more fluid borders between individuals and networks.

To examine what such a system might look like in practice, I have, in *The Affect Machine*, integrated a system for economic capital with one for social capital into one. The first system signifies a faceless global economy, in the form of an online marketplace for equities. The second system signifies intimacy and relationships and is a social network online. The principle is simple. You change parts of yourself to shares in others, a process described in a simplified way in Fig. 19. Just as with stocks, the individual can deal with pieces of each other, as shown in Fig. 20, which in practice means that relations do not need to be directly mutual but also may be indirectly reciprocal, opening up greater flexibility in the system.

Together the system creates the legal and economic basis for a relational economy in which people create long-term economic networks that could be seen as an alternative to the state and role of the family in the form of networked states. What characterizes the relationships in this economy is reciprocity. I have something you need and I need something from you. I'm not just anybody, but a part of a community that is both vital and meaningful. It is in the individual's interest to make sure that everyone in the network is doing well and that the network is sustainable over time.

This scenario is probably neither possible nor desirable, but it may be interesting as a way to better understand how network-based industry works and how globally situated economies alter the premise of local democratic processes. The network economy can be seen as an individualization of work, i.e. the collective associations such as trade unions, companies and governments are becoming less important and that instead it is the individual's network that is the main form of organization for work, as well as institutions such as schools and social services. Here social networks like *LinkedIn* and *Facebook* are ways to support this economy.

The results of this merging of two systems show that this individualization of labor paradoxically implies collectivization as the individual's relationships with others become more important. At the same time, it shows how this can also contribute to the rapprochement of the reproductive sphere to the productive, as it becomes the individual's immediate problem to create a network that is sustainable throughout the individual's lifetime (Fig. 21).

This article is foremost a contribution to a discussion of the conditions for labor in the digital age and it might be difficult to understand what this has to do with political participation online. But it actually has a central role in this thesis, as it has been important for me as a way to understand globalization and the networked economy. Globalization means, among other things, that formal organization such as the state loses control and economic power, which is why more informal institutions such as social networks like families, friends, and criminal gangs become more important. Therefore we also need a strategy for democracy that moves beyond the

nation state and is applicable in social networks. This can, of course, be seen as a paradox, as the network is highly exclusive and unequal in its basic structure. But if we want to see democracy as a general process on different levels rather than an absolute rule in a restricted area of society, we need a strategy to deal with this paradox and accommodate the inequality and differences in the network.

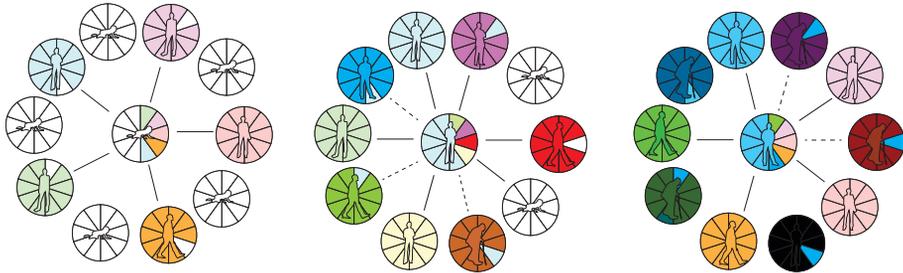


Figure 21. *The Relation Portfolio Life Cycle, where the network gradually ages and is replaced (white = young with potential skills, color = adults with skills/network, black = old, with network/no skills).*

3.5 Art as participatory methodology

The art project *The Affect Machine* in the article above is an example of how art can be used as a participatory methodology. In this article this methodology was further developed.

The practice of using art in qualitative research as a way to involve participants in participatory research is well described. It can be seen as a way to use means other than words to get participants' experiences or opinions. Scenarios, sketches, and performance are, for example, established methods in design research to involve participants in the design and research process. However, art as a methodology is more about an attitude towards knowledge production that has not so much to do with traditional artistic genres such as painting or performance. Instead the particular artist/researcher is in focus, along with his or her situated perspective, rather than the informant. This person uses the production of an art work as a reflective process where the artistic work is both means and goal. Here artistic practices such as the genres above are used in order to break with their own pre-understanding of a phenomenon and it is the personal motive that determines what is relevant, while this perspective at the same time is exposed to critical scrutiny.

Unlike a traditional scientific objective perspective, this perspective is highly subjective, it is the researcher/artist that is central and the reflection concerns his or her special experience and reasons. This is something that lately has been emphasized in qualitative research, to reflect over the

researcher's situatedness and how this affects what is researched and how. A modernist art tradition can be seen as a locus for such a reflective process and the artist can be seen as an expert in reflective practices.

The subjective singular perspective of the artist is also the key to the participatory potential in art. As artistic interpretation is a communicative act, it creates a public space for discussion by expressing an opinion. Unlike traditional science, this is only an expression of one person's opinion rather than a scientific collective, which is why it is open for criticism and discussion. It is OK to dislike and disagree.

This artistic methodology was used in a research project on urban planning and e-democracy as a way to get to know a place and better understand its information structures. Here an art exhibition in the public space functioned as a critical and innovative room that enabled a better understanding of the situation in an urban planning project. It was also used as a room for criticizing the foundations of the research project, which was based on an unarticulated democratic norm that hadn't been discussed.

The article argues that artistic research in this way is an important part of scientific research as a means to maintain a reflective, self-critical and innovative research environment.

3.6 The importance of recognition for equal representation in participatory processes: Lessons from Husby

What strategies can accommodate the inequality and differences in the participatory process? The introductory articles examined art students' information structures and participation in the global art world's meaning-making processes. In this article, we look at communication structures at a local place in order to understand participation in this shared space. As with the first article where art students' online mediation was compared with their own descriptions and explanations, we here compared the media image of Husby with the image that people who live and work in Husby have of the place and its information structures.

To understand what images form the public opinion of Husby, we looked at the dominating public sphere of news media. Herein, we focused on representation and identity: which age groups, genders and professional identities were represented and how they were portrayed, as subjects or objects. To find alternative public spheres, informal networks important for information exchange and debate locally, we conducted semi-structured interviews with eight people who live and/or work in Husby that we came into contact with when we worked in Husby with various cultural projects.

Husby is located in northern Stockholm next to a large natural area. It is a typical transit place: it has a large proportion of immigrants and unemployment is higher than elsewhere in Stockholm. In the general

discourse Husby is a problem area, which means that, following the logic of this discourse, you should move out of it, or stay and make the problem your identity by becoming a troublemaker. The politicians wanted to solve this problem and the general housing problem in the Stockholm area, by rebuilding and building new houses, but because of residents' protests the plans were shelved. Although the authorities, to a greater extent than usual, tried to have a dialogue with the residents about the construction process, it didn't solve the conflict. There were clearly disagreements both about the problem picture and what measures were needed to solve the problem.

Our analysis of the media image of Husby shows there are clear democratic problems. Firstly, people who usually never set foot in Husby dominate the public opinion of Husby. Secondly, the so-called dialogue means that the audience participates in a very constrained part of the process. Third, the lack of representativeness becomes a problem, as the results are not taken seriously.

To better understand the conditions for participation in the situation, we used the term "recognition" to analyze the conditions for broad participation in the local site's development. Husby is interesting as it shows the importance of globalization for participation. Thanks to the locals' international presence in other communities and because of the perceived lack of recognition of one's own identity position locally, the incentive to participate in the local common decreased. The results point to the importance of recognition for representation in participatory processes and the need for a diversity of public spheres to support long-term participation in the development of the common urban space. Thus, support for deliberative consensus processes is not enough if a plurality of discourses is not developed and acknowledged.

Of course, reality is far from this ideal. In this case the urban planners had already made up their mind and used the dialogue process more as a way to create transparency and understanding for changes they thought were necessary, but also to manipulate as they used the results not to inform themselves but rhetorically to prove they had "listened" to the residents. But this feeling of being manipulated actually made residents come together and form a public that had not been there before. This public was organized by a few actors that by using ICT could organize and make their opinions heard in the dominant public sphere. The technology was thus used to make the conflicts visible and to develop alternative solutions to the problems outside the urban planners' "dialogues." This simplification of the events is far from the only interpretation of the situation, but can nevertheless be used as an illustration of the conflict between and at the same time mutual dependency between, an e-democracy supporting consensus and e-democracy supporting pluralism. If I place the different aspects of democracy that were touched upon in this case on the e-democracy map I get an overview of the democracy processes in the situation (Fig. 22).

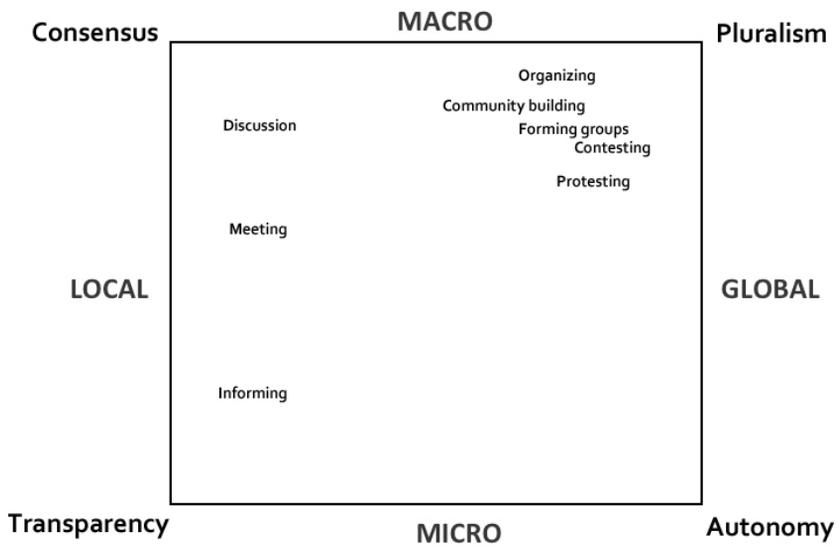


Figure 22. Map over types of participation in Husby urban planning process 2007–2014 in relation to democratic aspects, local/global locus, and macro/micro focus.

The local officials addressed all the residents in discussions, meetings and information materials. Some of the residents, on the other hand, formed groups and organized events, contesting the plans and protesting, which also supported community building. They didn't address all the residents, but everyone that largely thought as they did, to form a strong public opinion against the plans.

What we didn't study at all was the democratic processes in the micro-global corner and the cultures and systems used by individuals to collaborate and manage their network. However, this was touched upon in the interviews. There are structures to support NGOs such as political organizations or sports clubs in Sweden that also impose democratic forms of organization. Basically it works through economic incentives. If the organization is defined as a legal NGO its members can apply for economic support. The condition for this is that the organizations are open to anyone and that they are governed according to democratic principles and can show proof of this in meeting notes and a statute that defines how meetings are structured and decisions are taken. In the following article a support tool for this type of micro democracy is developed.

3.7 Open government and democracy: A research review

As described earlier, most research in the e-government field is based on a liberal democratic ground, where rights and transparency are emphasized. Less research and development has been done regarding deliberative processes and means to accommodate differences and inequality in participation. The open government paradigm can be seen as an answer to some of the critique of the e-government field for being too focused on efficiency, services, and technology, and less concerned with the more collaborative and transformative aspects of ICT in government. The open government paradigm is an attempt to transform government to be more open, participatory and collaborative. This, of course, is promising, but a more deliberative and direct democracy also creates problems regarding democracy due to the lack of representativeness in the participatory processes.

In this article we look at how open government research in peer-reviewed journals on open government from 2009 to 2013 addresses democracy, especially regarding how e-participation can be analyzed and developed from a representational perspective.

The rhetoric in the dominant discourse supports the concept of open government formulated by the Obama Administration as transparency, participation, and collaboration, but in practice the focus is predominantly on transparency, while ignoring democratic issues regarding participation

and collaboration. Furthermore, the concept of *the public* is inadequately considered as a homogenous entity rather than a diversified group with different interests, preferences, and abilities.

In general, the basic idea of open government is not problematized; instead, the assumption is that transparency and participation are something obviously good. The problem discussed in the articles is how to reach it. The obstacles to open government that are mainly discussed include: problems interpreting the data; cultural barriers to creating open government norms and practices; organizational barriers; technical problems and lack of resources; lack of motivation to participate; how to handle the conflict between private interests and public rights; and outsourcing of public functions.

However, alternative discourses were also present that pointed to other types of problems and opportunities, such as the importance of nongovernmental collective actors, like a free press. Other things mentioned included the problem with data proportionality, meaning the relevance of information that is made open. The idea of transparency was also questioned, pointing out that secrecy can be a powerful strategy in developing alternative publics. Maybe the result would have been different if we had looked outside the open government and e-government area, as these two areas primarily have a government perspective. We also excluded conference proceedings, which is why we might have missed some of the latest development. However, the tendency is mirrored in the development of tools for participation that we have investigated, which is why the result is probably not too misleading.

To conclude, the results shows that despite the rhetoric, there is still a lack of tools that support deliberation in any meaningful way and means to analyze online participation regarding representativeness are not even discussed.

3.8 Managing deliberation: Tools for structured discussions and representation analysis

E-participation can occur at several levels, from clearly defined and easily accomplished participation in crowdsourcing projects to more open processes in which the participants' expertise and opinions are of importance for the outcome. A more open and interactive government, so-called open government, has received much attention lately. Governments must not only become more efficient and innovative by allowing a crowd of citizens in the work processes, this citizen participation is also seen as a way to deepen democracy. Technologies such as wikis are seen as the optimal tool for online deliberation, where users are developing information together in a discursive process of negotiation. But the tools used here are often not very sophisticated and lack support for analyzing more complex decision processes.

The example of Husby in article 6 shows the complexity of participatory processes. Here new media have given a small group of people disproportionate power because of their digital skills and ability to influence public opinion. If you look at who is actually involved in, for example, Wikipedia, you see it is a small minority of young Western men. The discriminatory processes in new media do not differ much from those in other contexts. In this article, we discuss how tools for open government can be used to manage deliberative processes, to handle the problem of the lack of representation and the lack of motivation. We also explore these issues through the development of a prototype for collaboration where we have built in decision support and analysis tools with regard to representation. Fig. 23 describes the functionality of the system. In addition to the standard features provided, “statistics” gives support for extracting statistics on the use and users, the “options” function can be used to create voting options and the “pro/con” function can be used to develop arguments and sub-arguments for or against proposal. These decision support functions are all integrated in the same document.

The idea is that the decision support systems should facilitate the structuring of arguments in the discussion and thus support deliberation. The analysis tool can be used either for research, as a way to analyze the representation in a discussion, or as a way to make users more aware of the different types of power dimensions between users and groups of users. The reputation mechanism described in articles 2 and 3 is used to analyze the interaction. In

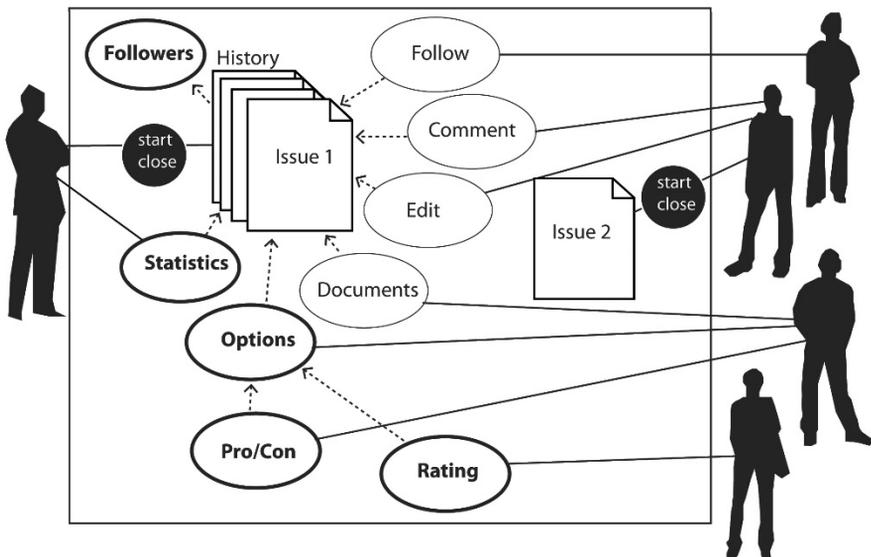


Figure 23. Basic functionality in groupware with decision support tools (Options and Pro/Con) and support for representation statistics (Statistics).

addition to this information, the system uses simple demographic data that can either be provided by the user or are hard-coded to a particular identity, as in Fig. 24.

The results show how tools for structured dialogue can be integrated in a standard interface without losing usability. Furthermore, the interface enables an easily available representation analysis, both for research and as a means for users to reflect on the structure of the conversation.

The idea is that different groups can use this tool to improve their democratic processes. But the same tool can be used in less deliberative settings, such as to gather information in a survey. The perspective is the individual actor that can use it for organizing family activity just as well as organizing a large-scale survey in the municipality. It thus takes a micro-global perspective where the agency and autonomy of the individual are emphasized. The tool can be used as a way for the actor to manage his or her different social networks to discuss and solve the actor's different problems that are either his or her own problems or shared.

The idea that all communication would be channeled through one system is, of course, not an ambition; the idea with the prototype is rather to show how a system, by taking the individual actor as a starting point rather than an imagined collective, becomes more flexible both in terms of functionality and levels of power in the participatory situation. Here the initiating actor can decide what he or she wants from the invited participants in terms of power, either as consultation or in sharing the decisions.

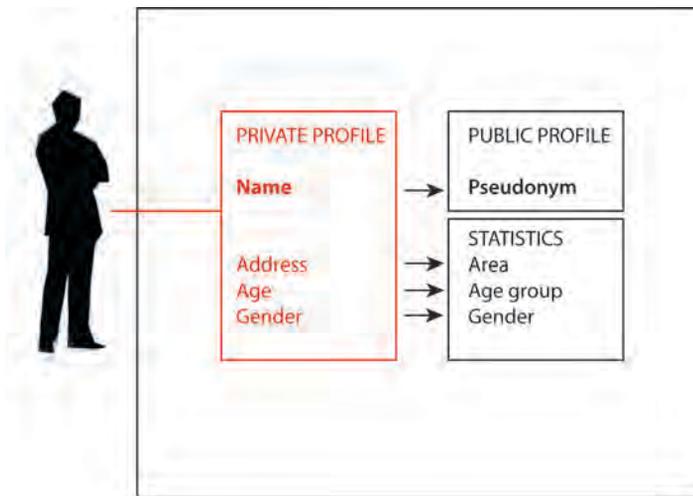


Figure 24. Different levels of identity in the tool.

3.9 Summary of results

In this article I have explored issues of participation online in the context of art sociology, e-participation, urban planning, and art. It has also been an exploration of different participatory research methods, with a focus on motivation and ownership.

I started with a study of how and why people participate online. Art students' communication strategies and use of Internet and mobile communication was explored in a visual ethnography of online content (article 1). The results showed how ICT was used mainly as a way of reproducing and maintaining the community. The students that used the Net more extensively to communicate their art in a diversity of venues and to more actively organize events came from a privileged group in terms of social and economic capacity.

In a follow-up to this study I organized a research circle with a group of students and artists, where we explored theories and experiences of the art community by creating a model of its functionality (articles 2 and 3). In this creative common the unequal participation is fundamental and the border for the common is unclear and under constant negotiation. By mirroring this in a groupware we got a better understanding of the structuring processes but also means to affect the dynamic.

In general, the norm in the field of e-participation is that an equal and democratic participation in a state is something to strive for, which is why most research focuses on how to achieve this. But this norm might conceal important facts, which is why it is interesting to question it and focus on the opposite: how to exaggerate the global processes of differentiation. In article 4, through a performative art project, this differentiation is enacted in a scenario where the "state" is something dynamic and where people's differences rather than commonalities are emphasized. The results show that this individualization paradoxically implies collectivization as the individual's relationships with others are central. This also implies a merger between a reproductive and productive sphere as the long-term sustainability of the network becomes important.

Unequal participation is a central problem in e-participation and in order to maintain a democratic legitimacy there is a need to deal with the lack of broad representation online. To understand how to address the problem we have looked at the information structures in one case, using, among other methods, art as a way to understand the situation (articles 5 and 6). We also looked at the area of open government to see how these problems are addressed (article 7). Based on the results we created a prototype for a tool that supports a decentralized deliberative process, but that also clarifies the levels of representation within this process (article 8).

An underlying question in all the studies is how democracy can be understood and achieved in a state that is relative and dynamic and where

differentiation is what creates meaning. In the following discussion I will therefore develop a model of how democratic participation online can be understood from this global micro perspective. Secondly, I will summarize some of the participatory methodologies used in an epistemological and ontological map of e-participation to articulate different participatory positions for tools for e-participation.

4 A micro perspective on democratic participation online

This thesis has been an exploration of different aspects of participation, both as a subject and as a way of developing a research methodology. The iteration between different aspects of participation has been mutually beneficial. Therefore I also want to discuss the development of the methodology together with the results of the studies. In the following I discuss the results of the studies in the light of the theories in chapter 1 and develop a micro perspective on democratic participation that takes the individual's actions as a starting point for understanding collective processes. Thereafter I will, based on the participatory methods used in the thesis, create a map of participatory positions. Finally, I show how this map can be used when developing tools for e-participation.

4.1 A theory of democratic participation online

As shown in the introduction, unequal participation may cause severe problems with regard to strengthening democracy through increased e-participation. Therefore there is a need for models and tools that can support a greater understanding of the citizen as an e-participant, especially given the differences in interests and belongings. Digital differentiation can be described in different ways: it can be described as a question of individuals' digital literacy, or it can be described as a structural problem due to difference in education and abilities to produce information online. It can also be looked upon as a matter of choice; in this perspective, ICT means that it is easier to step out of the public spheres that do not feel urgent and public spheres where you do not feel comfortable. In the long term, these choices might reduce the democratic legitimacy of these public spheres.

The question is: How can this process of differentiation be reversed in order to establish democratic legitimacy in the local political process? How can the unequal local public sphere become a more egalitarian community of interest that equally includes all that share the common problem? Communication technology and shared culture cause globalization and differentiation; therefore, in order to answer these questions we need to understand how the local public sphere is related to globally distributed publics and how we can look at democratic participation in a global micro perspective.

4.1.1 Ideal democracy and the lack of representativeness in the public sphere

The deliberative concept of democracy is based on a classic democratic ideal where a group of equals take collective decisions based on rational reasoning and an informed understanding of the problem (Fig. 25). This ideal might be great as an ambition, but it also hinders a better understanding of the political reality. When used as a recipe for tools for e-participation there is also a risk of damaging democratic processes. In practice, democracy is not that easy, but messy and filled with conflicting interests. People are affected differently by the questions and they interpret information based on their particular situation and experiences. Their ability and motivation to participate varies.

In Husby, the case described in articles 5–6, politicians, along with construction companies, wanted to develop the area. Stockholm needed to expand and Husby was conveniently located regionally with good transport links and large unexploited areas. There was also a general idea that the area had problems and that these problems could be solved with renovations, new roads and buildings. But a renovation of the area would have the consequence that many of those who live there today would not be able to afford to live there. Therefore the conditions for a deliberative dialogue including those most affected by the decision were not the best. It was difficult for residents to be understanding and reason “rationally” when the result of the discussion could threaten their entire lifestyle and force them to move elsewhere.

This is an example of an antagonistic conflict in politics that is simply too big to overcome. It is difficult to have a discussion with people that don't want to have you on their map. This is why proponents of a radical democratic perspective such as Mouffe (1999) are critical of the idea of public deliberation. A deliberative discussion also assumes that everyone has the same information and that the information is correct, when in practice strong interests and identities dominate the production of the information (ibid.). The case in Husby illustrates this dilemma. The building plans were among other things justified by the notion that Husby was a problem area. The problems were connected to the aesthetics of the buildings: simple, fast-built concrete boxes built in the 70s welfare programs, now signifiers of a high proportion of immigrants, low income, crime, and social exclusion. This is also the impression given in the media of Husby and other suburbs in the periphery of Stockholm, or any other large European city. But in fact, Husby is relatively healthy. If you set, for example, the school results against the proportion of new residents and children with languages other than Swedish as their first language, Husby's school results are decent in comparison.

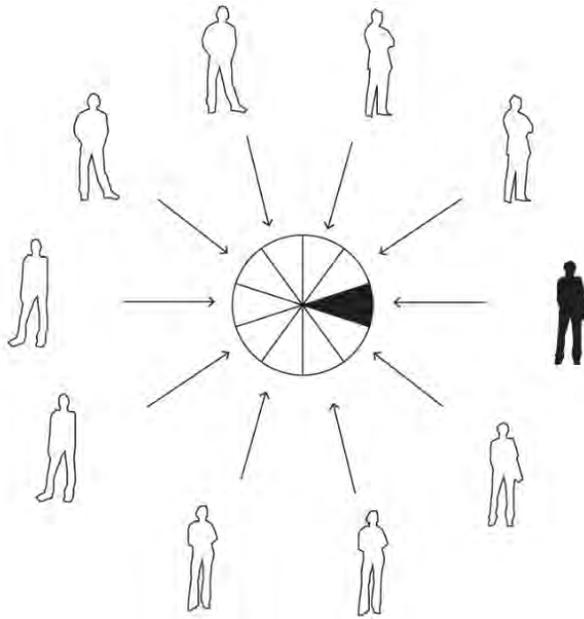


Figure 25. Model of the democratic ideal where the participant has an equal part in the collective decision.

Crime is not higher than in some of the more expensive areas in central Stockholm that also have areas that were built in the 70s to provide affordable housing for workers. But in the dominating media discourse, these areas are not portrayed as problem areas even though the crime rate is high here too. This imbalance in the reporting is simple because this is where journalists live and where they feel safe (Ekberg 2007). There is a lack of time and resources to establish a personal network in areas where you don't live, which is why the sources of the news articles from the suburbs are often the police or municipal officials and virtually never residents living in these areas. Most decision-makers such as politicians and officials do not live in Husby either, therefore they also lack a personal relationship with the area, which is why the incentive to question the media reporting is low.



Figure 26. Sitora Turdieva and Berfin in class 7C in Husbygård school being guided through the Kista Theatre's production of "Antigone's diary" through their mobiles (Lerner 2012).



Figure 27. Basar Gerecci is one of the initiators of the occupation of Husby träff. He is pleased that the Red Cross opened up a dialogue about the community room (Frenker 2011). The image is from the occupation of Husby Träff.

The uneven distribution of visibility among different groups in the media is not unique to the reporting of Husby. But it clearly shows how the public sphere can be seen as a highly unequal place with respect to the representation and recognition of identity. There is a lack of acknowledgement of the existing plurality of worldviews at the site. But this is nothing new and does not help us to find solutions. Instead, it is more interesting to look at what differs from the pattern. Something that is distinctive in the reporting of Husby is arts and culture. A quarter of the articles and news items relate to cultural events. Husby Gård culture center is important for bringing Husby into the public light. The Kista Theatre is the institution that has had the greatest media impact for their productions and is important for bringing young women into the public sphere as active

subjects. Pictures of girls participating in a virtual drama with their cell phones are reproduced extensively by the press (Fig. 26). Likewise, the culture organization Megafon is behind many of the articles that portray young men as acting and reasoning subjects (Fig. 27).

4.1.2 Parallel public spheres

Swedish newspapers are not the only public sphere in Husby and new communication techniques in particular enable alternative spheres, perhaps more consistent with one's own worldview, where the form of addressing is more inclusive.

The satellite dishes are illustrative. Many people do not experience what is around them as real. What is here is not your truth, so you turn away, maybe to your home country, to get information from outside. (Amir Marjai 45)

Information technology facilitates parallel public spheres. If one's identity is not confirmed in one forum, involvement is reduced but might increase in other forums. This may strengthen the individual's identity, but obviously, if there is not a common place or forum in a society the possibilities of solving common problems are reduced. In this way, ICT might also lead to separatism. In a radical democratic perspective, separatism is sometimes necessary to get an opportunity to develop your own thoughts and opinions without having to be questioned by the majority culture. Fraser (1990) calls this subaltern counter-publics and they can be seen as incubators for ideas, ideas that when stronger can influence other public spheres.

The culture organization and Web magazine Megafonen was founded with the goal of creating an alternative view of the northern suburbs of Stockholm. They lacked a more nuanced picture of young people and Husby than the dominant Swedish media sphere gave room for, and wanted to launch a debate on their own terms through the online forum and organization of discussion evenings. Megafonen and its representatives also quickly managed to gain attention in the dominant media and became an informal representative for both young people and their parents.

Other organizations in the area also gained attention in the media. The construction plans in Husby created protests from several of the residents and united a variety of groups around the common interest of Husby. In the informal association "Nätverket Järvas Framtid" [The Network Järva's Future] (2011), participants both from the youth group and the seniors association joined forces as they recognized each other in a shared idea of Husby and a wish to defend its particular values. As Young (2005) pointed out, a group of people with a shared interest is only a series if they not are aware they have something in common. In Husby, the conflict created an awareness of residents' shared interests, which enabled a shared local public sphere and means for collective action as a group. ICT was here a way to organise action and communicate the discourses developed in this local

counter public to a broader public, to change the reporting of Husby in dominant media channels and influence decision-makers.

But not everyone is interested in contributing to the local commons. This poses a dilemma for a more deliberative democracy model, when those participating in the discussion are not necessarily representative of those affected by the issue and therefore do not know the full extent of the problem. The downside of a more participatory government is that those who are involved are often groups of people who are already relatively influential in the community and the opportunity to gain greater influence is primarily taken by those few. Most people may not have the motivation to participate. They have other more pressing interests to engage in and may, sometimes rightly, not see how involvement in this local issue would benefit them. It also takes a certain kind of cultural and social capital for the involvement to be rationally justified and to feel meaningful. Therefore, even in cases where the participation might be high, such as in Husby where, for example 3000 out of 12000 participated in the dialogue meetings organized by the municipality, the results can still be questioned as not being representative enough.

The case of Husby is an example of the difficulty with creating a coherent framework for local participation as it is structured by forces outside the local room. To understand the motivation to engage in a local interest, it is therefore interesting to look at the opposite and ask how motivation to participate is created in a global movement and how one can look at democracy in a global micro perspective, from the single individual's point of view.

4.1.3 Public spheres as performative states

As explored in articles 1–3, where a collaborative virtual space was designed that mirrored an art world, participation in an interest-bound community, rather than in a given and locally constrained commonality, is something performative, maintained, and enacted by participants' actions. Participation here is a process of recognition, of inclusion and exclusion, and is both about conforming to informal rules and developing them. Most democratic models presuppose what I, in a broad interpretation of the word, call a state: a common issue or problem (such as a piece of land), shared by a given group of participants (for example, inhabitants of the land). Then the question is how the group should rule over the common issue. But state can have other connotations, such as a state of being, or to state something by expressing it. In this last meaning, a state is something I state, that I create, such as a painting or a library, or the collective universe of ideas expressed as a discourse in a public sphere, such as a newspaper.

In a state where participants have chosen to participate and the state is something the group develop together, the basic notion of the state as something given is questioned. Instead the state is more clearly

performative, something I maintain and reproduce through my actions. The decision process in such a *performative state* also becomes a bit blurry. For example, in a group based on interest very strong notions can be developed concerning who can participate and what the issue is, but the decision process behind can be difficult to describe. There are no formal criteria and if there are any, they are in constant renegotiation. This can be described as an iterative process as in Fig. 28. Here the objective is adjusted in an iterative ongoing process that produces performances that are discussed, discussions that change the objective, and so on.

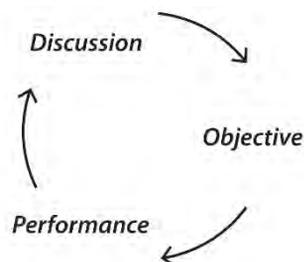


Figure 28. A performative state where the objective is defined and redefined through performance and discussion in an iterative process.

In this state, anyone is welcome as long as they recognize the objective and are recognized as a member of the community. This means that citizenship is not something you have or do not have, but rather is a scale of influence, based on your relative level of reputation and trust. Unlike an ideal democracy model, participants in this state are essentially unequal and contribute unequally to the common issue (Fig. 29).

The difference between the performative state of the art world and the given place Husby might seem too huge for a meaningful comparison. But when looking more closely, the differences are not that huge. Unlike the art world, there are formal structures and regulations that regulate participation in Husby. You can't claim that you are a resident if you do not live in the area, but you can claim other rights, for example that you are affected by what happens in Husby and therefore should have a say, or that you are an expert on the problem and therefore should be consulted. Just as in the arts, participation in the issue of "Husby" can also be seen as performative, unequal and structured by discriminating factors. Some people take more space in the public sphere where Husby's problems are defined and they have a greater influence on the discourses about Husby. The youth organization Megafonen illustrates this. Here a group of people created a webpage, organized meetings, and performed as representatives of young

people in the suburb, which gave them a lot more space in the dominating public sphere than the average resident. Just like in the art world, where you have to perform as an artist to be recognized as one, they performed as “young Husby residents” in their language, appearance, and political claims, and were embraced by a news media in need of a clearly visible cast of characters to narrate their stories.

Another similarity between the cases is in my description of them. Both the case of the art world and the case of Husby focus on one issue, one state, “Husby” and “Art,” and presuppose that this is the main issue at stake that engages participants in collective action. But in reality, there might be many competing states. The individual participates in a variety of states that divide her or his attention (Fig. 30).

Husby is an interesting case as it encompasses a multitude of performative states based on different groups’ interest and identity, such as *The Eritrean Association*, *The Mongolian Youth Organization*, *The Culture Association Peyvand* and *The Turkish Association*, to name but a few of over 50 organizations in the area. Here “Husby” is one of many performative states that the individual shares with different groups of people. One can call it multiple shares in different publics, which all together define the individual (Fig. 31). These states or publics can be smaller or larger and consist of more or less tightly connected networks of people. They also compete. Therefore a person’s participation in one state not only depends on the individual’s literacy and motivation, but on the alternative costs and benefits of participation in other states.

So, now I have gone from a democratic model where people have equal shares in the state, to a model where people have unequal parts, to one where several states have unequal parts in the individual. But as in the case of the art world, where co-branding is central, the most important thing is the person behind the art, not the state of the art. Each state in the model is defined and performed by the people that participate in the state (Fig. 32). Without those people there are no states. In this perspective, the individual is not only defined by her or his shares in different states, but by his or her shares in the people that define the states. Consequently, as these people have shares in the states the individual contributes to, they also have shares in the individual. In the model *The Affect Machine*, I created a system that highlighted the relational aspects of globalization by taking away the states altogether, to explore what a system totally based on mutual relations would look like in theory (Fig. 33).

The result of this extreme individualization created a relational form of collectivism, as interdependency and relations became central rather than a common issue. The merger between social relations and economic relations also introduced time to the equation, as relations are something that develop over time.

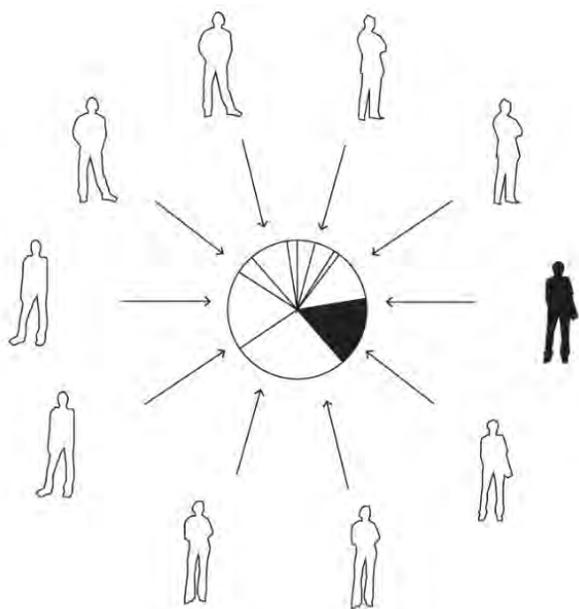


Figure 29. Unequal participation in a performative state.

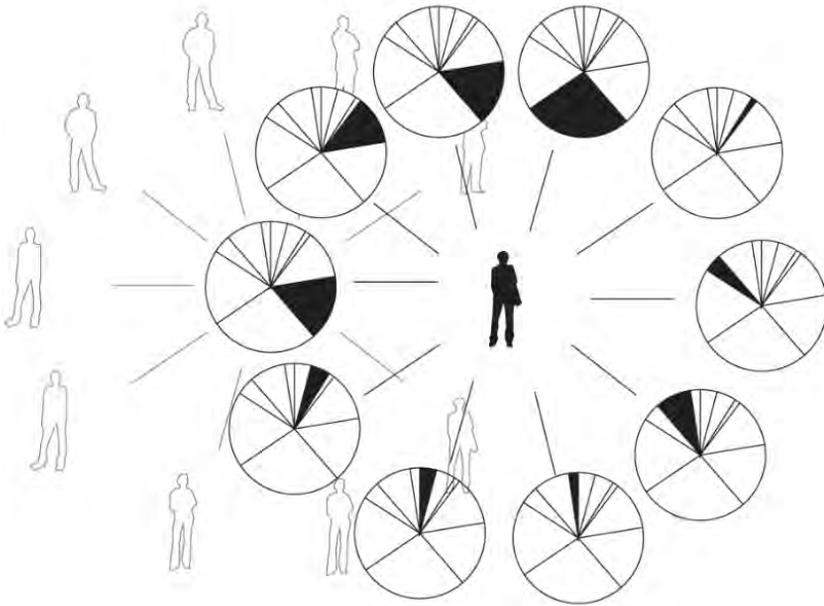


Figure 30. Instead of looking at the state from a collective perspective, as a shared asset, one can look at the individual as shared between different states.

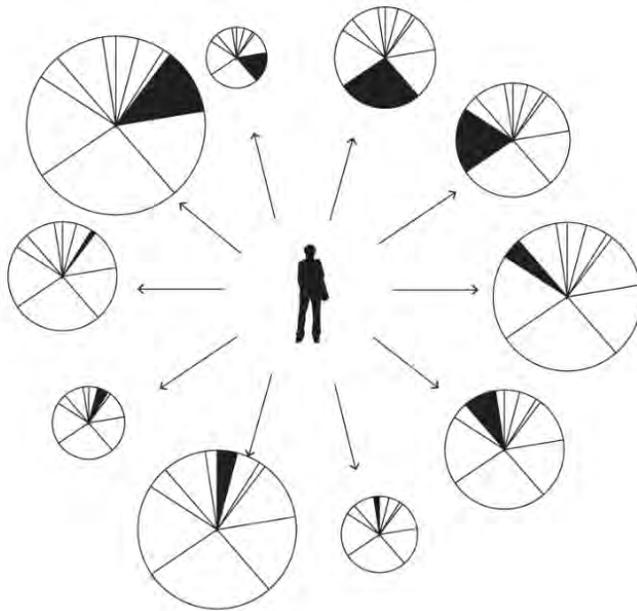


Figure 31. The individual's participation and different shares in multiple states, which all together define the individual.

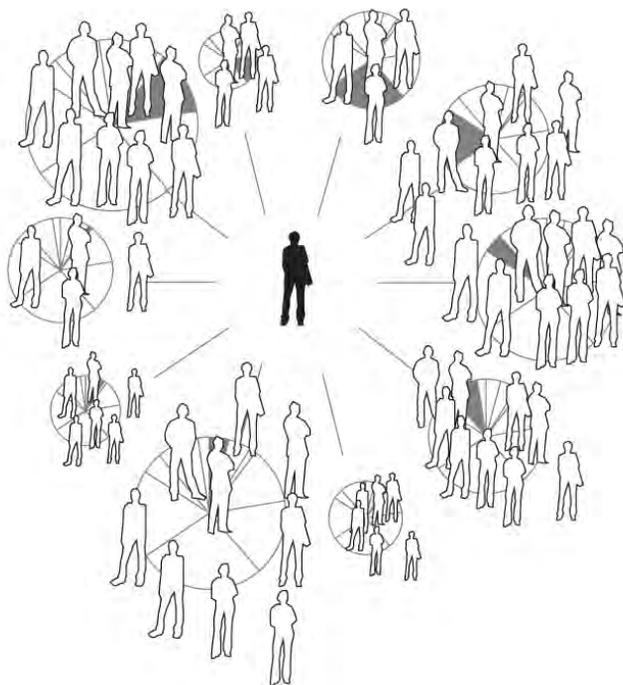


Figure 32. The individual's participation in multiple states, which are all performed and defined by their participants.

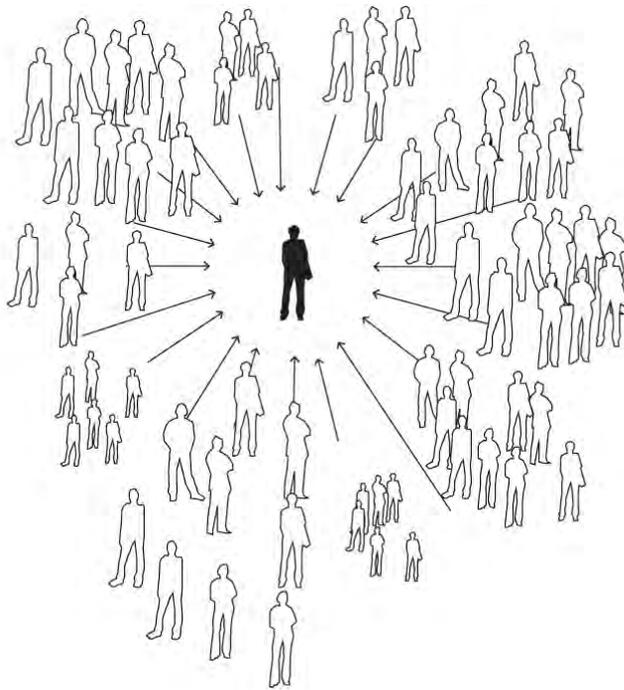


Figure 33. The amount of people that have shares in the individual, and who all together define the individual.

So what does democracy mean in this scenario where inequality is the norm and time is an important factor – a scenario where people tend to abandon states (in the way they can) that don't recognize them and their interests? How can the democratic ideal be practiced in a scenario where the individual's multiple groups of people are the starting point rather than one more abstract commons?

This call for e-participation tools that help the *individual* to practice democracy. This means enabling autonomy and supporting plurality, but also work for consensus and transparency within the performative state. This can be described as:

- 1) Means to perform states:
 - a. Management of a diversity of public spheres
 - b. Deliberative communication with peers
- 2) Means to enable a sustainable participation over time
 - a. Visualizing interests
 - b. Visualizing belongings
 - c. Multimodality considering differences in literacy

In this recursive democratic process, e-participation simply means *a method to get a diversity of opinions and perspectives rather than one single one*.

In other words, e-participation is something anyone, an institution or a single person, can use to engage others in a collaborative effort to understand something or to develop something: an e-supported participatory methodology. As relations are central in the network, the outcome of participation depends on the nature of the relations in the process. Therefore it is interesting to look at how participatory approaches in general can be described as relations and how means to establish and maintain these relations can be understood.

In the following I will develop a model for how these relations can be described and supported.

4.2 A map of participatory positions

In chapter 2 I described how I have worked with different participatory methods to change power relations and motivate participation in the design and research process. These methods differed regarding the relation to participants, the collected data, and attitudes to the data, for example: from a content analysis of participation online where participants were treated as objects, to a research circle that enabled a structured conversation, to a participatory process where participants were treated as agents, to an art exhibition in the public space where the data was treated as participants' creative expressions.

To analyze and develop these participatory processes in terms of power and relations, some available models in the field of urban planning and design that I have described in chapter 2 were useful. These models can, for example, be described as:

- 1) stages for the designer enacting a method (Wulz 1986),
- 2) the participant's position on a ladder of power (Arnstein 1969),
- 3) changes in the use of the design artifact (Houde and Hill 1997).

But the relations between these aspects of participation are intertwined and dynamic. Instead of looking at power as something linear and dichotomous, I therefore suggest a nonlinear illustration of power in the participatory process, as a map of different participatory positions where the individual or institution's *relations*, her/his/its *epistemology* and basic *ontology* can be placed. Different types of *tools* for e-participation can then be positioned in relation to these views on participation:

- Decision support to improve deliberative consensus processes to, for example, list alternatives and count probabilities, or to visualize structure, which can be called *Statistics*.
- Tools and standards that enable the autonomous individual to interact as a crowd; accessing and contributing open data for different purposes, for example, to identify common issues and belongings or conflicting interests: *Interoperability*.
- Tools that enable the management of public spheres and organize deliberative discussion with peers to enable a temporary consensus in the performative state, such as structured decision support systems and reputation systems: *Structure*.
- Tools that enable a diversity of people to express their particular worldview in their choice of modality and create a base for a plurality of public spheres: *Modality*.

A process of participation can thus, simplified, comprise four components: there is a way of looking at the social reality, an *ontology*; a way of acquiring knowledge, a certain *epistemology*; it can be expressed in the *relations* to participants; and there are *tools* that support these different modes of participation. This way of looking at participation, as a position between different attitudes towards knowledge and social relations in the participatory process, might be helpful for better understanding how participation can be articulated and how different tools for e-participation can be developed.

The phenomenon can, for example, as in article 1, the visual ethnography of the art students, be treated as *data*, an independent reality (such as newspapers or web pages). The phenomenon can also be interpreted and created in *negotiation* between the participants, as in article 2, the research circle (such as interviews and discussions). The phenomenon can also be expressed as *manifests* of the researcher/designer/participant's critical

reading of the situation, such as sketches, prototypes, publications or art works. This was the case when we developed a collaborative design. In the case of the art exhibition, the phenomenon was treated as merely *art*, an expression of a singular subject's relation to the situation.

Different participatory paradigms are expressed in different ontologies and epistemologies. As Wulz (1986) pointed out, the epistemology of the designer/initiator can vary in the participatory situation, from, for example, doing an *analysis* of given data, to generating data by *investigating* relations, to enabling *interaction* such as in interviews, to enabling *deliberation* as in the research circle, to the creation of a *discourse* together with other subjects who express their particular viewpoints.

If I set this against what Arnstein (1969) focuses on, the power relation to the participants, I can look at the relations to others in the situation, from treating them as passive *objects* for an investigation as in the visual ethnography, to seeing them as *actors* in the research process, to personally motivated *agents* in the collaborative design, to looking at them as strong *subjects* that express their reality and engage others in this reality.

By letting these different scales – epistemology, ontology, tools, relations – intersect, I create a map of participation that describes different ways of understanding and producing knowledge, and shows how these ontologies and epistemologies emphasize different power relations and technical solutions (Fig. 34).

On the outskirts of the field is a more positivist paradigm, where the individual, together with other people, uses statistical tools and crowdsourcing to compile and analyze large amounts of open data. In the center of the field is a more interpretive paradigm, where the way of acquiring knowledge is more of an action research or artistic research where a strong subject uses a diversity of modalities to create dialogue with other situated subjects in a conversation about the world they create together, from the perspective of the singular subject and the particularity of the situation. On the outskirts of the field, what is sought after is *commonality*, what a group of people have in common and actions explained as *structure*. In the center of the field, the singularity of the participant and the participant's intentions and *motive* to participate, are emphasized, such as in the art project where the participants were artists motivated by their personal issues.

This image is, of course, an extreme simplification; the actors in the cases were not on one single spot but on different and moving positions. The design of the map could also have been done differently, which would have focused on other relations. In another version of it, for example, I inverted it and placed analysis and data in the center and the discourses and art on the outskirts to illustrate the richness and variation in the qualitative base for the quantified data. But in this context I preferred to put the subjectivity and art in the center as a rhetoric to emphasize the particular person in the center for

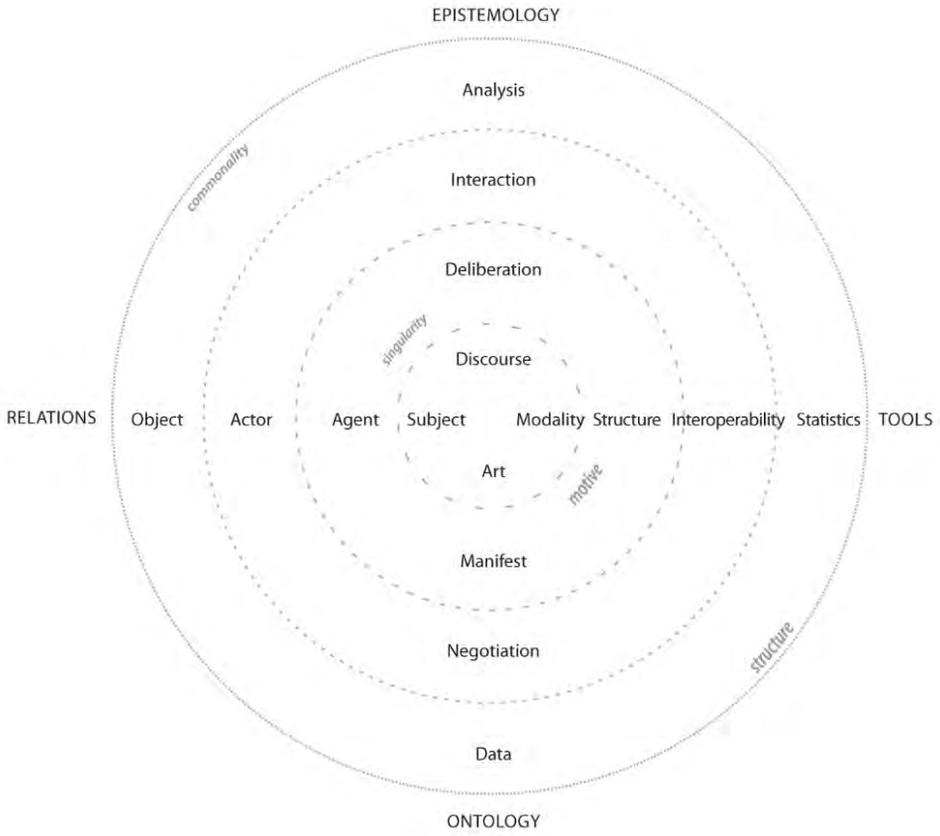


Figure 34. A map of participatory positions of different tools, power relations, ontologies and epistemologies.

the research and his or her situated perspective as the starting point for constructing data. This is not a final model, but rather a temporary illustration of different notions of participation.

The ambition with this map is not to present only one solution but to show how intentions and relations between roles and tools in the participatory setting can be clarified. Especially in contexts that involve a diversity of actors and interests, as well as different research disciplines, this type of map can be useful as a way of making expectations and intentions clear and creating a common vocabulary. Finally, it can be used as a guide when designing tools for e-participation that helps the individual to create and maintain multiple and sustainable performative states.

4.2.1 Njaru: A tool for micro democracy

Here I will use the prototype Njaru described in article 8 to show what the above theory can be used for in practice. Njaru was developed with a Swedish municipality in mind, but not to function as a government-to-citizen tool, but rather a citizen-to-citizen tool, or actor-to-actor tool, rather than an agency-to-citizen tool. We wanted to clarify that it is an individual with a certain power and motivation that “owns” the problem and invites others to solve it collaboratively as a group; this can be anyone, but it can also be a representative of the municipality. This group is not representative of an abstract collective, but represents certain clearly defined interests and expertise.

The tool is named after Philip Afuson Njaru, one of many brave journalists that used words to fight repressive regimes. “Njaru” is also Swedish slang used to express ambivalence and understanding that can translate to “I don’t really agree (yet). But yes I do understand how you think.” Njaru thus connotes the act of deliberation, where free speech enables a discursive process.

The basic form of the tool is that of a wiki, where participants collectively edit a document together and where the negotiations involved are described in a history of earlier document versions and comments. In addition, three types of functions are integrated: 1) *Deliberative functions* to support consensus such as structured augmenting and rating options, 2) *Reputation system* to describe who dominates the forming of opinion to enable transparency, 3) *Statistics*, which make transparent what the participants represent in terms of categories such as “age,” “gender,” “location” etc. The tool can be open for everyone to edit, or for just an invited few, and different rights can be set either manually by the owner or by the dynamic reputation process. All users have the right to their information and can withdraw earlier contributions at any time. The aim is mainly to support deliberative discussions, not to monitor opinions and decide on important issues through voting. The voting system is rather a way of obtaining quantitative snapshots of opinions under development.

