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The Power Inherent in E-Democracy

Greenlandic Experiences, Practices, and Visions

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THE POWER INHERENT IN E-DEMOCRACY

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PhD Dissertation, February 2017
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Resumé

Internettet har som ingen anden teknologi (foruden trykpressen måske) været genstand for demokratiske forestillinger. Gårsdagens statiske websider samt de uanede mængder information internettet gjorde tilgængelig har givet næring til to sammenhængende forestillinger: Idéen om at borgere kan vægte og teste politiske påstande og meninger samt frygten for informationsoverload. Peer-produktion og sociale netværk nærer i dag håbet om at dominerende diskurser og privilegerede magt positioner kan udfordres igennem en personaliseret politik. Men samtidig vokser bekymringen for ekkokamre, manipulation og ukontrollerede algoritmer. Disse og lignede forestillinger er indfanget ved fænomenet e-demokrati. E-demokrati forstås i denne afhandling som brugen af Informations- og Kommunikations Teknologi (IKT) til at understøtte demokratiske politiske praksisser såsom stemmeafgivning, debat, konsultation, petition og demonstration. E-demokrati inkluderer således politiske praksisser udøvet direkte af borgerne og indirekte af politikere og embedsværket. Disse praksisser forandres hele tiden i takt med at IKT anvendes på nye måder til at understøtte demokratisk handling. Nærværende afhandling handler om de magtdynamikker, der driver disse ændringer. Målet er at muliggøre en kritisk refleksion af e-demokratiets udvikling.

Afhandlingen består af fire artikler og en cappa. Formålet med sidstnævnte er at forene de fire artikler substantielt, teoretisk, ontologisk, epistemologisk og metodisk samt reflektere over implikationer og bidrag.

Tilgang

Forskningen på området er domineret af politisk videnskabelige studier, der fokusere på effekterne ved at bruge IKT til at understøtte demokratisk praksis. Sådanne studier etablerer pejlemærker for den fortsatte udvikling af e-demokratiske praksisser ved at måle og evaluere internettets effekter op imod normative demokratiske idealer. Sådanne studier forklarer imidlertid ikke fyldestgørende, hvordan forskellige og til tider modsatrettede former for e-demokratisk praksis udvikles. Dette kræver tillige, at de processer, hvorigennem forskellige versioner af e-demokrati konstrueres, undersøges. I afhandlingen sammensættes en tværdisciplinær tilgang, der trækker på elementer fra politisk videnskab, sociologi, antropologi og science-technology-society studies, og som fokuserer på, hvordan magt udøves igennem e-demokratiske visioner og praksisser. Fra dette perspektiv forstås e-demokrati ikke som en teknologisk løsning på en demokratisk krise, men som et polemisk og politisk fænomen. Brugen og afhængigheden af IKT destabiliserer og udfordrer hele tiden hegemoniske antagelser og etablerede demokratiske praksisser. Afhandlingen anvender to magtbegreber til at analysere disse magtdynamikker. Det første begreb, som oprindeligt er udviklet af Laclau og Mouffe, beskriver magt som hegemoni. Det andet begreb er oprindeligt formuleret af Foucault og i de efterfølgende governmentality studier. Det fremstiller magt som forsøget på at styre handling ifølge specifikke logikker eller normer og for at nå et bestemt mål. Begge begreber forstår magt som en handling, der har til hensigt at skabe regularitet. Kamp er en immanent del af magt og forandring er altid mulig. Magt skal derfor studeres ved at udforske kampene for eller imod forandring. De to begreber finder anvendelse på forskellige cases. Hegemonibegrebet finder anvendelse på cases, hvor positionerne og grupperingerne er i radikal opposition til hinanden og hvor de e-demokratiske praksisser synes at opstå mere eller mindre vilkårligt. Foucaults magtbegreb finder anvendelse på cases, der er

karakteriseret ved, at aktørerne forsøger at konstruere strategiske og taktiske e-demokratiske praksisser. Afhandlingen tilvejebringer således en kvalitativ udforskning af både de kaotiske og uorganiserede magtkampe samt de taktiske og strategiske rationaler, der er indlejret i konstruktionen af diverse former for e-demokratisk praksis. I afhandlingen argumenteres det at disse magtkampe ikke kun er befolket og formet af menneskelige aktører men også af de teknologier, der medierer den demokratiske praksis. For at kunne inkludere mennesker og teknologier på lige fod, kombineres de to magtbegreber med aktør-netværk-teori – en afart af science-technology-society studies, som argumenterer for en flad ontologi og for performative aktør-netværk.

Case

Casen for studiet er Grønland. Men på grund a praktiske omstændigheder og metodiske overvejelser fokuseres på hovedstaden Nuuk. E-demokrati er i Grønlandsk sammenhæng et empirisk uudforsket område. Afhandlingen bidrager således til en mindre men voksende litteratur, der bryder nyt land og udvider det empiriske fundament for forskningen på området. Litteraturen er ubekendt med Grønland og samtidig er e-demokrati også nyt i Grønland. I afhandlingen argumenteres det, at Grønland kan anskues som et paradigmatisk case. Grønland er i gang med en afkoloniseringsproces og der arbejdes for større selvstændighed. De demokratiske praksisser er således under stadig udvikling og derfor desto mere påvirkelige af de nye e-demokratiske praksisser, som hele tiden udvikles, ændres og tilpasses. Borgere, politikere, og embedsværket bekræfter og reproducerer ikke blot etablerede måder at tænke og praktisere demokrati. I stedet kombineres og tilpasses diverse elementer i forfølgelsen af forskellige interesser.

Metode

E-demokrati praktiseres og konstrueres på flere måder, af mange aktører samt på mange forskellige steder og platforme. Der argumenteres derfor i afhandlingen for en metodisk pragmatisme og fleksibilitet, der ikke a priori udelukker nogen datatyper eller datagenereringsmåder. I stedet for inkluderes aktører, steder og platforme, samt forskellige praksisser fortløbende. Kvalitative data genereres på forskellig vis: Borgere, politikere og embedsmænd interviewes vha. semistrukturerede individuelle, fokusgruppe samt online interviews. Politiske samt administrative rapporter og strategier, der berører samspillet mellem IKT og demokrati, indsamles. De primære websider, som medierer forskellige former for demokratisk praksis, gennemgås for at tilvejebringe en forståelse af hvordan de styrer brugerens handlinger. Demokratiske praksisser observeres på tværs af on- og offline platforme. I analysen forfølges associationerne imellem de aktører, der former og praktiserer e-demokrati i Grønland. Analysen fokuserer især på hvordan praksis hele tiden er genstand for forhandling imellem et væld a heterogene aktører. For at få greb om magtkampene undersøges det hvilke magtrelationer konkrete e-demokratiske konstruktioner er modsvar til og hvilke effekter disse konstruktioner implicerer. Afhandlingen forsøger således at etablere en sammenhæng imellem de lokale magtkampe og de bredere demokratiske implikationer og bevægelser.

Udfordringer

Studiet står over for og reflektere over en række udfordringer, hvoraf nogle stammer fra forskningstilgangen selv. Viden forstås som et resultat af forhandlinger imellem blandt andre forskeren, lokale aktører, forskningsfællesskabet, det empiriske data og de anvendte teoretiske perspektiver. Videnskabelige artikler forsimpler imidlertid ofte de processer hvormed viden skabes. Det følger ydermere af forskningstilgangen, at forudfattede antagelser om det studerede fænomen bør 'kasseres' og at forskeren i stedet skal følge og lære af de lokale aktører og deres praksisser. Forudfattede antagelser om bade magt og demokrati har imidlertid med nødvendighed influeret analysen. Det er desuden metodisk udfordrende at inkludere alle aktører ligeligt. De metoder, der anvendes til at generere og til dels også analysere data, er oprindeligt udviklet til at generere data om menneskelige praksis og meningsskabelse. De er mindre egnede til at generere data om IKT, hvorfor sådanne nonhumane aktører er inkluderet i mindre grad. Studiet fokuserer på de stærkeste alliancer og de stærkeste aktør-netværk og udelader til gengæld alternative eller svagere aktør-netværk. Dette er metodisk retfærdiggjort, men det følger at kritik kun er muligt indefra disse stærke netværk. Konteksten for studiet er også udfordrende. Jeg taler ikke grønlandsk og det har følgeligt kun været muligt at interviewe dansktalende grønlændere. De lokale aktørers anonymitet er desforuden truet på flere måder: Relevante aktører er identificeret igennem deres sociale og professionelle netværk, hvorfor de kender hinanden i forvejen. Nogle interviews er foregået i grupper. Sidst men ikke mindst, Nuuk er lille og de fleste har en idé om hvem hinanden er.

Resultater

I afhandlingen udvikles et konceptuelt rammeværk på baggrund Foucaults magtbegreb. Rammeværket kortlægger og beskriver fire mekanismer, der på forskellig vis betinger udviklingen af e-demokratiske praksisser. Mekanismerne er funderet i demokratiske normer såvel som markeds og sikkerhedslogikker. E-demokratisk praksis er således ikke kun formet af demokratiske idealer. Afhandlingen kortlægger derudover hvordan e-demokrati konstrueres og praktiseres på forskellig vis i Grønland. E-demokrati konstrueres som en konsultativ dialog, der er kontrolleret af politikere of embedsværket. Sådanne konstruktioner er legitimeret som en måde at forbedre den politiske repræsentation og smidiggøre implementeringen af love og regulativer. E-demokrati praktiseres også igennem agendasættende aktiviteter, mobilisering af masserne samt protester over enkeltsager. De forskellige konstruktioner er resultater af komplekse of fortløbende forhandlinger imellem flere aktører, bade menneskelige og ikke-menneskelige. Formålet med diverse praksisser samt deres effekter ændres løbende som resultat af disse forhandlinger. Facebook ændrer online dialog til opmærksomhedskampe. Uformelle petitionssider sætter spørgsmål ved værdien og kvaliteten af de indsamlede underskrifter. Politiske protester samt deres effekter bliver formet af blandt andet de teknologier, der anvendes til at orkestrere demonstrationer, magtelitens modsvar samt befolkningsstørrelsen. Grønlands e-demokrati er således ikke en rationel instrumentel løsning på demokratiske udfordringer. Der er snarer tale om midlertidige stabiliseringer, der er resultat af og underlagt dynamiske magtkampe imellem heterogene aktører.

Summary

Like no other technology (except perhaps for the printing press), the internet has sparked the democratic imagery. Yesterday's static webpages and the amount of information provided by the internet conjured images of a citizenry capable of weighing and testing political claims and opinions as well as frightening images of information overload. Today's dynamic peer-production and social networks conjure up images of a citizenry capable of challenging dominant discourses and privileged positions of power through personalised politics, as well as images of echo chambers, manipulation, and the rule of algorithms. These images are subsumed by phenomenon of e-democracy. E-democracy is understood as the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to facilitate democratic political activities such as voting, deliberation, debate, consultation, petitioning, and protesting. Political activities exercised directly by the people and indirectly through politicians and civil servants are included into the notion of e-democracy. E-democracy is in a state of tension and it is constantly changing as new ways of ICT-mediated democratic practises are developed. The current dissertation is concerned with the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy. It explores the power aspects of ICT-mediated democratic practice in order to open up a space for critical reflection about the trajectory of e-democracy.

The dissertation consists of four articles and a cappa. The purpose of the latter is to unite the four articles substantially, theoretically, ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically and reflect upon the implications and contributions.

Approach

The research field is dominated by political science studies that focus on ICT's effects on democracy. Such studies serve as references for the development of e-democratic practices by assessing and evaluating the internet's effects against distinct normative democratic ideals. Such studies, however, do not sufficiently explain how different and sometimes conflicting e-democratic practices develop. It is also required that the processes by which different e-democratic versions develop are attended to. To do so, a cross-disciplinary approach, which focusses on the power exertion within e-democratic visions and practices, is constructed out of elements from political science, sociology, anthropology, and science-technology-society studies. From this perspective, e-democracy is understood not as a technological solution to a democratic normative deficit but rather as a polemic and political phenomenon. The use of and reliance on ICT continuously destabilise and challenge hegemonic democratic assumptions and established democratic practices. The dissertation employs two concepts of power: One is developed by Laclau and Mouffe and frames power as hegemony. The other is developed by Foucault and successive governmentality studies. It frames power as the attempt to steer behaviour according to a specific logic or norm to meet specific ends. The two concepts share significant characteristics. They understand power in terms of action that seeks to create stability or regularity. Struggle is an immanent part of power and change is always possible. Thus, power is approached through the study of struggle for stabilisation and destabilisation. The two concepts are applicable to different cases. The concept of hegemony is applicable to situations where positions and groupings are radically opposed to one-another and where e-democratic practices seems to arise more or less arbitrarily. Foucault's concept of power is applicable to situations where actors attempt to construct

strategic and tactic e-democratic. The dissertation, then, explores both the haphazard as well as the tactical and strategic struggles invested in the constructions and practices of e-democracy. Such struggles are populated and shaped not solely by human actors but also by the very technologies that mediate democratic practices. In order to include humans and technologies on equal footing, the two concepts of power are combined with actor-network theory – a branch of science-technology-society studies that argues for a flat ontology and performative actor-networks.

Case

The case for the study is Greenland. However, due to practicalities and methodological considerations the exploration focusses on the capitol of Nuuk. Greenlandic e-democracy is an empirically uncharted territory and the dissertation contributes to a minor but steadily growing body of literature that breaks new empirical ground and expands the empirical base of e-democratic research. Greenland is new to the literature on e-democracy but e-democracy is also new to Greenland. Greenland is, therefore, a paradigmatic case for the exploration of the power struggles inherent in e-democracy. Recovering from colonialism and striving for greater independence, Greenland's democratic practices are still being developed. Consequently, these practices are particularly susceptible to challenges from new forms of democratic understanding and practices, which are pushed forward by new ICTs, citizens, politicians, and civil servants. In this setting, the local actors do not simply reaffirm and reproduce established ways of thinking and practicing democracy. They recombine and adapt diverse elements to pursue different and sometimes conflicting interests.

Method

E-democracy is practiced and constructed in multiple ways, by multiple actors, and in multiple sites. Consequently, no data or method of data generation should be excluded a priori. Instead, the dissertation opts for methodological pragmatism and flexibility. Actors, sites of struggle, and e-democratic practices are included as the exploration proceeds. Qualitative data is generated in different ways: Semi-structured interviews are conducted with citizens, politicians, and civil servants in groups, individually, and online. Key governmental reports and strategies are included into the study. The websites that mediate primary forms of democratic practice are scrutinized to get an understanding of how they control the user's actions. Political practices are observed across on- and offline platforms. The analysis traces the associations among the actors that shape e-democratic practices. It focusses on how e-democratic constructions and practices are negotiated by a wealth of heterogeneous actors. Moreover, the effects on power relations that the resulting constructions and practices imply as well as the power relations that they respond to are questioned. As such, the dissertation attempts to establish a link between local power struggles and the wider democratic ramifications and movements.

Challenges

The study faces a range of challenges, some of which are internal to the research approach. It follows from the approach that knowledge is a result of negotiations among others the researcher, local actors, research communities, empirical data, and theoretical perspectives. Research papers, however, tend to present simplistic accounts of this process. In addition, the approach argues that the researcher should discard preconceived ideas about the object of study and instead follow and learn from the local actors. Preconceived notions of both democracy and power, however, by necessity influence and direct the analysis. Moreover, it is methodologically challenging to include all actors equally. The methods applied have been developed to generate data on human practice and meaning making. It is less suited to generate data on ICT, why such nonhuman actors are included to a lesser degree in the analysis. The study focusses on strong alliances and actor-networks and does not consider alternative or weaker actor-networks. This is methodologically justified but it entails that a power critique is only possible from within these strong networks. In addition, the study is challenged by the research setting. I do not speak Greenlandic and have only been able to interview Danish speaking Greenlanders. Anonymity is challenged on several fronts. Relevant actors are identified through their social and professional networks, why they know each other. Moreover, some interviews have been conducted in groups. Last but not least, Nuuk is small and most people know of each other.

Findings

A conceptual framework is based on Foucault's notion of power. The framework maps and describes four mechanisms that in different ways condition the development of e-democratic practice. The mechanisms are founded in and exhibit democratic norms as well as market and security logics. Thus, the trajectory of e-democracy is shaped not solely by democratic ideals. The dissertation explores how e-democracy is constructed and practiced in different ways in Greenland: It is constructed as online consultative dialogues controlled by politicians and civil servants. Such constructions are warranted as a way to improve political representation and the implementation of rules and regulations. E-democracy is also practiced as political agenda setting, mobilisation, and single issue protests. The different versions of online democratic engagement result from complex and ongoing negotiations among a wealth of actors, both human and nonhuman. The meanings, the purposes, and the effects of e-democratic practices change as a result of these negotiations. Facebook translates online dialogues into struggles for awareness. Informal petition sites question the value and the quality of signatures. The trajectory and effect of public protests are shaped by among others the technologies employed to orchestrate demonstrations, the power elites' responses, and the population size. Greenlandic e-democracy, then, is not a rational instrumentalist solution to democratic challenges. It is, rather, continuously destabilised and re-stabilised as a result of dynamic power struggles among heterogeneous actors.

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List of Papers

Jørgensen, A. M. & Andersen, K. N. (2016). Navigating Troubled Waters: Bringing the E-Democratic Ship into Safe Harbour? *Transforming Government People Process and Policy*, *10*(4), 591 - 604.[1]

Jørgensen, A. M. (2016). Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland: Negotiations of Power in Online Political Participation. *Policy & Internet*. doi:10.1002/poi3.126.[2]

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Figures & Tables

Introduction

Nuuk, the capital of Greenland, January 2014. A young man is frustrated with the government, politics, policies, spending, staff disputes, the lack of citizen involvement. He has shared his worries with friends and family. Most of them agree. Agreeing with friends and family, however, does not bring change. It is time to leave the safe and familiar setting and enter the public arena. This is by all means a frightening and unfamiliar place. The young protagonist has never been a member of any political party and he has almost never engaged in politics in public. The very few times he has publicly stated his political opinions he has been met with harsh responses and counterattacks. It becomes too personal and too emotional, he says (Interview, Founder of 'Demonstration Against the Government', January 19th, 2015). However, if the status quo is to be changed, the public political arena is the arena that he needs to enter. He turns to his computer and logs in on Facebook. He is a political amateur but a Facebook connoisseur. He uses it at work and at home; to get news, to socialise, and to talk about politics with friends – but only within the confines of his private Facebook wall. He creates a new public group, which he calls 'Demonstration imod Naalakkersuisut / Naalakkersuisuusunut akerliussuts' which is Danish and Greenlandic for 'Demonstration against the Government'. The purpose is clear. As the very first thing he writes: "I want to show my discontent with the current Government… I have no experience with demonstrations or how to organise them. Therefore, I have created this group in the hope of meeting people of the same opinion as me who will help me" (Facebook post, founder of 'Demonstration Against the Government', January 9th, 2014, Author's translation).Then he invites his friends to join. The group soon attracts members and attention. A few hours later, the group's activities are covered by the online national news media, Sermitsiaq.AG. Not only does Sermitsaq.AG publish the groups' intentions, it also sets up an online poll on whether or not the Government should call for an early election. 4,817 out of 5,820 readers vote that the Government should stand down. The following day the group creates an online petition via skrivunder.net that calls for an early election. The snowball has begun to roll. The protagonist turns to his loved ones and asks rhetorically: "What have I gotten myself involved in?" He has become the spokesperson for the group. He gives interviews to the media and is in charge on the day of the demonstration. On behalf of the demonstrators, he speaks to Government representatives and he hands over more than 1,300 signatures that ask for the Government to resign (Interview, Founder of 'Demonstration Against the Government', January 19th, 2015).

March 26th, 2014, the National Parliament's assembly. Members of the Parliament discuss a proposal to change the existing law on mineral extraction to ensure greater citizen involvement during the planning of mining projects. It is a hot topic. The future economy depends on substantial investments from an international mining industry that has begun to consider Greenland's minerals. It is a cause of great concern and great disagreement. But one thing is agreed upon. Hitherto, there has not been enough citizen involvement in the planning and decision processes for large scale mining projects. The debate in Parliament is streamed via the Parliament webpage, inatsisartut.gl, where the proposal and the different parties' responses are also published. NGOs, public institutions, and Unions have already been consulted. On May 27th, after a third round of debate, a unanimous Parliament passes the proposal. Two weeks later, the proposal is uploaded to the government's website's consultation portal, naalakkersuisut.gl, for public consultation. Public consultation is considered an inherent part of the democratic process, as a way to ensure the quality of legislation, and as a preparatory step in legislation's implementation.

The two accounts above portray two very different scenarios. The first is informal, tense, chaotic, conflictual and bottom-up. The second is formal, procedural, planned, and top-down. Despite their differences, both accounts are cases of the same phenomenon: E-democracy. E-democracy is understood as the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to facilitate democratic activities as for example voting, deliberation, debate, consultation, petitioning, and protesting. Democracy is a type of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation (Coleman & Norris, 2005). It involves a triangular relationship between citizens, politicians, and civil servants that is mediated by ICT (Figure 1) (Grönlund & Horan, 2005, cited in Sæbø, Rose, & Flak, 2008).
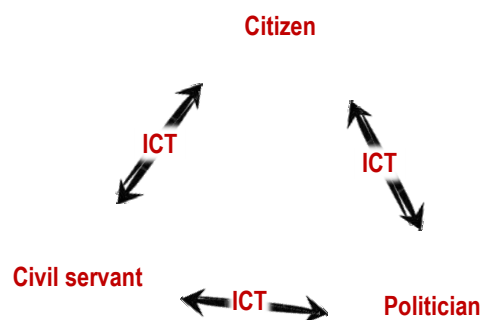
Figure 1 E-democratic triangle

E-democracy includes both top-down participation and bottom-up empowerment. The former may be characterised as ICT-supported participation in governmental processes and governance, including administration, service delivery, decision making, and policy making (Macintosh, 2006). Here, democratic activities are understood as citizens' participation in formal or institutional politics and public administration. These activities are organized and controlled by parliaments or governments. Online deliberation (Albrecht, 2006; Coleman, 2005; Wright & Street, 2007), online consultation (Ainsworth, Hardy, & Harley, 2005; Coleman & Shane, 2012; Walsh, 2007), and online voting (Alvarez, Hall, & Trechsel, 2009; Macintosh, Robson, Smith, & Whyte, 2003) are examples of such participatory practices. Participation in political decision making and policy making is certainly a key democratic element, but it is ill defined (Anduiza, Cantijoch, & Gallego, 2009) and it does not account for all kinds of e-democratic practice. ICT are also thought to support bottom-up empowerment. Ainsworth, Hardy, and Harley (2005), for example, view nonparticipation as a way to exercise democratic resistance. Bekkers, Beunders, Edwards, and Moody (2011), Breindl (2010), Nam (2012), and Ward, Gibson, and Lusoli (2003) conclude that bottom-up flash and single-issue campaigns thrive online. Garrett and Jensen (2011), Nam (2012), and Vissers and Stolle (2013) show that otherwise silent voices are mobilised online. Dahlberg (2007) argues that the internet creates a favourable environment for the development of political counter-discourses. Van den Hoven (2007) describes online democracy in terms of contestatory politics, and Dutton (2009) sees the internet as a fifth estate where citizens may monitor governments and parliaments. The aim of such bottom-up initiatives is not to participate in institutional politics but rather to challenge policies, parliaments and governments.

Since the inception of digital ICTs and especially since the internet has become a worldwide infrastructure, scholars have been concerned with the relationship between these technologies, democracy, and power. Often the question of e-democracy and power is approached through political scientific normative and evaluative effect studies (Medaglia, 2012; Sanford & Rose, 2007). Evaluative effect studies consider paradigmatic question such as whether ICT does indeed deliver on a given democratic normative model of political inclusion and participation or whether ICT can be employed to meet assumed democratic ends. Different democratic ideal types are understood as the goal and the internet is understood as the tool by which this goal may or may not be reached. Approaches to e-democracy, then, are often normative and concerned with how technology ought to be applied to improve different types of democracy (Coleman, 2007). From this approach, successful and unsuccessful initiatives are considered to demonstrate the failure of e-democracy (Sæbø, Rose, & Flak, 2008, cited in Sæbø, Flak, & Sein, 2011). In order to understand the development and fate of e-democracy, however, such an approach does not suffice (Wright, 2012). As Raab, Bellamy, Taylor, Dutton, and Peltu (1996, p. 298) argues the trajectory of e-democracy depends on "a struggle between proponents of change and of stability, each more or less aware of the opportunities and threats posed by technical change". The political interactions between the entities involved in e-democracy (Sæbø, Flak, & Sein, 2011) and the tensions inherent in online e-participatory communities (Braccini, Federici, & Sæbø, 2016) should also be considered. The current dissertation follows this line of reasoning. It does not explore how a specific democratic norm, e.g. representative, deliberative, or direct democracy, may be implemented and advanced with the aid of ICT. Neither does it employ such norms as measuring rods against which e-democratic practices may be evaluated. Rather than exploring the effects of ICT *on* democracy, the current dissertation is concerned with the power *inherent* in e-democracy. It considers the different kinds of e-democratic practice, such as online information provision and consumption, consultation, mobilisation, and protest, as fleeting outcomes of struggles over what political participation entails, who is to participate, and when participation is called for. E-democracy is thus approached as a polemic and political phenomenon and the dissertation opens up a space for critical reflection about the trajectory and practices of e-democracy. It employs methodologies from sociology, anthropology and science-technology-society studies in an exploration of the processes of power exertion involved in the making and the practices of different versions of e-democracy.

It is a process study rather than a variance study. While the latter study variations in outcomes through independent and dependent variables, process studies explore how issues emerge, change, and terminate over time. Such studies require narratives to explain the observed sequence of events in terms of a plot or an underlying generative mechanism (Van de Ven, 2007). The dissertation uses the work of Laclau and Mouffe, Foucault, and Latour to provide these narratives. It explores the radical oppositions and the strategic and tactical struggles involved in the construction and maintenance of e-democracy. Similar interpretations and approaches have been applied in the study of Gov 2.0 (Henman, 2013; Morrison, 2010), political participation (Ekelin, 2007), and target groups of public services (Gidlund & Sefyrin, 2014). From this perspective, the use of and reliance on digital ICT destabilise and challenge hegemonic assumptions and established ways of political engagement and open up a struggle about who is to participate, how, and when. The two narratives at the beginning of this chapter exemplified different e-democratic practices neither of which is guided solely by normative democratic ideals. Rather, they result from the attempts to enact e-democracy through the alliances and negotiations between political concerns, technological artefacts, and human beings. The dissertation shows that the different and conflicting ways of democratic

engagement are shaped by citizens, politicians, civil servants, and the very technologies that are employed to sustain democratic practices. It investigates how the technologies that facilitate political participation or contestation actually direct politics. It draws on Actor-Network Theory (ANT), a branch of science-technology-society studies that radically expands the range of possible actors while staying true to the sociological and anthropological approach (Latour, 1993, 1999). ANT is concerned with action and its conditions of possibilities. Action is understood very broadly as changes in the course of things and anything that changes the course of things is an actor (Latour, 2005). ANT, then does not distinguish between subjects and objects (Latour, 1993) or individuals and collectives (Callon & Law, 1997). It does not posit essential assumptions about humans and nonhumans but operates with a flat relational ontology where action is elevated as the single ontological criteria and where everything is what it is because of its relations.

Figure 2 below shows how the current dissertation is situated on the intersection of the political scientific concern for e-democracy, the sociological and anthropological approach to the study of power, and ANT's flat relational ontology. The dissertation attempts to bridge these disciplines by connecting local power struggles to wider, generic democratic ramifications and movements.
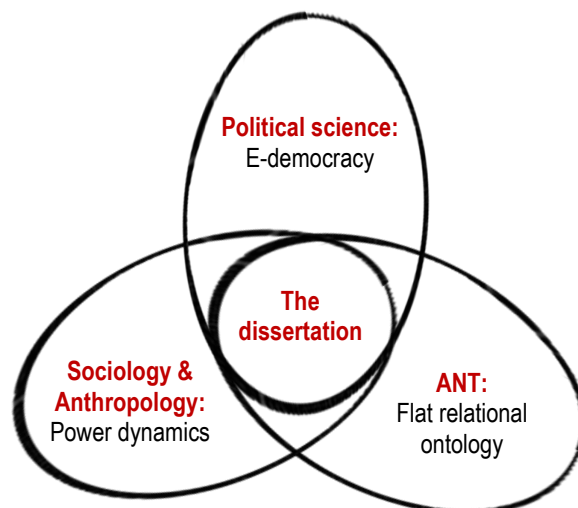
Figure 2 The dissertation's disciplinary position

Four questions, four articles

The dissertation explores the power inherent in e-democracy through four research questions:

1. How can the dynamic power mechanisms inherent in e-democracy be framed and how do they structure e-democratic practices and trajectories?
2. How do politicians and civil servants in Greenland construct e-democracy?
3. How is e-democracy constructed by Greenlandic citizens and the technologies they employ?
4. What are the possibilities for single-issue protests in Greenland?

These questions have been addressed in the four articles found in the appendixes:

'Navigating Troubled Waters: Bringing the E-Democratic Ship into Safe Harbour?' (Jørgensen & Andersen, 2016) (henceforth 'Navigating Troubled Waters') considers question one. The article suggests that power is the employment of diverse techniques to steer, direct, or shape behaviour according to particular sets of logics to meet specific ends. Based on this definition of power, a model is developed that considers the mechanisms by which power is exerted. A framework for the study of these power mechanisms is based on the literature on the phenomenon of e-democracy. The resulting framework illustrates how the possibilities for e-democracy are conditioned by monitoring, inclusion/exclusion, moderation, and exposure mechanisms.

'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland: Negotiations of Power in Online Political Participation' (Jørgensen, 2016a) (henceforth 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland') investigates question two. It explores empirically how Greenlandic politicians and civil servants envision and enact e-democracy as consultative dialogue and information provision. It considers the network of heterogeneous actors that is employed to sustain these specific ways of political citizen participation and the logics of political representation, political and visionary authority, and rational efficiency that legitimise them.

'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' (Jørgensen, In press) is concerned with the third question. The article concludes that e-democracy is constructed by Greenlandic citizens, informal petitions sites, and the social media platform Facebook, in the spirit of partisan or contestatory democracy. As such, space is made for political oppositional forces which challenge political status quo and bypass misrepresentation.

'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland: Single Issue Protests in a Young Online Democracy' (Jørgensen, 2016b) (henceforth 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland') attends to the fourth and final question. The article explores how the plan for a new Greenlandic parliament building changed from a political prestige project into a failure due to public protests organised on Facebook, shifting alliances, and the emergence of new political actors. It concludes that the mobilising structures, opportunity structures, and framing processes specifically pertaining to Greenland are favourable to single-issue protests' incremental impact on parliament politics.

Power effects and inherent power dynamics

Reviewing 122 publications on e-democracy, Medaglia (2012) concludes that the share of research contributions evaluating the effects e-democracy has grown significantly in the last five years. Various topics have been considered. Gibson & Gantijoch (2013) and Linders (2012) have studied whether there is an actual difference between online and offline political engagement in general. Albrecht (2006) has considered whether the voices of otherwise silent citizens are heard in online deliberation. Carman (2014) has assessed whether online petitions attract otherwise disengaged citizens. Price (2012) has discussed the quality of online deliberation and whether it meets deliberative standards. Coleman (2005) has studied the use of ICTs for more direct political representation and Wakabi (2016) has researched the possibilities for ICT to foster democratic participation in authoritarian countries. These scholars have employed a classical political science approach. They have studied the general effects of e-democracy and its effects on civic engagement. They have considered its deliberative effects and its effects on turnout. They have researched the participants' demography and socioeconomic status, and the tone and style in online activities.

Kling (1996) observed that accounts of ICT's impact on democracy tend to follow either a utopian or a dystopian narrative. The dichotomous narratives also haunt e-democratic evaluative effect studies (Albrecht, 2006; Anduiza, Cantijoch, & Gallego, 2009; Ainsworth, Hardy, & Harley, 2005; Borge & Cardenal, 2011; Nam, 2012; Neubauer, Vuga, & Ilc, 2012; O'Loughlin, 2001; van Dijk, 1996). Thus, effect studies tend to affirm one of two theses on the internet's impact on democracy: The amplification thesis (Agre, 2002) or the reinforcement thesis (Danziger, Dutton, Kling, & Kraemer, 1982). The amplification thesis states that the internet amplifies ongoing power struggles, because it provides all parties with additional communication channels. The amplification thesis is affirmed primarily by studies in online social movements, online political activism, and alternative non-institutional forms of political engagement (Bakardjieva, 2009; Bennett, 2003; Nam; 2012; Toyama, 2011). The reinforcement thesis, on the other hand, states that ICT supports rather than challenges the existing distribution of power. Individuals, groups, and organisations that already hold advantageous power positions are able to shape the diffusion, design, and use of new technologies in ways that enhance their established interests and positions. This thesis has been affirmed repeatedly by empirical research (Borge, Colombo, & Welp, 2009; Carman, 2014; Coleman, 2004; Garrett & Jensen, 2011; Price, 2012; Nielsen, Andersen, & Danziger, 2016).

The amplification and the reinforcement theses refute simplistic accounts of e-democratic effects. It is not the internet in and of itself that impacts democracy and power relations. Rather, the impact is conditioned by a complexity of social practices, usage, symbolic dimensions, the specific technology used, and the nature of interactions and existing political dynamics among key actors. The two theses, then, agree that the internet's effects on democracy can only be assessed if several actors are taken into consideration. Their views differ with regard to how the internet distributes the power that impacts politics. Whereas the amplification thesis holds that the internet distributes power equally, the reinforcement thesis maintains that the internet distributes power unequally, because e-democracy is developed, accessed, and employed primarily by those that are already in power. As such, power is understood as a distributable asset by both theses.

It is, however, questionable if power can be considered an asset or a resource akin to money and goods or even a position. One's share of money and goods as well as one's social and political position certainly condition one's opportunities to exercise power, but power should not be likened with these goods (Young, 2011). Power is, rather, something exerted (Foucault, 1982). Money and social positions can be employed as power techniques. Assembly pay for attendance and fines for absence, for example, were two ways that democratic attendance was ensured in ancient Athenian democracy (Hansen, 1991). Due to their position, members of Parliament (MP) have a greater say in political decision processes than ordinary citizens. The position in and of itself, however, it not equal to power. Rather, the position may be employed to ensure a say in the decision process. The distributive interpretation of power leads to a focus on those who have power and on those who do not, while it neglects the way power is enacted in relational actions (Young, 2011). As such, it does not include or consider how power *works*. Evaluative effect studies and the amplification and reinforcement theses ignore how power works and thus how the e-democratic practice is steered, directed, and shaped.

The current dissertation is concerned with how power works. It suggests two comparable perspectives on power to use to explore different cases of the construction and enactment of e-democracy. Cases of e-democratic enactment that are characterised by struggles among radical oppositional positions are approached from a perspective that frames power in terms of hegemony and discursive struggles to stabilise, fixate, or create a centre in a thoroughly pluralistic reality (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). No specific version of e-democracy saturates reality but is necessarily a temporary fixation that favours some social actors to others. As such, hegemonic e-democratic practices are always open to alteration or destabilisation. From a hegemonic point of view, we may say that e-democracy is destabilised in at least three ways. One, if an entity within a hegemonic democratic version rearticulates itself. If, for example, citizens currently defined as voters try to redefine themselves as political deliberators. Two, if a foreign element is introduced into the hegemonic democratic discourse. When, for example, social media is introduced into an established liberal representative democracy. Three, if two radically different discourses collide. E-democracy today is impacted by corporate and business concepts and factors such as commodity and consumption (Bellamy, 2000), shareholders (Coleman & Gøtze, 2001), and crowdsourcing (Lee, Goel, Aitamurto, & Landemore, 2014). These entities, however, could potentially destabilise hegemonic democratic practices. Conversely, they also partake in stabilising e-democratic practices by arresting the flow of differences and constructing a centre (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001).

The second perspective on power suggested interprets power as the attempt to steer behaviour according to a specific logic or norm (Foucault, 1980; Dean, 2010; Rose, 1999). This perspective is applied on cases that are characterised by reasoned strategies and tactics. With the introduction of governmentality, which sees power in terms of dispersed or distributed governance, Foucault broke with the traditional lines of enquiry into political power (Rose, 1999). The concept of governmentality was intended to cover the entire range of practices that constitute, define, organise, and instrumentalise the strategies that individuals use in dealing with each other (Foucault, 1997). Foucault changes the focus from sovereigns and states to the heterogeneity of mechanisms and tactics that shape the people's conduct (Henman, 2012). To govern is not to acquire power but rather to exert it. Power is exerted by inciting, seducing, and making certain behaviours more or less probable. It is not equal to sheer force or to command and obedience. Rather, governance presupposes that those who are governed are principally free to act otherwise, and that

counter strategies and tactics are to be expected (Foucault, 1982). To govern, then, is understood as directing the conduct of others by structuring the field of possible actions to meet certain ends (Rose, 1999). Rather than focussing on who holds power or who benefits from e-democracy in terms of gaining additional power, the conceptual framework of governmentality is attentive to the mechanisms, practices and techniques by which power is exerted (Rasinski, 2011).

The two perspectives differ with regard to how they conceptualise the exertion of power. Whereas Laclau and Mouffe are preoccupied with radical oppositions that struggle to overcome each other, Foucault and subsequent governmentality studies are preoccupied with reasoned strategies, tactics, and techniques. The two perspectives do, however, resemble each other in significant ways. They both attempt to free social agents from the determinants posited by structuralism. Instead of interpreting power in terms of fixed structures, they understand power in terms of action and as a principally non-saturated and non-fixable regularity in dispersion (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Change is always possible, and it is the struggles for or against change that is interpreted in terms of power. As a consequence, it does not make sense to speak of a single culprit or an unmoved mover. The change of focus from those who have or benefit from power to the ways in which power is exerted invites a whole new entity into the analysis; the ICT that is used to mediate democratic ways of political engagement.

Instruments and actors

Democratic practice has always been technologically mediated. Indeed, it is next to impossible to think of democratic practice without any supporting technology. In the ancient Athenian democracy of the fifth century BC, assembly pay was not yet used as a means of ensuring attendance. Instead, citizens were driven to the assemblies with red ochre-stained ropes. Anyone with red-stained clothes that had not attended the meetings was liable to a penalty (Hansen, 1991). Moreover, voting was facilitated by small pieces of clay ware and large vases, and even the different assemblies' designs – the agora, the auditorium at the Pnyx, and the spectacular Theatre of Dionysus (Kourouniotes & Thompson, 1932; Thompson, 1982) – reflected and impacted the possibilities for democratic political participation in different ways. The Pnyx auditorium, for example, which was remotely located and designed as a semicircle, was likely to allow for greater political deliberation than the hustle and bustle of the market place of the agora. It could, however, only accommodate between 5,000 and 6,000 citizens out of the 40,000. Issues that required a greater amount of attendees would have to be discussed and decided upon in the much larger agora (Thompson, 1982).

In the latter half of the 20th century, clay ware, vases, ochre-stained ropes and even physical architecture have been replaced by digital ICT. Vedel (2006) has provided an illuminating and concise historical account of the last 50 years of technological innovation and democratic thought and discourse. In the 1950s and '60s, efficient public administration, as well as rational and scientific public policy, called for and were sustained by hitherto unseen processing capabilities of centralised computer systems. This was during the Cold War and strong state intervention was the political norm. In the 1970s and '80s, the contested political institutions were in crisis and centralisation made way for local and independent systems of cable TV networks that could potentially improve the relationship between citizens and elected officials by

sustaining interactivity. During the 1990s and 2000s, globalisation, individualism, and liberalisation thrived and the internet became a global phenomenon that provided an open and decentralised infrastructure for non-hierarchical communication. Simultaneously, political engagement came to be understood in terms of autonomous, self-organising agents in a global public sphere (see Vedel, 2006, for a schematic overview). In the wake of the 1990s bulletin boards, multi user dungeons, and online discussion forums that utilise the internet's capabilities to facilitate online discussion deliberative democracy experienced a momentum in e-democratic thought (van den Hoven, 2005; Wright & Street, 2007). More recently, claims of digital democracy as a personalised politics that challenges dominant discourses and privileged positions of power through online mobilisation (Nam, 2012; Vissers & Stolle, 2013) and single-issue protests (Garret, 2006) have arisen from the second generation of social media and social networks applications (Loader & Mercea, 2012).

If democratic practice and technology have always been close allies, one may wonder why it has become legitimate or crucial to underscore the technological element and why it today needs a distinct term. It would appear that there is a strong discourse that frames digital ICT and the internet as substantially different from all other technologies. The use of the internet for democracy is considered to be a distinct realm or phenomenon. The use of phones, voting booths, broadcasting and so forth, is considered to be normal. Providing a much-needed historical perspective, Marvin (1990) shows that the telephone and electric light, which are today considered to be mundane and hardly objects worthy of special attention, were once objects of heightened attention. In time, technologies tend to slip into the background (Latour, 2005) and the same will happen with the internet. Currently, however, the internet receives great attention. Parallel to the technological transformation from physical materials to the more immaterial and ubiquitous ICT, a hitherto unseen academic focus on, ironically, the material aspects of democratic practice has gained momentum. The focus shifted during the latter half of the 20th century and gained special prominence during the spread of the internet in the 1990s. It is as if the social, cultural, anthropological, humanistic, and philosophical disciplines have witnessed a technological, material or thingly turn (Matthewman, 2013). This observation corresponds with that of Medaglia (2012), who argues that research on e-participation almost exclusively focusses on underlying technological determinants.

While there is evidence to suggest that technology and democratic practice are closely related, the nature of the relationship is less obvious and the subject of philosophical debate. Soft technology determinism argues that democratic thought is determined by the idea of technology whereas hard technology determinism maintains that democracy is determined by concrete technologies (Smith & Marx, 1994). Technological instrumentalism argues that democratic norms dictate the design and employment of otherwise neutral and concrete technologies (Green, 2002). Social constructivist accounts of technology argue that technological democratic design and use is a temporary closure resulting from social struggles (Pinch & Bijker, 1987).

