ACCOMMODATING DIFFERENCES:
POWER, BELONGING, AND
REPRESENTATION ONLINE

Karin Hansson
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


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?


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 konkurrierar individernas deltagande i den lokala offentligheten med deras deltagande i andra globalt utsträckta 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.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the participants in the research circle and the exhibition, and my co-writers Kheira Belkacem, Göran Cars, Mats Danielson, Love Ekenberg, Johanna Gustafsson Fürst, Petter Karlström, Aron Larsson, Thomas Liljenberg and Harko Verhagen for their help in the development of the projects, Ernest Rwandalla and Jona Ekenberg for conducting the programming, Åsa Andersson Broms, Måns Wrange and Ylva Gislén for their encouragement and advice, and all the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments. I am especially grateful for the personal encouragement and academic insights of Love Ekenberg.

This research was funded by the Swedish Research Council FORMAS, project number 2011-3313-20412-31, as well as by Strategic funds from the Swedish government within ICT – The Next Generation.
Selected articles for this thesis


Other published articles within the thesis work


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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 distributonal 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
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 (Schradie 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Epistemology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal democracy</td>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Extracting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliberative democracy</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Negotiating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agonistic pluralism</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Subjectivity</td>
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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 sphericules,” 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).

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

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:

- 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 (Päävärinta 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.

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arnstein’s ladder</th>
<th>Wulz’s stages</th>
<th>Cornwall and Jewkes’ modes of participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participants’ power position</td>
<td>Designer’s attitude to participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Control</td>
<td>Self-decision</td>
<td>Agents</td>
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<td>Delegated Power</td>
<td>Co-decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>Actors</td>
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<td>Placation</td>
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<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Regionalism</td>
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<td>Informing</td>
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<td>Therapy</td>
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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.
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 Science (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.

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 themself 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 questioned 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). A research circle can be described as a study circle 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 students 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

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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.](image)

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; Finkelpearl 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 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 enough for

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.
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

![Figure 9. The Affect Machine materialized as Pokémon cards](image)
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 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.
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 qualitative on the outskirts.
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. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of findings</th>
<th>Design principles</th>
<th>System specifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anyone can join</td>
<td>A discursive forum</td>
<td>A Wiki-like groupware.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Users have the right to edit their own posts and to delegate this right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asynchronous communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Linking structures the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralized system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantly ongoing decision-making</td>
<td>Ubiquitous voting</td>
<td>Linking, commenting, liking/disliking and rating. All actions in the system create a score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status counts</td>
<td>Counting activity</td>
<td>The user’s total score depends on own activity and the score others give the user’s activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-branding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the important informal hierarchy lacking</td>
<td>Visualized status</td>
<td>Transparency and visualization of how score is gained clarifies user strategies, system rules, roles and rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating game</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchy as a way of communicating the system and motivating participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 ofdifferentiating 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.
The groupware that initially aimed at reflecting informal processes was further developed with this in mind. In Fig. 14, one can see the basic functionality of the interface. Here the user has the opportunity to create and edit a post, comment, and vote on it. As in a wiki there is an opportunity to go back in history. Fig. 15 shows how the rating of each activity in the system is distributed in the network of users.

The result of the design process was a wiki-like prototype in which participants’ reputation/status evolved and changed in a dynamic voting process that not only reflects the participants’ activity, but also how this is valued by others. In this way you can see how representative the discussion is for all participants, who is active and how and what gets recognized by others.

Initially, the ambition with creating a software was to understand ourselves and the “decision system” of the art world. Building something together was an alternative to having a discussion. But as this wasn’t a very structured or planned study, rather an exploration of our own theories and actual need to navigate the art world and the academic world, the result became a compromise between different participants’ interests and understandings. Especially as the project was part of an academic research and had to conform to these constraints, other interesting aspects of the project were not developed. The result can be seen as an exploration of the

Figure 14. Basic functions in the Actory system.

...
autonomy aspect of the e-democracy map, an understanding of networking and collaborating (Fig. 16). To this collaborative networked process we added tools for developing a collective agenda and tools that make the process of inequality more transparent and open for discussion.

![Map of the democratic processes supported by the Actory tool in relation to democratic aspects, local/global locus, and macro/micro focus.](image)

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 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.
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.

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

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

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

\[\text{Figure 20. Investments are mutual, but can be delegated, which creates more flexible relations and more fluid borders between individuals and networks.}\]
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).

![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).]

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.
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 of the democratic processes in the urban planning process in Husby 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 show 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 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

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

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.](image-url)
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,

Figure 29. Unequal participation in a performative state.
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.

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.
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 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).

![Figure 34. A map of participatory positions of different tools, power relations, ontologies and epistemologies.](image-url)
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 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.

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).

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

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.
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 (Voida, 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. Crowdsourced 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.

III. Reputation, inequality and meeting techniques: Visualising user hierarchy.

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

V. Art as participatory methodology.

VI. The importance of recognition for equal representation in participatory processes – Lessons from Husby.

VII. Open government and democracy: A research review.

VIII. Managing deliberation: Tools for structured discussions and analysis of representativeness.