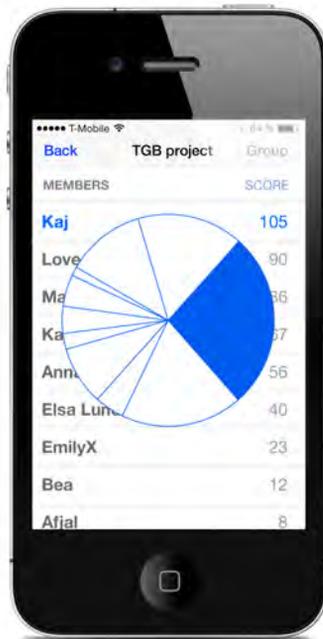


Figure 35. The reputation system shows who is active and who gets most reactions and positive feedback in the discussion.

To connect to the map of participatory positions above, the tool contains a certain kind of *statistic* that supports transparency, as it can visualize structure by showing how certain opinions are (or are not) connected to categories such as age or gender and who dominate the discussion (Fig. 35). These categories are reused by the system, which enables a certain *interoperability* and can be used to identify common issues and belongings or conflicting interests.

For example, the user can invite everyone in the system that shares a certain combination of categories to create a discussion based on this common denominator (Figs. 36–38). In this way, the tool supports pluralism as it enables the establishment of new public spheres, since it can connect individuals from different groups that don't have to know or like each other, but that share a common denominator. In Husby, this could, for example, be used to address a certain segment of the residents, such as women between 18 and 25, to discuss how they would want to use the public space. A new category can also be introduced as a way to create a group around an issue, such as “soccer.”

Furthermore, it creates a *structure* to the communication that supports a deliberative discussion towards consensus through the help of voting alternatives and pro/con argumentation and by visualizing informal structures in a reputation system (Figs. 39–41). This could, for example, be a way for democratic organizations in Husby to structure discussions and support decisions. Furthermore, an online meeting tool could make it possible to also include those that do not have enough time to attend meetings, or for other reasons have difficulties attending, such as parents of small children, or elderly, and disabled people.

The tool should be used as one of many tools for expression as it is constrained in one kind of *modality* that doesn't fit everyone. The tool should also be seen as part of a general methodology that can also be used offline and is possible to implement in other forms of expression. Swedish local organization life is an important basis for a more extended political participation, as it teaches basic meeting techniques that follow standard protocol in other parts of society such as in the workplace or in higher education. The tool supports this culture and also makes it more transparent and open for critique and development.

4.2.2 Preliminary evaluation of Njaru

Evaluation of the tool as a whole is yet to be done. But different parts of the tool have been tested in the previous prototype Actory, where the reputation system was developed. Two studies of this prototype have been performed. The first study invited a small group of five participants who conducted scenario-based tasks for an hour. The second study lasted for three months and involved a group of 11 participants with the goal of developing an art project.

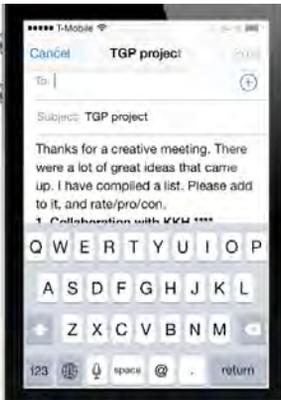


Figure 36. When the user creates a post the system sends an invitation to a list of recipients the user chooses.

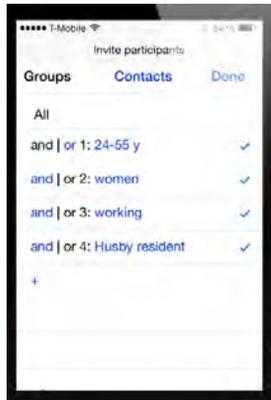


Figure 37. The user can invite everyone that shares a certain combination of categories to create a discussion based on this common denominator.

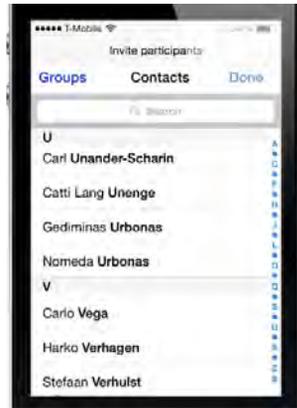


Figure 38. Users can also target people in their own network.

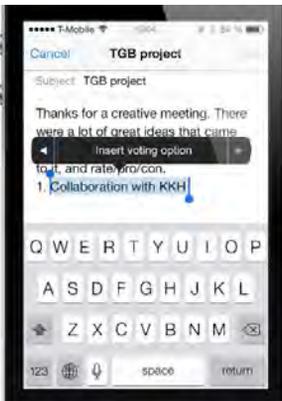


Figure 39. Text in the post can easily be converted to a voting option.

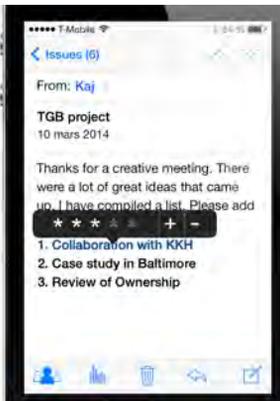


Figure 40. Text tagged as voting option can be "voted" on, and the user can add pro and con arguments.

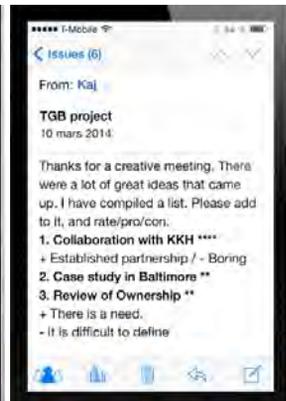


Figure 41. Voting options in post with nested pro and con arguments.

One important insight from both studies was that navigation easily becomes a problem due to the organic structure that is a result of basing the system on discursive practice. Just as in an ordinary blog, the user mostly enters in the middle of a conversation and it takes a while to understand the context if you haven't been in the discussion from the start. In *Njaru*, navigation is therefore simplified and follows the design conventions of an ordinary e-mail program.

The evaluation of the scoring system showed that most users didn't pay much attention to how it actually worked, but accepted the system and adapted to it without too much thought. Therefore, the scoring system as such worked as intended. It triggered some people to contribute more to the discussion and it gave a quantitative measurement that made the participation easier to overview. The emphasis on reactions to each other's posts meant that the group as a whole developed a higher sensibility for the roles in the discussion even when they met real-life settings. The tool and the discussions about the use of it created a discussion about the meeting situation in general and thus helped foster a certain attitude and behavior in the real-life context too.

To conclude, *Njaru* can be used to help the individual to establish and manage a multiplicity of performative states with the help of deliberative functions. Here the relational aspect of communication is emphasized, but the tool can also help the individual to create new relations based on interests rather than tightly knitted group affiliations. From a government perspective, the tool can be used but from the situated perspective of the government representative that any user can invite a smaller group of people to develop a question, or a bigger group to answer more clearly defined questions. Of course, this instrumentalization of complex social relations and processes cannot solve political problems and the use of a tool that monitors people's discussions and interactions might hinder rather than promote democracy. Just like any tool online that records people's actions and opinions, this tool can also be used for surveillance. Secrecy and negotiations behind locked doors are also important for a democracy. The tool should rather be seen as an illustration of how underdeveloped parts of the e-democracy map such as autonomy and pluralism can be supported in practice. A technical communication system is always a normative claim. The claim I make here is that people have motives that make them do things. Some people have more power to do what they want than others, but if this power is misused and the inequalities become too big, this will cause conflicts. Therefore there is a need for tools that help to show when inequalities in different contexts become too large. This tool is a method to help the individual initiate and manage collective action and to monitor the inequalities within.

4.3 Conclusion

In this thesis I have addressed two related problems in the e-participation field: the lack of transdisciplinarity and the lack of a coherent theory of democratic participation. The thesis has also been an exploration of different participatory research methods and a development of art as a participatory methodology. By involving a broad group of artists and researchers from different disciplines, this participatory methodology has been discussed and further developed in the art projects that have framed the research.

To create a theory regarding participation in a global ICT-distributed context and to find means to enable transdisciplinarity I first needed to answer some more general questions about online participation. The first question about *how people participate online* was answered by studying art students' practices online, on websites and in social media. The result showed how ICT was primarily used to maintain and reproduce a shared culture, rather than to connect to other communities. Secondly I explored, in a design project based on the findings from the first study, *what democracy can mean in a globally distributed environment* such as the art world. The result was a method for visualizing the presence of social structuring factors. Third, as a way to *understand these difference-making structures*, an exaggeration of such a system was explored in an artistic work that combined a social network online with an online stock trading company. The result showed how an individualization of labor paradoxically implies collectivization as the individual's relationships with others become more important. Fourth, as a way to come up with *e-strategies for accommodating the inequality and differences in the local participatory processes*, the information structures in a local commonality were explored using an art exhibition as one of the methods. The results show the importance of long-term support for a plurality of public spheres to enable a broad deliberative process around common issues.

Finally, I asked what a deliberative e-tool for organizing a diversity of groups from a micro-democratic perspective would look like. The result was a deliberative tool that makes it easier to analyze the online public spheres from a representational perspective and enhances awareness of the lack of equal representation in e-participation.

The overall question in the thesis has been how transdisciplinarity in e-participation can be supported and what a theory of e-participation looks like that departs from a situation that is relative and dynamic and where differentiation is essential for the creating of meaning. The answer to the first question about how to support transdisciplinarity was addressed in a *map of participatory positions where the relations between different ontologies and epistemologies and participatory positions of power were described*. This type of map enables an overview of the participatory spectrum in relation to different research paradigms and can be used both as

a way to communicate between researchers and to plan e-participation efforts. The answer to the second question on what a theory of e-participation looks like is that *e-participation is an ICT-enhanced method to get a diversity of opinions and perspectives rather than one single one*. In practice this means tools that help actors to organize collective action by enabling autonomy and supporting plurality, but also support transparency and consensus within the temporary and performative state. The theory was further explained and exemplified by a software design, a tool that aims to support management of a diversity of public spheres and deliberative communication with peers, while at the same time monitoring differences in interests and belonging.

5 Future research

While writing this thesis I moved to Brooklyn in the USA with my family and we arrived the day before Hurricane Sandy, the most destructive and deadliest of the storms on the east coast 2012. We started our new life by being evacuated to a friend's basement. This experience of the fragility of urban life, but also the durability of tolerance and caring that the crisis revealed, marked my first relation to my new home.

One of the questions I asked the participants in the urban planning context in Husby was where they would go in a crisis situation if the information channels broke down. This gave a deeper understanding of how they normally used communication technologies and was a great way to see beyond the functionality of technical and formal systems. Therefore, one of the things I would like to look into, in future research, is how community was enacted in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and how this was materialized in information practices.

The use of social media in disaster contexts can be seen as a test of our communication strengths and weaknesses. It both signifies the need for overview and control and the collaborative aspect of information production. Also, it is often an expression of improvised grass-root activism and temporary organization (Palen and Liu 2007). Palen et al. (2010) define emergency response as a socially distributed information system and point to the importance of understanding how data is socially produced and by whom. Therefore the social media practices in New York City during Hurricane Sandy are interesting as a case for exploring issues of representation.

Social media has widely been adopted in voluntary organizations as a means to create civic engagement and organize collective action (Obar, Zube and Lampe 2012; Starbird and Palen 2011). Authorities have been more cautious in their adoption of social media, but Hurricane Sandy led to a change in many officials' attitudes in New York and fostered an awareness of and interest in using social media to interact with the public (see, for example, McKay 2014; Sullivan and Uccellini 2012). But even though there is an interest in the possibilities of social media in crisis management there is a lack of tool support when it comes to important social and deliberative aspects of communication practices, such as coordination and bridge building (Volda, Harmon and Al-ani 2012), or to motivating long-term

commitment to the civic sphere (Starbird and Palen 2013). There are also problems due to a lack of trust and accountability (Antoniou and Ciaramicoli 2013). The related question about representation in social media practices is seldom touched upon at all. Crowd-sourced data is created by situated subjects in dialogue, representing a constrained amount of experiences and realities. Therefore there is a need for a more critical reading of the current open government paradigm regarding representation, meaning a need to create awareness of whom the data represents, who is recognized in the data and how the means to produce the data are distributed.

When looking at what has been published in connection with Hurricane Sandy and the problems that arose in the crisis, I distinguish two different ways of framing the crisis. The first is focused on control and technical solutions: for example, how “big data”, the collecting and combining of large amounts of data, could improve prognoses and the distribution of city resources (see, for example, Gupta et al. 2013; Morstatter et al. 2013; Munro, Erle and Schnoebelen 2013; Preis et al. 2013; Shelton et al. 2014). In this discourse, the crisis is an information problem that will be solved through greater transparency and public innovation. There is a great deal of research dealing with quality of information, but the question of who is behind the information is not the issue; rather it is trustworthiness and credibility from a technical perspective, detecting the presence of spam, compromised accounts, malware and phishing attacks (Gupta et al. 2013). This type of research is highly data driven, meaning you take available data such as Facebook conversations and Twitter tweets and try to understand it using quantitative methods. The qualitative base for the information is seldom problematized. When using so-called big data to improve government, it is therefore important to carefully look at how the data is created, what the data actually reveals and what it doesn't reveal.

The other way to address communication during Hurricane Sandy is focused on the specific human values the crisis revealed, the love and the compassion. Al-akkad et al. (2013) show, for example, how people made creative use of the remains of the technological landscape. White, Palen and Anderson (2014) point to the advanced collaborative work by the crowd using social media. News media also discussed the differences and inequalities that the crisis revealed, which meant that it affected different people to different degrees depending on socioeconomic factors (Cher 2012; Rohde 2013; Wiley 2013). In this more critical discourse, the modern rational city as an organization is not sufficient to deal with real crisis; instead it is people's fundamental need to care for each other and support their group that allows us to manage crisis. Despite the collapse of communication technology, people used available means to maintain and establish relations (Al-akkad et al. 2013). This discourse defines

infrastructures as relations and communication technologies as something used to strengthen relations.

It would be interesting to study the intersection between these two different discourses, control and compassion, in relation to my previous studies of identity and community online. I'm particularly interested in looking at ways to establish and strengthen collaborative spaces through ICT and how social media was used as community support during the crisis. But I am also interested in how big data can be used to highlight representation in the online public spheres and the difference-making processes within and between these spheres as well as connecting a particular sphere to a general picture.

This means connecting different layers in the participatory map: for example, developing tools in the deliberative layer, but also integrating data developed in the interaction layer and systemized in the analysis layer, to create a more informed understanding when making decisions.

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Included articles

- I. Controlling singularity: Art students' online communication.
- II. Reflexive technology for collaborative environments.
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Controlling Singularity

The role of online communication for young visual artists' identity management

by Karin Hansson

Abstract:

This article contributes to the literature on art, new media and identity by investigating the role online communication plays for young visual artists' identity management. Drawing from comprehensive sources on the Internet such as blogs, web pages, networking sites and digital magazines, as well as interview data from art students at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, the article describes how artists deal with convergent contexts online, while addressing an exclusive public of cultural producers and simultaneously reaching for a broad cultural significance.

The study shows how the artists' discursive practices online foremost preserve a traditional artist's persona. The common denominator for the few students who used the web differently to communicate and collaborate was that they appeared in a variety of creative fields and also that they came from affluent families. However, to reach a high degree of consecration on the Swedish art field one should not communicate with a broad public online but with the right people that one first gets to know face-to-face at intimate social gatherings. Online communication is foremost used as a way of displaying belonging to the field, and to show that one recognizes a certain value – the singular artist.

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Introduction

In the novel *The City & The City* Mieville (2010), describes a place where two different cities coexists in the same geographical space and time without mixing, by the technique of un-seeing. This practice of not acknowledging people and objects because of certain characteristic is maintained by strong taboos, and in the novel,

breaking the taboo is punished by social exclusion. I think this is an interesting allegory of how community can be maintained in situations that lack spatial, social, and temporal boundaries such as on the Internet, and where there is a threat – or potential threat – that parallel communities will collapse into each other. As an artist that has been working with web based projects since the 1990s, I am fascinated with how the global world of fine art maintains its exclusivity in the open environment of the Internet. To better understand how such a community can take place in the open, but be inaccessible without the right codes, this paper examines this process from the perspective of young artists' online self-performance.

In the arts, technology has always placed limits on how artwork is produced and distributed (Alexander, 2003). Art worlds are not isolated cultures but highly influenced by the changes in the surrounding society. The production of culture perspectives that have developed in sociology since the 1970s shows how the elements of culture are shaped by the systems within which they are produced and preserved (Peterson and Anand, 2004). The music business is an example of how external factors, such as information and communication technologies (ICTs), have altered production conditions and production methods (Alexander, 2003; Ebare, 2004; Zentner, 2006). In the case of fine art, online communication that makes it easy to manipulate, copy, distribute information, and interact with an audience has challenged the exclusivity of the artwork and the artist's role (Dahlgren, 2005; Paul, 2003).

Nowadays, Internet technically provides visual artists with an opportunity to directly communicate their art in a global context and to a wider audience than before without going through gatekeepers such as art critics, publishers and galleries. However, research contains very little information about how visual artists actually use the Internet, and in the few studies available, the Internet is primarily looked upon as a conventional platform for display (See e.g., Clarke III & Flaherty, 2002; Mäkinen, 2009). When looking at comparable fields, such as the music industry where the production conditions have radically changed the business due to file sharing and online social networks, there is an extensive amount of research. The Internet gives musicians a direct channel to their fan base and enables collaborative networks at a distance, but the music industry is still an important gatekeeper when it comes to promoting the artist and setting the norms (Johnson, 2011). Marontate's (2005) research into a music technology program in a rural Canadian university shows how the Internet enables contact with the central music industry, at the same time as hegemonic norms create limits on the way online communications are used. Even though the students set up their own system of production and find alternative distribution channels, they still have to adapt to the conventions of their musical style to establish their career. In line with these findings, in their study of Australian musicians attitudes towards online social

media like MySpace, Young and Collins (2010) show that even if the Internet has improved non-established musicians with the means to act without gatekeepers in the music industry, there is an incredible amount of work to create, distribute and generate money from music.

The Internet can also be looked upon as a style, a symbolic capital rather than a means of production. Uimonen's (2009) comprehensive study of an arts college in Tanzania shows how the use of technology is embedded in local and national relations and imaginations where the Internet not only has practical importance for getting access to the global art world, but also is a symbol that signifies belonging to this global context. Research on young people's use of social media also shows how different online contexts signify identity and belonging, and thus are structured by factors like class, age and race (Ahn, 2012; Ames et al., 2011; boyd, 2011b).

An art school is a place where artistic identity and discourses about art develop and where new media is on the curriculum; it is therefore an interesting place for studying young artists' use of the Internet. Here the artist's identity is shaped in relation to different ideas about the artist that exists in art students' different life contexts (Taylor and Littleton, 2008). In this study, I have therefore chosen to look at how young artists use different online communication tools and what these practices mean for the individual when establishing themselves as artists. During a five-month stay at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm (KKH) 2009/2010 I conducted a content analysis of students' (N=50) online artistic mediations and conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 of the students. In a follow-up study, I compared the result of the first study with informants' position on the artistic field over the following three years 2010-2013.

In the following Section 1, I begin by summarizing the theoretical background to the investigation; in Section 2, I describe my method. I summarize the results of the investigation in Section 3, and I discuss these results in Section 4. The last section provides a conclusion.

1 The significance of communication technology in the arts

As scholars from Goffman (1969) to Butler (2004) have shown, identity is not something stable but rather something performed and reproduced by constant repetition. By performing the norm for being an artist, one becomes an artist. The fact that identity is created does not however mean that the individual is free to change his or her identity; language and society's norms and rules place limits on what is conceivable and feasible (Foucault, 1982). The artist's norms are decided by the field of art, which according to Bourdieu (1990), includes all social actors sharing the same *illusio*, the belief in art and the importance of this field. Players may include policymakers, arts administrators, funding agencies, gallery owners,

museum curators, the audience as well as artists themselves. To establish a career and acquire influence, what Bourdieu (1975, p. 30) calls a “*succession strategy*”, is made by following the established rules of the field.

This field of art can be described as structured because of the opposition between two systems of production (Bourdieu, 1985). On the one hand, there is the field of large-scale production where the general audiences who are outside the realm of artistic producers, consume art with low cultural and economic value. On the other extreme there is the field of restricted production, where short-term economic gain is always secondary to recognition from other art producers (Figure 1). In order to enjoy a high reputation in this field, one should be independent and not allow oneself to be guided by the market or the rules of society.

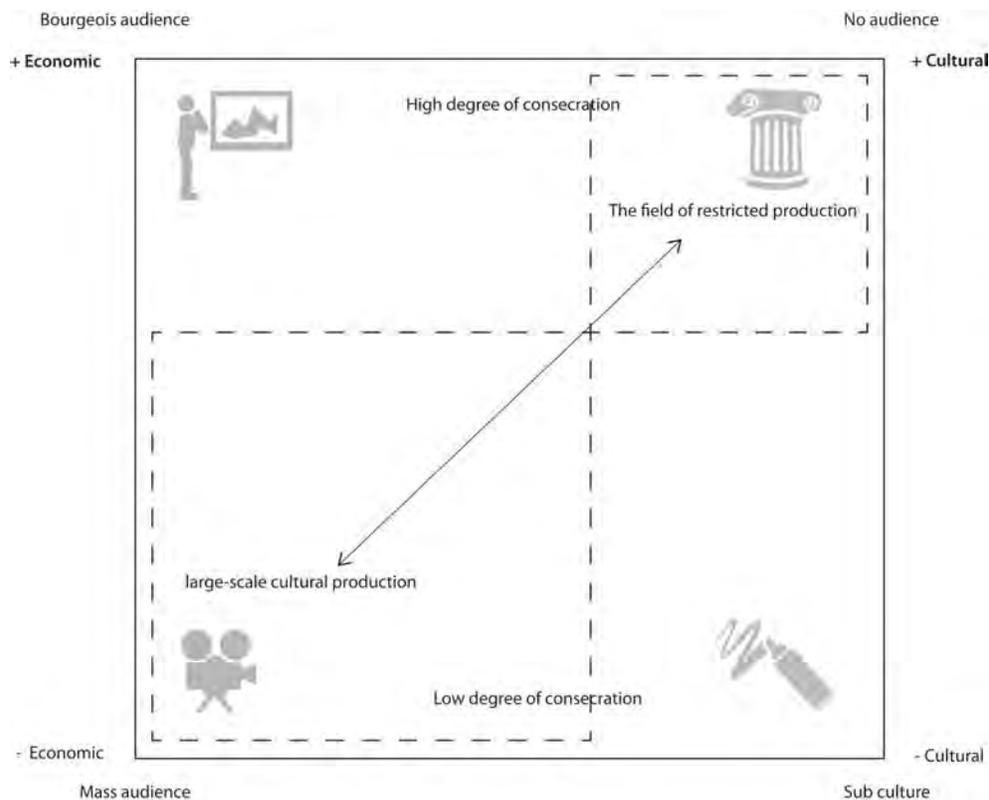


Figure 1. The field of art structured by audience size and levels of cultural and economic capital, and also by the field of large-scale cultural production and the field of restricted production.

An artist’s reputation depends on how he or she navigates the artistic field, balancing between playing a role in the small circle of cultural producers on the field of restricted production and gaining a broader cultural significance and qualifications for e.g., much-needed scholarships and prestigious assignments. More detailed rules of the game, however, are unclear and in constant

renegotiation. The ability to act in the field is limited by “the objective relations” in which the artist’s identity is enacted, such as the dominant ideology, normative practices and power structures arising from the unequal distribution of artistic capital within the field. Bourdieu (2000) claims individuals adopt different strategies in the field depending on their habitus, meaning that individual variables such as ethnicity, gender and class determine the individual’s possible strategies on the field. However, by obtaining a sound knowledge of the field, the individual can change his or her opportunities and also alter the rules of the game (Ibid). In this perspective, online communication changes the objective relations that limits the field, and could thus help some individuals with a high level of digital literacy in their succession strategy.

Bourdieu’s view of the art world as a field in which different subfields and genres are fighting over a limited space has often been criticized as being too concerned with power and domination. Becker (1982) suggests a less structuralistic and more agent-centered idea of the field of art, as a network of smaller interconnected art worlds, consisting of individuals sharing the same interests and belongings. Becker’s rhetoric is less warlike than Bourdieu’s and more optimistic regarding the individual’s opportunities to create his or her own conditions. He stresses the possibility of creating alternative art worlds when the established ones do not fit. In this perspective, new communication technologies, like the Internet, enables the establishment of new art worlds as it makes it easier to connect people with the same interest. Becker considers that every art world is a meaning-making culture with its own conventions and way of making art. These conventions create both limits and meaning, but without these boundaries, there is no art (Alexander, 2003; Becker, 1982).

Even though Bourdieu and Becker represent different perspectives in the sociology of art, they share an approach to art as a collective process. Heinich (2009) questions this collective perspective, suggesting that sociology should create explanations based on understanding the actors’ own logic, where art most often is seen as an expression of a unique singular individual and not something collective. She also suggests that motivation in art has more to do with recognition of peers than an urge to gain power and dominate. Heinich (1997) claims that since modernism, singularity has been the central value regime of art. In her study of Van Gogh, Heinich shows how the modernistic concept of art is a matter of belief, where the artist functions like a martyr for a religion that worships singularity (Ibid). Singularity is not a stable regime but something that coexists in parallel with other values, such as the value regime of the artisan or the value regime of the professional networker. These unstable paradoxical belief systems are what constitute art.

However, making art is also to make something public. An alternative concept to *belief systems, fields* or *art worlds* is therefore to talk about art as public spheres or just *publics*. Dewey uses the word public as something that is formed when a group of people recognizes each other when they perceive how something affects them collectively this gives them a reason to acknowledge each other and to come together (Dewey, 2012). A public is not only something that one belongs to, 'public' is also a property of something one makes, which is why it is an interesting term in research as it connotes an action that can be observed as it is made public. A public is nothing a person belongs to, but something people perform and participates in. The public, the place where identity and interest become public, is thus both a product of social or political action and a ground for further action. This means that the mode of public expression, whether it is a conversation, an online chat, an original painting or a printed book, is central for the forming of publics. Following the thoughts of Latour (2005), this means that not just humans are forming publics, communication technologies also have an active part.

Boyd (2011a, p. 39) points out how 'networked publics'— online social networks — differ from other distribution forms as technology 'collapses' multiple contexts, making different publics collide as the lack of spatial, social and temporal borders makes it more difficult to control the environment and address specific publics. For the same reasons, the boundaries between the private and the public are more difficult to maintain (Ibid). This convergent architecture of networked publics means that the individual continuously needs to present a coherent identity, that make sense from different publics' perspective, while acting this identity on different stages, and in different types of modalities (Papacharissi, 2010). Different stages for an artist can for example be blogs, articles, web pages or gallery openings. Types of different modalities are for example artworks, photos, reviews or interviews. Papacharissi (2010) suggests that mastering this art of distributed self-performance creates a sense of place from an individual perspective. The enactment of a public self thus becomes an important literacy.

Identity-performance has been central to the arts since modernism, where artists' brands have been maintained over time and space through the publication of books and articles in newspapers controlled by gatekeepers such as art critics and art historians (Bydler, 2004). It is therefore interesting to see how individuals in this culture enact public selves online.

At the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm (KKH) the emphasis is not on teaching a range of artistic techniques; the majority of students have already spent several years of art studies in preparatory art schools. The focus is more on career management, to create and maintain an identity for the artist on the art scene (Gustavsson et al., 2008). While the school offers the latest technology for artistic production such as 3D scanners and courses in animation and web production,

KKH is also known as one of the most conservative art institutions in Sweden. Previous studies of the institution were conducted before the introduction of the Internet and mobile communication. Therefore, it is interesting to see how actors in this context adapt to the changes in communication technologies, and how they manage their professional identity expressed in aesthetics and other online practices. The main question is how young artists in this context use different online communication tools and what these practices means for the individual when establishing an identity as an artist.

2 Methods and data

To understand how the art students use online communication I look at their communication in a broad sense, from oral speech and clothing to social media. The focus is not so much on the singular artifact or practice, rather how artifacts and practices are used, organized and understood in a larger context. Here, I investigate how these discursive practices are reproduced, understood and developed by the actors in relation to existing social and economic positions. The initial study consists of a content analysis of the online mediations of fifty students, followed by semi-structured interviews with ten of the students. As a way of obtaining additional perspectives, the result of the content analysis was the starting point for the questions in the interviews. By combining the content analysis of online practices and students' own explanations of these practices, I compare a more quantitative overview of the practices with the individual actor's motivations. To see how student's online practice correlated with their career, the result of the first investigation was compared with a study of informants' official recognition in the dominating public sphere in established media the following three years.

The reason to study art students and not more established artists is that this gives us an opportunity to not only analyze those who succeed but also those who do not, as well as an understanding of the process of creating a field while establishing an artistic career. Here students from a larger diversity of backgrounds than established artists' try to make sense of the field, but also change it to make place for their unique perspective. Art students in higher education presumably share the same *illusio*, a similar belief in creating an artistic career.

The Royal Institute of Art is the highest and most prestigious education in art in Sweden and the reason why students most often have studied at several art schools before and might even have established themselves as professional artists. The school accepts about 25 students each year, the pool of students are usually about 25 years of age, with slightly more women than men. I have chosen to examine two groups, first-year and fifth-year students, in order to obtain a variation in age and at the same time an opportunity to make comparisons between students who have just entered the school and those who have

completed 4 years. In this way, I can better understand how the educational setting affects students' cultural capital expressed in their online identity. The whole population in the two groups was examined; a total of 50 students; 23 first-year students (9 men and 14 women) and 27 fifth-year students (10 men and 17 women) were included in the study.

In the first study, I analyzed the *representation* of fifty art students' identities in the multimodal environment of the Internet in the form of text, images, sound, video, animation and typography on web pages, as well as in social networks. The material was collected through Google search, and by searching the most popular social networks. An 2009 Internet search combined much of the information that was publicly accessible for a person operating in Sweden and, as most of the newspapers and books were reviewed and marketed online, also included analogue media. Here, representation does not mean a representation of the physical body like an avatar in a game but rather, refers to identity-representation in a broad sense. It is not the single action that plays a role when establishing an online identity but the combination of different actions. Therefore, as opposed to most uses of visual methods, where researchers focus on a constrained aspect of the information like profile images on Facebook or text-based conversation in chat rooms, the focus was on the visual and verbal representation as a whole (see Appendix A). The type of information, whether it was a photo of a painting or an interactive video, was treated as discourse and thus a part of the message. The technical aspect of the information, how it was produced and how much interactivity was involved, were also important. Not only the actual representation, but the framing context was investigated, whether the students' name occurred in established art contexts on the web, in articles about art in Swedish newspapers, press releases to news bureaus and information from art institutions in alternative contexts, and whether students themselves present themselves as artists. It is also important to understand the interactive and social dimensions of social networks like Facebook and MySpace (See for example the discussion by Doostdar, 2004; Murthy, 2008), thus why I created active user identities in the most used social networks. However, I did not interact with informants online, or access their private communication in, for example, social media networks.

My own role as a member of the Swedish arts community has also been important for understanding the culture, balancing the disadvantages with being a native. For example, with the help of my network I could co-create a Facebook user with over 700 'friends' from the Swedish arts community, which enabled me to see how many Facebook friends the art students had in this network of established artists.

In addition, publically available information on a 5th year art student could, for example, consist of:

- Web page where domain is registered in own name, which shows that the page probably is self-produced. The web design is simple, black Courier size 10 on white background. The information is sparse; a resume containing a list of gallery shows, and photos that document art works (mostly sculpture) in the context of art galleries and museums.
- Company information at www.allabolag.se that index all Swedish companies.
- Network with 266 friends on Facebook, where at least 6 are established artists.
- No account in own name on Flickr, Myspace or Youtube.
- 3 articles in online local newspapers about a recent art project. These articles are mostly summaries of press information from an art hall and not written by art experts.
- Named as participant in a group exhibition at an art hall web page. Simplistic aesthetic, black Helvetica on white background. Provincial art hall.

Focus was on the information production that surrounds the artist and emphasizes the collective work in the art; the collective of critics, journalists, gallery owners and the public that co-creates the artist's identity. To investigate how the artist's online identity relates to different senders and contexts I not only looked at *ideologies* about the artist expressed in different *discursive practices* (the organizing and making of different forms of knowledge like text, form, color, technology, place and genre), but I also used the concept of *frame* to link discourse to a broader context that indicates a conscious sender as opposed to more un-reflected discursive practices (see Appendix B). I was also interested in the *sender* of the information and whether the art student seems to have control over the information.

The content analysis resulted in five ideal types representing different communication styles. To obtain contact with a heterogeneous group, as much as was possible in terms of communication style, 1 hour in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with students of each of the ideal types and of each cohort group, in total 10 students. The initial results were presented at a seminar at the school, on the school e-mail list, and were also discussed with a small group of seven students that formed a research circle about the artist's role.

To see if students' online presence had any effect on the informant's artist's career, I compared how they succeeded as artists the following three years (2010-2013), in terms of quality of exhibiting galleries and art halls, and communicated in established media as notices or reviews. The media analysis also gave me an overview of some of the contexts in which the students acted, for example, the articles and notices are often the result of galleries and art halls marketing efforts in relation to exhibitions or art rewards.

3 Results and analysis

3.1 Internet use: Co-existing artistic ideologies online

The students represented a heterogeneous group in terms of forms of expression: from surreal paintings to charcoal drawings, performance, sound art and film. Many students used a diversity of expressions. They were also present in multiple online contexts. However, the most striking difference between the students in the online content was not the art genre or context, but type of online activity, thus, why I chose this as a starting point for a categorization. The categories are as follows: *Visible* for those whose activities created a coherent identity that made them easy to find and to define artistically; *Unclear* for those who were difficult to find and difficult to understand in terms of what kind of art they did; A few students were completely *Invisible*, as I couldn't find them online. Secondly, I grouped different ideas about the artist and art that was expressed in the material into three different categories; *Artisan* categorized material that showed the artist as someone that demonstrates skills, at for example painting nature or at editing video; *Singular* categorized material that portrayed the artist as a genial outsider who creates from his or her inner self; and *Networker* categorized material that signified the artist as someone that makes art in an art context.

The first group, *Visible*, was transparent in various ways; some students were primarily described by others, in newspaper articles about art exhibitions and the art schools' reports about who had obtained scholarships or entered higher education. This ideal type I called *Icons*. *Icons* could also frame themselves on self-produced websites, but if this were the case, they were presented as if someone else was the creator. The most common artistic ideologies in this group were *Artisan* and *Singular*, but the ideology *Networker* was also expressed. Figure 2 shows a webpage placing one of the art students in a *Singular* ideology as foremost, the sculptures are described as an expression of the artists' inner feelings and urge to express him or her self, and a journalist interprets the art and the artist. The article is based on an interview with the artist and written by a reporter that is covering culture in a broad sense; soccer, chorus performances and children playgrounds, and the article does not show any expertise in the way the text is written as it lacks references to contemporary art discussions. The art student was only present online in this manner, described by others and framed in an established art context showing a clear artistic identity, leaving no doubt that the art student was an authentic artist.

Another more active framing was performed by the students themselves by creating their own website and addressing visitors directly or by posting contributions in discussions on the web, acting more as cultural entrepreneurs in the way they engaged in collaborative work. I called this ideal type *Agent*. The most common ideology in this group was *Networker*. Figure 3 shows an artist's

blog that I have categorized as *Agent* and *Networker* for several reasons. The blog is written by the artist in first person, it describes an art exhibition the artists has co-curated with other artists in an alternative non-commercial gallery, and it is published using a blog tool that enables a certain interactivity as it invites people to comment on posts and communicate with the artist. The artist was present online in other similar contexts, mentioned by other artist on their blogs, or as publisher of arty videos on YouTube.

The other large group of students was unclear as artists in various ways, as it was difficult to understand what kind of art they did: Some were easy to find but were present primarily as art students, framed as a name of a participant in various art school contexts like, for example, in press releases about student exhibitions. I called this ideal type *Student*. The ideal type *Student* did not have a clear artistic profile and the ideology *Singular* dominated the context. The ideal type were presented as a student and not as an artist and only appeared in student-related contexts. This could for example take the form of a name on a press release about a student exhibition, or a name on an art school's website. The ideal type *Student* occurred almost solely in the fifth year. All in all, twice as many students were unclear as artists in the fifth year as in the first year. This might sound odd, but it is important to understand the high status of The Royal Institute of Art (KKH) in the Swedish art context; to be a student at KKH is an important identity that might be the main legitimization of one's art. Figure 4 shows the framing of one *Student*, a web page from a well-known art school in Stockholm that prepares students for higher arts education, where the artist is listed as a former student. This person was present on two other sites, as a name on a press release from a student exhibition and as the receiver of an arts grant for students at KKH.



Figure 2. *Icon*, framed by journalist that emphasizes the student's artisan skills and singularity.

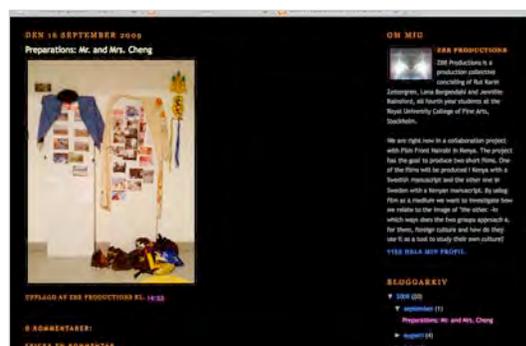


Figure 3. *Agent*, creating a blog about artistic collaborations.



Figure 4. *Student*, framed by art institutions, here as an image and a name on an art school web page.

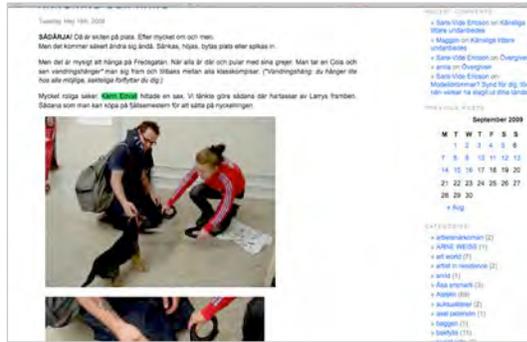


Figure 5. *Indefinable*, framed by other artists in arty contexts. Here in a blog as the name of a person that helps an artist installing an exhibition.

Another group was almost invisible as artists, but circulated in art contexts in different ways. This group I named *Indefinable*. The ideologies in this material were *Singular* or *Networker*. Among the *Indefinable*, the *Singular* ideology was strong first and foremost, because they demonstrated an inability to clearly communicate themselves and their art. As shown in Table 1, this group was largest in among the fifth year students. This group also expressed a *Networker* ideology since they showed that they moved around in several social art contexts, for example by being publishers of Flickr photo web pages documenting art exhibition openings or by having many people in Stockholm's art world as friends on the social network Facebook. Figure 5 is a screen shot of a blog that documents work with an art exhibition. Here an art student I categorized as *Indefinable* is mentioned as a person that helped install the exhibition. The exhibition is in a non-commercial alternative space and the other people that are mentioned or are in photos are from a younger generation of artists in Stockholm. The photos document the process off installing the exhibition and the blog presents the social aspects of the art space, which clearly positions this blog in an art discourse that has been around since the 1990s where focus is on the relational aspects of art rather than on the art object. The publication tool is a free open source tool that has just been slightly modified, which either shows that the blogger did not know how to change the layout, or that the aesthetic is a political statement pointing to the fact that they are using this particular free software and not a commercial one.

When looking at the students whose artist identity was clearly visible, it was the ideal type *Icons* whose discursive practice contained all the artist ideologies. The ideology *Artisan* was especially prominent in many cases. The material of the artwork or the craftwork elements of the work process could, for example, be discussed in reviews. The craft might be about drawing with charcoal in a certain complicated way or using 16 mm film to get the correct grey scale. In addition, the

contextualization of the craft was important, for example it was important that the quality of the documenting photo was high or that the text about the artwork was well written. The ideal type *Icon* was largely framed through others, and in the description of the art and the artist first and foremost a *Singular* ideology emerged, in which the artist's individuality and differentness were highlighted and where others framed the art. This stereotype of an artist was foremost reproduced in local newspapers, where the journalists often are not experts on art (and therefore might reproduce a more popular notion of art than art experts would).

"Because she is not on site it is the gallery's manager [name], who presents [name] and her work of art. [] He knows she wants to have her art without words, that it shouldn't be talked to pieces but rather must be allowed to speak for itself." (Quote from article about art exhibition in local newspaper)

In the above example, the framing is done first by the gallery manager whose story is interpreted and edited by the journalist. The narrative is that the artist is a shy oracle who cannot meet an audience directly but has to be interpreted by experts. What contradicts this image of the artist as framed by others is the fact that most *Icons* have their own website, which signals that they have an eye on things, and are someone that is more of a networker than an outsider. However, the art and the artist are often presented in the third person on the website, as if the owner of the website was someone other than the artist. Stylistically the same graphical language as for a museum of modern art is used. This language is more refined in fifth-year students' communications. In addition, the student category *Agents* can show, through their graphic language, that they belong to the art world, but they write in the first person, using a subjective voice. They not only use the web to directly promote themselves, but also as a tool for the organization of exhibitions and collaborative projects. *Agents* were twice as common among first-year students as among those who had entered their fifth year.

Table 1. Different types of visibility as artist on the Internet when searching for names of students at the Royal Institute of Art (KKH) autumn 2009, divided by ideal types.

	<i>Invisible</i>	<i>Unclear</i>		<i>Clear</i>	
		Indefinable	Students	Icons	Agents
Ideologies		Singular Networker	Singular	Artisan Singular Networker	Networker
Information control		Yes, not visible	Poor	Yes, partly	Yes, largely
Year 1 (23 students)	1	4	2	9	7
Year 5 (27 students)	3	4	9	8	3
Total	4	8	11	17	10

3.2 Motivation

3.2.1 Contradictory opinions about the artist in interviews

In the interviews, contradictory ideas about the artist came up, often from the same person, where artists' Internet use and general communication practices were placed in opposition to concepts about the artist.

<i>Concepts about the artist</i>	<i>The artist's practice</i>
The artist as passive object	The artist as active subject
Does not use Facebook	Everyone uses Facebook
Lets the art speak	Speaks for the art
Outsider	Networker
Takes big risks	Pays close attention to detail
Doesn't keep up with marketing	Takes the main responsibility for their PR
Needs no website	Website essential
Doesn't care about appearance	Makes efforts to stick out
Not average	Middle class
Clearly definable art. Credible.	Does a bit of each. Unserious.

The issue concerning appearance was also discussed in the interviews. The view was often that important contacts were established in informal social contexts where the artist's appearance and behavior became important. In this perspective the Internet had a secondary role; online presence functioned more like an extended business card.

The students were well aware of how an artist should behave but had difficulties describing the artist other than in negations. Here, the identity was not defined in duality with the other, rather the identity of the artist was to be the other; someone who does not use Facebook, does not keep up with marketing, does not look like all the others; someone who does not manage to dress themselves up, who does not arrive on time, and who does not have a bicycle helmet:

[Answer to question about appearance]

" Here, I am nearly the only one with a bicycle helmet! But it is perhaps because I am one of the older ones. Sometimes it feels as if people do not see you when you arrive with a bicycle helmet. Maybe a true artist should not be afraid to die." [laughs]

The art students that showed awareness of these conventions of the art world but had the self-confidence to ignore these limitations came from an upper-class or upper-middle class background.

In the interviews, I unintentionally formulated the questions in a way that provoked an informative discussion. The formulation many questioned was my use of the word “marketing”: if and how the students marketed themselves and their art. It was obviously wrong to talk in terms of marketing. Nobody wanted to be someone that “marketed” him or herself. However, when I asked how people knew about them and their art, I got other types of answers. When asking the students about artists they liked and why they liked them, they often mentioned young and not so established artists, unknown to a broader public.

[If you think about artists that you think are good, or are good at communicating, who are they?]

There are many young artists, and it is also contradictory to what I said earlier [about not being too private], but it’s rather me who thinks it’s a hassle if it is too personal. But I think of those young artists that blog or have websites where they post everything that happens in their art and what is happening in their lives.

[Do you have any examples?]

Sara-Vide, she has been here [at KKH] before, and one that has been a student at Konstfack [University College of Arts, Crafts and Design] and one that goes here at Mejan now. But it’s not as if I intrude into their lives, it is as a kind of role they have as they post. [---] As a sort of alter ego. It feels good too when you read it, it does not feel like it’s too private, but as if I read some sort of history.

[But they are younger artists then?]

Yes.

[Do you think this is a way to get success?]

I do not know, but it appeals to me.

[Is this something you’re willing to do yourself?]

Yes, I have set a goal, at least this year, to put up some sort of blog or website.

(Student, year 5)

Here the student expresses identification with someone and she also gives her recognition. It was my question that made her aware that this practice could be a smart marketing tool. When asking about how they used information and communication technologies (ICT) to market their own art, the students were also reluctant to admit that they engaged in marketing more than having a web page. However, when talking about other things, they indirectly showed they were aware of the media and had a communication strategy. Most students used online communication to communicate with their network. Here a homepage or video clips were something they shared with a few but important acquaintances they met through their network at social gatherings, and not with a broad and unknown public.

But I have used this Vimeo, it’s like YouTube but a little more serious, you can choose for yourself, here I’ve posted videos and then I locked it, so if I want someone to watch my stuff, the other day, a producer wanted to watch it, then I could send a link.

But I do not make it available via the website. I would not like to be exposed to others’ eyes. It’s a little stalker alert.

(Student, year 1)

3.2.2 The artist as a commodity online and alternative art worlds

The preliminary result of the study was presented at an open seminar at KKH. The changes, especially those between the first and last year were discussed. The students made me understand that some of these differences were because of structural changes at the school, and could not be explained by student's age or degree of art world socializing. We also discussed the attitudes in the student group towards the use of social networks like Facebook, and their negative attitudes towards marketing. An opinion came up that the reason people find their way to art often is a reaction against an over-rationalization in society, and a need to avoid the language of economics and politics. The use of online social networks or marketing strategies was seen as an expression of a trivialization of communication that was something one wanted to avoid. This fits well with the idea of the artist as being outside society, following his or her own singularity beyond the simplification of mass communication. However, it also shows how identification and recognition by peers is more important for these young artists than is the attention of a potential market.

The fact that so many 5th year students did not use the web to communicate their artistic persona, does not seem to be due to lack of enterprise but on the contrary, indicates that the students, during their training, have acquired some of the codes and strategies that exist in the art world. Several of the students testified that teachers and professors did not see a personal website as being important.

"There are some who do not believe that one should have websites, some older, they say that one only requires a portfolio, and all that. Some people here at the school say so, I think, teachers and so. It was he [name] who is here at school now. [---] I do not think he has a website, but maybe he has, but he did not think we needed one.[---] No, I have never felt any pressure on me about it. It is mostly a discussion among students, but I've never heard a professor say that I ought to have one."

Despite the lack of pressure from teachers, the interviews showed that the students saw it as their task to frame their art carefully according to all the rules of art. All the students that were interviewed thought that having a website of their own was good; 35% of first-year students and 52% of fifth-year students had more or less developed their own websites and/or blogs. The aesthetics and framing on these pages showed most clearly that they placed themselves within the contemporary artistic field. Especially on the websites of fifth-year students, the art was framed in an exclusive art gallery, stripped down and simple, black and white. Usually the website did not contain too much information; it only included the most essential facts about the art and the artist written in the third person, sometimes with references to fashionable art philosophers. Almost none of the students worked with information technology as artistic material in and itself or with the opportunities for interactivity and collective action that technology makes possible.

Several students highlighted the former student Sara-Vide Ericson's (2010) website as an example of good self-promotion. Here the artist, as part of an otherwise tightly maintained website, lays out images and comments about her own romantic artistic life in bohemian art studios and at gallery openings. Ericson has literally turned the artist identity into a product which is demonstrated among other works of art on the website. This blogging artist does not frame the art, but is rather a work of art in the form of a reality show from the art world.

Thus the ideology expressed about the singular artist has not changed appreciably, it is still a modernistic artist on display, but the discursive practices have changed, what the artist does. The artist is still an oracle that must be explained by others, but the contextualization made by art halls, art critics and journalists takes place online and can be difficult to overview. A portfolio in the form of a website therefore makes the curator's work easier. To pass as an authentic artist, it must however still look as if someone else does the framing, and the web design should not be an expression of a particular person, but look exactly as the web design of an art institution.

A few students, the ideal type *Agent*, actively communicated their art online; directly addressing visitors on their own blogs, and using social forums to organize collaborations, events and fundraising. When comparing the artistic genres and fields of activity of *Agents* and *Icons* an interesting pattern emerged. *Agents* represented a larger diversity in terms of artistic genres and were also more often active in multiple artistic fields (as shown in Appendix D). I had assumed that their online communication had to do with their experience in digital media tools in general, but it was not their skills in digital media that connected the *Agents*. Rather, the connection was the link to cultures that emphasize network and collective processes like open source, feminist activism or dance performance and especially that they had experiences from different art worlds and worked in several different genres. One student in the fifth year who acted as an *Agent* saw the Internet as a means of finding his own creative community:

It feels like a very difficult way to become a well-known artist who is mentioned in the big media, and regularly as well. So, the odds of being successful are very low. I think that it feels like a sense of security to believe that it is possible to find other ways too. I think it is possible. You don't have to be big, you can still find your audience.

[Where have you got your conviction from?]

I think it is much about the [Internet] culture that I grew up with. The fact that what I mostly listen to is smaller bands. I don't think they earn any big money, but they still keep on with their thing.

It is above all about trying to find your own niche. It is perhaps something the Internet has helped with too. Finding others who are doing similar things as you. [Yeah] And who are interested in the things you do. I do not see it as obvious to reach out to galleries and the classic art world. It [my work] borders onto many other areas, music, text, design, illustration and suchlike too. (Student, Year 5)

This student's motivation is recognition among peers, rather than acquiring influence on the established field of fine art. This means that to use Internet to find others with similar interest or to create one's own alternative art world, if the more established one does not fit.

3.3 Relationship between online presence and artistic career

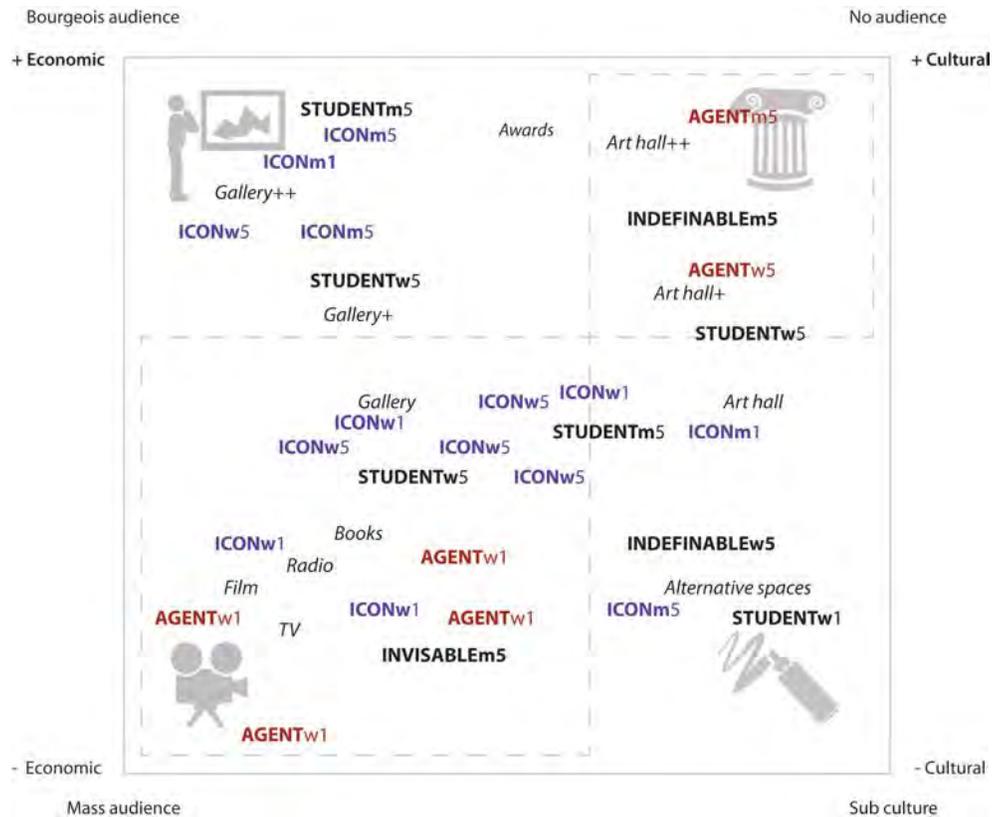


Figure 6: Informants position in the field in relation to different contexts for display: Ideal type, gender and year.