Political scientific effect studies imply an instrumentalist interpretation of the technology-democracy relation. The instrumentalist interpretation is implied by the very research frame that effect studies apply. Research frames shape the selection of cases, the choice of research questions and how subsequent results are interpreted (Wright, 2012). Research frames are never neutral; they convey ontological assumptions that are ideologically loaded but rarely decoded. Research frames are necessary, which makes it all the

more important that they are intellectually questioned. Research into of e-democracy should not be free from such scrutiny (Coleman, 2003). The idea that ICT may be used at will to enhance, improve, or in other ways radically change the relations between citizens, politicians, and civil servants tacitly implies a radical ontological distinction between democracy and ICT. The former is a normative ideal and the latter is understood as a neutral instrument. It suggests that ICT's effects on democracy may be unambiguously identified, measured, and evaluated. ICTs are understood as a neutral instrument that can be used to motivate political participation in authoritarian countries (Wakabi, 2016), deliberative processes (Albrecht, 2006), local government (Borge, Colombo, & Welp, 2009), online consultations (Coleman & Shane, 2012), and voting (Alvarez, Hall, & Trechsel, 2009), or to mobilise the populace and organise demonstrations (Garrett & Jensen, 2011; Vissers & Stolle, 2013). As such, academic studies of e-democracy are symptomatic of the most recent research paradigm in which technological rationality prevails (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

However, these very same effect studies agree with the amplification and the reinforcement theses and refute the idea of any unambiguous impact. Instead, the power effects of ICT on democracy depend on a wide range of elements, both technological and social. Albrecht (2006), for example, proposes that technology is viewed as a cultural practice, which means that the complexity of the social practices of technology usage, its symbolic dimension, and the specific technology used in a given case need to be accounted for. Similarly, Borge, Colombo, and Welp (2009) conclude that the expansion of online participation does not depend on the internet alone but also on population size, the territorial situation, and socio-economic conditions. As such, there is a noticeable tension between the research frame and the conclusions that these studies makes (Wright, 2012).

In order to include all relevant elements in the account of the power inherent in e-democracy, this dissertation considers anything that contributes to the construction and maintenance of e-democracy as an actor in its own right. From this perspective, action does not hinge upon intention or other human capacities. Rather, action is whatever changes the current states of affairs (Latour, 2005). No element, no matter its traditional ontological status, is left out *a priori*. This broad notion of action is the sole fundamental principle for a flat ontology (Law, 2009). In this way, the heterogeneity of actors that exercise power in the construction and maintenance of e-democracy can be radically expanded. As such, the flat ontology posited by ANT presents itself as an important foundation for applying the two perspectives of power discussed above.

Non-Western e-democracy in the making

E-democracy is a growing phenomenon. In 2012, nearly all United Nations member states had to a greater or lesser degree digitalised the relations between state and citizen (United Nations, 2012). Empirical e-democratic research, however, favours European and North American cases. For European studies see, for example, Albrecht (2006), Borge, Colombo, and Welp (2009), Brants, Huizenga, and van Meerten (2010), Ekelin (2007), Lührs, Albrecht, Lübcke, and Hohberg (2003), Paralic, Sabol, and Mach (2003), Parvez (2003), Saglie and Vabo (2009), Tambouris and Gorilas (2003), Taylor, Bardzki, and Wilson (1995), and Wright and Street (2007). For North American studies see, for example, Browning (1997), Dahlberg (2001), Li and

Feeney (2014), Price (2012), Varley and Hetherington (1991), Weare, Musso, and Hale (1999), and Zhang, Seltzer, and Bichard (2013).

Greenlandic e-democracy is an empirically uncharted territory. As such, the dissertation adds to a minor but steadily growing body of literature that breaks new empirical ground and expands the empirical base of e-democratic research. Tiecher, Hoeschl, and Zimath (2003), for example, examine how the Interlegis programme improves communication between legislators and society and promotes citizen participation in legislative processes at Federal, State, and Municipal level in Brazil. Wakabi (2016) explores how ICT may motivate political participation in Uganda. Hoff (2006) has compiled five articles that focus on Asian e-democracy in general, and ICT and empowerment in Nepal, Malaysian experiences with ICT as a tool for political participation, and young people and digital divides in China in particular.

Greenland makes for a paradigmatic case for the study of the power dynamics inherent in the construction and practices of e-democracy.[5] Greenland was a Danish colony from 1814 until 1953 when it became a Danish county. Since 1979, Greenland has been an autonomous self-governing country within the Kingdom of Denmark and has had its own democratically elected sovereign Parliament, Inatsisartut. There are two legislative levels, the National Parliament and four Municipalities. Elections are held every four years. The Parliament has 31 seats and the four Municipal Boards have 70 seats in total, which amounts to one parliamentarian per 555 citizens. Sessions in Parliament and Municipal Boards are for the most part public, but citizens cannot initiate or decide on amendments or recalls and referendums are very rare. Very few persons make up the power elites and nepotism is a constant threat (Ankersen & Christiansen, 2013; Christiansen & Togeby, 2003). Although liberal representative democracy has remained the dominant democratic discourse from the transition from colony until today, the democratic representative institutions and the practices of parliamentary representative democracy are young and still struggling to find a form that is suitable to Greenlandic conditions. During the Parliamentary debate about greater citizen involvement in the planning of mining projects (the latter of the two opening stories), concern was raised that the duration of consultation periods was insufficient because Greenland is bilingual and the translation resources few and because there only is a small number of NGOs with very limited resources. Furthermore, the number of MPs is often contested and Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq is experimenting with local citizen councils as a local political outreach in addition to already existing Settlement boards. The extreme Greenlandic settlement pattern (56,000 people scattered around the west, south and east coast of the world's largest island) makes the use of the internet to facilitate democratic engagement very appealing. E-democratic practice is in its infancy but growing rapidly. Approximately 77% of the population has access to the internet at home, while an additional 10% has internet access elsewhere (Epinion, 2014). Access is unevenly distributed favouring town dwellers (89% has access) over settlement dwellers (74% has access). Internet traffic has increased significantly over the last few years (TelePost, 2016). 17% of the population never use any type of social media (Epinion, 2014). In November 2015, there were 36,000 Greenlandic Facebook accounts, which is a 62.4% penetration rate (Internet World Stats, 2016). Several Facebook groups, pages and events are dedicated to politics – either in general or for specific issues. Issues are debated online, fellow citizens are mobilised and demonstrations are organised on Facebook.

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[5] See Appendix E for a summary of Greenland's democratic setup, its political history, its geography, the internet infrastructure, and internet penetration.

Skrivunder.net (a petition site similar to, but much smaller than, change.org), is widely used as a third-party petition website. In 2009, the Central Government began publishing consultations online and the numbers of consultations published online have risen significantly from one consultation in 2009 to 88 consultations in 2015. Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, one of Greenland's four municipalities, recently began to consult citizens via its webpage and in August 2014, the first non-binding vote was conducted online. To borrow the words of Collier (2009), no stable regime of knowledge/power exists here, the existing forms of democratic engagement are already shaky and therefore all the more susceptible to challenges from new forms of democratic understanding and acting. In such circumstances, actors do not just reaffirm and reproduce established ways of thinking and doing democracy. Rather, they recombine diverse elements and adapt them to the new problems of democratic engagement. Such circumstances call for an exploration of the power dynamics inherent in the construction and practices of e-democracy, rather than an assessment of e-democratic power effects.

Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is concerned with the research design. Apart from presenting the overall research design, the research approach's ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology are presented and discussed. Chapter Two summarises the four articles. The implications are discussed in Chapter Three. The fourth chapter is concerned with the dissertation's contributions to the research field. The dissertation closes with a conclusion that summarises key points and arguments, discusses unanswered questions and points towards subjects for future research.

Research Design

Above, the theme of the dissertation – e-democracy and power – was presented. It was argued that it has been an enduring theme for scholarly thought but that the power dynamics inherent to the development of e-democratic practices have been neglected. To study these dynamics it was argued that the researcher's gaze needs to be directed at how power is exerted. The dissertation investigates how different actors take up and reassemble various parts of democratic norms and various technological possibilities in the construction of e-democracy. It radically expands the range of potential co-constructors by applying a flat ontology. As such, power exertion is not reserved to democratically engaged human beings, but includes the technologies that mediate political action.

The current chapter elaborates on the research approach. First, the different research activities and their mutual relations are considered. The aim is to paint a general and paradigmatic picture of research as a congruent practice. Next, the relations between the four articles are structured as cases of comparable but distinct analytical frameworks. The aim of this manoeuvre is to tie the research outputs together across analytical frameworks, objectives, and methods in a shared interpretation of and approach to the subject matter. The next four sections present and discuss the research paradigm – the ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology – implied by the approach.

Research activities

The overall objective of empirical research is to link the empirical with the theoretical (Ragin, 1992). The process by which this is accomplished consists of a rather limited range of activities: identify a phenomenon of interest, review existing literature and build or choose an appropriate theoretical perspective, formulate research questions, shape a methodology, collect and analyse data, write up conclusions and provide an output. The relation between each of the elements can be illustrated as a circle with an additional arrow going from theory to phenomenon, thereby creating circularity between the two (Figure 3).
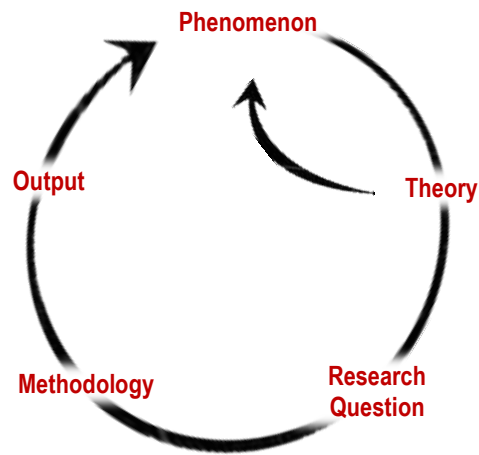
Figure 3 Research elements and their mutual relations

The phenomenon is an observed issue or problem; something that sparks the researcher's curiosity. Three things made me curious: 1) the odd concept of e-democracy that combines a practical means with a normative political ideal, 2) the wealth of directions in which e-democracy has evolved over the last three decades, and 3) the shared history of ICT and democracy. A theory is a general principle that directs the scientific gaze at a particular phenomenon. It highlights and explain certain aspects of reality while bracketing others. In this case, the theory states that current states of e-democracy are the temporarily fixed results of power struggles among human and nonhuman actors to shape the contours of e-democracy. These struggles may take the form of attempts to stabilise, fixate, or create a stable version of e-democracy or as strategic and tactical attempt to govern future behaviour by diverse mechanisms, techniques, and technologies. The theory, moreover, employs a wide definition of action and argues that anything that alters the trajectory of these struggles is an actor. Caution is required here. Phenomena do not arise out of themselves. Problems are constituted as such due a specific theoretical perspective on and prior experiences with reality (Weick, 1979, cited in Van de Ven, 2007). The enquiry into the wealth of actors, their associations, alliances, and negotiations that construct and enact e-democracy in Greenland is guided by a specific theoretical interpretation of power and the technology-democracy relation. The power inherent in e-democracy becomes a research problem due to the theoretical perspective that is applied and this very perspective is warranted by the observed phenomenon. Though we might wish for a clean slate (Law, 1992) it is unattainable. Rather, the researcher should be aware of how preconceived notions affect and structure scientific explorations. In my master's thesis, I explored the phenomenon of the digital divide from an ANT perspective. Moreover, prior to conducting this PhD, I worked at the Greenlandic digital citizen portal, Sullissivik.gl. Both of these experiences have shaped my perspective of the phenomenon in tacit but profound ways. Thus, it could be said that reality and theory have been shaped so that they conform to each other. Problem formulation and theory building go hand in hand (Van de Ven, 2007). Research questions result from a theoretical interpretation of the phenomenon. They condensate and fixate theoretically derived issues or ways of framing the phenomenon. The research questions in the dissertation are concerned with the generic power mechanism inherent in e-democracy, and the local Greenlandic struggles to construct and enact e-democracy.

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Methodologies are concerned with the nature of evidence that is required to answer the research questions and with how the evidence is obtained and analysed. The current research project makes use of qualitative data in the form of texts (academic publications and governmental reports and strategies), loosely structured interviews (individual, focus-groups, and online), asynchronous observation (primarily of citizens' use of ICT in political practices), and usage of the same websites that citizens, the Government and the Parliament employ. The data is explored and interpreted to determine how e-democracy is constructed and practiced. Finally, the output is the product of the prior actions which, if the design has been appropriate, says something about the phenomenon by way of answering the research questions. The purpose of a research design is to logically bind these elements into a consistent whole. It ensures that the evidence obtained allows for answering the initial question as unambiguously as possible (de Vaus & de Vaus, 2001). Because the purpose of the design is to link all the other elements together, it is not present in Figure 3 above, even though it strictly speaking is an element of the research process.

Thinking in cases

Case study literature affords the researcher with valuable conceptual tools with which to argue for the coherence between the different research elements. Thinking in cases forces the researcher to reflect on the link between the phenomenon, the theory, the methodology, and the output (in this case, the four articles).

According to Medaglia (2012), case studies are the third-most used approach adopted in current e-participation research. The case study literature is rich, but it contains many controversies (Gerring, 2004; Thomas, 2012). There are disagreements about what a case study entails and how a case is to be understood. Stake (2005) argues that case studies should focus on the object of study rather than a specific methodology. Often, a case is understood as one instance in a wider population with which it shares key characteristics and with which it may be compared (Gerring, 2004; Ragin, 1992). Through a comparison with the wider population case findings may be generalised. Generalisation can also be accomplished through least and most likely cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In contrast to these types of case studies a case is also understood as an example of an analytical framework (Thomas, 2011). According to this interpretation, two elements in a case can be distinguished: The empirical, practical, and historical unit, and the analytical or theoretical frame. The former is then a case or an example of the latter. It follows that a case is not representative of a wider population (ibid.). Instead of generalising findings to similar empirical cases, the objective of a case study is to provide insight into a specific analytical frame through an in-depth exploration of a single case that exemplifies the analytical frame. Because a case is not a given empirical unit, but constituted as an example of the analytical framework, one empirical unit may serve as two radically distinct cases if it is explored from two radically different analytical frameworks. The findings from distinct case studies are, on the other hand, comparable to the extent that their analytical frames are comparable. Comparison, then, is necessarily mediated by the analytical frame. Greenlandic key characteristics – its colonial history, its young democracy, the small population size, and the widespread settlement pattern – are of interest, not because other empirical cases show or lack these characteristics, but in relation to the analytical frame. As has been argued above, Greenland makes for a paradigmatic case of the construction and enactment of e-democracy because of these key characteristics.

The overall objective of the current dissertation is to explore the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy. This is accomplished in four articles that approach the phenomenon under investigation from four distinct but interrelated analytical perspectives. Thus, there are four subcases that are related to each other through the overall research objective. The four articles' subcases can be summarised as follows (Table 1):

Article	Analytical frame	Unit of analysis	Data
Navigating Troubled Waters	Develops and adjusts a model of power that attends to the mechanisms by which power is exerted	Academic literature	Scientific publications
Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland	Explores the associations among heterogeneous actors that condition politicians' and civil servants' visions of e-democracy. Analyses tactical productivity and strategic integration of concrete visions.	MPs Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq Municipal Board Members Central administration civil servants Municipality civil servants Associated nonhuman actors	Interviews and Governmental reports and strategies Usage
eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)	Investigates how citizens and nonhumans coproduce eDemocratic discourses. Analyses the emerging power effects.	Citizens Facebook Skrivunder.net	Interviews, asynchronous observation, and usage
Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland	Explores how specific circumstances condition the political impact of online mobilisation and public protests Analyses how actors and political issues are co-constituted.	The trajectory of the parliament building	Asynchronous observation and news coverage Interviews

Table 1 Analytical frames, units of analysis, and data

'Navigating Troubled Waters' is distinct from the three other articles. Whereas the other articles analyse the power dynamics inherent in local Greenlandic constructions and enactments of e-democracy, 'Navigating Troubled Waters' is concerned with developing a theoretical framework in which e-democratic power mechanisms in general can be understood. The unit of analysis is academic literature, which was procured through extensive literature search and review. 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland' and 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' are closely related. They are concerned with the construction of e-democracy in Greenland, but focus on different actors. Because of this shift in actor-

focus, their analytical and empirical data also differ. 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland' focusses on the heterogeneous associations through which politicians and civil servants construct e-democracy. Data primarily comprises interviews with politicians and civil servants, as well as governmental reports and strategies. Usage forms only a small part of the data. The strategic and tactical aspects of e-democratic discourse are analysed by employing Foucault's power analysis. This article can be characterised as a local knowledge case (Thomas, 2011), because I had in-depth knowledge of Government strategies and reports, which I had implemented during my prior position at Sullissivik.gl. 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)', on the other hand, focusses on how citizens and diverse technologies co-construct e-democracy. Citizens talk less about e-democracy than politicians and civil servants do. They do not write reports or strategies about how ICT is supposed to sustain democracy. Instead they engage in politics online. They quite literally do e-democracy. As a consequence, data for this article consists equally of interviews, usage, and asynchronous observation, and materiality receives more attention in the analysis. Rather than focussing on tactics and strategies, e-democracy is understood as emerging in ICT mediated practice. 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' concludes that e-democracy, as constructed by citizens, Facebook, and skrivunder.net, creates a space for political oppositional forces to set the political agenda. It does so by making it easier to create public awareness of local issues, to make local issues public, and to mobilise the populace and arrange public protests. 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland' takes its cue from this last conclusion.[6] Using a single political event as case – the trajectory of the parliament building –, it explores the co-constitution of actors and issues, as well as how specific circumstances condition the political impact of online mobilisation and public protests. Whereas the two earlier articles are concerned with more general constructions of e-democracy, 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland' is concerned with a single political event. As such, the case differs in nature from the two previous cases. Consequently, data for this article was generated primarily through asynchronous observation and news coverage while interviews were included to a lesser degree.

The analytical framework exemplified by the trajectory of the parliament building could have been exemplified by other cases. In addition to the 2014 protests organised on Facebook that caused the downfall of the Government, 2013 and 2014 also saw several demonstrations against the extraction of uranium in Greenland that had been organised on Facebook. The parliament building issue, however, is interesting because it evolved around a concrete artefact – the parliament building –, explicitly involved several actors and changing alliances, clearly exemplified the impact of the protests, and had a clear start date and a fixed end date.[7] Thus, the trajectory of the parliament building contains all the paradigmatic elements of a proper ANT account and can therefore be considered a key case (Thomas, 2011) or a paradigmatic case (Flyvbjerg, 2006) of the analytical frame applied.

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[6] While this reading is not entirely wrong, it does not tell the entire story of how the article came about. I describe the trajectory of each article in more detail below.

[7] Long after 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland' was finalised, the issue rose again. Though the plans for a new Parliament Building were publicly abandoned in July 2015, the Parliament discussed the issue again on October 21st 2016. Judging from the motion itself, neither the Presidium of Inatsisartut, nor the Committee for the Parliament's Rules of Procedure, which moves the motion on behalf of the Presidium, are keen on reinvigorating former oppositional actors. The motion does not mention the public protests, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, or the online vote (Udvalg for Forretningsordenen, 2016). Thus the end date was not fixed after all.

Research paradigm

> "The net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm... or interpretative framework, a basic set of beliefs that guides action." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13)

How one approaches research depends on or implies a specific ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998). Ontology is concerned with the nature of being or reality. Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge given a specific ontology. Methodology is concerned with how knowledge is obtained given the epistemological task. And, finally, axiology is concerned with the principles by which the value of research is estimated, which depends on the three prior aspects and ties them together. Figure 4 illustrates the hierarchical structure and interdependence between the four aspects.
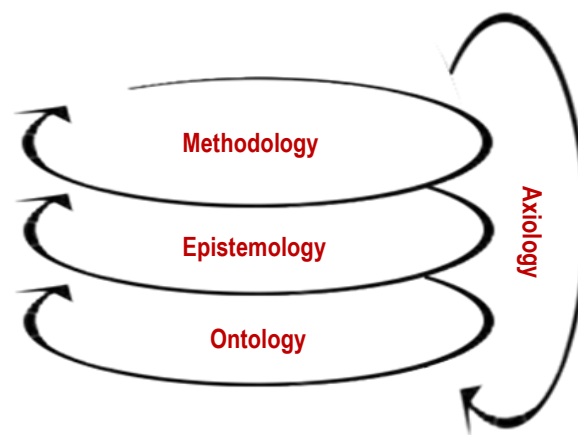
Figure 4 Ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology

Fitzgerald and Howcroft (1998) argue that information systems research (a close relative of e-democratic research) tends to apply either a 'hard' positivist or a 'soft' constructivist approach that function as mutual and co-constitutive poles. The 'hard' approach interprets reality as independent of human cognition and governed by laws that an objective researcher can uncover by way of quantitative and controlled measurements that may affirm or refute hypotheses. Truth is understood as a correspondence between statements about these laws and the laws themselves and the value of research is measured by methodological rigour. The 'soft' approach, on the contrary, ignores the question of an objective reality. There might be an external reality, but human beings do not have any privileged access to it. Instead of studying the independent laws that govern an objective reality, the 'soft' approach explores the practices and processes of meaning making. The researcher's epistemological task is to interpret how subjects understand or construct reality. Qualitative data that describes world constructions in detail and in a specific context is required and explored to discover patterns and induce generalisations. Truth is understood as coherence with the socially constructed reality of which scientific statements are a part and the value of research is assessed by its relevance to practice.

A number of strategies have been suggested to resolve the schism between the 'soft' and the 'hard' approach (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998). An integrationist strategy seeks to integrate both approaches into a single coherent mode of analysis and a pluralist strategy allows for different paradigms to be applied in a research situation. The paradigmatic wars have moved to new turfs since the late 1990s, when Fitzgerald and Howcroft characterised information system research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), today's paradigm war within qualitative research is a conflict between evidence-based methodologists on the one side and the mixed-methods, interpretative, and critical theory schools on the other side. As noted in the introduction, research into e-democracy is a symptomatic case of the technological rationality that is at stake in this paradigm war. ICTs are understood as mere instruments that can be employed at will to meet democratic ends, and their success and failure can be measured objectively.

The present dissertation attempts to discard the technological rationality and bring politics and power back into consideration, but without retreating to the 'soft' approach, which brought these items to attention in the first place. Paraphrasing Latour (1993) the approach pursued in the dissertation leans towards the 'soft' approach but without excluding materiality. The approach pursued, then, is associated with the narrative-constructivist pole, but it gives it a realist bend by including materiality (Blok, 2010). This distinct approach does not fit easily into any one of the polar positions identified above.

Each of the three perspectives applied in the dissertation has been employed in prior studies of e-democracy in general or of significant elements pertaining to e-democracy. Dahlberg and Siapera (2007) employ the notions of hegemony in an interrogation of radical democratic theory and internet practice. Boyle (1997), Lyon (1998), Green (1999), and Fuchs (2013) employ a Foucauldian power analysis of how concrete technological artefacts govern online behaviour. Nygren (2009), Henman (2013), and Morison (2010) conduct Foucauldian inspired discourse analyses of e-government. Bin Salamat and bin Hassan (2011) employ ANT key concepts to analyse Malaysian e-participation, and Elovaara (2004) regards e-democracy as a process that is co-enacted by several heterogeneous actors in collaboration. Very few studies combine these theoretical vantage points. Ekelin (2007) is an exception to the rule. She combines a Foucauldian notion of power with ANT's insistence on nonhuman actors in an exploration of the work it takes to make e-participation work. The present dissertation follows Ekelin's path and seeks to combine the three theoretical perspectives into one approach.

The purpose is not to argue for one theory at the expense of the two others or to weigh these schools of thought against each other. See, for example, Dyrberg, Hansen, and Torfing (2000), Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), and Rasisnski (2011) for a comparison of Foucault and Laclau and Mouffe under the header of discourse analysis; Mol (2010), Law (2007), Latour (2005), Hekman (2009), Kendall and Michael (2001), Harman (2014) for critical comparisons of ANT and Foucault; and Harman (2014) for a comparison of ANT and Mouffe. The level of disagreement within this body of literature is staggering. Mol (2010), for example, argues that ANT has inherited the Foucauldian mode for thinking about social order as variously dispersed ordering modes and modalities. ANT, however, has substituted Foucault's focus on form with a focus on the work involved in ordering. In contrast, Latour (2005) states that no one was as precise as Foucault in analysing the composition of the small ingredients that make up power. Hekman (2009) argues that Foucault successfully integrates the discursive and the material. Müller (2008) argues the exact opposite.

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Finally, when faced with Kendall and Michael's (2001) argument that Latour stresses technological systematicity while Foucault shows the painstaking technical process whereby systematicity is achieved, Harman (2014, p. 130) claims: "I have to wonder if we are reading the same Latour." This is, I believe, the main problem. Foucault's approach to power changed radically during his authorship (Collier, 2009) and ANT does not offer a coherent framework, but rather an open repository. It is not solid but adaptable (Mol, 2010). Moreover, though Laclau and Mouffe tend to be treated as one, clear differences with regard to the political articulation of social relations separate their individual lines of reasoning (Wenman, 2003). How is anyone to compare such movements per se? Which Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe, and ANT repository should we read and by which principle should we compare them?

Rather than weighing these moving theoretical perspectives against each other, the current dissertation pieces together a theory of power and socio-technical relations which can explain and guide the analysis of the power inherent in e-democracy. One unified theoretical approach is required, since in the case of e-democracy, power and socio-technically go hand in hand.

> "It is impossible to grasp the modern forms of power if we do not first understand that what is called 'society' and what is (wrongly) called 'technology' are two artefacts created simultaneously and symmetrically by analysts who have too narrow a definition of power to track down the powerful." (Latour, 1988, p. 3)

The theoretical approach still needs to be logically coherent. However, it will be judged not on its heterogeneous heritage but by its effects; its explanatory and guiding capacities in relation to the object of study. Thus, it is the object of study that unites the theoretical perspectives. In this regard, the theoretical perspectives are compatible rather than mutually exclusive. Thus, the dissertation argues in line with Rasinski (2011), Harman (2012), and Matthewman (2013) that the similarities greatly outweigh the dissimilarities and that the differences make up for their respective blind spots. From Laclau and Mouffe, then, the idea is retained that power takes the form of a struggle to stabilise, fixate, or create a centre in a thoroughly agonistic pluralistic world. The idea of a radically pluralistic and ever-changing reality is also present in ANT. From Foucault and successive governmentality studies the definition of power as a fragmented strategic and tactical attempt to direct behaviour to meet certain ends is retained. From this combinatorial perspective on power it follows that power is both cause and effect. Struggles are both guided by logics or norms and they affect logics and norms. In comparison, ANT casts power solely in terms of network effects (Latour, 1984). Moreover, power is an act and must be approached through the ways it is enacted. From ANT I retain the notions of a flat ontology and of performative actor-networks. This final addition implies that power is enacted equally by humans and nonhumans through translations, negotiations, and alliances and that practiced power is wrested free from the realm of thought; something that neither Foucault and the successive governmentality studies, nor Laclau and Mouffe have accomplished. The compound research approach's ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology are elaborated in the following four sections.

Ontology

Descartes' distinction between *res cogitans* (the thinking thing) and *res extensa* (the extended thing) heralded the ontological dualism between subjects and objects, which both characterises and haunts modernism (Brinkmann, 2011). The great modern project has been to determine the exact distinction between them and to bridge this gap (Latour, 1993).

Foucault indirectly struggled with the implications of the subject-object distinction. In his early publications – the 1966 'The Order of Things' (Foucault, 2005) and the 1969 'Archaeology of Knowledge' (Foucault, 1972) –, Foucault was primarily interested in the rules that condition systems of things expressed in language; thoughts, beliefs, meanings, and ideas. He termed these conditioning systems discourse or epistemes. While he continued to focus on the power exerted by structuring conditions throughout his career, in his later publications, materiality came to play a greater role while the role of thought was downplayed. Simultaneously, the structured object changed from things said to practices. What was at stake was not the structuring of thought but the structuring of practice – thought being merely one type of practice. Thus, rather than focussing solely on discourses or epistemes and the realm of meaning, he introduced the notion of *apparatus* or *dispositif*. An apparatus is defined as a system of relations that at any given point in history can be established between a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of among other things discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, and philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – the said as much as the unsaid (Foucault, 1980, p. 194). The transition from discourse as the overall structure to apparatus as the overall structure, however, was not readily accepted by his peers. During a conversation in 1977 between Foucault, Miller, Grosrichard, Wajeman, and Le Gaufey (ibid., p. 194-198) about the difference and hierarchy of apparatus and discourse, Foucault defended his stance on apparatuses against his peers' insistence that there is no non-discursive by stating:

> "I don't think it's very important to be able to make that distinction [between Gabriel's discursive plan for the Military School and the actual material structure of that school, as the example goes], given that my problem isn't a linguistic one." (ibid., p. 198)

Instead of focussing on language, in his later writings Foucault focusses on practice and how practice is conditioned. Simultaneously, materiality comes to play a greater role. It is not only ideational programmes, but also the stones in Bentham's Panopticon that make people docile (Foucault, 1991). In addition to stones Foucault's later analyses mention scaffolds, barracks, tables, prisons (ibid.), and city plans (Foucault, 2007). In a similar spirit, those that have taken up Foucault's notion of power under the header of governmentality tend to eschew discourse and focus, at least in theory, on governance of and through practice. As Rose (1999, p. 52) states:

> "A technology of government… is an assemblage of forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculations, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgement, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscription techniques, and so forth, traversed and transected by aspirations to achieve certain outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed."

Drawing on especially the later Foucault, Rose argues that power operates through assemblages of heterogeneous elements. Despite the theoretical focus on the heterogeneous nature of power exertion,

however, ideas, concepts, and thought tend to reign supreme in governmentality analyses. Henman (2013), for example, examines Government 2.0 as a calculated activity to shape conduct solely through an analysis of how national governments articulate Government 2.0 within major documents. The analytical focus is explained by the fact that governmental reports have an immediate programmatic effect on determining government activities. One may, however, wonder why government activities are exempted from analysis. This is no less puzzling since Government 2.0 is the conceptual offspring of Web 2.0, which is understood as a term that subsumes diverse technologies and practices of user generation and sharing. Similarly, while Morison (2010) includes actual practices of Government 2.0, governmental reports and white papers still take analytical precedence. It is as if regimes of practices, which is the overall analytical object, have a material and institutional locale but exist in the milieu of thought (Dean, 2010), which takes precedence in the analysis.

Laclau and Mouffe explicitly relate their approach to that of Foucault and find the latter lacking because he maintains a distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices (2001, p. 107). Echoing Foucault's critical peers, Laclau and Mouffe suggest that discourses serve as the bridge between thoughts and materiality. A discourse is defined as a structured totality that consists not only of linguistic phenomena, but pierces the entire material density of multifarious institutions, rituals, and practices. Thought and materiality are distinct and cannot manifest themselves outside any discursive structure (ibid., p. 108). Every object and thought is constituted as an object or thought of discourse. No object or thought is outside discourse. Any distinction between linguistic and behavioural aspects of a social practice is a differentiation that is created and maintained within the social production of meaning, which is discursively structured. Discourse, then, is neither a linguistic phenomenon nor a material phenomenon in itself, but rather the bridge that connects and structures the two. As such, there is a great affinity between Foucault's notion of apparatus (not his notion of discourse) and Laclau and Mouffe's notion of discourse, insofar as this permeates both linguistic and material phenomena. However, once Laclau and Mouffe have affirmed the material character of discourse, it disappears from their analysis. The hegemonic struggles that Laclau and Mouffe are preoccupied with are struggles over meaning among political human actors and it is difficult to appreciate the role played by materiality. Discourse may be the bridge that connects thoughts and objects, but discourses are accessible and intelligible only through language, which is understood as a world-constructing activity. According to Laclau and Mouffe, and poststructuralist discourse analytics in general, it is only through the construction in language that 'things' – objects, subjects, states, living beings, and material structures – are given meaning and endowed with a particular identity (Hansen, 2006, p. 18). Without language, all other phenomena remain meaningless. They exist, but they do not have meaning for human beings, unless they are ascribed meaning through language. Contrary to Müller (2008), who argues that Laclau and Mouffe's notion of discourse as both language and practice contributes to a more comprehensive and critical understanding of the discursive constitution of identities, I argue that their notion of discourse slips into the language and thought pole.

To be clear, I am not arguing against analysing the milieu of thought. Rather, I argue for an approach that considers the wealth of practices and the wealth of heterogeneous elements through which power is exerted. In this greater scheme, governmental reports and signs are but two important forms of power exertion. The heterogeneous nature of power exertion implies an ontology that neither governmentality

nor discursive hegemony analyses pursue. If power is exerted through an assemblage of heterogeneous elements, an ontology is required that breaks with the Cartesian inherited ontology.

ANT offers a unique and radical solution that implies the end of great divides (Callon & Law, 1997). In the words of Law (1999), ANT is a material semiotic machine for waging war on essential differences. Rather than bridging any gap between subjects and objects, the ontological gap is imploded, bypassed, and ignored (Latour, 1999). ANT maintains that there is just one reality and that everything is equally real (Law, 2009). There is no *a priori* ontological difference between subjects and objects (Latour, 1993). Visions and symbols of e-democracy belong to the same reality as the ICT that sustain e-democratic practices; they are equally real. ANT does not presume essential differences between humans, understood as subjects ordained with motives, intentions, and desires, and nonhumans, understood as objects at the mercy of human will or collective social forces. Instead, it sees action as the principal analytical unit. It substitutes the notions of subject and object with the notion of actor-networks and focusses not on what actors are, but on what they do. An *actor* (leaving the network part aside for the moment) is anything that brings about a change in the state of affairs or, better yet, contributes to a chain of action (Latour, 2005). To illustrate this shift, the act of signing a petition at 'Petitions: UK Government and Parliament' can be described as a course of action. This specific train of action involves at the very least a user, a user account, an e-mail address, a device hooked to the internet, the internet, the website, a server, and software developers and designers. Obviously, the user does a lot of acting when signing a petition. The user certainly is a prominent actor. But the device, the internet, the website, its design, and the algorithms also contribute. Thus, the act is carried out by a long range of heterogeneous actors. In fact, nothing ever acts on its own. Action is always distributed among actors. If nothing ever acts on its own, if action is not located in any single actor but always distributed among several actors, how can one actor be described as that which contributes to or alters chains of action? If a software breakdown, which interrupts the signing a petition at 'Petitions: UK Government and Parliament', is itself an act that is distributed by several actors, how can that act be attributed to a specific actor? The solution to this conundrum is to understand actors as actor-*networks*. An actor is always a network and a network is always an actor (Latour, 2005). The difference between the two is analytic rather than ontological. Thus, analytically an actor is that which represents an action, when in fact this action is sustained by a greater network of actors (Callon & Law, 1997). Facebook, for example, can in an analysis of the construction of e-democracy figure as an actor that shapes the way politics are discussed and shared online. However, the construction of Facebook can also be analytically investigated by exploring the heterogeneous elements that continuously make up Facebook. Ontologically speaking, Facebook is both an actor and a network. It is an actor-network. Analytically, the two are distinct.

Epistemology

Epistemology builds upon ontology. The 'hard' approach sketched in the section about research paradigms maintains that reality is divided into conscious subjects and material objects and that it is the former's task to disclose the laws that govern the latter. In order to do so, it is paramount that the subject does not interfere with these laws, but remains objective and detached. The 'soft' approach on the other hand holds that the only accessible reality exists as subjective constructions of the mind and that the researcher

attempts to interpret how reality is constructed from his or her own subject position. The approach adopted in the current dissertation resembles the 'soft' approach to some degree. It maintains that the researcher is hopelessly entangled in the phenomenon under investigation (Latour, 2007) and that the researcher necessarily impacts the phenomenon that is studied (Latour, 2005). Unlike the 'soft' approach, however, the researcher does not solely impact meaning-making practices, but reality itself, which the 'soft' approach traditionally leaves out of consideration. As such, it could be said that the semiotic turn is extended so that it encompasses materiality, which the 'soft' approach left aside (Latour, 1996; Law, 2009).

The researcher's analyses are add-ons to the world. The researcher is a world builder as Latour (1996) puts it. Knowledge does not disclose laws that govern an objective and independent world through scientific statements that corresponds with the state of affairs. Knowledge adds to reality. As Dewey states, knowledge and science confer traits and potentialities upon things which did not previously belong to them (Dewey, 1958, in Latour, 2008). The following example shows that the researcher may have a genuine impact on e-democratic practice by constructing a situation in which potential solutions to impending problems can be articulated and investigated.

Anecdote

In April 2014, I conducted a focus group interview with three members of the Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq Municipal Board. After a lengthy talk about online dialogue and deliberation and the risk of opening the floodgates, as one participant put it, they started considering online consultations as a viable solution:

Participant 1: "You could target it. I mean, instead of creating a Facebook page and then just opening the floodgates, then you could target it and say "What do you think? Where do you as a citizen think that we should cut the budget? Suggestions are welcome!" Then you have made kind of a filter."
Interviewer: Yes
Participant 1: "And then people can chip in on a more specific issue"
Participant 2: "Mmh" [approving]
Interviewer: "Yes"
Participant 1: "You could create some filters in that way."
Participant 2: "Mmh" [approving]
Interviewer: "Absolutely."
Participant 1: "And still invite people to contribute"
Participant 2: "Mmh" [approving]
Participant 1: ""We face these specific challenges…" or "We are about to set up an event. How do you think it should take place?""
Interviewer: "Yes"
Participant 1: "And "What do you think that we should do on the national day?""
Participant 3: "Mmh" [approving]
Participant 1: "Anything really!"

It is fair to assume that the interviewed participants did not think of e-democracy in terms of online consultation prior to the interview. However, as they weighed the pros and cons of an open online political dialogue during the interview, online consultation became a solution to the problem of loss of control. The municipal board regained the control that they saw themselves losing on e.g. Facebook. This way of regaining control while involving the citizenry grew on the interview participants during the interview. The interview participants included among others the Mayor and the Vice Mayor, each representing the two largest political parties in the board. Thus, it can be assumed that they had significant impact on decisions. Four months later, in August 2014, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq hosted its first online consultation, concerning the site for the new parliament building.

Because interviews rely on a direct interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees, interviews illustrate the process by which data is constructed by researchers and participants most vividly. But it applies to all sorts of data. Governmental reports and strategies do not become data until the researcher interprets them in terms of a specific research question. Online political action does not yield information on how power is exerted in the enactment of e-democracy unless the researcher employs it as data.

According to ANT, the researcher is a mere actor-network on par with any other – the citizen, the politician, the civil servant, and even the different ICT. As such, the resaercher may be understood as a world builder among world builders (Latour, 1996). Data is not extracted from an independent reality. It is coproduced by multiple actors. Drawing on the pragmatism of William James, Latour (2008, p. 89) describes knowledge in terms of the continuous process by which it is generated: "we try to say something, we err often, we rectify or we are rectified by others." The keys to this phrase are process and others, which needs to be understood as encompassing not just other scholars but also materiality and non-scholars. Latour (1999) goes to some length to argue that researchers are not superior to other actors, and that the researcher's job is not to explain why and how unwitting actors are manipulated by forces unknown and exterior to them. Rather, it is the researcher's job to learn from these actors not only what they do, but how and why they do it. The poverty of ANT's vocabulary is in this regard to be understood as a clear signal that none of these theoretical and ontological words either could or should replace the rich vocabulary of the actor's practice. The ontologically derived vocabulary of actor-networks, action, and association, however, allow for an exploration of the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy only to a certain extent. The formation and sustainment of associations between heterogeneous actors can be explored, but not much else (Couldry, 2008). In order to appreciate the formation and sustainment as power exertion, additional conceptual tools about power are required. As I have argued above, in this dissertation power is understood in two related ways: As a hegemonic struggle among radical agonistic forces and as the reasoned strategic and tactical attempt to direct behaviour to meet specific ends. The associations, which are formed and sustained among heterogeneous actors, are interpreted in light of these conceptual frameworks. The research, then, contributes with an interpretation of the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy to the world.

The local or 'native' (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998) actor's judgement of the adequacy of research is of paramount importance, since it is them that we learn from. Two times I have had the fortune to present and discuss preliminary analysis and findings at public lectures at Ilisimatusarfik, the University of Greenland. The lectures where public and I personally invited interview participants. Moreover, the employee at the Bureau for Inatsisartut, who had been responsible for the Bureau's communication strategy with regard to the Parliament building controversies, reviewed the article 'Kunuk too it to the Streets of Greenland', which dealt with this controversy. I was especially concerned with the degree to which the local Greenlandic actors recognised themselves in the analyses and whether the analyses were meaningful to them, and if the analyses shed new light on the development of e-democracy in Greenland. To judge from the responses, my analyses were recognisable and opened up new perspectives on the political use of the internet. The adequacy of research should however not only be judged by local actors. It needs to be judged also by the research community. This is why researchers travel the world to present research ideas, methods, and findings at scientific conferences. This is why they discuss their work with colleagues and supervisors. This is why they subject their work to peer review before publication. So that

they may gain some feedback on their work and then correct mistakes, fill in gaps, sharpen arguments, develop new ideas, and perhaps even discard poor work. At two occasions I have had the opportunity to present my work at international conferences. At the Internet, Politics, and Policy academic conference series 'Crowdsourcing for Politics and Policy' at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, I presented the draft 'The Question of Technologically Mediated Civic Political Participation Reformulated'. Later the draft became the article 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland', which incorporated the feedback received and the discussions with fellow conference attendants. At the conference 'By the People – Participatory Democracy, Civic Engagement and Citizenship Education' at Arizona State University, I presented the draft for 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)'. Similarly, all four articles have been subjected to double-blind peer review before publication. The review processes resulted in anything from discarding and reframing research objectives and ideas to changing few sentences. In addition to these formal ways of subjecting my work to the judgement of the scientific community, I have continuously discussed my work with my two supervisors.[8]

As such, the research approach operates with a pragmatic view on truth. A true belief is one that would withstand doubt, were we to enquire as far as we fruitfully could on the matter (Misak, 2002). Scientific enquiry aims at truth but since it is in principle impossible to determine when no further enquiry is possible, truth cannot be determined. Instead of asking whether or not a belief is true, pragmatism encourages a focus on the enquiry and on getting the best possible answers to the questions that arise (ibid.). Truth, then, is not something above or beyond enquiry that characterises the link between a statement and an otherwise independent reality. Rather, truth is linked to the practices of enquiry.