To see if online activity had any correlation with informants' artistic career I compared this with how the informants were described in established media three years (2010-2013) following the initial assessment. The content analysis was used to position the informants on a field of fine art where both type of audience and contexts for display were described in terms of economic and cultural capital. Not surprisingly, the result illustrated in Figure 6 shows there was a clear difference between the *Agents* and *Icons* informants regarding what type of career the media expressed, independent of artistic genre. This was especially clear among informants that reached a high degree of consecration, showing their works on prestigious art halls and galleries. The *Icons* foremost exhibited at commercial

galleries, and were represented by a gallery. Just as this ideal type framed themselves at their homepage, as an object on display, their gallery now framed them. The *Agents* that were successful in having many mentions' in the media and had exhibited at prestigious venues, had no gallery support in doing so (at least not according to the articles), and they exhibited foremost at non-commercial art halls and temporary art events. Thus it was a correlation between online discourse and career path.

However, presumably, success in the art world is the result of a myriad of factors and thus why this correlation is an expression of so much more than online communication; it indicates that a certain behavior, partly documented online, creates a certain outcome.

4 Discussion

To sum up the investigation, a picture emerges where the art students' Internet presence contains two competing concepts of the artist: the romantic concept of the singular artist and the artist who is collectively created by the art world's institutions. This applies to someone who appears as an outsider but in practice is a networker. The ideology expressed is not something new, but the discursive practices have changed. For an older generation of artists, a personal website is, for example, considered vulgar. Artists should not promote themselves to a potentially broad audience. For a younger generation, a personal website is something that is considered valuable, but not as a mean of communicating directly to a wider audience but as a traditional artist's portfolio whose fastidious content requires a good understanding of contemporary art to be detectable. The most important interpretations and presentations of the art are still made by others. Informants that acted as *Icons* online, reproducing a traditional artist role, were also recognized by more prestigious galleries; this discourse was thus more successful from a career perspective. Performing as a traditional artist online became being an artist. Papacharissi (2010) suggests that from an individual perspective mastering self-performance creates a sense of place. This result shows how this self-performance also co-creates a shared space, as it recognizes and reproduces the values of the established art scene.

Agents did not receive less attention than *Icons*, but got it for other reasons. One informant did for example, get work as a program leader at a TV-show, another as an "artist blogger" in a magazine, thus still active as artists but not on the more restricted field of fine art. Other *Agents* were still in the field of fine art outside the commercial gallery sphere, taking part in thematic art exhibitions and projects in a diversity of venues, where the aim with exhibitions most often was to discuss a certain theme or contemporary tendency, and not as much to highlight the individual artist.

What is interesting is how the students handled competing ideologies about how an artist should be. On the one hand, they saw the Internet as an obvious tool to self-access information about an art world that was difficult to gather and overview of. Even though they wanted to believe in the idea of the singular artist promoted by others, they doubted it, and as long as someone else was not doing the job, felt they had to promote themselves. On the other hand, following the logic of the more restricted field of cultural production, it is not important to reach a large audience but the right audience, and to exclude others. Communicating their own art on the Internet to a potential mass audience could damage their reputation and be seen as vulgar, as the most prestigious art is produced primarily for other cultural workers and an exclusive gallery market (Bourdieu, 1993; 2000). To gain legitimacy as a real artist they had to be accessible but play hard-to-get in order to not to be perceived as 'cheap.' The students' self-produced websites clearly signaled this norm through their formal language and their economical text. The websites were used as a way to frame the art as fine art, rather than to communicate with a broad public. When the art is shown outside the established institutions, like the art gallery or art museum, it becomes difficult to claim that what one does is fine art (Alexander, 2003; Becker, 1982). The art needs a context to be perceived as art, and as boyd (2011a) notes, the Internet collapses context; anyone can enter a web page without a pre-understanding of what is on display. This is probably why media practices, language style, and visual markers such as typeface and color are just as important as the artworks. These discursive practices signal to others in the arts community that the artist belongs to this social and art historical context, but is also a code that excludes people outside this context who do not recognize the importance of these communicative practices. This is consistent with Marontate's (2005) study of a music technology program in a Canadian university that showed how norms limit the use of technology even in a highly pro-technic art world. In his study, the students carefully framed themselves using the same styles and expressions as established music institutions to clearly signal their coveted position. The art simply becomes more conservative when the boundaries between contexts become blurred. Without context the artist have to perform the context to be recognized as an artist. Today, it is relatively easy to distribute one's own film or make a website with audio and animation without an entire production company. However, even though in theory, the technology gives the individual unlimited communication opportunities, the structurally organized positions the artist can take in order to be accepted as an artist are limited. A website that is too advertisement-like can, in this context, do more harm than good when trying to be seen and not 'un-seen' by peers and important gatekeepers in the world of fine art.

Another way to continue to be a rare artist with integrity and yet be an accessible and searchable commodity is to turn the artistic identity into an alter ego. However, the strategy of adopting an alias is not particular to new media, but a recognized

tactic in the art world. Here one can see a strategy like Sara-Vide Ericson's (2010), who created an alter ego online, as a way of pushing the artist myth by exaggerating the myth of the artist in a staged, online narrative about young artists who eat noodles to save money to afford canvas. In the same time the artist actively controls the process as director of the story. However, this blogging artist does not really frame her art, rather she turns the conflict between being an outsider and being a networker into art: a work of art in the form of a reality show from the art world. The lack of an aura from an original artwork thus turns the artist into an icon for the art.

Some art students did not just reproduce the norms of the singular artist but took advantage of the convergent online contexts, and the means for collaboration with others. What united the students who acted as *Agents* is that they worked within many artistic disciplines and appeared to participate in multiple contexts. This anchoring in several different cultures can be interpreted as something that gives the individual perspective and space for renegotiating the norms for the group's identity. A space for negotiations that decreases the strength of the dominant ideology and, in the long term, might contribute to a renegotiation of the ideology. The role of technology is in this interpretation to destabilize norms, to facilitate the individual's movement between different art worlds, and to help establishing new ones enabling contacts with like-minded others. Another way of regarding the students' anchoring in several art worlds or sub-art fields is that it provides them with the opportunity to compare one field from another and in this way gain a deeper understanding of the structures. Bourdieu (2000) emphasizes the importance of understanding the field in order to change it. When the technology helps the user to look at the social space as a system that can have different sets of rules, it also paves the way for a renegotiation of the rules.

Important here is to see how this understanding of the field intersects with class. Students bent the rules for how an artist should be performed and instead of reproducing an idea of the artist as someone that needs to be interpreted by experts, used the Internet to communicate their art directly and as a way of organizing collaborations and events. These students not only acted on many different artistic fields, they also came from families with high amounts of cultural and social capital. Digital literacy is about having the right education to be able to navigate the cultural codes online, but also to be able to connect to the right social network. However, this digital literacy does mean, not from a constrained arts perspective, that the students that acted as *Agents* were successful as artists. When looking at informants' careers, the ones that attracted the most prestigious arts galleries and those who got different arts awards were foremost *Icons*. These students reproduced a more traditional artist identity online where it looked like they did not market themselves, but were framed by others. The *Agents* who were more successful in the art world were instead active on a non-commercial arena

ruled by curators at art halls and museums. The online communication thus foremost seemed to help preserve a conservative artist's role on a commercial arena and artist aiming for a high degree of consecration to maintain the right social network, established on informal venues. The risk of being framed in the wrong context online was minimized by avoiding activity in contexts such as social networks like Facebook and Myspace, and by carefully framing the art as art.

Conclusion

In this study, I examined how art students manage their artistic identity online, how they use online communication and why, and the role these practices have in their succession strategy. In theory, online communication might make it difficult to maintain distinct social contexts regarding why the norms and practices that limit the field of art might be easier to change, and could thus help individuals that stands for this change. Following the logic of Becker's (1992) theory on art worlds, online communication could also be used as a way to abandon art worlds that do not fit new art worlds. However, instead the art students in this study primarily used the Internet as a way to maintain the norms and practices of fine art, motivated by belonging and recognition among peers and other culture producers as well as of potential success in the art establishment. The discourse regarding artists' homemade web pages reproduced the aesthetic and language of prestigious art galleries and museums and the art and the artists were framed by a minimalistic design and academic language. This controlled self-performance secured a position in the right art context.

The few actors that did not follow the norms regarding the singular artist interpreted by others but used the Internet in a more direct way to organize and collaborate, and to move from one context to another, did not gain recognition among the important galleries and were not awarded with grants.

As a possible way to change, online communications collapse contexts and make contact with alternative art worlds easier. The right family and social network makes it easier to make use of this opportunity to access a diversity of contexts and people. However, to reach a high degree of consecration on the Swedish art field, one should not communicate with a potential mass audience online but with the right people that you first get to know face to face at intimate social gatherings in the art world. One could assume that the Internet would diminish some of the uncertainty in the arts that often leads to conservatism but in this study, the Internet was not prominently used as a way of providing information about artists' skills in doing art works, but rather to show skills in performing an artist persona. Self-performance online could instead be seen as a way of communicating belonging, to show that one recognizes a certain value – the singular artist – and to be recognized as an embodiment of this value. To avoid participative online contexts

such as social networks and blog tools, and to maintain a minimalistic looking website was a way to take control over how one's persona was mediated and to establish oneself in the right discourse. The online communication was thus part of a broader discursive practice that involved skills in typography as well as in being secretive. In this discourse, an important artistic statement was to not give out information. The characteristic minimalistic aesthetics and not easily penetrated language coded with references to art philosophy thus made it possible to maintain context even where social, spatial, and temporal boundaries were lacking, as it was inaccessible for groups without the right codes and conventions.

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Appendix A

Example of analysis of the visual and verbal representation as a whole

Example of how different discourses of the artist are expressed on personal web pages through a combination of graphical styles, technologies and language.

Example 1: Agent

A blog with a background in different shades of gray-blue. In the middle a picture of a landscape painting in similar style as the background. The picture is framed with a black border on a gray field in a different tone than the background. The blog's content-rich menu bar consists of white text on a green-blue framed box with a shaded frame. The text is a bold san-serif. The language is a mixture of blog's default English menu and descriptions in Swedish. There are several icons that indicate that there is more information to see and that a larger picture can be downloaded.

Here the artist has obviously used a blog tool and added a template that matches the style of the paintings on display, in a matter that does not follow the conventions. The blog is situated on another person's personal homepage. The site looks self-made and the introduction text is also very personal and direct:

"Hi everyone! Welcome to my gallery on the net! My name is [...] and can be reached at [...]. Do not hesitate to contact me if you want to know anything about any painting! Furthermore, you can comment on the pictures if you click on them, just so you know! :)"

The language is Swedish which narrows the target group. The title states "artist" [konstnär] and the artworks are also labeled in different categories, like paintings, drawings, photos. But there is no information on size or price. But each artwork can be rated and commented on.

Discourses about the artist: Here the artist is an active person who can speak for herself to anyone interested. The art is nothing exclusive, but a craft, and the artist is an artisan. She shows mastery in different genres but doesn't seem to have any certain theme she follows. What she doesn't master though is the language of fine art, as she clearly doesn't understand the codes.

Example 2: Icon

A web page with a white background. At the top a simple menu item with a few headlines in capital letters in a gray san-serif. Centered in the white field, a picture from an art gallery that displays the student's paintings.

Here the style is much more strict. It does not follow the styles or colors of the art works on display, but rather contrasts them. It looks as though a skilled graphic designer has been involved in the creation of the website, but probably it is the teacher in web design at the school that has been helpful. It is a static page without the possibility to comment or rate the content. The domain name is the same as the artist's name and is also owned by the artist and hosted on a web hotel. The background is white and there is plenty of space around text and images, just like in an exclusive art catalogue. The purpose of the site is never declared, the information given is minimal; contact information, brief cv, images of work. Each work is presented together with the title, production year, size and material. There are no prices, but the site refers to an art gallery. There are no labels on the work. Different genres of art, foremost paintings and animations, are simply presented as "works". Several of the artworks are documented in an art context that shows that the art works have been on display in environments that look like art museums and galleries. Links to more information go to mediations by others, like press releases from art institutions.

Discourses about the artist: Here the artist is an exclusive object who does not speak directly to her audience. The target group speaks English, and the tone is not personal. The artworks and the titles of the artworks connote physicality, self-image and feelings, and are all concerned with the same theme.

Appendix B

Example of data collection sheet for a student

Year 1	Student B
Ideology	Singular; does not self publish artworks; the theme in the art is to express own strong feelings. Networker; Active in social media, present in many databases
Discursive practice	Art genre: Film Graphical style: High art dominates; simple spacious design, white background, san-serif typeface like Helvetica or Arial, brief information. Contexts: Uses Facebook and social networks about film. Shows up in several film databases. Name on film school web page. Articles in newspaper. Listed on the Art Grants Committee homepage. Information both in Swedish and in English. Does not seem to have her own web page.
Framing	The student does approximately 2/6 of the framing, 3/6 is done by institutions like film databases and art schools, 1/6 by journalists.
Control, target network.	Low control over the information. Target group is the professional art
Distribution	Over 120 different sites of information
Comment	The student has worked with a famous filmmaker, which is why the student's name appears in many film databases. This makes the student seem more established than what might be the fact. At first I thought this student was very active, but when I got a better understanding of how the film databases operate I understood that the student had no active part in this framing.

Appendix C

Fields of art the students are active on and art genre

Table A1. Representation of fields of activity and artistic genres among the ideal types Agent and Icon.

Fields of activities for Icons	Field : Genre (Icons)	Fields of activities for Agents	Field : Genre (Agents)
Icon 1: Visual Art + Film	Fashion: Fashion design	Agent 1: Visual Art	Film: Experimental film
Icon 2: Visual Art	Film: Script writing	Agent 2: Visual Art	Film: Scenography
Icon 3: Visual Art	Music: Rock music	Agent 3: Visual Art + Film	Literature: Poetry (2)
Icon 4: Visual Art	Visual art: Drawing (2)	Agent 4: Visual Art + Literature	Photography: Photo art
Icon 5: Visual Art + Music	Visual art: Painting (8)	Agent 5: Visual Art + Literature	Photography: Photo journalism
Icon 6: Visual Art	Visual art: Installation	Agent 6: Visual Art+ Photography	Politics: Feminist activities
Icon 7: Visual Art	Visual art: Animation	Agent 7: Visual Art+ Politics	Visual art: Conceptual art
Icon 8: Visual Art	Visual art: Performance	Agent 8: Visual Art + Film	Visual art: Curating
Icon 9: Visual Art + Fashion	Visual art: Sculpture	Agent 9: Visual Art	Visual art: Drawing (3)
Icon 10: Visual Art	Visual art: Sound (2)	Agent 10: Visual Art + Photography	Visual art: Painting (2)
Icon 11: Visual Art	Visual art: Video (2)		Visual art: Performance (2)
Icon 12: Visual Art			Visual art: Sound art
Icon 13: Visual Art			Visual art: Street art
Icon 14: Visual Art			Visual art: Video (2)
Icon 15: Visual Art			Visual art: Photography (2)
Icon 16: Visual Art			
Icon 17: Visual Art			



REFLEXIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract

In the field of e-democracy, what is mostly emphasized is the ability to create a neutral place for deliberative discussions and voting, where the view is that technology can enable a stronger democracy. Most important, focus is on the nation state, not on democracy on a global level. In a democracy initiative on a global scale one cannot only deal with the questions of what should be discussed and in what way. First of all the question about representation has to be answered: who the participants are that are part of democracy. In order to create technologies that support democracy initiatives at a global level, it is not enough to create methods to set the agenda and framework for discussion, but it is also important to have a well thought out idea about how those who participate will be selected and on what grounds. In a micro-global perspective, in the collaborative network, this is about creating incentives that support a democratic culture, an awareness of how to go about involving everyone in the conversation. With this in mind we have developed a discussion platform that uses a radical democracy as a benchmark. Based on democratic meeting techniques and social media and grounded in a participatory design process, basic principles for a groupware are formulated containing typical democratic features such as voting and discussion, but taking user activities and reactions into account and clarifying the individual's activities in relation to the group. The result of the design process is a Wiki-like prototype where the participants' reputations are measured and transformed through a dynamic voting process. This can clarify the representativeness of the discussion at stake, showing whose positions and interests are put forward, providing a method for measuring the quality of online discussion.

Keywords: E-Participation, Meeting techniques, Diversity, Collaboration online

1. Introduction

Despite the rapid growth of social networks that indicates that the political discussion takes place elsewhere than at governmental web sites, the research field has a governmental perspective rather than a participant perspective (Macintosh, Coleman, & Schneeberger 2009). Instead, the major part of the technology-driven research in the field of e-democracy is characterized by a technologically deterministic discourse, where technology is seen as an unproblematic opportunity to deepen a deliberative democracy within the nation state (Dahlberg 2011). The current more nuanced discussion of a Habermasian democratic model taken place in the field of political science and political philosophy is missing (Macintosh et al. 2009; Sæbø, Rose, & Skiftenesflak 2008). Here the idea of a deliberative democracy has been widely

discussed and developed (Dahlberg 2007; Dryzek 2005; Fraser 1985, 2000, 2005; Mouffe 1999).

Dahlberg (2011) suggests a model that could clarify the gap between different research areas and show what discourses about democracy are present in e-democracy development by creating four positions for digital democracy: liberal-individualist, deliberative, counter-publics, and autonomist Marxist. Dahlberg (2011) argues that most of the development of e-democracy is situated in the left part of the field. Here a liberal-consumer paradigm dominates that is about giving citizens better service, increase accessibility and information transparency, simply to improve government “customer service“ through flexible information systems and more informed decision making. But it is to some extent also about changing the representative system by creating room for deliberative discussion on various issues, both in order to gather information and to anchor the political decisions.

In the right part of the field there are fewer investments in the development of technologies for e-democracy. But it is perhaps here that the major development of democracy has occurred. Not for individual countries but for global movements and community-based communities of interest. The counter-public position is about grassroots activism, network-based organizations built on shared-interest bases. Internet is a cost-effective way to organize the group and articulate opinions, and can also provide links to other similar interests globally. Democratization is also at a micro level within companies and between individuals in a network-based form of production that is facilitated by the rapid exchange of information communication that technologies allow.

If you let these four positions be the corners of a square box, one can identify four key aspects. Democracy can be seen in a macro perspective as a global framework which can be reformed by local authorities in supporting a more deliberative process (Macro / Local). Democracy in a macro perspective can also be about giving global NGOs more power (Macro / Global). Democracy can also be seen from a micro perspective as the local citizen's rights in relation to the State (Micro / Local), or a way to act in relation to other global citizens (Micro / Global).

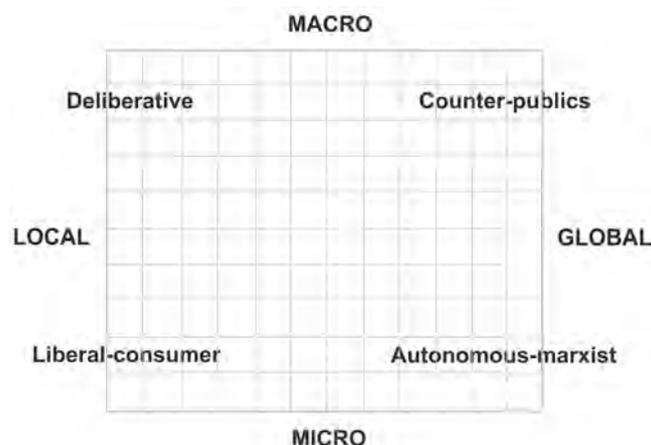


Figure 1. Map of four democratic positions in relation to local/global and macro/micro processes.

We are interested in developments in the lower right map position, democratic techniques for globally scattered micro-cultures. It's about means of production for a creative collaborative process. Democratic skills that are not constrained by nation-state thinking, but that independently and dynamically define demos.

Anderson (1991) argues that the nation state developed and held together thanks to the printing press which spread of a common culture to a geographically defined language area. This “imagined community“ was thus held together by the exchange of information that created a homogeneous culture in areas that previously consisted of culturally distinct village communities. Today imagined communities are globally created. Thanks to the Internet, shared cultures can more easily hold together and develop without geographical limitations. But according to Fraser (2005) most of the political theories build on a normative vision of the nation state as what constitutes demos. Within its geographical domain, citizens have equal rights to participate in the design of this state. In contrast to this nation thinking the “state”, or “common” for an interest based group is defined in other ways. Here the creation of identity is not defined primarily by geography, but built up around an interest, such as “environment”, “star wars” or “Karlberg's football club”.

The hegemonic model of democracy is also based on a norm of equality, which may mean that it can be difficult to deal with a situation where everyone does not have equal value in a “democratic” manner. Macintosh's (2009) overview of the e-participation research shows a lack of methodology for measuring the quality of online discussion. Most discussions on the web are driven by a relatively small number of active participants, in which these are far from representative. It is not just anyone who can exploit the opportunities technology offers, to resist, create opinions, or be part of creative networks. Research on the digital divide shows the importance of class for the use of digital media, also when looking at how the technology is used; whether it is for consumption or production of online material (Schradie 2011). Gender research shows that the difference-making and discriminatory processes within and between the different groups online are reinforced rather than reduced, thanks to technology. (Dutta-Bergman 2005; Herring 2008; Kampen & Snijkers 2003; Nakamura 2001; Norris 2001; Postmes & Spears 2002; Wright 2005).

In these perspectives, one can see an interest as a sort of country, and in this virtual country, there is an unequal distribution of opportunities and recognition. In this project we have therefore based our research on theories about how a special community of interests is maintained, namely the global art world, with a view to finding principles for how a demos built on interest can be effectively enforced. These principles have guided the development of a digitally mediated collaborative system designed to strengthen democratic processes in self-interest groups. In order to find guidance for how a reflexive democratic process can be supported, we have used Fraser's definition of democratic justice and Dahl's model of democracy. We begin by describing theories of democracy in more detail in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the participatory research method used for the development of ideas. Chapter 4 describes the art world from a democratic perspective. From this analysis the design principles are derived that are used in the development of a tool as described in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 discusses how the results of the design process correspond to the initial questions about what a reflexive process built on radical democratic principles might look like in practice. A summary of the outcome of the process is given in Chapter 7.

2. Theories of global democratic justice

2.1. A global radical model of democracy

Fraser (2000) argues that democratic justice includes both equal *distribution* of resources and opportunities as well as *recognition*, an acknowledgment of identity, and that it is important to understand that these two sometimes overlapping parameters are not the same thing. It is for example possible for an artist to have high status and a great cultural influence without having the financial capacity. Economically successful people may have difficulty getting their culture reflected in the media, or their sexual preferences recognized as a political right. A third parameter that is crucial to democracy is the question of who should participate (Fraser 2005). The issue of representation, that those affected by the decisions are involved in the decisions, is becoming increasingly important in a globalized world where nation state both affects and is affected by global events. It is no longer clear who should be part of the political unit. Fraser (2005) argues that most political theories are based on a normative view of the nation state and that it is important to find other ways of looking at the framework of democracy for this to develop.

Dahl's (1989) model of democracy is not based on the nation state but rather defines demos as the location that includes those affected by its decisions. It can just as easily apply to residents of a house as in a state, as well as participants in a globally dispersed community of interest. Democracy is thus a process that is not just about making decisions, but that also covers the definition of who is involved in the association. Furthermore, all participants should have an opportunity to influence what should be on the agenda and in setting the rules for decision making, and being able to make informed decisions. The democratic regime does not exist, except as a utopia, that can be used as a mirror to measure the degree of democracy in a particular situation (Hemberg 2002):

- Who is involved in the situation?
- Can they define the problem?
- Do they have equal opportunities for discussing the problem?
- Do they all agree on the rules for how decisions should be taken?
- Does everyone understand?

These criteria can be used to analyze any situation from a participatory perspective, in order to find methods to improve democracy in actual situations. In practice, these can be used as democratic techniques that not are fixed in a set of methods, but are a way of maintaining the reflexive process on a daily basis. This is also the ambition in democratic meeting techniques developed in critical pedagogy and in feminist-oriented movements. Democratic meeting techniques can be seen as a development of traditional meeting techniques where one uses an agenda, rules for speaking and voting procedures. But instead of assuming an ideal speech situation where participants are relatively equal, these techniques assumes that people do not participate on equal conditions; that they have different capacities for participation and that they are treated differently depending on interacting power structures. By varying meeting forms, by visualizing power structures, and by constantly reflecting on the meeting culture, a more democratic culture is developed (Hedenstrand 2008; Hemberg 2002). In addition to following traditional meeting procedures and informing participants in advance of important points to the agenda, the aim is to

enhance participation and activity. This is, for example, done by setting the meeting agenda together, by rotating key functions like president and secretary, by using speaking rounds to get everyone involved in the conversation early on, and by employing many different discussion forms and forms of voting (Hemberg, 2002). One method of increasing participants' awareness of the importance of power structures is to observe the conditions for dialogue in the meeting situation: who it is that gets the most space and attention and who is ignored, and how domination techniques are used (Hemberg 2002).

But what is it that motivates participation? If democracy is not seen as something that deals with the relationship between the state and its citizens but as relationships between participants in dynamic communities of interest you have to understand what motivates this involvement. Why do people engage in network-based collaborative processes, such as open source culture, which do not directly produce any gains? Kelly (2008) calls the open source culture a "recursive culture", a culture that is not just about recreating discourse but that also seeks to re-build the basic systems that limit discourse. In this public place, where participants not only express themselves in, but also are co-creators of a continual building process, the central motif for participation is to confirm their identity as participators in this collective creative process. The participants act in this perspective as highly creative subjects. It may therefore be interesting to look at the functionality in another creative field. The global art world is a culture built around a common interest that is practiced largely through the publication of books and articles in newspapers and now also by the Internet (Bydler 2004). What does community mean in this context? How "democratic" is this community?

3. Participatory design methods

Instead of searching for a general model for how community is created, this project has focused on finding a distinctive model, based on the singularities that can be found in social realities. Through the experience of the art world and theories from art sociology, we find principles to implement in a technical design solution for a network-based collaborative tool. The design was then further developed and implemented together with programmers and researchers at Stockholm University.

To explore the art world a practical design work was conducted based on a discussion in a so-called research circle. Research circles are mostly used in pedagogy and work-life research in the Scandinavian context (Härnsten 1994; Persson 2009). A research circle can be described as a study circle¹ in which experts are involved. The aim is to bring the expertise and experience of the participants involved to the inner circle of research, not only as informants but also as co-researchers and work-place developers. The group was formed by students and project students² at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm who answered an open invitation to participate. During a period of two years a group of five to seven people met together with the researcher on a monthly basis to discuss the role of the artist by sharing experiences and theories.

The initial group of seven was a heterogeneous group of people as regards gender, age and artistic genre. The average age gap was five years, the youngest was

¹ The study circle is an important part of the Swedish labour movement. It is a form of adult education common in Sweden where a group of people with a shared interest meets regularly to discuss a common theme. Most common are book circles around a shared reading list.

² A project student is an artist that for a particular purpose gets the opportunity to work in the workshops during a shorter period like a year.

born in 1983 and the oldest in 1951, and so they all represented different generations of artists. The initial group thus contained a combined experience of the development of the art concept and how this has influenced the art environment from the political action oriented figurative painting of the 1970s, to the performative acts of the 2010s. The participants' different strategies in the art world, different perspectives on the concept of art and personal relationships to the artist's identity, were rich resources for comparison and the empirical ground for the study of different theories about the art. The theories that were discussed were initiated primarily by the researcher but also chosen by the participants: From anthropological network theory, the sociology of art and different feminist approaches. Everything that felt relevant for creating a common understanding of the functionality of the art world. As a method of making abstract theories more concrete, the idea came up of translating the theories and personal experiences of the art world in a practical design of a collaborative groupware that would combine agency with structure.

In the design process different participatory design methods were used such as sketches, prototypes, cases and scenarios. Especially in the design field, various participatory methods are used to get a more informed design, grounded in the reality of potential users; ethnographic techniques as participant observation and interviews, as well as more exploratory methods like sketches and prototypes (see eg. (Buchenau & Suri 2000; Goldschmidt 1991; Houde & Hill 1997; Lim, Stolterman, & Tenenberg 2008). Also more artistic techniques are used to involve participants as informants and co-designers such as probes, scenarios and role-playing. (Buchenau & Suri 2000; Gaver, Dunne & Pacenti 1999; Goldschmidt 1991; Houde & Hill 1997; Lim, Stolterman & Tenenberg 2008). Unlike most problem-focused design research, the aim with our project was not primarily to get a more informed design. Instead we used the design process in itself as a participatory research method, as a tool to explore the art world.

The following chapter 4 describes how the theories and experiences from the field of fine art evolved into principles that could guide a design of collaborative software.

4. Democracy in the art world

What is community in the art world, a global culture not directly characterized by the idea of equality?

- Who has the right to participate in the art world?
- How is the agenda set in the art world?
- Who participates in the discussion of the concept of art?
- How are decisions taken about what is art?
- How do you know what rules apply in the art world?

Following Heinich (1997), looking at the art world and the concept of art as a faith community, we can make use of Hemberg's (2002) model to see this community from a democratic perspective. In the following, we answer these questions by looking at how the concept of art is defined.

4.1. Who has the right to participate in the art world?

Elitism in the art world, where some people's expressions and taste dominate over others, can be seen as something profoundly undemocratic. According to Bourdieu

(2000) participation is here a question of power, the understanding of the situation, and an ability to handle the codes in the field that you want to play on. Everyone can, in theory, be involved in deciding what is art. There is no central instance that legitimizes art. Following the institutional art concept, the creation of art is a collective work, where shared norms about art and the artist are developed. In this collective development work all those who have any ideas about art are involved, from a disinterested public, to an enlightened art audience and hobby artists to professional artists and curators. For many it is an important part of their identity, to be part of the art world. According to sociologists from Goffman (1959) to Butler (2004) identity is a performative act, something we repeat and thus maintain. By acting by the rules of how, for example an artist should be, you become an artist. By doing things that look like art, they become art. Heinich (1997) compares the art with a belief system. Art is a belief in certain fundamental values we share with others, a sort of identity. Some people, of course find it easier to follow the standards of the arts than others. For example, if art is considered to be something that white Western men do best, it is difficult for a black woman to assert her artistic genius and be accepted as one of the clergy. If discussions are carried out at exclusive nightclubs it can be difficult for low-income parents with young children to participate. Participation is not on equal terms, and some decide more than others. Decisions about what is art are not taken by any central authority, but are influenced by all. But some have more influence than others, and this cultural hegemony interacts with an economic hegemony.

One principle we can note here is that while *anyone can join*, this does not mean that anyone will get recognition. It is a *decentralized system*, there is no central legislation for who counts, the rules are carried and maintained by all the participants in the system.

4.2. How is the agenda set in the art world?

From a historical viewpoint the concept of art has changed radically, starting from the Middle Ages, when the art was more like a craft, to the artist as a romantic genius following the emergence of capitalism, to the artist as collectively created by the art world's institutions, the institutional concept of art (Becker 1982; Hauser 1999; Thornton 2008). So, what is considered as art is changing. And everyone has their view of what art is, or of which art is more interesting. In principle, anyone can do what she wants how she wants. But obviously there are certain issues that count more than others. Some artists' art sells for millions while other artists may never even get the opportunity to be exhibited. Here it is important who it is that makes the art or suggests an artist; whether there is someone who has high status or that refers to someone of high status and thereby legitimizes their position. Status is co-created from different intersecting parameters such as class, age and ethnicity. Bourdieu (1993) claims that status is thus both something we are born into and something others assign to us, though it can also be developed through individual actions.

The changing status of the art world's actors is important information in the art world. What is right and what is wrong in the arts is relative and changes constantly, depending on the changing status of the actors. Co-branding is also an important feature of the art world, where the actors benefit mutually from strategic relations with the right people and places (Thompson 2008; Thornton 2008). If an important actor falls out of fashion, the status of associated actors and art genres lose value and position in the history of art.

Status is thus an important feature of the art world. To get your own perspective into the arts, you have to be the right person and have the right contacts. *Co-branding* is another important aspect, in terms of being associated with the right people and styles.

4.3. Who participates in the discussion about art?

Even though status is important when you collectively decide that certain issues are more important than others, perhaps it is not the will to dominate that is the main reason for wanting to participate in the discussion about art. Common interests and identity is what the players themselves set as an explanation for participating in various artistic fields (Gielen 2005; Heinich 2009). Bowness' (1989) description of the avant-garde in art emphasizes the recognition of peers as the main driving force. His model of four "circles of recognition" takes both time and space into account. The inner circle, whose recognition matters most, consists of the closest artistic colleagues, the second circle consists of gallery owners and collectors. The third circle consists of experts in art, critics and art historians who are often further away spatially and in time. The outermost, widest but least significant circle consists of the general public. The actors simply want to participate primarily in discussions concerning themselves, where they feel understood, where they are listened to and recognized. This recognition does not have to come directly but may well be in an uncertain future (Heinich 1997).

So there is a need to create a system that rewards the creation of joint discussions, a *discursive forum* that rewards exchange between actors. *Asynchronous communication* is another principle, the fact that the discussion can evolve over time.

4.4. How are the decisions taken about what is art?

There are no central instances of legitimization for becoming an artist or the standard for art. In the dynamic rating system of the art world artists' and art's value is decided on a daily basis through a complex evaluation system situated in each action of the system. In order to mirror this decentralized action in the digital system some kind of *voting should be ubiquitous*, ongoing and everywhere.

4.5. How do you know what rules apply in the art world?

The experiences of the group were that a common domination technique in the art world is the withholding of information. What is right and what is wrong to do is seldom outspoken. In principle, according to the norm for artistic freedom, everything is possible and everyone can join the global art community. But in reality, the rules are harsh and few have the privilege to participate. The informal rules governing the fellowship are a tacit knowledge obtained by socializing with other participants in the international art world. Here the group wanted to challenge the norm by using the tool as a clarification of the informal systems, and thus empowering the actors.

One method practiced in radical democratic meeting techniques is to increase the participants' awareness of power structures by observing the conditions for dialogue in the social situation; e.g. who gets the most space and attention, who is ignored, and how domination techniques are used (Hedenstrand 2008; Hemberg 2002). In order to challenge the domination technique of withholding information, and to support reflection, some kind of *visualization of the informal hierarchy* is necessary.

4.6. Design principles

Design principles we can extract from our study of the art world are thus:

- Any one can join
- Decentralized system
- Status counts
- Co-branding
- Discursive forum
- Asynchronous communication
- Voting should be ubiquitous
- Visualization of the informal hierarchy

5. Implementing design principles

Even though the focus in the analysis was on the singularities of the art world, what came out was a set of common principles for an informal discussion. An informal discussion can be seen as a complex “value system” where users give each other encouraging nods, ignore some of the speakers and engage in heated argumentation with others. There are several meeting techniques that emphasize complexity and offer diverse possibilities for debate to encourage different kinds of participation styles. Open space technology is one example where users employ both written comments and informal oral discussions to come up with an agenda (Owen 1997). Here users create the agenda together, and prepare the questions in self-organized groups in an organic but efficient process, before any decisions are taken. There are plenty of examples of digitally mediated self-organized systems that contain a similar functionality. Wikis are, for example, based on the idea of an open ongoing discussion and here many of the aspirations of deliberate democracy are fulfilled (Klemp & Forchimes 2010). Referring to the work of Dryzek (2005) on deliberative democracy Lourenço & Costa (2010) define blogs and Wikis as “discursive forums”, places where peers can develop a common discourse around shared interests. A Wiki is a simple system which enables a group of people to develop a website without knowledge of coding. The basic idea is that anyone in principle can add or edit pages. Anyone can create new Wiki pages by simply creating a new link with the name of the page. The pages are not hierarchical, but the data structure is held together by hyperlinks between pages. Most Wiki types come with an opportunity to discuss the contents of the current page, and a history of the development of the site with the possibility to retrieve earlier versions. This provides an easy way to collaborate around the development of the content. A Wiki fulfills many of our design principals; *any one can join*, it can be a *decentralized system*, it is a *discursive forum* and it enables *asynchronous communication*.

We have therefore started from this basic Wiki functionality and developed certain aspects further. The user has greater control over the pages she develops, and may choose to invite other participants in the development or only as commentators. You can also make parts of the content private or public, or direct it only to specific users.

Ubiquitous voting systems are also present online in form of possibilities for extending communication in different ways; linking, liking, blogging, digging, twittering. Here value systems are created using reputation to validate content rather than using the legitimacy of conventional institutional frameworks. But the algorithms involved are never completely visible or open to change by the users. Our ambition is to reconnect this kind of ubiquitous and ongoing rating directly to the user and thus make the valuation process visible. Therefore, in order to mirror the importance of status in the tool, status needs to be calculated. But it is a delicate

matter to decide who in practice would determine the status of various actors in the system. Should the participants' status be determined when they enter the system? Or should the status be decided in an ongoing voting procedure in which participants regularly rate each other? This would probably not attract some participants. The solution is to focus less on the actors and, instead, to count activity. "Status" is thus measured indirectly through the value others assign to the actors' actions. Here we assume, following gender research on communication on-line (Herring 2008; Kampen & Snijkers 2003; Nakamura 2001; Postmes & Spears 2002; Wright 2005), that users will react differently to other participants depending on the status position they attribute to the actor. People who have acquired a reputation inside and outside the system get more attention and their actions are given a higher score. Of course, this provides no simple answers as to exactly what factors determine how participants treat each other. But it can point towards ongoing discrimination patterns.

Everything the participants do in the system is called *Acts*, and every Act is also a *React* on someone else's Act, as in Fig. 2. The participants' *Status* is measured in these two different ways in the system. Initially it was an attempt to mirror Bourdieu's habitus concept. Here your position (Status) is something that can be developed through individual actions (Acts), and something others assign to you depending on class, gender and other structuring factors (Reacts). Of course this can not measure the complex habitus process, but it creates a nuanced unit that gives an idea of what kind of activity is needed to level up in the system, without going into details.

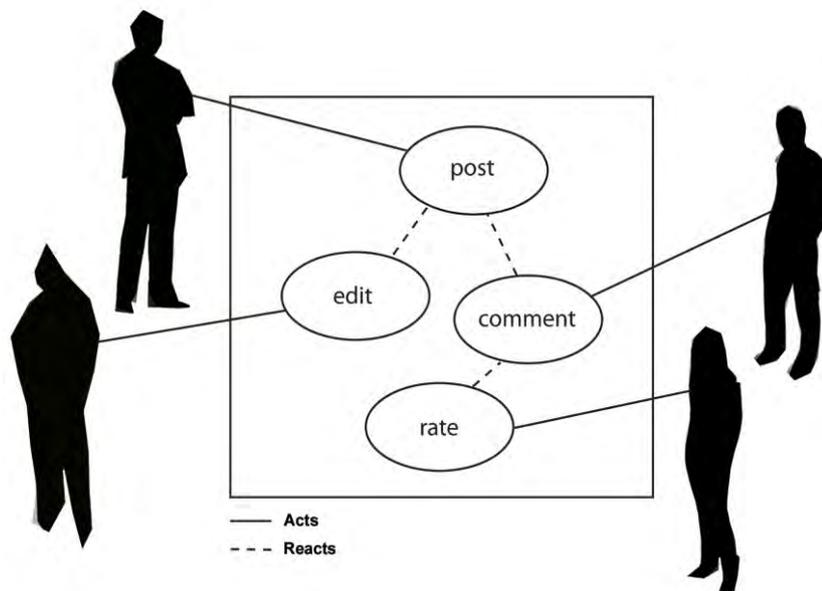


Figure 2. Acts and Reacts on Acts in the system.

Fig. 3 shows how score is distributed in the system, both for Acts and Reacts, and to both actors and objects in the system. The scoring of the objects gives users an opportunity to navigate the content based on popularity.

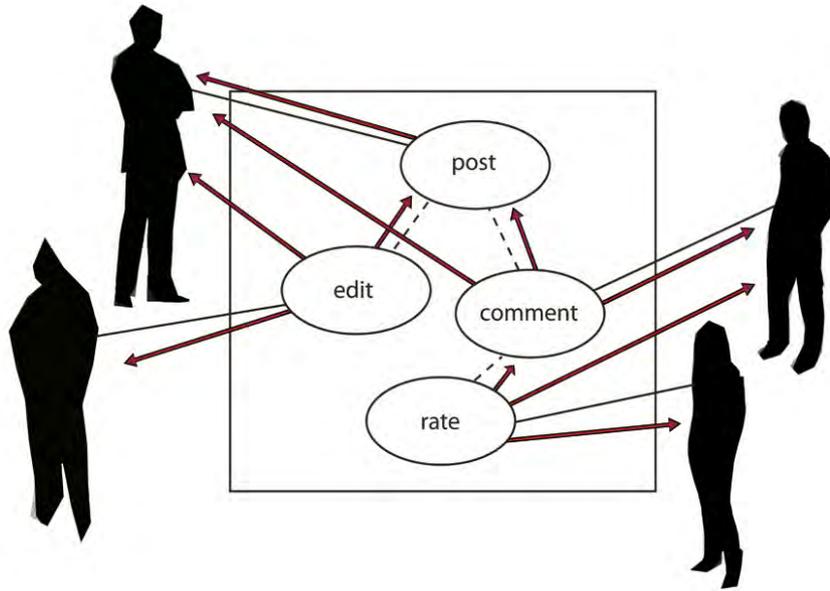


Figure 3. Distribution of score in the system for Acts and Reacts, to both actors and objects.

The valuation does not just take place in one direction in the art world. If one is referring to an artist this not only gives the artist greater value, but also gives oneself value by making the reference. The reference is a way to legitimize one's own position, but it is also a way to legitimize others using the same reference. This mechanism of co-branding also has to be counted. Therefore the score that is given for certain Reacts depends on who is responsible for the React. Fig. 4 illustrates a case where an actor's status level influences the amount of score that is distributed. Here status is a relative value calculated on the user's percentage of the total amount of score in the system, expressed in a value between 0 and the number of users in the system. This implies more or less "inequality" depending on how the system is used, and the greater the number of users the greater the potential inequality.

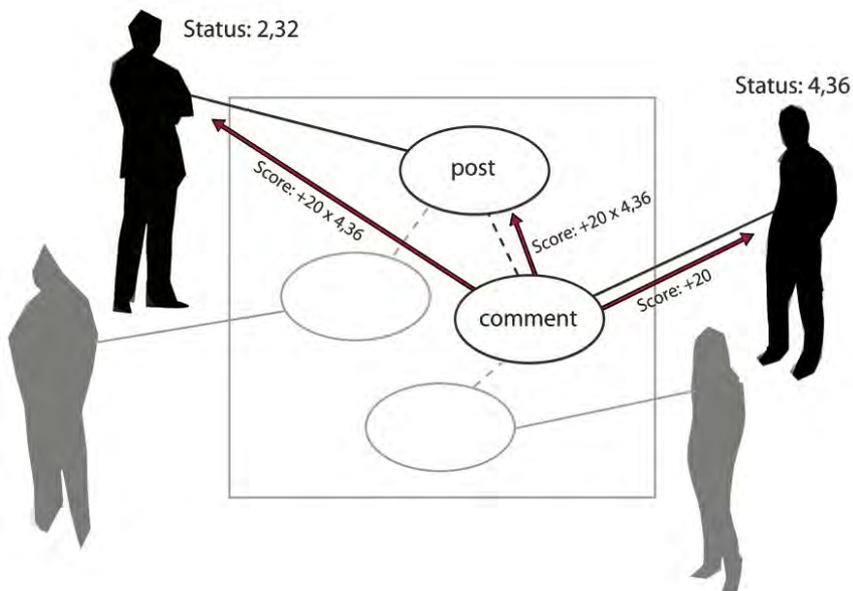


Figure 4. Distribution and calculation of score when a user with the status 4,36 is commenting another user's post.

5.1. Visualization and motivation

Bourdieu describes the art world in military terms as field and movements of positions, where different fractions compete (Bourdieu 2000). Becker describes the art world more as a collaboration, where there are not one but many worlds, in a universe that expands with more participants (Becker 1982). Whatever one's perspective, one can look at a strategy to legitimize/establish the artist as a kind of game. A game can also be used as a method for clarifying the rules and can both be instructive and motivate participation. Thus hierarchy of some kind can, in fact, enhance participation. Most groupware support the setting of different roles, like administrator, moderator, members and guests, but these are not dynamic and do not mirror the complex interplay in real life role settings. In order to involve the actors of the art world in the effort, a system was needed that reflected the important informal and dynamic hierarchies that create meaning in this culture.

The actors' scores can be used to visualize the actors' positions in the system, but they can also give this status a formal meaning, connecting it to certain rights. This could be a way of fostering a certain behavior, like forcing new participants to lurk and listen to previous discussions before starting their own.

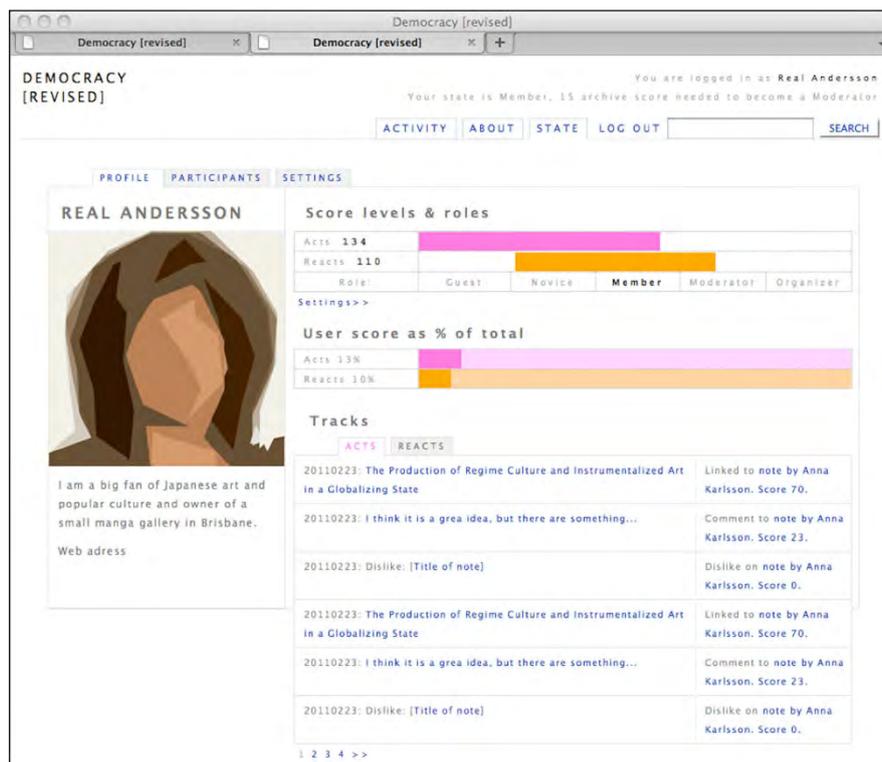


Figure 5. Prototype profile page showing status in relation to total amount of acts and reacts.

		Variables		Roles				
Rights		Score	Status Impact	Guest	Novice	Member	Moderator	Organizer
Acts	new post	140	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	edit	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	comment	20	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	like	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	dislike	0	x0	0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rate	20	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Edit public pages	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Setting Values	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Score needed				0	100	200	500
Reacts	comment	20	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	liked	10	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	disliked	-10	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	linked	70	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 1	-15	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 2	-10	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 3	10	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 4	30	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 5	45	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
Score needed				0	0	200	500	
Total score needed				0	100	400	1000	Invitation

Figure 6. Template of thresholds, amounts and total scores of user activity related to roles and rights. Variables that could be changeable by users are in red. Grey areas show what rights are connected to which role in this template.

Users' status in relation to others as well as the valuation of different actions and scores can be made visible and changeable for the users, or groups of users (Fig. 5 and 6). Here the system can be set up for different purposes depending on what type of interaction one wants to promote. In Fig 6. the value of adding a new post is relatively high in order to promote new initiatives. The score given can both have an informative and a symbolic function. If attached to roles, it creates a “game” where users level up and receive extended rights by earning points within the system. In the template example of settings of roles and rights in Fig. 6 “Guest” has the right to read and comment on others posts and to approve them, but cannot create posts or rate others' posts. To become a “Novice” the user has to obtain a score of 100. As a “Member” the user has the right to do everything except edit public pages. To be allowed to edit public pages the user has to level up to “Moderator” which demands a sustainable contribution to the topic. To become an “Organizer” with the right to set the values and thus being able to co-create the rule for the game the user has to be invited by an organizer.

5.2. Design specifications

The system can be summarized in the following design specifications:

A discursive forum: It should support development of common questions, rather than decision-making. Anyone should be able to propose an activity and implement it without anchoring it through voting and discussion. Technically it resembles a Wiki, a discussion forum that supports open source cultural production. Users

have the right to edit their own posts, and to delegate this right. Linking structures the information pointing all actions to earlier actions, to emphasize a common discourse.

- Ubiquitous voting: Voting is done constantly everywhere and in different fashions: Linking, commenting, liking/disliking, and rating. All actions in the system create a score that reflects an opinion.
- Counting activity: A person's reputation should be measured through her and others' actions. Everyone's different reputation should be taken into account when judging action. The scores users give depend on their total score, i.e. their status level. The users' total score depends on their own activity and the score other gives the users' activity. User and posts percentage of all scores are dynamic and depend on the total distribution of score within the system.
- Visualized status: Transparency and visualization of how score is gained clarifies user strategies, system rules, roles and rights.
- Motivating game: Gaining visual reputation should be challenging in order to motivate and encourage participation. Hierarchy can be used as a way of communicating the system and motivating participation.

5.3. Wiki + Status + Visualization = Reflexive technology

A collaborative Wiki-like interface, where anyone can create a page linked to previous pages and develop this through the collective, reflects the institutional concept of art where anyone can become an artist as long as she follow the rules created in the dynamic negotiation in the network and thus contributes to the common discourse. A status meter reflects the importance of status in the art world, where participants are scored both by one's initiative and the value others put on this work. Score is gained for many different activities: Linking, commenting, liking/disliking, and rating. Just as in the art world co-branding is an important part of the scoring system, and one's own value is changed indirectly if those referred to change their value. Unlike the art world, where unclear rules makes the system difficult to maneuver, our system creates a visualization of the individual strategy in relation to others as a way of showing alternative routes. The visualization of the score level also creates a kind of gaming experience that clarifies the strategy game in the art world, and can serve as a way to motivate participation in the short run.

The tool is a fully functionally prototype in Drupal that has been evaluated in a small group of users and will be tested further during 2012. The functionality is discussed in detail in two previous conference papers (Hansson, Karlström, Larsson, & Verhagen 2011; Hansson, Verhagen, Karlström, & Larsson 2011).