Methodology

The literature suggests multiple methods with which to explore the power inherent in e-democracy. Boyle (1997), Fuchs (2013), Green (1999), and Lyon (1998) investigate how concrete technological artefacts condition the possibilities for action online. Gidlund (2015), Henman (2013), and Morison (2010) analyse the power effects of specific ideas of government manifest in governmental reports and strategies. Nygren (2009) analyses governmental action plans, in-depth interviews, and surveys in an exploration of the relation between rhetoric and practices of government. Ekelin (2007) applies an ethnomethodological approach and turns to practices as the object of study. There is no one single agreed-upon route to travel, but there are several possible routes. Which route to travel depends on the object of study rather than on any rigorous methodology (Latour, 1996). The researcher needs, therefore, to be sensitive to the field's variability. This is the first principle, methodological pragmatism. Because e-democracy is enacted in multiple ways, by multiple actors, and in multiple sites, no type of data or method of generating such data should be excluded *a priori*. Instead, the exploration needs to incorporate and adjust to new actors, new sites of struggle, and new ways of enacting e-democracy. Practice is multi-sited (Marcus, 1995) and the researcher needs to focus on flows and connections rather than on locations and demarcation lines (Hine, 2000). This also implies a move across online-offline divides (Leander & McKim, 2003). Hampton (2003)

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[8] In the chapter 'Articles', I return to the trajectory of each article to show the processes by which they came into being.

argues that it is impossible to determine the development of community involvement if the crosscutting nature of communities is ignored and if online relationships are treated as entities in themselves, isolated from existing social networks and existing means of communication. The very distinction between online and offline relationships needs to be dissolved. There is no distinction between a relationship that is maintained by phone, letters, dinners, talks, hugs, smiles, and so forth and there is no distinction between a relationship that is maintained online and one that is maintained offline. All these actors mediate and construct a relationship differently. They do not constitute independent and distinct relationships.

Utilising several types of data not only complies with the methodological requirement to attend to and document the various ways in which e-democracy is enacted, it also makes triangulation possible. Triangulation is a procedure by which convergence among multiple and different sources of information is sought for in order to determine themes or categories in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Thus the visions constructed during interviews, the visions constructed in strategies and reports, and the practical enactment can be compared, thereby providing credibility and trustworthiness to the analysis. Credibility and trustworthiness are to be understood as validity and reliability translated from a quantitative into a qualitative research paradigm (Golafshani, 2003). The implications of this translation are significant, since it involves a move from a 'hard' to a 'soft' paradigm. The purpose of triangulation is not to add breadth or depth to the pursuit of objective truth, but to add breadth and depth to the analysis (Fielding & Fielding, 1986, cited in Flick, 1992). Using validity-reliability vocabulary, engaging multiple methods, such as observation, interviews and documents, and usage allows for the construction of more valid, reliable, and diverse realities (in plural). Radically departing this vocabulary, which is suggested by among others Flick (1992), triangulation can be seen as an alternative to validation.

Above I argued that the four articles can be understood as four subcases of the power inherent in e-democracy. Data generated and analysed is warranted by the analytical frames utilised and the distinct purposes of each article. 'Navigating Troubled Waters' rests upon a literature review of academic publications on e-democracy. The other three articles make use of qualitative data generated in Greenland: Governmental strategies and reports, interviews with key political actors, observations of online politics, and usage of key websites. Analytically, the articles explore the paths whereby different versions of e-democracy in Greenland are constructed. They follow these paths and document how different actors (human as well as nonhuman) shape Greenlandic e-democracy. As such, they are in-depth explorations of the complexity and uniqueness of the particular phenomenon in its real-life setting (Simons, 2009).

The remainder of this chapter presents and reflects upon the various types of data, the methods by which it was generated, and the strategies employed for analysis.

Academic publications

Boote and Beile (2005) present a literature review scoring rubric, which consists of five categories. Thus a literature review should:

1) Be thematically bounded and explicate the principles by which literature is included or excluded.
2) Summarise, analyse, and synthesise the selected literature on a given topic.
3) Identify, analyse and evaluate the main methodologies and research techniques pertaining to the field.
4) Asses the practical and scholarly significance of the research problem.
5) Be written with a coherent, clear structure that supports the review.

The scoring rubric was originally developed to evaluate the literature reviews in doctoral dissertations in educational research. No self-evaluation is attempted here. Instead, the scoring rubric is used to guide the literature reviews conducted in the dissertation. Five literature reviews have been conducted: One overarching review and one literature review per published article.

The overarching review was not systematic but explorative and broad in scope. It has not made it into the dissertation but delineated the overall theoretical and thematic boundaries of the PhD. Its objective was to discuss what has been done and what needs to be done, to place the research in a historical context, and to identify main research approaches. The review consisted of multiple discussions of and several probes into potentially interesting and relevant publications suggested by my supervisors. This literature review has influenced all four research outputs as it laid the foundation for the overall approach. The review's ramifications were profound. Initially, I had planned to use the online citizen portal, Sullissivik.gl, where I had worked the previous three years, as focus for my enquiry. I had planned to analyse the key reports that had enabled the development of and made the strategic foundation for the portal. I expected to interview the people behind these reports. I was to draw upon my own experience from working with this portal. I would observe how Sullissivik.gl, citizen service employees, and citizens enacted local democracy in concrete scenarios. However, as I was making myself familiar with the literature on the subject matter, and as I considered the Greenlandic state of affairs in more detail, it became clear that Sullissivik.gl does not resemble the cases of e-democracy discussed in the literature. Sullissivk.gl is a good case for e-government or e-governance, but not for e-democracy. "e-Democracy is NOT about paying speeding fines over the Internet (that is e-government)" (Coleman & Norris, 2005, p. 7). Paying speeding fines and similar things was, however, the exact purpose of sullissivik.gl.

Anecdote

Months later the discrepancy inherent in my initial research objective and plan was confirmed. During an interview with the head of the Department for Domestic Affairs, who was implementing the parliamentary report on structural reform (Strukturudvalget, 2005) – one of the key reports that founded Sullissivik.gl – I was told that in the preparatory work for the report, in the subsequent implementation process, and after, local democracy was understood in two ways: As citizen participation in local politics, and as local provision of administrative services. Furthermore, it was only the latter that was implemented in Sullissivik.gl to any degree. Thus, what I understood by local democracy – that of people participating in politics – did not resonate with the public administration's interpretation of that concept.

This suggested two possible avenues to pursue. I could either maintain my focus on Sullissivik.gl and reframe the project as an e-government study, or I could maintain my theoretical interest in the power inherent in e-democracy and discard sullisivik.gl as the empirical focal point. I opted for the latter, because I believed it would provide more interesting findings. Moreover, I expected that the technology-governance complex would lend itself too easily to an analysis of power in terms of technologically mediated self-governance. In comparison, the technology-democracy compound appeared to offer a more complex and paradoxical case. The decision, however, caused many changes. First, I altered my research questions so that they better captured the e-democratic state of affairs in Greenland, which is much more abstract, diffuse, and dispersed than the reality of Greenlandic e-government. Second, I changed the research design significantly. Originally, Sullissivik.gl and its users would have functioned as the empirical focal point for the investigations, but I now found myself considering a phenomenon that is not manifest or embodied in any single concrete technology. Instead, it is enacted in multiple sites, some formal, some informal, some of great duration, some fleeting, some initiated by and involving one set of actors (for example civil servants, politicians, and institutional webpages), some involving others (for example protesters, petitioners, Facebook, and third-party petition websites). Consequently, my research practice changed from being structured by the initial research proposal and its plan of execution to a practical task of following events as they unfolded, getting in touch with actors as they became relevant, and tracing associations among diverse and dispersed actors.

The literature reviews conducted for 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland', 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)', and 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland' were based on the overarching literature review. But in order to focus on the specific issues in each article, successive and minor literature reviews were conducted that explored the concrete issues and prior research approaches. Thus, the purpose was to analyse the selected literature and identify thematic gaps. In comparison, the literature review for 'Navigating Troubled Waters' was more systematic and thorough. For a given period or a certain phenomenon it is possible to locate similarities and corresponding techniques that allow for a logical, coherent, and valid investigation of the mechanisms of power (Foucault, 2007). The purpose of the literature review was to investigate the mechanisms of power inherent to e-democracy as they appear in academic publications and develop a framework for the study of these mechanisms. The literature review conducted for 'Navigating Troubled Waters' followed the guidelines of Webster and Watson (2002). Relevant publications within the field of study were gathered from diverse journals in two leading research databases: Web of Science and ProQuest. Only peer-reviewed original research publications in English were included. A list of key terms were created: 'eDemocracy', 'e-democracy' 'electronic democracy' 'digital democracy', 'online democracy', 'internet democracy', or 'cyber democracy'. A ProQuest test search that searched for these terms in the main body of text resulted in 410 publications. Since the purpose of the literature review required that each publication was read and analysed in-depth it was deemed practically impossible to include this amount of publications. In order to shorten the list of publications, I only included publications that had one of the key terms in the title. The publications' relevance was estimated by scanning their abstracts and determining their subject matter. Publications that were not about politics were omitted. Next, the search went backwards by looking for earlier key publications that were cited in the publications and forwards by looking up publications of a later date that cited them. I found additional key publications via ProQuest, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The resulting body of literature, which counted 113 publications, served as the foundation for the development of the MIME framework.

Although literature reviews are an important and necessary part of research projects (Webster & Watson, 2002), the way they are to be conducted depend on their purposes. Published literature reviews need to be stringent and systematic as Boote and Beile (2005) maintain. In this regard, Webster and Watson's (2002) guidelines are very helpful. If the purpose of the literature review is to develop the overall theoretical and thematic frame, however, adaptability, flexibility, and exploration should perhaps take precedence over stringency and systematicity, in order to create the right fit between empirical reality and theoretical and thematic framework. Thus, instead of applying a universal evaluative scoring rubric (Boote & Beile, 2005), it might be better to judge literature reviews on their distinct objectives.

Reports and strategies

When exploring how power is enacted by governments, it is recommended to start with investigating governmental reports and strategies, because they define programs of governmental activity (Henman, 2013). From such documents visions of and ideas for e-democracy can be constructed. However, there is an important difference between defining programs of governmental action or formulating visions of e-democracy and impacting or steering governmental practices. The reports and strategies need to be triangulated with interviews and practices in order to provide the analysis with credibility. In line with Jensen and Lauritsen (2005), it is not just the content of reports and strategies that should be investigated, but also what they do. For the current dissertation, the link between governmental strategies and reports and governmental practices is established by way of analysis. The Parliament's and Government's websites may be interpreted as translations of these reports and strategies and they may be compared. The reports and strategies are listed chronologically below (Table 2).

Reference	Description
Landsstyrets IT-arbejdsgruppe (1996)	A plan of action and a foundation for the Parliament's future IT-politics
Grønlands IT-Råd (2000)	A proposal for a national IT-Strategy
Grønlands IT-Råd (2004)	An assessment of the Greenlandic e-democratic status quo
Strukturudvalget (2005)	Advisory report on the structural reform
Naalakkersuisut (2011a)	Legislative drafting guidelines
Naalakkersuisut (2011b)	The Government's 2011-2015 IT-Strategy
Naalakkersuisut (2014)	The Government's 2014-2017 IT-Strategy
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq (2015)	The municipality's communication strategy
Naalakkersuisut (2016)	The Government's 2016 Political – Economic Report

Table 2 Government and political reports, strategies, and guidelines

The earliest report is from 1996 and the most recent is from 2016. If I have collected all publicly available reports and strategies on the subject, only nine such documents have been crafted in 20 years. The low number indicates that ICT facilitated democracy is in its infancy in Greenland and that neither Parliament nor Government pay it much attention. The documents consist primarily of strategies that formulate visions for and define future paths for Greenlandic e-democracy, a single assessment of the implementation, and a single practical guideline for legislative procedures. The different documents explicitly or implicitly say something about how ICT ought to be implemented in the democratic political processes. In 1996, the Government set up an IT workgroup that was to come up with a plan of action that could serve as a foundation for the Parliament's future IT policies. The plan was required to formulate visions for IT and propose future focus areas (Landsstyrets IT-arbejdsgruppe, Appendix 4, 1996). In its final report, the workgroup argued that "IT should support democracy and the individual's possibilities for participation" (Landsstyrets IT-arbejdsgruppe, 1996, Author's translation). The vision of an IT-supported democracy was echoed four years later by Grønlands IT-Råd (Greenland's IT Council) (Grønlands IT-Råd, 2000) and in 2004 the Council assessed the e-democratic status quo for the first time (Grønlands IT-Råd, 2004). By then, the Government's webpage hosted MPs' speeches and proposals, as well as political and government reports, rules, and regulations. Apart from addressing the massive digital divide, which characterised Greenland at that time, the Council recommended that debates in Parliament and in the Municipal Boards were to be transmitted online. Furthermore, it was recommended that a national strategy was to be crafted that defined how citizens were to be involved in the democratic processes, what kind of dialogue is desired, and how citizens' opinions and preferences were to be used. No such strategy has been formulated as of yet. Instead, these questions are still being debated. The various Government IT strategies and reports that have been written in the past decade have focussed on e-administration or e-governance and mention e-democracy only in passing or as symbolic coating. The 2005 report on the structural reform, which laid the foundation for the citizen portal to be, sullissik.gl, only mentioned political participation as one possible feature among several administrative solutions (Strukturudvalget, 2005). The Government's 2011-2015 IT strategy ignored political participation altogether (Naalakkersuisut, 2011b), and in the 2014-2017 strategy, the term "democracy" first and foremost served as a symbolic coating on service provision and administrative optimisation (Naalakkersuisut, 2014). Most recently, the need for and possibilities afforded by digital democracy were mentioned in the Government's 2016 Political – Economic Report (Naalakkersuisut, 2016). The report states that the prime objective of digital democracy is to ensure openness, transparency, and proximity for citizens and companies in relation to decision makers and decision processes. This is to be achieved by ensuring that political agendas, bases for decisions, meetings, and political debates are accessible online. Finally, it is recommended that digital solutions for voting processes are explored. The internet, it is argued, ought to be employed to provide political information and to facilitate already established democratic practices of voting. Although Facebook has become a major site for politics, public strategies that take social media into account are absent. Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq is the sole institution that has begun to consider social media and especially Facebook in its communication strategies and has established a team dedicated to Facebook communication (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2015). The Government's 2016 Political – Economic Report affirms that several politicians already use Social Media and merely recommends that these measures ought to be strengthened significantly (Naalakkersuisut, 2016).

Interviews

A second type of data that has been employed in the dissertation is interviews. Three types of interviews have been conducted: individual interviews, focus-group interviews, and online group interviews. The purpose of conducting interviews is not to disclose pre-existing thoughts in the minds of interview participants. Rather, the aim is to invite participants to construct e-democracy *in situ*. The anecdote above about how members of the municipal board constructed e-democracy as online consultation during the interview illustrates this point. Loosely structured interviews utilise and document the interactional character of meaning making, thereby yielding data on both the outcome and the process. This is especially true for group interviews where the interview participants talk with each other (Wilkinson, 1998), but it also applies to individual interviews, because the interview data is constructed by the interviewer and the interviewee. During 2014 and 2015, four focus group interviews and 11 individual interviews were conducted with seven citizens, six members of legislative bodies, two candidates for parliament, and seven civil servants employed by the Government or Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq. The interviews were loosely structured and lasted from half an hour to two hours. The table below (Table 3) summarises and characterises the interviewees and the interviews.

Characterisation	Interview type	Date
Member of Parliament	Individual	Apr. 2014
Candidate for Parliament – Facebook group member	Focus group	Nov. 2014
Candidate for Parliament	Focus group	Nov. 2014
Member of Municipal Board, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq	Focus group	Apr. 2014
Member of Municipal Board, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq	Focus group	Apr. 2014
Member of Municipal Board, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq	Focus group	Apr. 2014
Member of Municipal Board, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq	Individual	Nov. 2014
Government civil servant	Individual	Apr. 2014
Government civil servant	Individual	Apr. 2014
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq civil servant	Focus group	Mar. 2014
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq civil servant	Focus group	Mar. 2014
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq civil servant	Focus group	Mar. 2014
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq civil servant	Focus group	Mar. 2014
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq civil servant	Focus group	Dec. 2014
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq civil servant	Focus group	Dec. 2014
Citizen	Individual	Dec. 2014
Citizen – Facebook group member	Individual	Jan. 2015
Citizen – Facebook group member	Individual	Feb. 2015
Citizen – Facebook group member	Individual	Feb. 2015
Citizen	Individual	Feb. 2015
Citizen	Individual	Mar. 2015
Citizen	Individual	Apr. 2015

Table 3 Summary of interview participants and interview types

In addition to these interviews, I administrated a public Facebook group called 'Grønlandsk eDemokrati' (Greenlandic E-Democracy). The group served as a forum for deliberations on Greenlandic e-democracy. Similar to Fileborn (2016), I used my personal Facebook account to enrol interview participants. The group

was active from October 2014 until May 2015 and consisted of 32 members, four of whom were also interviewed individually. Despite efforts to facilitate deliberation among the members, interaction resembled an interview. I posed a question, the members answered, and I posed follow-up, exploratory, and specifying questions.

Sampling and interview strategies

Interview participants were sampled in three ways with increasing success. In February 2014 I sent an interview invitation to all MPs and members of the Municipal Board of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq. I received replies from five MPs and 11 Municipal Board members. However, as the replies cited below illustrate, busy political schedules and great distances were insurmountable obstacles.

> "The only day that I can participate is Wednesday 29th 16:00-18:00. But on this day a range of Municipal Board members will leave Nuuk and return to their hometowns." (Email, Municipal Board member, October 21st, 2014, Author's translation)

> "I would like to participate but I cannot at attend at any of the suggested dates. I only have spare time on Sunday. [Another Municipal Board member] suggested October 28th 11:00 but I have a committee meeting. On Wednesday I go to Paamiut." (Email, Municipal Board member, October, 16th, 2014, Author's translation)

> "Thank you for the invitation. I regret to announce that I cannot participate in the focus group interview. I live in Sisimiut and I am not in Nuuk at the suggested dates. Good luck with your project." (Email, Member of Parliament, February 20th, 2014, Author's translation)

> "Dear Andreas. Thank you for your invitation. I am in Upernavik so regrettably I cannot participate." (Email, Member of Parliament, February 18th 2014, Author's translation)

Thus, I managed to arrange only one focus-group interview with three members of the municipal board of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, one individual interview with a member of the municipal board, and a single individual interview with a MP. Next, I looked for citizens, politicians, and civil servants who were especially politically active online or who wrote about online political participation. This required that I followed the public debates in newspapers and online. 50 people that had been engaged in political activities online were invited to join the Facebook group on Greenlandic e-democracy. 32 accepted the invitation. Together, the two first strategies ensure that differing perspectives and opposing groups of actors are included. Finally, I employed a snowball sampling strategy (Noy, 2008) during interviews and traced associations between contributing actors during the analysis. Thus, new key actors emerged both during the interviews and in the successive analyses. Snowball sampling and association tracing guide the exploration in relevant directions insofar as these strategies utilize the very networks through which e-democracy is enacted. Snowballing not only discloses other relevant actors but also relevant themes to pursue (Hine, 2000).

Kitzinger (1994) argues that it is preferable to interview pre-existing groups rather than artificial groups because the former provide the social context within which ideas are formed and decisions made also outside interviews. Established power relations are brought along into the interview situation and are in turn documented by the interview data. The four focus-group interviews conducted for this dissertation were with pre-existing groups (members of the municipal board, colleagues at the municipal public

administration, and candidates for parliament running for the same political party). As the table above shows, it was not possible to arrange any focus group interview with citizens. There might be several reasons for this. Groups, and perhaps especially artificial groups, can be intimidating (Wilkinson, 1998). Whereas civil servants and politicians are colleagues, citizens do not necessarily share much except for their citizenship. Focus group interviews with citizens are likely to bring disparate viewpoints together and could potentially end in conflict. This uncertainty may be intimidating and exclude potential interviewees. Prior knowledge of other potential interviewees may also keep some from participating.

Anecdote

One member of the Facebook group, whom I later interviewed individually, told me that she wanted to leave the group because of one other member, whom she knew from before. Moreover, while she was interested in participating in a focus-group interview, she asked me not to be paired with that person.

Finally, while it was difficult to coordinate civil servants' and especially politicians' schedules, it proved impossible to coordinate citizens' free time. Moving the interview online to Facebook avoided these practical problems, as the conversation could be asynchronous and take place across physical distances. Group members were for the most part ordinary citizens. Two members were political candidates in the 2014 Parliament elections and one of them became Minister of Finance. The other was not elected.

Prior to conducting any interviews, I crafted an interview strategy to determine and facilitate a division of labour between me and the interviewees. Interviews were loosely structured, open ended, and in many ways resembled a conversation which moved where the interviewees wanted it to – within the thematic limits set by me. Furthermore, I tried to create safe and confidential spaces in which the interviewees could construct specific versions of Greenlandic e-democracy. This was accomplished by speaking *with* the interviewees or following their trajectories and encouraging them to elaborate on definitions rather than speaking *against* them.

Because e-democracy is somewhat abstract and not on the popular political agenda I expected it to be difficult for interviewees to talk about it. In order to set the stage and topic for the interviews, I created an interview guide that translated the subject of e-democracy into themes of political participation, openness and accountability, and the internet's democratic potentials and pitfalls. The themes were inspired partly by academic literature on e-democracy and partly by local news coverage and debates in national media, which I expected the interviewees to be familiar with. Additional subthemes explored these overall themes. For example, potential subthemes to 'political participation' were 'democratic legitimacy', 'political influence', 'discrediting', and 'political disagreement'. In case the interviews diverted from the topic or did not move forward, the guide listed follow-up, exploratory, and specifying questions to get the interviews back on track. In accordance with the interview strategy, the themes were not fixed but open to modifications, alterations, and even deletion if appropriate.

The strategy and guide proved to be useful in individual and focus group interviews. Measured quantitatively, 982 minutes of recorded interviews were transcribed into 617 pages. The online interview produced less data. It resulted in ten posts, 28 comments, and two votes. 14 out of 32 members actively

contributed to the discussions. Most of the active members made only one or two comments, while one person contributed with 10 comments. I facilitated the discussion and posted questions, making seven posts and seven comments in total. Thus, the distribution of activity confirms the distribution of activity of similar online discussion forums. The majority are silent but potential spectators while a small minority interacts. Before closing the group, I asked the members why they had or had not participated. To this, they replied:

> Member 1: "I am a little bit sorry that the group is closing. However, I believe that most of us are probably better at doing e-democracy than discussing it. Personally, I have become a single parent – so there have been other things for me to focus on. Therefore, I have not been very active in the group. I think that there needs to be someone that keeps the discussion going if this group is to be active."
> (Member of Greenlandic E-Democracy, May 11th 2015, Author's translation)

> Member 2: "Dear Andreas... I believe that daily activity is a must if such a group is to be successful. Moreover, I think it would have been useful if you posted some of your findings from your work with e-democracy – it is as if there has been no clear objective except that you have posed questions."
> (Member of Greenlandic E-Democracy, May 11th 2015, Author's translation)

> Member 3: "I did not really know what to use the group for, but there is fierce political debate on oqalliffik [Political Discussion Room]."
> (Member of Greenlandic E-Democracy, May 11th 2015, Author's translation)

Significant lessons can be derived from the replies above. Online interviews invade the members' daily lives. One member explained lack of activity with the fact that they had become a single parent during the online interview. The longer an asynchronous online interview lasts, the greater the risk that it interferes with the interviewees' personal lives. The duration of the online interview may also cause the members to forget why they were there in the first place. All members were asked to participate because they had been politically active online and the group's purpose – to serve as a forum for deliberations on Greenlandic e-democracy – was stated explicitly in the about section. Nevertheless, the purpose of the group was forgotten. It also seems that online interviews require a strong moderator or facilitator. The idea of a strong moderator, however, conflicts with the interview strategy and the group's purpose. During an individual interview, another member of the group explained the low activity level with the fact that I asked follow-up, explorative, and specifying questions. According to this member, people interpret follow-up questions as 'attacks' on their standpoint, which they then have to defend, which is counterproductive for the ensuing conversation. This is especially true online where it is much easier to speak one's mind. Another member suggested that I should have posted some of my findings in the group in order to encourage it. The researcher is obliged to provide some feedback to the participating actors and account for how their input has been used (Van de Ven, 2007). It was, however, not possible to present any findings to the group because its activities provided the data that the findings were to be based upon. On September 13th, 2016 I presented my findings at a public lecture at Ilisimatusarfik to which I had invited all members of the group and everyone that I had interviewed. I recorded the lecture and afterwards I distributed it to those that were interested in participating in the lecture but who had been prevented from doing so. Ultimately, it may be as one member suggested that people are generally better at doing things than talking about it.

Usage

E-democracy is constructed not only by governmental strategies and reports and in interviews. In order to comprehend the web of relations that together enact e-democracy it is important to consider the technologies that sustain online political actions as actors. Online geography reconfigures political access (Chadwick, 2006), which is otherwise vivid in the traditional grandiloquent and impenetrable physical architecture of parliamentary and government buildings (Coleman, 2003). Reconfiguration, however, does not imply elimination. Website users' behaviour is directed online just as it is offline. To enter a webpage is much like entering a building. Just like a building's interior directs visitors' movements, so a website directs users' movements through its design. In addition, just like architecture attests to and effectuates norms and logics, so do websites. In order to appreciate how websites direct actions, the researcher has to use the very websites that sustain and guide the political actions observed (Hine, 2000). I have traversed the websites in which online politics takes place. I have paid special attention to how these websites encourage some types of actions and make other actions more improbable through their designs, rules and regulations, and purposes. Below, I have listed the major websites that I have used (Table 4).[9]

| Website	Main use
Citizen portal http://www.sullissivik.gl/	Provide services, guides, and information on rules and regulations
Parliament http://inatsisartut.gl/	Provide information on the Parliament and its members, inform about the political agenda in Parliament, motions, and hearings, and stream Parliament sessions
Government http://naalakkersuisut.gl/	Provide information on Government activities and publish consultations on national politics
Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq https://sermersooq.gl/	Provide information on the Municipality's activities, budgets, and strategies, and consult the citizenry
Consultation site Expired	Consult Nuuk residents on the placement of the new parliament building
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/	Connect people and share content
Skrivunder.net http://www.skrivunder.net/	Provide additional voice to specific issues

Table 4 Websites

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[9] It is important to mention that several other technologies and websites take part in the process of enacting Greenlandic e-democracy (Jørgensen, 2016a).

Sullissivik.gl provides information on rights and obligations and an array of online self-services, but does not support political participation in any form. Similarly, Parliament website users may stream Parliamentary sessions and obtain political information and documents, but they cannot comment or in any other way contribute except by writing e-mails to MPs. Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq's webpage also primarily provides information. Under the header 'Politics and Influence', users may read agendas and summaries from sessions in the Municipal Board, strategies, speeches, policies, and so forth. Despite the header's wording, however, users are only provided with very few possibilities to influence politics. As civil servants from the municipality explained, the header has a symbolic and preparatory function:

> "It was just called "Policy" before… And so we have decided to put "and Influence" in… To show that's where we're going… Also to signal to the rest of the administration… If we want to be a democracy – it's such a keyword – we have to hear them [citizens] too. They need to be on the playing field. And they can only play if they know what's going on. (Interview, Communication Department, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, December 4th 2014, Author's translation)

IT, however, is and has been employed by the Government and Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq to facilitate consultation processes. It is not mandatory but recommended that Parliamentary proposals are passed for consultation to secure a broad base of knowledge, experiences, and views in order to ensure the quality and usability of legislation. Consultations are, furthermore, described as a part of the democratic process as well as a preparatory step in the legislations' implementation in practice (Naalakkersuisut, 2011a, p. 22). If proposals are passed for consultation, all consultation documents – the proposal, appendixes, and responses – must be uploaded at the government website (ibid., p. 26). While consultations are public, it is only organisations and institutions (NGOs, Unions, Ministries, and Departments) that are considered consultation parties (ibid., p. 24). The number of consultations published online has steadily increased from one consultation in 2009 to 88 consultations in 2015 (see Figure 5).
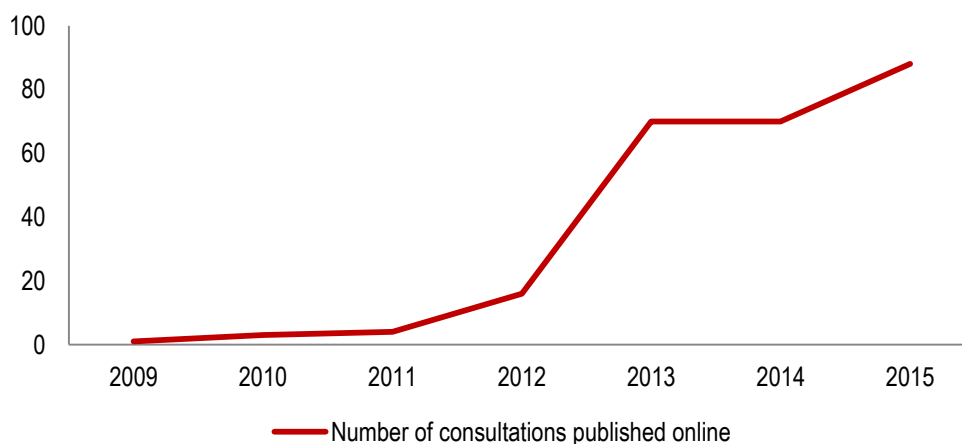
Figure 5 Consultations published online per year

Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq has recently created a consultation portal on their webpage that is open for individual citizens. As of September 2016, one consultation has been published here. In addition, the municipality consulted the citizenry online in August 2014. The Parliament had decided that a new parliament building was to be built in the capital of Nuuk and because city planning is a municipal matter, the Municipal Board of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq had to allow the construction. Nuuk citizens were consulted on this matter via an online instructional referendum.

At an informal level, Greenlanders have embraced Skrivunder.net (a petition site similar to, but smaller-scale than, change.org), which is a third-party petition website owned by Petitions24 Oy, Oulu, Finland. Petitions created and signed on this website are not formally tied to legislative procedures and do not directly inform political decisions. However, they offer a way for citizens to voice their opinion on specific issues, thus making them public issues. Another major site for online politics is Facebook. According to Internet World Stats (2016), there were 36,000 Facebook accounts in Greenland in November 2015, which is a 62.4% penetration rate. Facebook is among other things used to make the public aware of locally pertinent issues and to mobilise the populace and arrange concrete political happenings or demonstrations. Facebook is also popular among Candidates for Parliament, MPs and Ministers. During the campaigns for the 2014 Parliament election, 77.8% of the candidates had a Facebook profile. All but one of the ensuing MPs and all of the ministers had an account (Table 5).

Facebook profile	Population 57,728 in total	Candidates 194 in total	MPs 31 in total	Ministers 9 in total
Yes	36,000[10] (62,4%)	151 (77.8%)	30 (96.8%)	9 (100%)
No	21,728 (37,6%)	43 (22.2%)	1 (3.2%)	0 (0%)

Table 5 Number of Facebook accounts in relation to political role

Asynchronous observation

The methodological mantra of ANT to follow the actor (Latour, 2005) echoes the longstanding anthropological research approach to observe practices and account for the strange trajectory of quasi-objects as a whole (Latour, 1993). In relation to e-democracy, this implies that online politics need to be observed by the researcher. Fortunately, it is relatively easy to observe online politics. For the most part, online political practices are documented and made public. This means that the documentation can still be accessed long after the fact. This kind of data generation can be described as asynchronous and as passive lurking or observation (Denzin, 1999) which impacts the field only passively. Passive observation is familiar to but still different from full-fledged participant observation (Murthy, 2008) and virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000), since the participating observer and the virtual ethnographer are or aspire to be active community

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[10] http://www.internetworldstats.com/america.htm#gl.

members that are immersed and engaged in the field of study. I did not actively participate in the online politics investigated. I was, however, known to at least some of those that I observed because I used my Facebook profile to observe politics on Facebook and because I used my Facebook profile to get in touch with interview participants and to conduct online group interviews. The lurking method can thus not be compared with ethnographic complete observation where the observation is unobtrusive and unknown to participants (Kawulich, 2005).

Some activities are documented as texts. For example:

> "I…, hereby ask the Danish, the Greenlandic and the international population to support this petition against the Greenlandic uranium 235 insanity and fairy tale which has to be stopped NOW by you and me before it is too late". (Author's translation)

> "Prior incidents and the general critique of the conditions of homeless and outcast Greenlanders in Denmark show that completely different and a far more serious effort is required. We know that not all Greenlanders in Denmark end up at the bottom of society – where talk about a 'social security net' is naïve. Nonetheless, it is imperative that we react, and I plead all Danes that have some respect for Greenland and Greenlanders to speak up". (Author's translation)

The first of these two texts was written on February 10th, 2016 by a citizen as part of a petition at skrivunder.net.[11] The latter was written on October 7th, 2016 by a citizen in the Facebook group 'Political Discussion Room' as a response to the news about the death of a young homeless Greenlander in Denmark.[12] These texts are different from governmental reports and strategies and from interviews, because they are not about e-democracy. Rather, they *are* acts of e-democracy. Documentation and political action are one and the same thing. Besides texts, online politics is also documented as likes and shares on Facebook, signatures on skrivunder.net, and as votes cast at Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq's online consultation.

Not all practices are documented and therefore observable to the researcher. Activities on Inatsisartut.gl, Naalakkersuisut.gl, and Sermersooq.gl are not documented beyond the number of users. Consequently, I have only observed political practice by active actors on Facebook and skrivunder.net. However, even here it is not possible to observe everything. There is no way to observe lurkers that passively consume politics online as they leave no or only very faint observable traces (Hine, 2000; Leander & McKim, 2003). As I show below, there are many lurkers on Facebook and activity tends to revolve around a few people and topics.

In the table below (Table 6) the major sites that I have observed systematically are listed.

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[11] http://www.skrivunder.net/forbyd_danmarks_og_gronlands_uran_235_udvinding_i_gronland.
[12] https://www.facebook.com/groups/129100667273522/.

Website	Sub-site	Purpose
Facebook	Politikkikkut oqalliffik Politisk diskussionsrum Political Discussion Room	To share opinions on and discuss political matters pertaining to Greenland
	Naalakkersuisuusunut akerliussuts Demonstration imod Naalakkersuisut Demonstration against the Government	To mobilise likeminded people and organise demonstrations
	Nutaamik qinersisa! Nyt valg! New election!	To disseminate invitations to political happenings
	Akerliussutsimik takutitsineq Demonstration mod ny parlamentsbygning Demonstration against the new parliament building	To disseminate invitations to political happenings
	Aqqaluup Aneerasaartarfiani Inatsisartut Inatsisartut på Aqqaluks Plads Inatsisartut on Aqqaluk's Square	To advocate that the new parliament's building should be placed at Aqqaluk's Square
Skrivunder.net	Nutaamik qinersisa Udskriv nyt valg Call a new election	To petition and collect signatures for a new Parliament election
	Nutaamik qinerseqqinnissamik piumasaqaat Krav om nyt valg Demand for a new election	To petition and collect signatures for a new Parliament election
	Forny den grønlandske adoptionslov nu Renew the Greenland Adoption Act now	To petition and collect signatures for a renewal of the Greenlandic adoption Act
	Uran: Bevar nultolerancen Uranium: Maintain zero tolerance	To petition and collect signatures for a preservation of the zero tolerance policy towards uranium extraction

Table 6 Observed websites

Although some of these sites attract many members, activity tends to evolve around a few members and a few issues. To illustrate this, consider data extracted using SocioGraph.io[13] on the activity in the largest political community – Political Discussion Room. In August 2016, 22.1 % of the total amount of members wrote 404 posts and 3,400 comments, liked 4,000 times and shared 55 times. Facebook was active on behalf of the remaining 77.1 % passive members by distributing activities on their private walls and from there potentially throughout their networks. The data does not tell if the passive 77.1 % followed the

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[13] http://sociograph.io/.

activities or not. The data do tell us three things. One, measured by the number of comments, likes, and posts, few members are highly active, while the vast majority is not very active (Figure 6).
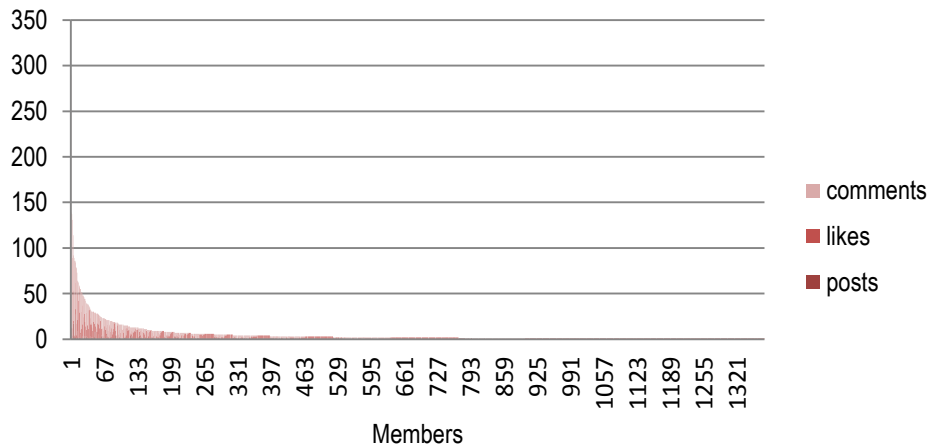
Figure 6 Members' share in activity

Two, activity tends to evolve around a few people (Figure 7). This is measured by rating the members according to how much they submit to the community and how much they receive from the community. Sociograph.io calculates members' rating in any given period in the following manner: The number of posts submitted to the community is multiplied by five. The number of likes submitted to the community is multiplied by two. The number of comments submitted to the community is multiplied by three. The number of shares received from the community is multiplied by four. The number of comments received from the community is multiplied by three. The number of likes received from the community is multiplied by two. The number of comment likes is multiplied by one. The rating is the sum of posts, likes, and comments submitted to the community, and shares, comments, likes, and comment likes received from the community (Rating = 5× posts + 2× likes + 3× comments + 4× shares + 3× comments + 2× likes + 1× comment likes.). Because the rating also includes how much is received from the community, the highest-rated members are not necessarily the most active members.
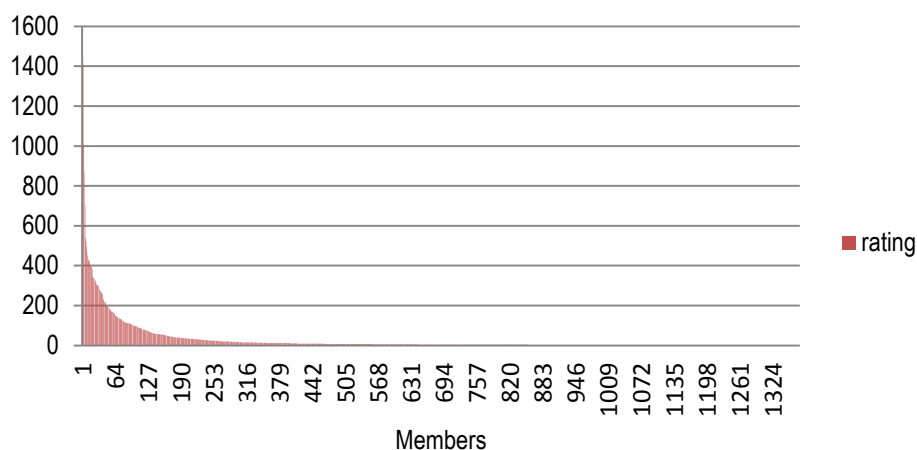
Figure 7 Members' rating

Three, measured by the number of shares, comments, and likes, few posts generate much activity, while the vast majority generates much less activity (Figure 8).
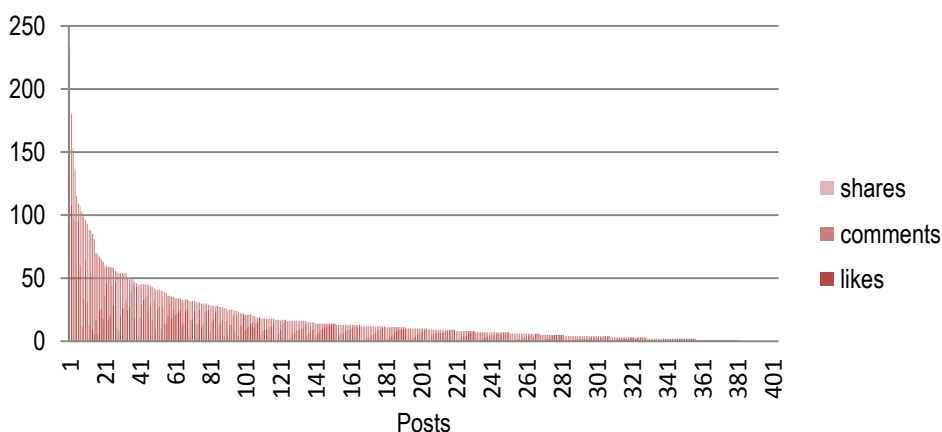
Figure 8 Posts' share in activity

News coverage

Online political practice is also documented by news media. Thus, news coverage can be seen as an observation of political action. However, despite journalistic objectivity, news coverage is biased. Sometimes newspapers also engage directly in the enactment of e-democracy. It is not uncommon for Sermitsiaq.AG, the online edition of the two Greenlandic national newspapers, to link to petitions at skrivunder.net and to call for demonstrations on Facebook. See, for example, Stefansen (2016), Dollerup-Scheibel (2016), Duus (2013; 2014), and Kruse (2014). There has also been at least one incident where the

editors of the online newspaper actively urged demonstrators to publish the date and time of demonstrations on the newspaper's own website (Søndergaard, 2016). The journalistic effect is that the reader is more informed. The political effect is that news coverage spreads the word and potentially helps gather additional signatures and enlist other demonstrators. Furthermore, Sermitsiaq.AG structures e-democratic action in much the same way as Facebook does, since it lets users comment on news. The main difference between Facebook and Sermitsiaq.AG is that the editorial board of the latter controls the topics of discussion. It is Sermitsiaq.AG rather than the users themselves that dictates what is to be debated and what is not. Sermitsiaq.AG documents, structures, and partakes in politics online.

I have systematically monitored the two national online news media, Sermitsiaq.AG and KNR.gl, for news coverage of political issues that also generate heightened political activity online. A rough estimation of the resulting newspaper articles is presented below (Table 7).

Political issue	Number of online newspaper articles
The downfall of the Siumut led Government in 2014: • The demonstration against the former Government • The process by which the demonstration was arranged • The issues that led to the demonstration • The aftermath	68
Uranium extraction: • The debate regarding extraction of uranium • The demonstrations for the maintenance of the zero tolerance policy • The political decision to discard the principle of zero tolerance towards extraction of uranium and other radioactive mineral resources • The aftermath	89
The new parliament building: • The political decision for a new parliament building • The debate regarding the parliament building in general and its location specifically • The online consultation regarding the construction site hosted by Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq • The demonstration against the parliament building • The aftermath	50

Table 7 Newspaper articles concerned with political issues

Analysis strategy

Just like the theoretical approach to the question of power and e-democracy, the analytical strategy also combines approaches from governmentality studies, hegemony studies, and ANT. First of all, relevant actors have been identified by tracing associations among actors. Associations are traced by continuously

asking how different actors shape the development of a vision, a practice, or the trajectory of an issue, as these are constructed in the various types of data. Interview participants, for example, often mention Facebook, sermitsiaq.AG, and several human actors when they envision Greenlandic e-democracy. Likewise, a host of changing actors directed the trajectory of the parliament building issue as documented by news media, and asynchronous observations. Second, the momentary results of such constructions and practices have been questioned on two levels: I have asked what kind of power relations between citizens, politicians, and civil servants e-democratic visions or practices establish or challenge. Moreover, I have asked what kind of power relations necessitate or legitimise any given e-democratic construct.