6. Discussion

In a global perspective, one can say that democracy is about the dissemination of a democratic culture, an idea of equality expressed in reflective acts. How can our tool support a global democratic reflexivity? And how is it possible to develop this further?

In this groupware we have developed what we would like to call a micro-democratic model with the ambition of mirroring Fraser's concept of democracy. According to Fraser (2005) a global democratic justice has three dimensions; The first dimension is distribution (1) of equal rights, from legal rights to economic opportunities. The second is recognition (2), that all different kinds of identities and singularities are culturally recognized. The third dimension deals with representation (3), that the people who will be affected by the decision are also represented in the democratic process.

Our tool visualizes these aspects on a conceptual level;

- 1) Distribution of individuals activities is visualized in Acts, showing who is actually using the possibility to act, and who are able to articulate themselves in suggestions and question.
- 2) Recognition is visualized in Reacts, that show whose questions and suggestions get support and acknowledgment.
- 3) Representation is visualized in Status, showing who is most influential and active. Our system can, by measuring the "status" show which actors have contributed most to the community of interests, and the stakeholders whose participation is perceived as important by others. This will create, if not a fair representation, at least a clear picture of who is counted as most "representative" in the community.

A computer program can of course not solve democratic conflicts in interest-based associations, but by showing how individual actions reproduce and alter the structural patterns, use of the system serves as a basis for discussion and as a support for a reflective democratic culture.

The idea of the system is to support discursive democratic processes that can develop various social issues within communities of interest. But it could also be interesting to see how the system can support a traditional representative decision-making process. In most decisions in the representative democratic system, policy makers and officials are in dialogue with citizens about various details of the process. One way to create civic dialogue is through the use of digital discussion forums where various arguments on an issue can be discussed directly with the people concerned. The problem with these forums is the question of representation (Macintosh et al. 2009). It is generally people who already have great influence in society who dominate these digital boards. A tool that keeps track of who is involved and whose positions influence the most, can be a tool to catch sight of how much value this kind of discussion can be given. This does not mean that the participants' opinions are recorded directly, but that one keeps track of some meta-data such as gender, age, education level, etc., depending on the situation, and for safety reasons separates the data from the actual discussion.

Another development of this tool is instead of seeing this from a group perspective or from a government perspective, seeing it from an individual perspective. The individual is part of a wide range of interests and it may be interesting to see how these can be managed and made to work together from the perspective of the individual's life-world. It may therefore be interesting to see how reputation systems are used in other areas. Projects such as Klout give users an opportunity to transform their social capital in different networks to an economic capital in the form of various free products. Here an individual's personal brand is simply used for product placement, and influential individuals are given different free product offers.

Social networks like Facebook supports the user with a variety of opportunities to discuss and “vote” on various issues. Micro blog services like Twitter allow users to see how their own statements are spreading further through their network. It is often personal interests and a few enthusiasts, supported by fans, who run various issues. By looking at issues and interests as individual driven and identity-based, rather than collectively driven and interest-based, one can develop the system further.

7. Conclusion

In the field of e-democracy the research on technological development is primarily on the development of e-government, despite the rapid growth of social networks that indicates that the political discussion takes place elsewhere than at governmental web sites (Dahlberg 2011). This project focuses on the democratic processes in the creative culture online in globally spread commons. We have started from theories about how a particular community of interest is maintained, to find principles on how demos built on interest can be effectively enforced. These principles have then guided the development of a groupware designed to strengthen democratic processes in self-interest groups. The result is a Wiki-like prototype of a groupware where the participants’ reputation is measured and transformed through a dynamic voting process. The participants’ scores are created by their own activities but also by others’ reactions: links, likes / dislike, rating, commenting. This creates a system where both user activity and user reputation create the user’s score level. Importance is thus given not only to users’ actions but users’ informal status, here we assume that users will give scores not only based on the actual activity but also based on the status they attribute to the actor (that we assume depends on the level of closeness as well as on intersected factors like gender, class, age and ethnicity). The participant advances in the system by gathering points and can, based on the score level, be given different possibilities to influence the rules. Hierarchy can thus be used as a means to foster behavior and communicate the functionality of the interface, but also to create stability and to motivate people with high scores to continue to participate.

The prototype was tested in a small group of users and is now being tested in our internal team. During the summer of 2012 it will be evaluated in conjunction with civic dialogues in a research project on planning processes.

The system will be further developed towards two different uses:

- 1) A collaborative tool for interest based networks. This tool can serve as a way to draw attention to individual initiative by visualizing how reputation is created in the system by the user and in collaboration with other users. By using the score as a way to dynamically create roles and provide rights, informal roles in the group are visualized and formalized and thus become easier to understand and influence.
- 2) A research tool for empirically analyzing the significance of representation and recognition, transparency and motivation in in-group processes.

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Reputation, inequality and meeting techniques: visualising user hierarchy to support collaboration

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Abstract Equality within groups is ordinarily taken for granted when technology for e-democracy is conceived and developed. However, inequality in online communication is just as common as in other social contexts. Therefore, we have developed a groupware with the express purpose of illuminating imbalance of power. Inequalities are measured and made visible to users of the system, and they change dynamically as actions are taken by users. The system is based on democratic meeting techniques and is reminiscent of a strategy game based on social media. Each participant's score within the game is dynamically calculated and reflects that user's activity, others' reactions to that activity and reactions to others' activities. The calculations and weighing mechanisms are open to inspection and change by the users, and hierarchical roles reflecting game levels may be attached to system rights belonging to individual users and user groups. The prototype we present stems from the question of how to conceive of groupware based on diversity and is the result of combining social theory with algorithms for modelling and visualising user hierarchy and status. Empirical user tests suggest improvements to the prototype's interface, which will be implemented and further evaluated by embedding the algorithms in a system for e-participation.

Keywords E-Participation · Reputation · Inequality · Collaboration

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1 Introduction

In the early discourse on the Internet and e-democracy, the absence of the body and its attributes suggested the Internet to be a neutral place where different people could come together and develop a deliberative democratic discourse (Herring 2000; Witschge 2002). In this ideal speech situation participants would reach consensus on rational grounds and technology would diminish differences between people, regarding body, time and space. This view of the Internet as a neutral medium that fosters consensus still characterises many of the contemporary attempts to use it as a forum where participants from different groups, officials and politicians can meet (Dahlberg 2007; Hands 2005; Macintosh et al. 2009; Witschge 2002).

Gender research concerning new media argues that social media such as chat rooms, online games, etc. are far from neutral places where participants are treated equally but instead are places where gender, race, ethnicity and other grounds of discrimination are just as prominent as in other social contexts and that hierarchies and status are reproduced online (Herring 2008; Kampen and Snijkers 2003; Nakamura 2001; Postmes and Spears 2002; Wright 2005). In practise, communication technology may reinforce differences between individuals and groups in society rather than bringing diverse groups and perspectives together (Dutta-Bergman 2005; Norris 2001).

In the fields of political science and political philosophy, the Habermasian idea of a deliberative democracy has been widely discussed and developed (e.g. Dahlberg 2007; Dryzek 2005; Fraser 1985; Mouffe 1999). However, in technological development in the area of e-democracy a more nuanced understanding regarding the importance of form and structure in democracy is seldom articulated (Macintosh et al. 2009; Sæbø et al. 2008). Instead, what is mostly emphasised is the ability to create a neutral place for deliberative discussions, where the view is that technology can enable a stronger democracy (Dahlberg 2011). Even from a more radical democratic perspective, where difference on a societal level is emphasised and the importance of separatist counter-publics is put forward, in-group equality is taken for granted. Despite the rapid growth of social networks, which indicates that the political discussion takes place elsewhere than on governmental web sites, efficient technology design to support representation and analysis of representation is lacking (Macintosh et al. 2009).

In an exhaustive review of current research on e-participation, Sæbø et al. (2008) discuss a technological agenda for the field. The paper states that most software products are adaptations of existing technologies without much technological innovation, that the internet is treated as a distinct artifact, and that technological solutions are mostly taken for granted (with the exception of systems for e-voting).

It seems that there is a gap between theory-driven research, where technology most often is seen as given, and technology-driven research, where theory is seen as given. We intend to bridge this gap by not treating technology as a neutral means to an end. Instead, we treat it as cultural production where norms and social practises are expressed in the system design. As a starting point, we challenge the presumption that members of an interest group are equals. Instead of developing a system based on an ideal speech situation, we suggest a system based on the opposite, a technological

tool that takes differences between people into account and even makes it the point-of-departure. The research questions in this paper are: *How should a system based on diversity be conceived?* and *How is it possible to visualise and communicate power structures in the system's design without emphasising or simplifying them?*

By diversity we mean not only varieties and differences between people but the notion that all variety between people also implies inequality. In other words, there are adverse as well as positive effects of diversity, and an urgent question is how to strengthen the positive ones and alleviate the negative ones. One possible way of reducing negative aspects is by communicating power structures to all participants, bringing power relations and hierarchy out for inspection, reflection, and discussion. However, merely displaying power structures might reinforce them rather than alleviate them. Therefore, some care must be taken in the aim of designing a system promoting diversity yet demoting fossilisation of inequalities. This calls for dynamic ways of representing participants' status and hierarchy in the system that are grounded in social theory. In order to find guidelines for the design of such a system, we have grounded our designs in democratic meeting techniques and feminist and discursive social theory. These positions in social theory and their implications for design will be elaborated on in the following two sections. Formalisation of the political and theoretical positions into a mathematical model follows, as well as a preliminary evaluation and discussion of the system's consequences. The resulting system is called "Actory", its name emphasising actions and reactions of participants and that it is activity that influences their relative hierarchy and status.

2 Democratic meeting techniques

Following Dahl (1989), Hemberg (2002) created a model of democracy that is useful as a way of measuring participation on different levels, from countries and organisations to smaller interest groups. Five criteria are stated for fulfilling the ideal democratic situation:

1. Participants are equal members
2. Participants set the agenda together
3. Participants can fully participate in the discussion
4. All participants have the same status when decisions are taken
5. Everyone has an enlightened understanding of the discussion

These criteria can be used to analyse any situation from a participatory perspective in order to find methods to improve democracy in the actual situation. Democratic meeting techniques are not a fixed set of methods but a way of maintaining a reflexive process.

Democratic meeting techniques as developed in critical pedagogy and in feminist-oriented movements can be seen as an elaboration of established meeting techniques (i.e. setting an agenda, having rules for turn-taking and speaking, and having procedures for voting). While these traditional techniques assume that all participants are relatively equal, the elaborated techniques emphasise that people do not participate on equal conditions, that they have different capacities to participate, and that they are

treated differently depending on interacting power structures. The underlying idea is that status and power are created in relation to others without being assigned a fixed category such as “man” or “black”. Power is created in the intersection of multiple categories.

One method to increase participants’ awareness of the importance of power structures is to observe the conditions for dialogue in the meeting situation, e.g. who gets the most space and attention, who is ignored, and how suppression techniques are used (Hedenstrand 2008; Hemberg 2002). Different communication forms produce different results, and people are more or less at ease when expressing themselves, depending on the situation. In a critical and feminist pedagogic perspective, the importance of diverse forms of communication that take peoples’ different capabilities and experiences into account is therefore emphasised (Bondestam 2002; Enns and Sinacore 2005; Howie and Tauchert 2001; Maher and Thompson Tetreault 2001). An informal discussion can be seen as a complex value system where participants control the stage by, for example, encouraging or ignoring some people and going into heated argumentation with others. There are several meeting techniques that emphasise complexity and offer diverse possibilities for debate to encourage different kinds of participation styles. Open space technology is one example where written comments as well as informal oral discussions are used to put together an agenda (Owen 1997). The ambition is to create the agenda together and prepare it in self-organised groups in an organic but efficient process before any decisions are taken.

2.1 Technology and discursive democracy

There are several examples of digitally mediated self-organised systems that contain functionality similar to those used in democratic meeting techniques. Wikis are a concept where many of the aspirations of deliberate democracy are fulfilled (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010). Referring to the work of Dryzek (2005) on deliberative democracy, Lourenço and Costa (2010) define blogs and wikis as “discursive forums”. These are places where peers can develop a common discourse around shared interests, and these discourses can, in the long run, influence democratic decision-making.

Dahlberg (2011) suggests that democracy in self-organised systems such as social media is to be understood as an autonomous system that goes beyond the centralised power of the nation-state, and where the network is the organisational principle. In this so-called open source production, decision-making takes place in the collaborative, decentralised network of peers. Communication forms associated with social media and Web 2.0 are examples where technology supports this kind of e-democracy through a mix of different discussion forms, motivating and voting systems and possibilities to extend communication in different ways; linking, liking, blogging, digging, tweeting. Here, value systems are created using reputation to validate content rather than using the legitimacy of conventional institutional frameworks. Instead, quality is measured by the crowd of users, as, for example, in auction services such as Ebay, where customers validate the trustworthiness of the seller. Garcin et al. (2009) show how important the particular algorithms and calculations are when the micro feedback of the crowd is aggregated. Despite this, the algorithms involved are never completely visible or open to changes by users.

2.2 Reputation in social simulation

In social simulations studies, a few different frameworks for modelling reputation have been proposed (Hahn et al. 2007; Sabater et al. 2006; Muller and Vercouter 2010). However, all three of these models are based on economic interactions (or modelled as such), where the evaluation of reputation is used to decide whether to sell/buy to/from another agent or not. In our case, reputation reflects communicative interaction rather than economic interaction, interaction between one agent and many other agents simultaneously, and an evaluation that is cognitive rather than economic. One similarity with other models is the need to model both direct and indirect interactions. In our case, direct interactions are of various kinds (represented by different feedback mechanisms) whereas the indirect interaction is managed in the reputation calculation system (Actory).

A dissimilarity is that in the three models, knowledge of reputation is distributed in the agent population, in contrast to the reputation system in, for example, Ebay which like our system has a centralised reputation value. We are aware that the one centralised value model misses out on some of the more subtle sides of reputation; however in the situation in which it is used in our system we believe these subtleties to be represented well enough by the openness of the system and the diversity of the actions weighed into the reputation measure, enabling the users to define how the calculations will be performed.

2.3 Game challenge to influence behaviour

One can view the use of reputation in social media as an economic system for social capital, or a strategy game. Most games contain an economy of some sort where the challenge is to accumulate resources, where the users often gain levels and earn “scores” by doing different activities (Adams and Rollings 2007). Some social media also use this game aspect in order to motivate the use of the system and to foster certain behaviour. For example, LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>) encourages users to add information to the system in order to gain “profile completeness”, which means submitting different kinds of information and adding a certain number of contacts. Swedish Lunarstorm (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LunarStorm>) was another social networking website that used an economic challenge to make people explore and use all parts of the system. In this system, active users received attention and sometimes rewards for their participation. A more recent example of the use of reputation as a direct way to get rewards is Klout (klout.com). In Klout, the user online “influence” is measured and rewarded with special product offers. The Klout score (on a scale 1–100) is also visible to other users. A final example is the widely used Disqus (<http://disqus.com>) system, which in 2011 released a service that closely resembles our system in that it uses multiple feedback mechanisms. However, the functionality of this system is only partly revealed and thus far from transparent. This holds for all social media applications we have analysed.

3 System design

Dahlberg (2011) suggests that an important part of e-democracy takes place outside of the development of government initiated e-democracy projects. Instead, it occurs in collaborative decentralised interest-based networks. In order to create a system that supports and conceptualises more autonomous decentralised parts of e-democracy, we have instrumentalised some of the norms and practises that were synthesised from democratic meeting techniques and social media discussed in the previous section. Our ambition here is to create:

1. *A discursive forum*: The software should support development of common questions, rather than decision-making. Anyone should be able to propose an activity and implement it without the need for formal voting and discussion.
2. *Ubiquitous voting*: Informal voting should be on-going and everywhere.
3. *Measuring activity*: A person's score in the system should be created through her and others' actions. Everyone's status in the system should be taken into account when judging action.
4. *Visualised reputation*: An informal hierarchy should be visualised.
5. *Challenging game*: Gaining score should be challenging in order to motivate and encourage participation.

We elaborate on each of these points in the following Sects. 3.1–3.5, where we describe how these norms and practises are expressed in the system design.

3.1 Discursive forum

Our intention is not to develop a formal voting system but a platform that supports development of common discourses—like the development of a political agenda or a collaborative cultural production. Therefore we build on the principles of a wiki, a platform that suits discursive processes. A wiki gives the user an opportunity to develop information in collaboration with other users in a simple way. One important criterion of democracy, according to Hemberg (2002), is to be able to set the agenda. In a wiki, the opportunity for anyone to raise a question and create a space for the discussion around it is technically unlimited.

In a more informal grouping, the subjective experience is important and it is the individual who decides what is relevant for her to discuss and how it relates to the overall theme. Therefore we have added the feature that the user who creates a post also controls this micro-forum and decides if she wants to invite others to the writing process or just as commenters. In order to make the information structure simple to use and to facilitate the development of a common discourse, we use association as a way of structuring instead of categorising. A requirement to link a post to an earlier post forces the user to refer to at least one source within the system and this contributes to an emphasis on the development of a common discussion.

3.2 Ubiquitous voting

In a collaborative, decentralised network of peers, there are constant negotiations about what to do and cooperation is not steered by a centralised formal voting process. Democratic meeting techniques acknowledge that the arrangements for voting

are important for participation and outcome and therefore seek to vary forms of discussion and voting (Hemberg 2002). Our proposed system emphasises different kinds of activities and gives scores not only for direct voting but for all kinds of attention: linking, commenting, clicking a like/dislike button, and rating. These different possibilities to express meaning as a numeric value can be unrestricted or restricted in time and quantity. In the scoring process, both users and their actions are given scores, creating a hierarchy not only between users but also between posts.

A “like” option that is easy to click on is commonplace in social media in order to provide users with a possibility to quickly express their opinion. This is often combined with a rating system that demands slightly more reflection. Some blogs provide users with a set of tools to evaluate and disseminate information widely through services such as Digg and Twitter. Our idea is to reconnect the value of this kind of informal voting directly to the user and also to create an understanding of the valuation process. The valuation is bi-directional; the reference is a way to legitimise the own statement and also a way to legitimise other people who use the same reference. When linking to someone’s post, it adds score both to the user and the post. The amount of score can also depend on the *actory index* of the user, which is the user’s percentage of the total amount of score in the system multiplied by the total number of users.

3.3 Measuring activity

Visualising communication structures may make the represented structure more permanent. An important question then is how to make structures visible without entrenching hierarchies. Another question is how status should be estimated. A situation where everyone rates one another in a constantly on-going voting process is not only time-consuming, it can be difficult to get people to want to participate. Our solution to these two questions is to focus less on actors and more on actions. Following a critical and feminist pedagogic perspective, we assume participants will give more attention to people with high status and to people in their network. Reputation most often refers to an opinion that an agent has of another agent’s intentions and norms. We emphasise that this opinion is influenced by socially structuring factors: people who have a high status may get more attention and their actions may be valued more highly by other users. Beginners and other people can instead compensate for their low status by being more active. The system may thus work in an emancipatory way. By visualising reputation as a way of formalising informal social processes, we will be able to use the system for understanding structural mechanisms empirically in unequal settings.

3.4 Visualised status

If we assume that groups are always structured and therefore that the power distribution within the group is more or less unequal, a transparency of the structures can clarify user strategies and system rules in an empowering way. We start with the premise that users receive recognition through the way they use the tool, and that others’ reactions also depend on the status they attribute to the user due to structuring factors such as gender, class, and ethnicity.

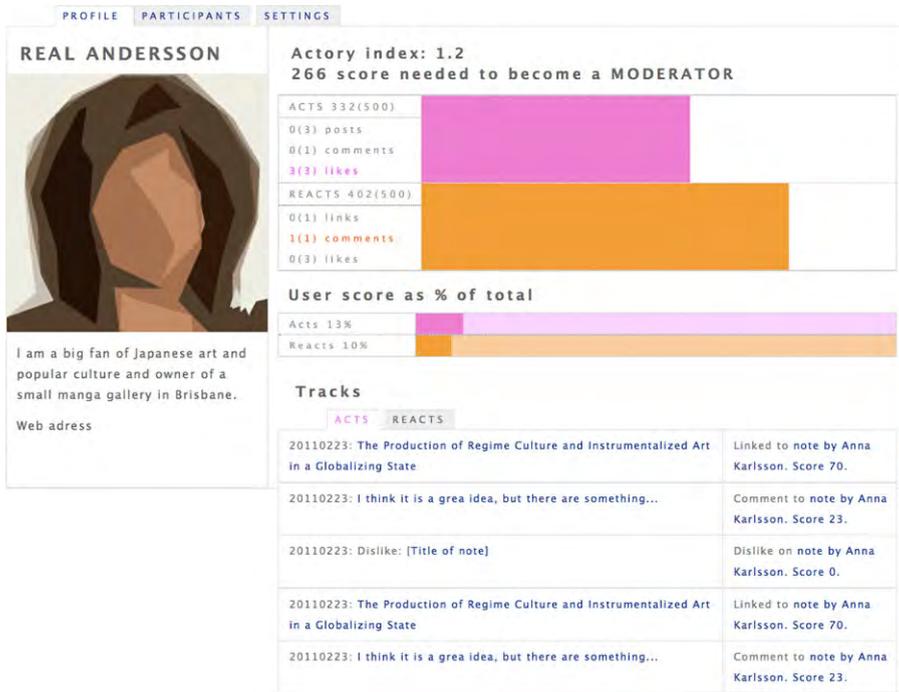


Fig. 1 Web-based prototype built in Drupal visualising user state

The system consists of three different parts: Activity, About and State. Activity is where new activities are suggested and debated inside a group and are partly displayed on the public web as a news feature. About is where the result of the collaborative work is manifested outwards and where the overall topic that functions as the starting point for the work is expressed. State is where the individual score is visualised and roles and score levels are set (Fig. 1). Of these three parts, State stands in focus here. Participants' State is measured in two ways: through the activities users initiate and by the reactions from others to these activities. User score level thus depends on the score of the activity the individual creates in the system (Acts) and the score others give the individual actions in the system (Reacts). Depending on the purpose of the system, the setting of the score can be changed, emphasising either Acts or Reacts.

3.5 Challenging game

In order to motivate and encourage participation, the system has to be challenging and rewarding. One can see the system as a strategic game, where increasing one's influence is a goal in itself. Most games contain an economy of some sort where the challenge is to accumulate resources. Users often level up and earn "score" by conducting different activities (Adams and Rollings 2007). The game aspect of the system can create an incentive to participate, even when the participant does not have

an enlightened understanding of the “game”. A certain hierarchy can be used as a means to develop a certain type of behaviour and communicate the functionality of the interface but also to create stability and to motivate people with high status (which we assume is due to knowledge and experience) to continue to participate. Users’ score levels can have a direct function, giving a user that has gained a high score greater influence over the formulation of the collective goal. System roles could also be set dynamically, giving the user more and more influence over the system, apart from being set by an administrator.

3.6 Summary of design principles

The system can be summarised in five design principles as follows:

1. A discussion forum, like a wiki, that supports open source cultural production. Users have the right to edit their own posts and to delegate this right. Association structures the information.
2. Informal voting is done constantly and in different fashions: linking, commenting, liking/disliking, and rating.
3. The scores that are generated by users’ activities depend on each user’s total score level. A user’s total score depends on their own activity and the score that others give that user’s activity. The percentage of scores for users and posts is dynamic and depends on the total distribution of points among users and posts.
4. Transparency and visualisation clarify user strategies, system rules, roles, and rights.
5. Hierarchy can be used as a way of communicating the system and motivating participation.

The system can be described as a wiki combined with an evaluation system that tracks all activities of the users including the reactions of other users in relation to a specific action. Any comment, like/dislike, or link action creates a score. Each new score affects other users’ scores in all parts of the system, as each user’s activity index is calculated in relation to the total amount of score in the system. Furthermore, how many points are given (by making comments, links, like/dislike, grades) depends on who reacted. As the user’s activity index is constantly changing, and as some old posts might be updated with new links and comments, the order of the archive is dynamic as each post depends on changes in the total system (Fig. 2).

4 Implementation

4.1 The scoring system

Part of how the distribution of scores between users when they post or comment is illustrated in Fig. 3. A distinguishing mark of the proposed system is that scoring is multi-directional. For example, when commenting on a post the commenting user receives score, as this user demonstrates activity, as does the owner of the post and the post itself because these entities are subject to attention. Another example is that when writing a new post and linking to another post, both post owners receive score.

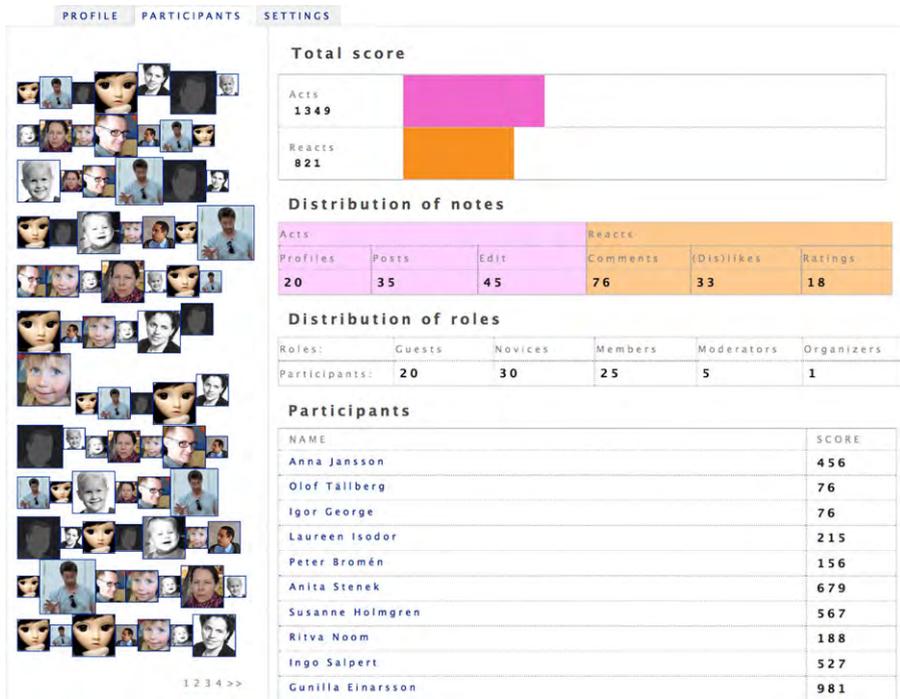


Fig. 2 Web-based prototype built in Drupal visualising distribution of total score and roles of users

We now outline how scores are calculated in the event of an action. Let an action x be initiated by user u_i . We now use two pre-defined mappings relative to the current system, the default score function $s(x)$ and the status impact function $t(x)$. See Fig. 6 columns “Score” and “Status impact” for an example of s and t , respectively. The default score function simply represents the minimum score that an action generates, while the status impact function yields a multiplicative factor. We then define the status impact function for action x and user u_i , $t_i(x, j)$ as

$$t_i(x, j) = \begin{cases} t(x) & \text{if } i \neq j \\ 0 & \text{if } i = j \end{cases}$$

In words, the status impact function for user u_i equals zero if x was initiated by u_i , otherwise it equals $t(x)$. The score r awarded to user u_i for the action x initiated by any user u_j is obtained from the following equation:

$$r(x, j) = s(x)[1 + t_i(x, j) \cdot a_j]$$

where a_j is the actory index for user u_j . This is defined in Sect. 4.2.

In Fig. 3, user B comments upon a post by user A. B receives a score of $r(x, j) = 20$ for the comment, as $r(x, j) = s(x)$. A and the post that is commented on also receive score for the comments from B. A receives a score of $r(x, j) = 20(1 + 2 \times 1, 5) = 80$. In Fig. 4, user C creates a post that links to a post by user A. This generates scores for the post plus for user C and also for user A and the post that gets linked to. As user C has a low actory index, the generated score is rather low.

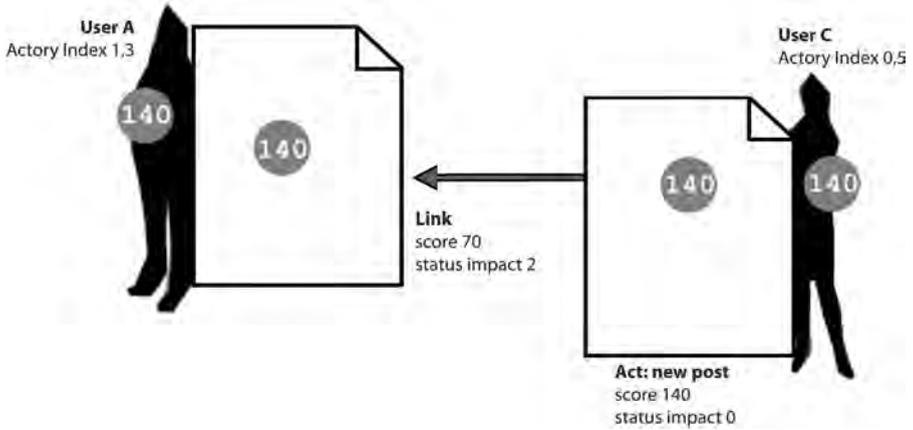


Fig. 3 The distribution of score between users and activities when a user creates a post

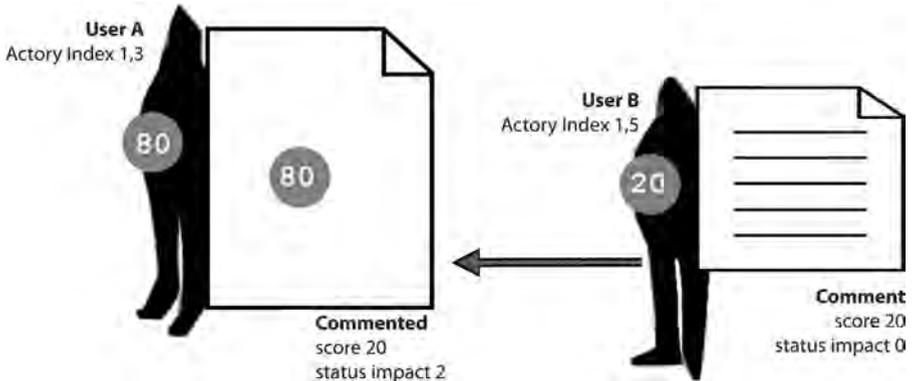


Fig. 4 The distribution of score between users and activities when a user comments on a post

4.2 The actory index

The intention is not only to visualise the users’ relative status in the system, but also to use this information to enhance hierarchy. We devised an *actory index* that is used to generate scores which are dependent on users’ statuses within the system. For any instance of the system we have a finite set of users $U = \{u_1, u_2, \dots, u_N\}$, where each user u_i is associated with a score level s_i , i.e. the amount of score they have achieved from actions or reactions. The actory index a_i for a user u_i is defined as u_i ’s percentage of the total score in the system multiplied by the number of users, such that

$$a_i = N \frac{s_i}{\sum_{u_j \in U} s_j}$$

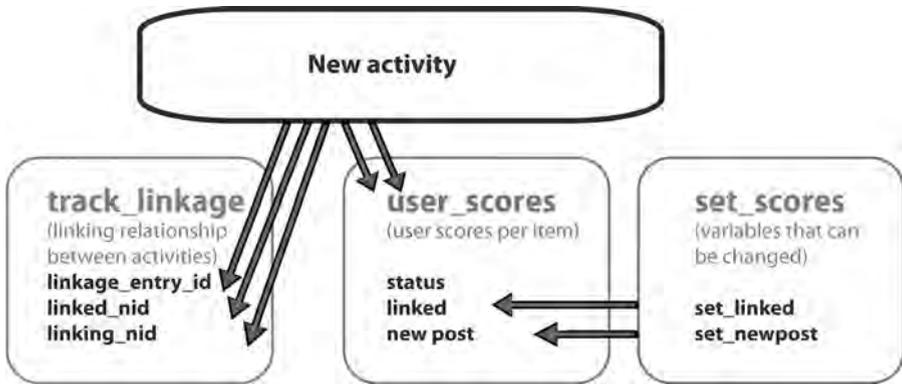


Fig. 5 The scoring system in Drupal when creating an activity

In this manner the activity index has an upper bound of N , the number of users. This enables a visualisation of greater inequalities between users in systems with many users than in systems having just a few users.

This suggested logic was implemented and tested in a spreadsheet using a scenario with three fictional users involved in a dialogue that consisted of 28 activities. Figure 5 illustrates the implementation of the scoring system in our Drupal prototype. The table *track_linkage* stores the linked and the linking activity. The user who created the linked activity receives a linked score in the *user_scores* table. The user who is linking the activity receives a new post score in the *user_scores* table. The *set_score* table stores variables that can be set and changed by the user/organiser.

4.3 Designing the rules of the social game

Informal voting is ubiquitous and performed in different ways: linking, commenting, liking/disliking, and rating. We have chosen to use these features for the sake of simplicity. They are common in social media and are simple to understand and use for most users. The score given for each feature depends on the social context and what kind of discussion one would like to promote. Different behaviours may then be stimulated and rewarded by redefining the score and the use of the activity index. What emphasis is put on each feature thus creates the informal rules of the collaboration. The rules can be set and changed by the organiser but can also be set by the users. What each user can do depends on how the system is configured from the start. Permission to change the score and the importance of status impact can be open to the administrator only, to a few users depending on their status in the system, or to all users.

We exemplify our system with two templates reflecting different goals with respect to the type of activity aimed for in the discussions. In Figs. 6 and 7, the values that are coloured in red are open for change to users with the status “organiser”, and the grey areas indicate different permissions due to user status. In the template “Initiative” in Fig. 6, the value of adding a new post is relatively high in order to promote new initiatives. Features such as like/dislike provide an easy way of expressing an opinion

		Variables		Roles				
Rights		Score	Status Impact	Guest	Novice	Member	Moderator	Organizer
Acts	new post	140	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	edit	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	comment	20	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	like	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	dislike	0	x0	0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rate	20	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Edit public pages	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Setting Values	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Score needed				0	100	200	500
Reacts	comment	20	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	liked	10	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	disliked	-10	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	linked	70	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 1	-15	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 2	-10	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 3	10	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 4	30	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 5	45	x2	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
Score needed				0	0	200	500	
Total score needed				0	100	400	1000	Invitation

Fig. 6 Template “Initiative”: thresholds, amount and total score of user activity related to roles and rights. Variables changeable by users are in red. Grey areas show what rights are connected to which role

that does not demand much in terms of critical thinking. In the example in Fig. 6, those actions are therefore not associated with high scores relative to other actions. For instance, to rate something is a more cognitively demanding action than liking or disliking, which motivates its higher minimum value in the suggested template. The rating is also conducted in relation to the history of the collaborative work, thus votes from users with higher status are given a higher reward. In this way, the status of users that have worked for a long time on the topic is emphasised, making it more difficult for new users to change the rules for discussion as well as the overall topic.

The score given can thus have an informative and symbolic function. If attached to roles, it creates a “game” where users level up and receive extended rights by earning score within the system. In the example concerning setting roles and rights in Fig. 6, the “Guest” has the right to read and comment on others’ posts and like them but cannot create posts or rate others’ posts. To become a “Novice” the user has to obtain a score of 100. As a “Member” the user has rights to do everything except edit public pages. To be allowed to do this, the user has to level up to “Moderator” which demands a sustainable contribution to the topic. To become an “Organiser” with the

		Variables		Roles				
Rights		Score	Status impact	Guest	Novice	Member	Moderator	Organizer
Acts	new post	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x2	x0
	edit	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	comment	20	x0	x0	x3	x5	x5	x0
	like	20	x0	x0	x1	x0	x0	x0
	dislike	0	x0	x0	x1	x0	x0	x0
	rate	40	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Edit public pages	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Setting Values	0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	Score needed				0	100	400	570
Reacts	comment	40	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	liked	10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	disliked	-10	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	linked	100	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 1	-15	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 2	-10	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 3	10	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 4	30	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
	rated 5	45	x3	x0	x0	x0	x0	x0
Score needed				0	0	200	530	
Total score needed				0	100	600	1100	Invitation

Fig. 7 Template “Debate”: thresholds, amount and total score of user activity related to roles and rights

rights to set the values and thus be able to co-create the rules for the game, the user has to be invited by an organiser.

In the template “Debate” in Fig. 7, the ambition is to reward debate and to give attention to other users. Therefore a new post does not give the active user a score. Instead the user who created the post that is linked to is rewarded. The user can receive score by commenting, liking/disliking, and rating but her activity foremost gives score to others. Users’ statuses are emphasised and the score given depends on who reacts. For example, if a user with an actory index of 1.8 (which is 180 % of average) creates a post, the linked post and its user receives $100 \times (1 + (3 \times 1.8)) = 640$. But if the active user’s actory index is 0.2 the linked post and its user receives $100 \times (1 + (3 \times 0.2)) = 160$.

In order to level up from “Guest” to “Groupie” the user not only has to gain score but also perform certain actions: at least three comments, one like, and one dislike. As a guest, the user is not allowed to create posts or rate other posts and thus can only comment on others’ posts and like/dislike. These rules follow the norm for common netiquette in online discussion lists, where new users are supposed to lurk for a while and give attention to the on-going discussion before positioning themselves. To be able to participate in the rating the user has to have submitted at least five comments.

In this template, it is only the “Boss” who has the right to edit the public part of the groupware, where the objectives of the group are listed and the collective work is abstracted.

4.4 Preliminary evaluation

The focus of the study reported here has been to implement a system model and a graphical interface that represent and encourage discursive political practise in explicit ways. The system design is a partial answer to the question of how to account for diversity in groupware. In order to analyse the effect of the tool on group dynamics it should be part of a longitudinal study by, for example, performing repeated experiments with various settings of rules and parameters. Experiments will test the mathematical models empirically and investigate whether various settings would stimulate different kinds of behaviour. The other side of the coin is of course participants’ attitudes towards the system—how participants understand the scoring system and the interface. Development of Actory takes place in an iterative manner, and the first usability studies focused primarily on the latter—how participants understand the system. Two studies were performed. The first study had a small group of participants who conducted scenario-based tasks, and the second study lasted for three months for a group with the goal of developing a project.

In the first study, a small representative group of participants was selected among artists, art teachers, and art students at the Royal Institute of Fine Arts in Stockholm. The reason for choosing participants from the art world was that hierarchies are always present in art communities but are also highly implicit and difficult to navigate, especially when participating in collaborative projects. The group was recruited using an open call to participate and consisted of two women and four men between 25 and 50 years old. They were all from different European countries except for one Columbian artist. They shared an interest in communication technologies; half of them claimed that they had very good computer skills, four of them were used to publishing information on the Web, and one had moderated several e-mail lists.

The usability test took 20–30 minutes. During the test, the participants explored the tool using simple scenarios, after which they were interviewed about their impressions of the tool and its possible uses for them. The tool contained fictional profiles and a fictional on-going conversation about organising an art exhibition. The informants were asked to play one of the profiles when acting out the scenarios.

Two types of results stand out: navigational issues and issues relating to our model of status and hierarchy. Our foremost interest lies in the latter, but the former is always an issue in novel prototypes.

The informants had reported difficulties with navigating within Actory; as it was still a prototype it was not yet very user friendly and required a lot of information to be understandable. The tool was perceived as not very intuitive and too textual. The informants also felt that it was difficult to get an overview and to understand the goal of the web site of which the tool was part. This is a problem shared with other blog-like interfaces; new users jump into the middle of the conversation and have to reconstruct the narrative by exploring former posts. One of the main reasons for the confusion was the fictional profiles and conversations:

“Looks like I have logged into someone else’s account.”

The informants’ impressions of the tool were clearly marked by their previous experiences of social media. One of the informants described the tool as “a mix between a forum and Facebook”. Another informant compared it with a social forum she used that was a place for people in the local art world to publish news about different art events, and she suggested that the tool could have a similar functionality.

Regarding participants’ attitudes towards the system’s views on group hierarchy etc., they had difficulties understanding the meaning and the functionality of the “status” indicator. One of the participants thought it was related to dating services as she connected the word “status” with civil status. Half of the informants did understand the functionality and the concepts on the status page. However, surprisingly, there was only one informant who actually questioned the basic idea behind the tool:

“Maybe the score method is simplistic. It is too simple for a big [thing]. Social relations are not that, as a simple score. It seems like a game. When you sit down around a table and talk about a project, everything is not a game.”

The reason that the lack of questioning surprised us is that we had expected more concerns regarding privacy, control, suppression, etc. to be raised. The lack of problematising the idea with the tool may be explained by various forms of participant bias: the situation, that the informants wanted to show that they were capable of understanding the tool and also that they wanted to please the researchers. The informants were probably also there because of their interest in communication technology. Maybe the reactions would have been much more negative if they were a more representative group of artists and art students at the school. A previous paper showed that social media such as Facebook were seen as something rather negative among art students at the Royal Institute of Art, as a too rational way of handling social relations. Even though most art students use Facebook, they do not like it.

In a follow-up study, twelve persons used the tool during three months, generating around 30 posts and ten times as many comments and likes/dislikes. The tool was used by a group of artists and researchers to develop a common research project and as a complementary to meetings in real life to prepare meetings and to have a place for feedback on sketches.

The two main activities that emerged in the group were memory work (a method for deconstructing ones’ own notions concerning a specific subject such as gender, violence etc.) and art project proposals. Memory works is very personal, even though participants express themselves in third person. Due to the personal nature of posts, the atmosphere in comments was good-natured and sympathetic, and this was also reflected in comments regarding project proposals.

The scoring system was set up so that it could not be changed by the users, but it was open for inspection. However, the users were engaged in the discussion and had no interest in the scoring system itself (i.e. how scores were set etc.). Still, the scoring-system as such seemed to encourage participants to contribute to each other’s project proposals and recollections. It is frequently the case that participants are more interested in their own proposals than commenting on others’. Activity, in conjunction with the task and context, triggered participants to contribute to the discussion without enforcing them to do so. The emphasis on reactions to each other’s posts also

caused the group as a whole to develop a high sensibility for the roles in the discussion even when they met in real life settings. In other words, the tool and the discussions about the meeting situation triggered by the tool seemed instrumental in fostering a certain behaviour and culture in the group.

Navigation was still problematic in the second study, in part due to the self-regulated structure of the system. Just as in an ordinary blog, the user mostly enters in the middle of conversation and it takes a while to understand the context. But unlike an ordinary blog, Actory consists of many parallel “blogs” that mix into each other. If the user does not constantly follow the flow of information it is easy to get lost. More traditional navigation may therefore be necessary, for example a collaborative menu as in a wiki.

5 Discussion

In this article we have challenged the norm in the area of e-participation that all the participants in an interest group are equal. Instead, we have created a tool that assumes the opposite, that everyone is different and that differences create meaning. To find forms for this, we have combined democratic meeting techniques with a scoring system from social media and designed a web-based groupware that functions as a strategic game. Our ambition has been to clarify informal norms and structures by formalising them and make them possible to debate and influence, as when using democratic meeting techniques. The focus has been on the discursive democratic processes that take place in collaborative group discussions online.

To answer our first research question—*How should a system based on diversity be conceived?*—we have proposed a system that measures users’ own activity and the reactions towards these activities. We have assumed, following gender research on on-line communication (Herring 2008; Kampen and Snijkers 2003; Nakamura 2001; Postmes and Spears 2002; Wright 2005), that users will react differently to other participants based on the status position they attribute to the actor, and thus the resulting system visualises these informal structures by counting reactive activity. In this way we avoid a situation where participants judge the status of other participants directly and where status attached to a certain participant is emphasised. Instead, participants’ statuses in the system change dynamically and depend both on users’ own actions and others’ reactions as well as on the changing scores of all users and posts in the system. This is the answer to our second research question: *Is it possible to visualise and communicate power structures in the system’s design without emphasising or simplifying them?* We have created a system that recognises and expects hierarchies without linking them to any designated identity position. This fits well with the idea of status and power as being created in relation to others and not assigned a fixed category.

We also go one step further. Instead of avoiding hierarchy, we emphasise it in order to create a strategic game and to explore hierarchy as a way of enhancing participation. One might ask how the emphasis on the game can create a social culture that promotes collaboration around a common goal. Here the use of game elements in social media has influenced us. In social media, games are sometimes used as a means to inform the user of how to use the platform. Adams and Rollings (2007) define similar motivation in games as economic challenges, when the user is motivated

by simplistic economic measure of success. Strategy is another important part of the game, understanding the relation of whom you support and vice versa and how the sum of your actions rather than a single move influences your score.

Preliminary studies with our prototype “Actory” have confirmed that such a system may foster certain behaviours, but have also shown difficulties for users in navigating a non-hierarchical system.

It will be interesting to see other game aspects in the design that can be emphasised for different purposes. In our tool, most game aspects have to do with exploration. According to Adams and Rollings (2007) there is always a spatial awareness challenge in exploring a new tool. Creating a map over the terrain makes it easier to navigate, but in order to maintain a challenge one should not make it too easy for the players. There is therefore a point in not revealing all the possibilities and rules in detail but letting the details be revealed when the user has used the system for a while. Locked doors is another game concept that motivates, meaning that knowing there is a higher level is enough, you do not have to declare exactly what the benefits are to level up or how to do it.

Our ambition has been to create a dynamic voting system that reflects the complex systems of meaning in social groups. One of the shortcomings of the system in its current state is, not surprisingly, that it is complex and therefore difficult to explain. To reveal all the rules and give out a lot of information leads to problems with information overload. Just because all the rules are revealed does not mean that users can embrace them all. The usability tests clearly showed the limitations of users’ ability to make sense of too much information. Here, the use of gaming challenges like locked doors can create motivation to participate even for those who fail to understand the overall meaning of the “game rules”. The rules of communication may instead be presented at a more moderate pace, and understanding can be created through practise rather than by reading a detailed manual.

In this version of the system we haven’t taken history into account. Therefore the status of a post does not change as it is becoming old. But if a post becomes old, its relevance usually diminishes if no other users link or like it for a period of time.

The ambition to make the system modifiable by users can also be developed further. As a way of supporting diversity we have devised abilities to express opinions in a variety of fashions. To start with, we have used the most commonly used symbols for discussion and voting online, such as “comment”, “like/dislike” and “rate”. These different modes of expression are fixed in this version of the system, but a less static and more modifiable system could easily be developed in a future version.

Further empirical research on the platform in use will investigate how users interact with each other and the system, and further incorporation of the algorithms and actory index into e-participation platforms will resolve some of the usability issues in navigating the system.

6 Conclusion

We have proposed a groupware that takes diversity and power into account, influenced by democratic meeting techniques and social media practises. Instead of treating technology as a neutral means to an end, we regard it as cultural production and

use it as a way of expressing and changing norms and social practises. The resulting system is a prototype of a collaborative platform with a game functionality where participants' status is measured and transformed through a dynamic voting process. The participants' status as users depends on their own activity and the reactions of others to these activities: links; likes/dislikes; rating; commenting. Importance is given to users' activity as well as their status position. We assume that users will react based on the actual activity and the status they attribute to the actor. The status position we assume depends on the level of closeness as well as on intersected factors such as gender, class, age, and ethnicity. By measuring participants' activity in relation to each other's actions instead of only their rating of each other, we visualise the presence of structuring factors rather than the actual structure. Participants advance in the system by gathering score and can be given different possibilities to influence the rules based on their score. By looking at the collaborative work in the groupware as a strategic game and using hierarchy as a way to motivate participation, we open up the possibility to communicate complex processes through practical action.

The system will be further developed towards two different uses:

1. A collaborative tool for interest-based networks. This tool can serve as a way to draw attention to individual initiative by visualising how status is created. By using the score as a way to dynamically create roles and provide rights, as in a strategic game, informal roles in the group are visualised and formalised and thus become easier to understand and influence.
2. A research tool for empirically analysing the significance of status, role, transparency and motivation in group processes. The system can be set up differently for different experimental purposes and groups.

The current status of the project is a functional beta, developed in Drupal. We will be testing the tool on larger groups of users during 2013.

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THE DESIRES OF THE CROWD

Scenario for a Future Social System

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1. INTRODUCTION

The capitalist system Marx described when formulating his theories was based on nineteenth-century industrial capitalist society. New methods of communication have since changed the conditions for capitalism. Parts of today's network-based creative economy are characterized by the humanistic values some writers claim Marx was looking for when he formulated the theory of alienation. ¹ For instance, Hardt and Negri argue that the new economy of affective labour and networked relations amounted to "a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism." ² This stateless network economy operates in a relational space where the consumer is also the producer, and self-fulfillment, as much as financial gain, is the goal.

In this article, I describe how to alter the functionality of the creative sector and develop institutions allowing for a union of the private and public sector. In doing this, we may approach something resembling Marx's vision of an ideal society as he describes in, for example, *Comments on James Mill*. ³ Here, unlike in his other texts where the communist society is described only as the antithesis of capitalism, he describes his vision more directly, as "production as hu-

ABSTRACT

The micro-financing of artists offers new possibilities for people outside the economic and cultural elite to become patrons of the arts. One might term it a more democratic base for the artistic activity and its varied discursive practices. However, it is not just the economy of art that focuses on people with the particular skills to make things that get called 'art.' Promoting a personal brand in the form of taste, education and social relations is also central to every career in an insecure and flexible labor market, and not only in the creative sector. Accordingly, the crowd funding of humanity, rather than of production of commodities, is a possible and reasonable scenario for a future social system, where people are deeply interconnected in collaborative networks.

*In order to examine what such a system might look like in practice, I have in my project *The Affect Machine* formulated a market place for social relations. Here I show how the principles for a capitalist institution like a corporation can be combined with those of a digital social network, and thus point to a form of merger between the private and public sector. In this scenario for a future social system, we may approach something resembling Marx's vision of a communist society.*

man beings," in which the products of work would reflect human nature, and would be made for reciprocal benefit as a free manifestation and enjoyment of life.

By combining an institution from the public sphere with the private, I show how we can create a scenario for a future social system. In the next part, I give a brief description of Marx's theory of alienation. In part 3, I describe how the art world can be seen as an exception to the mainstream market economy. In

part 4, I describe how changing the production conditions for art creates new opportunities to deepen the relationship between producer and consumer. In part 5, I argue for a broad definition of the artist. In part 6, I discuss how to create institutions that unite the private with the public, by combining a system of online trading with an online social network. In part 7, I draw the conclusion that today we can see the embryo of a communist society.

2. ALIENATION ACCORDING TO MARX

The theory of alienation is central to Marx's analysis of capitalism. During the financial and political conditions of the Western industrial revolution, a division of labour on an unprecedented scale was made possible, which drastically reduced the individual's ability to monitor and control the results of her own work. Marx argued that this created alienation in society that operates on several levels:⁴

1. Alienation between the producer and the consumer. Instead of producing something for another person, the worker produces for a wage.
2. Alienation between the producer and the product of the work. As the production is split into smaller parts and the worker becomes an instrument that makes a limited part of the whole, the pride and satisfaction of work is lost.
3. Alienation of workers from themselves, since they are denied their identity. By losing control over the product of work and thus pride in labor, the worker is deprived of the right to be a subject with agency.
4. Alienation of the worker from other workers, through the competition for wages, instead of working together for a common purpose.

A capitalist society, divided into classes of bourgeoisie and proletariat, stands in contrast to the ideal of communist society where there is no need for the state and class differentiation; instead everyone owns the means of production, and the principle of distribution is famously: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need!"⁵

This has often been interpreted to mean that everything should be shared equally, but Marx says nothing about equality, rather he emphasizes the relationships between people.⁶ A communist society is a society where everyone is linked in a mutual interdependency with others and nature, and self-actualization is the driving force:

*Let us suppose that we had carried out production as human beings. Each of us would have, in two ways, affirmed himself, and the other person. (1) In my production I would have objectified my individuality, its specific character, and, therefore, enjoyed not only an individual manifestation of my life during the activity, but also, when looking at the object, I would have the individual pleasure of knowing my personality to be objective, visible to the senses, and, hence, a power beyond all doubt. (2) In your enjoyment, or use, of my product I would have the direct enjoyment both of being conscious of having satisfied a human need by my work, that is, of having objectified man's essential nature, and of having thus created an object corresponding to the need of another man's essential nature...*⁷

In this perspective, production is a mutual exchange that strengthens individuals. The producers are strengthened by expressing themselves through their work, where the product is an expression of their subject and position in the world, and thus expands their power and range. As this expression of their identity is put into use, and used by other individuals, the producers also get the satisfaction of seeing their products in use, as a response to other people's human needs.