The analysis strategy is anchored in considerations about what kind of analysis is required given the research approach. I disclose these considerations below in a series of short discussions. The first is concerned with analyses of hegemonic power relations. The second strikes a balance between superficial and minute analysis. The third discusses the analysis of strategies and effects. The fourth and final discussion is concerned with the difference between how, why, and what questions.

Hegemony analysis

Dyrberg, Hansen, and Torfing (2000) suggest that one can apply one of two strategies to analyse the contingency of a status quo: A deconstructive and a hegemony strategy. A deconstructive strategy seeks to denaturalise the status quo by showing how implied hierarchical poles constitute each other through power struggles. The hegemony strategy reverses the analyses and shows how specific interests and actors attempt to fixate a chaotic and fluid terrain. The starting point for a hegemony analysis, then, is not a dominating discourse or a well-established and stable network, but rather a fluid terrain. As Vedel (2006) noticed a decade ago, e-democracy is heterogeneous and builds on varied and sometimes contradictory logics. I believe this characterisation is true to this day. Loader and Mercea (2012, p. 2) provide a more recent symptomatic illustration of this ongoing struggle to match and fixate technology and democracy. They ask:

> "What are we then to make of these latest claims for digital democracy arising from the second generation of social media applications? Are they best interpreted as a further commercial incarnation of internet mythology making (Mosco 2005) destined to become ameliorated through ubiquitous everyday incorporation? Or do they offer new opportunities for challenging dominant discourses and privileged positions of power? Is there evidence for the emergence of a more personalised politics being played out through social networks?"

New technological movements from one-way static information provision to user production and dissemination through social networks have not stabilised e-democracy. On the contrary, it remains as instable and polemic as ever. The situation is thus characterised by ongoing struggles to stabilise e-democracy. This then calls for a hegemony analysis rather than a deconstructive analysis. Rather than deconstructing the status quo in the form of a dominating discourse or a well-established and stable network, I analyse how e-democracy is created. This is achieved by tracing associations among heterogeneous actors and focussing on their mutual alliances and how the subject matter is translated along the way. The construction and enactment of e-democracy is, then, analysed in terms of power strategies, tactics and effects.

Power effects and conditions of possibilities

Data is analysed in terms of power. As such, it is the data's strategic effects that are the subject of analysis, rather than its truth value or its normative value (Dean, 2010). What is analysed is what for example a government strategy or a pamphlet does, rather than whether it is true or adheres to a specific democratic norm (Foucault, 1972). Thus, the current dissertation distances itself from normative political theory such as found in Rawls or Habermas, as well as from evaluative effect studies. The difference between the two approaches and the analytical path I have chosen are illustrated in the following example. As part of the political campaign for a new Parliament building, the President and the Bureau for Inatsisartut published a pamphlet called 'Aqqaluks Plads – Demokratiets vugge i Grønland' [Aqqaluk's Square – The Cradle of Democracy in Greenland]. Ostensibly, the pamphlet merely provided an impartial historical account of the country's political assemblies and thus an insight into the places where the country's parliamentary system has its origin. One way to approach this pamphlet would be to assess its truth value. The account's accuracy could be tested by comparing the statements regarding the historical political assemblies with alternative accounts and discussing the link between the historical political assemblies and Greenlandic democracy. Alternatively – and this is the route followed in this dissertation –the pamphlet could be subjected to a power analysis and its strategic integration and tactical productivity could be explored (Foucault, 1978). This means, first, that the pamphlet's conditions of possibilities must be analysed – the power relationships that warrant that the pamphlet is employed and the logics and norms that legitimise it and make it intelligible. This can be scrutinised in still greater detail through the concepts of translation and alliances. In the case in question, the pamphlet was published during a public debate about the need for and the location of a future parliament building.[14] Among others, the President of Inatsisartut, the Bureau for Inatsisartut, the Parliament, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, a forthcoming online consultation, and Nuuk residents took part in the dispute. Formally speaking, the Parliament was democratically authorized to decide on the parliament building. However, their authority was challenged by a faltering alliance among MPs and an emerging alliance between Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq and the citizenry, which provided a formal voice through the coming consultation issued by the municipality. The pamphlet argued, without once mentioning the actual parliament building, that Aqqaluk's Square was the historical natural location for the Greenlandic Parliament. Although the pamphlet looks and feels impartial, it was not. It was meant to persuade Nuuk residents that they should vote for Aqqaluk's Square in the ensuing online consultation. Second, the pamphlet's tactical productivity needs to be analysed by exploring its power effects. A distinction needs to be made between intended effects, which are closely associated with the pamphlet's strategic integration and which the content attests to, and the ensuing effects. Thus, it could be said that the intended effect was to persuade Nuuk residents about the location of the new parliament building. With regard to the ensuing effects, the concepts of translation and alliances are helpful. The translation of the pamphlet within the wider network of actors could be considered, as well as its impact on the alliances between actors. In the case in question, the pamphlet did not succeed in forging an alliance between the future consulters and the President and the Bureau for Inatsisartut. Instead, it was translated into evidence of Parliamentary propaganda that not only divided the consulters from the President and the Bureau for Inatsisartut, but also disrupted alliances within the Parliament. The type of analysis sketched here is

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[14] The entire trajectory of the parliament building issue is explored in greater detail in 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland'.

possible only if the local political disputes and negotiations that the pamphlet was part of are taken into consideration. If the circumstances are ignored and only the text itself is analysed, it will look and feel impartial and lend itself primarily to an analysis of its truth value.

Superficiality and minuteness

"Against interpretation… I advocate superficiality, an empiricism of the surface, of identifying the differences in what is said, how it is said, and what allows it to be said and to have an effectivity." (Rose, 1999, p. 57)

"[An] ANT-scholar has to trudge like an ant, carrying the heavy gear in order to generate even the tiniest connection." (Latour, 2005, p. 25)

Whereas Rose argues for superficiality, Latour calls for minuteness. The present exploration is theoretically founded on both analytical approaches, which at first sight can seem mutually exclusive. I think, however, that the two strategies do not exclude but complement each other. Generally speaking, the dissertation constructs from the bottom up how e-democracy is shaped locally and the norms that result from and guide concrete ways of online political engagement. Paraphrasing Latour (1996), the exploration does not start from democratic norms or from an idea of how ICT may be employed to foster such norms. Instead, it starts from irreducible, incommensurable, unconnected localities, which may end in provisionally commensurable connections. Both the strategy of superficiality and the strategy of minuteness need to be applied. Which strategy is needed depends on the partial analytical goal.

Superficiality is called for when the analytical purpose is to piece together the logics and norms that structure and result from the construction of e-democracy. Thus, data can be treated as small pieces of evidence of norms and logics and it is the analyst's task to discuss and interpret them. If similar norms and logics can be identified throughout the data, there may be a systematic or general normative or logical structure. It follows that large amounts of data are needed. Minuteness, on the other hand, is called for when the purpose is to trace the translations and alliances among diverse actors. Rich and detailed information is needed in order to trace the associations between actors, to situate them in the e-democratic network, and to account for how they contribute to the destabilisation or stabilisation of e-democracy. In this sense, the approach resembles and makes use of in-depth case study methodologies (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

How, what, and why

The study explores how various actors stabilise, de-stabilise, and re-stabilise e-democracy through diverse practices. It analyses how power operates within these struggles and results from them. This implies that primacy is given to 'how' rather than 'why' questions (Van de Ven, 2007). This emphasis is argued for by both ANT scholars and governmentality scholars alike:

"Actor-network theory is descriptive rather than foundational in explanatory terms… it tells stories about 'how' relations assemble or don't." (Law, 2009, p. 2)

"An analytics of government takes as its central concern how we govern and are governed within different regimes, and the conditions under which such regimes emerge, continue to operate, and are transformed. An analytics of government thus emphasises 'how' questions." (Dean, 2010, p. 33)

While the exploration focusses on *how* e-democracy is constructed, it also employs a theoretical approach to explain *why* e-democracy is constructed the way it is. Thus, e-democratic constructions are explained by the concepts of translations and alliances among heterogeneous elements and by their tactical productivity (that is, the effects of power that they ensure) and strategic integration (that is, the force relationships and logics that make them possible, utilisable, or necessary). Finally, this dissertation also addresses 'what' questions. In order to explore how and why something is enacted, it is necessary to know what it is that is being explored. This target is not fixed, but open to alterations. This is why I define e-democracy loosely. I want the initial definition to set the theme of the exploration without limiting it.

Axiology

Above, it was argued that the three aspects of ontology, epistemology, and methodology are tied together by a fourth aspect of axiology, which is concerned with the principles by which the value of the entire endeavour can be estimated. The quality of a study should be judged by the terms of its own paradigm (Healy & Perry, 2000). The 'hard' approach posits that there is an exterior objective reality against which claims can be assessed and that the value of research resides internally in the methods by which such claims are produced. The 'soft' approach maintains that the object of study are not objective laws, but the processes by which realities are meaningfully constructed by people and that the value of research is its external relevance to practice (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998). If, however, there is but one flat reality in which the researcher is hopelessly entangled with the other actors, if the object of study is constituted in the research process itself, and if the methods applied are legitimised by the research objective rather than a rigorous methodology, how then can the value of the research be estimated?

The value of research depends on its relevance and implications for practice. The purpose of the research is to say something useful about the currents and mechanisms that direct the course of e-democratic practices. The aim is to open up a space for critical thought (Rose, 1999) by drawing new associations between actors and collecting them in new actor-networks (Latour, 2005). As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, the problem of the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy is intelligible because of the research approach. Thus, it follows that the value of research is necessarily determined within the confines set by the research itself. The local actors and the research community judge the degree to which the objective is accomplished. As I mentioned above, I have had the fortune to present and discuss preliminary analysis and findings at public lectures at Ilisimatusarfik and with key local human actors. Such opportunities are valuable not only because they strengthen the research, but also because they are a first step in translating research implications into practice.

Articles

In the previous chapters, I have argued that power is enacted equally by humans and nonhumans, through translations, negotiations, and alliances. In order to investigate the workings of the power inherent in e-democracy, I have argued that it is required to explore the multiple ways in which heterogeneous actors practice and construct e-democracy as well as the strategies and tactics they employ.

The output of this approach is four articles, which the present chapter is devoted to. The chapter presents a summary of the four articles, their respective research objective, the methods applied, and their findings. In addition to the subject and methodologies of each article, a brief account of their trajectories is given. As I cannot hope to account for all the details of their respective trajectories – indeed, some details are less important than others –, I focus on specific and decisive moments, turns, and changes. The accounts provided, then, do not serve to illustrate the entire trajectory from beginning to end, but rather show specific instances from which specific and significant lessons with regard to the practice of research can be drawn.

Navigating Troubled Waters[15]

The research question for this article reads: How can the dynamic power mechanisms inherent in e-democracy be framed and how do they structure e-democracy? The article is conceptual in nature and constructs a framework for the study of the power mechanisms inherent in e-democracy. Contrary to the political scientific focus on e-democratic winners and losers, the framework captures the dynamic ways in which different forms of online political practice are structured. This change of focus, it is argued, is needed in order to understand *how* power works within diverse e-democratic practices. The framework is developed in three methodological steps. First, a model of power is derived from Foucault and affiliated governmentality studies. Next, the model is adjusted to the phenomenon in question by grounding it in research literature on e-democracy. Finally, the model is applied in an initial study of the mechanisms that structure e-democracy. The resulting framework conceptualises power as the mechanisms that structure the field of possible democratic political online practice by balancing disparate concerns, which are posited by specific logics. Four such mechanisms are analysed: 1) monitoring mechanisms that apply logics of security and service provision to weigh anonymity and publicity against each other; 2) inclusion/exclusion mechanisms which determine the range of participants through rules of engagement; 3) moderation mechanisms that balance concerns for heterogenic viewpoints and homogeneity according to a logic of uniformity; and 4) exposure mechanisms, which operate according to logics of profit making and shared understanding to balance information abundance against centralised access. The article encourages practitioners to be cognisant of the variety of mechanisms and their internal components and how they work when designing, building, and conducting e-democratic practices.

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[15] Appendix A.

The article's trajectory illustrates two points. The first is that knowledge production is a joint venture involving not only the authors but also the research community and reviewers. The article was co-authored by my supervisor, Kim Normann Andersen, and me. We started on the article a few months into the research project. Instead of working full time on it, we returned to the article repeatedly during the next two and half years and it ended up being the last of the four articles to be ready for publication. This also explains why the framework developed has not been applied in the other articles. Initially, the article was meant to combine Foucault's power analysis with ANT in an exploration of the power mechanisms inherent in e-democracy as evidenced in academic publications. Katarina Lindblad-Gidlund, Professor at the Department of Information and Communication Systems, Mid Sweden University, who has worked extensively with Foucault in relation to e-government, read a very early draft of the article and provided very helpful comments, which propelled the work forwards by several leagues. As a result of her advice, the ANT perspective was discarded and reserved for the subsequent local empirical investigations, because it did not fit easily with the empirical data. Moreover, she pointed to Collier's (2009) article 'Topologies of Power', which has had a great and lasting impact on my understanding of power as the processes by which elements are taken up and recombined by specific actors to meet certain ends. With the theoretical approach in place, we explored e-democratic power dynamics by analysing academic literature on the subject matter. However, as one reviewer noted, a major challenge was to make the notion of power operational: "the authors try to pin it down and make it study-able but they need to describe how the go about and how they translate and understand Foucauldian power in order to deal with that. They need to make it 'operationalizable'" (review comment on paper submitted to 'Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy', March 3rd 2016). Our solution was to illustrate our translation and understanding of power through the development of the three models found in the final article. The point of employing three models was to demonstrate the three distinct methodological steps by which the model was translated from a purely theoretical model into a representative model that was adapted to the subject matter, and, finally, into a descriptive framework. We developed the models through iterative discussions of the power mechanisms as evidenced in the literature on e-democracy and creative discussions about how to illustrate the models. Thus, the models and our analysis of the power mechanisms inherent in e-democracy co-developed, which is the second lesson that we can learn from the article's trajectory. Without going into the ontological aspects of theoretical and descriptive models (see, for example, Toon, 2010), the account above explicates not only the epistemological point that models are vehicles for learning about the world (Frigg & Hartmann, In press) but also that knowledge is generated during the process by which models are developed.

Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland[16]

The article departs from the observation that the internet challenges established and conventional democratic practices and positions by offering new and alternative possibilities for political participation. In the first version of the article, this observation was founded on a preliminary analysis of the concept of e-democracy as a curious empty signifier (Laclau, 1995, 2001) that is void of content but determined by performative technologies. However, during the initial copyediting of the accepted article the Managing

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[16] Appendix B.

Editor suggested that I remove the entire section on empty signifiers and instead begin the theoretical section with the statement that the concept of e-democracy is far from settled. I think the Managing Editor was aware of the profound changes I was asked to make. But as he wrote to me: "it's basically just trying to make sure that everything will be understandable to the reader (i.e. written in plain English), and therefore more likely to gain citations". The account above illustrates not just the profound impact that journal editors may have on already accepted research outputs, but also that texts, and editors, inherently presume readers (Johnson, 1988). Scientific journals target specific groups of readers who are presumed to be interested in and knowledgeable about specific issues. An abstract analysis of the concept of e-democracy as an empty signifier does not fit easily with the expected reader of 'Policy and Internet', which reports on the implications of the internet for public policy. In addition, the account illustrates that research is not solely about gaining personal knowledge about a given phenomenon but also about sharing this knowledge and impacting further research, as evidenced by other publications citing the work.

The published article, then, unifies Foucault and ANT – the approach, which was originally pursued in 'Navigating Troubled Waters' but left to local empirical investigations. It combines the ontology of ANT with Foucault's idea of power and asks: How do politicians and civil servants in Greenland construct e-democracy? It concludes that the discourses which condition e-democratic visions are continuously shaped by power strategies and tactics, ongoing events, and the associations among a wide variety of human and nonhuman actors. The article focusses on politicians and civil servants in Greenland and the networks within which they are situated and through which they construct e-democracy. In order to understand the processes by which e-democracy is constructed, two methodological steps are employed. First, the associations among the heterogeneous actors that contribute to the construction are traced and mapped. Second, the power relations that make certain visions of e-democracy more likely or needed than others are analysed. It is concluded that politicians and civil servants are enrolled in networks that know no national boundaries, that traverse ontologies and multiple logics, and in which they are not in control. Instead, their visions of e-democracy as consultative dialogues can be seen as an attempt to regain some political control in the technological reality in which the hegemonic forms of democracy have lost ground.

eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)[17]

Like the previous article, 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' explores how e-democracy is constructed, but this article explores it from the perspective of citizens and the technologies they use. It pursues the research question: How do citizens in collaboration with nonhuman actors construct e-democracy? The change of focus effectuates a change of theoretical framework. Like its predecessor, 'eDemocracy by the People' makes use of ANT's ontology to widen the range of potential actors, but it replaces Foucault's notion of power with the theory of hegemonic power struggles (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). A change of theoretical framework was deemed necessary, because the processes by which e-democracy is constructed by the people and the technologies they use is more chaotic and characterised by accidental movements than the reasoned strategic and tactical ways of politicians and civil servants. Instead of finding a 'best' or most appropriate way to participate in politics in accordance with some ideal

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[17] Appendix C.

of democratic inclusion, the people's oppositional politics echo the radical antagonism of Laclau and Mouffe. This shows that the object of study and the theoretical framework need to be aligned. The article concludes that e-Democracy, as it is constructed by Greenlandic citizens, informal petitions sites, and the social media platform Facebook, primarily creates a space for political oppositional forces in the spirit of partisan or contestatory democracy.

Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland[18]

The trajectory of 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland' exemplifies the fact that research is an effect of negotiations between the heterogeneous elements of research objective, data, analysis, stylistic presentation, and review. Initially, the article was meant to compare 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland' and 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' and explore how, why, and to what effect citizens, politicians, and civil servants prescribe different versions of the e-democratic citizen through words and deeds. The general theoretical approach easily lends itself to such an analysis, since the notion of pastoral power (Foucault, 1982) is derived from the initial theoretical approach. The article identified four conceptions of the e-democratic citizen that intersect the two discourses explored in the previous two articles. The reviewer of the first draft, however, disagreed with both the relevance and the execution:

> "Beyond the discussion whether it [the theoretical framework] is useful at all, [it] does not seem to have a real impact on the presentation of the empirical data… there are hardly new insights to be found. The potentially interesting things point to incidents in Greenland's experience with e-protests… But we hear too little about this and similar incidents to understand the mechanisms that led to such surprising results and whether some specific context condition of Greenland are responsible for it." (Review comment on paper submitted to 'Information, Communication and Society', February 8th 2016)

My first response was to replace the notion of pastoral power and the focus on citizenship with an analytical focus on the struggles to close down possible routes of online political action. In addition, I replaced the four conceptions explored in the first draft with two oppositional discourses (one of passive politics and one of active politics). I was, however, not satisfied with the result, because it resembled the earlier articles too much. Moreover, after reading this revision, my supervisors echoed the reviewer and called for greater emphasis on Greenlandic local events.

As a result I discarded the plan to connect the two earlier articles and reformulated the research objective. The new purpose was to explain the substantial effects of recent public e-protests in Greenland. Thus the new research question read: What are the conditions of possibilities for single-issue protests? According to Garrett (2006), earlier research had focussed on the changing possibilities for mobilisation, while the question of how specific circumstances condition the political impact of online mobilisation and public protests had received much less attention. The revised article attempted to cover some of this ground by applying the concepts of mobilising structures, opportunity structures, and framing processes (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996) in an analysis of the conditions of possibilities for the emergence, development, and impact of the 2014 protest against the parliament building in Greenland. In order to do so, however, it

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[18] Appendix D.

was necessary to generate substantial amounts of new data (newspaper articles, Facebook pages, governmental reports, and press releases). The attempt to comply with the reviewer's and my supervisors' concerns and interests, as well as to fill the gaps in literature on online protest movements was, however, betrayed by the way in which I presented the findings. The theoretical framework justified an analysis of mobilising structures, opportunity structures, and framing processes, but I presented primarily an ANT-inspired analysis (Marres, 2007) of the parliament building issue's trajectory. I alluded to this fact in the concluding remarks. The reviewer of the revised article saw the problem clearly:

> "The author claims to use the McAdam approach but in practice does not do it… the author claims that using Actor Network Theory everything would be better understandable for the reader… if the author is convinced that this is the case, one wonders why (s)he has not used the approach in his/her article." (Review comment on paper submitted to 'Information, Communication and Society', June 15th 2016).

The protest, which I was exploring, was but a single significant event in a longer trajectory involving several other actors than protesters and social media. Therefore, I revised the analysis so that it covered the trajectory of the political issue and illustrated how different actors were constituted along the way through shifting alliances and translations among heterogeneous elements. In order to tie this exploration to the Greenlandic fabric of colonialism and independence, the issue of online political engagement was associated with Lynge's (2003) strategic reinvigoration of the Greenlandic legend of Kunuk. The version of the legend that Lynge employs tells of the story of a man who has a good sense of justice, and who is polite, humane, reticent, and modest, but not self-repressive. These were the political virtues that Lynge called for in 2003 and the virtues with which the protests against the parliament building were compared.

The article that was initially supposed to be an analysis of e-democratic subjects in terms of pastoral power became the most unequivocal ANT account of the four articles. However, as the account above illustrates, this change was not directed solely by me, but happened as an effect of several negotiations between me, my overall research plan, reviewers, supervisors, and the research community.

Discussions

The previous two chapters presented the general research approach and paradigm, as well as the developmental trajectory, methodology, and the subject of each of the four articles. As the methods applied are founded in the objective of study rather than a strict methodology, the articles rely on comparable but not completely similar methods. Moreover, the trajectory of each article explicates the complex processes and the heterogeneous actors involved in creating knowledge.

The approach for this dissertation is novel to the study of power and e-democracy and I have found little guidance in prior research within that field. Instead, I have turned to the poststructuralist works of Foucault and Laclau and Mouffe, governmentality studies, and ANT and I have composed a unified approach from these strands of thought. The novelty does not disqualify the approach. Rather, it moves the discussion away from democratic failures and successes, which have haunted and captivated thinking about technologies and democracy, into the contested terrain of struggles, processes, and change. It goes beyond normative democratic discussions and evaluations of power effects and empirically explores the ever-changing faces of e-democracy.

The purpose of the present chapter is to address the approach's implications, which I do through a series of discussions. First, I discuss at a general level how knowledge is produced. Rather than framing knowledge production as the practice of applying theory onto empirical data, I suggested that knowledge should be viewed as the effect of negotiations among all research elements and the human actors that contribute to the research. Second, I discuss the poor fit between muddled research practices and the clean and linear research output. Third, I discuss how preconceived concepts and ideas challenge the approach and call for conceptually clean slates. Fourth, I discuss the methodological bias to give humans a greater voice than nonhumans which challenges the theoretical call to include humans and nonhumans equally. The fifth discussion is concerned with my position as a Danish researcher living and studying in Greenland. Due the post-colonial climate between Greenland and Denmark, my Danish heritage might be an issue, since I represent the old colonial ruler. Moreover, the fact that I do not speak Greenlandic may have excluded me from talking with significant political actors that do not speak Danish. The sixth discussion is concerned with the methodological tendency to ally with or confirm strong networks at the expense of weaker ones. ICTs were meant to cut across the Inland Ice and connect the disparate population of Greenland. However, the dissertation focusses primarily on Nuuk, because this is an e-democratic hotspot. The seventh discussion is concerned with the implications for anonymity of the research setting and methodology. The eighth and final discussion is concerned with how my methodological skills have developed over the course of the research project.

Negotiating knowledge

Above I argued that the researcher is a world builder among world builders (Latour, 1996). The researcher builds worlds by combining the worlds constructed by others according to chosen explicit theoretical perspectives and research approaches. The researcher can be likened to a moderator who has invited diverse stakeholders to a meeting in order to find a solution to a specific problem.[19] The moderator has determined the purpose of the meeting and leads the negotiations according to some design. The aim is to provide a coherent account within the limits set by the research approach and the analytical frameworks applied, which is not only recognisable and acceptable to all the actors involved in the negotiations, but also workable. This requires the diplomatic skills of moving from one perspective to another while creating a link between them (Block, 2010). There is no appeal to an objective judge. Everyone is enmeshed in this one reality and the best the researcher can do is to devise explanations that pass the tests deemed suitable by the actors around the table. Since the output of the negotiations is written by and signed solely by the researcher/moderator, the moderator comes to represent the myriad of actors attending the meeting and the negotiations between them. This is no short list of actors. It includes the object of study, a set of research questions, an analytical framework, a research design, a set of methods for generating and analysing data, a set of deliverables, a specific research setting, reviewers, colleagues, journals, editors, and targeted readers.

Like any other process of negotiation, the negotiations of knowledge are not linear but are a muddled affair. In my own case, this roundabout movement might be explained by my lack of a thorough research design, my impatience, and an inclination to be led astray by thoughts and ideas, which the following anecdote shows.

Anecdote

Every half year I wrote a status report. The very first report stated: "So far I have not approached the research systematically. Instead, I have worked on several fronts from the beginning. I have worked on theoretical and methodological specifications while I have arranged and conducted interviews. This has been both an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage is that I, at an early stage, have been able to align the project with issues that are of relevance to Greenland and that I have begun the actual research. The downside is that it is, at times, difficult to work systematically with the project. Much time and energy has been spent on arranging and conducting interviews (more resources than I had imagined), and generating data has, at times, disrupted the theoretical and methodological work. On the other hand, I have not had time to transcribe the interviews yet because of theoretical and methodological work." (Author's translation)

On the other hand, I am not the only one feeling like this. Despite the scientific community's aspiration to systematic research approaches, one readily gets the feeling that the community agrees that research hardly ever is a smooth operation (Van de Ven, 2007).

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[19] Elsewhere, the researcher has been likened to a detective who assembles clues spread by actors, gradually stitching them into a coherent narrative (Blok, 2010). The problem with the detective metaphor is that the event that triggers the investigation is external to the detective. Unless the detective is the culprit, the crime which is investigated is committed by someone else. This is not the case in research. The problem that triggers the investigation is constituted by the researcher's specific theoretical reading of reality.

The trajectories of the four articles presented above illustrate the complexity of negotiating knowledge. The trajectory of 'Navigating Troubled Waters' shows that knowledge is the product of discussions among peers but also propelled forward and shaped by the models created to illustrate arguments. 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland', on the other hand, is the end-result of negotiations between the researcher and the editorial board of 'Policy and Internet'. There is nothing new to the fact that editors may cause major alterations in research papers. However, they are seldom credited. Johnson (1988) offers a rare and interesting example. Six pages into the text, a footnote reveals the process by which an imaginary author, Jim Johnson, was constructed by the editors of Social Problems, the presumed readers, and the actual author, Latour:

> "The author-in-the text is Jim Johnson, technologist in Columbus, Ohio, who went to Walla Walla University, whereas the author-in-the-flesh is Bruno Latour, sociologist, from Paris, France, who never went to Columbus nor to Walla Walla University [...] The reason for this use of pseudonym was the opinion of the editors that no American sociologist is willing to read things that refer to specific places and times which are not American. Thus I inscribed in my text American scenes so as to decrease the gap between the prescribed reader and the pre-Inscribed one. (Editors' Note: Since we believed these locations to be unimportant to Bruno Latour's argument, we urged him to remove specific place references that might have been unfamiliar to U.S. readers and thus possibly distracting. His solution seems to have proven our point)." (Johnson, 1988, p. 304)

Latour's point is that texts construct authors and readers by prescribing and delegating specific qualities to each (ibid., p. 307). The quote above, however, also illustrates another point: Texts are effects of translations and negotiations among authors, reviewers, and editors. In this regard, the relevant observation is not so much Latour's solution to the editors' query, but the fact that the editors' query had Latour reconstruct the text. Latour's point that authors and readers are constructed in the text is not the same as the editors' points that "no American sociologist is willing to read things that refer to specific places and times which are not American" (ibid.) and that the exact location is unimportant for Latour's argument, which is a presupposition about the readers. The end result is a successful negotiation between these differing concerns in the sense that both Latour and the editors appear to be content with the result. While editors consider the specific interest and readership of scientific journals, reviewers detect flaws, ensure and enforce scientific standards, and make sure that the research concerns a topic that is relevant for the wider scientific community. The trajectory of 'Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland' attests to the profound impact that reviewers can exert.

The negotiation processes that are conveyed above resemble to some extent the processes by which knowledge is produced in participatory research. In participative research, knowledge production can be understood as the negotiation between scholars representing potentially distinct disciplines and paradigms and local actors contributing with lived experience (Elwood, 2006). However, the negotiating actors include not only human scholars and local actors, but also the object under study, the theoretical framework, and the means of presentation. To illustrate this, consider again the trajectory of 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)'. Superficially, the trajectory shows a smooth operation, since the output was not drastically challenged by reviewers, editors, or the research community. However, even smooth negotiations are negotiations. In the case of this article, the stakeholders that caused most changes and adaptations were not the reviewers, editors, or the research community, but rather the object of study

itself, the analytical framework, and the empirical data. Such negotiations are part of any research that attempts to link the empirical with the theoretical. 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' makes for an especially illuminating case, because the other human actors played a smaller role in the negotiations. As recounted above, 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' focusses on how citizens and diverse technologies construct e-democracy. As such, it might be expected to lend itself easily to an analysis similar to that employed in 'Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland'. After all, the main difference between the two articles is that 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)' replaces politicians and civil servants with citizens. However, this small shift entailed major changes, because citizens construct e-democracy differently than politicians and civil servants do. Citizens do not write reports or strategies. Rather they are engaged in politics online. They enact e-democracy *in situ*. This implied that the data was of another kind and that interviews, usage and asynchronous observation, and materiality needed to receive equal analytical attention. It also meant that the analytical framework needed to be adjusted. Rather than focussing on the tactics and strategies employed in constructing e-democracy according to a democratic logic, power was understood as oppositional forces struggling to overcome each other. While politicians and civil servants employ certain strategies to improve democratic representation while regaining political control, citizens bypass the question of democratic representation altogether. It is not just a matter of adapting a suitable theoretical framework to the object of study. The object of study also needs to be adapted to the theoretical framework. The enquiry into the processes by which e-democracy is constructed is intelligible not in and of itself but thanks to the overall research approach. Furthermore, even though the analytical framework is warranted by the empirical data, it applies a specific perspective to this data to the effect of highlighting some characteristics while subduing others. As such, research does not only require trying out different methodologies in order to explore a given object of study, but also exploring potential issues to be investigated (Larsen & Glud, 2013). Problem formulation and theory building go hand in hand (Van de Ven, 2007).

A positivist delivery

While negotiations between object of study, empirical data, methodology, and analytical framework are part of any research, they are lost in translation when research articles are written. Research is a process characterised by negotiations among heterogeneous actors, which causes a lot of backtracking, intersecting adaptation, and so forth. The medium in which the end product is presented however, is linear. A research article has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The same is true for a dissertation. In a sense, this form of communication belies the work behind research.

> "Research, when it comes to the communication stage where papers are written for publication, is inherently positivist: research papers are by necessity structured in a linear fashion; the research 'data' gathered is unitised and categorised to a greater or lesser extent; reductionism is present to the extent that choices have to be made as to what should be included or omitted; some explanation and interpretation of the findings will be included, implying some degree of cause-effect; and some degree of 'objectivity' will be affected in so far as political and polemic tirades will generally be avoided. The interpretivist tragedy is to fail to recognise that research communication, in the traditional form, is inevitably positivist." (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998, p. 16-17)

A 'positivist' structure makes the work more accessible, since it complies with standard ways of presenting research. The picture of a neat and concise piece of research is, however, inaccurate. It does not account for the significant actors that contribute to the making of knowledge and it does not account for the complex negotiations that take place in the process.

The trouble of preconceived notions

ANT requires the researcher to remove all preconceived notions of that which is to be investigated and instead to follow the actors and to map their ways of building worlds. However, if all preconceived notions are left behind, the researcher may lose sight of the very object under study. Research requires inspiration, a methodology, and an analytical framework. ANT's meagre vocabulary is not particularly useful (Couldry, 2008). If the power inherent in e-democracy is to be explored, a concept of power and a way to study power are required. I have attempted to remove preconceived notions of democracy and I have focussed on the processes through which different ways of online democratic engagement are constructed. In retrospect, however, I suspect that established democratic labels have guided the exploration to a greater extent than the approach warrants. The first half of the concluding remarks in 'eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans)', for example, reads:

> "The paper's findings echo a range of prior research. The struggle for attention observed at online debate fora provide evidence to Dahlberg's (2005) and Hargittai's (2004) argument that control over the means of exposure is becoming increasingly important, as the means of production are becoming more common. Facebook's positive impact on the conditions of possibilities for mobilizing the populace and arrange protests around flash and single-issue campaigns resounds the works of Breindl (2010), Nam (2012), and Ward, Gibson and Lusoli (2003). Finally, the study shows that the people employ ICTs in order to create favourable conditions in which they can develop political counter-discourses (Dahlberg, 2007), from which they can contest rather than partake in political decisions (van den Hoven, 2005)."

It makes perfect sense to compare findings with prior research. This is how a unified body of literature about a phenomenon is created. I fear, however, that preconceived notions of single-issue campaigns, counter-discourses, and political contestation unintentionally have guided my analysis of the local processes through which e-democracy in Greenland is constructed and enacted. Preconceived notions of specific ways of doing e-democracy, have, I fear, had a too strong voice in the analyses.

The human bias

Finally, I want to highlight a human bias which marks the three empirical articles. Throughout these articles, I have attempted to remain ontologically ignorant and to treat humans and nonhumans equally in the construction and practices of e-democracy. The methods applied, however, are much better suited to generate data on human behaviour than on nonhuman behaviour. Reports and strategies are authored by humans and interviews are conducted with humans. The role of nonhumans becomes visible only by an analytical detour. The data used to study nonhumans is coproduced with humans. Methodologically speaking, this is a problematic way of generating data on nonhumans. There are strong methodological

forces at play that direct the trajectory of research. The methodology applied betrays a theoretical insistence on heterogeneity and ontological ignorance.

A Dane in Greenland

Given the colonial historical ties between Greenland and Denmark I expected that the fact that I am Danish could be a problem when accessing the field. I cannot exclude the possibility that my status as a Dane has hindered me from getting in touch with some key human actors or that some actors have chosen not to respond to my enquiries because I am Danish. Similarly, although the interview data does not reveal that this is the case, I cannot exclude the possibility that some interviewees withheld information or framed e-democracy differently because I am Danish. However, I have no positive indication that this is the case. Quite the contrary, interview participants explicitly expressed an interest in the topic of research and applauded that I had decided to explore the making of e-democracy in Greenland. Apparently, interview participants were more interested in my position as a PhD fellow than in my Danish heritage. During interviews, I was often asked about the subject matter when all I wanted was to learn from them. Moreover, I was often asked what it was like to be a PhD fellow at Ilisimatusarfik and how I had obtained the position.

Another possible barrier, which is closely connected to the previous one, is language. In 2001, approximately 70% of the population were native Greenlandic speakers, 15% were native Danish speakers, and 15% were bilingual (Oqaasileriffik, 2001). While it is difficult to estimate the Danish proficiency among native Greenlandic speakers (Langgård, 2003), it is fair to assume that the great majority of Greenlanders are better at speaking Greenlandic than Danish. I, on the other hand, do not speak Greenlandic. It follows that a great number of political actors have been excluded from the research. I have not been able to conduct interviews with people who do not speak Danish and I have not been able to observe online politics in detail if it is documented solely in Greenlandic. With regard to the observation of online politics, the members of the Facebook group 'Political Discussion Room', for instance, primarily discuss politics in Greenlandic and I have not been able to assess what is written. However, often posts link to news coverage in Danish, which allowed me to trace the topic of debate, if not the debate in itself. Furthermore, I relied on the interviewees' – including the founder of the group – testimonies on what is debated and how debates unfold, which is comparable to similar debate sites in Danish. In addition, practices on Facebook are documented also by likes, shares, number of comments, numbers of active members, etc. These types of documentation do not reveal anything about the content but about the activity in itself. In other Facebook groups, such as the group 'Demonstration against the Government', members wrote primarily but not exclusively in Danish. Governmental and parliamentary websites are in Greenlandic and Danish and the same goes for reports and strategies. Interviews have been conducted in Danish.

My poor Greenlandic skills meant that I was unable to interview people that only speak Greenlandic. Judging from the percentages of native Greenlandic speakers, this implies that a significant amount of potential research participants was automatically excluded from the research. However, only one person whom I invited to participate in an interview declined to participate because of language issues. Thus, language was not as serious a barrier as I had expected. Obviously, I cannot exclude the possibility that

some interviewees found it more difficult to speak about e-democracy in Danish than they would have in Greenlandic. Occasionally, the interviewees had trouble finding the right words. When that happened, I and the other interviewees (in cases of focus-group interviews) could help convey the intended meaning. The fact that the interview participants were so fluent in Danish can be explained by the fact that I focussed my studies on Nuuk, where Danish is spoken to some degree by most residents. Had I focussed on Greenland more generally, language certainly would have been a critical issue and I would most likely have had to hire an interpreter. The choice to focus on Nuuk, however, was not based on language considerations. Rather, it was the result of the sampling strategy employed and the approach to the subject matter, which was to trace associations between actors as they practice and construct Greenlandic e-democracy.

Allying oneself with the strongest networks

Greenland is massive and its sheer size challenges not only political participation but also research endeavours. It is both time consuming and potentially extremely expensive to do cross-country research in Greenland. Above, I noted that it proved very difficult to arrange interviews with some politicians despite their interest in the invitation. The problem was one of too great distances and too little time. I lived in Nuuk and they lived on the east coast or in the northern part of the country. They visited Nuuk only during sessions in the Parliament or in the Municipal Board of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, which meant that their schedules were overbooked in advance. Had I had unlimited funds and time, I could have met and talked with them in their home towns. I had neither. As a consequence, the human actors that were interviewed in person lived primarily in Nuuk. Had the study claimed to be representative of the wider population, this would have been a serious defect in the research design. No such representativeness is claimed. Instead, the study aims at exploring how e-democracy is enacted by various actors and, as far as human key actors are concerned, the evidence suggests that they are primarily Nuuk residents. During an interview with the founder of the Facebook group that arranged the demonstrations against the former government, the interviewee and I talked about the fact that the demonstration did not represent the wider population:

> Interviewer: "Playing the devil's advocate, you could say that it was not particularly democratic representative."
> Participant 1: "It was not. No. I don't think so."
> Interviewer: "But it may very well be justified anyway."
> Participant 1: "Yes. But it was very much a Nuuk phenomenon. The petition also shows this… the majority of the signatures were from Nuuk."
> Interviewer: "Yes."
> Participant 1: "So it was very much a Nuuk phenomenon."
> Interviewer: "Yes. Do you see that as a problem?"
> Participant 1: "Not really."
> (Interview, January 19th 2015, Author's translation)

As the interviewee notices, it was primarily Nuuk residents that signed the petition for a new election. The figure below (Figure 9) illustrates the distribution of signatures in relation to places of residence:
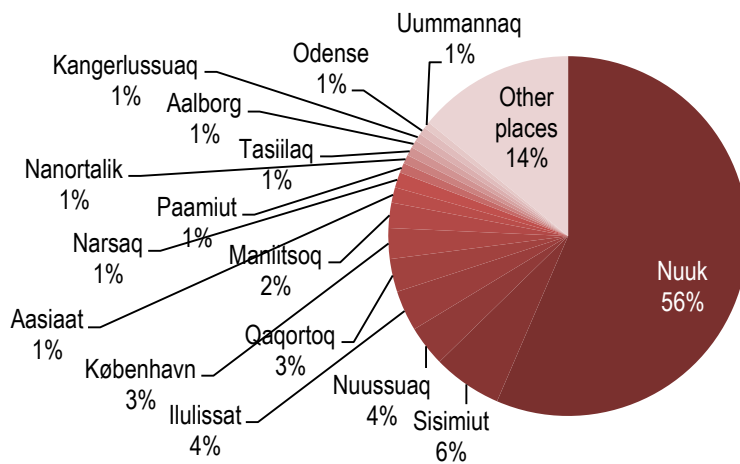
Figure 9 The distribution of signatures in relation to places of residence

For the interviewee, the misrepresentation was not a problem because the demonstration did not hinge upon a logic of democratic representation. It was the contested issues in and of themselves – staff disputes, the decision to discard the zero-tolerance policy towards uranium extraction with the smallest majority possible, and the Premier's private use of public funds – that justified the demonstration. The statistic above could thus be interpreted as evidence that e-democracy in Greenland is primarily enacted by Nuuk residents. As the objective is to trace the enactment of e-democracy and analyse the power effects and causes, the exploration primarily involves Nuuk residents.[20] Within the logic of the research design itself, then, the focus on Nuuk is unproblematic. By focussing solely on the actors that practice e-democracy, however, the study does not consider those actors that have no or only a very limited impact on these practices. As such, the exploration allies itself with the strongest networks to the effect of excluding quieter voices from the account (Star, 1991). Consequently, it is not possible to formulate a critique that meets the interests of excluded or subdued actors. This is true but the critique is somewhat misguided. First of all, the approach does open up the possibility of critique (Rose, 1999) and counter-narratives (Law, 2009), exactly because it accounts for the heterogeneous actors as well as the translations and alliances between them that destabilise and stabilise e-democracy. Thus, each alliance and each translation can be questioned along the way. Moreover, the strategic integration of e-democratic constructions is questioned through an exploration of power relationships that warrant the specific constructions. Finally, the notions of emerging power effects and tactical productivity are employed to question the consequences of power that specific e-democratic constructions imply. In summary, critique is possible, but only from within the network accounted for. It does not consist of including silent actors into the networks that construct e-democracy. Nor does it consist of stepping outside this network. Rather, the critique consists of questioning the alliances internal to the networks and questioning the e-democratic emerging power effects.

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[20] This being said, the ways in which e-democracy is enacted beyond Nuuk should not be underestimated. A cofounder of the Facebook group 'Demonstration against the Government' lives in Sisimiut, the founder of the Facebook group 'Political Discussion Room' lived to the south of Nuuk in Paamiut when he founded the group (he currently lives in Nuuk), Facebook is located in the US, skrivunder.net is based in Finland, and so forth.