Exactly how this state is achieved is, however, controversial, and the self-proclaimed precursors of Communist society, the socialist states of the twentieth century, fell far short of these high ideals. Yet the problem of alienation has not dissipated, and may indeed have got worse as capitalism lost its socialist other. However, in a description of the alienation in American society, social scientist Fritz Pappenheim points out the strategy that many feminist theorists have focused on:

*If our goal is to overcome alienation by fostering bonds between man and man, then we must build up institutions which enable man to identify his ends with those of others, with the direction in which his society is moving. In other words, we must try to reduce the gulf between the realms of the private and the public.*⁸

Thus, that the differentiation between people should be avoided, and that the gap between what is seen as private and what is seen as public should be reduced.

3. AN EXCEPTION TO THE MARKET ECONOMY

Today, Marxist scholars claim that we are living in a hypercapitalist era where more and more relationships with other people are converted into commodities without contact with the specific needs and expressions of the people who produce or consume them.⁹ But a small creative class of people has resisted the temptation of capitalism, and refuses to participate in the regular market. This creative class consists of an art avant-garde that plays in another arena, what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls the field of restricted production.¹⁰ Here the game is not to sell as many products as possible to a broad mass, but a few to a limited audience of other cultural producers and colleagues. Your access to this market depends on your social relationships more than your financial capital. The products are an expression of the producer's individuality and the result of a desire to participate in the arts collective. They are a reflection of other individuals' need to understand themselves and their contemporaries, and to be acknowledged as unique human beings.

It may be argued that the global art world can be seen as a market like any other though with the peculiarity that it has a small and affluent clientele who use

art as a way to launder their economic capital with cultural capital.¹¹ But even though this market exists, economic capital is not usually the main motive of the art world's participants. What is most pursued by the producers in this field is not profit, but self-realization and peer recognition.¹²

Others argue that since modernism and the breakthrough of industrial capitalism, it is peer recognition that is most important for artists, more important than recognition from gallery owners, collectors and a wider audience.¹³ To sell their art 'commercially' is seen as a necessary evil, as a way to get money for studio rent and the necessities of the life as an artist. This has similarities with the work ethic of today's so-called open source communities, where the driving force is primarily to achieve fame and acknowledgment from peers.¹⁴

4. NEW PRODUCTION CONDITIONS FOR ART

Yet even artists adapt to new conditions of production, and must somehow finance their fulfillment, which, after all, takes place within the framework of capitalism.

For instance, the British artist Tracy Emin sold options on her future work for £10 in the early 1990s.¹⁵ In recent decades, financial crises, digital technology and a new form of network economy have stimulated a search for alternative forms for financing the visual arts. Crowd funding is one of these forms. Internet sites like Kickstarter and Crowdfunder make it possible to gain small, but potentially numerous, contributions from large groups of people.¹⁶ Some sites provide the sponsors with an opportunity to ask questions and propose a change or development of the project. The investors / consumers can therefore be in direct communication with the artist, which might develop into a more sustained relationship. This crowd

can also function as a loyal audience and PR-support for realized projects; if you have invested in something, you probably also want it to be successful.

Coming up with a good idea for an artwork is not too difficult, and arguably the the art lies in carrying it out. This demands skill, experience, contacts, and legitimacy. For this reason, the artist as a person is often more important for the artwork than the idea. Following the logic of the dominating western modernist concept of art, one cannot alienate the work of art (the commodity) from the artist (the human being).

Art is also about much more than producing artworks. Art sociologist Nathalie Heinich shows in her study of Van Gogh how art in modernism is a belief in the special, the uniquely human, and in this belief system the artist is an embodiment of this idea of the singular and special person, and indirectly of all people.¹⁷ The artwork can be viewed as a way of mediating this singularity, a proof that we are not interchangeable cogs in a machine without significance, but that our particular experience of the world is important and unique. The art world is therefore more about belief in the singular artist rather than in the artworks. Some sites, for example, SonicAngel and ArtistShare have concentrated on this aspect of the arts.¹⁸ In this context it is no longer only the artwork that is central, but the existence of the artist. The micro-financing of artists rather than works of art also offers new possibilities for people other than the economic elite to become patrons of the arts. One might term it a more liberal democratic base for the artistic priesthood and its varied discursive practices, as it makes the patronage of art more easily accessible to people without large financial means.

For the founder of ArtistShare, Brian Camelio, crowd funding is a way to create deeper and more direct links between those who produce art and those who

consume art.¹⁹ Camelio argues that digital technologies are gradually destroying capitalist production conditions, especially in the music industry, as it becomes increasingly difficult to sell music as a commodity when it is too easy to copy in its commodity form. Therefore, the focus on the crowd-funding site is on the process and the technology to enable consumers to be with the artist and participate in the artistic process, rather than merely buying some end product of the process. By donating money on the site to the artists you like, you get special privileges to be in the vicinity of the artist, for instance, as a participant in pre-concert activities, and to meet others who share the same passion.

Perhaps it is mainly the music industry that fits into the concept of crowd funding, since it is already built on relationships with big fan groups. But even more traditionally oriented artists can use technology to establish a contact with potential customers on a deeper level. Painter Laura Greengold used an online crowd-funding service to ask people to sponsor a project that was about sharing dreams and stories.²⁰ The contributors not only sent money but descriptions of their dreams, and Greengold used these as the starting point for a series of paintings. For the artist, this was not just a way to finance a project, but also a way to create a relational space for her art that she lacks in the traditional gallery setting. It thus worked as a way to establish a deeper discussion about the content of the artistic process, rather than focusing only on the end product. Art that emphasizes the relation to the audience, and art as a platform for a wider discussion do not necessarily have to be restricted to digitally mediated art. The participatory aspects of art were emphasized by Fluxus and the Situationists, to take just a couple of examples, and so-called relational art has been a marked trend in contemporary art from the 1990s onwards.

Is it possible then to widen this relational functionality of the art world to other parts of society? To answer this question, we first have to examine the concept of the artist.

5. THE CONCEPT OF THE ARTIST

In an institutional view of the definition of art, what gets called art and who gets called an artist is defined by the powers within the art world. But even with this approach, important participants in the art world are left out: namely, those who themselves do not think the term 'artist' is interesting, but who the art world still categorizes as an artist.

You can also broaden the concept of the artist to include all members of the creative class, that is, often highly educated people working with creative industries and problem solving. Needless to say, even this is far too limited, and I would propose a different and broader way of looking at who the 'artist' is by looking at how such a person is placed on a map of production conditions. Here the individual can be seen as either placed in a structure that she cannot overview or affect, or as someone who has agency and manipulates, navigates and changes to realize herself. In the first position, social relationships are not important, and the individual is alienated from herself and her work. In the other position, relationships are central, and the individual is the one who creates the production conditions. The artist is someone who is in the more active position, where maintaining relations and communication is central to the work.

According to Chris Mathieu, the editor of an anthology of research on creative industries, particular features of the art field make for distinct conditions for artistic production.²¹ First, there are no real permanent jobs, but a life-long competition in which the rules are con-

stantly changed. Moreover, it is not a competition on an open market; instead, participation is determined by the relationships you have, and how close or far there are work opportunities in the production network of relationships. The judges of the competition are colleagues, not some faceless market. The competition is not only individual, but can be seen as a team sport where there is uncertainty about who your partners are. Here, everyone gains if someone in the network is successful, and everyone is pulled down if someone does not succeed. A great deal of time is thus spent not only on making artistic things, but on behaving as an artist and being in places artists are, to be present when there is a new market opportunity.

However, it is not only artists of various types who operate in an uncertain and ever-changing labor market, or who are constantly forced to transform and express their identity to be recognized. Having a lifelong permanent job is increasingly scarce, and social skills are in demand in all areas.²² Promoting a personal brand in the form of taste, education and social relations is thus central to every career in an insecure and flexible labor market, not just in the creative sector. Here you can see the popularity of networks like LinkedIn and Facebook as a general expression of the need to maintain a personal brand and many social relationships.²³

These networks are not only central to the individual's ability to act as producer and to navigate an uncertain job market. They are also important channels for the individual as consumer when the abundance of information increasingly makes us rely on recommendations from people we have a personal relationship with.

Social networks in combination with crowd funding create a situation where we are linking our social being to economic investment, thus creating direct personal relationships between producer and consumer, in which the consumer is also co-producer.

6. THE AFFECT MACHINE

When this networked social being is paired with economic investment the division between the private and the public sphere is disrupted. The private sphere usually consists of members of a legal statutory family, which for the family members means mutual rights and obligations enshrined in law but also in norms. The public sphere is typically composed of adults that compete within a market, where the production of goods and services is performed on a commercial basis. This market is maintained and governed by collective institutions that dictate the rules of participation. Here, a collective of individuals can come together in companies in which the market temporarily does not apply, but where everyone instead collaborates for the collective good. There is also a capital market, where companies' profits for surplus production can be used for investments in new businesses.

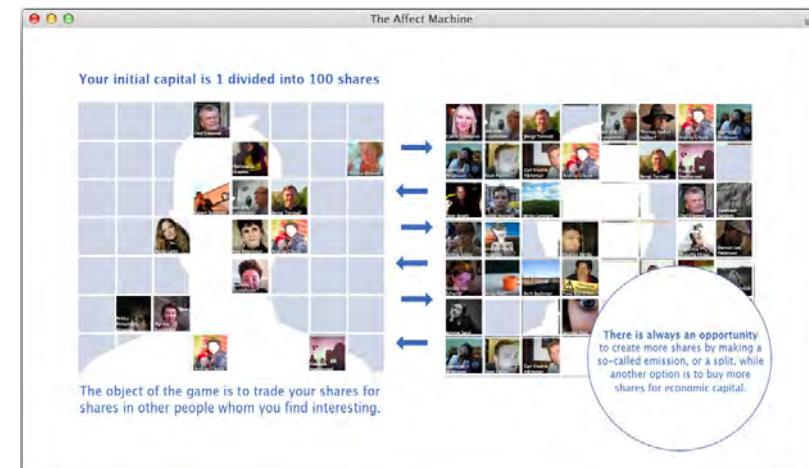
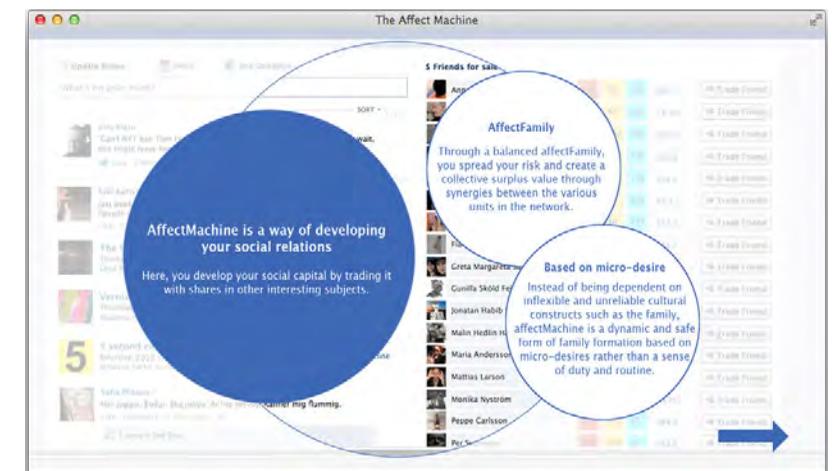
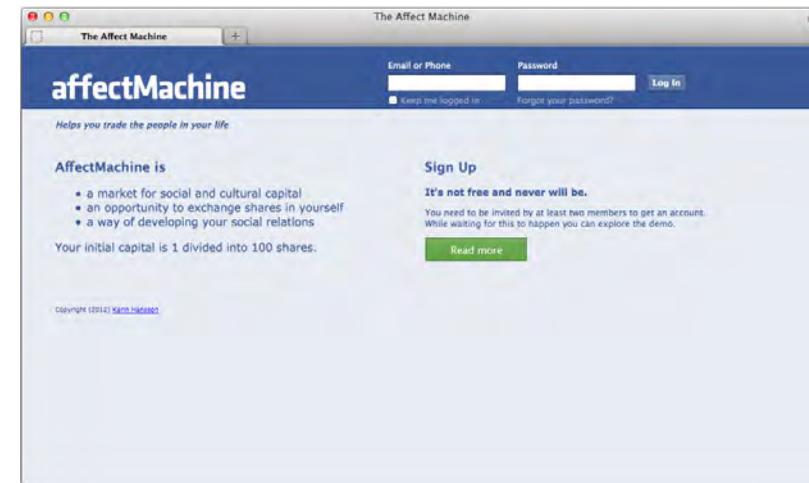
Naturally, there is a fuzzy border between the private and the public sector, which is in constant negotiation. But must activity be either private or public? What if, as Pappenheim proposes above, we unite the private with the public? In order to examine what such a system might look like in practice, I have in the project *The Affect Machine* formulated a marketplace for social relations by combining the principles for trading shares with those of a digital social network (see figure 1-X). Here you can develop your social capital by acquiring shares in interesting subjects. Instead of being dependent on inflexible and unreliable bourgeois constructions like the family, *The Affect Machine* is a dynamic and much safer way of creating a family that is built on micro-desire rather than a sense of duty and routine. With a carefully composed Affect Family, you spread your risks and create surplus value, thanks to synergies between different shares in the network.

If I am a corporation and want new capital, I can divide the company with a share issue, and sell ownership on to those who are interested. If I want to invest in a corporation, I must wait until the shares are for sale on the open stock market. If, as a corporation, I need more capital, I can issue new shares; that is, splitting the company into even smaller parts in the hope that more people will want to invest.

On the other hand, a digital social network is about collecting and developing social relationships in a workable way. At best, this network formalizes contacts with a group of people I like and trust in one way or another. This digital platform can facilitate my communication with this group, and be used as a way to develop and deepen the relationship by exchanging information. In this way, you can, for example, easily get hold of someone who can help out with something, or knows where to find a certain type of information.

There are interesting similarities in the structuring of a corporation with the structuring of a digital social network. But while one is based on legally viable contracts between people that do not need to know each other, the second is built on relationships between people who know each other and which have no legal validity. If we combine the idea of a corporation with a digital social network, this would open up a legal opportunity for people to act as a corporation on a social market.

Suppose that each player initially has 100 shares. They may exchange these shares for shares of other people, provided that both parties are interested. In this way social networks are established that are legally valid and cannot be waived without compensation. Unlike in a social network, the relationship does not need to be exactly reciprocal; you can exchange shares with people who have not exactly reciprocal shares in you, so the value of different people's shares will shift. The sum of your network is your total capital, and this capital increases or decreases depending on how well the individuals in your network perform. If I do not feel good about a relationship with someone in my network, I can either try to exchange my shares if possible, without too much loss of value, or work on improving the relationship, thus strengthening my social capital. Likewise, it is in my interest to promote my social network and help my relationships with their needs. Just like in a family, you simply help each other, without thinking about exactly what you get out of it all, but safe in the knowledge that a long-lived loyalty is being inculcated, in part through a binding legal contract. Unlike a family, which usually is not very large, and in practice can be quite unreliable, here risk is spread across a larger number of people. In practice, this legal institution can replace and merge institutions



Figures 1, 2 & 3. *The Affect Machine*, Karin Hansson, 2012. Web page, <http://affectmachine.org/>. © Karin Hansson, 2012. Used with permission.

that are now divided between a private and a public sphere, and thus create a legal support for the development of a communist society. Here, maintaining and developing relations are central to the work, and the individual navigates and changes the structure to realize herself.

This model shows how, by joining the functions in a capitalist institution with the functions in a digital social network, we can sketch a form of how the private and public sectors can approach each other.

7. CONCLUSION: AN EMBRYO OF A COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In practice, a lot of institutions, laws and norms need to be recompiled in order to legally and socially replace the current system of norms and laws with ones that better reflects the dynamic organization of the network society. But it is possible to see phenomena such as digital social networks and crowd funding as an embryo of a communist society in which all are bound together in mutual economic and social relations. Here we cannot, of course, ignore all those without the possibility of operating on digital networks, and those who produce the wealth that makes this sector possible. But the examples in this article show how other people besides artists can set personal fulfillment as their objective before economic profit, and how crowd funding and digital social networks can support people's active role as producers and consumers.

Here technology may be a way to allow for the extension of the social network to more than the biological family and closest friends, and the means that bring the social/private and economic/public sectors closer together. Communications technology brings about the possibility of reducing the alienation between producer and consumer by establishing direct links without any tangible intermediary. The product can be seen as an expression of the talent of the producer and the needs of the consumer, but also as an act of recognition between humans, that is, a social relationship. Information and communication technology here may reduce the need for the mediation of commodities as symbolic capital like fashion or other status

symbols as a way of signaling group affiliation and hierarchy will become less important, thus reducing the need for commodities and the exploitation of natural resources.

To translate this into Marx's terminology, instead of alienation, stronger relationships are created:

- » The relationships between the producer and the consumer. Instead of producing work for a wage, a direct relation is produced to another person.
- » The relationship between the producer and the product of the work. As the product and the producer is one, the artist/artwork is one, and the producer has total control over her own self-image and can feel proud of the image created.
- » The relationship with herself. When production is mainly about realizing oneself and creating one's own market, the worker is no longer a stranger to herself.
- » Relationships between workers. By not competing for the salary, but working together for the common network that everyone depends on, relationships are strengthened.

In this perspective no one can own anyone else's work, or even their own work, as their own subject is dependent on all the others, and cannot therefore exist outside of this relationship:

Our products would be so many mirrors in which we saw reflected our essential nature. This relationship would moreover be reciprocal; what occurs on my side has also to occur on yours. ²⁴ ■

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ART AS PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY

KARIN HANSSON

Keywords

Artistic research, practice based research, participatory methodology, urban planning, Husby

Summary

While Art is often defined in opposition to Science, artistic research is often legitimized by a positivistic classical scientific paradigm. For example the artist as scientist was highlighted in 2012 year's Documenta – one of the most important exhibitions of contemporary art. In contrast to this position, I intend to show the fruitfulness in positioning art in a feminist, qualitative-oriented research tradition.

An important point here is the definition of an artistic methodology, where art is a reflective process and where artistic work is both means and goal. This includes the use of artistic practices to break the own pre-understanding of a phenomenon. It is the personal motive that determines what is relevant, while this perspective is exposed to critical scrutiny.

Based on this, I discuss how art can be described as a participatory methodology, and use a research project in urban planning and information and communication technology as an example. Here, the art project functioned as a creative and critical room that created a greater understanding of the significance of discursive practices and the importance of reviewing the information that is the foundation of how we formulate the research problems. The most significant conclusion is that artistic research in this sense may well be, and probably should be, an important part of a scientific research and is a prerequisite for scientific development.

Diskussionerna kring konstnärlig versus vetenskaplig forskning hamnar ofta i skillnadsfixeringens stillestånd. Utifrån Husby-projektet *Performing the common* väljer Karin Hansson istället att undersöka konstens möjligheter som del av en feministisk och kvalitativ forskningstradition.

KONST SOM DELTAGANDE METODOLOGI

KARIN HANSSON

Introduktion

En procession av människor bär på en bil av trä i full skala. Färden går från konsthallen i kanten av Järvafältet genom Husby via en av bilvägarna. Då och då stannar man för att betrakta något och en guide berättar om platsen och dess historia. Tåget går vidare och vid en gångbro bär man upp bilen till den upphöjda gatunivån där gångtrafikanter vistas. Trafiken i Husby är separerad och guiden berättar att en av de planerade åtgärderna för att utveckla orten är att ta bort trafiksepareringen och blanda bilar och människor på samma sätt som i innerstan. Träbilen lyfts med gemensamma krafter upp på gångvägen och processionen går vidare. Nu blir det trångt, det pågår festival i Husbys intima centrum och det är tjockt med människor och matstånd. För att komma igenom folkmassan skriker guiden: "Ge plats åt bilen. Ge plats åt bilen!" Med stor möda, skratt och en del förvirring släpps bilen igenom festivalpubliken. Processionen går vidare genom centrum och den guidade turen avslutas utanför konsthallen. Här på grusplanen placeras bilen på samma plats som någon brände upp en riktig bil tidigare under sommaren. En av konstnärerna sätter eld på träbilen och när brasan falnar efter några timmar grillar vi vår middag över glöden.

Denna performance av Nomedas och Gediminas Urbonas med Giacomo Castagnola med flera var en del av en konstnärlig undersökning av uppfattningar om "Husby", där beskrivningar av platsen Husby i norra Stockholm och liknande platser i världen var i fokus.¹ Konstprojektet *Performing the Common* som pågick mellan 2010 och 2012 med 15-talet deltagande konstnärer var del av ett större forskningsprojekt vid Data- och systemvetenskapliga institutionen vid Stockholms universitet och avdelningen för samhällsplanering vid KTH, i ett



Nomeda och Gediminas Urbonas med Giacomo Castagnola med flera: *Husby Channel, Performing the Common* 2012. Foto: Åsa Andersson Broms.

samarbete med Kungliga konsthögskolan i Stockholm. Projektet var initierat av mig som en del i mitt avhandlingsarbete och utvecklades i samarbete med de deltagande konstnärerna och forskarna.

Nomeda och Gediminas Urbonas och deras studenter utgick i sitt bidrag till projektet från sina egna upplevelser av platsen via bilder, interventioner, samtal och studiebesök, och formulerade denna erfarenhet i en guidad tur, bilbränning och måltid. Här blandades fiktiva berättelser med affirmationer och överdrifter i en sorts konkretisering av en dröm om förorten. En dröm där bilden av bilar som brinner blandades med samhällsutopier om gemenskap. Precis som konflikterna i Husby på grund av dyrare bostäder och nedskärningar i samhällsservicen har stärkt en lokal gemenskap, fungerade den rituellt

brinnande bilen som spis och samlingsplats. Den guidade turen skapade en berättelse som band ihop motsägelsefulla bilder av platsen och gjorde oss som åskådare till turister i ett samhällssystem i förändring.

Detta är konst för mig: Genom att utifrån min position i rummet, gestalta situationen som jag upplever den, förtydligar jag min position och mitt perspektiv och möjliggör ett samtal med andra om de rum vi delar. Det är enkelt men väldigt svårt. Alla som har försökt att måla ett landskap vet vad jag menar. För vad är egentligen ett landskap, och hur kan jag översätta mina sinnens förnimmelser till uttryck som ska kunna förstås av andra? Hur målar jag ett landskap som beskriver människors idéer, relationer och kommunikationsmönster? Landskapet "Husby" i exemplet ovan är inte bara en utan flera motsägelsefulla

bilder sammansatta av fragment från olika källor – samtal, mediebilder, drömmar, rykten och enskilda händelser.

Hur kan denna komplexa verklighet förstås och beskrivas? För mig är gestaltandet ett sätt att förstå min egen upplevelse av världen, att utveckla ett språk för att dela denna bild med andra, för att på så sätt möjliggöra en kollektiv kunskapsutveckling som vidgar min förståelse av fenomenet ytterligare. Konst handlar i detta perspektiv om en grundläggande undersökning av den egna perceptionen och deltagande metoder för att ständigt destabilisera den egna världsbilden med hjälp av andra. Därför är konst en nödvändig förutsättning för vetenskaplig utveckling.

Innan jag utvecklar mina tankar om konstens metodologi kan det vara bra att diskutera idéer om konst och vetenskap. Konst och vetenskap är två värdeladdade ord och ibland skymmer de sikten för vad jag vill säga. Det är som att bära omkring på ett stort otympligt paket, tyngt av idéer om konst och vetenskap som alla har starka känslor för. Tillsammans, som i begreppet ”konstnärlig forskning”, blir det helt enkelt för mycket att bära.

Ambitionen i det följande är inte heller att definiera eller ensam bära begreppet konstnärlig forskning. Vad jag vill göra inledningsvis är att ge exempel på hur idéer om konst och konstnärlig forskning skapas i förhållande till idéer om vetenskap. Vidare beskriver jag en konstnärlig metodologi och ger exempel från ett konst- och forskningsprojekt. Avslutningsvis diskuterar jag hur man kan se konst som en position inom en deltagande forskningspraktik.

Konstnär i ett vetenskapligt rum

2009 påbörjade jag Stockholms universitets forskarutbildning, med Data- och systemvetenskap som huvudämne och i samarbete med Kungliga Konsthögskolan i Stockholm. Som konstnär inom detta vetenskapliga rum definieras jag ofta som ovetenskaplig – som någon som genom sin identitet definierar vad vetenskap *inte* är. Detta sker särskilt i mötet med yngre forskare och studenter som håller på att forma sin vetenskapliga identitet. Denna inställning kan tyckas föråldrad efter decennier av kritik mot en objektivistisk kunskapssyn, inte minst inom en feministisk tanketradition företrädd av exempelvis Sandra Harding och Donna Haraway.² Men dikotomin mellan konst och vetenskap är en lätt reproducerad uppfattning som fortfarande dominerar. Vetenskapsfilosofer som Karl Popper och Hans Reichenback har ofta använt just konsten som negation till begreppet vetenskap:

Det är tydligt att utan den [vetenskapens princip], skulle vetenskapen inte längre ha rätt att särskilja sina teorier från fantasifulla och godtyckliga skapelser från poetens själ.³

Alltså, även om Reichenbach enligt Popper inte har hittat definitionen på vetenskaplighet, vet han att *vetenskap inte bara är konst*. Popper definierar också tydligt ut konstnärlighet och all form av kreativitet från vetenskapens rum.⁴ För Popper är *allt* det som föregår teorin ovetenskapligt; alla ingivelser, idéer, erfarenheter eller moment av psykologiserande som utgör grunden för det som uttrycks i en teori.

Enligt vetenskapsfilosofen Sandra Harding har diskussionerna om vetenskap historiskt sett inte bara handlat om hur vetenskap ska definieras utan även om vilka grupper av människor som kan vara vetenskapliga och vilka som inte är tillräckligt kapabla att vara objektiva, utan är för känslolösa, som till exempel kvinnor, svarta eller konstnärer.⁵ Vetenskapshistorikern Lorraine Daston pekar i en artikel om objektivitetsbegreppet på hur vetenskapens etos historiskt sett inte bara handlar om att vara objektiv till skillnad från konstnärens subjektiva perspektiv, utan att det även handlar om att vara en anonym person i ett forskarkollektiv, där individens särskildhet ska skalas av och disciplineras in en praktik som skapar en perspektivlös objektivitet.⁶ Detta citat från fysiologen Claud Bernard sammanfattar väl denna positionering versus konsten: "Konsten är jag; vetenskapen är vi."⁷

Fast dessa föreställningar om vetenskap inte är representativa för vad forskare gör i praktiken idag, så menar Daston att de fortfarande är viktiga i forskarens identitetsbygge, och inte minst i hur vetenskapen legitimeras i samhället i stort.⁸ Det kan ses som ett slags trossystem, där idén om

forskarens objektivitet och utbytbart är en viktig trossats.

Tro är också viktigt inom konsten enligt konstsociologer som Pierre Bourdieu och Natalie Heinrich, tron på det särskilda, obegripliga som inte går att kopiera.⁹ I detta trossystem är konstnären ett sorts helgon som förkroppsligar en tro på det unikt mänskliga vi alla är bärare av.¹⁰

När konstnären blir forskare

Vad händer då när konstnären blir forskare? Hur förhåller sig det unga fältet konstnärlig forskning till idéer om vetenskap? Konstvetaren Marta Edling har i sin studie av svenska konsthögskolor visat hur diskussionen om vad konstnärlig forskning ska innebära har pågått i Sverige sedan högskolereformen på 70-talet.¹¹ Enligt konstsociologin har konstnärsrollen och konstsynen alltid förändrats och definierats olika från en tidsålder till en annan.¹² Bourdieu har visat att fältet är i ständig omförhandling, bland annat på grund av förändrade ekonomiska villkor.¹³ Skapandet av ekonomiska institutioner som stödjer ett konstnärligt forskningsfält kommer följaktligen också att förändra synen på konstnären.

Jag är själv mitt i denna förändringsprocess som en av de bildkonstnärer som håller på att akademiseras. Konkret handlar det om att konstutbildningen i Sverige instrumentaliseras och görs mer transparent för studenterna, bland annat för att bli jämförbar internationellt. Detta pågår även i andra europeiska länder som en del i den så kallade Bologna-processen och diskussionen om konstnärlig forskning i Sverige speglar i stort den i övriga Europa.¹⁴ En

stor del av diskussionen om konstnärlig forskning tar just nu år 2013 också plats i denna världsdal om man räknar antalet konferenser på temat. Som en del av internationaliseringen av konstutbildningen i Sverige läggs en forskarnivå på toppen av en kandidat- och masterutbildning, vilket öppnar upp för tydligare karriärvägar inom utbildningsväsendet. Tidigare meriterades lärare inom konsthögskoleutbildning främst på sina konstnärliga meriter, det vill säga i förhållande till sina framgångar inom konstens fält i stort. Genom skapandet av en forskarnivå, och avsättande av medel avsedda för konstnärlig forskning, skapas ett nytt konstnärligt fält eller subfält. Debatten kring detta är inte oväntat livlig. Striderna om vad som ska definieras som konstnärlig forskning, och inte bara som konst, inbegriper alla på fältet och inte bara de som direkt verkar inom högskoleutbildningen. I Sverige har den kanske viktigaste striden handlat om forskarutbildningen ska ske på en vetenskaplig eller konstnärlig grund. 2010 infördes konstnärliga examina på forskarnivå och idag har Göteborgs universitet, Lunds universitet och Högskolan i Borås tillstånd att utfärda examina. Men flera konstnärliga eller praktikbaserade doktorandutbildningar ges fortfarande inom ramen för den generella forskarutbildningen.

Att beskriva den dominerande diskursen om konstnärlig forskning låter sig därför inte helt enkelt göras. I ett intersektionellt forskningsperspektiv framhålls att diskurser struktureras och upprätthålls genom hierarkiserande skillnadsskapanden.¹⁵ För att komma åt en beskrivning av den

dominerande diskursen i det svenska sammanhanget kan därför en metod vara att titta på beskrivningar av vad den konstnärliga forskningen definieras i skillnad mot. Den definition av konst som är gemensam

Men paradoxalt nog är det gärna samarbeten med naturvetenskap som lyfts fram som exempel på konstnärlig forskning.

för diskursen i de olika konstnärliga forskarsammanhang jag vistats i de senaste tre åren (2009–2012) kan också sammanfattas i en enkel negation: *konst är inte som vetenskap*. Denna uppfattning repeteras i allt från diskussioner med studenter på Kungl. Konsthögskolan i Stockholm, till seminarier och konferenser om konstnärlig forskning med företrädare för högre konstnärliga utbildningar i Norra Europa, till diskussioner med andra konstnärskollegor. Alltså en omkastning av Poppers traditionella definition av vetenskap, som något som inte är som konst. En viktig del av konstens identitet i dessa sammanhang är alltså att inte vara som vetenskap. Den vetenskap man inte är, är en populär idé om vetenskap som står för rationalitet, instrumentalisering av kunskap och ett ignorera av individens särskildhet till förmån för det gemensamma och generella. Det är alltså en vetenskap, definierad utifrån en snävt positivistisk vetenskapssyn som främst associeras till naturvetenskapen.

Men paradoxalt nog är det gärna samarbeten med naturvetenskap som lyfts fram som exempel på konstnärlig forskning i till

exempel tidskrifter som *Leonardo* som publicerar artiklar om konst, teknik och vetenskap.¹⁶ På den senaste Documenta, den stora internationella utställningen för samtidskonst som tar plats i Frankfurt vart femte år, lyfte man år 2012 fram exempel på naturvetenskapsmän (med betoning på män) som även verkat som bildkonstnärer, och argumenterade genom salar fyllda av modellstudier och landskapsmålningar, för likheten med konstens traditionella undersökande seendepraktiker med naturvetenskapsmannens undersökningar av kroppar och annan natur.¹⁷

Konstens koppling till det materiella och kroppsliga är också något som betonas i Vetenskapsrådets senaste publikation om konstnärlig forskning och utvecklingsarbete, där ämnet är dokumentation.¹⁸ Denna tidskrift är viktig i det svenska sammanhanget då man här både samlar exempel på vad man tycker platsar som konstnärlig forskning och publicerar rapporter från den konstnärliga forskning Vetenskapsrådet har godkänt och finansierat.

Sammanfattningsvis ger artiklarna här en bild av en konstnärlig forskning som betonar att konstnärlighet är något särskilt och speciellt och som går förlorat i mötet med den akademiska textbaserade kunskapsformen. Samtidigt används uttryck som bevis, experiment och hypotes. Det hela framstår som en sorts performance, där man skapar legitimitet genom att uppträda som ”vetenskaplig” genom att låna begrepp och bilder från en populärvetenskaplig symbolvärld. Med det menar jag inte att den underliggande kunskapsprocessen är ytlig eller spelad, utan snarare att man använder den populärvetenskapliga vetenskapsrekvisitan som ett sätt att särskilja det man gör från annan konstnärlig praktik och visa att man ser på sin konst som en sorts forskning.

Alltså, samtidigt som man inom det unga konstnärliga forskningsfältet använder positivistiskt laddade vetenskapliga uttryck, reproduceras idéer om konstens särskildhet och annorlundahet i förhållande till en negativt definierad, objektivistiskt anstruken vetenskaplig forskning.

Det finns flera problem med denna performativt skapade vetenskapsroll och hävdandet av en dikotomi mellan konst och vetenskap, praktik och teori. I denna betoning av skillnaden mellan konst och vetenskap skymms till exempel maktskillnader mellan olika konstnärliga forskare. Därför är det viktigt att till exempel uppmärksamma vilka sorts kroppar som passar i rollen som den konstnärlige forskaren.

Den dominerande diskursen riskerar också att låsa in den konstnärliga forskningspraktiken i ett isolerat rum, utan kontakt med forskningssamhället i stort. Det finns så klart ett behov att utveckla den egna forskningspraktiken i en empatisk sinnad omgivning, utan att allt som görs ifrågasätts av en dominerande vetenskaplig diskurs. Men istället för att påstå att konsten är något helt annat än

vetenskap, och följaktligen att den konstnärliga forskningen är något helt annat än den vetenskapliga, vill jag ta fasta på likheterna. Donna Haraway talar till exempel om vetenskapsgörandets kulturella uttryck som "narrative practices" som genom användningen av vissa vokabulärer och praktiker berättar historier om "objektivitet".¹⁹ I detta perspektiv är också vetenskaplig forskning en sorts konst.

Det är konst då det handlar om att kunna föreställa sig något tidigare okänt och gestalta detta på ett sätt som gör att det går att samtala med andra om det. Det är konst då det är indelat i olika genrer, där legitimitet bland annat skapas genom att likna och referera till annan forskning inom genren. Det är konst då det i hög grad styrs av mode och makt. Med detta menar jag, i likhet med feministiska vetenskapsteoretiker, att vi alla för att alls kunna se bortom våra egna perspektiv måste erkänna oss själva och andra som särskilda och identitetsskapande subjekt.²⁰ Här har bildkonsten utvecklade metoder för självreflexion som forskarsamhället väl behöver.

I en konstnärlig metodologi är den egna upplevelsen central

Hur kan man då beskriva en konstnärlig metodologi utan att basera denna beskrivning på idén om att konst *inte* är vetenskap? Jag väljer här att använda begreppet metodologi, inte i meningen användning av särskilda konstnärliga metoder som bild, musik, foto, magdans eller etsningar, utan i betydelsen förhållningssätt, alltså vilket syfte man har med metoden och hur man förhåller sig till resultatet. Det finns

mängder med forskare som använder konstnärliga metoder som ett sätt att engagera informanter.²¹ Detta gör det inte till konst eller konstnärlig forskning. Det specifika med en konstnärlig *metodologi* menar jag är att utgångspunkten inte bara är andras upplevelser av ett fenomen, utan att det är den egna upplevelsen som är central. Syftet är att förstå denna upplevelse genom att engagera andra i den och koppla det personligt upplevda fenomenet till övergripande strukturer.

Om man ser på det konstnärliga forskningsfält som växt sig starkare främst i Europa de senaste decennierna i takt med akademiseringen av konstutbildningen, så finns ingen enhetlig konstnärlig metodologi i betydelsen förhållningssätt. Istället betonas metoderna och formerna, det vill säga att de är konstnärliga och praktikbaserade, att utföraren är konstnär och att resultatet är konstnärligt.²² Detta är inte heller underligt, då utgångspunkten för forskningen är den högre konstutbildningen. Vem som är konstnär och vad som är konst diskuteras följaktligen inte, utan beskrivs genom ett underliggande cirkelresonemang; En konstnär är någon som gör konst, och konst är något som görs av en konstnär. Konstnärlig forskning handlar i denna bemärkelse om forskning som utvecklar det konstnärliga fältet, och som alltså hjälper konstnärer att utveckla sin konst. Alla som är verksamma inom konstnärlig forskning håller inte med om detta, och det finns många röster som betonar att konstnärlig forskning även kan bidra till vetenskapssamhället i stort. Christopher Frayling ifrågasätter till exempel dikotomin

praktik och teori, och framhåller att både konst och vetenskap är något praktiskt.²³ Ofta framhålls konstens kreativa praktiker och kritiska potential som värdefulla

Mika Hannula beskriver också konst som en "passionerat" deltagande praktik.

i ett vetenskapligt rum.²⁴ Michael Biggs och Henrik Karlsson föreslår att konstens roll inom vetenskapen är att ifrågasätta den inom akademien dominerande kunskapsmodellen.²⁵ Mika Hannula betonar betydelsen av ett fristående konstnärligt forskningsfält men positionerar samtidigt konsten inom ett kvalitativt forskningsparadigm, och framhåller konstens reflektiva praktiker och betoning av det personligt situerade.²⁶

Självreflexion är så klart något som förekommer på alla områden, inte minst betonas vikten av reflexion inom kvalitativ metodologi som ett sätt för forskare att få syn på och synliggöra sina egna bevekelsegrunder och möjliga särintressen.²⁷ Inom en modernistiskt präglad konstutbildning är självreflexion inte bara viktigt utan helt centralt. Här är självreflexion det som bestämmer allt, det som avgör vad som är intressant, förklarar vad som görs och är anledningen till det som görs.

Många av texterna om konstnärlig forskning betonar konstens essens och materialitet, till skillnad från akademins textbaserade framställningsformer.²⁸ Jag vänder mig mot denna form av essentialisering av konst. Bildkonst är i bästa fall utveckling av

språk, och inte nödvändigtvis något annat än en text. Tvärtom handlar konst om att delta aktivt i en rörlig samtid konstruerad och ständigt rekonstruerad av mänskligt skapade texter, symboler och bilder. Jag menar att alla typer av gestaltningar (som till exempel denna text), är bristfälliga, de kan i bästa fall fånga en bråkdel av det komplexa som finns att uttrycka eller ta intryck av. Att materialisera tankar, och tänka genom att göra, handlar för mig om att göra och testa teorier och modeller, där gestaltningen utvecklar teorierna i en iterativ process där teori och praktik är ett.

En konstnärlig metodologi kan med fördel placeras inom en kvalitativt orienterad forskningspraktik. Med kvalitativt menar jag ett intresse för variation, komplexitet och det som avviker från mönstret, det enskilda och särskilda, men också kopplingen mellan denna mikronivå och strukturerande faktorer. Utgångspunkt är att vi kommer att hitta något vi inte redan visste, men för att detta ska kunna hända måste vi vara lyhörda och öppna för vad som sker i processen.

Denna kvalitativa hållning innebär att forskarens position är central, då informationen definieras och tolkas genom forskarens erfarenhet. Feministiska forskare betonar således vikten av "situerad kunskap".²⁹ Här passar en konstnärlig metodologi väl in, alltså ett förhållningssätt till kunskapsproduktion där konsten är en reflexiv process som använder konstnärliga arbeten som medel för att förstå sig själv och på så sätt sin omvärld.

Mika Hannula beskriver också konst som en "passionerat" deltagande praktik.

Som något vars främsta syfte är att kommunicera med andra.³⁰ I detta perspektiv är konst en dialogform, en deltagande metodologi. Med konst som deltagande menar jag inte bara så kallad deltagande konst, utan allt som ryms inom konstbegreppet. I deltagande konst är publiken engagerad direkt i den kreativa processen, som aktör eller medskapare.³¹ Andra tolkningar och benämningar på denna typ av konst är social engagerande konst, community art, dialogbaserad konst, relationell estetik, eller en konst som konverserar, beroende på vilka aspekter av deltagande som avses.³² Konsthistorikern Grant Kester föreslår termen "dialogisk konst" som en konst som är förankrad i ett historiskt och socialt sammanhang.³³ Konstnären är här i en kollaborativ dialog med sammanhanget, som också ifrågasätter konstnärens auktoritet. Konstnärens subjektiva upplevelse tonas ned till förmån för konstnären som moderator, och konsten ses som en plattform för diskussion snarare än ett uttryck för en persons upplevelse. Jag vill dock helst inte betona denna uppdelning mellan deltagande konst och icke-deltagande, gemensamma upplevelser och enskilda personers. En traditionell målare engagerar sig också med sin omgivning och tar intryck från samtiden. Beträktaren av verket deltar också i skapandet genom sin särskilda läsning. Konst som använder mer traditionella uttryck kan också upplevas mindre skrämmande och mer gripbar för en allmänhet som ibland känner sig obekvämt i den relationella estetikens öppna rum.

När jag betonar att konst är en deltagande

metod, menar jag inte att det måste handla om så kallad deltagande eller interaktiv konst där konstverket utvecklas i samarbete med en grupp deltagare. Min poäng är att det faktiskt är konstnärens enskilda subjektposition som möjliggör en vidare dialog med den situation som utforskas. Om forskaren/konstnären är en människa med engagemang, tydliga åsikter och uttrycksförmåga går hon att möta och säga emot. Till skillnad från vanliga forskningsresultat kommuniceras konstnärens resultat mer direkt som en reaktion på situationen och skapar förutsättningen för vidare dialog. Här kan det enskilda konstverket vara startpunkten för denna dialog, eller dialogen kan starta tidigare i själva arbetsprocessen.

Att skapa koncentrerad uppmärksamhet

Konstnärlig metodologi handlar alltså inte om en särskild genre, eller ett särskilt material, färg eller form. Både vad som anses vara ett konstverk och vad som anses vara konstnärliga material skiljer sig åt från ett sammanhang till ett annat. För femhundra år sedan handlade konst främst om hantverket, att vara skicklig på att hantera färg och form.³⁴ Idag är hantverk fortfarande viktigt, men det handlar inte bara om att skapa objekt utan även att ha teoretiska färdigheter. Utbildningen i konst på en västerländsk konsthögskola handlar till exempel både om att ha förmågan att gestalta något och att sätta detta i ett vidare konstteoretiskt sammanhang. Det är alltså svårt att tala om någon specifik konstnärlig metod. I grunden handlar det om ett konstnärligt förhållningssätt. Här är själva

konstbegreppet i sig ett viktigt verktyg, alltså den kollektiva uppfattningen att konst är något viktigt och speciellt som förtjänar extra uppmärksamhet. Konst innebär att göra fenomen viktiga, särskilda och speciella, och på så sätt skapa en mer koncentrerad uppmärksamhet för det man vill tala om. Här är konstnärens roll också viktig och själva mytbildningen kring konstnären och verket, samt alla andra verk i konsthistorien, är del av verket. Konst handlar alltså om att skapa ett sammanhang som gör konsten trovärdig som konst, och som laddar konstobjektet med olika berättelser.

Inom andra forskningsfält kan konstnärliga metoder som måleri eller teckning ses som en sorts kvalitativa metoder.³⁵ Den konstnärliga metodologi som genomsyrar de konstnärliga praktikerna utgår inte så mycket från en viss genre eller metod utan från en syn på konst som en reflekterande process där konstverken är en delmängd i konstnärens diskurs, snarare än mål i sig. De metoder som används för att få till stånd den genom konstverket medierade berättelsen handlar här inte främst om färg eller material, utan om metoder för att leka med normer och konventioner, och olika sätt att granska de egna föreställningarna.

Inom konsten är brott mot normen en tradition. Olika metoder för att lura den egna perceptionen är till exempel vanliga. Judith Butler argumenterar för att kulturell förändring kommer ur vår förmåga att undergräva normer genom att skeva språket så det svarar bättre mot icke-etablerade strukturer.³⁶ Förutsättningen för detta normöverskridande är distans och ett visst

oberoende i förhållande till dominerande bekräftelsestrukturer, alltså en förmåga att finnas till utan bekräftelse. Konstnärsidentiteten är traditionellt en position som – i likhet med forskaridentiteten – placerar sig utanför det dominerande sociala sammanhanget och därför erbjuder en möjlighet att ifrågasätta det som tas för givet i detta sammanhang. Bekräftelse söks istället från andra konstnärer som också definierar sig som utanför och annorlunda, och till och med gjort normöverskridandet till centrum för sin gemenskap. Konst kan alltså ses som en praktik som leker med uttryck för dominerande uppfattningar och normer och på så sätt ”queerar” dessa diskursiva praktiker och möjliggör fler läsningar. Vanliga kreativa metoder inom bildkonsten är till exempel praktiker som att byta plats på olika föremål, färger, genus, eller att identifiera vad som inte sägs i en bild. Liknelser och metaforer kan också vara sätt att utveckla idéer och bilder. Olika tekniker, perspektiv eller skärpedjup, hjälper oss att förändra den egna föreställningen om hur verkligheten blir till.

Ett konstprojekt som form för en tematisk undersökning

Performanceverket med bil-processionen av Urbonas med flera som jag tog upp inledningsvis var en del av konstutställningen *Föreställningen om det gemensamma* som tog plats i och omkring Husby konsthall och Moderna Museet i Stockholm sommaren 2012.³⁷ Här diskuterades förutsättningarna för gemenskap utifrån platsen Rinkeby-Kista genom femton konstnärliga arbeten som belyste temat från olika konstnärliga

perspektiv. De inbjudna konstnärerna deltog i egenskap av experter, för att de är erfarna konstnärer och särskilda personer och att de tidigare har forskat om liknande frågor. Vid valet av konstnärer var ambitionen också att skapa en mångfald av konstnärliga arbetssätt och uttryck för att betona innehållet och processen i det konstnärliga arbetet istället för formen. Förutom konstnärer deltog forskare från Data- och systemvetenskapen (DSV) vid Stockholms universitet och från avdelningen för Urbana och regionala studier vid Kungliga tekniska högskolan (KTH), samt studenter från Kungl. Konsthögskolan. Utställningen var en del av Multimodal Communication for Participatory Planning and Decision Analysis: Tools and Process Models, ett treårigt forskningsprojekt om stadsplanering och informations- och kommunikationsteknik.³⁸ Här fungerade konstprojektet som ett sätt att utforska platsen och dess kommunikationsmönster, samt problematisera idéer om rum, offentlighet, demokrati och gemenskap. Vår ambition var också att knyta ihop platsen med andra platser globalt, genom att bjuda in konstnärer från orter med liknande förändringsprocesser, platser där den lokala gemenskapen fragmenteras och omvandlas genom globalisering och nedmontering av välfärdsstaten.

Förändringar av det offentliga rummet diskuteras livligt på den internationella konstscenen.³⁹ Här fick vi en möjlighet att sätta denna kritiska diskussion i arbete i en förändringsprocess på kommunnivå. Vi utgick i arbetet från ett antagande om att kommunikationssystemen vi använder för att organisera oss är bärare av normer och ideologier. Genom att utforska dessa och genom att förstå hur de samverkar med andra strukturerande faktorer kan vi också experimentera med scenarior där någon del av systemen är utbytt, förflyttat eller överdrivet.

I forskningsprojektet tog vi också fasta på vikten av att ha en mångfald av metoder och uttryck som gärna fick motsäga varandra. Genom konstnärernas olika enskilda projekt skapades en mer komplex, skruvad och mångfacetterad bild av ”problemet” och platsens förutsättningar. Istället för att bara observera platsen, gick vi genom konstprojektet in i en aktiv dialog genom att materialisera våra intryck och slutsatser. Konstprojektet fungerade på så sätt som en deltagande metod och ett publikt rum för de frågor som utkristalliserades. Parallellt med konstprojekten genomfördes också publika seminarier och mer konventionella kvalitativa och kvantitativa undersökningar som sammantaget med konstprojekten gav en bättre förståelse av platsens särskilda kommunikationsstrukturer.

Att på detta sätt placera en konstnärlig undersökning på en bestämd plats och/eller inom ramen för ett särskilt tema, är en vanligt förekommande praktik inom samtidskonsten, för att inte säga en norm. Vad som särskiljer detta konstprojekt från mer curatorstyrda är betoningen av det kollektiva kunskapsgörandet i gruppen konstnärer, en metodik jag utvecklat i tidigare projekt.⁴⁰ I detta projekt har

vi ägnat särskilt lång tid att utveckla detta kunskapsgörande.

Det kollektiva kunskapsgörandet i en grupputställning

I arbetet med konstutställningen tog jag som curator fasta på det kollektiva kunskapsgörandet som tar plats i en grupputställning och försökte på olika sätt stärka detta. I en tematisk utställning går konstnärerna in med sina enskilda perspektiv, men förhåller sig till ett gemensamt tema och ibland gemensamma upplevelser. De enskilda arbetena utvecklas delvis kollektivt genom att konstnärerna träffas regelbundet och reflekterar över arbetet samt delar information. Det kan handla om intressanta texter som berör ämnet, eller praktiska frågor som hur den lokala byråkratin fungerar, eller varför en viss byggnad står där den står. Fastän utställningen i Husby utgick från ett fastslaget tema, utvecklades tematiken genom konstnärernas arbete och reflektion i en dialog mellan olika punkter: konstnärens pågående projekt, den övergripande temadiskussionen, samt de olika strukturer som synliggjordes genom det sammantagna arbetet.

Detta kollektiva arbetssätt har beröringspunkter med så kallat minnesarbete, en kvalitativ feministisk metod där deltagarna kollektivt eller enskilt analyserar egna minnesbilder kring ett ämne.⁴¹ Minnesarbetena liknar i sin feministiska kunskapssyn den konstnärliga metodologin då det handlar om att grunda en förståelse för övergripande samhällsstrukturer i egna personliga erfarenheter. Just därför använde vi i detta projekt ett minnesarbete som metod för att komma in i och utveckla ämnet genom

den kollektiva erfarenheten. Konstnärerna och forskarna från KTH och Stockholms universitet diskuterade här egna erfarenheter av plats och gemenskap för att på så sätt utveckla det gemensamma temat och grunda abstrakta begrepp i självupplevda situationer.

Edge City Talkshow

Begreppen gräns och gränslöshet användes som triggerord för minnesarbetet. Shiva Anourshivani fokuserade här på de informella gränserna mellan orterna Husby och närlägen Kista. I konstprojektet *Edge City Talkshow* arbetade hon vidare med erfarenheter av hur kroppar i det offentliga rummet regleras och definieras av osynliga gränser.⁴² Gränsen mellan Kista och Husby är inte bara en ekonomisk och social gräns. Det handlar även om en gräns mellan arbete och privatliv, produktion och reproduktion. Här placeras Husby i facket ”hem” och Kista i ”arbete”. Dessa positioner är också könade och ålderskategoriserade. I Ester Barinagas etnografiska studie av stadsdelen visas hur den tudelning som finns på orten förstärks genom medias bilder.⁴³ På ena sidan gränsen lever unga, gamla och kvinnor, man är ”invandrare” och tar hand om gamla och barn. På andra sidan vistas lönearbetande män i medelåldern, man är ”nomader” och tillhör en internationell klass. I Husby är man isolerad från Sverige, i Kista har man kontakt med omvärlden. Denna av medierna skapade uppdelning skapar en sorts identitet hos de som bor i området, även om den kanske inte stämmer med fakta. Anourshivani undersöker i sitt verk



Edge City Talk Show av Shiva Anourshivani 2012. Foto: Martin Hultén.

dessa kontraster och gränser genom att skapa ett slags hybrid av de två olika stadsdelarna. Genom att förflytta kontorsrekvisita från Kista till Husbys offentliga rum och använda jargong från en typisk talkshow placeras en välbekant bild till "fel" plats och förtydligar på så sätt kontrasterna genom en konkret situation. Här bjuds lokala kändisar in för att diskutera hur de ser på arbete, "networking" och sitt skrivbord. Värdinnan för programmet samtalar med gästerna på svenska med amerikansk brytning om frågor som klädstil på jobbet, vilka färger man inreder sitt kontor med, och varför man vill sitta högt upp i en skyskrapa. Allting är "fabulous".

Vad är det då konstverket gör i sammanhanget? Vad åstadkommer denna konkretisering av kontraster och sociala gränser? Här är själva materialiseringen av händelsen en viktig kunskapsgörande process, med allt vad detta innebär; bestämma plats, få tillstånd, skriva manus, hitta skådespelare och deltagare, hitta scen och teknisk utrustning, skapa scenografi och kostym; förklara/övertyga alla människor om hur det ska genomföras; ta hand om och redigera materialet; presentera det på en utställning; förklara för den lokala pressen och publiken. Allt detta med en minimal budget vilket innebär att alla deltar för att de blir intresserade och inte heller kan släppa taget innan de får se hur det blir.

Tillblivelsen av verket involverar alltså en mängd människor i utvecklingen och skapar möten, associationer och samband. Att en komplex arbetsprocess skapar nya insikter är så klart inget unikt för konst. Det specifika här är snarare att



Bild 3: *Potemkins kulisser* av Åsa Andersson Broms 2012. Foto: Åsa Andersson Broms.

utgångspunkten för undersökningen utgår från en särskild persons särskilda känsla och frågeställning. En lust eller oro som inte riktigt är klarlagd och därför behöver formuleras.

Anourshivanis installation samt videodokumentation av händelsen är komisk och kuslig på samma gång. Genom att låta olika ibland motsägelsefulla diskurser mötas i form av olika karaktärer i en tv-soffa, konkretiseras konflikterna i de sociala rum platsen härbärgerar.

Potemkins kulisser

Ett annat sätt att förstå ett dilemma är att överdriva det, eller förflytta det till ett annat sammanhang. I verket *Potemkins kulisser* undersöker Åsa Andersson Broms de arkitekturvisioner som producerats

om Husby och andra liknande stadsbyggnadsprojekt, genom att hon skapar en kuliss i den sjöstadsvita stil som är på modet.⁴⁴ Begreppet potemkinkuliss härrör från berättelsen om när Rysslands kejsarinna Katarina den andras älskare, fursten Grigorij Alexandrovitj Potemkin, enligt myten ska ha förvrängt verkligheten med hjälp av kulisser. När kejsarinnan besökte de områden han kolonialiserade åt henne i Ukraina, lät han med hjälp av kulisser iscensätta ett välstånd som inte existerade. Begreppet potemkinkuliss används sedan dess som ett sätt att beskriva när någon skapat en skönmålad fasad framför en inte lika vacker verklighet.

I Andersson Broms verk används en kuliss föreställande en modern vitputsad

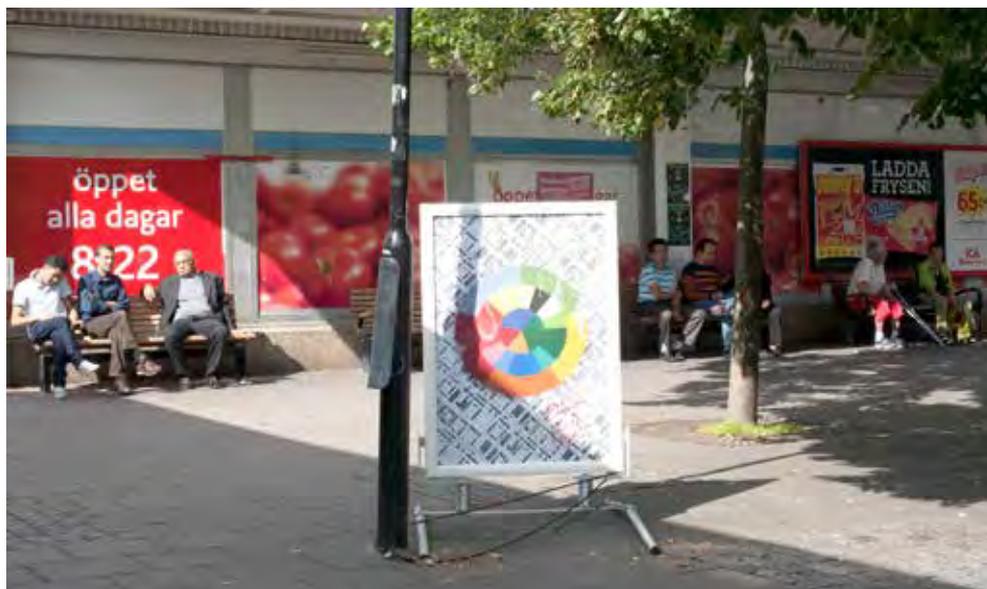


Bild 4: *Husby 2012* av Johanna Gustafsson Fürst 2012. Foto: Åsa Andersson Broms.

husfasad med mönsterblästrade glasbal-konger, i samma stil som en del av Husbys 70-tals arkitektur har gjorts om i, för att täcka över en av de pittoreska kulturbyggnader som har bevarats i Husby. Genom denna enkla förflyttning från ett sorts hus (miljonprogram) till ett annat (röd stuga med vita knutar) går hon över gränsen för vad som anses vara i behov av ett ”Järvalyft”, och hjälper oss att sätta dagens arkitektvisioner i ett historiskt sammanhang: Det är kanske inte 70-tals designen som är problemet i Husby, utan de sociala problemen och det faktum att man inte renoverat området ordentligt sedan det byggdes. De nymålade sjöstadsvita fasaderna är bokstavligen kulisser för att skymma sikten för de allvarigare bakomliggande problemen. Verket ställer också frågor om

vems estetiska ideal det är som styr och hur makt uttrycks genom en dominerande klass smakideal.

Husby 2012

Estetik är bärare av normer och ideologier. Genom att undersöka kopplingen mellan form och norm kan de underliggande ideologierna synliggöras. Johanna Gustafsson Fürst har ett mångårigt intresse för estetiken i Husby. Färgerna, materialen och huskropparnas förhållande till varandra, är något hon återkommit till i flera arbeten. Dessa studier ledde vidare till information om de värderingar som ligger bakom ortens småskaliga stadsrum. Dessa rum skapades för att främja gemenskap och intima offentliga samtal. Centrum består av flera små torg sammanbundna

med varandra genom trånga gator utformade för gående. Här ligger små butikslokaler, bibliotek, vårdcentral och samlingslokal. De centrala husen marknadsfördes när de byggdes som en sorts kollektivhus, med restauranger och förskola i bottenvåningen och skola och tunnelbana runt hörnet. Det är grönt, lummigt och nära till stora naturområden. Kontrasten är stor till närbelägna Kista där det offentliga rummet domineras av ett gigantisk inglasat köpcentrum.

Det materialiserade resultatet av det konstnärliga arbetet var *Husby 2012*, en plansch som också kan fungera som en flagga, som ett emblem för orten och en grafisk identitet.⁴⁵ Utgångspunkten för mönstret var Husby stadsplan och färgsättningen från 70-talet. Planschen och historierna invävda i designen spreds lokalt via konsthallen och butikerna kring torgen. Arbetet med projektet involverade en mängd personer som på olika sätt medskapat till projektet och indirekt bidragit till att ge mer kunskap om platsens och dess relationer. Utgångspunkten i denna dialog med platsen är konstnärens tidigare arbete på platsen och ett intresse för normer i arkitektur och samhällsplanering. Det handlar också om att förstå hur de egna estetiska normerna som präglat oss från barnsben och utvecklats ytterligare genom utbildning, är historiskt och socialt situerade.

The Affect Machine

En viktig aspekt av konstnärlig metodologi är en självreflexion som ständigt ställer frågor som ”Hur berör denna samhällsplanering mig”, ”Varför väljer jag att måla väggen vit?”, ”Hur görs jag här?”. I arbetet *The Affect Machine* har jag utforskat det som ligger mig nära, de konflikter jag upplever i den egna identitetskonstruktionen i förhållande till andra identiteter.⁴⁶ Platsen som undersöks är virtuell, ett socialt rum som genomkorsar den lokala platsen – i detta fall Husby – och splittrar den i parallella skikt baserat på subtila skillnader i hur vi uppträder och vilka vi umgås med. Genom att undersöka ett fenomen som ”crowd financing” och tillämpa dessa principer på ett annat fenomen som sociala nätverk online, skapas en handelsplats för sociala relationer där man byter och säljer andelar i människor. Ungefär som med Pokémon-kort, men med avatarer av kött och blod som förhåller sig till varandra genom sofistikerade poängsystem. Metoden som använts är att materialisera situationen i detalj. Ett skissande av scenarios där jag närsynt designar varje funktion konsekvent för att se vad detta leder till. På så sätt kommer jag fram till en design av ett system som kan jämföras med en modern sorts slavmarknad, ett handelssystem för socialt kapital som möjliggör mer flexibla typer av familjerelationer. Genom att på detta sätt ”queera” diskursiva praktiker genom att förflytta en princip till ”fel” sammanhang och på så sätt



The Affect Machine av Karin Hansson 2012. Foto: Björn Larsson.

skruva till detta sammanhang, luckrar jag upp grunden för min egen förståelse och kan se andra möjliga läsningar.

Startpunkten för arbetet var mina försök att finansiera konstprojektet i Husby. Ekonomiska kriser, digitala tekniker och en ny sorts nätverksekonomi har de senaste decennierna skapat incitament till nya finansieringsformer för bildkonsten. Så kallad ”crowd funding” är en av dessa. Sajter som till exempel Kickstarter och Crowdfunder ger möjligheten att få små men potentiellt många bidrag från en stor grupp människor.⁴⁷ På så sätt kan även okända konstnärer i teorin nå ut till ett brett nätverk av konstintresserade. Ett nätverk som i bästa fall även fungerar som lojal publik och pr-stöd för de projekt som genomförs. Genom en mikrofinansiering av konstnärer skapas, enligt modellens förespråkare, en möjlighet för fler än den ekonomiska och kulturella eliten att vara konstnärsmeccener. Horder

av fans kan här betala direkt till konstnärerna (och crowdfundingstajterna) och på så sätt få komma lite närmare det heliga och särskilda.

Det är dock inte bara konstens ekonomi som kretsar kring speciella personer. Särskildhet är något som betonas i allt fler yrkeskategorier. Inte bara konstnärer, utan alla sorts kreativa yrken betonar den unika personen bakom produktionen, som till exempel kockar, djs, och pr-konsulter. Att föra fram ett personligt varumärke i form av smak, utbildning och sociala relationer är också centralt för varje karriär på en osäker och flexibel arbetsmarknad, inte bara i den kreativa sektorn. Bourdieu menar att den liberala idén om individens frihet och konstnärlig frihet är sammankopplade.⁴⁸ Den perfekta arbetaren är en konstnär – hon är flexibel, självmotiverad, kräver ingen betalning och skapar sin egen marknad. Individens egenart, speciella förmåga och

särskildhet betonas inte heller bara i yrkeslivet utan är ett bärande tema i den västerländska kultursfären. Det är inte personers produktivitet som är temat i filmerna, böckerna, sångerna, utan längtan och åtrån efter den ende och det egenartade existensiella.

Gestaltningen av dessa idéer hjälpte mig att komma vidare i idéarbetet och hitta kopplingar mellan disparata kulturella fenomen som Facebook, Pokémon, Tove Jansson och aktiehandel. Jag designade till exempel en möjlig handelsplats för socialt kapital i detalj, formulerade slogans för marknadsföringen av sajten till boende i Husby, designade en Pokemon för skolbarnen och beskrev konflikten i sagoform för förskolebarn. Här fungerade platsen Husby som ett konkret case, ett sätt att komma bortom konstvärldens begränsade fält för produktion och abstrakta idéer om gemenskap och hitta andra sätt att beskriva och undersöka den sociala situationen.

Konst som position inom en deltagande forskningspraktik

Jag inledde denna artikel med en diskussion om vilka förväntningar ord som konst och konstnär kan skapa i ett vetenskapligt sammanhang, och hur man inom den konstnärliga forskningen positionerar sig genom att framhålla *skillnad* i förhållande till en seglivad idé om vetenskap. Där konst skapas genom att *inte* vara som vetenskap, görs konstnärlig forskning till en verksamhet som *inte* är som vetenskaplig forskning. I detta skillnadsgörande döljs maktordningar mellan konstnärliga forskare. Debatten om vad som är konstnärlig forskning, skymmer den underliggande frågan om *vem* som räknas som konstnärlig forskare.

Jag hävdar att denna dikotomi är tråkig och ofruktsam. Konstnärlig forskning kan istället vara en viktig del av en vetenskaplig forskning och en förutsättning för vetenskaplig utveckling.

Som exempel tog jag ett forskningsprojekt om kommunikationsteknik och stadsplanering där konstnärliga arbeten förde in ett rum för reflexion, där de begrepp, föreställningar och data som utgjorde grunden för själva forskningsprojektet ifrågasattes, förvrängdes och gavs nya tolkningsmöjligheter.

De konstnärliga arbetena fungerade också som utgångspunkt för ett mer tvärvetenskapligt förhållningssätt. Genom att betona det personliga och särskilda i mötet mellan frågeställningen, individerna och platsen, och starta undersökningen i detta möte fanns inga på förhand givna metoder eller teorier att följa. Detta gav en mer förutsättningslöst ingång till temat där teorin byggdes från samtalet med platsen och ledde vidare till olika forskningsfält – från urban planning, till ekonomisk teori och forskning om sociala nätverk. Alltså en konstnärlig metodologi som ett sätt att komma åt ett större antal frågeställningar snarare än svar på specifika frågor. Här fungerade konsten som

en deltagande praktik, dock inte främst genom att engagera en mängd deltagare i konstnärlig produktion. Nej främst handlar deltagandet om att konstnärerna är tydliga med sina egna bevekelsegrunder, idéer och slutsatser. Genom att kommunicera detta direkt som en reaktion på platsen och temat, antingen i utställningen eller i arbetsprocessen, öppnas för en dialog. I detta avseende är skillnaden stor när det gäller hur vetenskapliga forskningsresultat i allmänhet redovisas. Fastän en vetenskaplig forskare kan utveckla sina slutsatser i en dialog med en grupp informanter så är det undantagsvis som själva slutsatserna bollas tillbaka till informanterna direkt.

Deltagande metodologier innebär alltid ojämlika maktrelationer i förhållandet mellan den som forskar och det som beforeskas. Den konstnärliga forskaren utgör inget undantag, men innebär en annan sorts maktrelation, vilket möjliggör andra typer av samtal. Konstnärens arbete är mer öppet för en allmänhet att beskåda och tycka till om, och därför möjligt att säga emot. Konsten är också på ett vis anti-auktoritär då den aldrig utger sig för att redovisa sanningen om ett fenomen, utan bara är uttryck för en eller några få individers upplevelse. Samtidigt är konsten och konstnären i hög grad auktoritär. En av konstens viktigaste egenskaper är att den är annorlunda och särskild. Alltså något ovanligt som kräver extra koncentration och förmåga till närvaro. Konstnären är medskapare till denna aura, och förväntas också ha särskilda egenskaper, en särskild lyhördhet och uttrycksförmåga. Här finns beröringspunkter med forskarens roll, som

i likhet med konstnären förväntas vara någon som står utanför situationens politik och sociala och ekonomiska relationer. Men då forskaren legitimerar sig genom att referera till ett helt forskarkollektiv, representerar konstnären aldrig någon annan än sig själv. Alltså finns en annan sorts möjlighet

Samtidigt är konsten och konstnären i hög grad auktoritär.

för andra att säga emot, tycka tvärtom, eller ignorera denna person.

Konstnärliga arbeten kan vara ett sätt att engagera sig i ett tema och en plats och på så sätt inleda en dialog med platsen. Genom att den konstnärliga processen och resultatet materialiserar och tydliggör forskningsresultat möjliggörs en dialog inte bara om empirin utan även om forskningens slutsatser. Om man ser konst som en deltagande forskningsmetodologi kan man också jämföra konsten med andra deltagande forskningsmetodologier. Jag tänker särskilt då på en jämförelse av förhållandet mellan forskaren och det som undersöks. Forskarens roll kan variera, från att vara den som undersöker världen utifrån, till den som möjliggör eller modererar ett samtal med det som ska undersökas, till forskaren som regissör av skeenden eller som någon som främst uttrycker en egen upplevelse av något, en konstnär. Om man sätter detta i relation till vilken makt den som undersöks har att definiera sig själv, från ett passivt undersökningsobjekt, till ett en aktör, till en uttrycksfull konstnär, skapas ett fält som

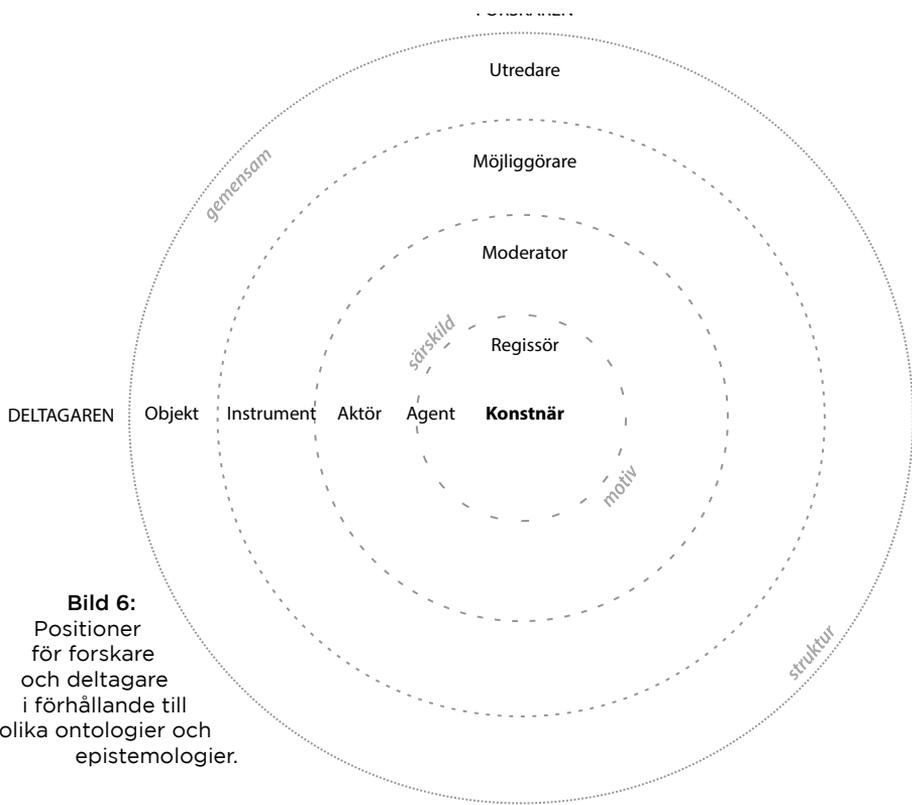


Bild 6:
Positioner
för forskare
och deltagare
i förhållande till
olika ontologier och
epistemologier.

kan användas för att beskriva olika ontologiska och epistemologiska positioner på ett samhällsvetenskapligt fält.

I ytterkanten av fältet ett mer positivistiskt paradigm, där forskaren tillsammans med många andra sammanställer och analyserar stora mängder data för att hitta generella strukturer. I centrum av fältet ett mer interpretativt paradigm, där forskaren är mer av en konstnär som går i dialog med andra subjekt i ett samtal om den värld man skapar tillsammans, i syfte att hitta det enskilda motivet och det särskilda i situationen.

Dessa olika positioner illustrerar den mångfald av perspektiv som behövs för att beskriva en komplex och rörlig social verklighet. Genom att se till att röra sig över hela ytan av forskningsparadigm garanteras konfliktfyllda, dynamiska och kreativa forskningssamarbeten.

Med denna bild vill jag också betona att konstnären/forskarens roll inte är fastlåst utan är positioner på glidande skalor. De är dessutom performativa och förhandlingsbara och kan användas som verktyg, alltså metoder för att skapa

olika situationer och förväntningar. Rollen som konstnär har här stora likheter med rollen som forskare. När konstnären/forskaren går in i ett socialt rum skapas en viss förväntan, i sämsta fall en negativ förväntan och osäkerhet, men ofta en upprymd känsla och koncentration.

Det krävs både en stor osäkerhet och en upprymd koncentration för att kunna bryta med den egna föreställningen om ett fenomen. Här behöver vi styrkan och passionen i det personligt situerade motivet, men också träning i att utsätta detta motiv för granskning. Den reflexiva process, som den konstnärliga processen innebär borde därför utgöra en viktig del av en vetenskaplig forskning och är en förutsättning för vetenskaplig utveckling.

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(Translation from Swedish, referred images and articles in original document)

Art as participatory methodology

Author: Karin Hansson

Introduction

A procession carries a life-size wooden motorcar. The route leads from the public art gallery on the edge of the extensive park known as Järvaåfältet, through the suburb of Husby via one of the main roads. Every now and then the procession stops and a guide talks about the place and its history. At one of the pedestrian bridges the wooden car is carried up to the pedestrian level. Traffic in Husby is separated from pedestrians and the guide explains that the plan for developing Husby involves mixing motor traffic and pedestrians in the same way as in downtown Stockholm. Willing hands lift the wooden car up to the walkway and the procession moves on. Now there is serious congestion because a festival is being held in the limited confines of Husby's civic centre with numerous food stalls and crowds of people. In order to make way for the procession the guide calls out: "Make room for the car. Make room for the car." With a great effort and much good humour the car makes its way through the crowds taking part in the festival. The procession passes through the centre of Husby and ends up back at the art gallery. The wooden car is finally laid to rest at a point on the gravel square where a car was arsoned earlier in the summer. One of the participating artists sets light to the wooden car and, when the flames have died down some hours later, we grill our dinner over the glowing embers.

Figure 1: Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas with Giacomo Castagnola and others: *Husby Channel*, Performing the Common 2012. Photo: Åsa Andersson Broms.

This performance by Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas with Giacomo Castagnola and others was part of an artistic investigation of how people view "Husby" in which the focus was on comparing Husby, which is a suburb in northern Stockholm, with other similar places in the world.¹ The project, which ran between 2010 and 2012 with some 15 participating artists, was part of a larger research project undertaken at the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences at Stockholm University and the Department of Architecture and the Built Environment at KTH, in collaboration with the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. I was the initiator of the project as part of my dissertation, developing it in collaboration with the participating artists and researchers.

Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas and their students based their contribution on how they experienced the location themselves, using visual images, interventions, discussions and study visits. They formulated their experiences in a guided tour, in burning the car and in a communal meal. Fictional narratives were mixed with affirmations and exaggerations in a sort of concretization of a dream of the suburb; a dream in which the image of burning cars is mixed with utopian ideas about community. Just as conflicts in Husby pertaining to increased rents and cuts in social services strengthened a local sense of community, the ritual conflagration of the car provided a cooking stove and a gathering place. The guided tour created a narrative that bound together contradictory images of the place and turned the spectators into tourists visiting a social system in a state of transition.

Art, to me, is this: Through my position in the room I give expression to the situation as I experience it, clarifying my position and my perspective and enabling a discussion with others about the spaces that we share. This is both simple and very

difficult. Anyone who has tried to paint a landscape will know what I mean. Because what is a landscape and how can I translate the sensations of my senses into expressions that are intelligible to other people? How can I paint a landscape that describes other people's ideas, relationships and patterns of communication? The landscape that is "Husby", in the example just given, is not just one but several contradictory images made up of fragments from different sources – discourses, media images, dreams, rumours and individual events.

How can we understand and describe this complex reality? For me, artistic expression is one way of experiencing the world, developing a language in order to make possible a collective development of knowledge that further expands my own understanding of the phenomenon. With this perspective, art is concerned with a fundamental investigation of one's own perception and participatory methods for constantly destabilizing one's own understanding of the world with the help of others. And so art is a necessary condition for scientific development.

Before I account for my ideas about the methodology of art it may be a good idea to discuss notions about art and science. Art and science are two value-laden words and there are times when they obscure the view with regard to what I want to say. It is like walking about, carrying an ungainly package weighed down by ideas about art and science that everyone has strong views about. Taken together, as in the concept of "artistic research", the totality becomes too heavy to bear. Nor is my ambition, in what follows, to define or to carry the concept of artistic research on my own shoulders. What I want to do, initially, is to give some examples as to *how ideas about art and artistic research are generated in relation to ideas about science*. And I also want to describe *an artistic methodology and to give examples from an artistic research project*. Finally, I shall discuss *the way in which one can see art as a position within participatory research praxis*.

The artist in a scientific space

In 2009 I commenced a research programme at Stockholm University with computer and systems sciences as my main subject, in collaboration with the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. As an artist working in this scientific space I am often defined as unscientific – someone who, through her very identity, defines what science is not. This is particularly evident when meeting younger researchers and students who are still shaping their scientific identity. This attitude may seem out-dated following decades of criticism of an objectivistic understanding of knowledge, not least in feminist thinking as exemplified by the likes of Sandra Harding and Donna Haraway.² But the dichotomy between art and science is a readily acquired point of view that continues to dominate. Philosophers of science like Karl Popper and Hans Reichenbach have often used art as a negation to the concept of science:

"Without it [principle of science], clearly, science would no longer have the right to distinguish its theories from the fanciful and arbitrary creations of the poet's mind."³

That is, that even though, according to Popper, Reichenbach has not found the definition of scientific, he knows that *science is not just art*. Popper clearly excludes an artistic approach and all forms of creativity from the domain of science.⁴ For Popper, everything that precedes the theory is unscientific; all notions, ideas, experiences or psychologizing instants that form the basis of what is ultimately expressed in a theory.

According to philosopher of science Sandra Harding historically, discussions of science have not just been concerned with how science is to be defined but also with which groups of people can be scientific and which people are not capable of being objective, but who are too emotional: for example women, black people or artists.⁵ Science historian Lorraine Daston, in an article about the concept of objectivity, points to how the ethos of science has not just been a matter of remaining objective as distinct from the artist's subjective perspective, but has also been a matter of being an anonymous person in a research collective in which the individual's peculiarities are peeled off and are disciplined in a praxis that creates an objectivity that is free of any specific perspective.⁶ A quotation from physiologist Claude Bernard gives a good summary of this position as opposed to art: "Art is I; science is we".⁷ Although these notions about science are not representative of how researchers actually act today, Daston still claims that they continue to be important elements in the researcher's creation of an identity and, not least, in how science is legitimized in society at large.⁸ It can be regarded as a sort of belief system in which the notion of the scientist's objectivity and exchangeability is an important article of faith.

Faith is also important in art according to sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Nathalie Heinich, faith in what is a specifically inexplicable element that cannot be copied.⁹ In this belief system, the artist is a sort of saint who embodies faith in the uniquely human element which we all share.¹⁰

When artists become researchers

What happens when an artist becomes a researcher? How does the youthful field of artistic research relate to ideas about science? In her study of Swedish art colleges, art historian Marta Edling has demonstrated how discussion of what artistic research entails has continued in Sweden since the reform of higher education in Sweden in the 1970s.¹¹ According to sociologists of art the role of the artist and our view of art have changed and been subject to changing definitions from one era to another.¹² Bourdieu has shown that the field is in a state of constant negotiation, not least because of changing economic conditions.¹³ The creation of financial institutions that support an artistic research field will, accordingly, likewise change our views on art.

I am, myself, at the centre of this process of change, being one of the visual artists who is becoming part of the academy. In concrete terms this means that art education in Sweden is being instrumentalized and more transparent to the students, not least to allow for international comparisons. The same process is taking place in other European countries under the auspices of the Bologna scheme, and discussion of artistic research in Sweden broadly mirrors that in the rest of Europe.¹⁴ A large part of the discourse on artistic research at the present time (2013) is actually taking place in this part of the world if one adds up the number of conferences on this theme. As part of the internationalization of art education in Sweden a research level has been added to the BA and MA programmes, and this opens up for more obvious career opportunities in art education. Formerly, lecturers at art colleges were selected largely on their artistic merit, that is, in relation to their success in the field of art in general.

Creating a research level and providing funds for artistic research, has given rise to a new artistic field or subfield. Not surprisingly, there has been lively discussion of these changes. Battles regarding what should be defined as artistic research and not just be considered as art, concern everyone in the field, and not just those who teach at art colleges. In Sweden perhaps the most important battle has concerned itself with whether research training should have a scientific or an artistic base. Artistic exams at

research level were introduced in 2010 and approved examining bodies are currently the University of Gothenburg, Lund University, and the University of Borås. A number of artistic and practice-based doctoral programmes are still being offered within the framework of general research programmes. Thus it is not possible to give an accurate description of the dominant discourse on artistic research. From an intersectional research perspective it is claimed that discourses are structured and maintained by creating different hierarchical levels.¹⁵ One way of achieving a description of the dominant discourse in its Swedish context would be to look at the descriptions of what artistic research is contrasted with. The definition of art that is common to this discourse in the various different artistic contexts that I have been engaged in during the last three years (2009-2012) can also be summarized by a simple negation: *art is not science*. This opinion is repeated in everything from discussions with students at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm to seminars and conferences about artistic research with representative of advanced level artistic education in Northern Europe, and to discussions with fellow artists. This represents a reversal of Popper's traditional definition of science as something that is not art. An important aspect of the identity of art in these contexts is, thus, not being science. The science that one is not is a popular idea about science as standing for rationality, the instrumentalization of knowledge, as well as a disregard for the particularities of the individual in favour of what is common and general. Thus it is a science, defined on the basis of a narrowly positivist view of science that is primarily associated with natural sciences.

Paradoxically, it is precisely collaboration with the natural sciences that is held up as an example of artistic research in periodicals like *Leonardo* that publish articles on art, technology, and science.¹⁶ The most recent *Documenta* (2012), the major international exhibition of contemporary art that takes place in Frankfurt every fifth year, highlighted examples of men of science – with the emphasis on men – who have also worked as visual artists. Rooms were filled with their model studies and landscape paintings supporting the notion of the similarity between art's traditional investigative visual praxis and the scientist's investigations of bodies and other natural phenomena.¹⁷

The link between art and material and bodily phenomena is also something emphasized in the Swedish Research Council's latest publication about artistic research and development, with documentation as the subject.¹⁸ This periodical is important in a Swedish context in that it both collects examples of what is regarded as fitting in with artistic research, and publishes reports from artistic research that have been approved and funded by the Council.

In brief, the articles published here give a picture of artistic research that emphasizes that artistic ability is a separate and special talent that loses out when confronted with an academic, text-based form of knowledge. The expression is used simultaneously as proof, experiment and hypothesis. The entire process appears as a sort of performance in which legitimacy is gained by appearing to be "scientific" by borrowing concepts and images from the symbolic world of popular science. By this I do not mean that the underlying process of knowledge is superficial or a pretence but, rather, that one makes use of the props of popular science as a way of distinguishing what one is doing from other artistic practices and of showing that one regards one's art as a type of research.

That is, at the same time that people are using positivistically charged scientific expressions in the youthful field of artistic research, ideas are repeated about the

uniqueness of art and its difference from the negatively defined objectivistically tainted scientific research.

There are several problems with this performatively created scientific role and the claim of a dichotomy between art and science, practice and theory. This emphasis on the difference between art and science obscures differences in power between different art researchers. Thus it is important, for example, to pay attention to what sorts of bodies fit the role of artistic researcher.

The dominant discourse also risks locking up artistic research praxis in an isolated room without contact with the world of research in general. There is clearly a need to develop one's own research praxis in an empathetic environment without everything one does being questioned by a dominant scientific discourse. But instead of claiming that art is something entirely different from science and, accordingly, that artistic research is entirely different from scientific research, I should like to emphasize the similarities. Donna Haraway speaks, for example, of the cultural expressions of doing science as "narrative practices" which, by using certain vocabularies and practices narrate stories about "objectivity".¹⁹ From this perspective, scientific research is also a sort of art. It is art when it is a matter of imagining something previously unknown and expressing this in a way that makes it possible to converse with each other. It is art when it is divided into different genres in which legitimacy can sometimes be created by comparing and referring to other research in the genre. It is art when it is largely governed by fashion and power. By this I mean, in line with feminist theorists of science, that if we are going to be able to see beyond our own perspective, we need to acknowledge ourselves and others as individual and identity-creating subjects.²⁰ Here, the visual arts have developed methods for self-reflection that the research society definitely needs.

In an artistic methodology, personal experience is central

How, then, can one describe an artistic methodology without basing the description on the notion that art is *not* a science? Here I choose to use the concept of methodology not in the sense of using specifically artistic methods like visual images, music, photography, belly dancing or etchings, but in the sense of an approach, the aim that one has in using the method and how one relates to the result. There are innumerable researchers who use artistic methods as a way of catching the attention of the people they are trying to inform.²¹ This does not make the process art or artistic research. What is specific to an artistic *methodology*, in my view, is that the point of departure is not limited to other people's experiences of a phenomenon, but that one's own experience is central. The aim is to understand this experience by engaging others in it and by linking what has been experienced to the overriding structure.

If one surveys the artistic field of research that has grown ever stronger, principally in Europe in recent decades in step with the becoming part of the academy, there is no uniform artistic methodology in the sense of a common approach. Methods and forms are emphasized instead. That is to say they are artistic and practice-based, that the person conducting them is an artist and that the result is artistic.²² This should not come as a surprise in that the starting point for research is advanced art education. Thus there is no discussion as to who is an artist and what is art, but these are defined by means of an underlying circular argument: An artist is someone who does art, and art is something done by an artist. In this respect, artistic research is concerned with developing the artistic field which, in turn, helps artists to develop their art. Not everyone who takes part in artistic research agrees with this, and there are many

voices that maintain that artistic research can also contribute to the wider scientific community. Christopher Frayling, for example, questions the dichotomy between practice and theory, maintaining that both art and science are something practical.²³ The creative practices and critical potential of art are often regarded as valuable in a scientific context.²⁴ Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson claim that the role of art in science is to question the dominant model of knowledge in the academic world.²⁵ Mika Hannula emphasizes the importance of an independent artistic field of research but, at the same time, places art in a qualitative research paradigm and notes art's reflective practitioners and their emphasis on the personal situation.²⁶

Self-reflection is obviously something that appears in all areas; the importance of reflection within qualitative methodology as a way for researchers to catch sight of and visualize their own motives and, possibly personal interests, is stressed.²⁷ In a modernist type of art education, self-reflection is not just an important aspect but is central to all endeavours. It is self-reflection that governs everything: determining what is interesting, explaining what is being done and the reasoning underlying this.

Many articles about artistic research emphasize the essence and materiality of art as opposed to the text-based productions of the academic world.²⁸ I am opposed to this essentialisation of art. Visual art is, in the best instance, the development of a language and is not necessarily anything other than a text. On the contrary, art is about actively participating in a fluid contemporary world constructed, and constantly reconstructed, by humanly created texts, symbols and images. I maintain that all forms of artistic expression (like this article) have their limitations. In the best instance they can only capture a tiny fraction of the complexities that are waiting to be expressed or to have an impact on us. For me, materializing ideas and thinking by doing is a matter of testing theories and models, in which the mode of expression develops theories in an iterative process in which theory and practice are one. It can be advantageous to place an artistic methodology within a qualitatively directed research practice. By qualitative I mean an interest in variation and complexity, and that which departs from the established pattern; what is individual and separate, as well as the link between this micro level and structural factors. The point of departure is that we will discover something that we did not already know. But if this is to transpire, we need to be responsive and open to what is happening in the process.

This qualitative approach means that the researcher's position is central in that information is defined and interpreted using the researcher's own experience. Thus feminist researchers emphasize the importance of "situated knowledge".²⁹ An artistic methodology is highly relevant here, that is, an approach to knowledge production in which art is a reflective process that makes use of artistic methods as a means for understanding oneself and, by extension, the world around.

Mika Hannula also describes art as an "impassioned" participatory praxis. Something whose primary aim is to communicate with others.³⁰ In this perspective, art is a form of dialogue, a participatory methodology. By art as participation I mean not just what is termed participatory art, but everything that can be included in the concept of art. In participatory art, the general public is involved directly in the creative process, as an agent or collaborator.³¹

Other interpretations and titles for art of this type are socially committed art, community art, dialogue-based art, relational aesthetics, or an art that converses, depending on which aspects of participation we mean.³² Art-historian Grant Kester proposes the term "dialogical aesthetics" to describe art that is rooted in a historical and social context.³³ Here the artist is engaged in a collaborative dialogue with the context, a dialogue that also questions the authority of the artist. The importance of

the artist's subjective experience is minimized and the artist is rather seen as a moderator, while art is viewed as a platform for discussion rather than the expression of someone's experiences. I try not to overemphasize this division into participatory and non-participatory art, shared experiences and individual experiences. Traditional painters also engage themselves in the world around them and gain impressions from their own era. People viewing a work also take part in creating it through their specific reading. Art that uses more traditional forms of expression can also be experienced as less frightening and more comprehensible to a public that may sometimes feel uncomfortable in the open spaces of relational aesthetics.

When I emphasize that art is a participatory discipline I do not mean that it has to be concerned with participation or be interactive in a situation where a work of art is created by a group of participants. My point is that it is precisely the artist's position as an individual subject that makes further dialogue with the situation being investigated a possibility. If the researcher/artist is a person who is committed and with clear views and an ability to express them one can meet and criticise her. Unlike ordinary research data, the artist's results are communicated more directly, as a reaction to the situation and this creates the conditions for further dialogue. Here an individual work of art can be the starting point of the dialogue, or the dialogue can be the starting point for the work process itself.

Creating focused attention

Artistic methodology is not, in itself, a specific genre, nor a particular material, colour or shape. What is considered a work of art and what is regarded as an artistic material differs from one context to another. Five hundred years ago art was primarily a craft and the aim was to be good at dealing with colour and form.³⁴ Craft skills are still important, but now it is not just a matter of creating objects but also of being skilled in theory. Art education in Western art colleges has to do both with being able to give artistic expression to something and of positioning it in a wider theoretical context. It is, thus, difficult to speak of a specific artistic method. Basically it is a question of an artistic approach. Here the very concept of art is an important tool, that is, the collective notion that art is something special and important that deserves extra attention. Art means making phenomena important, distinct and special, and in this way creating a more concentrated focus for what one wants to talk about. Here the artist's role is also important and the myths surrounding the artist and the work of art, as well as all other works in the history of art, are part of the artwork. Thus art is a matter of creating a context that makes art credible as art, and that charges the art object with a variety of narratives.

In other research fields artistic methods like painting or drawing are regarded as a species of qualitative methods.³⁵ The artistic methodology that pervades the artistic practice is not so much based on a particular genre or method but on an understanding of art as a reflective process in which the work of art is a subset of the artist's discourse rather than an end in itself. The methods that are used to achieve the narrative that is mediated by means of the work of art are not concerned here with colour or material, but with methods for playing with norms and conventions and different ways of monitoring one's own convictions. Breaking with tradition is normative in art. For example, diverse methods for deceiving one's own perceptions are common. Judith Butler argues that cultural change comes from our capacity to undermine norms by twisting language so that it relates better to non-established structures.³⁶ Essential to exceeding the norm is distance and a degree of independence in relation to the dominant affirming structures. That is, an ability to exist without

being affirmed. The identity of the artist is, traditionally, that of an outsider who, like the researcher, is not part of the dominant social context and who is therefore able to question what is generally taken for granted in that context. Instead, affirmation is sought from other artists who also define themselves as outsiders and who have even made breaking with norms the centre of their sense of community. Thus art can be seen as a practice that plays games with expressions of dominant points of view and norms and, in this way, queers these discursive practices and makes a variety of readings possible. Ordinary creative methods in visual art are, for example, practices like changing the positions of objects, colours or genders, or identifying what is not stated in an image. Allegories and metaphors can also be ways of developing ideas and images. Different techniques, perspectives or depths of focus help us to change our own ideas about how reality is created.

An art project as a form for a thematic investigation

The performance involving the wooden car and its procession that was created by Urbonas and others with which I introduced this article was part of an art exhibition entitled *Föreställningar om det gemensamma* [Performing the Commons] which took place in and around Husby Public Art Gallery and Moderna Museet in the summer of 2012.³⁷ The exhibition discussed the conditions applying to community and the commons based on the location of Rinkeby-Kista by means of fifteen artworks that illuminated the theme from a variety of artistic perspectives. The invited artists participated in their role as experts, on the grounds that they are experienced artists and specific people and that they had earlier researched similar issues. In choosing the artists, the ambition was to create a variety of artistic approaches and forms of expression in order to stress the content and the process in the artistic venture, rather than the form of the works. Besides the artists, there were researchers from the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences at Stockholm University and from the Department of Architecture and the Built Environment at KTH as well as students from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. The exhibition was part of a three-year research project on urban planning and information and communication technology entitled *Multimodal Communication for Participatory Planning and Decision Analysis: Tools and Process Models*.³⁸ Here the art project acted as a way of investigating the locality and its pattern of communications as well as problematizing ideas about space, the public domain, democracy and community. Our ambition was to link up this place with other places globally by inviting in artists from places undergoing similar types of change, places where the local community is being fragmented and transformed by globalization and the dismantling of the welfare state. Changes in the public domain are a source of lively discussion on the international art scene.³⁹ Here we had the opportunity of putting this critical discussion to work in a process of change at a local level. Our work started from an assumption that the communications system that we use for organizing ourselves is a bearer of norms and ideologies. By investigating these and by learning to understand how they collaborate with other structural factors we can also experiment with a scenario in which one part of a system is changed, shifted or exaggerated.

In the research project we also stressed the importance of having a multiplicity of methods and forms of expression that could be self-contradictory. The artists' individual projects created a more complex, stranger and multifaceted image of the "problem" and of what the place had to offer. Instead of merely observing the place, we maintained an active dialogue throughout the project by materializing our impressions and conclusions. Thus the art project acted as a participatory method and

a public space for the questions that arose. In parallel with undertaking the art project we held public seminars and more conventional qualitative and quantitative investigations which, taken together with the project itself, gave us a better understanding of the particular communications structure of the place.

Positioning an artistic investigation at a specific location and/or within the framework of a particular theme is common practice in contemporary art, if not actually a norm. What distinguishes this project from other art projects more closely run by curators is the emphasis on knowledge being created within the group of participating artists; a methodology that I developed in earlier projects.⁴⁰ In this particular project we have devoted unusually much time to this process of knowledge creation.

Generating knowledge collectively in a group exhibition

While I was curating this exhibition I focused on the collective creation of knowledge that takes place in a group exhibition and I tried to encourage this in various ways. In a thematic exhibition the artists contribute their own personal perspectives but they relate to a common theme and, at times, to shared experiences. The individual artworks are developed partially collectively since the artists meet regularly and reflect on the project as well as sharing information. This information can be in the form of interesting texts that deal with the subject, or as practical questions like how the local administration works or why a particular building is sited at a particular place. Although the exhibition at Husby was based on a predetermined theme, it developed thematically through the work and reflection of the artists in dialogue with different points: the artist's on-going project, the overall discussion of the theme and the various structures that were made visible through the shared work.

This collective approach to work touches on what is known as “memory work”, a qualitative feminist model in which the participants collectively or individually analyse their own memories pertaining to a particular subject.⁴¹ In its feminist understanding of knowledge, memory work is reminiscent of the artistic methodology in that it is concerned with founding an understanding for overriding social structures in one's own personal experience. Precisely for this reason we made use of memory work in this project as a method of penetrating and developing the subject through our collective experience. The artists and the researchers from KTH and from Stockholm University discussed their own experiences of place and community in order to develop the common theme and to root abstract ideas into situations that we had experienced ourselves.

Edge City Talk Show

The concepts of boundaries and unboundedness were used as trigger words in the memory work. Here, Shiva Anoushirvani focused on the informal boundaries between the suburbs of Husby and neighbouring Kista. In the art project entitled Edge City Talk Show she continued her work on experiences as to how bodies in the public domain are regulated and defined by invisible boundaries.⁴² The boundary between Kista and Husby is not just an economic and social boundary. It is also a boundary between work and private life, production and reproduction. Husby gets placed in the “home” category while Kista means “work”. These positions are also gendered and categorized by age. Ester Barinaga's ethnographic study of the area shows how the division that exists there is further reinforced by media reporting.⁴³ On one side of the divide there are children, old people and women. The people are immigrants and they are occupied with looking after the elderly and children. On the other side are

employed, middle-aged men. The inhabitants are “nomads” and they belong to an international class. In Husby people are isolated from Sweden while in Kista they have contact with the world around them. This division, created by the media, creates a sort of identity for the people living in the neighbourhood even though it may not agree with the facts. In her work, Anoushirvani investigates these contrasts and boundaries by creating a sort of hybrid out of the two suburbs. By moving office equipment from Kista to the public spaces of Husby and by using jargon from a typical talk show she places a familiar image in the “wrong” place, thus clarifying the contrasts by means of a concrete situation. Local celebrities are invited to discuss their views about work, “networking” and their own desks. The hostess for the talk show speaks to her guests in Swedish with an American accent, discussing issues like how to dress for work, which colours one chooses for the office and why one wants to sit on the upper floors of a skyscraper. Everything is “brilliant”.

What does the artwork really do in this context? What does this concretization of contrasts and social boundaries actually achieve? Here the materialization of an event is an important act generating knowledge with all that that involves: a specific place, getting permissions, writing a manuscript, finding actors and participants, finding a venue and the necessary technical equipment, realizing a set design and producing costumes, not to mention explaining or convincing everyone as to how the project is to be carried out; and, ultimately, taking charge of everything and editing the material, presenting it at an exhibition, and explaining it to the local media and the public. All this on a miniscule budget which means that everyone taking part is doing so because they are interested and they will not let it go until they see the result.

Figure 2: *Edge City Talk Show* by Shiva Anoushirvani 2012. Photo: Martin Hultén.

Realizing the work thus involves numerous people in a state of development, creating meetings, associations and relationships. That a complex work process creates new insights is obviously in no way unique to art. What is specific here is, rather, that the point of departure for the investigation comes from a particular person’s own ideas and questioning. A desire or a sense of unease that is not really clear and that thus needs to be formulated.

Anoushirvani’s installation, together with video documentation of the event is comical and creepy at the same time. By letting different and sometimes contradictory discourses meet in the form of different characters in a TV sofa she concretizes the conflicts that are inherent in social spaces.

Figure 3: *Potemkin’s façades* by Åsa Andersson Broms 2012. Photo: Åsa Andersson Broms.

Potemkin’s façades

Another way of understanding a dilemma is to exaggerate it, or to move it to a different context. In *Potemkin’s façades* Åsa Andersson Broms explores the architectural visions that have been devoted to Husby and to other similar urban projects by creating a false façade in the waterfront white style that is so fashionable here.⁴⁴ The notion of the Potemkin façade goes back to the story of the occasion when Prince Grigory Potemkin, favourite of the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, was reputed to have distorted reality with the help of false façades. When the empress visited the territories that he had colonized on her behalf in the Ukraine he used painted façades to give the impression of a wealth that did not exist. The concept of

the Potemkin façade is still used today as a way of describing a situation in which someone has created a beautiful façade in front of a reality that is not nearly as nice.

Åsa Andersson Broms' work uses a façade showing a modern white-plaster exterior with patterned glass balconies in the same style that was adopted in refurbishing some of Husby's 1970s architecture to cover up one of the picturesque historical buildings that has been preserved in Husby. Thanks to this shift from one sort of building (high-rise apartment block) to another (red timber cottage with white details) she crosses the boundary of what has been considered to be in need of the "Järvalyft" refurbishing programme, and she helps us to position today's architectural visions in a historic context. Perhaps it is not the 1970s design that is Husby's real problem but the social problems and the fact that the area has not been properly revamped since it was built. The freshly painted white façades are, literally, façades intended to hide the more serious, underlying problems, from sight. The work also poses questions about whose aesthetic ideals govern and how power is expressed through the ideals of the dominant class.

Husby 2012

An aesthetic is a bearer of norms and ideologies. By investigating the links between form and norm, the underlying ideologies are brought into view. Johanna Gustafsson Fürst has long been interested in the Husby aesthetic. Colours, materials and the way in which the buildings relate to each other are aspects to which she has returned in several works. These studies have led on to information about the values that underlie the small-scale public spaces in the neighbourhood. These spaces were created with the aim of promoting a sense of community and public discussion on an intimate scale. The city centre consists of a number of small public squares linked by narrow streets intended for pedestrians. On these streets there are shops, the public library, health centre and meeting rooms. When Husby was being built, it was claimed that the central buildings were a sort of public cooperative with restaurants and kindergartens on the ground floor with schools and the subway just round the corner. The neighbourhood is green and leafy and close to open countryside. This contrasts strongly with neighbouring Kista where the public spaces are dominated by a gigantic, glazed shopping mall. The material result of her artistic work was *Husby 2012* which consisted of a poster that could also act as a flag, as an emblem for Husby and a graphic identity.⁴⁵ The starting point for the design was the street plan of Husby while colours were typical of the 1970s. The poster and the histories that were woven into the design were spread locally via the public art gallery and the shops around the square. Work on the project involved numerous people who contributed in various ways and who indirectly provided more information about the locality and its relations. The point of departure for this dialogue with the locality was the artist's own previous work in Husby and an interest in norms pertaining to architecture and social planning. It is also concerned with understanding how the aesthetic norms that have shaped us since childhood and have developed further during our education, are situated historically and socially.

Figure 4: *Husby 2012* by Johanna Gustafsson Fürst 2012. Photo: Åsa Andersson Broms.

The Affect Machine

One important aspect of artistic methodology is self-reflection which is constantly posing questions like "How does this urban planning affect me?", "Why do I choose to

paint that wall white?”, “What am I doing here?”. In *The Affect Machine* I have investigated aspects that are very dear to me, the conflicts that I experience in creating my own identity in relation to other identities.⁴⁶ The place investigated is virtual, a social space that runs through the locality – in this instance Husby – dividing it into parallel layers based on subtle differences in how we behave and who we mix with. By investigating a phenomenon like crowd financing and by using these principles on another phenomenon such as social networks online, market places for social relations are created in which one can buy and sell shares in people. Much in the same way as with Pokémon cards, but with flesh and blood avatars who relate to each other through a sophisticated points system. The method used is to materialize the situation in detail. Sketching scenarios in which I design each function with extreme care in order to see what it leads on to. In this way I achieve a system design that can be compared with a modern sort of slave market, a trading system for social capital that makes more flexible types of family relationships possible. By “queering” discursive practices by moving a principle to an “incorrect” context and in this way twisting the context, I loosen the foundation of my own understanding and can see other possible readings.

Figure 5: *The Affect Machine* by Karin Hansson 2012. Photo: Björn Larsson.

The starting point for the work lay in my attempts to finance the art project in Husby. Financial crises, digital technologies and a new sort of network economy have, in recent decades, created an incentive to find new ways of funding the visual arts. So-called “crowd funding” is one such way. Sites like Kickstarter and Crowdfunder make it possible to get small – though potentially numerous – contributions from a large group of people.⁴⁷ In this way, even unknown artists can, in theory, reach out to a broad network of people interested in art; a network that, in the best instance, functions as a loyal audience and PR support for projects that are realized. Through micro-financing artists it is claimed that the model makes it possible for people other than the economic and cultural elite to become patrons of the arts. Hordes of fans can now pay directly to the artists (and the Crowdfunding sites) and, in this way, can get a little closer to the sacred and the unique.