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A tough case of anonymity

Sociological research is concerned with people. It obtains information from people. The research activities and outputs affect people. Researchers are obliged to ensure that the situation of those that they study, depend upon, and bring changes to is not worsened by their interference. This implies that they respect research participants' values and decisions, that they avoid harming participants, and that they treat all participants equally (Wakabi, 2016). In addition, it implies that the security of research participants should be protected by ensuring anonymity (International Sociological Association, 2001). E-democracy is not a sensitive or personal topic in the same way that health issues or sexual orientation are. However, there are still good reasons to ensure the research participants' anonymity. One interview participant explicitly asked to be anonymous for fear of reprisals. Another said that she could not get a job in public administration because she had criticised the Government at prior occasions. Therefore, I have strived to keep anyone contributing to the research endeavour anonymous. But the concept of anonymity, its purpose, and when it is necessary is not always clear. Moreover, anonymity could compromise research and vice versa.

The case for anonymity is traditionally based on a distinction between public and private data. Private data need to be anonymous whereas public data do not. Online data, however, challenge the understanding of the private/public distinction (Larsen & Glud, 2013). Online actions can be private – or intended to be private – although they are publicly accessible (Zimmer, 2010). Thus, the privacy of a piece of data needs to be assessed before a claim for the need for anonymity can be made. Political practice is usually public. It is documented by the actors themselves and made public for anyone to see. It is meant to be seen. As such, the internet may be characterised as a public space for public political action (Liu, 1999). This does not entail, however, that political online practice was meant to be documented and analysed by a researcher whose agenda may not necessarily comply with the actor's intentions. The case for anonymity is much clearer with regard to interviews, which make use of the confidentiality between interviewer and interviewees. As I mentioned above in the section on interviews, I tried to construct a confidential space during the interview session in order to allow interview participants to construct e-democracy freely. One way to build a confidential space is by ensuring that the interview participants remain anonymous in the research output.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, anonymity is when a name is not given or known. According to this definition, research participants are anonymous since their names are not disclosed. If this were all, it would be quite straightforward to protect the security of research participants. The researcher would only need to substitute participants' names with letters, numbers, or pseudonyms. However, the purpose of ensuring anonymity is not to hide away names but identities. Only if the identity of research participants is obscured has anonymity been properly assured. This involves more than protecting names. Other attributes, such as job positions and family ties, may also need to be protected. Even valuable contributions to the research in the form of e.g. quotes may need to be obscured. This is especially important if the research is conducted in small communities or when the research participants are known to the reader. In such settings, pseudonyms, letters, or numbers do not necessarily hide the identity of the participants. The reader may for example be able to tell who is being interviewed from what is said during the interview.

In the present research, it has been next to impossible to ensure that identities are fully hidden. First of all, Greenland may be geographically large but it has a small population. Everybody knows everybody, and everybody certainly knows their political representatives. As the anecdote below shows, university students at least do not need that much information about interview participants before they can guess who they are.

Anecdote

In the spring of 2015, I taught a class about e-democracy at Ilisimatusarfik. Among other things I had the students analyse excerpts from a focus-group interview with Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq municipal board members. The students were told that this was an interview with members of the Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq municipal board. The names of the participants had been replaced by the first letter in their given names. The students identified each of the participants. Afterwards, I named interview participants using the letter 'p' for participant and a number so that I could distinguish between them.

The trouble is that often background information about interview participants is needed in order to understand and analyse their statements. It is for example valuable information to know if research participants are politicians, civil servants, or citizens, in order to understand the position from which they construct e-democracy. In other words, research participants' respective positions in the democratic compound provide valuable information about the network within which they enact e-democracy. However, disclosing such information together with lengthy quotes could compromise their anonymity. Similarly, the account of the trajectory of the protest against the parliament building would have been poor if not meaningless if the Facebook event which orchestrated the demonstration had not been mentioned. However, once the event is publicly disclosed, the identities of the mobilisers and at least some of the protesters are but a click away. Since I could not ensure the anonymity of interview participants without a potential loss of significant data, I have, where possible, refrained from quoting those interviewees that expressed a concern for anonymity.

It is not only the research setting that challenges anonymity. Anonymity among participants is also put into question by the research methods. In focus-group interviews as well as in online group interviews no-one is anonymous. Even the participants that were interviewed separately most likely know each other and are aware that they each contributed to the research, because they were sampled via a snowball sampling method that makes use of their social and professional relations. Online written interviews are, moreover, publicly documented. Any member of the Facebook group that I set up to conduct online group interviews could in principle publicly distribute anything written in that group. I did not request that members abstain from sharing content produced within the group. It would have been a futile request and I would have had no way to enforce it. Instead, members were made aware that the group was public and told that anything stated within the group was public.

Learning the trade of interviewing

Anyone entering a PhD program is not yet a researcher. The purpose of the PhD program is to develop the student's independent research competence, i.e. the ability to explore, discover, independently process, and disseminate scientific issues (Ilisimatusarfik, 2016). The aim is to transform the student into a researcher. It is therefore to be expected that the person enrolled in a PhD program goes through greater changes than more established researchers do. Moreover, in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. This means that the credibility of qualitative research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). It is, therefore, appropriate to consider how I have developed as a researcher over the course of the research project.

The research for and writing of the dissertation took three years. During that period, my methodological style has changed. While this is true for the whole palette of skills required to do the kind of multi-method research I have been engaged in, it is especially evident with regard to face-to-face interviews. Academic publications, news articles, and governmental strategies and reports can be retrieved quite easily. Diverse platforms for political engagement can be accessed and scrutinised at will, and online political practices can be observed asynchronously. Asynchronous online interviews make for an interesting case. The response time can stretch for days. I almost felt obliged to exploit the possibilities of stretching response time to ensure that anyone who had something to say had a chance to do so. I was tempted to wait just one more day hoping that more members would have something to add to the discussion. However, waiting too long may lead to decreased interaction. When asked if anything could have been improved, members of the Facebook interview group stated among other things that daily activity and a strong moderator is required to ensure activity. Time, then, is not the key to interaction. Members do not interact because they are given a lot of time to do so. Rather, their interaction depends on the topics or questions provided. The key to interaction, then, is daily moderation. Asynchronicity is useful only to a limited degree and it is perhaps more fruitful to think of online interviews as face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews happen in the present, which requires that the interviewer is mentally present throughout. There is no retracting or rethinking once the conversation has begun and not a lot of room for correcting errors. It follows that the credibility of interview data is especially dependent on the ability and effort of the researcher/interviewer.

My interview style changed over time from thematically very open to being more focussed on particular themes. During the first interviews, I followed the interview participants' detours to greater lengths than I did in later interviews. Patterns and themes that had emerged from the first interview were pursued in ensuing interviews. Thus, the first interviews set the boundaries for the further investigation, which attests to the importance of the former. As I became familiar with the themes and patterns, I was able to employ them during subsequent interviews and ask the interview participants relate to them. Simultaneously, I became better at summarising and making mini analyses of what was said during interviews and ask the participants to think about my interpretation of their statements. On February 27th, 2015, for example, I conducted an interview with a citizen. Among other things we talked about the nature of power in online politics. The particular theme was summarised in the following way:

Interviewer: "I was just drawing what you said. One could imagine power as a circle."
Participant 1: [laughter]
Interviewer: "It goes round and round. And now it runs faster than usual.
Participant 1: "Now it just runs around faster. Yes."
Interviewer: "People fall from grace and then there's someone new who takes their place, but..."
Participant 1: "I think so. But when you look at it concretely, it [politics] has not become more result-oriented. It has not encouraged faster decisions. It has not encouraged either side to take greater ownership of the decisions taken. It just goes faster. You do not get any better decisions from politicians because of this. And you do not get greater engagement. People are online for 10 minutes and that is it. But it is transparent. Judged on how they [people] behave online, I have, and I bet that this is also true for those in power and businesses people, come to question what they can contribute with in any association either private or professional. Later, I found out that it is not the full picture."
Interviewer: "That which you get online?"
Participant 1: "Yes. It is merely moods, just thrown up there, right?!"
Interviewer: "Yes."
Participant 1: "And over time you start to think 'What a bunch of bipolar people out there all the time.' And we cannot possibly be bipolar each and everyone."
Interviewer: [laughter]
Participant 1: "So it's like mood pictures."
Interviewer: "Yes."
Participant 1: "But the power is running faster. Whether or not that is a positive thing, I am not so sure about."
(Author's translation)

As the excerpt shows, the previous talk had been summarised in the figure of a circle of power, which the interview participant then elaborated upon, explained, and evaluated. Being familiar with the themes and patterns allowed me to abstract myself from the talk and draw similarities and dissimilarities across interviews and within interviews. This helped me interpret what was said during interviews. In turn, I had the interview participants reflect upon my interpretations of what was said. Thus, my interview style and my understanding of the object of investigation co-evolved. We may expect that the quality of the data improved too. If we measure quality against the interview purpose, it is however not unproblematic to compare the quality of the first and the latter interviews, since they, unintendedly, came to serve slightly different purposes.

Contributions

In the previous chapters, I have argued that the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy can be explored by way of two related conceptualisations of power, coupled with a flat ontology. In this chapter, I present and discuss how the dissertation contributes to the field.

During the 1990s, the internet became a global phenomenon that provided an open and decentralised infrastructure for non-hierarchical communication. Since then, a wide array of technologies has appeared, including static webpages, bulletin boards, online discussion forums, peer-to-peer production and sharing sites, social media and social network applications. At the same time, democracy is in crisis: Voter turnout is low and trust in the government and parliament is waning. It has been suggested that the communication technologies that make use of the internet infrastructure could improve democratic conditions. It has been considered whether internet-based ICTs could save (Breindl & Francq, 2008; Taylor, Bardzki, & Wilson, 1995; Westen, 1998), rescue (Levine, 2002), improve (Meeks, 1997), strengthen (Bellamy, Horrocks, & Webb, 1995), restore (Holzer, 2004), or reinvigorate (Coleman, 1999) democracy. Somewhat less categorically, specific internet-based ICTs have been studied for their potential to save or strengthen specific forms of democracy or political participation (Anduiza, Cantijoch, & Gallego, 2009; Barber, 1998; Krueger, 2006). Some answers are affirmative, but most often they are negative (Kling, 1996). Whereas positive answers tend to be founded in theoretical discussions of the technological potentials of the internet, negative answers tend to rest on investigations of empirical cases (Albrecht, 2006). Empirical effect studies often reinvigorate the reinforcement and the amplification theses. The former holds that the internet primarily reinforces already existing and unequal power relations while the latter maintains that the internet amplifies already existing forces. In line with the two theses, empirical studies that assess the internet's democratic effects against a given normative democratic ideal argue that radical democratic changes, which are suggested by the utopian rhetoric surrounding e-democracy, are determined not by technological possibilities but by political, social, and organisational forces. Technology is left out of the equation and understood as a neutral instrument with which democratic norms *could* be enhanced. The problem is not the technology in itself but the social forces that determine the development, implementation, and use of otherwise neutral technologies. Master-servant instrumentalism thrives alongside a democratic ethos. People remain naïve believers in technology. Despite evidence to the contrary, they cling to the hope that technology might at some point actually challenge or circumvent unjust power structures. They are deeply committed to this hope and with good intentions. They find current situations unjust, unequal, benefitting the few at the expense of the many, and so forth, and they hope that something can be done about it.

Present day e-democratic research tends to apply a technological and instrumental rationality that removes power struggles. ICTs are understood as neutral instruments that are deployed to deliver democratic ideals. Success and failure are evaluated by measuring the effects of utilising ICT against the ideals they were meant to enhance. Political scientific evaluative effect studies focus on the outcome of employing ICT in politics. Such a focus and approach allow the researcher to assess the direction in which e-democracy has moved. Evaluative effect studies, however, cannot explain why e-democracy develops in the way it does. Power is interpreted as a resource – something which the internet may or may not distribute more equally – and an ontological distinction between user and technologies is implied. Both of these interpretations are

problematic. The distributive interpretation of power leads to a focus on the powerful or the powerless, but it cannot say much about how power works (Young, 2011). This is a serious problem, because the dynamics and tensions inherent in e-democratic initiatives need to be addressed in order to understand the development and fate of e-democracy (Braccini, Federici, & Sæbø, 2016; Sæbø, Flak, & Sein, 2011). The reinforcement and the amplification theses do not attend to these dynamics and tensions but focus on their effects. As such, they neglect the tensions that even the most powerful navigate in. Power elites are also entangled in a wide network of ideas, norms, technologies, practices, and so forth and they are continuously under pressure. They constantly negotiate the trajectory and fate of e-democracy with a whole range of actors. Data suggests that politicians, civil servants, and citizens do not always choose to employ the internet politically. They are also influenced by social and technological forces. Since these forces are both social and technological in nature, both need to be incorporated into the analysis. Technologies are not mere instruments that human subjects may wield at will, but actors in their own right that translate, change, and challenge democratic practices and ideals. E-democratic initiatives are not only reasoned responses to a democratic crisis as the instrumentalist interpretation implies. Rather, democratic thinking and technological development co-evolve (Vedel, 2006). This comes dangerously close to technological determinism, a label that no-one wants to be associated with and against which instrumentalism has become the standard bulwark. The disillusionment of e-democracy, however, rests on the instrumental rationalist attempt to globally apply a model of 'truth as correspondence' that is simply inapplicable to the political sphere (Harman, 2014). Reality does not live up to the democratic norms. Technologies do not instrumentally run democratic errands. The technological and democratic co-evolvement, however, is not the same as technological determinism. It is not as if technologies determine the trajectory of democracy. Rather, technology and democratic thought are part of the same trajectory. Deliberative democracy, van den Hoven (2005) argues, has been advocated for as the most suitable conception of democracy to guide the design of e-democracy, because it is uniquely suited to put the communicative properties of the new information and communication technologies to use. Similarly, Varley and Hetherington (1991) quotes the director of strategic computing and telecommunications at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government as saying that the public sector uses technology not merely to automate an existing method of doing business, but to rethink the basic way of doing things. If technologies are left out of the equation, as the instrumentalist approach suggests, the joint history of technological innovation and e-democratic thinking remains unaccounted for. To the explosive cocktail of the Athenian agora, Rousseau, Jefferson and Mill, and Californian ideology (Vedel, 2006) the technological ingredient needs to be added.

The critique of the dominating approach to the study of e-democracy in terms of power creates a conundrum. If democratic yardsticks cannot be used to explain the development of e-democracy and if an instrumentalist approach does not pay heed to the intricate relationship between ICT and politics, how should e-democracy and its trajectory be approached? How can power be interpreted, not as an effect but as an action? How can power struggles be captured? How can technologies be included in the analysis? How can the changing faces of e-democracy be captured? In this dissertation, I have attempted to answer these questions and point to a possible unified solution. It is a work in progress. The approach has not yet reached a stable ontological, epistemological, methodological, or axiological configuration and a great deal of future work is required. However, I do believe that the research community can profit from pursuing this line of enquiry as it promises to yield greater insights into the trajectory and ever-changing nature of e-democracy.

The approach argued for in the dissertation breaks with the approach offered by prior evaluative effect studies. It discards the technological and instrumental rationality and shifts focus from the power effect to the power dynamics inherent in the construction and enactment of e-democracy. Thus, politics and power, rather than democratic ideals, are in focus. Two poststructuralist conceptions of power have been suggested and applied. The first conception frames power as the hegemonic struggle among radically opposed groups to define and determine the contents of e-democracy. The second conception frames power as a reasoned and strategic attempt to steer the behaviour of others through heterogeneous techniques and mechanisms to meet specific and explicit ends. Departing from these conceptions of power, I have argued for an approach that studies how power is exerted not only by human beings, but also by the technologies that they apply to either define the contents of e-democracy or govern the behaviour of others. Thus, ANT meets poststructuralist power analysis in a combined approach to the study of the power inherent in e-democracy.

Methodologically speaking, I have argued for in-depth qualitative and pragmatic explorations that follow the multi-sited practices that constitute e-democracy. This implies that new actors, new sites of struggle, and new ways of practicing e-democracy need to be incorporated and adjusted to as they become relevant for the exploration. I have explored academic publications, governmental reports and strategies, individual interview, focus-group interview, online interviews, asynchronous observation, and diverse webpages that mediate politics online. I have applied superficial as well as minute analysis strategies in order to construct the logics and norms that structure and result from competing constructions of e-democracy and trace the translations and alliances among the diverse actors. The methodological pragmatism, which is inherited from anthropology and sociology, is expanded so that it also includes nonhumans as actors in their own right and so that it can be applied to the political scientific realm of power and e-democracy. Thus, a bridge is built between the distinct disciplines of anthropology, sociology, science and technology studies in the shape of ANT, and political science.

Applying this approach, the dissertation has offered a framework with which the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy can be explored. The framework maps and describes four mechanisms that condition the development of e-democratic practices: Monitoring, Inclusion/exclusion, Moderation, and Exposure mechanisms. Hence the name, the MIME framework. Each of the mechanisms strikes a balance between opposing concerns. These opposing concerns and the balance between them are warranted by logics that are not necessarily derived from democratic norms or ideals. Thus, the fate of e-democracy rests not only on democratic norms, but also on market logics and security logics. The logics are not approachable in and of themselves. They do not exist as tangible assets to be studied on their own. Instead they result from a logical abductive analysis (Bertilsson, 2004) of the ways in which power is exerted. As such, the logics are understood as the mechanisms' conditions of possibilities.

The MIME framework aids scholars that pursue similar approaches to the study of e-democracy by making Foucault's notion of power operational. Moreover, the framework creates a much-needed space for critical thought, in which the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy can be questioned. If only the implementation of e-democracy is considered, there is no consideration of the dynamics of power exertion through the implementation process. If these dynamics are considered critically, transparency and some

sort of legitimacy may ensure. The framework is based on an extensive review of the literature on e-democracy and is therefore generic in nature. As such, the framework may assist practitioners in various fields in understanding the power exerted in concrete e-democratic practices.

With regard to e-democracy, Greenland is an empirically unchartered territory. The dissertation has broken new ground by exploring how e-democracy is constructed and enacted in Greenland. I have focussed on the three key human actors (citizens, politicians, and civil servants) that figure in the democratic triangle, on the technologies that they employ, and on the historical, demographic, and political circumstances. Their associations have been traced and documented as they have become relevant to the study and to the construction of Greenlandic e-democracy. Consequently, the exploration has primarily included Nuuk residents and excluded those that are not present on the online political scene. Obviously, not all ground has been covered. Many more actors than have been included in this dissertation participate in the negotiations of e-democracy. Furthermore, a host of questions specific to Greenland needs to be raised and addressed. For example, who turn to the internet for politics and who do not? Why do some refrain from employing the internet politically?

The dissertation has provided the research field with qualitative empirical evidence of how the fate of e-democracy in Greenland is continuously negotiated among heterogeneous actors. We may speculate that the power struggles that result in e-democracy in Greenland are to some degree comparable to those resulting in e-democracy elsewhere. In terms of democratic and technological development, Greenland is not cut off from the rest of the world. Greenlandic institutional democracy resembles other western representative democracies and Greenlanders employ the same internet-based technologies as people in other countries. The construction of e-democracy does not respect national borders. As one reviewer noted, the results of the empirical research conducted in Greenland could have been produced anywhere (Review comment on paper submitted to 'Information, Communication and Society', February 8th, 2016). This means that the struggles disclosed in the dissertation are comparable to the struggles that shape e-democracy in Europe, the US, and elsewhere. While the democratic institutions and the technological uptake in Greenland are quite common compared to other Western representative democracies, the specific Greenlandic combination of a colonial history, a slow, peaceful, and paternalistic transition from colony to Self-Rule, a young democracy, a dispersed settlement pattern, and sheer size is unique. Because of these specific circumstances, the struggles leading to e-democracy are all the more evident.

Focusing on the specific Greenlandic experiences, the dissertation has shown that e-democracy is constructed and enacted in different ways: As online consultative dialogues controlled by politicians and civil servants to improve political representation and the implementation of legal acts and as a way to shortcut political representation, set the political agenda, mobilise the populace, orchestrate single issue protests, and hold politicians accountable. In and of themselves such ways of online democratic engagement are not new to the literature. In many ways they resemble consultation (Coleman & Shane, 2012), single issue campaigning and protests (Breindl, 2010), political counter-discourses (Dahlberg, 2007), and political contestation (van den Hoven, 2005). My contribution lies in the focus on how these versions of online democratic engagement result from complex and ongoing negotiations among a wealth of actors, both human and nonhuman. Through these negotiations the aim, the purpose, and the effect of e-democracy change. Facebook translates the online dialogue into a struggle to achieve public awareness of

local issues. Informal petition sites diminish the value of signatures. The trajectory of protests is shaped not solely by the technologies employed to orchestrate the demonstration, but just as much by the power elites' response and handling of such protests, the few people needed in Greenland to make up a significant crowd, and the public attention towards political inclusion. Thus, it is not only the different and mutually conflicting ways of online democratic engagement that are continuously enacted through negotiations and translations, but also their political effects and impact. As such, Greenlandic e-democracies are not mere rational instrumentalist solutions to a democratic problem. If the effects of employing ICT politically are solely evaluated based on a given democratic ideal, the dynamic struggles by which it was constructed are ignored. The fate of e-democracy is determined not by independent democratic ideals. It is continuously destabilised, and re-stabilised as a result of dynamic power struggles.

The approach is not unproblematic and it needs to be explored and elaborated further. One way forward would be to compare the dynamic struggles explored in the dissertation with the work of Braccini, Federici, and Sæbø (2016). Departing from the premise that online political communities are shaped by internal and external forces, they explore the tensions that arise from the differences in values, rules, and routines internal and external to online communities. Through a qualitative study of the Italian Five Star Movement, they identify eight such tensions which seem to address the same forces, struggles, and movements that I identified in this dissertation. The field of study would benefit from a comparative analysis of the similarities and dissimilarities between them.

Conclusions

Since the 1990s, the internet has been incorporated in a variety of new and old ways of political democratic engagement. It has been used to provide information about policies, parties, governments, and parliaments. It has been used to consult citizens on political issues and to foster dialogue among and between citizens, politicians, and civil servants. It has been used to create formal and informal petitions and to raise political awareness of otherwise unnoticed issues. It has been used to mobilise populaces and orchestrate protests. Evidence suggests that this is merely the tip of the iceberg and that ICT and especially the internet will come to play an even greater role in the ways politics are conducted democratically. Tweets, social media, big data, etc. are currently entering and altering the political scene. Parallel to this proliferation of internet-mediated ways of democratic practice, the concept of e-democracy has arisen. In this dissertation, e-democracy is understood as an umbrella concept for several practices, each of which is designated by the concepts of e-participation, e-consultation, e-protest, e-voting, and so forth. These and similar concepts are special, because they explicitly pair a material technology with democratic practice or variants of democratic practice. When new technologies are invented or introduced to a new practice, disruption often follows. History shows traces of many of such disruptions. Recently, the human, social, and political sciences have taken a material or technological turn, which implies that such traces are made more visible. It has become common to look for the technological or material disruption of social practices. The very concept and the research into e-democracy are symptomatic of this material turn.

There is a strong instrumentalist tendency within political science, which approaches e-democracy by measuring the power effects of employing internet-based ICTs against a given democratic normative ideal. Evaluative effect studies have repeatedly affirmed two theses on the power effects of technology: the reinforcement and the amplification thesis. While the latter maintains that the internet amplifies already existing power struggles, the former holds that the internet primarily reinforces already existing power relations; thus, the internet cannot save a failing democracy. Normative democratic ideals are of great value for the evaluation of e-democratic initiatives. However, in and of themselves they do not illuminate the development of concrete instances of e-democracy – whether they be initiated from the bottom up or from the top down. Rather than offering technological solutions to democratic problems, the internet has raised new questions and re-opened very old ones (Vedel, 2006). In this dissertation, I have suggested that the ways in which these questions are settled need to be considered in order to understand how e-democracy develops. Rather than focussing on the power effects of employing internet-based ICT in democratic practices, I have focussed on the power inherent in the destabilisation and stabilisation of e-democracy. Two concepts of power suitable for the exploration of power dynamics have been suggested. The first concept frames power in terms of hegemonic struggles among radically opposed adversaries. The second sees power as the attempt to steer the behaviour of others to meet specific ends by employing diverse techniques and mechanisms. It has been argued that both of these power concepts allow for the inclusion of materials into the analysis, but neither pursue this possibility to the end. In order to pursue this possibility, the two power concepts have been coupled with ANT's flat ontology, which does not distinguish between humans and nonhumans and focusses on associations and the level of action in the form of translations and alliances.

From this theoretical vantage point, four research questions were devised that have guided the exploration of the power inherent in e-democracy. The first question was: How can the dynamic power mechanisms inherent in e-democracy be framed and how do they structure e-democracy? The question is general in nature and has been answered by adjusting and grounding a theoretically derived model of power in the literature on e-democracy. The ensuing framework illustrates four distinct mechanisms that balance conflicting concerns and condition the possibilities for e-democracy. Specific instances of online democratic engagement balance anonymity against publicity, the masses against the elite, heterogeneity against homogeneity, and production against exposure. The framework makes Foucault's notion of power operational and creates a much-needed space for critical thought, within which the power dynamics inherent in e-democracy can be studied.

The remaining three questions are specific in nature and empirically explored in Greenland. They read: How do politicians and civil servants in Greenland construct e-democracy? How do citizens in collaboration with nonhuman actors construct e-democracy? What are the conditions of possibilities for single-issue protests? The approach applied and the research setting are not unproblematic. Research takes place after the fact. For the most part, researchers approach their object of study after the dust has settled, after something has been construed and implemented. The object of study and its ramifications become a fixed entity. Citizens, politicians, and civil servants are understood as independent actors that pursue their own interest in a world of manipulable objects. They come to represent democratic movements that stretch far beyond themselves. The young protagonist in my opening story comes to represent the demonstrators and their dissatisfaction with the political status quo. Politicians and civil servants figure are the main architects behind solutions such as online consultations. In much the same way, the researcher comes to represent the networked negotiations of research through his or her signature. All the negotiations, translations, and alliances that lead to a published article are hidden behind the signature of the researcher and within the structure of the article. Simultaneously, well-established democratic labels and norms are used to categorise the endpoints of these trajectories. This adds to their strength; they are provided with democratic form and content. Dialogue, consultation, protests, and counter discourses come to represent specific ways of online democratic engagement, while they obfuscate the complex power struggles by which such momentarily stable forms of democratic engagement are achieved. Throughout this dissertation I have attempted to attune myself to the complex negotiations and struggles as well as the heterogeneity of actors that partake in them. Rather than attending the field after the fact, I have tried to immerse myself in the construction and enactment of the fact. I suspect, however, that established categories of democratic engagement have played a greater role in the research outputs than intended. My focus may have shifted towards the different *kinds* of e-democracies that are constructed and enacted in Greenland rather than remained on the ways *in which* they are constructed and practiced. Moreover, I fear that human actors have been given a far greater voice than nonhuman actors. My sociological and anthropological toolbox contains a larger arsenal of methods to generate data on humans than on nonhumans. ANT's toolbox has been called upon as a way to include and document the voice of nonhumans. This toolbox, however, is severely limited and only allows for the tracing of associations and documenting of translations and alliances. As a result, the analyses are biased towards human actors and far more attuned to the ways in which they shape e-democracy in Greenland.

Few studies have investigated the power struggles involved in the making of e-democracy. Ekelin (2007) has studied the work involved in making e-participation in Swedish local municipalities work. Mahrer and Krimmer (2005) have explored how members of the Austrian Parliament and the Provincial Diets resist changes in established democratic practices. Sæbø, Flak, and Sein (2011) have applied genre and stakeholder perspectives in an exploration of the dynamics inherent in the development of e-participation initiatives. Braccini, Federici, and Sæbø (2016) have explored the tensions that condition the trajectory of online communities for e-participation in the case of the Italian Five Star Movement. While such studies are slowly growing in numbers, they do not have a common methodology or a common research objective. This dissertation, which explores the making of e-democracy in Greenland, certainly contributes to this slowly growing body of literature, but it hardly diminishes the methodological and empirical confusions. The field of research would benefit from a shared methodology and a shared approach; a shared framework with which otherwise distinct studies may be compared. Moreover, if humans and nonhumans are to be considered equally, methods need to be devised that allow for the gathering of data about nonhumans and humans equally. The methods suggested by ANT are a good start, but research needs to move beyond tracing associations if it is to analyse the power inherent in e-democracy.

I have argued that Greenland makes for a paradigmatic case for the study of the power dynamics inherent in the construction and maintenance of e-democracy. On the one hand, employing internet-based ICT in the name of democracy seems obvious considering the geography and settlement pattern. On the other hand, because of the political and democratic history, no stable regime of democratic knowledge/power exists, so democratic practices are susceptible to challenges from new forms of democratic understanding and acting. The research setting, however, impacts the very possibilities for the kind of explorative qualitative research conducted. I had expected that my Danish background might become an obstacle and that it would be more difficult to access the field. Local human actors, however, where more interested in my position as a PhD fellow than in my position as a Dane. Language was a greater but not an unsurmountable obstacle. The fact that I do not speak Greenlandic has prevented me from accessing and interpreting data that only exists in Greenlandic. The greatest limitation, however, derives from the methodological approach itself. The study focusses solely on the actors that enact e-democracy and excludes those actors that have no or only a very limited role. The study allies itself with the strongest networks and thus excludes the quieter voices from the account. As it happens, and contrary to the hopes attached to the internet's transnational connecting capacities, e-democracy is primarily enacted and constructed in Nuuk. Thus the dissertation focusses mainly on Nuuk.

The empirical explorations have shown the complex power dynamics involving disparate logics, mechanisms, and actors in Greenland. The empirical exploration presented in the dissertation has shown how different variants of e-democracy are continuously constructed through alliances and negotiations among a great number of actors. Online consultative dialogue is construed by politicians and civil servants, their perceived loss of dialogic control, their conceptions of political representation and efficiency, the technological possibilities and impossibilities, as well as the researcher. Similarly, e-democracy understood as a way to create awareness of local issues and political protests is the result of translations between citizens, their perception of a political crisis, and Facebook's network structure. E-democracy is constructed not in a vacuum but *in situ*. The trajectory of political protests, for example, is shaped by the shifting alliances between different layers of government, political parties, prior conflicts, political history, and

attention. Even the sheer size of an electorate in relation to the ease with which a significant percentage is mobilised online is part of the conditions of possibilities for political protests. Moreover, new actors that shape the further direction are construed along the way. E-democracy is in a state of flux and will continue to be so for as long as there are actors with conflicting agendas. The current dissertation has explored the e-democratic fluctuations in Greenland between 2013 and 2016. In the long run, chances are that these e-democratic constructions will be replaced by other partially stabilised versions of online democratic practice. E-democracy, whether it is understood in terms of consultative dialogues or as single-issue protests, would not be what it is if it were not for all of these actors. From this it can be concluded that e-democracy is relational. It always points outwards and beyond itself. Its stability is momentary by principle, which explains the breadth of potential e-democratic pathways and the great many mutual conflictual paths chosen over the course of time and across different actors.

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Appendix A

Jørgensen, A. M., & Andersen, K. N. (2016). Navigating Troubled Waters: Bringing the E-Democratic Ship into Safe Harbour?. *Transforming Government: People Process and Policy*, *10*(4), 591 – 604.

Navigating Troubled Waters: Bringing the E-Democratic Ship into Safe Harbour?

Andreas Møller Jørgensen and Kim Normann Andersen

Navigating Troubled Waters: Bringing the E-Democratic Ship into Safe Harbour?

Structured Abstract:

Purpose – Whereas prior research has conceptualized and empirical investigated reinforcement and amplification mechanisms, this paper proposes a framework of power that captures the dynamic ways in which different forms of online political action is structured by disparate mechanisms.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper derives a theoretical model of power from Foucault and affiliated governmentality studies, which constructs power as the mechanisms and logics that structure the field of possible actions. This model is grounded in research literature on e-democracy and applied in a study of the mechanisms that structure e-democracy.

Findings – The paper identifies four mechanisms that balance disparate concerns of e-democracy. Monitoring (M) mechanisms apply logics of security and service to weigh anonymity and publicity against each other. The range of participants is determined by Inclusion/exclusion (I) mechanisms which operate through rules of engagement. Moderation (M) mechanisms balance concerns for heterogenic viewpoints and homogeneity according to a logic of uniformity. Logics of profit making and shared understanding warrant the balance that Exposure (E) mechanisms strike between information abundance and centralized access. The four mechanisms are combined in the MIME framework.

Research limitations/implications – The MIME framework includes mechanisms that are documented by the English speaking research community, often with a substantial time lag. Others and potentially forceful mechanisms might not be reported in the research literature.

Practical implications – Practitioners are encouraged to be cognizant of the variety of mechanisms that condition e-democracy; their internal components and external relations of e-democratic practices when designing, building, and conducting e-democratic initiatives.

Originality/value – Instead of focusing exclusively on the beneficiaries and the possible payoffs from e-democratic practices, the MIME framework developed in the paper focuses on the mechanisms which structure e-democracy.

Keywords:
e-democracy, power, governmentality, steering mechanisms

Article Classification:
Conceptual paper

Introduction

A broad range of studies suggests that the share of information and communication technologies (ICT) in political involvement is significant and that democratic governance is changing as a result. The changes include the rise of bottom-up flash and single-issue campaigning (Breindl, 2010); increased mobilization of otherwise silent voices (Vissers and Stolle, 2013); developments of political counter-discourses (Dahlberg, 2007); and the creation of a fifth estate (Dutton, 2013). The tactical employment of online channels could indeed change the conditions for political participation and reconfigure the relationships of power. Empirical evidence, however, suggests that despite two decades of online involvement and three to four decades of e-mail campaigning and tele-democracy radical shifts in power balances have yet to transpire.

While it has become significantly easier for most people to produce information, the sheer volume of user generated information necessitates structuring access points; as new avenues for political participation is enabled online, participation requires compliance with rules of conduct that are not formulated nor enforced by the participants; while the myth of anonymity invites Internet users to act and express themselves freely, monitoring measures are continuously deployed in the name of security; while deliberative forums provide stages for hitherto subdued voices, the plethora of voices is turned into a uniform account resembling that of the political, administrative, and technical elites.

In this paper, we propose a framework for studying and understanding power in relation to e-democracy. Drawing on a line of reasoning developed by Foucault and adapted by successive governmentality studies, we argue that power is an integrated dimension and source of dynamics in e-democracy and that attention needs to be directed at the mechanisms by which power is exerted. The paper, then, moves beyond discussions of beneficiaries and the magnitude of payoffs from e-democracy. Employing this line of reasoning, we explore four mechanisms - Monitoring, Inclusion/Exclusion, Moderation, Exposure (MIME) – that correspond with the contradictory trends noted above and which structure various incarnations of online political participation such as deliberation (Coleman, 2004), petitioning (Cruickshank and Smith, 2010), consultation (Coleman and Shane, 2012), and voting (Schaupp and Carter, 2005). The exploration of the mechanisms results in the MIME framework for understanding the conditions of possibilities for e-democracy.

First, we critically review the reinforcement and the amplification theses and propose in the subsequent section an alternative view of power, which interprets power as mechanisms that structure the field of possible actions. In the following section, we present the MIME framework, which summarises and combines these mechanisms. Each mechanism is elaborated on in the following section. We conclude the paper by comparing the MIME framework with the reinforcement thesis and the amplification thesis and discuss possible implications for theory and practice.

Online Political Participation and Power

The research literature on online democracy and power has been dominated by two major streams: The reinforcement thesis and the amplification thesis. The reinforcement thesis (Danziger *et al.*, 1982) states that traditional political and economic elites gain most from e-democratic developments. This view has been affirmed repeatedly by empirical research (Borge *et al.*, 2009; Carman, 2014; Coleman, 2004; Garrett and Jensen, 2011; Price, 2012; Nielsen *et al.*, 2015). The amplification thesis (Agre, 2002) suggests that the Internet amplifies existing forces and that power struggles intensify online. While the amplification thesis is affirmed across the board it primarily finds empirical evidence from social movements, political activism, and alternative non-institutional forms of political engagement (Bakardjieva, 2009; Bennett, 2003; Toyama, 2011). The reinforcement and amplification theses both contradict the Utopian hope that the Internet per se will level power relations and improve the conditions for political participation. What is more important,

they also conceptualise power as an obtainable and tangible asset, something which is possible to possess more or less of.

It is, however, difficult to imagine power as a resource akin to, for example, money, tradable goods, and Internet access (Foucault, 1982; Young, 2011). One's share of such goods may condition one's possibilities of exercising power, but power is not to be likened with these goods. Likewise, while one's social position may hinder or further the exertion of power, power is not a social position. Thus, while power is contingent upon one's resources and social position, power is something else. If power was a resource or a position it appears that the only thing that would hinder an equal share of power would be the unwillingness of those in power to share their resources or their positions. In the literature on e-democracy, however, there are abundant well-intended initiatives in which the political elites invite those less fortunate to participate but where the desired effects are not achieved. If we interpret power in terms of resources we would have difficulty in explaining that the desired effects fail to materialize, which suggests that we are in need of another concept of power and another approach to exploring power.

Foucault (1980) suggests that we cut off the King's head in political theory by discarding our perception of power as a resource pertaining to the person or the position of the King or the State. Rather than viewing power as a resource or a position, as something obtainable or tradable, Foucault (1982) suggests that power is exerted through the wealth of actions that structure the field of possible actions. Somewhat less abstract, power is the attempt to steer, direct, or shape behaviour according to particular sets of logics through the employment of diverse techniques and mechanisms (Dean, 2010; Rose, 1999). Power does not designate any specific logic or any specific way of steering, directing, or shaping behaviour but the very relationship between logics and structuring mechanisms. The logic of sovereign-subject relations, for example, makes possible the sovereign's punishment of the subjects on the scaffold and affirms thereby the might of the sovereign. Likewise, surveillance mechanisms such as Bentham's Panopticon (Foucault, 1991) or enacted online (Andrejevic, 2007) – make us discipline ourselves. Behaviour is structured by less spectacular mechanisms still. The city plan of Nantes, for example, directs the flow of populations, goods, diseases in a way that adheres to the welfare of the general populace (Foucault, 2007). The relational logic of power is illustrated in Figure 1. Mechanisms structure the field of possible actions rather than determining the concrete actions themselves. This is illustrated by the dotted arrow from "Mechanism" to "Possible actions". The mechanism adheres to and is warranted by an underlying logic, which in turn is affirmed through the deployment of the mechanism. This is illustrated by the curly bracket.
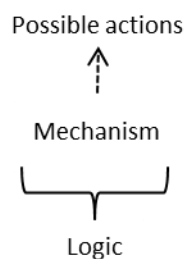

Figure 1 Theoretically derived model of power

Power is enacted through a broad repertoire of mechanisms that operate across the entire social field (Dahlstedt, 2009) and e-democracy is no exception. E-democracy designates the field of possible online democratic actions. It is the sum of different incarnations of online political participation such as deliberation, voting, petitioning and consulting. Correspondingly, we expect e-democracy to be structured by a diverse and multifaceted set of mechanisms, which are manifest in concrete interfaces, designs, and

codes of conduct. The mechanisms, to be clear, condition the possibilities for action and attest to their justificatory logics.

Method

The analysis consists of two steps: First the theoretically derived model of power is adjusted to the field of e-democracy. This is accomplished by grounding the model in literature on e-democracy. Second, the adjusted model is applied to the very same body of literature. The purpose is to capture each mechanism that structures concrete instances of online political participation. In the next section, we will outline briefly how we have employed the research literature from which this dual analysis is drawn.

Fortified by the online availability of research in databases as ProQuest, Web of Knowledge, and Google Scholar, the "interim struggle" (Weick, 1995) to establish the research theoretical background has in our work been aided by the classic work on the grounding theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) attempting to contribute to substantive and longer term formal theorizing. In this paper we attempt to ground the model of power as it is derived from Foucault and governmentality studies and enhance the existing knowledge of power (the amplification and reinforcement theses) through the study of scientific literature on e-democracy. In other literature reviews of ICT in the political arena (Andersen *et al.*, 2010) we have used Webster and Watson's (2002) concept-categorization to enrich and advance the categories of impacts of IT on the political world.

We focused on peer-reviewed research papers containing 'eDemocracy', 'e-democracy', 'electronic democracy'. 'digital democracy', 'online democracy', 'Internet democracy' or 'cyber democracy' in the title of the paper. Using these keywords, we identified 45 papers through Web of Knowledge and ProQuest. During re-iterative interpretations and discussions of this literature the model of power derived from Foucault and governmentality studies proved itself more capable of accounting for how power operates within e-democracy than the reinforcement and the amplification theses. With the theoretical model in place, we identified and distilled four distinct mechanisms within this body of literature: 1) monitoring, 2) inclusion/exclusion, 3) moderation, and 4) exposure. A second round of literature search and analysis was conducted focusing solely on the four mechanisms. Relevant references within the initial publications were traced and the aforementioned databases and key journals were investigated. The total body of literature then reached 113 papers. Next, we grounded the theoretically derived model in the literature on e-democracy. During the second round of interpretations and discussions of how the model fitted with the literature in question we adjusted the model by conceptualizing mechanisms as a slider between opposing concerns. In the subsequent sections we present the grounded model of power and MIME framework that emerged from these re-iterative analytical steps.

Adjusted Model of Power

The mechanisms that conditions e-democracy tend to rest upon and strike a balance between opposing concerns in accordance with a specific underlying logic that does not necessarily derive strictly speaking from democratic concerns. A brief example illustrates these points. Conglomerates like Google and Apple, for example, employ exposure techniques to direct our online movements in accordance with their interest of keeping us within their reach, collect our data, expose us to individually tailored advertisements, and thereby reaping profits (Dahlberg, 2005; Patelis, 2000). These businesses face the challenge of providing relevant information but also keep users within reach. The conflicting concerns, the balance between, and the mechanisms employed to strike this balance are warranted by the underlying logic of profitmaking. The access to the internet and the amount of political information is distributed and consumed mainly along commercial channels and as such conditioned by market logics.

We adjust the model displayed in Figure 1 accordingly (see Figure 2): The relations between logic, mechanism and possible actions remain the same as in Figure 1. Thus, possible actions are structured by mechanisms, which are contained by specific logics. The level of "Mechanisms", however, are expanded to illustrate that mechanisms function as a slider (the triangle) that strikes a balance between opposing concerns (in the model merely labelled concern A and B).
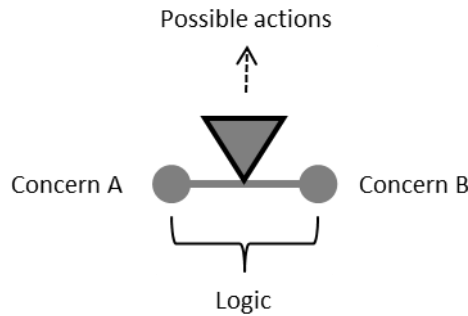

Figure 2 Adjusted model of power

The MIME Framework

The analysis' second objective is to identify the *general* set of mechanisms that structure concrete instances of online political participation. This implies that our analysis and report of the findings is at a more abstract level as compared to studies that have specific lenses as deployed by for example Boyle's (1997) study on encryption technologies, Henman's (2013) study on government 2.0 discourses, Lyon's (1998) research on surveillance mechanisms in the form of cookies and spiders, Green's (1999) identification of mechanisms of power in commercial and workplace surveillance, and Fuchs's (2013) study of Deep Packet Inspection surveillance technologies.

We have identified four mechanisms that span conflicting objectives and are dynamic arenas for an extensive exercising of power. The mechanisms are combined in the MIME framework (Figure 3).
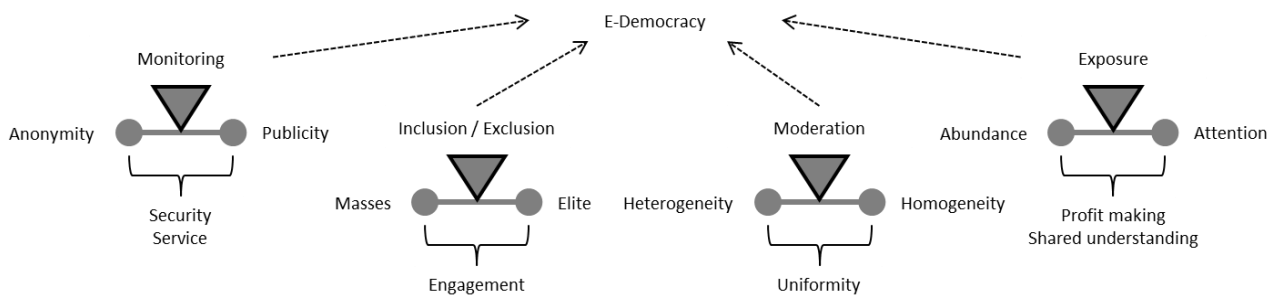

Figure 3 The MIME framework

Monitoring mechanisms are concerned with security and service provision and embed ideals of anonymity and publicity according to these concerns. Inclusion/exclusion mechanisms enforce rules of conduct. Moderation mechanisms are concerned with uniformity and strike a balance between the desire to involve heterogenic viewpoints and a wish for homogeneity. Finally, exposure mechanisms embed user generated information and central access points according to a logic of profit making and a concern for shared understanding.

Attention to each of these mechanisms and the interplay between them is the key to understanding the evolution of e-democracy. Based on the work on centralization-decentralization of IT-systems by King (1978), the conditions of possibilities for online political participation swing back and forth as a pendulum of change between masses and the elite, production and attention, heterogeneity and homogeneity, and anonymity and publicity. The combinatorial and dynamic nature of the MIME framework enables us to obtain a multifaceted grasp of the structure of online political participation. Attempts to describe the structure as static will not only be erroneous but also be counterproductive in understanding e-democratic power. In the subsequent section we will expand on each of the structuring mechanisms.

Monitoring Mechanisms

Anonymity is a key component of e-democracy. If social, racial, and economic cues are hidden, political interaction might be more effective. However, while such cues are blurred online, history has shown that actual anonymity is a myth. Sites well-known for embracing anonymity include Threema and 4chan. 'What's unique about [4chan] is that it is anonymous, it has no memory, no archives, no registration' (Poole, 2010). Despite this, authorities have on two occasions been able to identify and arrest 4chan users, whose Internet protocol addresses were captured by 4chan and provided to the authorities (Cassidy, 2013; The Smoking Gun, 2011).

Concern for anonymity is weighed against that of publicity by monitoring mechanisms according to a logic of security. Arguably, the extensive surveillance programs of the National Security Agency are the most well-known examples of monitoring presently. But minor and less popular examples proliferate. In the light of the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, the French Parliament voted in April 2015 for a bill proposing extended surveillance measures under the pretext of security (Woods, 2015), thus forcing Internet service providers to automatically monitor their customers' online activities and make their data freely available to intelligence services (Toor, 2015).

Monitoring mechanisms are also employed in order to tailor services according to citizens' needs (Gunter, 2006, Lips *et al.*, 2009). In order to provide individually tailored services the service provider needs to have detailed knowledge about the service consumer. The better tailored a service, the more knowledge about the user is required. At a somewhat speculative level, Meijer (2012) argues that big data on diverse issues such as pollution and education could diminish the need for citizen engagement. The core of Meijer's concern is not so much that an all-knowing government needs citizens for providing information. Obviously, they do. The tricky question is whether citizens need to provide that information knowingly or not.

Citizens, NGOs and journalists equally use online techniques to monitor legislators' and private enterprises' activities (Dahlberg, 2005; Dutton, 2013). The risk of being caught in manipulation or surveillance is a constant threat which paradoxically might counter these activities (Rosa, 2013; van den Hoven, 2005). Online, monitoring has become a common way of structuring action.

Inclusion/Exclusion Mechanisms

While the online geography of access is reconfigured and includes a wider group of people (Chadwick, 2006), political participation presupposes compliance with the rules of conduct; compliance or exclusion. Thus, rules of engagement translate into inclusion / exclusion mechanism which structure online political participation (Macintosh, 2004; Morison, 2010).

The US petition website, *We the People*, serves as an example of inclusion/exclusion mechanisms characteristic of websites that support mass-collaboration or mass–interaction (for similar examples see betrireikjavik.is and epetitionen.bundestag.de). At *We the People* the potential participant base is extensive. In order to create or sign petitions you need to be at least thirteen years of age and provide a

name and a valid email address. Nowhere is it stated that you need to be a US citizen. Thus, 13-year old Pakistanis can participate on an equal basis with East Hampton residents. Participation, however, is severely constrained by design and the rules of conduct. The design incites users to find, sign, and create petitions. It discourages deliberation and group formation along with a wide range of other activities. Activities are further restrained by rules of conduct according to which you are, among others, not allowed to post anything obscene, vulgar, or lewd. Obscenity, vulgarity, and lewdness, however, are open to interpretation, and it is not clear when any posting is inappropriate. What is clear is that it is the White House staff that judge and execute the penalty. If the White House reasonably believes that one does not comply with the rules of conduct it may 'disable [his/her] accounts, remove associated signatures and remove petitions created or signed by [the user]' (The White House, 2014).

The intangibility of the inclusion/exclusion mechanisms renders them all the more efficient. While it is significantly easier to include people, exclusion potentially entails more than being left out of future participation. Exclusion from *We the People* means that your online alias ceases to exist (your account is disabled) and that your prior actions never transpired (signatures and petitions created or signed by you are removed).

Moderation Mechanisms

The third mechanism structures the process by which heterogenic groups and interests reach agreement through cooperation according to a logic of uniformity. This is especially significant with regard to deliberative participation. Deliberation is different from consultation, petitioning and voting, because it forms rather than affirms preferences (Coleman and Blumler, 2009). While citizens value the opportunity to express themselves, traditional elites value the opportunity to hear otherwise subdued or excluded voices. Insofar as opinions change during deliberation processes, it is, however, primarily citizens' opinions that change into those of the elite (Price, 2012). The changes of opinion cannot be explained by elite persuasion as it also occurs in groups without any elite members. Deliberation, then, does not challenge but reconfirms the elite discourses and opinions. Does this mean that people arrive at better opinions through deliberation and that these opinions happen to coincide with those of the elite? We feel sceptical of such a conclusion because it ignores the diverse processes by which people come to hold certain opinions outside of or prior to the controlled deliberation processes.

At a general level, the deliberative democratic theory has been criticized for being elitist (Przeworski, 1998; Rättila, 2000) and homogenizing (Dahlberg, 2007). If deliberation does not produce homogeneity, the participating citizens will most likely be met with no reaction from politicians who deem the quality of online discussions too insignificant to have a serious impact (Hedde and Svensson, 2009). These general observations might explain preference formations in deliberative settings with ordinary and elite members. However, they do not apply to settings with no elite members. In order to shed light on the workings of such settings, we need to focus on concrete moderation mechanisms. The crucial point, here, is how the online deliberative environment is designed, structured, and controlled (Coleman, 2004; Wright and Street, 2007). These and similar mechanisms have profound impact on the outcome of deliberative sessions. However, they remain understudied (Price, 2012).

Exposure Mechanisms

The fourth mechanism maintains a balance between widespread opportunities to produce information and central access points to this user generated information. The underlying logics are profit making and shared understanding. The balance obtained by exposure mechanisms has become especially significant with the rise of Web 2.0 technologies and social media, which have made it significantly easier for both citizens and political elites to produce content and to magnify voice (Dahlberg, 2005; Rosa, 2013). The potentials for production and outreach are enormous. As of June 2013 there were 1.15 billion Facebook users that on

average daily shared 4.75 billion status updates, wall posts, photos, videos and comments (Facebook, Ericsson and Qualcomm, 2013). Facebook statistics indicate that only a minor portion of this content is of any political significance. This does not change the fact, however, that political actors have experienced an escalation of voice platforms and that these platforms have been employed to increase the frequency of voice. The wealth of information, however, makes means of exposure or attention all the more important (Hargittai, 2004). As Dahlberg (2005) argues: 'The problem of vast attention inequalities between publications is masked by abundance'.

Evidence suggests that popular search engines and large corporations effectively structure and limit users' access to information (Patelis, 2000). AOL and Google, for example, have created massive one-stop shops. The wealth of opportunities, email accounts, newsfeeds, calendars, social networks and shops, offered by such entry sites make it nearly unnecessary for users to ever leave these domains. In addition, their search engines give primacy to sites hosted by their own domains to ensure that users do not leave.

Citizen generated voice, then, is of significant importance. However, the mere wealth of voices necessitates entry points that make order out of chaos. Currently, such structuring points are controlled by massive industries rather than the political actors themselves.

Discussion

The MIME framework views power as a set of structured actions and thereby brings attention to which and how concrete power mechanisms structure the range of possible democratic actions online. The emerging picture thereby moves beyond the reinforcement and amplification theses. It sees power as an integral part of e-democracy. Mass-collaboration requires some agreement as to how we are to work together formally as expressed in rules of conduct. Everybody spies on everybody in order to counteract or disclose presumed anonymous actions that are deemed harmful. Deliberation requires an agenda, a topic to be debated, as well as information, and moderation, all of which condition the deliberative outcomes. The wealth of user generated information necessitates structuring of entry points, to the effect that much information goes unnoticed.

Foucault has been criticised because it is impossible to raise a criticism of power from his conceptualization. The internal logic of the relations between the elements of the model cannot be tampered with. We can change each element, but the field of possible actions will still be structured according to some logic. No emancipation is possible. This does not mean, however, that criticism and change are not possible. Thus we can disagree with and change the balance made, we can disagree with the fairness or the reasonableness of the underlying logic and replace it with something else. We can ask, for example, if we find it justifiable that market logics condition online political participation. The aim is to open up a space for critical thought (Rose, 1999) and create a fuller and more nuanced picture of e-democracy; to show that participation does not delimit, equalize, or eliminate power relations; that e-democracy implies the exercise of power. This does not change even though the tables are turned by technological means.

Due to our literature search strategy, the list of mechanisms identified is not exhaustive. Only publications in English were included, which is a particularly pressing issue, since we are addressing a phenomenon that stretches well beyond the English speaking world. In addition, other search parameters or other databases would have resulted in another potentially larger body of literature in which it would be possible to identify other mechanisms. The function of coding, for example, is not present in our analysis even though it has become subject of critical and systematic academic scrutiny (see the list of research literature created and maintained by Gillespie and Seaver). Furthermore, as mechanisms are located in research publications, possible findings are limited to mechanisms that have been treated with different approaches by the academia. Finally, as new e-democratic avenues evolve, new mechanisms are deployed. We posit,

therefore, that additional mechanisms contribute to the structuring of e-democratic possibilities and that the MIME framework remains open-ended.

Conclusion & Policy Implications

Inspired by Foucault and governmentality studies, this paper views power as an integrated part of e-democracy and direct the analytical attention towards the mechanisms by which power is exerted. Based on an extensive literature review, four mechanisms were located: monitoring, inclusion/exclusion, moderation, and exposure. In practice, e-democratic initiatives need to strike some balance between: 1) anonymity, security, and individuality; 2) the inclusion of multitudes and ordered collaboration; 3) heterogeneous viewpoints and single societal means and ends; and between 4) the production of and the access to information. However, different initiatives affect these balances differently, and consequently, condition the possible range of democratic actions. *We the People*, for example, ensures anonymity, includes a broad segment of the population, hardly moderates collaboration, and serves as a central access point to create petitions. By comparison, in order to participate at kansalaisaloite.fi (the Finnish equivalent to *We the People*) one needs to sign in with one's personal online banking password. Thus, anonymity yields to individuality and security. In addition, it is ensured that only eligible voters are included. Furthermore, significant moderation is offered by the NGO, Open Ministry, which advises campaigners on how to create viable legislative ideas and run effective campaigns (Heikka, 2015). Finally, access to the citizens' initiatives is provided by the site itself.

In the title of this paper we included the phrase *navigating troubled waters* to signal that introducing digital technologies in democratic processes is loaded with dilemmas and strong effects. The MIME framework helps in mapping them and the steps by which they are navigated. In addition, we can identify a new class of professionals with a profound impact on how the troubled waters are traversed. Among others, there is need for deliberation moderators, designers, and programmers. Among these, programming seems to be the most fundamental skill. In a sense, programming unites all previous skills into one. We encourage practitioners as well as scholars to be attentive to these skills and the concrete mechanisms that are produced and reproduced through the online environments designed for political participation. Acknowledging that no actors or institutions is in full control of the mechanisms and the logics that warrants specific designs, future studies of how the design of e-democracy prescribes specific political engagement may find theoretical guidance in the concepts of inscription (Akrich, 1992) configurations (Rose and Blume, 2003).

The MIME framework is useful for public and governmental policy making in two important aspects. Firstly, by being attuned to the variety of mechanisms that condition e-democracy, legitimacy and transparency can be enhanced. By paying attention to the internal components and external relations of e-democratic practices, the dilemmas e-democracy face in practice are disclosed and actions towards their solutions improved. Secondly, the MIME framework has a more actionable implication inviting government and semi-government organizations to map current practices and pro-active actions. We work with non-profit semi-governmental organization and various levels of government when we use the four steering mechanisms to spearhead the debate and guide possible actions.

Failure to pay attention to the mechanisms highlighted in the MIME framework and leaving the course of actions purely to the global technology players as well as market mechanisms might push the ship of e-democracy to a different direction where the nature of politics and involvement of citizens will be radically different and have less general legitimacy. In turn, this could lead to the destabilization of government.

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Appendix B

Jørgensen, A. M. (2016). Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland: Negotiations of Power in Online Political Participation. *Policy & Internet*. doi:10.1002/poi3.126.

Competing Visions of eDemocracy in Greenland: Negotiations of Power in Online Political Participation

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Abstract

By offering new and alternative possibilities for political participation the Internet challenges established and conventional democratic practices and positions. The article explores how legislators and public administration employees at national and municipality levels in Greenland address these possibilities and challenges when they envision eDemocracy. Drawing on Actor-Network Theory and the works of Foucault, the article argues that eDemocratic visions are conditioned by discourses that are continuously shaped by power strategies, ongoing events, and the associations among a wide variety of human and non-human actors. The article argues for a two-step approach to understand the process by which eDemocracy is constructed. First, by tracing the associations among the actors that contribute to the construction, and secondly by analyzing the power relations that make certain visions of eDemocratic more likely or needed than others. The article concludes that eDemocracy as envisioned by Greenlandic legislators and public administration employees involves the citizenry to a greater degree than conventional practices, but also implies unequal power relations among citizens, legislative bodies, and the public administration.

KEYWORDS: eDemocracy, Discourse, Power, Greenland, Foucault, Democracy, Deliberation, Government

Introduction

'*Can people have more political responsibility? Why, yes. Absolutely! The question is whether they are allowed to*' (interview, member of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq municipal board, November 12th 2014)

Greenland is a young democracy still in the making. For 232 years Greenlanders have had no or only limited influence on Greenlandic politics. In 1814 Greenland became a Danish colony and in 1953 a Danish county. In 1979, however, Home-Rule was introduced and Greenland's first national parliament was democratically elected (Janussen, 2003). In 2009 Greenland took yet another step towards independence and became largely Self-Ruling. To this day it belongs to the Kingdom of Denmark, with Denmark providing an annual subsidy of approximately GPB 353 million. Denmark also maintains control of foreign and defence policy. Greenland is a parliamentary democracy with two legislative levels: the national parliament, Inatsisartut, which has 31 seats, and the four municipalities of Qaasuitsup Kommunia, Qeqqata Kommunia, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, and Kommune Kujalleq, which have 70 seats in total. Elections are held every fourth year.

As of today, Greenland faces grave political challenges that have attracted attention on, and repeated calls for, civic political participation. Thus, parliamentary decisions regarding extractive industries have spawned public outcry for participation resulting in, amongst other things, the formation of a coalition of NGOs that works for better citizen involvement (Sermitsiaq.ag, 2014a). Simultaneously, feelings of loss of local democracy affected by a 2009 structural reform that reduced 18 municipalities to four have surfaced in public and political debate (sermitsiaq.ag, 2012, 2014c and 2014d).

The two largest municipalities, Qaasuitsup Kommunia and Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, have responded to these challenges in different ways. On March 25, 2014 Qaasuitsup Kommunia consulted its citizens on whether or not to divide the municipality, with 79 percent voting for a division (sermitsiaq.ag, 2014e). Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq has begun to set up local councils in the cities (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014c). In addition, the legislative bodies and the public administrations have recently begun exploring the democratic potentials of the Internet. Employing the Internet to enhance democracy seems promising considering Greenland's geography and settlement pattern. With a land area the size of Saudi Arabia and a population size equal to that of the Cayman Islands (57,728) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014), Greenland is one of the least densely populated countries in the world (indexmundi, n.d.). Despite high prices and unstable connections, 72 percent of the population has home access to the Internet. Town dwellers score highest with an Internet penetration of 75 percent, compared to 53 percent in small settlements (HS Analyse, 2013).

The first major ICT-facilitated governance project is the online citizen portal, sullissivik.gl, which was opened to the public in 2012 (KNR, 2012). The portal provides services and information to citizens. In addition, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq has held its first online poll (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014a). Meanwhile, citizens increasingly use social media for explicit political purposes, with the effect of challenging the democratic establishment. For example, in autumn 2014 a Facebook group called "Demonstration against the Government" arranged a demonstration, which led to the

Government's resignation and call an early election for parliament (sermitsiaq.ag, 2014f). Taking these circumstances into account, this article pursues the modest question of how legislators and public administration employees in Greenland construct eDemocracy through different visions of its potential.

Theory

The concept of 'eDemocracy' is far from settled. Rather "The very discourse on e-democracy is heterogeneous" (Vedel, 2006: 230). The concept of 'eDemocracy' embraces all kinds of democratic strands from representative and statistical democracy (McLean, 1989) through deliberative (Coleman & Gotze, 2001) and strong democracy (Anttiroiko, 2003) to radical democracy and agonistic pluralism (Dahlberg & Siapera, 2007).[1] 'eDemocracy' most often implies greater political participation. In principle, however, it encompasses any democratic form that can be sustained by the Internet. The question, then, is how the concept of 'eDemocracy' is envisioned locally by legislators and public administration employees and why some visions of eDemocracy are argued for at the price of others. This article argues that the process by which eDemocracy is constructed is conditioned by Internet-based technologies and local power relations. In order to shed light on this construction process I first turn to Actor-Network Theory (ANT) for a theory of action and actors. Afterwards, I turn to Foucault for the tools to understand the link between visions and discourses and how power operates through discourses. Last, I present the methodological approach.

According to ANT, an action is that which modifies the state of affairs. Consequently, anything that is capable of altering the state of affairs is an actor (Latour, 2007, 71). When people turn on their computer, when fiber optic cables transmit data, and when government websites invite political participation, they act. Or rather, they participate in the course of action. "By definition, action is dislocated. Action is borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenced, dominated, betrayed, translated" (Latour 2007, 46). It can be difficult to discern how an actor changes the course of things. As long as an actor performs the same actions over time the actor tends to slip into the background. This is especially true with regard to nonhuman-actors because they are more stable than humans (we change our minds more often than computers). If an actor's contribution is modified, however, we can trace the change in the entire course of action and thereby apprehend the actor's prior contributions. It is not until a nonhuman actor, say a light bulb, breaks down that we notice and appreciate that it made it possible for us to read the newspaper. Likewise, it is not until the Internet connection is lost during a Skype call that we come to realize how our online conversation was possible only by the mediation of the Internet.

Obviously, this is a very simple account that merely serves to exemplify the principles. A wide range of diverse actors is needed in order to bring about that specific course of action we might call online political participation. Within this string of actors, each contributes to the course of action in a specific way. They do not passively transmit a

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[1] For a comprehensive account of democratic ideals that are subsumed under 'eDemocracy' see Päivärinta & Sæbø (2006).

program of action. Rather, they are interrelated mediators that "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour, 2007, 39). See for example (Latour, 1994: 38) for a description of how speed bumps on campus force drivers to slow down by translating the moral imperative '"slow down so as not to endanger students" into "slow down and protect my car's suspension".' When legislators or citizens utilize Facebook for political rather than social purposes, they modify the meaning of Facebook from a social medium to a political medium. At the same time Facebook structures the possible field of political action. The technologies used to support eDemocracy distribute, suggest, influence and dominate the visions of eDemocracy. As we will see in the analysis, Internet-based technologies influence quite explicitly legislators' and public administration employees' visions of eDemocracy.

ANT provides the tools to understand and investigate how eDemocratic visions are conditioned by associations among several human and nonhuman actors. It does not, however, tell us why it might be interesting to investigate these visions. To my mind, Foucault provides this argument by linking visions and discourses.

Discourses are the rules that condition systems of 'things said' (Foucault 1991, 63). That is, among many other things, ideas, norms, and visions are discursively conditioned. Visions are, furthermore, one among several other discursively conditioned ways that we construct phenomena. As eDemocracy is still novel in Greenland, visions are the primary means by which eDemocracy is constructed as of today.

Power and discourse are inherently intertwined. Discourses legitimize, construct, and provide meaning to social relations. A liberal democratic discourse, for example, makes representative parliamentary democracy meaningful—it constructs citizens as voters and parliamentarians as legislators representing a constituency through elections, and it legitimizes the power relations between legislators and citizens. Power is the immediate effect of divisions and inequalities in social relations (Foucault 1990, 94). Social relations structure the possible field of action in different ways. Constitutional differences between legislators and citizens, for example, make it more or less difficult for people to participate in and influence politics. This means that power "operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. It is a set of actions on possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely" (Foucault 2002, 341).

In order to study discourses "we must question them on the two levels of their tactical productivity (what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure) and their strategical integration (what conjunction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary in a given episode of the various confrontations that occur)" (Foucault 1990, 102). In order to study how legislators and public administration employees provide meaning to eDemocracy, then, we must analyze who says what and why. This implies that we trace the associations among all contributing actors—human as well as nonhuman. Furthermore, we must analyze the relations that condition their visions of eDemocracy. Thus, by studying legislators' and public administration employees' visions of eDemocracy we can derive the discursive conditions of possibilities and thereby make possible a critique of the inherited power relations.

Method

The method used to examine the paths by which eDemocracy is being constructed in Greenland — and to analyze the tactical productivity and strategic integration of these constructs — was a tri-part cycle. First, actors were identified and characterized as either primary or secondary actors. Next, data on eDemocratic visions was generated. Finally, the data were analyzed, which in turn pointed towards new actors. Through the three iterative steps, the associations between actors were traced and mapped. The ensuing network drew the paths by which eDemocracy is currently constructed in Greenland. Each of the steps is discussed in the following three sections, starting with the identification of actors.

Identifying Actors

At least two research approaches are possible within the theoretical framework. A pearls-on-a-string approach and an octopus approach (Figure 1). The pearls-on-a-string approach is issue-focused and traces how and why an issue is constructed as it passes through several actors. The octopus approach is actor-focused and traces how and why an actor is informed by several other actors when constructing an issue. The two approaches determine which actors are relevant and which kinds of conclusions can be drawn. The strings-on-a-pearl approach can provide only limited evidence on why each actor shapes the issue as they do. This would require that we account for all the relevant associations of each actor. The octopus approach provides such evidence. But it is limited in scope because it focuses on only one actor and does not trace how issues are shaped beyond the first associations. This study is interested in how and why legislators and public administration employees in Greenland construct eDemocracy. Correspondingly, the current study employs the octopus approach.

Figure 1. Research Approach
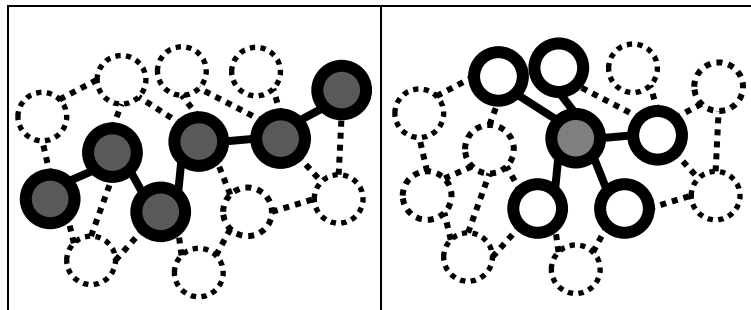
Note: The pearls-on-a-string approach (left) focuses on one issue and traces how it is shaped as it passes through several actors. Each actor is given equal attention. The octopus approach (right) focuses on one actor, which is given primacy, and traces how this specific actor is influenced by several secondary actors when shaping an issue.

The study distinguishes between primary and secondary actors. The primary actors are legislators (members of parliament and members of municipal boards) and public administration employees (employees at the State administration and in municipalities). Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq is included as the only municipality due to accessibility issues: its administrative and political headquarters are located in the capital Nuuk, as is the Self-Rule central administration and the national parliament. Not all legislators and public administration employees are equally relevant: some legislators discuss issues of political participation; others do not. Some public administration employees work with issues pertaining to eDemocracy; others do not.

The legislators and public administration employees who partook in the study were identified through public materials, the popular press, and interviews. During a public debate on large-scale mining projects in the national parliament, a member of parliament called for better conditions for civic political participation in general (Inatsisartut, March 26, 2014). In an interview with a public administration employee at the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources on April 10, 2014, the same legislator was described as having "an ideological vision […] some very general principles [... and wanting] transparency." In order to trace how this specific legislator envisions eDemocracy, an interview was set up. Similarly, an interview was set up with two candidates for parliament, because one of them had written an article in sermitsiaq.ag (2014g) calling for more direct democracy.

Actors that are not legislators or public administration employees but that influence their visions of eDemocracy are considered as secondary actors. These were identified through analysis. The analysis, for example, showed that the eDemocratic element of online dialogue is thoroughly influenced by and contingent upon nonhumans like Facebook and Sermitsiaq.ag (the website of a national newspaper, which allows for online debate of articles). Consequently, Facebook and Sermitsiaq.ag are relevant secondary actors.

Following this associative approach, several primary and secondary actors were identified (Table 1).

Table 1. Actors and Subgroups of Actors.

Category	Actors	
Primary actors	Members of legislative bodies	**Parliament** **Municipal Board** **Village Boards** **Siumut**. Siumut is the leading party of the government and three out of four municipalities

			IA. IA is the largest party in opposition to the government and the leading party in the municipality
	Public administration employees	Self-Rule Administration	**Agency for Digitalization** **Department for Domestic Affairs** **Ministry for Health and Infrastructure** **Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources**
		Municipality Administration	**Office for Strategic Development** **Department of Communication** **Board of Directors** **Management of Construction and Environment**
Secondary actors	Citizens		**Citizens**
	Organisations		**The union of Greenlandic municipalities (KANUKOKA)** **The NGO Coalition for Better Citizen Involvement**
	Technologies		**sullissivik.gl** **sermitsiaq.ag** **Facebook** **betrireykjavik.is**. betrireykjavik.is is an eDemocratic project based in Reykjavik, Iceland.
	Enterprises		**TelePost**. TelePost is a Self-Rule owned company that manages the communication infrastructure

		Kimik iT. Kimit iT is a private enterprise that provides three out of four municipalities in Greenland with IT and manages the link between Greenlandic public IT systems and the Central Person Registry in Denmark. **Nets**. Nets is a private company that manages the login system used for sullissivik.gl. It is owned by Bain Capital, Advent International and the Danish pension fund ATP.
	The researcher	**The researcher**

The researcher (i.e. the author) is a significant secondary actor having worked three and a half years at sullissivik.gl, and through setting up and partaking in interviews, conducting the analysis, and tracing the associations.

Generating Data

The data for the study consists of political practices, public materials and open-ended interviews. The political practices include the first online poll initiated by Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq in August 2014. Public materials include newspaper articles and official statements concerning the online poll, the parliamentary report on the structural reform (Strukturudvalget, 2005), the national digitalization strategy 2014–2017 (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, 2014), the opening speech by the Government Premier at the opening of the autumn session of the parliament on September 13, 2013 (Hammond, 2013), observation at a public panel debate entitled 'The future citizen inclusion' arranged by WWF and ICC Greenland, and an administrative memo concerning citizen inclusion in political decisions regarding the mineral sector (Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources, 2013). Finally, in March, April, November and December 2014 interviews lasting from one to two hours were conducted with 15 legislators and public administration employees. Peek and Fothergill (2009, 44) argue that the number of interviews should "reflect the research plan, including which sub-groups have been targeted" and that "three to five groups are usually adequate, as more groups seldom provide new insights." For this study, eight interviews, of which four were group interviews, were deemed enough. The interviews are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. List of Interviews.

Primary actors	**Subgroup**	**Type**	**Date**

Legislators	Member of Parliament (MP)	One-to-one	04-28-2014
	Candidates for Parliament (CP)	Group (two participants)	11-27-2014
	Members of Municipal Board (MMB1)	Group (three participants)	04-11-2014
	Member of Municipal Board (MMB2)	One-to-one	11-12-2014
Public administration employees	Department for Domestic Affairs (DDA)	One-to-one	04-30-2014
	Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources (MIMR)	One-to-one	04-10-2014
	Office for Strategic Development (OSD)	Group (four participants)	03-14-2014
	Department of Communication (DC)	Group (two participants)	12-04-2014

The purpose of the interviews was to examine how legislators and public administration employees construct eDemocracy and to identify additional actors that influence these constructions. Interviews, and especially group interviews, are well suited to meet these demands (Wilkinson 1998, 1999). First of all, the aim of group interviews is to make the participants talk to each other, rather than answering questions from the interviewer. Secondly, group interviews are a useful way to generate normative opinions, as it lets participants discuss their norms (Kitzinger, 1994; Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999). It is easier to discuss normative opinions than personal experiences. To foster interaction among the participants while keeping the conversations thematically relevant, a rough interview guide was designed. It consisted of four broad thematic questions: Why is political participation relevant? What is political participation? How could political participation be technologically mediated? What are the possibilities and challenges for technologically mediated political participation? Each theme had several sub-questions intended to sustain the conversation. Some of these were descriptive such as 'how do you experience online political deliberation?' and some were normative such as 'who ought to set the political agenda?'. It was not a problem that normative and descriptive questions were mixed. During interviews, participants did not restrict themselves to descriptive answers even though they were asked a descriptive question. Rather, descriptions were saturated with values. Correspondingly, participants justified their opinions through accounts of their experiences.

When conducting interviews, the researcher necessarily influences the production of data. This is problematic according to a view on discourse analysis, which states that the proper object of study is discourses that would be present even without the intervention of the researcher (Poulsen, 2000). Against this critique, I would argue that the researcher's interference in the data production is not a problem that needs to be addressed. Rather, the researcher is simply an actor on a par with other actors. The fact that the interviewer interferes in the data production does not disqualify the data. What is called for, rather, is an analysis that accounts for how the researcher contributes to the visions of eDemocracy.

In order to facilitate the analysis, all data were coded using QDA Miner Lite,[2] a free-to-use coding software that lets you structure any text source into actors, themes, subthemes, moods, patterns of interaction, etc.

Data Analysis

The analysis attempted in this article derives from a theoretical framework best described as 'associative discourse analysis.' The purpose of the analysis is to examine how members of legislative bodies and public administration employees construct eDemocracy and why they construct eDemocracy as they do. The first step is to trace associations among actors (Latour 2000, 2007), by paying attention to the sources that inform the primary actors' visions of eDemocracy. Any source is valid and counts as a contributing actor as long as it modifies the vision under consideration. If a public administration employee draws on Facebook in order to define eDemocracy, then Facebook adds to that definition. Next, attention must be paid to the effects on power relations that the specific vision implies. A vision of eDemocracy, for example, that frames political participation in terms of mere information consumption, leaves legislators with the authority to take political decisions while making it all the more difficult for citizens to influence these decisions. The implied effect is that the political power relationship between the two is unequal. Finally, the analysis needs to consider the context to which the specific eDemocratic vision responds. One such contextual factor is the technological possibilities of for example massive online collaboration, which legislators and public administration employees might perceive as a threat to their privileged positions. Consequently, they need to reinvent and legitimize their positions.

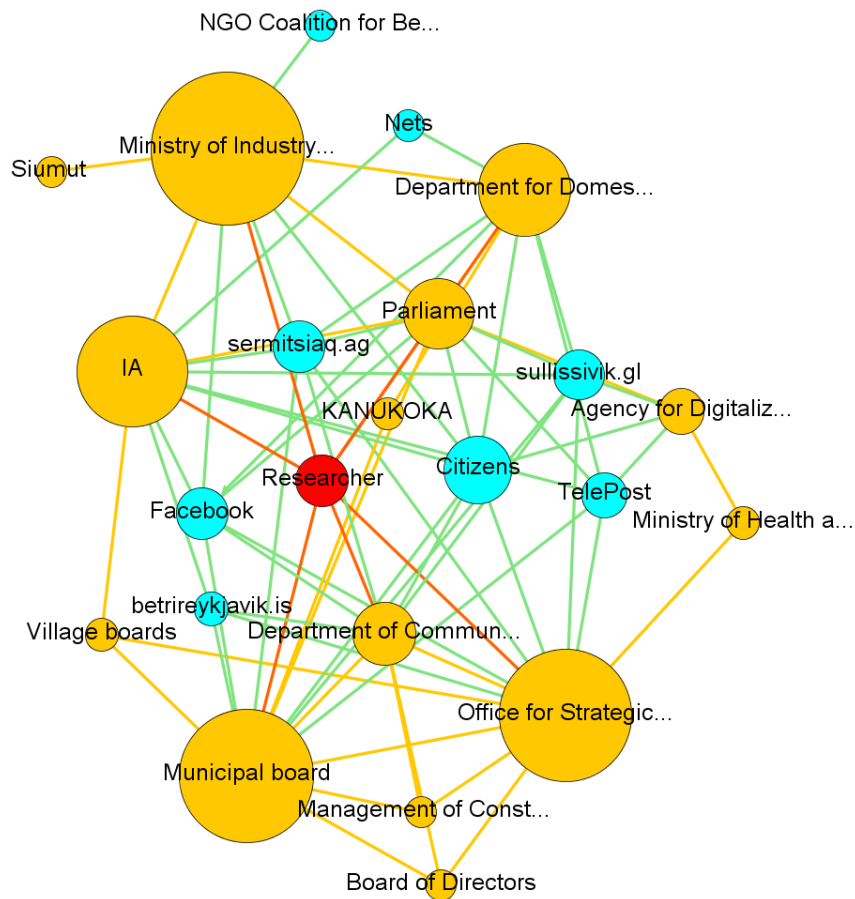[2] http://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/freeware/

Analysis and Findings

Paths of Discursive Power

Following the method of associative discourse analysis, a map was created to describe the paths of discursive power (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Paths of Discursive Power.

Note: Yellow nodes: Primary actors. Blue nodes: Secondary actors. Red nodes: the researcher. Yellow edges: associations between primary actors. Green edges: associations between primary and secondary actors. Orange edges: associations between the researcher and primary actors. A node's size indicates the number of associations in which the actors are a part; the larger the node the greater share of the median number of total associations it has.

eDemocratic Impetuses: Strategic Integration

The legislators and public administration employees in this study are simultaneously pushing themselves and are being pushed towards greater use of ICTs to facilitate and enhance democracy. They do not see themselves as the primary driving forces behind eDemocracy, but as respondents to technological development and emerging uses. Thus, the simultaneous technological motivation and conditioning is expressed in statements like "that's just the way the development goes, right?" (OSD), "it is more important than ever that we constantly consider digitization as a driving force" (Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland, 2014: 2), "I think that [eDemocracy] is the future... it is approaching faster than I think" (MMB), "We must admit that sometimes we feel that it is not so much legislation and so on that affects daily life. It is as much technological change" (DDA) and "It is a platform [the Internet] you must use and that you have to develop more" (MP).

Similarly, the actors' opposition towards the democratic status quo is articulated: "I don't think that politicians listen enough to the citizens" (CP); "It's almost gradually becoming a form of shareholder democracy where at each election, each general meeting, people evaluate: 'Have I been happy? Have I got enough out of it? Like, have I got enough of my share?'. If not, then I choose a new board. Instead of having a participatory democracy" (MIMR); "It has been a tradition to say: 'It is the municipality's problem or it is the Government's'. Point fingers and say: 'it is you who must take care of this'. Instead of seeing oneself as part of the solution" (OSD); "Only rarely do we get in touch with the very young. It is them who are to lift the burden in the future. They are the ones who need to understand the word 'democracy'" (DC).

Thus, democratic crisis coupled with technological developments and emerging uses motivate legislators and public administration employees in Greenland to envision eDemocracy.

eDemocratic Constructions

How do legislators and public administration employees envision eDemocracy? How are these visions informed by associations with other human and nonhuman actors?

The legislators and public administration employees in this study frame eDemocracy primarily in terms of a technologically mediated dialogue between them and citizens. Consultations and voting also form part of their visions for eDemocracy. These types of democratic interaction, however, are not deemed as important as a democratic dialogue between citizens, politicians and the public administration. The value of eDemocracy, in other words, is largely judged by how well it can facilitate a democratic dialogue. During an interview with the municipal board (MMB1), one participant talked about the necessity of restoring democratic dialogue, which had suffered from the 2009 structural reform that reduced 18 municipalities to four, and that in the process of creating municipal power centers removed the municipal legislators from large parts of their constituencies. To this, the remaining participants agreed:

P1. It [democratic dialogue] is a prerequisite for…
P2: Yes
P1: … participation and dialogue and that you don't control from above, but that you kind of listen how ... how can we work together in the best possible way so
P2: Yes. I see it as the core
P1: Yes

Similarly, a public administration employee argued that the overall political quality would improve by a greater dialogue with citizens: "The more input the better. The question is just how" (DDA). The dialogic element is also prioritized outside the eDemocratic context. When the Government Premier opened the fall 2013 parliamentary session, she stated that "The Government is of the opinion that information and dialogue with people create the best projects. […] I have previously mentioned that the Government prioritizes local democracy. These are not just empty words" (Hammond, 2013).

The democratic dialogue is also accentuated by technologies. When discussing eDemocracy, interview participants tended to draw heavily on their experiences with Facebook and sermitsiaq.ag, both of which facilitate online debate, to the effect of limiting their eDemocratic visions to concern online dialogue rather than for example online petitioning. Facebook and similar social media are understood both as challenging and as creating greater possibilities for democratic dialogue. Legislators and public administration employees value online dialogue because it affords citizens not comfortable with speaking directly to either legislators or public administration employees an alternative communication channel. That is, compared to face-to-face dialogue online media creates a comfortable distance between citizens on the one side, and legislators and public administration employees on the other. In addition, the distancing effect is valued because it diminishes the influence of informal power structures. According to legislators and public administration employees the informal power relations of the traditional Greenlandic clan society constrain political participation in Greenland as of today. Thus, it is primarily heads of communities that speak in public debates while the majority's voices are subdued (OSD, MP, MMB1 and MMB2). By making it possible for citizens to raise their voice from the comfort of their homes it is hoped that the effect of the clan relations can be diminished. The distancing effect, however, is also framed as a challenge to the democratic dialogue. Thus, the potential quantity of citizen-generated input challenges the process of lawmaking: "we have talked a lot about how to monitor our media […] That is, Facebook and our webpage, when two-way communication becomes possible there" (DC). This seems especially worrisome to public administration employees who frequently mentioned that citizen involvement is very expensive and time consuming: "It's just extremely tedious […] And it would be much more so if you began to include social media" (DDA). This is deemed all the more troublesome because the public administration already lacks resources: "we just have to realize that our administration, great as it is, have enough to do" (MP).

Technological mediation also poses a challenge to democratic dialogue because it is understood as encouraging a certain type of dialogue that is judged as having a politically

low standard. When asked how they would feel if the political agenda were set by the citizens via a technological platform the members of municipal board replied (MMB1):

> P1: I do not know how to interpret those responses on sermitsiaq.ag, Facebook and ...
> P2: Mmh
> P1: uh... I don't think it's benign. And I do not think its quality... it is very bitter [laughter]
> P3: Mmh
>
> P3: I think that this form for debate [online debate] is free of risks. People can sit at home in their living rooms
> P1: I completely agree
> P3: and all that rage, where does it come from?
> P1: mmh
> P3: There is so much anger
> P1: [sighs]
> P3: and I think that it pollutes the debate in some way

This view was also clearly expressed by public administration employees (MIMR): "That is what you experience on Facebook. But that is not—in my world—an expansion of democracy. Quantitatively it is, as people state their opinions. But, come on, it is a pile of rubbish".