But it is not just the economics of art that orbit about special people. Uniqueness is something that is stressed among increasing numbers of professions. Not just artists, but all forms of creative workplaces stress the unique person behind the production such as chefs, DJs and PR consultants. Promoting a personal brand in the form of taste, professional training and social relations is also central to every career in an insecure and flexible labour market and not just in the creative sector. Bourdieu claims that the liberal ideas of individual freedom and artistic freedom are linked.⁴⁸ The perfect worker is an artist for she is flexible, self-motivated, does not demand a salary and creates her own market. The particularity of the individual, their special skills and uniqueness, are emphasized not just in working life but are also an essential theme of the Western cultural sphere. It is not a person’s productivity that is the theme of films, books, songs, but a longing and desire for a single and uniquely existential situation.

Giving expression to these notions helped me to proceed with working on my ideas and finding links between disparate cultural phenomena like Facebook, Pokémon, children’s author Tove Jansson and the stock market. For example, I designed a trading place for social capital in detail, complete with marketing slogans of the site to the residents in Husby. I designed Pokémon for schoolchildren and I described the

conflict in story-form for nursery-school children. Husby functioned as a concrete case, a way of getting beyond the artwork's limited field of production and abstract ideas about community and about finding other ways of describing and investigating the social situation.

Art as a position within a participatory research praxis

I commenced this article with a discussion of the expectations that words like art and artist generate in a scientific context and how people position themselves in artistic research in contrast to a persistent idea about science. Whereas art creates by not being science, artistic research is carried out *differently from scientific research*. Power structures between artistic researchers are hidden here. The discussion as to *what* is artistic research obscures the underlying question as to *who* is reckoned as an artistic researcher. I maintain that the art-science dichotomy is overplayed and fruitless. Artistic research can, instead, be an important part of a scientific research project and a necessary condition for scientific development.

I took, as an example, a research project about communication technology and urban planning in which the artistic work introduced space for reflection in which the concepts, notions and data of the project were questioned and distorted, and were thus able to be interpreted in new ways. The artworks also acted as the point of departure for a more interdisciplinary approach. By emphasizing the personal and unique aspects of the meeting between questioning, individual and place, and by starting my investigation in this meeting, there were no preordained methods or theories to follow. This offered a more open entry to the theme with theory being built out of the conversation with the locality which led on to different research fields – from urban planning to economic theory and research into social networks. Thus an artistic methodology provided a way of getting at a larger number of issues rather than providing an answer to specific questions. Here art functioned as a participatory praxis, though not principally by engaging a large number of participants in artistic production. Participation is mainly about the fact that artists are clear about their own motives, ideas and conclusions. By communicating this directly as a reaction to place and theme, either in the exhibition or in the work process, the ground is prepared for a dialogue. In this respect, there is a great difference between the way in which the results of scientific research are accounted. Although scientific researchers may develop their conclusions in a dialogue with a group of informants, it is unusual for the end results to be returned to the informants directly.

Participation methodologies always involve unequal power relationships with regard to the researcher and what is being researched. The artistic researcher is no exception but here a different power relationship is involved which makes a different type of discussion possible. The artist's work is more open to the public viewing the work and reacting to it, with the possibility of opposing its conclusions. Art is also, in a sense, anti-authoritarian in that it never claims to offer the truth about a phenomenon, but is merely an expression of one or of a number of individual experiences. At the same time, art and the artist are, to a great degree, authoritarian. One of art's most significant characteristics is that it is different and singular. Something unusual that demands extra concentration and an ability to be present. The artist is the co-creator of this aura and is expected to have special qualities, a particular sensitivity and an ability to express herself. Here there are similarities with the role of the researcher who, like the artist, is expected to be someone who is not involved in the politics of the situation and the social and economic relations. But since scientific researchers legitimize themselves by reference to the entire collective of

researchers, artists never represent anyone other than themselves. Thus there is a different sort of possibility for other people to oppose things, to think entirely differently, or to ignore this person.

Artistic work can be a way of engaging oneself in a theme and a place and, in this way, of starting a dialogue with the place. Since the artistic process and the results materialize and clarify the research results, there is the possibility of dialogue not just about empirical data but also about research conclusions. If one regards art as a participatory research methodology one can also compare art with other participatory research methodologies. I am thinking, in particular, of a comparison of the relationship between researcher and what is being investigated. The researcher's role can vary from being the one who investigates the world from outside, to the person who makes possible, or acts as moderator for a discussion with whatever is to be investigated until the researcher, as the director of an event or as someone who principally expresses her or his own experience of something, an artist. If one places this in relation to the power that the person investigating has to define themselves, from a passive object of investigation to an actor and then to an expressive artist, a field is created that can be used to describe different ontological and epistemological positions in the social-science field.

Figure 6: Positions for researcher and informant in relation to different ontologies and epistemologies.

On the edge of the field there is a more positivist paradigm in which the researcher, together with numerous other people, compiles and analyses large amounts of data in order to locate general structures. At the centre of the field there is a more interpretative paradigm in which the researcher is more of an artist who enters into a dialogue with other subjects in a discussion of the world we create together with the aim of finding the individual motif and the particular in the situation.

The various positions illustrate the diversity of perspective that is required in order to describe a complex and flexible social reality. Ensuring that one moves across the entire surface of the research paradigm guarantees a conflictual, dynamic and creative research collaboration.

By means of this image I also want to emphasize the fact that the artist/researcher's role is not fixed but is a matter of positions on a sliding scale. Their role is performative and negotiable and it can be used as a tool, providing methods for creating different situations and expectations. Here, the role of the artist is very similar to that of the researcher. When the artist/researcher enters into a social space this gives rise to certain expectations; in the worst instance negative expectations and insecurity, though often a sense of elated concentration. Both serious insecurity and elated concentration are essential if one is to break with one's own preconceptions. Here we need the strength and passion in the personally situated motive, but also training in subjecting this motive to inspection. The reflective process that is an essential aspect of the artistic process should, then, serve as an important part of a scientific research project and should be an essential condition for the development of science.

The Importance of Recognition for Equal Representation in Participatory Processes: Lessons from Husby

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Introduction

In urban planning, ideas regarding the involvement of the public in planning processes have been present since the 1960s and 1970s, when popular, radical, democratic ideology emphasised public involvement.¹ In the discourse from that period, the word *participation* implied a process in which people could influence the decisions that affected them, or as Arnstein expressed it in 1969: '[Participation] is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future'.²

In the 1990s, an interest in participatory processes reappeared, while the issues of redistribution and power shifted to matters of recognition and identity construction, influenced by post-structuralism and third-wave feminism, with its focus on the politics of identity and diversity. Generally since then, the dominant planning discourse has undergone a major change towards more collaborative and communicative planning. There are many terms for this approach: communicative planning, collaborative planning, participatory planning, or planning through debate.³ These terms have been used in the literature of planning theory to describe and transform the concepts of Habermasian critical theory into the planning process.⁴ Furthermore, the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) to engage more people in collective processes was also seen as an opportunity to reform the system of representative democracy,

not only by enabling better services for citizens but also by introducing various ways of involving them in dialogue processes. Projects such as the Blacksburg Electronic Village in Virginia, USA, and the Digital City in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, explored the Internet as a means of developing a more deliberative democracy in local communities.⁵ Thus, public participation in urban planning can take on many different forms. Activities may range from clear-cut discussions about public art projects organised by various authorities with a formalised structure and a predefined agenda, to spontaneous revolts. Participatory forms may range from basic questionnaires to different kinds of more or less developed dialogues with stakeholders and citizens, such as public meetings, charettes or participatory design methods.

Needless to say, the participatory paradigm in urban planning has not been without its critics. In the 1960s, Arnstein was critical of many attempts to use participatory methods in planning, referring to them as 'manipulations' and 'therapy', and claiming that initiatives of this kind had nothing to do with sharing power but were instead used as a means to justify the plans. Furthermore, dialogue in urban planning is restricted in scope since the important decisions are mostly made elsewhere. Lack of transparency in participatory processes limits an understanding of the urban planning issues involved, and thus fails to meet modern society's need for effectiveness and social cohesion.⁶ Some commentators focus their critique on the deliberative 'ideal speech' condition

suggested by Habermas, which ignores hegemonic discourses and antagonistic interests, and does not position the public discourse in relation to the state and the economy.⁷ The lack of equal representation is common in extended, deliberative forms of democracy in which citizens participate more actively in planning and decision-making procedures, as these forms tend to give disproportionate power to people who have the means, time and opportunity to participate – a situation that undermines the widely held concept of representative democracy. In addition, citizens are too frequently conceived of as a homogenous group, so that differences both between and within various groups are seldom recognised.

Furthermore, from the 1960s onwards there has been a proliferation of various ICT tools for supporting democratic decision-making, and the field of e-participation has also struggled with similar problems of representation. The relationships among those who participate in Internet discussions are no more egalitarian than in other forums. Gender research into new media indicates that gender, race, and ethnicity as grounds for discrimination are just as prominent online as in other social contexts,⁸ and, once again, only certain groups participate in political activities via the Internet. The digital differentiation increases the gap between different social groups.⁹ In a comparison of research on the digital divide and research on community satisfaction, Dutta-Bergman demonstrated that the relationship between involvement in local political life and greater use of the Internet involves dividing people into many fragmented groups based on their identity and common interests rather than bringing together different groups and perspectives.¹⁰ At the same time, ICT and more globalised societies have changed the understanding of concepts such as 'common' and 'public'. The process of defining common problems and whom they involve remains unclear and controversial. Hence, both planning and decision-making processes often give rise to

conflict, are excessively time-consuming, and regularly end up in an impasse.

Given the many facets involved, the issue of representation in planning processes calls for a cross-disciplinary approach. We therefore established a joint research project involving the School of Architecture and the Built Environment at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, and the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences at Stockholm University. The research project team is exploring communicative structures on site, using various methods ranging from media analyses, interviews and participatory observations, to public seminars and more exploratory art projects in the public space. [fig. 1]

One area of research under focus is the lack of equal representation in participatory processes, which we consider by investigating and using the concept of *recognition* as a fundamental aspect of participatory urban planning. Below, we discuss one of our case studies and relate it to democratic theory and the critique of participatory practices in urban planning we presented above. The case is quite typical in the sphere of urban planning, but particularly interesting as it clearly demonstrates the impact of changing information structures on participatory processes. We conclude by arguing that the insights gained can help identify strategies for solving the problem of a lack of equal representation in the participatory process.

Urban planning in Husby

Car fires and riots have put Husby and other parts of suburban Stockholm on the global map. The events of May 2013, in which 76 cars and 21 schools and kindergartens were set on fire, and where youths threw stones at the police, is described in the media as symptomatic of a growing alienation in suburbs marked by immigration, social problems and unemployment. The media account



Fig. 1: Open Space by Anna Hasselberg (2012) is part of the art project in Husby. © Martin Hultén.

is dramatised and aestheticised, and presents a picture that is in sharp contrast to the normal, quiet, everyday life in Husby, a suburban idyll surrounded by extensive green areas. Husby was built in the 1970s as part of a ten-year national programme (1965-75) to combat inner city slums and simultaneously construct new, prefabricated, multi-storey housing in the suburbs. The construction of these suburbs was one of the core pillars of the Swedish welfare model. The inhabitants were offered clean and functional homes according to the ideals of the time. In 2012 there were about 12,000 people living in Husby, mostly in rented apartments, in an area built for a small-scale community. Husby is located along a subway line about 15 kilometres north of Stockholm's city centre. The area is home to many immigrants: 86.4% of Husby's population were born outside Sweden or had both parents born outside Sweden, compared with 33% in Stockholm as a whole.¹¹ The unemployment rate in the area is 8.8% (Stockholm, 3.3%), and the percentage of people in work is 55% (Stockholm, 77%). Voter turnout is similarly low: 55% (Stockholm, 81%).

Public opinion regards Husby as a problem area. Furthermore, the buildings have aged and there is a substantial need for renovation. In the light of these issues, there is a broad public consensus that Husby is in need of substantial redevelopment, including housing rehabilitation, social upgrading, and densification. Stockholm is also growing at a fast pace, and the municipality of Stockholm has developed strategic plans for new developments as well as for densification of existing suburbs to host this growth. Densification plans include Husby. A first planning proposal was presented in 2007, but has been frozen for the time being due to protests by local residents.

Both the redevelopment plans and the municipality's definition of the problems differ from the ideas and opinions held by Husby's residents. The plans coincide with cuts and changes in the delivery of

public services, and there are political controversies surrounding many of the initiatives included in the planned investments. The dilemma facing Husby is not only that the stakeholders cannot agree on how to solve the local problems but also that they cannot agree on defining them. This lack of a shared viewpoint makes it extremely challenging to find a solution that will satisfy the interests of the various stakeholders. As a consequence, the process of agenda setting is submerged in conflict. From a representative-democratic perspective, it is the region's long-term interests that should be the starting point for development strategies for Husby. 'Citizens' from this perspective are not only those directly affected – those living in Husby today – but also a wider group of stakeholders, given that Stockholm is an important economic node for the whole of Sweden.

From a deliberative-democratic perspective, all those who are affected by the decision should participate equally in the public discussion and, where there is a preparatory discussion, should ultimately reach a decision on rational grounds. From this perspective it is important to prepare and formulate the political issues by public debate with all the affected parties. In practice, the values at stake are too large to realistically reach a consensus decision. From the municipality's perspective, the growth of Husby is an objective, since the neighbourhood is strategically located between the city centre and the international airport, with a good communication network and recreational surroundings. From the perspective of Husby's actual residents, the municipal authorities' development plans imply that people who have lived in the area all their lives might be forced to move because they will be unable to afford the anticipated increased living costs.

According to the citizens of Husby, the mediated public sphere is dominated by a group of people who are not located in Husby and who acquire their information from police sources and press

releases. However, the dominant discourse in the public sphere maintains that Husby is an area suffering from high crime rates and social problems due to poor education, cultural differences and poor anchorage in civil society.

This negative image of Husby has created a local backlash. The inhabitants do not recognise the picture painted by the media and shared by public officials. In local public spheres, the discourses are different. Husby's residents feel comparatively safe and confident, and thrive in their community. They consider problems related to the recent influx of immigrants with low incomes and education levels to be small and mainly caused by cuts and deficits in services such as schooling, day care and welfare services.

Unlike the scenario related to problems in the 1960s, when a radical democratic ideology was central, the controversies are not just about the unequal distribution of resources among different stakeholders or the perception of planners as collaborating with powerful economic interests, but also about *recognition*: the residents feel that their perceptions of the situation do not coincide with how they are framed in the media or expressed by public opinion.

According to Husby's residents, planners should focus on social problems and not primarily on the physical environment. Various local organisations have therefore taken matters into their own hands and are working against the dominant discourse by creating their own. These interest groups have developed a strong common identity, where the self-defined values of 'Husby' are important common denominators.

The youth organisation Megafonen serves as one example of such interest groups. [fig. 2] Founded with the goal of creating an alternative view of Stockholm's northern suburbs, here,

young people in the community come together, positing their own conceptions of the neighbourhood. The founders were seeking a more nuanced picture of young people and Husby than the dominant Swedish media sphere allowed and wanted to launch a debate on their own terms through an online forum and organised discussion evenings.

Megafonen and its representatives have quickly gained attention in the dominant media, and the group is currently an informal representative for both the young people and their parents when an issue is to be debated; for example, when police shot a sixty-nine-year-old man in Husby, Megafonen organised demonstrations against police violence, and again, when the local meeting place, Husby Träff, was occupied as a protest against relocation plans.

Thanks to the use of social media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, local people in Husby have established information channels which manage to influence the dominant discourse, and have developed relationships with other groups with similar interests.¹² The network Järva's Future has organised opposition to proposed gentrification plans. Politically independent and not a formal association, the network is organised by means of a mailing list comprising people from different parties and associations in the area.

But even within groups of people with a broad consensus, power structures that limit participation still exist. The association *Street Gårds*, which uses a Facebook group as a meeting place, was founded as a reaction to male dominance in contexts such as youth centres, and school classrooms and corridors.

In Husby's urban planning process, the municipal authorities actively tried to establish a dialogue with the residents to encourage them to accept the development plans. In the course of just a few days

spent collecting opinions and discussing plans with the citizens, the municipality were able to reach a much larger group than dialogue meetings in Sweden's urban planning process usually attract. Residents responded to questions concerning where they felt safe and where they felt insecure, and were asked to suggest proposals for improvements to the physical space. This result was achieved by using young people from Megafonen as ambassadors. Their local knowledge and multilingualism were exploited in order to reach groups of adults who otherwise would not have participated because of language problems or their unwillingness to expose their views. There was therefore a strong degree of recognition between those who organised the dialogue sessions and the participants. The issues were also important to the residents since their immediate environment was at stake. Consequently, both the level of participation and expectations were high. The youth organisations also had great expectations that their accrued time and the capital built on their reputation would make a difference.

However, the municipal authorities never saw the citizen dialogue as anything more than a way of obtaining information. They had no intention of involving the participants in the actual decision-making. For their part, the urban planners were focused on a restricted field that concerned roads and buildings and avoided issues that the citizens found more urgent, such as the provision of social services in the area. Accordingly, reactions were strong when the final proposal did not meet the local activists' expectations. The municipal authorities took more account of the Stockholm region as a whole. Therefore, although the participatory approach created considerable expectations for direct influence in the decision-making process, these were never realised. Instead, the documentation of the dialogues, including quotes from citizens and their images, were used to justify a new plan that was almost identical to the one that had initially

been criticised.

One of the major conflicts in Husby developed from a change in the structure of local communication. The neighbourhood was built to create many venues for social interaction. There is no main square but several small ones, as well as a library, community centre, medical centre, grocery stores, restaurants, small shops etc. Pedestrian walkways avoid road traffic and connect the various parts of Husby, which means that children can play in safety. When the area was built in the 1970s it was designed for community life. Each apartment block had a meeting room, and each district had a recreational centre. There were management staff who assumed an informal role as 'information channels' between residents and public agencies. One community centre built adjoining one of the squares had a restaurant, and a stage that could be used for debates and parties. Over time, public services in Husby deteriorated due to changes in the Swedish welfare system and dominant political ideologies. The neighbourhood managers disappeared, as did other service personnel. Recently, the privatisation and closure of public housing, together with plans to remove the pedestrian/traffic separation, have provoked substantial local protests and illegal squats.

In parallel with the decline in publicly supported common spaces, the common domains in semi-commercial spaces online are widening. An important source of information among Persian speakers in Husby and other parts of the world is *Radio Peyvan*, a community radio based in Husby. The role of the Iranian Culture Association, which operates the radio, is to strengthen a sense of self and thus promote integration and participation in Swedish society. One of the more popular programmes has explained the activities of parliament and the government. The use of Persian has made it easier for the elderly (whose knowledge of Swedish is limited) to follow and therefore to



Fig. 2: Bana Bisrat from Megafonen at demonstration against Swedish migration policy in Stockholm 2013.
© Calandrella.

understand and participate in the community. *Radio Peyvan* also presents and discusses Swedish news. The radio channel works rather like a bulletin board, advertising events and hosting call-in programmes that discuss a range of urgent issues. The radio is also available on the Internet and, according to its producer Bahman Motaei, has about 8,000 online listeners, an estimated 90% of whom live in Iran. For Bahman, it is important that people who contact the channel are given space and can control the content. His aim is to act more as a moderator, listening and making sure that everyone has a chance to talk.

The Iraq Art Association is another active community in the area, and official Iraqi media comment on exhibitions at the art gallery. Although these organisations do not have much influence in the official Swedish cultural sphere, they are part of other global communities. This is an example of how globalisation has reshaped the foundations of the shared local sphere and how residents of Husby act in various public arenas not shared by the officials of the Stockholm municipality. Neither does the municipality see Husby's current residents as its main 'citizens'. Instead, the municipal authorities consider how they think Stockholm should evolve over time from a global perspective and, consequently, place importance on attracting financially strong partners to invest locally. 'Global' connections in this context are of a different kind from those represented by Husby's residents, many of whom have Swedish as their second or third language.

What is most interesting with regard to Husby is the gap in worldviews between the decision-makers from the city council and the residents. This can be explained by examining how Husby is presented in the dominant media. Ekberg shows how Swedish journalists are not only concentrated in the major cities, but also reside in a small number of neighbourhoods in the inner city.¹³

Our media study shows that Husby is often portrayed as a problem area in news articles.¹⁴ Half the articles and notices about Husby describe some kind of problem, and the majority of individuals selected as subjects or spokespersons in the articles – the ones who are portrayed or interviewed and whose opinions occupy a central role in the press – are middle-aged and have typical, ethnic, Swedish names. In general, they tend to be people with a position in society, usually working for a government or municipal authority, whereas the majority of 'objectified' individuals in the articles, those mentioned and discussed but not directly interviewed, are 'young people'. The positions presented in the articles are far from an equal or fair representation of the diversity found in Husby, or elsewhere for that matter. One can see the public sphere as a mirror in which some people can recognise themselves more than others. 'Young people' feature extensively in the reporting, but mainly as objects of concern. The people showing concern and doing the talking are middle-aged and are often representatives of public authorities: politicians, civil servants and police officers.

There is, however, one exception that counters this media approach: the local journal *Norra Sidan* has taken a more constructive attitude. It was founded as late as 2012 as a reaction to the discrediting style of journalism in other media. Its strategy is to conduct so-called citizen journalism by reaching out to residents and seeking to formulate problems and solutions together with its readers. Although the paper is only issued monthly, it has rapidly become an important local source of information.

In the newspaper *Norra Sidan* it is the local people who write, which makes it different, creating a different feeling. Crime is not the only thing that occurs in the area. The [other] media give a false image. The image has consequences. A while ago, the kids played with the image by making fun of it. They harassed those who came here they did not recognise, just to confirm

the prejudices. (Amir Marjai, aged 45).

For Rouzbeh Djalai, editor of *Norra Sidan*, the point of the local newspaper is not to change other people's image of a place – the most important thing is to change the self-image of the people themselves.

If the local newspaper constantly stresses that you live in a crappy area, then you have to, as a reaction, either move away or it's you who are the problem, and you make the problem your identity. (Rouzbeh Djalai, aged 47)

The uneven distribution of visibility for different groups in the media is not unique to reporting about Husby, but it clearly shows that the public sphere is a highly unequal place in terms of its representation and recognition of identity. Given that the media offers an important place for deliberative dialogue and democratic agenda setting, media discourses are fundamental to the way politicians and urban planners define and frame the problems that urban renewal is supposed to solve.

Participation, democracy and globalisation

As we discussed above, conflicts have arisen regarding the way in which Husby's problems are formulated and presented. The Municipality of Stockholm wants to develop and rebuild the area while the residents want better social services, and would prefer lower rents to renovations. An important part of defining the problem takes place in a public sphere that is dominated by restricted discourses.

The 1960s and 70s marked a period in which American urban planners were engaged in the civil rights movement and the struggles against the displacement of low-income communities. The rapid transformation of Western city centres provoked people to raise their voices and protest about insensitive rebuilding schemes and gentrification projects

determined by power elites who held no dialogue with residents in the local communities. A planning profession that only focused on the physical environment was questioned, and a view of the city as a total social, economic, and cultural system was emphasised. The critique was also strongly against an overly rational attitude towards urban renewal, which saw planners aligning themselves with powerful real-estate interests. At that time, new, more inclusive, planning paradigms appeared, such as transactive and advocacy planning. Advocacy planning, for instance, emphasises the conflicts and diversity of interests in the planning process, and maintains that the planner should not represent only one public interest, but acknowledge the presence of many and conflicting ones. One of its leading proponents, Paul Davidoff, has also criticised the fact that most so-called public participation programmes are reactions to government proposals rather than initiated by residents presenting their own proposals:

Intelligent choice about public policy would be aided if different political, social, and economic interests produced city plans. Plural plans rather than a single agency plan should be presented to the public. Politicizing the planning process requires that the planning function be located in either or both the executive and legislative branches and the scope of planning be broadened to include all areas of interest to the public.¹⁵

In this model, a radical democratic notion of public participation is a central tenet, and a multitude of public interests are assumed and respected. The formal planner is merely a facilitator who is supposed to stimulate primarily underrepresented groups to actively participate in the processes. The model also emphasises the political aspects of planning and the importance of recognising unequal economic conditions and power differences.

This model is interesting in relation to development plans for Husby. As with the urban planning Davidoff criticised in the 1960s, it is not primarily the

residents' interests that are being taken into account. The planners represent the one and only 'general best': there is no attempt to present multiple plans that include the standpoints of different groups of stakeholders. There is a clash of interests between the officials who want to change Husby and the residents of Husby who may have to relocate as a result of these changes. This conflict seems to be reinforced by the fact that the planning officials and politicians in charge, who do not live in the area, are also of a different class and ethnicity from the residents of Husby who are directly affected by the planning decisions. The gap between the conflicting interests and worldviews is simply too large. In addition, the agenda and discussion are governed by a hegemonic discourse in the public sphere, which reproduces discriminatory *structures*. *Ideally, we would like to see efficient means of enlightened reasoning taking place, much advocated by proponents of deliberative democracy. But as Mouffe, for one, has noted, this is only possible if no major conflicts exist between the different groups, which is not the case in Husby.*¹⁶

Consequently, the public sphere in which political issues are considered can be a profoundly undemocratic and unequal place, governed by ideologies very different from the ideal model of democracy in the deliberative participatory paradigm. Inequalities may also multiply when information and communication technology reinforce dominant norms about what questions are political, thus increasing the tension between different groups in society: those whose questions count as political and those whose issues are not even discussed. On the other hand, the increased use of social media, where the focus is on friends and family, has transformed what were once private social spaces into public spheres with a global reach. The development of public spheres on the internet can be regarded as an opportunity to create more alternative sources of information, and a way of breaking information monopolies. Fraser suggested the term *subaltern counter publics* for

these types of alternative public spheres, where contested identities, such as minority groups, can develop their own discourses without constant questioning from hegemonic worldviews.¹⁷

It should be noted, however, that minority groups also tend to be structured within certain parameters – age or gender for example – and are no more democratic than the dominant sphere: members of the same group may well have different, conflicting interests. In Husby, for example, *Street Gärås* was founded as a reaction against male dominance in local public spheres,¹⁸ and may serve to illustrate what John Dryzek calls a 'discursive democracy'. In this model, just as in a deliberative democracy, the agenda is defined by the dominant discourse; however, by creating places where alternative discourses can be developed, these can grow strong and influence the discourse of the dominant public sphere.¹⁹ In this context, the group's identity and interests may not necessarily be uniform. In contrast, a political practice that emphasises the antagonism between different groups underestimates the contradictions and unequal power relations within these groups. Identity-based groups held together by common norms and cultures can be composed of individuals with a variety of interests. In this respect, new media can enable individuals from different groups to gather more easily around specific interests (such as feminism), regardless of their identity-group affiliation (such as being young or from Somalia), which may loosen the links between interest and identity. Dryzek further argues that in order to reduce the significance of antagonism between different groups, we need public meeting rooms far from the hot political locations where decisions are made. Within these micro-public spheres more creative discussions can take place between people with similar interests, and thus enable the development of arguments and ideas strong enough to influence a larger public sphere.

To sum up: since the 1960s, participatory practices have become a norm in many areas, but the underlying ideology has changed towards a notion of democracy that focuses less on redistribution and more on recognition and representation. Furthermore, ICT is changing the concept of the common sphere; for instance, local issues (such as the action of Husby's young girls against male dominance) can easily become part of a global movement (the feminist movement, for example), while questions about who is affected by changes in a given situation become more difficult to answer as economies increasingly intertwine. Participation in urban planning therefore not only entails being part of the decision-making process, but also being part of the agenda-setting process, which evolves from discourses developed in the dominant public sphere: discourses that are also influenced by subaltern counter-publics formed from communities of interests. In Husby, the interest organisation Megafonen and the network Järva's Future are both examples of subaltern counter-publics that have managed to develop their own powerful discourses, which in turn have influenced general public opinion. Therefore the next question to ask is what motivates the individual to participate in a community of interest and to develop alternative public spheres?

The importance of recognition for participation

In the 1970s, Davidoff emphasised that redistribution was the ultimate goal for urban planners, and that equal representation in the planning process was the condition for this.²⁰ Representation is increasingly relevant today given that the perception of the nation state as the basis of institutionalised democracy is being questioned by the rise of global movements dealing with issues – from human rights to the environment – that involve globally scattered stakeholders. Participation is not just about taking part in decision-making processes, but also entails defining who is a legitimate, representative 'citizen' in these processes.

In addition to redistribution and representation, Fraser also adds *recognition* of one's identity as important for democratic justice.²¹ Particularly in a global perspective where the participant is not clearly defined, recognition of one's worldview and identity is important for developing the incentive to participate in the deliberative process. As one of our informants remarked in the interview: 'The satellite dishes are illustrative. Many people do not experience what is around them as real. What is here is not your truth, so you turn away, maybe to your home country, to get information from outside'. (Amir Marjai, aged 45)

Information technology facilitates parallel public spheres. If one's identity is not confirmed in one forum, involvement is reduced, but it might increase in other forums. If representation is considered from a perspective where the motivation for engaging in a community is not (only) based on national and geographic boundaries but also involves relationships between participants in dynamically-created global communities of interest, recognition both motivates and structures representation. According to urban network theory, participation in informal networks is organised along parameters such as class, gender or ethnicity, verifying the assumption that equals seek equals.²² People with similar interests or similar problems are attracted to each other as they acknowledge each other's perspectives, codes, and rituals. In this perspective, community is about *recognition* and shared cultural norms and values, developed through interaction between individuals over time.

Thus, recognition and closeness in time and space seem to be reasons for participating in a community. An individual's relationship with other people in terms of recognition is then determined by the amount of shared common ground, with parameters such as gender and class assuming importance, together with time and physical location. The significant contribution of information

technology in this context is to reduce the importance of time and physical location, making it easier to tie common bonds with peers at a distance. In practice, this means that the common domain shifts from one based on time and geographical proximity, to one where interests do not depend on time or physical location. For instance, instead of having a conversation with people in your physical vicinity whom you might not know very well, the mobile phone allows conversation with friends at a distance, with whom you may prefer to talk. To understand the individual's motivation for participating in the shaping of common, local spaces, it is important to understand how interests arising from shared geographical space intersect with other communities of interest. The individual here can be seen as more or less fragmented into various communities of interest that can be shared by people in the same geographical space, or in a completely different geographical areas. ICT can lead to fragmentation, but by facilitating involvement in local affairs, it can also be used to reconnect people who share the same physical location.

Iris Young refers to individuals who share common denominators as belonging to 'series' rather than 'groups' – a belonging that does not necessarily imply awareness.²³ This interpretation makes it possible to consider individuals as passive members of a variety of interest groups, even ones with conflicting interests. Figure 3 illustrates the difference between a series, a loosely tied interest group, and a community with shared cultural values:

- *Series*: A series of people, who are unaware of each other, share a common denominator. There are no channels of communication.

- *Interest Group*: A group of people who share a common interest and create a public sphere. The individual has a communication channel to the group, be it a shared space, a mailing list, or a similar forum that makes communication with the group possible.

- *Community*: A group of people who share interests, values, goals and practices, and where people often know each other. The culture is mediated in a public sphere.

This chart should be viewed as a scale where the individual may be simultaneously part of several different series, interest groups and communities.

Linking this perspective to Dryzek's concept of discursive democracy, communication tools such as shared meeting rooms, publications, or discussion groups online can develop greater antagonism between different interest groups by strengthening their separate culture and particularity. Yet the same tools can also reduce culture-based antagonism by making it easier for people to contact other groups with whom they share an interest, regardless of any culturally conditioned identity. The feminist movement is an example of this. People from different classes and cultures can form an interest group – on the issue of women's suffrage, for example – and thus change the rules that govern the scope for action of the whole series of women. Husby itself provides another example. The area has many organisations built on common values such as culture or religion. Although these organisations share premises, they otherwise have little in common. However, when the premises were threatened with closure, Järva's Future network was created as an interest group that drew its members from a variety of organisations. Their joint action resulted in a general improvement of the local community.

To conclude: the motivation to participate in the public sphere can be understood as a combination of shared interests and shared values; for example, recognition. The individual takes part in several, more or less coherent, communities of interest, all of which can be seen as bases for public spheres. A social space, such as a restaurant or discussion group online, does not automatically increase

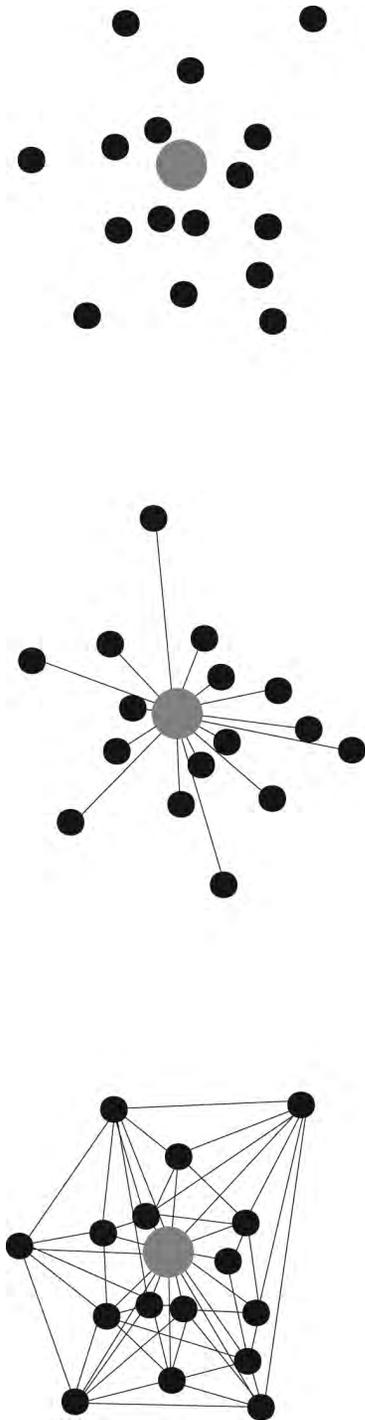


Fig. 3: Illustration of: A *series* of people with a common denominator; a loosely-knit *interest group*; a tightly-knit *community*. Black dots denote individuals; grey dots signify what they have in common; lines indicate that they know each other. The length of the lines has no significance. Illustration: Karin Hansson.

participation but it improves the conditions for participation. Globalisation causes a fragmentation of the local public sphere, but may also strengthen minority groups locally.

Concluding remarks: recognition and community

Today, participation is the norm in urban planning, but the underlying ideology has changed from a radically democratic ideology that emphasised the significance of unequal economic conditions and power differences, to a liberal ideology that emphasises access to information and the importance of participation for a more creative and efficient society. Differences in the ability to participate in planning processes are increased by a media landscape that is fragmented and ever more difficult to survey. This situation has also transferred interest from the economic inequalities between groups to the unequal influence certain groups have on the dominant discourse.

From this perspective, participation is as much about recognising one's personal identity, and how one's concept of reality is reflected in the media, as it is about the redistribution of the means to participate. Recognition is connected to representation. If the individual's self-image is not recognised in the public discourse, it is not represented in the decision-makers' image of the situation. The incentive to engage in the common also decreases if the individual is not acknowledged as a part of this community. Participation is about reciprocity: if the individual does not feel that the engagement is mutual, the incentive to participate is reduced. For most citizens, the personal benefit of becoming involved in planning activities is usually low and the cost of participation high.

In order to create greater engagement in local issues, a community seems to be required where the participants are seen and acknowledged in light of the diversity of the multiple communities they

belong to. Here, common spaces play an important role in helping transform common local interests into common identities. This includes such contexts as public squares, community centres, newspapers, TV channels, or websites that confirm individual self-images and encourage interaction and the collective development of knowledge.

Communities of this kind are not conflict-free. Participation is not a means of getting everyone to take part in a joint creative urban design process. Instead, broad public participation helps to promote more critical perspectives and as diverse a picture of the situation as possible.

For instance, Husby's residents were used as informants in the municipal authority's survey of the area, and their comments were submitted as part of the data that informed the municipal planners. The starting point was that Husby needed improvements. The solutions decided upon were aspects the city planners could control, such as buildings, roads, and repainting houses. The agenda had been decided in advance, and solutions to the problems were already defined. The authorities had already established the framework for discussion. Just as in the type of participatory art where the artist creates the framework and then invites participants to fill in the 'content', people are assumed to be bearers of 'data' that can be extracted, rather than acknowledged as critical discussion partners.

Figure 4 illustrates an individual's participation in diverse interest groups, to which he or she belongs to a greater or lesser extent. People who live in the same area tend to have more common interests than people who do not, but forums such as books, magazines, art, websites and social media loosen the link with geographical proximity. The individual may actually have more in common with people in other locations, and the incentive to engage in issues related to the common location decreases.

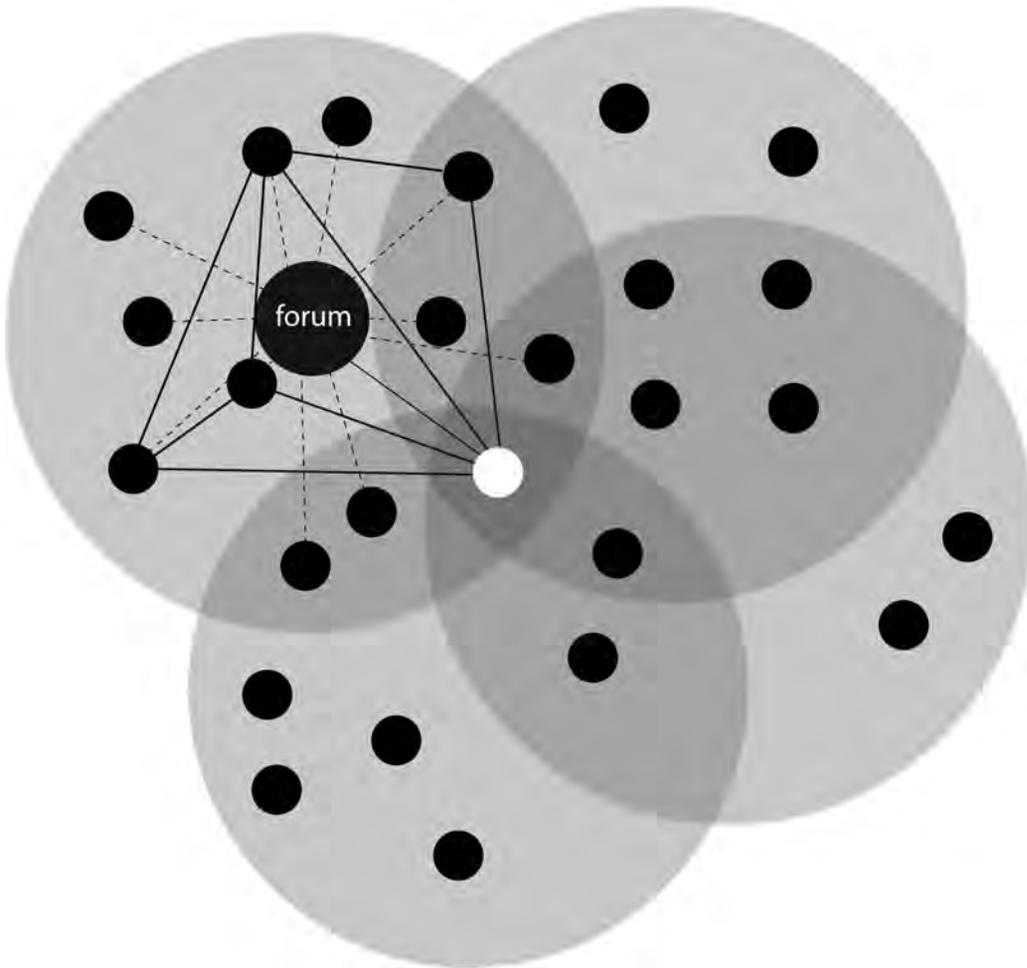


Fig. 4: Illustration of how the individual (represented by the white dot) is included in various interest groups (grey spheres), where such a group also provides a social network as several individuals (represented by black dots) in the interest group share and develop information together through a forum that can be a physical meeting place or ICT. A communication forum (big dot) provides potential contact (dotted lines) between members of the interest group and enables community in the group to develop (solid lines). Illustration: Karin Hansson.

But as Dryzek suggests, communication can also be actively used to strengthen the ties between those who share or are affected by the location: firstly, by bringing visibility to an issue, and secondly, by creating space for dialogue between those affected by the issue. In a discussion forum, the discussion starts when someone puts forward an issue and is interested in developing it with the help of the group. In order to get others interested in participating in the call, it is important to recognise and treat them as equals. In a long-term reciprocal interaction, fellowship and a common culture are developed that will further strengthen the relationship between interest and identity.

None of this is new, but Husby is an example of how globalisation and ICT have gained a significant role in shaping local issues, and thus contains important indicators with regard to reinforcing incentives to participate in urban planning.

To improve the equal representation of participants in urban planning processes requires the creation of a long-term engagement in local affairs rather than in single events. It involves creating spaces and forums for a variety of public spheres where different political agendas can be launched and given time to develop. Common domains such as public squares, libraries, schools, local papers, art galleries and online forums are important settings for communication. A participatory methodology for urban planning should thus be aimed at supporting and acknowledging a variety of communication flows in order to reduce the differences between those with more and those with less influence over the political agenda.

Notes

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Abstract

The concept of open government, having been promoted widely in the past 5 years, has promised a broader notion than e-government, as supposed to fundamentally transform governments to become more open and participative and collaborative. Unfortunately, this has not significantly enhanced a set of fundamental problems regarding e-government. One of the problems is that the underlying democratic ideology is rarely clearly expressed. In this paper, we have therefore constructed a framework for the analysis of open government from a democratic perspective, to explore the research foundation of open government and the types of research missing. We have looked closely at the notion of democracy in peer-reviewed journals on open government from 2009 to 2013, focusing on discussions of some fundamental issues regarding democracy and the type of solutions suggested. We have found that despite seemingly good intentions and an extensive rhetoric, there is still an apparent lack of adequate tools in which public deliberation and representation are addressed in any meaningful sense. There are two main important observations herein: (i) the rhetoric in the dominant discourse supports the concept of open government formulated by the Obama administration as *transparency*, *participation*, and *collaboration*, but in practice, the focus is predominantly on transparency and information exchange, while ignoring fundamental democratic issues regarding participation and collaboration, and (ii) the concept of *the public* is inadequately considered as a homogenous entity rather than a diversified group with different interests, preferences, and abilities.

Keywords

decision support, online representation, digital inclusion, public deliberation, collaborative government, open government, e-government

Introduction

The concept of *open government* has been used for some time now. Efforts to make government more transparent are not new (see e.g., Chapman & Micheal, 2011; Cross, 1953). However,

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information and communication technologies (ICTs) have changed the preconditions for information sharing, and created technical possibilities for a more collaborative information production and sharing culture. As ICT has become more prevalent and part of our everyday life, the focus has shifted from the technology itself to how we use it. The concept of open government sets ICT as part of a wider attempt to transform governments to be more innovative and collaborative. It can be seen as a development of the e-government field that has been criticized for being largely focused on improving government services, and for not looking at the transformation of the government as a whole toward a more participatory democracy (see, e.g., Heeks & Bailur, 2007; Wimmer, Scholl, Grönlund, & Grönlund, 2007; Yildiz, 2007). There are a large number of tools that support a more collaborative, participative, and transparent government, and it seems that these in combination with adequate data support would have a potential for greater use for informed deliberation and participatory decision making. The concept of open government has been increasingly important for accommodating these ambitions, while enabling a more innovative and collaborative public sector, and thereby, facilitating more deliberative and participatory democratic systems. However, several issues are connected with this, prompting for a more radical change of the government and a development of an innovative deliberative democracy based in a pluralistic public sphere.

Collaborative information sharing and deliberative discussions are nowadays increasingly predominant on public platforms such as micro-blogs, online social networks, photo and video sharing sites as well as wikis and various tools that have enabled a bottom-up approach to information production and information sharing. Some of the most well-known tools have been developed by the private sector, such as platforms for photo and video sharing (like *Flickr* and *YouTube*), social networking sites (like *Facebook* or *LinkedIn*), or micro blogs (such as *Twitter*). Others have been developed within or for the public sector. Some crowdsourcing projects are good examples of the latter, where the public typically has been asked to perform a simple predefined task, for example, transcription projects such as The Australian Historic Newspapers Trove (n.d.), Citizen Archivist Dashboard (n.d.), *Civil War Diaries & Letters Transcription Project* (n.d.), or *DIY History* (n.d.). Others demand more from the participants but are still strictly task oriented, such as tools for reporting neighborhood issues, to help governments track problems and manage public spaces (e.g., *FixMyStreet*, n.d., *SeeClickFix*, n.d.), to collect eyewitness reports of violence (Ushahidi, n.d.), to open the patent examination process to the public (Peer To Patent, n.d.), or to submit and vote on petitions to the House of Commons, United Kingdom (HM Government e-petitions, n.d.). There are also systems aiming at making the public sector more transparent, such as *Ballotpedia* (n.d.), an online encyclopedia about American politics and elections; *OpenCongress* (n.d.); and more innovative projects such as *Diplopedia* (n.d.), the U.S. State Department wiki for Foreign Affairs information; *Intellipedia*, a joint information source for U.S. Intelligence Agencies and Departments (Ben Eli & Hutchins, 2010); and *GCpedia*, the Government of Canada wiki (Fyfe & Crookall, 2010); or *MyUniversity* (n.d.) for educational settings. Further common categories include various wikis and community portals for collaboratively sharing information about local places like cities (Kassel-Lexikon, n.d.; *Stadtwiki Karlsruhe*, n.d.). Following these trends for making information of various kinds public, many governments and authorities have started to deliver access to public data wherein people can search, download, reuse, and share data from agencies, localities, or the federal government for the United States: an example of this is the site *data.ny.gov* from the state of New York.

This is in many respects a significant development; however, many problems still remain. Discrimination regarding gender, age, and ethnicity is just as common in the virtual context as in other social contexts. Herring's (2008) review of research on gender-building online shows how gender is relevant even in anonymous text-based chat and discussion forums. Nakamura (2001, 2008) and Wright (2005) show how racial identity is important for participation in interactive online environments. Even though online forums can have many *deliberative* characteristics, studies of online

political discussions in Canada and Poland have shown that the discussions often are neither constructive nor substantial (Koop & Jansen, 2009; Sobkowicz & Sobkowicz, 2012). Furthermore, various tools incorporate peer communication and discussions as a way of reaching consensus, but in actuality, the discussions are seldom combined with any sophisticated means to enable a deliberative democratic process in which relevant facts from multiple points of view are taken into consideration. Yet, there are tools available that focus on different ways to vote and structure argumentation around questions, such as, for example, Your Priorities (n.d.), VoteIt (n.d.), and Simply Voting (n.d.), or decision support systems such as Palisade (n.d.) and Rationale (n.d.). But they are very rarely integrated into more open-ended discussion forums. There are also platforms that aim to capture more systematic and deliberative decision making, (See e.g. Danielson, Ekenberg, Ekengren, H okby, and Lid en 2008; Danielson, Ekenberg, Idefeldt, and Larsson, 2007), but they are often only used for very specific purposes, and even though such structured tools have proven to create higher quality results, their use tends to result in even more reduced participation, since very few can and are willing to handle them. Among others, Loukis and Wimmer (2012) present a comparison between an ordinary unstructured discussion and the one supported by structuring tools, and not surprisingly, they show that the structured discussion added quality, but excluded participants who did not master the tools or this type of reasoning.

It is also significant that on Wikipedia, 87% of contributors are male, typically around 18 years old, and half of the contributors are less than 23 years old, and only 14.7% are parents (Glott, Schmidt, & Ghosh, 2010). Moreover, in the 10 largest Wikis, less than 10% of the total number of authors are responsible for more than 90% of the posts (Ortega, Gonzalez-Barahona, & Robles, 2008). More generally, in an overview of the e-government field, Flak, Moe, and S ab o (2003) illuminate the lack of knowledge about stakeholders' characteristics and differences. Similarly, S ab o, Rose, and Skiftenes Flak (2008) call for greater in-depth knowledge of the citizen as an e-participant, especially given the differences in gender, nationality, social grouping, and cultural background. In the Fyfe and Crookall's (2010) study of the thoughts and attitudes of public servants in Australia, Britain, and the United States, one of the obstacles to a more collaborative government was the dearth of analytic support. Besides, in an overview of the field, Macintosh, Coleman, and Schneeberger (2009) have emphasized that the unequal distribution of Internet access may cause severe countereffects when attempting to strengthen democracy through increased e-participation.

To summarize, the democratic aspect of the current systems for information sharing and collaboration lacks development when it comes to deliberative processes and means to analyse the representativeness of the actors involved. It is therefore important to look at how these issues have been addressed in the ever-increasing number of articles on open government and this paper addresses this through a content analysis of peer-reviewed journals that have dealt with the topic during the past 5 years. The next section describes the current concept of open government, and the third section sets the concept into a broader theoretical framework to analyze the concept from a democratic perspective. The fourth section describes the methodology used and the fifth section presents the results of our content analysis. Finally, we discuss the findings in light of our theoretical framework and suggest an agenda for future research in the field.

The Concept of Open Government

In the research field of computer science, open government can be seen as a new paradigm within different research areas with overlapping and sometimes changing meaning like e-government (making government more efficient, transparent, interactive, and service-oriented through the use of ICT), e-participation (top-down and bottom-up practices of citizen participation), and open data (availability, access, reuse, and redistribution of data to enable interoperability and innovation). The

open government concept encompasses participatory aspects of government such as crowdsourcing as a means to make the government more informed but also to make it more effective as some of the data production and management are distributed to a diversity of actors both in the public and private sectors. But interaction with the public is not only seen as a way to crowdsource information: collaboration concerns deliberative aspects of social media in which information is developed in a citizen to government dialogue. Transparency and information sharing on different levels within government, between government and the public, and in the public sphere means not only that the information shall be accessible by default to promote understanding and accountability, but also that it is interoperable and open for reuse both by different government agencies and the private sector to promote innovation.

The concept of open government has been strongly encompassed and promoted by the Obama administration (Open Government Progress Report to the American People, 2009). An article that maps online “virtual policy networks” (VPNs) has shown that the open government VPN is foremost promoted by the U.S. government and organizations based in the United States (Mcnutt & Pal, 2011). The concept is also promoted by the European Commission (European Commission, 2013) and the governments of Canada (2014) and Australia (2010). In China, the concept of open government has long been promoted, especially to make local government accountable on environmental issues (Horsley, 2010; Li, 2011). The Open Government Partnership (2014), an international platform sponsored by private investors and partner states, now gathers 63 Member States across the world that have committed to defining and implementing shared principles of open government.

The open government concept means that the focus is not so much on the technology but on the interoperability, openness, and participatory dimension that the technology might enhance, as well as on a fundamental change of how governments operate. Our interpretation of the official documents from the United States (Open Government Progress Report to the American People, 2009), Canada (Government of Canada, 2014), and European Commission (European Commission, 2013) that promote open government is that the concept is broadly used in the same way in various contexts, but that the focus differs. For instance, in the United States, private actors and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) already largely govern the public sector, which can explain why the focus is on interoperability and accountability, shared standards, and open data practices. In Europe, where many states traditionally have had a bigger responsibility over their public sector, the focus is on decentralization and opening up to private sector actors and NGOs. In all documents, focus is on transparency and understanding, and public participation is seen as a central means to gathering information. Furthermore, the Obama administration has emphasized the importance of public collaboration, meaning not only to provide government with data but also to develop information collectively in a collaborative democratic process that includes different perspectives (Open Government Progress Report to the American People, 2009). Singapore’s “Government with you” strategy also seeks to co-create information and services with the public (Linders, 2012). In the Australian statement, the main focus is on deliberation and a “greater participation in Australia’s democracy” (Declaration of Open Government, 2010, p. 3).

The meaning of the open government concept thus shifts, from a way to make government more efficient and innovative to a way of improving democracy. In order to analyze how the concept relates to democracy, we will in the following suggest a framework for democracy.