Legislators and public administration employees call for citizen involvement. However, they also perceive citizens as people who are not genuinely interested in politics but who are rather primarily interested in the drama. When speaking on citizens' interest in politics legislators at the municipal board agreed that national politics catches the attention of the citizens because it is much more spectacular than local politics (MMB1). Thus, it is not the politics per se that drives citizen interest but the drama. In addition, they compared the eye-catching drama of national politics with the way citizens themselves discuss politics online:

> P2: I draw a parallel between the comments at sermitsiaq.ag and the debates that go on in the parliament. Because there is [snaps fingers] fireworks
> P1: Mmh
> P3: Mmh
> P2: and it is action packed and there are highly explosive topics and cliff-hangers and everything
> I: [laughter]
> P2: It's extremely exciting. And maybe there is just no tradition in local politics to dig trenches from which you shoot at each other

The same problem was voiced by public administration employees (OSD):

> P3: So it [local politics] is perhaps interesting enough in principle, and there
> may also be some things on the agenda that are of interest to someone, but
> they just won't spend time on it anyway. So they have some other interests
> and some things... It's just...
> P2: I think you're very much right that local politics just isn't very sexy
> P1: mmh
> P2: Well, it just doesn't sell tickets the same way

The citizens' political disinterest was also voiced by a parliamentary legislator. In this case, it is the researcher who initially frames the citizen as politically disinterested. The legislator, however, agrees with this characterization right away and underscores the seriousness of it:

> I: Who shows up [at public political meetings]? And why do the rest not
> show up? One thing can be structural challenges
> P1: Yes
> I: they do not have the time. Another thing may just be that they're actually
> not interested
> P1: Yes. They don't care a whit
> I: Yes, exactly
> P1: And there are a great many of those, I think
> I: Yes
> P1: And their numbers are growing (MP)

Citizens, moreover, are thought to favor social events to political events. Thus, one public administration employee compared public meetings with a 'kaffemik,' that is, a traditional informal social gathering widely used to celebrate birthdays: "This is the way one perceives local democracy: that you, as a minister or politician, go out and talk, even across political parties, and say what you want to say and the village's residents have the opportunity to get up close and are allowed to ask questions. Yes it is a bit like a good kaffemik tradition" (MIMR). Tradition and cultural preferences were also framed as direct challenges to the prospects of eDemocracy:

> P1: I don't know. I just find it hard to imagine that eDemocracy can be
> achieved in our smaller settlements. Not even in Paamiut [the town closest to
> the capitol of Nuuk] [laughter]
> P2: Mmh
> […]
> P3: But ... I agree with P1. I think it is very much part of the culture, still,
> that the relation...
> P2: Yes
> P3: The personal relationship
> P1: Mmh

P3: It is very very important
P2: Mmh
I: Yes
P3: And therefore the physical meeting is still very important (MMB1)

Low Internet penetration is not understood as an obstacle to the implementation of eDemocracy in the remote areas of Greenland. Approximately half of the households in the smaller settlements have Internet access (HS Analyse, 2013). In addition, the structural reform, which created four massive (in terms of size) municipalities out of 18, presupposed that services and information could be provided to the citizens in the most remote areas via the Internet (Strukturudvalget, 2005). The obstacle is the citizens themselves. Their cultural preference for personal relationships and therefore for face-to-face meetings with legislators makes it unlikely that they would endorse the idea of online political engagement.

While the citizen is understood as politically disinterested, it is strongly emphasized that people tend to be informed and hold strong opinions on political issues that affect them personally: "if you ask people directly into the area that affects them—whether it's their child's school or day care or it's their recreational club or whatever it may be—their senior center—and this is something that relates to their life, then people will speak up" (MMB1). In a similar way, citizens are perceived as possessing local as opposed to expert knowledge: "The locals they know their nature. And if you have the patience and time, it implies an astounding amount of knowledge about a lot of issues. About the weather and stuff. There are many of the locals who believe that our airport is placed at the wrong site. It's always foggy out there […] and it blows all the time […] that is the kind of things that the locals know about" (MIMR); "Often, people possess knowledge of local conditions, which can be critical to a project's success" (Hammond, 2013); The public may possess knowledge about practical issues (e.g. weather and road conditions) that improves a mining project (Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources, 2013).

The self-perceptions of legislators and public administration employees also make up significant elements of their vision for eDemocracy. Public administration employees speak of themselves in terms of their professional integrity. According to them, greater involvement of the public via online dialogues is valuable insofar as it improves the quality of acts and the efficiency by which policies are drafted and implemented. That democratic dialogue is understood in terms of administrative efficiency is seen most clearly from the National Digitalization Strategy:

"The democratic dialogue is the cornerstone of society, and therefore
politicians must have access to documents anytime, anywhere. There should
be an analysis of needs, mapping of processes and choice of solution that can
support the politicians' work and streamline the administration"
(Naalakkersuisut – Government of Greenland 2014, 12).

The goal is to facilitate a more efficient public administration rather than providing the populace with a communication channel. In a similar vein, dialogue between citizens

and public administration employees is valued insofar as it ensures that policies are reasonable and workable:

> P1: "so fundamentally... that ought to be the first thing you need to do: It is to make sure that you have some legislation that people generally perceive as good and reasonable and workable" (DDA).

Legislators speak of themselves as visionary as opposed to the citizenry. One legislator provided an account of how her genuine interest in the future of the community was met by indifference from the elder community members:

> P3: I remember that I have tried asking, for example, in Elderly Associations "What do you think about your grandchildren's future?"
> P1: mmh
> P3: So as not only to talk about retirement and home care
> P1: Yes
> I: Yes
> P3: And I thought it was really neat of me asking that way
> P2: [laughs]
> P3: Because people of course are very concerned about their children and grandchildren and some also have great-grandchildren. That didn't bring me very far. And I was really genuinely curious
> I: Yes
> P3: What is the perspective and dreams for them at 80? In 20 or 30 years, how will this community look like? There came a bit. But it was pretty obvious that what they were passionate about was their own tiny world (MMB1)

In addition, legislators perceive themselves as ensuring political responsibility.

> P1: We listen and we have... we are in dialogue. So as P3 says, they [citizens] cannot come and say "Hey. Now there must be a culture house here." Come on... "All right, look..." come on
> P2: Mmh
> P1: There must be a meaning to it [laughter]
> P2: Ultimately, we are the decision makers (MMB1)

According to the logic of this vision, democratic dialogues need to be adjusted to the citizens' assumed political capabilities. That is, the legislative bodies or the public administration must decide on which topics are to be publicly debated and which are not. Furthermore, they need to frame these topics in a way so that citizens are able to participate in the deliberation, which means that the topics need to be sufficiently concrete and affect the citizens personally. "Greenland's Self Rule and the mining companies [must] pay attention not to 'drown' the people in information—and only disseminate the information expected to be relevant to the population" (Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources,

2013). As such, the power to set the political agenda and frame topics is very much placed in the hands of the legislative bodies and the public administration. That this is actual practice was unmistakably expressed by the Government Premier: "The parliament and the government are elected to make decisions on behalf of the people. But sometimes the issues are so important that we have to ask the public directly. Earlier, I mentioned that the government wants to abolish the overall policy of zero tolerance towards uranium. This principal question we decide here in the parliament" (Hammond, 2013). The premier acknowledged that the citizenry ought to be consulted on important issues. However, as the second part of the quote makes apparent, this does not amount to much. Though it was an important and even principal issue, citizens were not to be involved in the decision on whether or not to abolish the zero-tolerance policy towards uranium extraction. The issue was not to be subject of a public vote, most likely because the government, which argued for an annulment of the zero tolerance policy, feared that the public felt otherwise.

The view that legislators, rather than the general public, are necessary critical decision makers also surfaced during a panel debate on the future citizen. The Minister of Industry & Mineral Resources, when pushed by the other participants, threw out his arms in a surrendering gesture and stated in an ironic tone "Well, then we can just do direct democracy like the Swiss Cantons and vote for everything" (author observation, panel debate, April 24, 2014), effectively closing the topic. One possible and indeed plausible interpretation of the ensuing silence is that no one of the participating actors really found direct democracy desirable. This opposition towards direct democracy also surfaced during an interview with a parliamentary candidate. When asked what he meant by 'direct democracy,' he corrected the researcher and stated: "I wrote about MORE direct democracy […] Not that we should import Switzerland's form of government" (CP). Instead of deciding on political decisions, the citizens are to contribute with local knowledge and perspectives once the overall political decisions have been made. For example, it is the legislators' task to decide if a new airport is needed while the citizenry can be consulted on the concrete location of the airport.

The view that legislators ought to take the overall decisions while the citizenry can be consulted on more specific elements is also practiced. In November 2013, the national parliament decided without much public attention that a new parliament building was to be erected in Nuuk. On July 30, 2014, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq announced in a press release that there would be held an online public vote on where to place this building.[3] Citizens in Nuuk were asked to choose one of the three sites or none of these. In addition, they could comment on their choice. The result of the vote was not binding but was meant to inform the decision to be made later by the municipal board. This approach to citizen involvement was pitched as 'entirely new' (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014a).

In August the chairman of the national parliament publicized a booklet that argued very strongly for one of the three sites (Johansen, 2014). The booklet did not have the intended effect, though. Instead of persuading the populace, it raised the public's awareness and critique of the entire project. Later in August one of the larger demonstrations in Greenland's history took place (sermitsiaq.ag, 2014b). The protesters demonstrated against the entire project and demanded that the money was spent on schools and public housing

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[3] City planning is a municipal matter.

instead. Consequently, the online vote also gained public attention and momentum: "There was a natural interest in this topic" (DC). When the vote was finally completed at the end of August, three percent voted for the site preferred by the chairman of the parliament. 56 percent voted for none of the three sites. The citizens' comments, which were publicized along with the vote results, show that almost everybody was against the project as such and preferred to spend the money on schools and public housing (Epinion, 2014).

Why did Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq consult the citizens on this matter? And why was it an online consultation? Employees at the Department of Communication employed an argument for efficiency and said that the online consultation saved the public administration a lot of time and money (DC). Legislators said that "it was a democratic experiment" (MMB2) thereby painting a picture of the visionary politician. On the basis of the analysis in this article, we can offer some possible alternative explanations: first, it was a concrete issue. The four options, from which the public could choose, were very specific. No political vision was required to vote for one or the other site. Second, the final decision was left in the hands of the municipal board. The vote result was not decisive for the final decision but only meant as a way to inform the legislators. Third, it was not a critical issue. It was only the *place* for the building that was to be decided upon, and not the building itself. This was stated explicitly once the issue had caught the public's attention (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014b). The decision for a *non-decisive* vote was also technologically conditioned. Greenlandic banks and the national citizen portal, Sullissivik.gl, use a secure system to identify users and ensure secure transactions. The same system could have been used to identity voters and to ensure secure votes. However, only 50 percent of the electorate had access to this secure system at the time of the vote. It was, therefore, not an option if the vote were to be representative. Instead, it was decided that voters would identify themselves by providing their email address,[4] although it is an insecure way to identify voters. The drawback, or convenient consequence (depending on the perspective), was that the end-result could not be decisive for the final decision. It could be either secure but not representative, or representative but not secure. Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq chose representativeness over security, and placed the final decision in the hands of the municipal board. As one legislator said during an interview: "It is a way to preserve the responsibility [laughter] […] and the power" (MMB2).

The legislators and public administration employees in this study continuously attuned their visions for eDemocracy to unfolding political events. In August and September 2014 two large political demonstrations were arranged by citizens. The first demonstration, as discussed above, was targeted at the Parliament and the plans to build a new parliament building. The second demonstration was targeted at the government and especially the Government Premier, of whom protesters demanded resignation due to misuse of public funds. The demonstration attracted somewhere between 500 and 1,000 protesters. The Premier resigned next day and called an early election (sermitsiaq.ag, 2014f). Following these events legislators' and public administration employees' conceptions of their own roles and of the citizens' political capacities changed somewhat.

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[4] One may wonder whether this choice for a quick, albeit insecure, solution was made in order to take advantage of the momentum of public attention.

Three interviews were conducted with candidates to parliament (CP), members of the municipal board (MMB2) and Department of Communication employees (DC) after the protests had taken place. Compared to the interviews that were conducted prior to the protests, one can detect a change in the way legislators are described. Prior to the protests legislators were described primarily as politically visionary and responsible. After the protests they were also described as someone who could get too much power (MMB2). The quality of online debate was interpreted in a slightly more positive way: "In the beginning it was a very harsh language that was used [online] But over time [...] there is shorter distance between the good eloquent posts [...] So in that way, it has contributed to the development of the debate culture" (CP). Furthermore, the description of the citizen changed from someone who could provide valuable knowledge on local issues to someone who could manage local issues by themselves. A candidate for the 2014 elections for parliament, thus, argued that local matters were best decided by local residents: "The citizens of the small communities could decide for themselves how their communities, small communities, should be developed [...] Instead of deciding this a couple of 1,000 km away [by legislators in the national parliament] […] I do not think it is a national parliamentarian's role to micro-manage" (CP). Finally, the obstacle for greater citizen political engagement, participation, and responsibility was no longer understood in terms of the citizens themselves. It was not political disinterest, cultural preferences, or inherited clan hierarchies that kept citizens from engaging in politics. After the protests, the cause of lack of political engagement and ownership was understood as the unwillingness by legislators and public administration employees to give up power to the people: "Can people have more political responsibility? Why, yes. Absolutely! The question is whether they are allowed to" (MMB2).

Conclusions and Policy Implications

The process of constructing eDemocracy in Greenland is ongoing. Legislators and public administration employees change their visions for eDemocracy as political events unfold and as new technologies are taken up. It is, therefore, difficult to decide when to begin the analysis and when to stop and draw conclusions. It is possible, though, to trace the processes by which eDemocracy is being constructed. Following ANT's account of action it has been argued in this article that one must trace the associations among a wide range of actors through which these visions are being produced. Drawing on Foucault's discourse/power analysis it was argued that one must analyze the power effects that these concrete visions imply and bring forth the circumstances that make specific visions necessary. By doing so it is possible to derive the conditioning discourse. Employing this method the article has explored how legislators and public administration employees envision eDemocracy in Greenland.

From the eDemocratic visions of legislators and public administration employees—incoherent and inconsistent as they are—we can piece together a common and conditioning discourse that constructs and legitimizes eDemocracy as a way to facilitate participation among citizens, legislators and public administration through dialogue and instructional polls. As such, citizens are given greater possibilities for participating in and influencing

politics than they have in the conventional democratic setup. Legislators or public administration employees, however, are to set the agendas and formulate the topics and all political decisions reside in the hands of the legislative bodies formally representing the public. Their vision is integrated into and reproduces the power strategies of legislators and public administration employees, and affords legislative bodies the prime political and visionary authority. It gives the public administration rational authority in order to ensure efficient and sensible acts. And finally, citizens may help legislators represent the populace and help public administration employees enact rational legislation. They can do so through public polls and by informing them on local matters.

These visions are, however, continually informed by new events and new technologies. The protests against the plans for the new parliament building and against the government, thus, seems to have caused changes in how legislators and public administration employees describe both themselves and citizens' political capacities and therefore the prospects of eDemocracy. In addition, the possibilities for alternative means of online political participation challenge the conventional roles of legislators, public administration employees, and citizens. Because it is technologically possible to make a public matter of political deliberation and decision-making, the conventional representative authority of legislative bodies is put into question. Similarly, the possibilities of online political participation challenge the rational authority of the public administration. As a consequence, legislators and public administration employees are required to make a case for their privileged positions under these technological circumstances. They need to consider the technological possibilities that have destabilized the status quo in the first place. They cannot just be ignored.

This attests to the fact that the actors find themselves in a situation where no stable regime of eDemocratic discourse is identifiable. To use the words of Collier (2009, 95) legislators and public administration employees find themselves "amid upheaval, in sites of problematization in which existing forms have lost their coherence and their purchase in addressing present problems, and in which new forms of understanding and acting have to be invented." This does not mean that the democratic institutions (the parliament, the municipality boards, and the public administration) have lost legitimacy. It means that the possibilities for political participation have been multiplied by the Internet, and that legislators and public administration employees find themselves in the midst of these changes. The Internet has sparked a debate among legislators and public administration employees on how democracy ought to be practiced and which roles citizens, legislators, and public administration employees ought to occupy. This is very significant insofar as the conditioning discourses on eDemocracy construct and legitimize new relations of power. The long term effects, however, depend not only on how eDemocracy is envisioned by legislators and public administration employees: the eDemocratic visions will only impact democratic practice in Greenland to the extent that they are put to practice and structure the way citizens participate in politics. And the protests already discussed suggest that citizens do not necessarily agree or comply with the eDemocratic visions laid forth by legislators and public administration employees.

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Appendix C

Jørgensen, A. M. (In press). eDemocracy by the People (and nonhumans). Proceedings from the 2015 Arizona State University conference "By the People: Participatory democracy, public engagement and citizenship education".

Title
eDemocracy by the people (and nonhumans)

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Abstract
With the rise and spread of the internet, new avenues and possibilities of political action have been envisioned under the header of eDemocracy. Simultaneously, old democratic questions have been reopened: who is to participate, how, when and on what matters? These questions are not settled as of today, but are continuously negotiated by different actors. Focusing on citizens in Greenland, this paper presents an empirically informed study of the power struggles of defining eDemocracy. Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe's theory on hegemony and Actor-Network Theory, the paper argues that these struggles can be explored by tracing how eDemocratic discourses are shaped and reshaped through human and technological actors' interaction. The paper traces eDemocratic discursive formations through interviews with citizens and through online practices. It concludes that eDemocracy, as coproduced by Greenlandic citizens, informal petitions sites, and the social media platform of Facebook, primarily creates a space for political oppositional forces in the spirit of partisan or contestatory democracy.

Introduction

What happens when a hegemonic discourse of liberal representative democracy is challenged by intruding Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)? How are such challenges possible at all and how do citizens handle the discursive disturbances? In order to provide suitable answers, the paper unites the notions of discursive struggles (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001) with Actor-Network Theory's (ANT) (Latour, 1993) flat ontology and distributed action. From this perspective, humans and technologies are framed as equal contributors to discursive power struggles. The paper employs this concept in an account of how Greenlandic citizens in collaboration with nonhuman actors coproduce an eDemocratic discourse that runs counter to an institutionalized discourse of liberal representative democracy.

First, the Greenlandic case is presented briefly. Next, the concepts of eDemocracy, discursive struggle, flat ontology, and distributed action are clarified. The following section presents the methodology, which is derived from the conceptual work. The findings are presented in the ensuing section. The paper closes with a short comparative conclusion.

The case of Greenland

Greenland presents itself as an interesting case of eDemocracy. It is the world's largest island (Statistics Greenland, 2015), the 12th largest country in the world, but checks in at a mere 206th place with regard to population size (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). The Inland Ice covers 81% of the landmass and leaves only the coastline inhabitable. No two towns are connected by roads (Statistics Greenland, 2015) and though most towns are connected by flight routes, tickets are expensive and flights are often cancelled or delayed due to harsh weather conditions. If ever there was a country which could benefit from the internet's time and space eliminating capacities, this is it. Internet access, however, is expensive and instable – especially in the northern and eastern regions where internet comes by satellite. Despite of this, the nationwide private internet penetration is approximately 72% and the take-up of social media 73% (HS Analyse, 2013). Facebook is especially popular.

Greenland is a former Danish colony. In 1979 it converted to home rule and had its first democratically elected legislative authority (Janussen, 2003). Today, it has the status of an autonomous Self Rule within the Kingdom of Denmark. It is a liberal representative democracy and election for Parliament is held every fourth year (Bureau for Inatsisartut, 2015). Sessions in Parliament are public, but citizens cannot initiate or decide on amendments or recalls (Bureau for Inatsisartut, 2013). With one Member of Parliament (MP) per 1,800 inhabitants, citizens are statistically speaking well-represented. Notwithstanding statistics, political misrepresentation and apathy are surfacing in the popular press (Duus, 2015; Eising, 2015).

eDemocracy

Democracy is understood as citizen self-government. A citizen is defined as someone with the right to partake in self-governance. Only political aspects of citizenship are included in this definition. While social and emotional aspects of citizenship certainly are of great importance (Couldry, 2006; Marshall, 1992), they are disregarded in this study. The definition, furthermore, only includes people who have a civic right to partake and not a professional obligation to do so. Members of legislative and administrative bodies are therefore excluded.

The prefix 'e' in 'eDemocracy' is a stand-in for any type of digital ICT that is used to sustain or facilitate political self-governance. Historically, self-governance has had many faces (Held, 1996).

However, with the coming of ICTs, the range has exploded. eDemocracy repeats traditional forms of self-governance like political participation (Borge, Colombo & Welp, 2009; Garrett, & Jensen, 2011), nonparticipation (Ainsworth, Hardy & Harley, 2005), demonstration (Garrett, 2006), mobilization (Nam, 2012; Vissers & Stolle, 2013), group assemblage, and discourse formation (Dahlberg, 2007). In addition, it has spawned new concepts like the peer progressive citizen, the actualizing citizen, produsage-based politics, commons-based peer production, and DIY citizenship (Heikka, 2015). eDemocracy, then, covers a wide range of self-governing practices.

Discursive struggle

Hegemony and democracy are interwoven (Laclau, 2001). Therefore, the notion of hegemony is a promising starting point for a conceptualization of ICT and power in relation to democracy. The premise of hegemony is that there is no fixed and sutured social order. Neither society, nor social agents have any essential meaning. Rather, meaning and identity are relational (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 98-99). Social elements – social classes, political agents, subjects, social praxis, institutions – are discursive moments[1] that continuously are imbued with meaning through articulatory practices. The term 'discourse' designates the structured and partially fixed totalities of differentiated elements that result from such articulatory practices. Hegemony denotes the articulatory struggles resulting in discursive changes. Democracy is the political structure that creates the most suitable conditions for articulation (Laclau, 2001). These struggles are of great importance as they condition the possibilities for future democratic meaning and action.

Articulation establishes relations among elements so that their identities are modified as a result hereof (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 105). The identities and meanings of for example 'citizen', 'parliamentarian', 'dialogue', and 'petitioning', result solely from their relations to each other in a specific discourse. Likewise, ICTs can acquire a democratic meaning by establishing relations with these elements. When this happens, the meanings of all the elements are changed; a new democratic discourse is produced and the elements become moments hereof. The articulatory practices depend partly on the strategies of the current positions within the representative democratic discourse. Mahrer & Krimmer (2005) clearly illustrate that parliamentarians do not welcome any significant changes in the established democratic order.

Discourses are challenged in at least three interrelated ways. One, if a discursive moment rearticulates itself. If, for example, citizens currently defined as voters try to redefine themselves as political deliberators. Two, if a foreign element is introduced into the established discourse. In our case, ICTs are introduced to the established representative democratic discourse. Three, if two radically different discourses collide. If, for example, a business discourse, of which ICT is a significant moment as of today, intrudes the democratic ditto. Within eDemocratic discourses corporate and business terms such as commodity and consumption (Bellamy, 2000), shareholder (Coleman & Gøtze 2001), and crowdsourcing (Aitamurto, Landemore, Lee & Goel, 2014) have become common coin.

Flat ontology and distributed action

While Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. 108) affirm the material character of discourses, they do not explain how ICTs can partake in discursive power struggles. In order to provide such an account, we need to conceptualize the interaction between human beings and technologies in a way that does

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[1] Elements and moments are different insofar as the latter are discursively fixed (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001).

not compromise the general idea of hegemony. For this, I suggest we turn to ANT. ANT urges us to strip our analysis of any ontological assumptions (Latour, 1993) and describe anything that *actually* contributes to courses of action – including those that challenge and stabilize discourses – as an actor (Latour, 2005, p. 71). What is important is not what the actors *are,* but what they *do*. In order to disclose action contributions and contributors, Latour suggests that we follow the path of the action under study and document the mediators and their doings. That is, we are to trace the associations between the actors engaged in the course of action. If, for example, I am to retrieve some journal article, I turn on my computer, log on to my library account, search for and hopefully find the article in some online database, which the library has access to, and download it to my hard disc. Obviously, I do a lot of acting in this example. And I certainly am a prominent actor. But the computer, the power supply, the internet, the library, the library's search engine, and the database also contribute. To notice just how much, you can imagine and compare the same action – that of retrieving a journal article – without computers, power supplies, libraries and so forth. These actors do not merely work as intermediaries facilitating my action. Just like me, they add to, translate, and modify the chain of action (Latour, 2005).

Production and analysis

When we talk, write, act, design, or build, we produce and reproduce discourses (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 107). Discourses, then, are produced and reproduced also through interviews and through online political activities, which make up the two types of data for this study. Political activities on Facebook and Skrivunder.net (a third party petition site) have been traced. These sites are included in the analysis because citizens associate themselves with these particular websites. Nine interviews with citizens lasting approximately one and a half hour have been conducted from November 2014 to April 2015. Two interviewees were running for Parliament at the time of the interview. None of them were elected and their views are in line with the other citizens', therefore their distinct position is regarded as of minor significance. In addition, a Facebook group entitled 'Greenlandic eDemocracy' was set up as a debate forum in which members could discuss eDemocracy. The group attracted 30 members of which 14 actively contributed to the discussions. From October 2014 to May 2015 ten posts, 28 comments, and two votes were produced. Most members made only one or two comments, one person contributed with 10 comments. The author functioned as a group administrator and facilitated the discussion by posing questions through 7 posts and 7 comments in total. The reason for the low activity level might be that, as a member of the group stated: 'Most of us are probably better at doing eDemocracy than discussing it' (Facebook comment, May 11th 2015). Another explanation might be that Facebook does not support longer deliberations very well. Finally, the low activity might be explained by the interviewer's inability to keep the discussants engaged.

On- and offline interview data is coproduced by both interviewer and interviewees. This calls for an interview strategy that makes explicit the relation between the actors and an analysis that is attentive to the coproduction processes. The strategy was to create comfortable spaces wherein participants could construct eDemocracy freely. Interviews were open ended and moved wherever the interviewees or group members wanted to – within the limits set by the interviewer. Furthermore, the interviewer followed the interviewees' discourses and encouraged them to elaborate upon them. Despite such strategic manoeuvres, the interviewer and author remain significant actors in the eDemocratic discursive productions (Latour, 2005, p. 103), which needs to be taking into consideration in the analysis.

The analysis method derives from the theoretical framework and is coined associative discourse analysis. The goal is to shed light on citizens' and their nonhuman associates' eDemocratic discourse. First, a content analysis was carried out to disclose the definition of eDemocracy. Next, the associations between the discursive elements were traced in order to disclose which actors contributes to the process and how. Finally, the discourse's power effects were examined.

Findings

Three aspects characterize the coproduced eDemocracy: (i) creating public awareness of local issues through online debate fora; (ii) making local issues public through online petitioning; (iii) making MPs accountable by mobilizing the populace and protesting.

Creating awareness of issues

'Involvement is done only by active participation, dialogue, and communication between all stakeholders' (Facebook post, member of Greenlandic eDemocracy, October 31st 2014).

Dialogue plays a significant role in the eDemocratic discourse. Not only are citizens concerned with the dialogue between them, MPs, and the public administration. They are equally, if not more, concerned with the dialogue among themselves (interview, citizen, November 27th 2014 and March 3rd 2015). The Facebook group 'Political Debate Room'[2] was founded in order to create better conditions for political dialogue primarily among citizens and only secondarily between the citizenry and MPs (interview, founder of Political Debate Room, April 24th 2015). As of October 1st 2015, the group attracts 5,244 members, which is 1/10 of the population. 2/3 of MPs and all but one minister are members. On average, approximately 879 posts are generated per month, each of which is commented 11 times on average[3]. By Greenlandic standards, Political Debate Room is massive. However, Facebook restructures and modifies the intended dialogue into something else; something that we can describe as creating public awareness of local or individual issues. Facebook translates dialogues in at least three ways. First, interaction is limited to posting, commenting, sharing, and liking. The question is if dialogue is in need of a wider arsenal of possible acts. Second, as a many-to-many communication form, the possible outreach is greatly magnified to the effect of obscuring who the interlocutors actually are. The ensuing form of dialogue was by citizens themselves compared to the Hyde Park Speakers' Corner, the difference being that everybody speaks at the same time online (interview, citizen, February 27th 2015). Thirdly, Facebook's structure does not favor lengthy conversations. All posts and comments are structured according to a timeline. When 29 posts and 319 comments are created every day, posts soon disappear. They are quite literally pushed down and out of your screen and public attention. Identical posts often reappear several times and therefore regain public attention. Reappearance, however, necessarily comes at the expense of other posts. The intended dialogue, therefore, becomes a struggle for public attention. It is translated by the very medium into the act of making the public aware of locally pertinent issues.

Making local issues public

'The number of petitions has exploded […] There are incredibly many petitions for this and that issue' (interview, Founder of 'Demonstration against the Government', January 19th 2015).

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[2] https://www.facebook.com/groups/129100667273522/
[3] Statistics generated via http://sociograph.io/

At times, issues move between different platforms. For example, requests for a renewed adoption law[4], appeals to preserve a zero-tolerance towards extraction of uranium[5], and calls for reelection[6] travel between Facebook and skrivunder.net[7]. Skrivunder.net is a third-party website where users can create petitions. Some of the most popular petitions have made their way to the Parliament through citizen initiated happenings. Still, the petitions are not tied up to legislative procedures and do not directly inform political decisions. They offer a way for citizens to provide additional voice to specific issues, thereby making them public issues. It is easier to collect signatures and therefore make issues public online than offline. Most popular petitions have generated close to 1,500 signatures or 2.7 % of the population. The ease of online petitioning, however, also reduces their weight or value. Petitioners ask themselves if people really mean what they sign (interview, spokesperson for uraninfo.org, February 26th 2015) and if they will show up if more work is required (interview, citizen, February 27th 2015).

Mobilizing and protesting

'In the last two to three years, there have been as many demonstrations as there have been previously in the whole history of Greenland' (interview, citizen, February 26th 2015).

The final aspect of citizens' eDemocratic constitution is to mobilize the populace and arrange concrete political happenings or demonstrations. The Facebook group 'Demonstration against the Government'[8] serves as an exemplary case. The group was initially founded on January 9th 2014 and the call was clear: 'I want to show my discontent against the current Government. […] I have no experience with demonstrations or how to organize them. Therefore, I have created this group in hope of meeting people of the same opinion who will help me' (Facebook post, founder of Demonstration against the Government, January 9th 2014). The group attracted 928 members who showed support, shared events and updates, collected signatures, arranged events, or participated in the actual demonstrations. Agreement in the overall purpose was presupposed and it was explicitly stated that it was not a debate forum and that critical posts and attempts to start discussions would be deleted (Demonstration against the Government, About section). Posts and comments were supportive and often of a practical character asking, for example, for inputs to speeches, help to make banners, or encouraging members to share events and petitions. Facebook supports and speeds up these types of actions. This is illustrated clearly by the second demonstration arranged by the group. Following the disclosure of the Premier's personal spending of public funds one of the key actors asked: 'Is it about time that we make a new petition? And a demonstration? […] People on fb want a new election!' (Facebook post, member of Demonstration against the Government, September 27th 2014). Three days later, at the opening day of the Parliament's fall session, 500-600 protesters demonstrated against the Premier. Their demand for a new election was backed by more than 1,000 online signatures. Next day, the Government resigned and called for an early election (Duus, 2014). The demonstration did not bring about the Government's downfall on its own. It was a manifestation of a broader dissatisfaction with the Government accumulated over time. Still, Facebook played an enormous part by facilitating the mobilization and the accumulation of the popular dissatisfaction.

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[4] http://www.skrivunder.net/signatures/forny_den_gronlandske_adoptionslov

[5] http://www.skrivunder.net/bevarnultolerancen

[6] http://www.skrivunder.net/nutaamik_qinerseqqinnissamik_piumasaqaatkrav_om_nyt_valg

[7] http://www.skrivunder.net/

[8] The group is no longer publicly available

Power effects

eDemocracy, as coproduced by Greenlanders, Facebook and Skrivunder.net, primarily creates a space for political oppositional forces. Instead of fixing the political representational crisis, this discourse shortcuts the representational process. Through words and deeds, citizens and their associated technologies reconfigure democracy; create a structure that contains a wider arsenal of possibilities to set the political agenda and to make MPs and ministers responsible than is the case in institutionalized representative democracy.

Arguably, the current representative democratic discourse allows for these types of action. Highlighting issues, creating and signing petitions, mobilizing the populace and protesting are neither illegitimate, nor undemocratic. The representative democratic discourse, however, does not promote these types of actions. They are allowed and tolerated, but not encouraged. The coproduced eDemocratic discourse accounted for in this paper creates better conditions for these types of action without discarding the entire representational discourse. eDemocracy is not envisioned as a street parliament (interview, citizen, February 26th 2015), nor as a direct democracy (interview, citizen, November 27th 2014). Nor are MPs, their authority as decision makers, their responsibility for decisions, or the processes by which they are elected altered. What is changed is the population's capacity to control the political agenda and the possibility to make MPs accountable. The question is, if this discourse constitutes a significant challenge to the hegemonic representational ditto, or if the two can coexist. MPs and civil servants construct an eDemocratic discourse according to which MPs have the political and visionary authority and the public administration has rational authority. Within this discourse, people are not to set the agenda, nor are they to recall MPs. Rather, they are encouraged to assist MPs in representing the populace and assist civil servants in making rational and implementable acts through online consultations and consultative dialogues (Jørgensen, 2016). Coexistence, therefore, insofar as it is possible at all, implies tension between the conflicting discourses.

It is too early to decide on the outcome of these struggles. However, in comparison to other liberal representative democracies, the Greenlandic citizens seem to have had a greater impact on the status quo. A possible explanation for this is that the Greenlandic liberal representative democratic discourse is young and not well established. Another explanation is the population size. In a country of 56,000 inhabitants, 1,000 signatures or protesters might feel like a lot to those who are the target of such initiatives. And crowds of a thousand are not too difficult to mobilize online.

Conclusions

This paper has investigated how citizens in Greenland, together with nonhuman actors, coproduce eDemocratic discourses. While ICTs certainly support citizens' visions of self-government, they also translate these visions. The spread of the internet and the popularity of Facebook make it easier to create public awareness of local issues, but not necessarily to engage in dialogue. Sites like skrivunder.net, coupled with peoples' online social networks, make it easier to make local issues public, by creating petitions and collecting signatures at the cost of worth. The structure of Facebook makes it possible to arrange massive demonstrations within no time.

The paper's findings echo a range of prior research. The struggle for attention observed at online debate fora provide evidence to Dahlberg's (2005) and Hargittai's (2004) argument that control over the means of exposure is becoming increasingly important, as the means of production are becoming more common. Facebook's positive impact on the conditions of possibilities for mobilizing the populace and arrange protests around flash and single-issue campaigns resounds the

works of Breindl (2010), Nam (2012), and Ward, Gibson and Lusoli (2003). Finally, the study shows that the people employ ICTs in order to create favorable conditions in which they can develop political counter-discourses (Dahlberg, 2007), from which they can contest rather than partake in political decisions (Van den Hoven, 2005).

Adding to these conclusions, the paper provides an associative discursive explanation as to why eDemocracy is constituted by the people as it is. They do so in order to challenge the democratic status quo, to bypass misrepresentation and represent themselves as someone who can set the political agenda, mobilize and protest against single issues, and make MPs accountable for political decisions. This eDemocratic discourse is not founded by free floating minds or individuals. They are not pure ideas. The discourse is coproduced by the very tools that enact it.

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Appendix D

Jørgensen, A. M. (2016). Kunuk took it to the Streets of Greenland: Single Issue Protests in a Young Online Democracy. *Information, Communication and Society*. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2016.1226919.

Kunuk took it to the streets of Greenland: single-issue protests in a young online democracy

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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

Single-issue protests and online mobilization have proliferated in the wake of social media. While significant ground has been covered regarding the changing possibilities for mobilization, the question of how specific circumstances condition the political impact of online mobilization and public protests has received much less attention. During the last couple of years, Greenlanders have increasingly employed Facebook to mobilize the populace and arrange public demonstrations with noteworthy results. Arguing that single-issue protests cannot be separated from the issues they are concerned with, the paper explores how a single and potential trivial political issue – a new parliament building – developed from a prestige project supported by a nearly unanimous Parliament into a public-contested issue and a failed political project. The paper invokes Actor-Network Theory to account for the trajectory of the issue and how it was translated along the way as actors built and broke alliances. The concepts of mobilizing structures, opportunity structures and framing processes are employed to shed light on the conditions of possibilities for the emergence, development and impact of the protest against the parliament building. Finally, the paper discusses social media's impact on the image of politically engaged Inuit and on the power relations between citizens and parliament in Greenland. This discussion is of paramount importance as Greenlanders are struggling with their colonial heritage while they are constructing Greenlandic democracy.

Introduction

> *I definitely believe that the Greenlanders are becoming more aware that political participation matters. It's a consciousness that's growing in the population.* (Interview, February 26, 2015)

A painting from the 1860s by Aron of Kangeq[1] depicts a blubber trade between a Greenlandic hunter and a Danish trade manager of The Royal Greenland Trading Department. The trade manager's assistant places a finger on the scale and cheats the hunter of his rightful price. Everyone sees it, but no one does anything about it. Not the hunter, nor the crowd of people that has gathered around the scene. It would be seen as offensive to challenge the authoritative trade manager. The traditional Inuit virtues of reticence, modesty, and taciturnity became means of self-repression (Lynge, 2003). What would Kunuk have done, Lynge asks? Kunuk is a figure of legends: a skilled hunter who has witnessed violent repression throughout his life, who detests any kind of chieftaincy but who is also reticent, modest, and taciturn. Kunuk would have placed a finger on the scale, tip the balance and ensure a fair trade without offending the perpetrating authorities, Lynge replies. Kunuk was not self-repressive, he had a good sense of what is right and just, and he was polite and humane.

The origin of the Kunuk legend is unknown – it has been passed down through generations, altered into several versions along the way, and finally written down in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries (Rasmussen, 1924; Rink, 1866) – and Aron made his painting sometime in the 1860s when Greenland was still a Danish colony. Much has changed since then. Most significantly, in 1979, Greenland became a Home-Rule within the Kingdom of Denmark. Parliamentary multiparty democracy was introduced and an independent national parliament, Inatsisartut, was established (Dahl, 1986). For the first time Greenlandic politics was to be decided by Greenlanders themselves. Arguing for what he believed to be the necessary skills and virtues in a self-governing people in transition from colony to independence Lynge recalled the

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[1] Aron of Kangeq (1822–1869) was a Greenlandic hunter, writer, and painter. His paintings often depict the encounters between Inuit and Danish colonizers.

legend of Kunuk. Each and every Greenlander had to be Kunuk if they were to stay clear of self-repression, govern themselves democratically, and honour the traditional Inuit virtues.

In 1996, the internet hit the shores of the world's largest island. Since then, and especially during the last decade, Greenlanders have employed the internet to create for themselves new ways of political engagement and participation. While national and local governments primarily use the internet to provide information and to a lesser extent consult the citizenry, citizens use it increasingly to monitor politics and politicians, push the political agenda, display political convictions, and organize protests. The year 2014 saw two major protests that substantially challenged the institutional political power. In August, protesters convinced the national parliament to discard the plans for a new parliament building. A month later, protesters caused the downfall of the Government. Rather than placing a discrete finger on the scale, the most articulate and visible Kunuks as of today mobilize likeminded through social media and take it to the streets.

The paper explores the conditions of possibilities for the emergence, development and outcome of the protest against the parliament building. The exploration is guided by the framework of mobilizing structures, opportunity structures and framing processes (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996). However, because the protest against the parliament building cannot be separated from the issue itself, we need to expand the focus and trace the wider trajectory of the political issue. Thus, the framework above is expanded by the notions of relational actors, translation and issue politics (Marres, 2007) that are employed to trace and account for the trajectory of the parliament building; how it developed from a prestige project supported by an almost unanimously Parliament into a contested public issue which among other took the forms of online mobilization and street protests, and, finally, into a failed political project. Before the conclusions, the paper compares today's politically engaged Greenlander, of which protesters are one important configuration, with the legend of Kunuk and discusses the impact that the internet has had on the image of politically engaged Inuit and on the power relations between the people and the Parliament.

The internet and single-issue protests

A growing body of literature explores the relation between the internet and especially social media, on the one hand, and mobilization and protests, on the other hand (Garrett, 2006). Focus tends to be directed at the improved possibilities for mobilization that social media provides and questions often evolve around how protesters mobilize themselves, who participates, and who does not (Anduiza, Cristancho, & Sabucedo, 2014; Bekkers, Beunders, Edwards, & Moody, 201; Nam, 2012). These are very important questions to be addressed in order to understand social media's impact on the proliferation of protests and in order to evaluate the democratic legitimacy hereof. What is much less explored is how specific circumstances condition the development and outcome of such protests (Garrett, 2006).

Garret suggests that the emergence, development and outcome of ICT facilitated protests and social movements can be studied by employing the framework of mobilizing structures, opportunity structures and framing processes (McAdam et al., 1996). Mobilizing structures are formal and informal social structures as well as tactical repertoires of familiar forms of action that enable individuals to organize and engage in political collective action. Opportunity structures are conditions that are favourable to social movement activity such as the political system's accessibility, the stability or fragmentation of the political elites', and elite allies. Finally, framing processes designate the strategic attempts to craft and disseminate

the narratives used to justify or discredit political movements (Garrett, 2006). The concepts have a lot to offer with regard to the study of protests in an information society and I maintain, in line with Garrett, that the framework is an effective analytical orienting device. It is, however, limited in at least two ways. First, it is too static to account for the dynamics of social movements, the issues they struggle with, and their opponents (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). Second, while there is a significant relation between social movements and the case investigated in this paper, the latter is more abrupt, short lived, and is in general akin to today's internet mediated contestation (Van den Hoven, 2005) and single-issue campaigns (Ward, Gibson, & Lusoli, 2003). The protesters in Greenland were united solely for a single cause and, which is perhaps even more striking, single events, and did not claim allegiance to any specific movement. It is, in other words, difficult to separate the emergence, development, and outcome of the single-issue protest from the trajectory and fate of the parliament building itself.

We need, therefore, to explore the trajectory of the political issue before and beyond the actual protests. An actor-network theoretical (ANT) approach to politics is especially suited for this task because it explicitly characterizes democratic processes as particular practices of issue articulation (Marres, 2007). Articulation not only implies that the issue in question is constituted along the way. Rather, because everything is what it is due to its relations (Law, 2009), the actors are also constituted as they get involved in and direct the trajectory of the political dispute. The protesters, for example, come into being only in relation to the issue of the parliament building. Likewise, the adversaries are also constituted as such in the course of the political dispute. Actors, then, continuously take part in the constitution of each other and political issues. They do so by translating actions and events and by building alliances between each other (Latour, 1990). Actors that support and are supported by strong alliances have a greater impact on the construction and trajectory of a specific political issue. Translation, however, is always potentially treacherous, why alliances always are open for change.

ANT leaves no explanatory room for the concepts of mobilizing structure, opportunity structure, and framing process. We need not, however, discard these concepts per se. Instead, we are to establish them from the ground up. The distinctions drawn by these concepts come in handy insofar as ANT does not offer any vocabulary for differentiating among the multiple ways in which the emergence and outcome of single-issue protests are conditioned. In other words, where ANT provides the vocabulary for a detailed account of an issue's trajectory, the framework of mobilizing structures, opportunity structures, and framing processes lets us generate generic lessons about the conditions of possibilities for single-issue protests.

Method

In this paper, ANT's methodological mantra to follow the actor (Latour, 2005) is translated into follow the issue. In order to follow the issue of the parliament building and explore its trajectory, we are in need of rich context-dependent information, which in-depth case studies provide (Flyvbjerg, 2001). The researcher has lived in Greenland for five years and worked at the government-owned online citizen portal, Sullissivik.gl, for three and a half years prior to conducting the study. The experience of working and living in Greenland necessarily influences the study in implicit and important ways. In addition, the paper makes explicit use of several types of data: press material, statistics and research literature on current and historical politics, political and administrative reports, drafts, and proposals, data from Facebook groups and pages as well as loosely structured one-to-one, group, and online interviews with citizens, parliamentarians, and public administration employees.

The analytical task is twofold. First, the trajectory of the parliament building issue is reconstructed from the data. The reconstruction is especially attentive to the diversity of actors, the multiple ways in which they direct the development of the issue, how the issue is translated along the way, the alliances that are built, enforced and broken, and the continuous making of actors and issue. Second, in order to disclose the conditions of possibilities for the emergence, development, and outcome of the protest, the mobilizing structures, opportunity structures, and framing processes are established. This implies that we widen the analytical gaze somewhat from the local processes.

The trajectory of the parliament building issue

For at least a decade, the Greenlandic Parliament has been looking for new buildings. In 2006, the Parliament decided for an expansion and renovation of the building that houses the Parliament and the Parliament's secretariat, the Bureau for Inatsisartut. During public tendering, the costs rose from 2.64 to 7.93 million GBP. Because of the rising costs and because the Government prioritized educational facilities, the Parliament discarded the proposal in 2007. Instead, it was suggested that a former hotel was purchased and used by the Bureau for Inatsisartut, thus leaving free space in the existing buildings for new parliament facilities. This solution never passed the ideational stage because it was impractical to separate the Parliament and its secretariat and because the Government wanted to use the hotel for student housing (Presidium of Inatsisartut, 2013). In 2012, a ten-storey building housing a shopping mall and the Central Public Administration was constructed in the centre of Nuuk. The building divided the public opinion and it was soon nicknamed among other 'Rivejernet' (The Grater) due to its threadlike metal exterior décor (Nyvold, 2012). A year later, a new proposal for a parliament building saw the light of day. A workgroup consisting of the Bureau for Inatsisartut and the Ministry of Housing, Building and Infrastructure recommended that the old buildings were replaced because they were too small, suspected to be infected by mould, and outdated (Presidium of Inatsisartut, 2013). During the six months that it took for the Presidium of Inatsisartut to make the proposal ready for a vote in Parliament, the projects' scale and costs escalated significantly. In June, it was estimated that it would be about 3000 square meters and cost about 10.05 million DKK (Presidium of Inatsisartut, 2013). In the final draft of 27 November 2013, it was estimated that it would be anywhere between 3000 and 5000 square meters and cost between 10.05 and 20.1 million GBP (Udvalg for Forretningsordenen, 2013). The location for the building was not chosen as of yet but was to be decided upon in collaboration with the municipality of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, which is in charge of city planning in Nuuk (the capitol of Greenland). All parties, except for the Democrats, voted for the proposal and a 0.32 million GBP grant was allocated to the preparatory work. The Democrat's sentiment and argument echoed the resistance towards the prior construction projects:

> It is not wise financially and it is not fair considering the needs of the population. The Democrats believe that the money can and should be used much better. We believe it is wrong to spend so much money on a building to Inatsisartut, when our children are educated in dilapidated and unhealthy class rooms. We believe it is wrong to spend so much money on a building to Inatsisartut, when ordinary people must live with the consequences and effects of mould in their homes, because there is no money for renovation. And finally, we find it wrong that politicians once again place themselves before the people. (Demokraterne, 2013)

At this time, the project received little public attention and few critical responses were raised in the popular press and on Facebook. Notwithstanding the lack of publicity, some significant actors were deeply engaged in framing the issue and in building alliances. Thus, an almost unanimous Parliament agreed that a

new building was required because of the state and functional limitations of the current buildings. As we will see, these functional concerns later yielded to symbolic arguments. The Democrats broke the Parliament alliance and contrasted the desire for a new parliament building with the needs of the population. As the Parliament passed the proposal, the issue changed into a question of the location of the new building. This change brought a new significant actor, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, onto the stage. In the ensuing months, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq and Bureau for Inatsisartut identified three potential locations for the building: Aqqaluk's Square, a historically significant green patch, Nuutoqaq, the colonial harbour, and Arsiffik, which is downtown. On 6 June 2014, the Bureau for Inatsisartut applied for a permit to construct the building at Aqqaluk's Square (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014b).

The decision to locate the building at Aqqaluk's square, however, tapped directly into an ongoing local controversy between Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq and another noteworthy actor, Nuuk Local Historical Association. Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq was planning to restore and rebuild the colonial harbour, which the Local Historical Association contested. On 18 May, the association had demonstrated against Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq (Høegh, 2014). The demonstration was followed by 898 signatures (Nuuk Local Historical Association, Facebook update, 4 June 2014) and an open letter to the Municipal board on 6 June – the very same day that the Bureau for Inatsisartut applied for a permit to use Aqqaluk's Square – arguing for the preservation of the colonial harbour (Nuuk Local Historical Association, Facebook update, June 6, 2014). A third-party petition site – www.skrivunder.net – was used to collect 381 out of the 898 signatures. Facebook was used to disperse the online petition and create awareness of the demonstration. Nuuk Local Historical Association was, therefore, already alert and mobilized when the decision to locate the new parliament building at Aqqaluk's square was made public and it promptly objected to the decision (Kristensen, 2014a). Though the association would not collect signatures again, it would still put up a fight. As Stephen Heilmann of Nuuk Local Historical Association told the press:

> I have told my old friend, Lars-Emil Johansen (President of Inatsisartut), that as long as I live he will not be allowed to build a parliament on Aqqaluk's Square … Both Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq and Inatsisartut know our position so we will not create a new petition against the parliament building. But we promise to continue our work to preserve the old Nuuk.
> (Kristensen, 2014b)

The parliament building had become a contested issue involving at least two adversaries: The Parliament and the President of Inatsisartut (the presiding officer of the Parliament) on the one side and Nuuk Local Historical Association on the other. At the beginning, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq was placed on the same side as the Parliament. The Municipal Board, however, sought a mediating part and announced on 30 July that Nuuk residents would be consulted on the location of the parliament building through an online vote. The location of the parliament building was no longer a mere administrative matter but a full-fledged contested public question. It was, however, to be resolved by Nuuk residents only. The rest of the population was not to have a say on the whereabouts of the parliament building. The consultation was open from 20 August until 1 September (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014c) and all Nuuk residents at 16 years of age and older could vote. Though the Bureau for Inatsisartut had only applied for a permit to use Aqqaluk's Square, voters could choose among all three locations that were initially identified during the preparatory work. As a fourth option, voters could choose none of these locations. They could also comment their choice. By inviting Nuuk residents into the decision process, a new actor, the voter, was outlined and brought into play. This new actor served as a fresh partner with whom the municipality could fix the alliance with Nuuk residents, which had suffered somewhat during the recent controversy with Nuuk Local Historical Association regarding the renewal of the colonial harbour.

Once the location had become an issue of public vote, the Bureau and the President of Inatsisartut started to address the voters directly and advocate strongly for Aqqaluk's Square. Two leaflets were produced and sent to all Nuuk residents, a Facebook page dedicated to the project[2] was created and all material was accumulated on a sub-site to the Parliament's website. One leaflet constructed a historical argument that Aqqaluk's Square had been the centre of Greenlandic democracy since 1857, why it was the ideal location for the new parliament building (Bureau for Inatsisartut, August 2014a). The other leaflet argued strongly for Aqqaluk's Square and debased the two other locations (Bureau for Inatsisartut, 2014b). At the same time, the argument for the building shifted. Instead of focusing on the practical limitations of the old buildings, it was argued that the new building should reflect the Greenlandic people, be an iconic building, and a source of pride. Thus, the building was by the Bureau and the President of Inatsisartut translated from a practical into a symbolic issue. The arguments presented in the leaflets were repeated on the Facebook page and on the website. The attempts to persuade the voters, however, were not successful but instead viewed as propaganda (Nyvold, 2014a). Critical voices argued that democracy was not introduced until 1979 and that the first Parliament had its seat in the very same buildings that the current Parliament wanted to abandon. In addition, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq disclosed factual flaws in one of the leaflets (2014d) and on the Facebook page (2014e). Meanwhile, political parties that initially voted for the new building started to separate themselves from the approach and the arguments employed by the Bureau and the President. On 20 August, Inuit Ataqatigiit, which was the second largest party in Parliament, wrote in an open letter to the President of Inatsisartut:

> *We demand that the President of Inatsisartut clarifies to the public that it is only him and the Bureau for Inatsisartut that are behind the campaign. This is necessary because many hold the view that it is a unanimous Inatsisartut that has chosen the location of Aqqaluk's Square and that it is a unanimous Inatsisartut that is behind the campaign.* (2014)

Much critique was raised by citizens on diverse Facebook arenas including the page created by the Bureau for Inatsisartut. The Bureau deleted the critical posts and comments from its page. The Bureau excused the deletion and explained that it was a mistake that had happened during a Facebook update. The citizens did not believe the explanation and even more public outrage ensued (Nyvold, 2014b).

As critique built up, a curious compound actor consisting of the Bureau, the President, and the Parliament was constructed. The President of Inatsisartut was viewed as the main architect behind the entire project and the Bureau was critiqued for being too political and acting as the President's right hand. The President, on the other hand, argued that he was merely acting on behalf of the Parliament, which had passed the proposal. And, as noted above, members of Parliament started to separate themselves from both the President and the Bureau. Thus, old alliances between the Parliament and the President were crumbling, while new alliances between Nuuk residents, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, and at least some parties where forged.

On 21 August, three citizens called for and invited likeminded via Facebook[3] to a demonstration, which was to take place two days later on 23 August. The invitation summarized much of the critique as it had developed up until then.

> *Do you also think that it is crazy to place the new parliament building at Aqqaluk's Square? Do you also think it is unjust that politicians want to spend about 20.1 million GBP on a new*

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[2] https://www.facebook.com/aqqaluksplads/?fref=ts
[3] https://www.facebook.com/events/340565016121126/

parliament building when the money could be used more wisely elsewhere? Do you also think that Inatsisartut's campaign for Aqqaluk's Square is distasteful and manipulative? Show your dissatisfaction together with us when we walk from Nuuk Center to Aqqaluk's Square. Bring your banners and family and friends. The more the better. (Facebook invitation, August 21, 2014)

The invitation to the event quickly spread through Facebook and two days later, 800 out of 4100 invited had announced on Facebook that they would participate in the demonstration. Despite the short notice, approximately 1000 protesters gathered on Aqqaluk's Square (Schultz-Lorentzen, 2014). While this is a small and easily ignored crowd in most other countries, it was estimated to be one of the largest demonstrations ever in Greenland. The targets were the Parliament, the Bureau for Inatsisartut, and the President of Inatsisartut. The demand was not focused. Some wanted to save Aqqaluk's Square, some criticized the approach, and some reinvigorated the argument, which had been made against the 2007 construction plans and which the Democrats had made against the current plans, and demanded that the Parliament discarded its plans altogether and spent the money on public housing and schools instead. The protesters' arguments were all the more weighty because Greenland's economy is strained and dependent on an annual Danish subsidy of approximately GPB 353 million, which is approximately 56% of government revenues. Thus, demonstrators successfully translated the issue, which had been made into a local issue only concerned with the location of the parliament building, into a national question regarding the need for a parliament building.

When Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq's online vote ended on 1 September 2014, 22% of the eligible voters had cast their vote; 3% voted for Aqqaluk's Square and 53% voted for none of the locations (Epinion, 2014). The voters' comments, which were published along with the vote result, once again demanded that the Parliament dropped the project and instead focused on the needs of the population. Because of the public protests (Interview, November 12, 2014) and the vote results, the municipal board decided not to permit that the new Parliament building was constructed at Aqqaluk's Square (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014b). In the ensuing months, the political support in the Parliament dropped significantly. In June 2015, the President of Inatsisartut publicly announced that the plans for a new parliament building were abandoned altogether due to the waning political support (Bureau for Inatsisartut, 2015). In other words, the Parliament alliance had broken down in face of the alliance between protesters, voters, online consultations and Facebook which had translated the parliament building from a political prestige project that would symbolise the Greenlandic democracy into an egoistic elite project that neglected the needs of the population.

The conditions of possibilities for the single-issue protests

In order to disclose the circumstances of the single-issue protests we now turn to the conditions of possibilities for the emergence, development, and outcome hereof. This is done by establishing the mobilizing structures, opportunity structures, and framing processes. In turn, this abstraction from the local processes will add some support and weight to the account of the parliament building's trajectory.

Mobilizing structures

There is no easy way to estimate the effect of the mobilizing structures on the emergence and impact of the protest against the parliament building. No collective identity was created and the protesters were

hardly organized. Instead of identifying with a social movement, protesters united for single events and a few interrelated causes that were united by the parliament building. Some protesters cared for Aqqaluk's Square, some criticized the Parliament's approach, some demanded that the money should be spent on public housing and schools instead. In addition, the protesters did not have a grand repertoire of prior and similar protest to learn from. Protests as such are not novel. The Association of Fishers and Hunters in Greenland, for example, arrange demonstrations regularly as part of the fish quota negotiations (Jacobsen & Raakjær, 2012). Unlike these protests, however, the demonstration against the parliament building was not organized by an advocacy group and it was not a tool in ongoing negotiations. It was, rather, popular dissatisfaction and frustration with policies, politics, and politicians manifested in a single issue. Had the issue not developed in a way that could contain this diversity of concerns, it would, most likely, not have attracted the same amount of protesters and not have had the same impact. The protest on 18 May, for example, that was organized by Nuuk Local Historical Association and which focused solely on the preservation of the colonial harbour, attracted only 35–40 protesters. The proliferation of single-issue protests and campaigns that unifies diverse interests seems to be tightly connected with the spread and increasing political employment of the internet and especially social media like Facebook. At least, protesters themselves, state that Facebook is a necessity for single-issue protests to develop and gain traction (Interview, January 19, 2015). Thus, the social network structure of Facebook seems to be the only thing that unambiguously operates in favour of the single-issue protest against the parliament building.

Opportunity structures

The accessibility of the political elite is a significant factor for the impact of e-protests (Garrett, 2006). With a population of approximately 56,000, 31 seats in Parliament and 70 seats in the four Municipal Boards, there is one parliamentarian per 555 citizens. The political and administrative elites, furthermore, resemble the average population in much greater degree today than during the colonial era, where these positions were reserved exclusively to Danes (Seiding, 2011). Statistically, then, the citizenry is well represented by the legislative bodies. Except for elections for Parliament and Municipal Boards every fourth year, citizens, however, do not have many possibilities to impact legislation. While sessions in Parliament and Municipal Boards for the most part are public, citizens cannot initiate or decide on amendments or recalls (Bureau for Inatsisartut, 2013; Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014a) and referendums are very rare. During the home rule period, there has been only two referendums, namely on Greenland's membership of EU in 1982 (Skydsbjerg, 1999) and on the transition from Home-Rule to Self-Rule in 2008.

Access to the political elite is, furthermore, complicated by geography and demography. With the size of Saudi Arabia and a population size of 56,000, Greenland ranges among the world's least densely populated countries (Statistics Greenland, 2015). Eighty per cent of the land is covered by the Inland Ice, leaving only the coastline inhabitable. There are about 80 towns and settlements spread along the western and southern coastline and a few settlements on the east coast and you can only travel from one town to the next by boat or airplane as no two towns are connected by road. In addition, very few persons make up the power elites and nepotism is a constant threat (Ankersen & Christiansen, 2013; Christiansen & Togeby, 2003).

A small population certainly makes nepotism a real threat. But perhaps it also makes direct public influence more probable because protesters can make use of their personal ties to further causes of public concern. Stephen Heilmann of Nuuk Local Historical Association and the President of Inatsisartut were, for example, old friends. The decisive difference between nepotism and personal direct influence, then, is whether the issues pursued are of private or public interest. In other words, if a person makes use of his or her personal

relations in order to push an agenda that is of both private and public interest, should we label this nepotism or direct political influence? Either way, with 40,260 eligible voters, 1000 protesters make up significant numbers. In comparison, the President of Inatsisartut, who was a key target of the protest, got 400 personal votes at the 2013 Parliament election. With social media like Facebook and online petition sites like skrivunder.net, it has become significantly easier to unite 1000 likeminded and collect 1000 signatures for a single cause.

The emergence of elite allies and the Parliament's lack of control might also help explain the protest's immediate success. As noted above, protesters did not have prior and similar protest to learn from. But neither did the President and the Bureau for Inatsisartut. The political elite did not have any ready response. Once a response was crafted, it backfired and the Parliament alliance started to break up and some elite members started to ally themselves with the protesters. In the end, the President of Inatsisartut, the Bureau for Inatsisartut, and the Parliament left as losers – as legislative institutions that cared more for own needs than those of the population. The immediate political impact, however, did not translate into any long-term changes, which might be explained by the historical stability of the political elite. The President of Inatsisartut has been a leading figure in in the political party Siumut since its inception and Siumut has won every Parliament election except for one since parliamentary democracy was introduced in 1979.

Framing processes

While the parliament building was continuously translated, the mobilizers, protesters and the protest were subject to much less framing processes. The adversaries did not frame the protests as more or less democratically legitimate. Rather, in the aftermath of the protest, the President of Inatsisartut said that he understood and respected the protesters' message and that public debate only was to be desired (Thorsen, 2014). The positive framing of the protest by all parties might be explained by the fact that citizen involvement is high on the popular political agenda. It is especially prominent in light of the country's colonial history. As they move towards greater independence, Greenlanders distance themselves explicitly from the way politics was conducted during colonial rule. For Greenlanders, it is not a hypothetical scenario that policies are passed and implemented without their consent. It is lived history. Political non-involvement is judged in light of this history, which no one wants to repeat. In light of this, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq's online consultation was pitched as an entirely new way of engaging the population and symbolized a radical brake with politics as usual. In contrast, the Parliament, the President of Inatsisartut, and the Bureau of Inatsisartut came to symbolize disengagement from public interests. The project was translated from an 'iconic signature construction, which may be a source of our Greenlandic nation's pride' (Bureau for Inatsisartut, August 2014b) into a symbol of a Parliament out of touch with the population and politicians caring more for political prestige projects than public interests.

Discussion

The paper was introduced with a recollection of Lynge's appeal to the virtues of Kunuk. Lynge's portrait of Kunuk is not to be read as an accurate depiction of traditional or original Inuit. Several alternative versions of the Kunuk legend tell incompatible tales of a man that responds to suppression with aggression and violence. If we read these legends as essential descriptions, we would have to choose which one captures reality the best. The appeal to Kunuk is, rather, a historically conscious and strategic call for the virtues

which Lynge deemed necessary in a self-governing people in transition from colony to independence. The protesters in the case above, obviously, make up but a small portion of the people. It is, however, interesting to compare Lynge's image of Kunuk with the politically engaged protesters as of today because they embody the two interrelated forms of practices that Greenlandic democracy continuously is shaped by: an identity line, which represents traditional Inuit virtues and ways of living, and a modernity line, which represents capitalism, market logics and globalism (Adolphsen, 2003). We can therefore ask: Do the protesters in the case above compare to the identity line as represented by Lynge's Kunuk or is the online politically engaged protester significantly different from this image?

For starters, the protesters were not self-repressive. The decision for a new parliament building had as much democratic legitimacy as one can possibly wish for within the limits of a representative democracy. Only the Democrats voted against the proposal and they only had two seats in Parliament out of 31. The protesters, however, did not succumb to the authority and democratic legitimacy bestowed upon the Parliament. In addition, the protesters had a good sense of what is right and just in the sense that they assessed the Parliament's plan for a parliament building against the backdrop of Greenland's economic predicament and against the more pressing issues of public housing and education. However, unlike Kunuk, they were not reticent, modest, and taciturn and they did not mind offending the authorities. When faced with policies they deemed unjust, they did not place a discrete finger on the scale. Instead, they mobilized likeminded through social media and took their political disagreements and frustrations to the streets. By making it easier to mobilize likeminded and orchestrate demonstrations, the internet and social media in particular have tipped the power balance slightly between the protesters and the Parliament. As the case study illustrates, protesters united behind a common but flexible cause can make a change in parliament politics. This kind of political participation evolves around single issues and has a short intense life cycle. When people unite behind a single issue, they dissolve once the issue is resolved or once they have expressed their frustrations. Next time they meet on the streets –and it tends to be the same crowd of politically engaged people that meet up (Interview, February 26, 2015) – the issue, the paroles, and the banners have changed. It is, therefore, difficult to construct a uniform movement that could carry political changes forth in the long run. In other words, online mobilization and protests impact politics issue by issue. This is a disappointment to some protesters:

> It was a waste of time to come up with arguments and create debates. It didn't lead to anything concrete. It didn't lead to any changes as such. I think that the case against Aleqa [the Premier] illustrates this the most. A new election was held. But to what purpose? (Interview, February 27, 2015)

With Dean (2010), we might say that protesters do not challenge or overthrow but influence the society of which they are part issue by issue. Thus, political alienation and mistrust are addressed not by strengthening the representative ties but by publicly contesting parliament politics. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the protest against the parliament building is not unique.

> In the last two to three years there have been as many demonstrations as there have been previously in the whole history of Greenland. (Interview, February 26, 2015)

Though such events have increased in numbers, intensity, and size during the last couple of years, they are not representative – not of the population nor of the spectrum of political participation. While the internet and social media have made it easier to connect with politically likeminded across the Inland Ice, raise your voice from a distance, and mobilize likeminded, it is unequally distributed. The nationwide private internet penetration in Greenland is 72% and 73% of the population uses at least one type of social media (HS

Analyse, 2013). However, internet access remains expensive and it is primarily city dwellers who are online. Internet penetration is 75% for towns and 53% for settlements (HS Analyse, 2013). Internet access is more reliable and cheaper in Nuuk than in the Northern and Eastern parts, where the customer base is significantly smaller and internet comes via satellites. As a consequence, though there are notable exceptions from the rule, it is primarily Nuuk residents who employ the internet and social media politically. It is, in addition, important to remember that online mobilization and protests make up only one form of political participation and not that which is practised by most people. Thus, a Facebook group dedicated to debating Greenlandic politics attracts around 5800 users and election turn out has since 2002 been over 70% on average (Ackren, 2014). Political participation, then, comes in many disguises among which online mobilizations and protests are but one.

Conclusions

The aim of the paper was twofold: one, to explore the trajectory of the parliament building issue and specifically to address the circumstances of the protests. Two, to assess the impact that the internet and especially social media have had on the ways that political engagement unfolds in Greenland. While the nature of online mobilizations and participants has been investigated to some extent, less attention has been given to the links between historical and structural circumstances, local processes and political impact. In order to explore these links sufficiently, a single in-depth case study of the parliament building issue was conducted. Greenland presents us with a case unlike most others. It is a former Danish colony striving for greater independence. Today, it is an autonomous Self-Rule within the Danish Realm and dependent on Danish subsidiaries. Its parliamentary democracy is not much more than 35 years old. It is massive and extremely sparsely populated, why people look to the internet to tie the population together. And finally, with the rise of social media and especially Facebook people have turned to the internet to unite likeminded, mobilize the population, and arrange political demonstrations with impressive results.

By tracing the trajectory of the parliament building issue, the paper showed how it was translated from a national prestige project supported by a nearly unanimous Parliament into a local and publicly contested issue and back into a failed national political project. Several and diverse actors took part in directing the trajectory of the issue. Most of these actors – the Parliament, the political parties, the President of Inatsisartut, The Bureau for Inatsisartut, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, and Nuuk Local Historical Association – are instructionally anchored and existed long before the issue. Despite this, some of them were reconfigured along the way. Most notably, a compound actor consisting of the Parliament, the President of Inatsisartut, and the Bureau for Inatsisartut was constructed. Other actors – the mobilizers, the protesters, and the voters – did not exist prior the issue of the parliament building but were constituted along the way. Because of this, it is impossible to separate single-issue protests from the issue which brings them into being. This pushes the question if social movements are any different. Are social movement constituted by the issues they address and, if so, can we reasonably separate the two? It is beyond the scope of this paper to tackle this theoretical question and it is left for others to pick up.

The study showed that protesters mobilized online can make a change in parliament politics issue by issue. However, the emergence and impact of single-issue protests are conditioned by mobilizing structures, opportunity structures and framing processes. Thus, the internet and especially the network structures of Facebook seem to create favourable conditions for the emergence and development of single-issue protests. Internet access, however, is unevenly distributed and connects those most remote the least. The presence of similar conflicts between established adversaries enhances the chance that issues become

publicly contested. The novelty of single-issue protests is simultaneously an advantage and a disadvantage for the development of protests. On the one hand, protesters do not have a repertoire of prior practices but neither does the political elite. The elite's poor communication and handling of the situation thus created favourable opportunity structures for the protest against the parliament building. In addition, size apparently matters. When there are only 40,000 potential voters, 1000 protesters cannot be ignored. Finally, because of Greenland's colonial history, political participation is welcomed in most forms by all parties. As a consequence, it is difficult even for opponents to frame single-issue protests negatively. Furthermore, history provides a vivid background against which diverse actors might frame their actions. Thus, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq's consultation created a symbolic dividing line between a citizen involving municipality and a disengaged Parliament–President.

The development of new paths for political participation seems to be informed equally by images of traditional Inuit virtues and images of modernism. Online single-issue protesters embody both of these images. Like the Inuit legend of Kunuk, they step up when facing unjust policies and authorities. Unlike Kunuk, they are not taciturn and they do not mind offending the authorities. While protesting certainly is the most vocal and distinctive form of political engagement as of today, it remains, however, but one form of political participation – and by far the most common. Election turnout has been rather stable at 70% and Facebook groups dedicated to political discussion, rather than mobilization, attract far more users. Thus, even though evidence suggests that the internet and especially Facebook primarily foster single-issue campaigns and protests, the impact on political engagement in Greenland is multifaceted.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix E: Greenlandic Characteristics

Greenland is the world's largest island. Its population is very small and very widespread. It is a young democracy recovering from the yoke of colonialism and striving for still greater autonomy. Public and political discourse is characterised by repeated calls for greater involvement of the population in political matters. Finally, the internet figures as a political lifesaver that may help tie a dispersed population together in political participation. To the extent that these elements influence the background of the dissertation, they will be elaborated below.

Geography and settlement pattern

With the size of Saudi Arabia and a population size of 56,000, Greenland ranges among the world's least densely populated countries (Statistics Greenland, 2016). 80% of the land is covered by the Inland Ice, leaving only the coastline inhabitable. There are 18 towns (former municipal centres) and approximately 60 settlements in total. Two towns, Ittoqqortormiit and Tasiilaq, and their adjoining five settlements are situated on the east coast. The remaining towns and settlements are located along the southern and western coastline. It is roughly 2,147 km as the crow flies from the southernmost to the northernmost settlement. All settlements and seven out of the 18 towns have less than 1,000 inhabitants. With 16,000 inhabitants, the capital Nuuk is by far the largest town. The second-largest town, Sisimiut, has a mere 5,000 inhabitants.

Democracy: History and present

Greenland is politically, economically, and historically tied to Denmark. Greenland was a Danish colony from 1814 until 1953 when it became a Danish county. Since 1979, Greenland has been an autonomous self-governing country within the Kingdom of Denmark, and has had its own democratically elected sovereign Parliament, Inatsisartut. The ties between the two countries, however, remain strong. Denmark controls Greenlandic foreign and defence policy and provides an annual subsidy of approximately 353 million GPB, which is approximately 56% of government revenues. Two seats of the Danish Parliament are held by Greenlandic MPs. The path towards independence and greater political autonomy has been nonviolent and in many ways controlled by Denmark. Where other colonial powers responded to demands for decolonisation with brute force, Denmark incorporated and took control of the decolonisation processes (Dahl, 1986). Liberal representative democracy has remained the dominant democratic discourse during the transition from a colony until today. As early as 1857, that is, well before global demands for decolonisation echoed, Denmark set up so-called *Forstanderskaber*, which were replaced by *Kommune-* and *Landsråd* (Municipal and National Councils) in 1911. These institutions certainly had a democratic bend, but the powers actually bestowed upon them were administrative rather than political. Furthermore, up until 1951, members were for the most part appointed by the Royal Danish Trading Company and the church rather than being elected (Nielsen, 1953). While the colonising founding fathers had hoped that these institutions would educate the Greenlandic populace politically and prepare the population for democratic self-governance (Bureau for Inatsisartut, 2011; Oldendow, 1936), they also operated as

extensions of the Danish central administration. From 1814 to 1979, then, politics was by and large dictated from Denmark. The demand for Home-Rule was the first major – but also the most significant – leap towards democracy and independence initiated by Greenlanders themselves (Dahl, 1986). One might even say that it was the first national democratic act initiated by and carried through by Greenlanders.

Since 1979, Greenland has been a representative parliamentary democracy with two legislative levels: Parliament and Municipality. In addition, there are 26 Settlement Boards, the main functions of which are to inform the four Municipal Boards on local issues and to administer a minor budget set by the Municipal Boards (Greenland Parliament Act no. 22, November 18th, 2010 on Local Government, Ch. 6). Elections for Parliament and Municipal Boards are held every four years. While sessions in Parliament and Municipal Boards are for the most part public, citizens cannot initiate or decide on amendments or recalls (Bureau for Inatsisartut, 2013; Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, 2014). Referendums are very rare. During the home rule period, there were two referendums, namely on Greenland's membership of EU in 1982 (Skydsbjerg, 1999) and on the transition from Home Rule to Self-Rule in 2008. The Parliament has 31 seats and the four Municipal Boards have 70 seats in total. With a population of approximately 56,000, there is one parliamentarian per 555 citizens, not counting Settlement Board members. Statistically, then, the citizenry is well represented in the legislative bodies.

The political and administrative elites resemble the average population to a far greater degree today than during the colonial era, when these positions were reserved exclusively for Danes (Seiding, 2011). However, very few people make up the power elites and nepotism is a constant threat (Ankersen & Christiansen, 2013; Christiansen & Togeby, 2003). In addition, Greenland faces the same challenge of political mistrust that characterises many modern democracies (di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006). One might even posit that the political and mental discrepancy between ruler and ruled that during colonialism was represented by the distance and opposition between Denmark and Greenland is today represented by the distance and opposition between the capitol and national political centre of Nuuk and the rest of Greenland.

> "It is very far. It is very far from… well, sometimes when I work with people from East Greenland at GU [High school in Nuuk] who has come to Nuuk, right?! I mean, it is almost a longer mental journey than from Nuuk to Copenhagen." (Interview, Municipal administration, March 14th 2014, Author's translation)

A 2009 structural reform, which was cast in terms of local democracy, added to this feeling of distance between citizens and politicians. In order to bring political decisions and administration closer to the citizens, it was reasoned that municipal power centres needed to be created. Therefore, 18 municipalities were merged into four. The internet and the possibilities for the establishment of local councils were, among other things, supposed to tie the new massive municipalities together (Strukturudvalget, 2005).

Internet infrastructure, penetration and usage

No two towns are connected by road. Going from one town to the next, therefore, happens by boat, which is slow, or by airplane, which is expensive. Under these conditions, the internet is seen as a promising way to connect isolated citizens with each other. The internet is the material infrastructural backbone of e-

democracy. No internet, no e-democracy. Although internet infrastructure is severely challenged by Greenland's geography, the internet is present even at the most remote locations.

During the past 20 years, the internet has spread to all corners of Greenland. Greenland is connected to the rest of the online world by two fibre optic cables running along the seabed from Newfoundland, Canada, to Nuuk in Greenland. From Nuuk it continues to Qaqortoq at the Southern tip of Greenland and from there on to Iceland. A chain of 48 radio stations stretches 1,500 km from south to north and provides internet to 80 % of the population. Finally, in the stratosphere above the equator hover satellites, which connect the most remote regions to the internet (Figure 1).
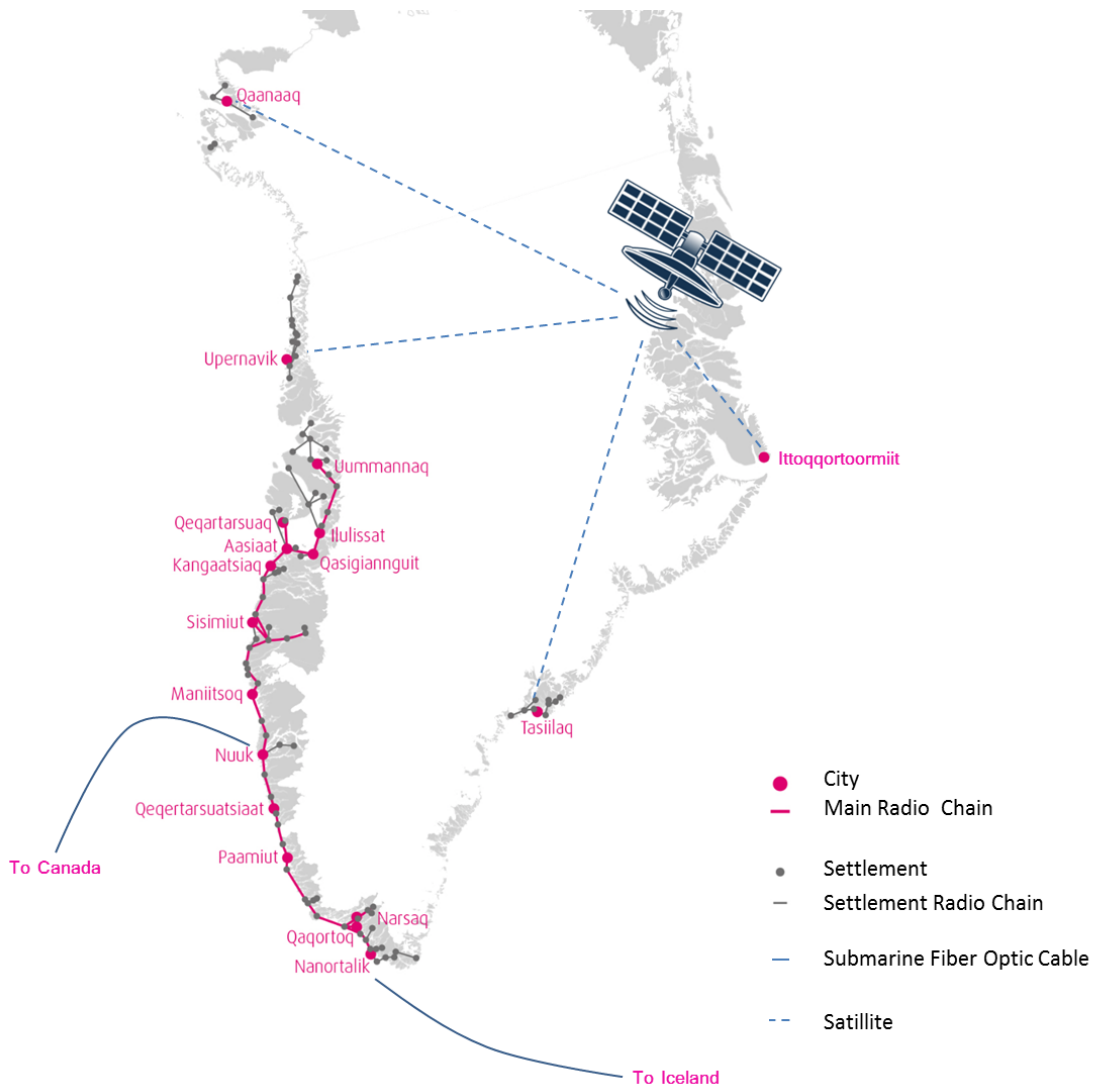
Figure 1 Internet infrastructure. Adapted from TelePost

The internet infrastructure, then, is present in all of Greenland. It is, however, very fragile as it is exposed to both harsh weather and human beings. It is not uncommon for parts of the country to be cut off due to local power failures (Søndergaard, 2015), combinations of technical problems, bad weather (Sermitsiaq.AG,

2014), or entrepreneurs that are just a bit too busy and eager (Krarup, 2013). At other times the international fibre optic cables are cut by drifting icebergs (Sermitsiaq.AG, 2010) or fishermen's gear (Broberg, 2013).

One thing is presence, another prerequisite is access. No access, no e-democracy. There are many ways to measure internet penetration. The overview presented here is a congregation of different statistics. According to the United Nations agency for information and communication technologies (ITU), 67.6% of the population had internet access in 2015 (ITU, 2015). According to Internet World Stats, 90.1% had access (Internet World Stats, 2016). It is, however, not clear what data these numbers are based upon. Internet World Stats figures are based at least partly on ITU data, but ITU's own figures are based on their own estimates. Either way, there is a big difference between 67.6% and 90.1%. According to TelePost's 2015 year report, there were 14,571 broadband subscriptions and 56,135 mobile phone subscriptions in that year (TelePost, 2016). TelePost is the sole national telecom provider, so their figures have some credibility. However, even if one assumes that all broadband subscribers also have a mobile phone, one ends up with a staggering internet penetration of 100.5%, which seems exaggerated. A 2014 national survey with 991 respondents above 16 years of age showed that 63% had a smartphone, 77% had access to the internet at home, and an additional 10% had internet access elsewhere (Epinion, 2014).

Compared to other countries where subscribers are not charged for data but only for speed, internet access in Greenland is very expensive. The reason for this is the mismatch between an immense infrastructure and a tiny customer base. Access is unevenly distributed, favouring town dwellers (89% has access) over settlement dwellers (74% has access)(ibid.). The uneven distribution is explained, at least partly, by uneven access prices combined with uneven income. Both the availability and the cost of internet subscriptions depend on the infrastructure. One GB of data delivered by satellite is four times as expensive as one GB of data delivered by fibre optic cable. At the same time, the average income is lowest where the internet subscriptions are the most expensive and highest where they are the cheapest. In 2014, the average personal gross income for Nuuk and Qaqortoq residents was 218,491 DKK (25,051 GBP) annually. Residents in these towns are charged 11.89 DKK (1.36 GBP) per GB data, which is provided by fibre optic cables. In comparison, residents living in places that are connected to the internet via satellites are charged 49.95 DKK (5.73 GBP) per GB while their average gross income is 153,750 DKK (17,628 GBP) annually. See Table 1 for a rough overview of average yearly personal gross income in 2014 and examples of comparable internet subscriptions. Internet access is also associated with education level. The higher the education level, the greater the likelihood that someone has access (Epinion, 2014).

Internet infrastructure	2014 Average personal gross income[1]	Internet Subscriptions[2]
Fibre optic cable	245,029 DKK (28,094 GBP)	4Mbps 50GB data 599 DKK (68 GBP) 11.89 DKK (1.36 GBP) per GB
Radio station	170,812 DKK (19,614GBP)	4Mbps 30GB data 999 DKK (114 GBP) 33.30 DKK (3.82 GBP) per GB
Satellites	153,750 DKK (17,628 GBP)	4Mbps 20GB data 999 DKK (114 GBP) 49.95 DKK (5.73 GBP) per GB

Table 1 Average gross income and internet costs

The final prerequisite for e-democracy is usage. No usage, no e-democracy. In 2015, there were 3% more broadband subscriptions than in 2014. In the same period, the amount of data used increased with 48%. It was primarily users from districts that rely on radio stations and fibre optic cables that used the internet more (TelePost, 2016). The increased use seems to be a consequence of decreasing prices. In 2013, 50% of those who had no private internet subscription said that it was too expensive. In 2014, after prices had been decreased, only 24% said that they did not have a private internet subscription because of the cost. Instead, the prime reasons for not being online were no interest or no need (Epinion, 2014). Roughly speaking, the average price per MB data in 2015 was 1/10 of 2011 prices. At the same time, data traffic has multiplied by ten (TelePost, 2016). The graph below illustrates the development in usage and prices since 2011 (Figure 2).
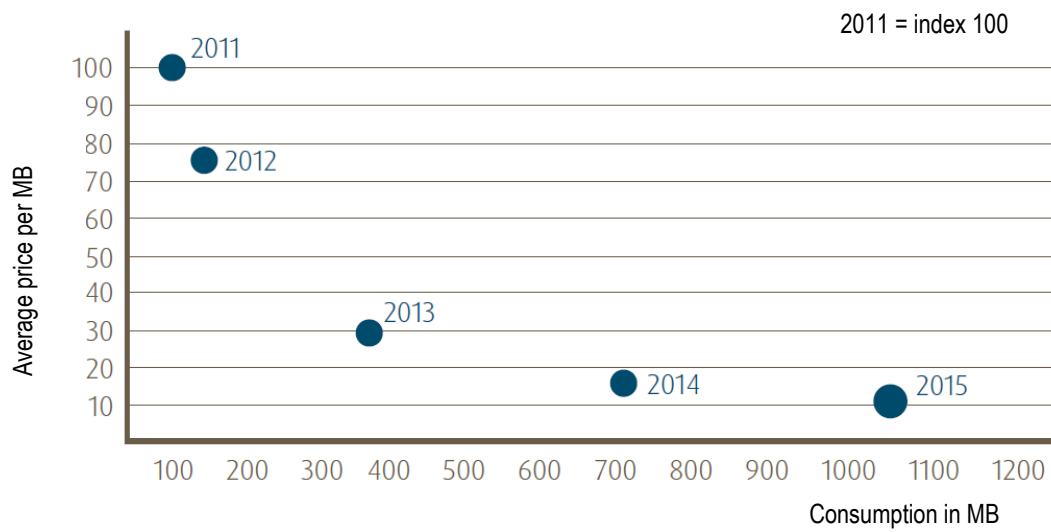
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[1] Statisitics generated at Statistics Greenland:
http://bank.stat.gl/pxweb/da/Greenland/Greenland__IN__IN30/INXP2.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=INXP329-08-2016%2009:43:29.
[2] TelePost 2016 price sheet. Available at https://telepost.gl/en/taxonomy/term/32.

2011 = index 100

Average price per MB

100 ● 2011
90
80
70 ● 2012
60
50
40
30 ● 2013
20
10 ● 2014   ● 2015

100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200

Consumption in MB

Figure 2 Development in usage and price. Adapted from TelePost (2016)

In addition to increased use of broadband connections, data traffic on mobile platforms increased more than 70% between 2014 and 2015. TelePost (ibid.) explained the increase as due to relatively lower prices and higher speeds and, in addition, the continued spread of social media. Like in most other places, social media has become important for the Greenlandic population. Only 17% of the population never use any type of social media (Epinion, 2014) and Facebook appears to be especially popular. Rumour has it that that worldwide, Greenland has most Facebook profiles per inhabitant (interview, Municipal administration, March 14th, 2014).

6

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