Framework for Analyzing Open Government From a Democracy Perspective

Open government can among other things be seen as a way to strengthen democracy through greater transparency, participation, and collaboration. These concepts are important aspects of democracy,

and to develop these democratic aspects in the interdisciplinary setting of open government, we need a shared democratic foundation.

In Dahlberg's (2011) overview of discourses on e-democracy, and in the reviews of the field of e-government by Heeks and Bailur (2007), the authors all point to a lack of nuanced discussion of the underlying concepts of democracy, and to the fact that it is usually an unarticulated liberal conception of democracy that forms the basis for technology development. Democracy in this liberal discourse is an instrument similar to a market economy, where citizens vote for the political parties of their choice, based on how these satisfy citizens' needs and interests. Here, the idea of individual autonomy and transparency is an essential condition for making enlightened choices. The open government discourse promotes a more participatory government, more in line with proponents for a deliberative democracy such as Habermas (1996) or Rawls (1993). The core idea is to turn back to a classic democratic idea where a broad public deliberative conversation is essential for reaching a shared understanding of the problems at stake and the decisions taken. Without active and engaged citizens, the gap between them and their representatives will create alienation in society and turn democracy into a marketplace for political ideas consumed by a passive audience. The deliberative democracy model has also been criticized, foremost because of the idea of a neutral public sphere without agonistic interests where all the facts are presented and everyone can share a common understanding. Laclau and Mouffe (2001) point out the unequal participation in the public sphere, and the hegemonic discourse that dictates what is possible to express in this sphere and what is considered as political. Therefore, consensus cannot exist, rather it is a "temporary result of a provisional hegemony" (Mouffe, 1999, p. 17), and there is a risk that the belief in this idea can undermine democratic institutions. Mouffe is also critical of the core aim of deliberative democracy to create a neutral sphere beyond self-interest and passion, where an "objective" reasoning and consensus are possible. Instead, she insists that democracy is about tolerating a plurality of values and identities, and should be about turning conflicting interests into competing interests rather than thinking that there is one solution that fits all.

With this discussion in mind, we turn to the liberal democratic theory by Dahl (1989) to identify some core concepts. This theory is useful as a starting point as it does not constrain democracy to a certain context, but rather sees democracy as an iterative and scalable process in *a context that includes those affected by its decisions*. Dahl's democratic model can thus apply to members of a small group or citizens in a state as well as participants in a voluntary organization. Democracy, in Dahl's perspective, is an ongoing reflective process that is not only about collective decision making but also about who is a representative "citizen" in the corresponding decision-making processes. Central to this process is *understanding*: the aim that everyone involved has primarily an enlightened understanding of the problems and opportunities as well as the rights to express their understanding. Thereafter follows basic democratic rights to participate in the *deliberative* process of agenda setting, discussions, and voting. Finally, equal *representation* is important on different levels, from setting the agenda, to discussion and voting. By analyzing these three aspects, we can reflect on the degree of democracy in a situation.

We will now show how open government concepts relate to these three aspects of the democratic process: understanding, deliberation, and representation.

Understanding

Understanding is a central notion in the definitions of open government. The first two directives of the Obama administration report on open government were *transparency* and *participation*, with a focus on providing information (Open Government Progress Report to the American People, 2009). Transparency is put forward as a means to provide citizens with information, while participation concerns how to gather information with the help of citizens. Focus is thus on information to

improve understanding and a central precondition for this information exchange is public participation. The European Commission also talks about transparency and participation in its latest call for open government initiatives, where it defines open government as accountability through transparency and as a way of creating “personalized” public services (ICT-enabled open government, 2013). Other documents emphasize participation as a possible way to reduce costs for public services (European Commission, 2013). The Obama administration also points toward efficiency and improved services and favors the distribution and decentralization of the public sector on several actors, public as well as private. The aim is to distribute this even further and release public data, making it easily accessible and possible to reuse as well as generally enabling governments to become more efficient in various ways. Hence, data interoperability is perceived as important both for accountability and because it can then be used in new and innovative ways. *Understanding* in the open government setting thus means making information that is produced by the government accessible and sharable, but also gathering information with the help of participating citizens.

Deliberation

The Obama administration also provides a comprehensive definition of collaboration that, unlike their definition of participation, not only is about exchanging information but entails creating new knowledge through citizen dialogue and through the development of an internal culture of knowledge sharing (Open Government Progress Report to the American People, 2009). Collaboration here implies that information is developed in *deliberation*, in a discursive form of decision making, supported by tools for dialogue and sharing. Deliberative processes have been discussed widely, especially in the field of political science (Dryzek, 2010; Fischer, 2003). The underlying assumption in a deliberative process is that if we acquire an informed understanding, we, as a collective, will be able to take an informed rational decision by weighing pros and cons and by predicting the consequences of different actions. Even though, in theory, the deliberative framework is believable, it remains a difficult one even when it comes to simple decisions. It is time consuming and energy consuming to gather information and to predict and understand future consequences of a situation. Support tools in the deliberative process aim to structure the decision situation and provide information regarding the alternatives and criteria involved. *Deliberation* in the open government setting thus means forms of collective decisions and information production to enable collaboration and innovation.

Representation

Equal representation is not formally addressed as a problem in any of the documents but rather regarded as a fact or an opportunity. In the Obama administration report, representation is addressed by defining “to involve everyone” as a way to “develop more complete pictures” (Open Government Progress, 2009, p. 6). In the European Commission’s Vision for Public Services (European Commission, 2013), questions about diversity, inequality, or inclusion are excluded. Citizens and the public are treated like one voice. In other documents, diversity is touched upon as a design question that can be overcome to, for example, produce “more personalized public services that better suit the needs of users” (ICT-enabled open government 2013). The official documents about open government are thus rather unclear when it comes to issues like deliberation, and almost numb when it comes to representation. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to see how scholars have looked at these issues and how it has been dealt with in studies of open government tools and projects. In the following section, our methodology is described.

Methodology and Data

The concept of open government has been used at least since the 1940s with different connotations in the research literature, but the quite recent increase in the number of research articles the last 5 years coincides with political initiatives, such as the abovementioned ones. To explore the research foundation of the current open government paradigm, we have therefore reviewed articles on open government in the past 5 years (2009–2013).

We looked at six of the more prominent journals in the field of e-government (see Table A1 in Appendix A). We also investigated other research fields, and to get the dominant and more developed discourse, we excluded conference proceedings and books, and foremost looked at peer-reviewed journals listed in *Web of Knowledge*. As we were interested in the definitions of the open government concept and not the practices, we specifically looked at articles that were directly related to “Open Government” by mention of the concept in a title, in an abstract, or as a key word. In total, the 80 reviewed articles came from 44 different journals (see the list of journals in Table A2 in Appendix A).

The content analysis has examined the way in which the three democratic notions of transparency, deliberation, and representation are addressed in open government literature. We established a context of understanding by also investigating how authors define open government, its benefits, and its problems as well as which parts of the democratic process have been emphasized—understanding, deliberation, or representation—and what types of solutions are suggested to address these. If the issue of representation has not been an issue at all, it is difficult to understand whether it is an issue that the author does not consider relevant, or just that it is not a subject of focus. One way to understand authors’ attitudes to the issue of representation is to explore how “the public” and “the citizen” are defined, that is to say whether it is generally looked upon as one entity or if it is looked upon as a diverse group of people (see Appendix A for summary of questions in the content analysis).

To provoke our own preunderstanding of the concept, we also studied more closely articles that differ from the mainstream open government discourse, as a way to get as many alternative readings of the concept as possible. The research process is described in Figure A1 in Appendix A. Each article was read by two to three reviewers, except for the articles in Spanish, which were only read by one of the reviewers.

Results

During the time span from 2009 to 2013, we found 80 articles with open government as a topic, part of the title or abstract. Three main fields promote the concept: e-government (22 papers), public administration (20 papers), and computer science (18 papers). But the concept was also used in articles covering subjects like political science, law, medicine, education, environment, geography, infrastructure and philosophy. Almost one fourth of all articles were found in the *Government Information Quarterly* with 19 articles; none of the other journals had more than 7 articles on the subject, whilst *Government Information Quarterly* appears as the main promoter of the concept. We had expected more discussion of the concept in the field of political science, but only 5 articles were found in this field. Most of the articles had open government as the main topic, whereas in the computer science field, the explicit focus was often on open data, and open government was simply mentioned as a context.

The Dominant Discourse: Open Government = Understanding

Almost all articles define open government along the Obama administration’s definition where open government promotes transparency, participation, and collaboration in order to reinvent government

and to engage citizens into the decision-making process via the use of new technology. However, regarding what is described as the benefits of open government, the dominant discourse foremost emphasizes the innovative potential for interoperability to make government officials and politicians accountable through greater transparency. Popular themes are transparency, interoperability, well-informed citizens, accountability, trust, and anticorruption. To reconnect to our theoretical framework, the focus is thus on *understanding* rather than deliberation or representation. Activities indicating deliberation are sometimes mentioned as something that inevitably will come with greater transparency:

Theoretically, the main value of Open Data as a concept is that in providing a free public access to various official files the government not only becomes presumably more transparent but also more efficient as it potentially could promote civic engagement by enabling citizens to participate in various discussions on how to better address their needs. (Kassen, 2013, p. 1)

Social media seem to be considered as platforms for deliberation as if the existence of a discussion forum and like/dislike buttons would develop a more deliberative democracy without any organizational support. The idea is that crowds of data activists will transform the data to useful public tools:

Various independent online community projects which use Open Data to create applications and platforms for direct civic participation are good examples of the potential in general. (Kassen, 2013, p. 2)

The issue of who actually participates is not addressed. The public is seen as one homogenous group, without diverse needs or political interests. Of all reviewed articles, only 7 define “the public” or “citizens” as heterogeneous groups that consist of individuals with different interests or with unequal means to participate. Not even from a security perspective, identifying “the public” has been expressed as a problem. Instead, the assumption seems to be that whoever acts like a citizen counts as one.

The basic idea of open government is seldom problematized: many articles do not argue why transparency, participation, and collaboration in government are important or beneficial, the assumption being that these are obvious positive and unquestionable norms. The problem is never open government, but how to reach it. The obstacles to open government that are often discussed in the reviewed articles are mainly as follows:

- Problems to interpret the data: It is not enough to release data. Without the right tools and understanding to interpret it, data are not very useful.
- Cultural barriers: There is a need of a culture change in government, to create open government norms and practices.
- Organizational barriers: There are problems in the current information management that are not compatible with the idea of open government.
- Technical problems and lack of resources: Interoperability demands global standards as well as negotiations between different worldviews and objectives. To maintain the feedback loop with citizens and collaborating agencies, extra administrative resources are needed.
- Motivation: Means to participate do not equal motivation.
- Privacy and copyright: This issue appears in journals in the field of law and public administration. The question is how to handle the conflict between private interests and rights with the public demand for openness.
- Outsourcing of public functions to private companies is another dilemma when it comes to defining the boundaries of open government: when is data open and public, and when is it within the private sphere of companies?

Security is not a focus in any of the articles, but sometimes is mentioned as a concern. The solutions to the problems are related to the research areas in focus. Computer science journals offer improved ways to create interoperability through new ways of linking or categorizing data or suggest better interface design. Public management journals suggest institutional changes and means to motivate participation such as more information, video communication, contests, and celebrities:

For example, if video capability allows citizens to hear directly from public managers rather than simply reading a challenge description, does this drive participation? Does the presence of a judging panel composed of known experts or celebrities drive participation? (Mergel, 2013, p. 889)

Better public relations efforts need to be undertaken to create an environment in which the public wants to get involved. (Mitchell, 2007, p. 27)

It is also suggested that government should act on places where 'people' are, like on social media as Facebook and Twitter. (Mitchell, 2007, p. 27)

However, most often solutions are not specific. Instead, what is suggested to overcome hinders is better understanding, and the solutions provided by the authors are various models and frameworks for open data and open government.

Despite the often-used Obama administration open government definition, the deliberative and representative aspects of democracy are largely lacking in these articles. Deliberation is mentioned in the passing but not problematized. Representation is not an issue at all and just mentioned in passing.

Alternative Discourses: Problems with Transparency

A few articles put forward alternative opinions to the dominant discourse: for example, a difference in the attitude towards the concept of transparency or in the framing of the problems. We took a close look at these, especially to find answers on how to address the questions of deliberation and representation.

One of the few articles that focuses on deliberation is about Regulationroom.org, an online experimental e-participation platform, designed and operated by Cornell e-rulemaking Initiative (Farina, Epstein, Heidt, & Newhart, 2013). Regulationroom is a tool that aims to open up the rule-making process in legislation, by inviting the public to review new regulations. The discussion process is structured according to policies and supported by moderators trained to help users to follow those policies and to foster a deliberative discussion. The presumption is that not only experts have important facts to contribute but that locals with experience of the problem also are valuable.

They thus provide situated knowledge, by which we mean information about impacts, problems, enforceability, contributory causes, unintended consequences, and so on that are known by the commenter because of lived experience in the complex reality into which the proposed regulation would be introduced. (Farina et al., 2013, p. 512)

However, not everyone can express himself or herself in a way that is praxis in the context of law making and, therefore, needs to be educated in the art of rational reasoning. The way information is expressed and collected can also change to fit more diverse ways of communicating. The project not only provided a platform, an education to legislating and moderators, but attempts were also made to reach out to a diversity of stakeholders.

Regulationroom.org is characteristic of the articles we looked at as it has a government perspective. Even though many articles discuss a reformulation/reorganization of government, the pressure to transform it is top-down. In this context, an ethnographic study of open data and journalism stands

out, as it sees open government as a paradigm that was established outside government, through data activism. Parasie and Dagiral (2012) discuss the difference between “computer-assisted reporters” and “programmer journalists” in Chicago, and how both citizen journalism and traditional journalism are important. A traditional journalist role is crucial for interpreting data and looking at the whole picture, while it can be combined with a more collaborative information production, where the journalist/programmer enables participants’ own stories, thanks to easy-to-use interfaces and access to data.

Not only the ability to interpret information and participate in a deliberative discussion is questioned but what transparency entails is also discussed. The quality of the data is one aspect of transparency: in a theoretical article on transparency, Fung (2013) suggests that “The important info might not even be in the data.” Transparency policies generally make available only documents that already exist, not the ones that might be useful or that could be the most relevant. To ensure that important data are produced and accessible, the author suggests that strong nongovernmental collective actors, like a free press, are needed to ensure citizens the right to information (Fung, 2013). Likewise, Parasie and Dagiral (2012) question the single focus on government data in the open government paradigm, where the importance of ensuring alternative data sources is forgotten. Independent information agencies are therefore needed (Parasie & Dagiral, 2012).

Fung (2013) also questions the idea that it is mainly the individual who is the “user” of the data, but professionals and organizations that function as guardians of individual rights are rather the ones who benefit from it. Fung also introduces the idea of data proportionality, meaning that it is especially information about large state or private organizations that might jeopardize citizens’ interests that should be available.

In the dominating open government discourse, participation and collaboration are mostly seen as unproblematic. We only found one article that focused on the problems that emerge with a more participatory system (Cornford, Wilson, Baines, & Richardson, 2013). This article deals with the democratic potential of open data on a local level, and discusses the implications of the Localism Bill 2011 in England, an attempt to create more decentralized decision making based on local participation. The authors point to the problem of conservatism that can occur in too confined, densely linked communities (Cornford et al., 2013). The solution proposed is to create systems that, like academic networks, connect individuals based on interest and thus link the local network with wider global interests to create more innovative “interpretative” environments.

Transparency is mostly something that is looked upon as a common good, and there is no real critique against this basic idea, that data should be “free.” Wikileaks for example is only mentioned in one article. But in an article on strategies taken by the left movement in relation to transparency and secrecy, the authors do question the transparency norm and claim that secrecy might be needed in certain contexts and that secrecy also has been a powerful strategy in relation to the state in different revolutionary movements (Birchall, 2012).

To summarize the alternative open government discourses:

- Deliberation through rational reasoning is a culture that can be taught.
- Nongovernmental collective actors, like a free press, are needed in the open data paradigm to ensure citizens the right to information. The individual does not have the power.
- Data proportionality, information about large state or private organizations that might jeopardize citizens’ interests should be made available.
- To create more innovative and “interpretative” environments, by supporting global interest-based communities.
- That secrecy is a powerful strategy in relation to the state.

To conclude, the dominant discourse promotes the concept of open government as formulated by the Obama administration: transparency, participation, and collaboration. But in practice, it ignores the more problematic notions of deliberation and representation, and foremost focuses on understanding through information exchange. Only one article presents a method to support deliberation with no suggested solution to the issue of representation. Finally, most commonly, the public is presented as one homogenous group.

Discussion

The open government concept that is promoted in the research articles is a powerful meme, as it talks about change, transformation, and even a revolution in government as we know it. It is also difficult to oppose this belief system; the promises of accountability, innovation, and a sharing culture that will be fulfilled if we just follow the same standards. Despite the clear democratic problems with ICT, with increasing inequalities and access to the means to participate in society as being more complex than ever, most research has focused on the less problematic areas of open government, avoiding the difficulties with digital differentiation. Both participation, in which citizens provide government with information, and collaboration, in which information is developed in dialogue, can be criticized from a radical democratic perspective. In this perspective, the “public” is not one but many and is marked by differences. In such context, it is difficult to achieve consensus in a deliberative process because of conflicting interests in and between groups. As research on digital differentiation has shown, ICT has also increased the inequality between different groups’ ability to participate as far as needed literacy and social capital are concerned (Norris, 2001; Schradie, 2011). It matters who it is that discusses and makes decisions. Feminist scholars especially emphasize the importance of “situated knowledge” (Haraway, 1988), meaning that knowledge always is situated in an individual’s preunderstanding of the information. People have different and sometimes antagonistic interests, but they also produce and interpret information differently, which is why the outcome of information gathering also depends on who the “crowd” is that gathers the information. Therefore, there is a need for discussion and action research in the area toward means for a more deliberative democratic support.

Furthermore, trying to access different stakeholders—particularly in more marginalized groups—is notably difficult, and in order to reduce the severity of such situations, it is important to recognize antagonistic interests as well as understand which opinions are visible in the debate and which are not. When it comes to means for a more representative participation in collaborative governments, the existing support tools seem to lack this ambition, with the possible exception of tools that address the need to identify the participants. In an online community, your identity is defined by how you perform online. When it comes to simple and clearly defined task-oriented activities such as the transcription of data, identity is not an issue, but as soon as the tasks become more complex, legally recognized identity becomes important. Therefore, there is a need for more critical research in this area. It also becomes necessary to discuss the reasons why issues around representation and digital differentiation are not discussed at all in these areas of research. In the same way, it is important to question the fact and the reasons why political science scholars have not been discussing open government in their own discipline/publications? This review of the open government paradigm shows that the concept of open government is highly politicized toward a political discourse that is mainly about innovation and efficiency, rather than deliberation and democracy. open data and transparency are means not only for accountability but also for control. Therefore, we need a more critical discussion on who controls the data, how the data are produced, and by whom.

Appendix A

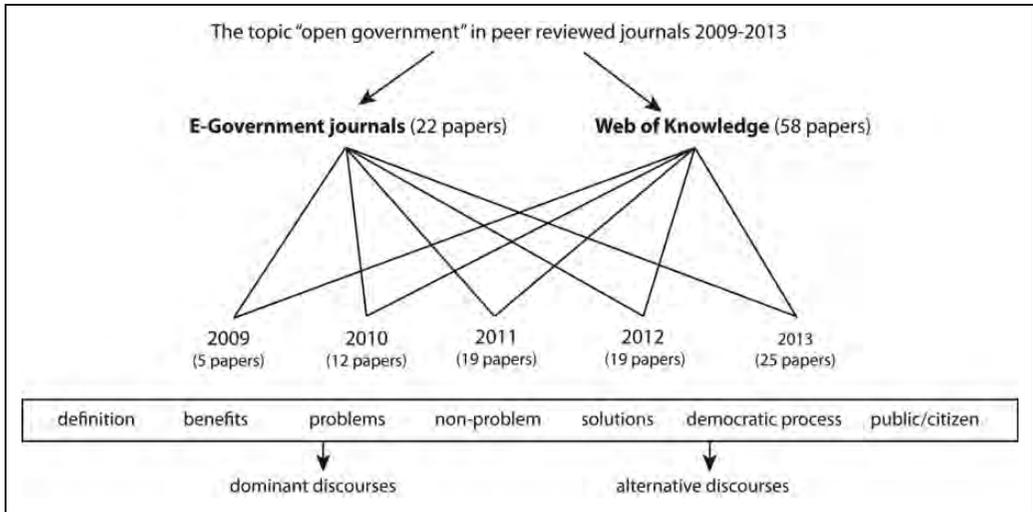


Figure A1. Research process: First we searched for the topic “Open Government” in e-government journals from 2009 to 2013. Thereafter, we extended our search of the same topic to all journals. We reviewed the articles primarily with the seven questions mentioned in Table A3. We looked at both common denominator to identify dominating discourses and especially for alternative discourses.

Table A1. List of the Most Prominent e-Government Journals According to a Review by Scholl (2010) and Listings on Forums for e-Government.

<i>Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy (TGPPP)</i>
<i>Journal of e-Government (JEG)/Journal of Information Technology and Politics (JITP)</i>
<i>Electronic Government, an International Journal (EG)</i>
<i>International Journal of Electronic Government Research (IJEGR)</i>
<i>Electronic Journal of e-Government (EJEG)</i>
<i>Government Information Quarterly (GIQ)</i>

Table A2. Journals in the Database Web of Knowledge With Articles on the Topic “Open Government” and Amount of Articles per Journal.

Journal Name	Articles
<i>Government Information Quarterly</i>	19
<i>IEEE Internet Computing</i>	7
<i>Profesional de la Informacion</i>	4
<i>Annual Review of Law and Social Science</i>	2
<i>British Medical Journal</i>	2
<i>Governance – An International Journal of Policy Administration and Institutions</i>	2
<i>The International Journal of Electronic Government Research (IJEGR)</i>	2
<i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>	2
<i>Journal of Web Semantics</i>	2
<i>Politics & Society</i>	2
<i>Public Administration Review</i>	2
<i>Public Performance & Management Review</i>	2
<i>Artificial Intelligence Review</i>	1

(continued)

Table A2. (continued)

Journal Name	Articles
<i>Canadian Medical Association Journal</i>	
<i>Cartographic Journal</i>	
<i>China Quarterly</i>	
<i>Econtent</i>	
<i>Futurist</i>	
<i>Gestion y Politica Publica</i>	
<i>Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy</i>	
<i>Hrvatski Casopis za Odgoj i Obrazovanje - Croatian Journal Of Education</i>	
<i>Informacios Tarsadalom</i>	
<i>International Journal of Software Engineering and Knowledge Engineering</i>	
<i>IT Professional</i>	
<i>JAMA – Journal of The American Medical Association</i>	
<i>Journal of Environmental Sciences – China</i>	
<i>Journal of Policy Analysis And Management</i>	
<i>Journal of Public Transportation</i>	
<i>Journal of The American Association For Laboratory Animal Science</i>	
<i>Journal of The American Society for Information Science and Technology</i>	
<i>Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government</i>	
<i>New Media & Society</i>	
<i>Information Systems Management</i>	
<i>Political Studies</i>	
<i>Prologue-Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration</i>	
<i>PS – Political Science & Politics</i>	
<i>Public Administration</i>	
<i>Public Administration and Development</i>	
<i>Public Money & Management</i>	
<i>Public Performance & Management Review</i>	
<i>Revista Del Clad Reforma y Democracia</i>	
<i>Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy (TGPPP)</i>	
<i>Theory Culture & Society</i>	
<i>Wisconsin Law Review</i>	
Total	80

Table A3. Research Question and Subquestions in the Content Analysis

How are the three democratic notions of transparency, deliberation, and representation addressed in articles about the open government	Definition	How does the author(s) define open government?
	Benefits	What benefits do they see with open government?
	Problems	What problems do they describe? What justifies the research?
	Nonproblems	What is not a problem regarding democracy?
	Solutions	What kinds of solutions are given by the author(s)?
	Democratic process	What part of the democratic process is emphasized? Understanding, deliberation and/or representation?
	Public	How are “the public” and “the citizen” defined? Is it defined as one or as a diverse group of people?

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MANAGING DELIBERATION: TOOLS FOR STRUCTURED DISCUSSIONS AND REPRESENTATION ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Purpose – In this article we address the lack of adequate tools for deliberation and analyzing representativeness in a more collaborative e-government. Available discussion tools generally lack the necessary structure for supporting more complex reasoning, or they are too complicated to use. The groups of participants in such contexts often lack representativeness regarding the issues at hand.

Design/methodology/approach – This design research is based on two case studies of urban planning projects in Swedish municipalities. A set of semi structured interviews with municipality officials and residents exposed a need for supporting the direct communication with citizens and NGOs as well as groups internal democratic processes.

Findings – We show how a general participatory methodology on different levels of governance can be better supported using a standard type of interface and analytical tools for structured discussions and representation. We furthermore address the traditional dichotomy between the government and the citizens in e-government research by developing a tool that takes the individual actor as the starting point rather than an abstract collective.

Research limitations/implications – The tool is at present foremost useful for communicating participatory methodologies. The empirical testing of the tool and its usability for the abovementioned purposes is still limited and further validation studies should be done for demonstrating its supposed impact at a larger scale in real case settings.

Practical implications – Except for being an analytical tool for analysing participatory attributes and for better understanding how decisions are formed, the platform also includes tools for more elaborated decision support as well as support for voting and pro/con argumentation integrated with discussion forum for providing reasonable conditions for a broader more well structured participation.

Originality/value – This platform provides integrated analytical tools and elaborated decision support for the individual user to support democracy from a micro perspective rather than a government perspective and goes significantly beyond the capacities of similar tools and methods presently available.

Keywords: Decision support, Representation online, Digital inclusion, Public deliberation, Open government, E-government, T-government, E-participation.

Classification: Technical paper

1 Introduction

The use of ICT such as websites and social media as a mean of creating a more collaborative government has been explored thoroughly in the e-government field, c.f. e.g., (Heeks & Bailur, 2007; Roy, 2003; Yildiz, 2007). However ambitious, due to technological barriers, lack of security, privacy and trust, lack of resources, digital divide, poor management among other things, these ambitions are often not fulfilled (Rana, Dwivedi, & Williams, 2013). Moreover, focus is often on enhanced public services and improved government operations and less focus is on how to support the transformation of governments caused by more open and interactive ways of operating, enhancing democracy and supporting administrative and institutional reforms (Dawes, 2008). There are however some exceptions more recently discussed. The concept *transformational government* as discussed in (Irani, Elliman, & Jackson, 2007; Irani, Love, & Jones, 2008; King & Cotterill, 2007; Lindblad-Gidlund & Nygren, 2011; Veenstra, Klievink, & Janssen, 2011), and the concept *open government* (Hansson, Belkacem, & Ekenberg, 2014; Janssen, Charalabidis, & Zuiderwijk, 2012; Linders, 2012; Maier-rabler & Huber, 2011; Nam, 2012), have encompassed a notion of a more fundamental institutional transformation where social media applications support a more collaborative government. In these contexts collaborative information sharing and deliberative discussions ever increasingly prevail in social media on platforms such as micro-blogs, social networks, photo and video sharing sites as well as wikis are put forward as means for creating a more innovative and collaborative public sector and, in extension, more deliberative and participatory systems. Except the obvious tools like *Flickr* and *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *LinkedIn*, or *Twitter*, there are e.g., crowdsourcing projects, transcription projects like *Louisville Leader* (Daniels, Holtze, Howard, & Kuehn, 2014) *Trove* (n.d.), *Citizen Archivist Dashboard* (Owens, 2013) and *DIY History* (Vershbow, 2013). Other projects include *SeeClickFix* (Richman, 2010) and *FixMyStreet* (Ibid), for identifying neighbourhood issues and *Ushahidi* (Gao & Barbier, 2011) for collecting eyewitness reports of violence; *Peer-to-Patent* (Jian, 2010) to open the patent examination process and *HM Government E-petitions* (n.d.) to submit and vote on petitions. Some projects are for making the public sector more transparent, such as *Ballotpedia* (n.d.), *OpenCongress* (n.d.), or more innovative like *Diplopedia* (Bronk & Smith, 2010), *Intellipedia* (Ben Eli & Hutchins, 2010), *GCpedia* (Fyfe & Crookall, 2010) and *MyUniversity* (n.d.). Another common use for wikis and community portals are to collaboratively share information about a local place like a city, e.g. city wikis like *Stadtwiki Karlsruhe* (Wiki, 2008). What all these have in common are that they encompass components for deliberative discussions, in one way or another and thus support a more collaborative government where political problems and solutions are developed more directly with various groups of people.

Despite these new platforms and methods, there are nevertheless some obvious problems regarding representativeness, and in particular concerning unequal access due to technical barriers and lack of cultural and economic capital. Various aspects of this has been pointed out, e.g., in (Abu-Shanab, Al-

Rub, & Md Nor, 2010; Al-rashidi & London, 2010; Aman & Kasimin, 2011; Choudrie, Weerakkody, & Jones, 2005; Elsheikh & Cullen, 2008; Mbarika & Byrd, 2009; Sang, Lee, & Lee, 2009).

Furthermore, the usual problems regarding participation are equally frequent in virtual as in other social contexts. Particularly social media reproduces phenomenon of other social contexts, such as discrimination as discussed in (Glott, Schmidt, & Ghosh, 2010; Herring, 2008; Nakamura, 2008a; Wright, 2005). Herring's (2008) shows how gender aspects, not surprisingly, is highly relevant also in these contexts. Nakamura (2001, 2008) and Wright (2005) show how the perception of racial identity structure online worlds. In the top largest Wikipedia less than 10% of the total number of authors handles more than 90% of the posts (Ortega, Gonzalez-Barahona, & Robles, 2008). Moreover, Flak et al. (2003) and Sæbø et al. (2008) highlight the lack of knowledge regarding stakeholders differences. In Fyfe & Crookall's (2010) investigation of the attitudes of public servants in Australia, Britain and the United States, the lack of analytic tool support were one of the obstacles to a more participatory government. Macintosh et al. (2009) emphasise that the unequal distribution of Internet access may cause severe counter effects when attempting to strengthen democracy through increased e-participation. Discussions at social forums are also often problematical from an egalitarian perspective and are lacking means for enabling a deliberative process where different views are considered, c.f., e.g., (Koop & Jansen, 2009; Sobkowicz & Sobkowicz, 2012). Slightly more structural tools exist, such as e.g. *Your Priorities*(n.d.), *Voteit*(n.d.) and *Simply Voting*(n.d.), or even *Palisade*(n.d.) and *Rationale* (n.d.). Such tools have a potential to provide better structural and analytical support, but are very seldom integrated with popular discussion forums. Instead, many platforms incorporate peer-communication and discussion as a way of reaching consensus, but then the discussions are seldom combined with any reasonable means to enable a deliberative process. Moreover, in many political contexts, discussion forums are launched without very clear objectives when communicated to potential users (Sæbo, Rose, & Molka-Danielsen, 2009). Even less is the support for creating decision structures (Danielson et al 2008, 2007), often making the discussions very unstructured and unfocused. On the other hand, a highly driven analytical framework might result in a strongly reduced participation and exclusion, as not everyone can handle it (Loukis & Wimmer, 2012). There is also a general lack of knowledge about who in terms of gender, nationality, social grouping, that actually participates and how (Fyfe & Crookall, 2010; Macintosh et al., 2009; Sæbø et al., 2008). At a more general level, there is an underlying liberal democratic norm with a clear dichotomy between citizens and government in the research fields of e-democracy and e-participation, where the public or the citizens most commonly are addressed as an homogenous entity, rather than a diverse group of people (Dahlberg, 2011, Hansson et al., 2014).

Understanding and using these processes are crucial in a democratic setting, but the current tools seem to lack to provide this and it seems to be a flagrant need for a new generation of discussion tools, integrating means for structured debate without sacrificing usability. Furthermore, there is an obvious need for greater in-depth knowledge of the e-participant and its behaviour while the currently available tool support systems seems to lack the ambition to identify the users and the interests they represent as also discussed in, e.g., (Hansson et al., 2014).

For these reasons, we have, recently, conducted projects for participatory planning and decision-making where we have been studying and developing participatory methods of various kinds, cf., e.g., (Hansson, Cars, Danielson, Ekenberg, & Larsson, 2012; Hansson, Ekenberg, Cars, & Danielson, 2013a, 2013b; Hansson, Ekenberg, Fürst, & Liljenberg, 2011; Hansson & Gustafsson Fürst, 2013; Hansson, 2013). A significant part of this consisting in investigating e-tools usable both from a bottom-up and top-down perspective for establishing a framework for citizen-to-citizen and citizen-to-government collaboration and, for the abovementioned reasons, we have identified a need for non-hierarchical user-friendly tools with integrated support for structuring open and constructive discussions. But we also need tools that help us analyse the representativeness in the discussion. Thus, unsatisfied with the prevailing methods, we have used two case studies in the municipality Upplands Väsby and Husby in Sweden as the starting point for finding new tools supported approaches to public participation. Despite the quite lugubrious perspective above, the potential of these tools should be substantial if these problems could be better understood and handled. In the following section, we present the methods we used in our design process, Section 3 present a prototype for a community software, where the above problems with deliberation and representativeness are addressed. Finally, Section 4 concludes our findings and discusses future development.

2 Research methods and data

A participatory methodology for accomplishing different levels of information must acknowledge the need of support of interaction on multiply levels, supporting a broad citizen-to-citizen discussion in various forums and formats in more informal groups, supporting data gathering through surveys, focus groups, town meetings and crowd sourcing, provide tools for aggregating and analysing data as well as making the data easy accessible and promote interoperability. Based on these levels we have grounded the design process on two very different cases of urban planning. In the municipality Upplands Väsby the official reached out to its residents and invited them to participate in a vision process on how the place could develop in the future. In Husby, the residents were presented with a finished plan that would significantly change their living conditions.

The municipality of Upplands Väsby has a long tradition of using participatory methods to reach out to citizens directly in town hall meetings and focus groups, or through different local organisations and schools, which is of course time consuming. The public administrators found it difficult to reach out to general groups not being able to participate in public meetings and had started to consider ICT-solutions for trying to enable asynchronous communication with people on distance and to motivate online peer-discussions in focus groups concerning local issues. Furthermore, they have realised that local organisations, such as culture organisations and sports clubs, have been important for the flow of information and as forums for discussions among people already knowing each other. As a comparison we also looked at the case in Husby, where the urban planning project have been stalled for several years because of conflicting opinions about the development. Also here, the municipal have tried to reach out to residents in town meetings and workshops and have, among other things, used a

youth organisation to reach a broader audience not always speaking the same language as the officials. However, these efforts have not been sufficient for solving the conflicts.

The data for the case studies that informs the design process consisted of one hour long semi-structured interviews with, in total, eight informants, together representing a broad spectrum of perspectives in terms of age, educational background and occupation (further described in Hansson & Gustafsson Fürst, 2013). Three of the informants were responsible for the communication in the planning processes for the municipality. They provided information on these processes as well as their general ideas on communication. The five residents that were interviewed were all active in local networks and organisations and had lived in the community between 10 and 40 years. In addition to these interviews we conducted a content analysis of how Husby was portrayed in news reporting (Hansson & Gustafsson Fürst, 2013). The results of the interviews and the resulting design ideas were discussed with the participants, which further informed the study. It turned out that there is a plurality of communicative spheres more or less connected with the spheres officials were using (further described in Hansson & Gustafsson Fürst, 2013). Against this background, we created a community software that could be used on the different interaction levels by the public administration, while addressing the community as a whole in surveying attitudes and opinions from focus groups or by local groups of citizen.

The design process followed a participatory design process. Especially important in this tradition is to engage users using different kinds of prototypes, to explore different aspects of the design, but also to use ethnographic research methods to understand the wider context of the design (Ehn, et al. 1987; Floyd, et al. 1989). To base the design in perceived needs, the design concept for the software was thus developed involving the municipality officials, the IT-department of the municipality and the persons responsible for citizen dialogues. The design was conducted in an iterative manner, starting with a cognitive walkthrough using a low-fi prototype before developing a large scale platform.

3 A tool support for different levels of communication

The analysis of the case studies in (Hansson et al., 2012; Hansson & Gustafsson Fürst, 2013) showed how information was developed and structured on different levels. On what can be called a *discursive* level, various ideas and meanings was expressed and developed in a plurality of forums; from the dominant public sphere in global media resources to local organisations webpages, residents closed social media groups and semi-private e-mail lists. On an *interactive* level, the municipals enabled a direct communication with residents in dialogue meetings, focus groups and surveys. The data gathered by the municipal, organisations and individuals were collected and analysed on an *investigation* level. Some of the data were published and made public available in different ways, such as the municipalities official documents as well as data published by organisations and individuals, i.e., what is often included in the concept of *open data*.

Using a participatory methodology, we addressed these information levels while supporting the communication. Hence, we developed a tool for supporting a plurality of forums, citizen feedback and

interaction in dialogues and surveys, means to aggregate and analyse data as well as sharing and reuse of information. But we also needed a support tool for communication between these levels; making discussions on the discursive level more informed by direct access to available data on the open data level; enabling data produced at the interaction level to be aggregated on the investigation level and published at the open data level to inform the debate on the discursive level. (See Figure 1).

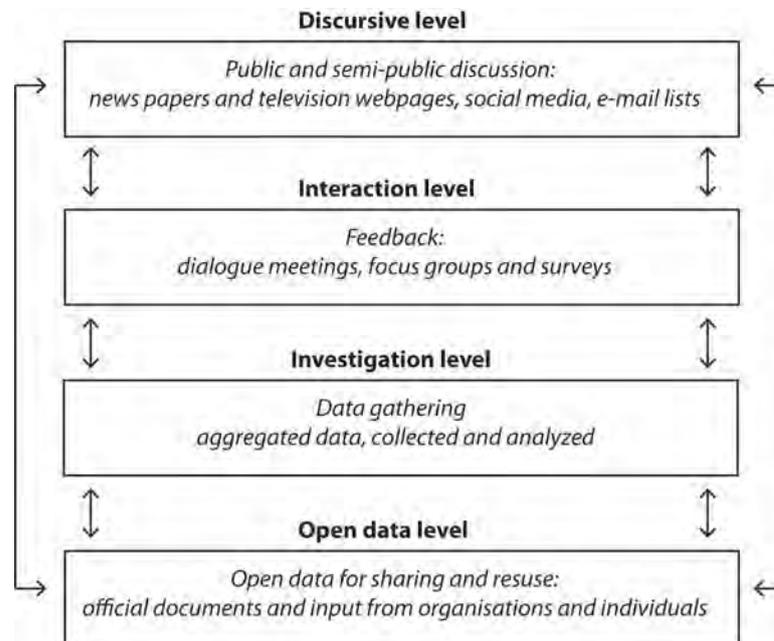


Figure 1. Participatory methodology supporting interaction on different levels; an discursive level supporting citizen-to-citizen interaction; an interaction level supporting citizen-to-government interaction; an investigation layer with analytic support; and an open data level for government-to-citizen communication.

The result is the design concept summarised in Figure 2 as a wiki-like tool, where issues can be suggested, developed and voted on, and where the representativeness of the participation is described. The basic functionality of the tool resembles many other publishing and discussion systems but includes and further develops important missing features. To start a discussion around an *Issue*, the initiator of the group sends an invitation to other participants to form a group. The initiator of an *Issue* is the one that decides when to close it, and how to use the result. This person has the role of the expert and moderator of discussion. Just as in a wiki all changes of the *Issue* are stored in *History*. The initiator can restrict the right of other users to develop the *Issue*, but by default others can *Comment*, *Edit*, and add additional *Documents*. Unlike most publishing and discussion systems, the participant can also structure the discussion by integrating *Options* (and *Sub-options*) in the text, which can be given a *Rating*, and *Pro/Con* arguments. *Statistics* shows outcomes of ratings in relation to user groups, and in *Followers*, the users' individual contributions to the issue are measured

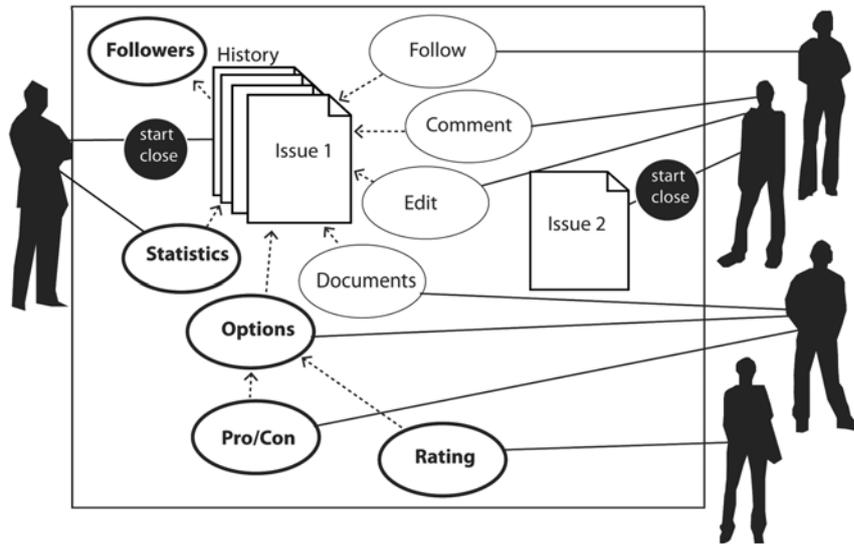


Figure 2. The basic features of the design concept.

The page and the related discussion may also have a time limit. A user can provide a deadline for participants to submit opinions on the matter. In this way an asynchronous but still relatively time intensive discussion can be created. This can be compared to an auction where the bidding (the argument) runs for a limited time, and that the seller (the author) uses the information obtained when taking a decision.

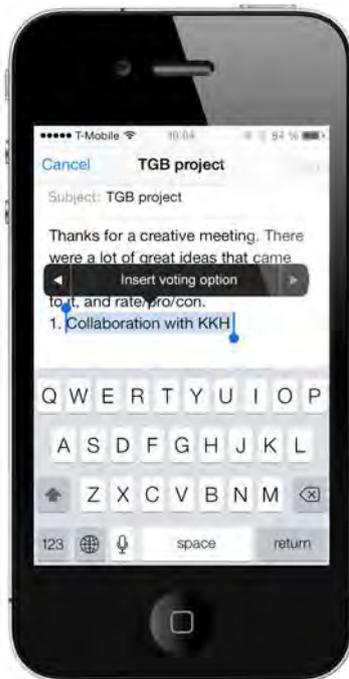


Figure 3. Text in the post can easily be converted to a voting option.

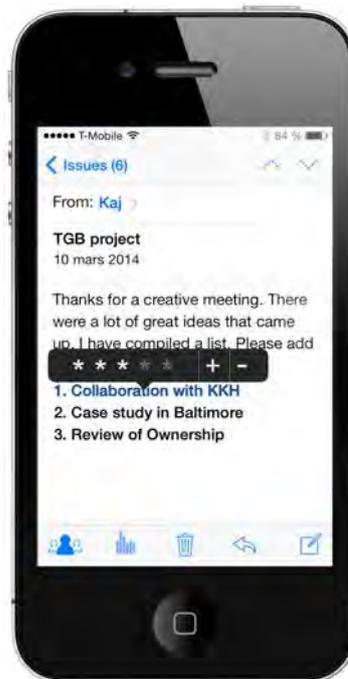


Figure 4. Text tagged as voting option can be "voted" on, and the user can add pro and con arguments.



Figure 5. Voting options in post with nested pro and con arguments.

To create an easy-to-use deliberation tool integrating means for structured debate without sacrificing usability, we started out with a conventional interface on a mobile device, looking much like an ordinary e-mail or discussion forum. But, in addition to ordinary text formatting features like bold and lists, the text can also be formatted as *voting options* (Figure 3). Text tagged as voting option can be “voted” on, and the user can add *pro* and *con* arguments, arguments that also can be nested (Figures 4-5). The editing can continue during “voting”, and the user can changes their votes during the process.

To create means to analyse the debate from a representative point of view users are categorized (or categorize themselves), according to criteria as e.g. age, gender and location (Figure 6). New criteria can easily be added depending on context. The result of the voting on alternatives can then be analysed from different perspectives, and it is thus possible to see if differences in user categorizing affect voting (Figure 7).

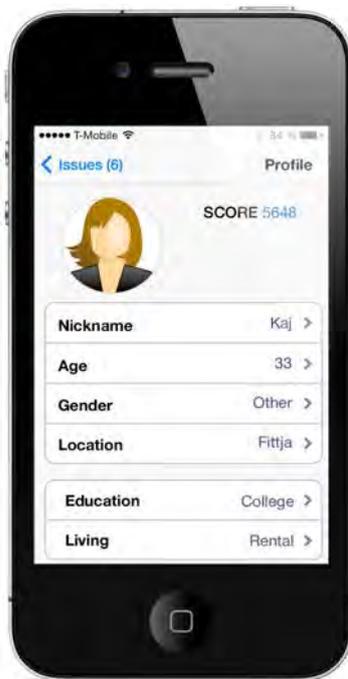


Figure 6. Users are categorized and their total activity and popularity is summarized as a score

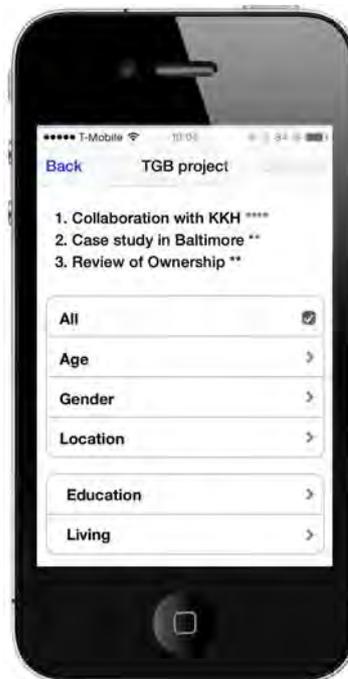


Figure 7. Users can see if differences in user categorizing affect voting.

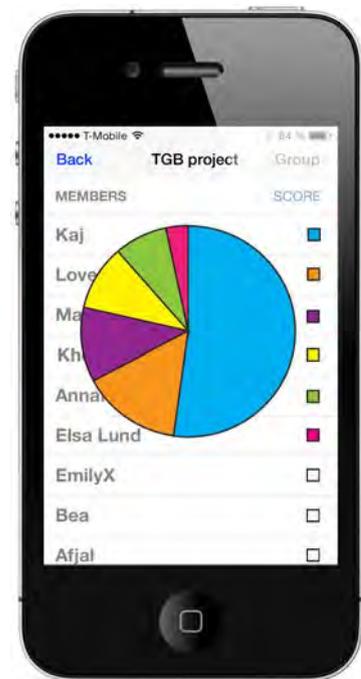


Figure 8. Each issue has a user group. The score reflects (simplified) each user’s actions for the issue, and how other users reacted on these actions.

However, in a deliberative democratic perspective, the discussion leading up to opinions are just as important to understand in terms of representation as the final opinions and it is important to

understand who participated and who did not as well as who got more feedback on their actions than others. This is measured in the user score, which measure both users' activity and how much following activity this activity creates (Figure 8).¹

The statistics and scoring make it possible to analyse the opinions developed in various forums from a representativeness perspective. They also create a starting point for an increased awareness of how opinions are dominated and structured, which, in turn, provide information on how structures can be altered, by for instance changing the way discussions are organized, when one groups perspective never is expressed in the discussions.

The tool is connected to the communication levels in different ways. 1) It can be used on a discursive level to organise publics and develop discussions. 2) It can be used on an interaction level in communication between residents and the municipalities, for example as a tool for making surveys in large groups, or as a meeting place for focus group discussion a certain subject. 3) The tool contains means to collect data on user actions and demography and to visualize it, which is useful on an investigation level to analyse representativeness. Finally, 4) on an open data level, the tool can make it easier to access relevant data, but will also keep information at a desired level of secrecy.

4 Concluding discussion

There is a general shift in the area of e-government from a focus on services and efficiency towards an emphasis on deliberative and innovative aspects, not the least for participatory democracy. Democracy, in this sense, becomes more of a process where a concept of a representative "citizen" and equal representation becomes highlighted and that everyone involved has an understanding of the problems and opportunities as well as the rights to express an understanding of these. Thereafter follows of course the usual basic democratic rights to participate in the deliberative process of agenda setting, discussions and voting and so on. Against this background, the idea of an open government with more direct participation relies to a large extent on the assumption that if more people participate in the production of knowledge and various decision processes, there should be an increased potential for actual participatory democracy. However, as have discussed in this article, there are several obstacles involved herein and a main, albeit not very surprising, result of our work is that there is highly important to understand whom, and whose interests, are represented in the various deliberative discussions as well as to developing supporting methods and tools that can be used to get as complex and varied information about the issue at hand as possible. We have addressed this in a study in the Swedish municipalities Husby and Upplands Väsby, where we needed a tool that could be used at several levels, from local NGOs and small group discussions to the dialogue with representative groups of citizen in the municipalities. From a series of interviews, and earlier experiences over the

¹ The particularities regarding the scoring method is further described in (Hansson, Karlström, Larsson, & Verhagen 2013).

years of these kinds of tools, we have designed a wiki-type participatory tool providing the users with integrated and easy to use means for structuring the discussion, as well as attempting to reduce the problems regarding deliberation and fair representation. The idea was to design a standard interface enhanced with integrated tools for structured discussions and representation analysis, without sacrificing usability and for making users aware of power issues in groups of users.

So the important design considerations when developing some kind of framework to support deliberative democratic processes boil down to some basic concepts independent of the particular technical solution at hand:

- Understanding: Do everybody involved have an enlightened understanding of the issue at stake?
- Deliberation: How is the agenda is set? How is the discussion around the problem organized?
- Representation: Whose issues are represented? Who participate in the discussion?

The design presented here is not the final answer to these questions. Instead it can be used to ask these questions on an everyday basis, monitoring democratic processes on different levels; from the local soccer club developing new ideas for how to develop the organisation and where its important that all members are engaged to get as many ideas as possible, to the municipal officials that are organising a meeting discussing the future building plans in the area and are interested in understanding groups not represented in the context, to find other means to contact this group or ways to visualise their absence so that they, at least, are not ignored. Unlike the dominant research field, which usually has a government perspective, this community software takes the individual actor as a starting point, whether this actor is a certain official, someone from an organisation or just any resident. The interface and all the available tools are the same, independent of whether it is a resident or a municipal official that are the users. In practice, this means that the actors within different organisations are highlighted as owners of specific questions. It also means that a municipality survey can have competition from surveys from other actors using the same instrument. The tool thus questions the traditional dichotomy between the state and the citizens in liberal democracy that seems to be a norm in much e-government research.

Needless to say, despite our enthusiasm, it is still far from clear whether such a tool in actual fact substantially will contribute to delimit the abovementioned issues regarding deliberation and representation and it is definitely too premature to draw any firm conclusions regarding the use of this tool. All transparent systems are vulnerable and maybe many discussions need to take place without any recording or monitoring, albeit anonymous. However, disregarding this and as a complement to informal discussions, such tools can structure the arguments when summarising and archiving meeting notes and function as a library for information around issues. We are now trying to investigate this further and are launching a set of user studies for this purpose. We will also extend the platform with even more decision analytical features trying to capture one or more concepts of rationality, as well as exploiting more ways of visualising the data despite that such an extended tool would again be balancing on the delicate line between broad user friendliness and analytic capability. Probably, such a

tool must be partitioned with a large variety of possibilities, but still very accessible already when using some relevant sub-parts of it. Moreover, a system of whatever kind, however successful this might be with respect to the various features included, can never be useful in isolation. It must be put in a context of a broad participatory methodology, from an active civil sector, to the citizen-government dialogue, to internal communication and innovation. Nevertheless, in such a context it has a potential for working as an important instrument for public decision processes.

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