HYEON SU SEO

Reaching Out to the People?

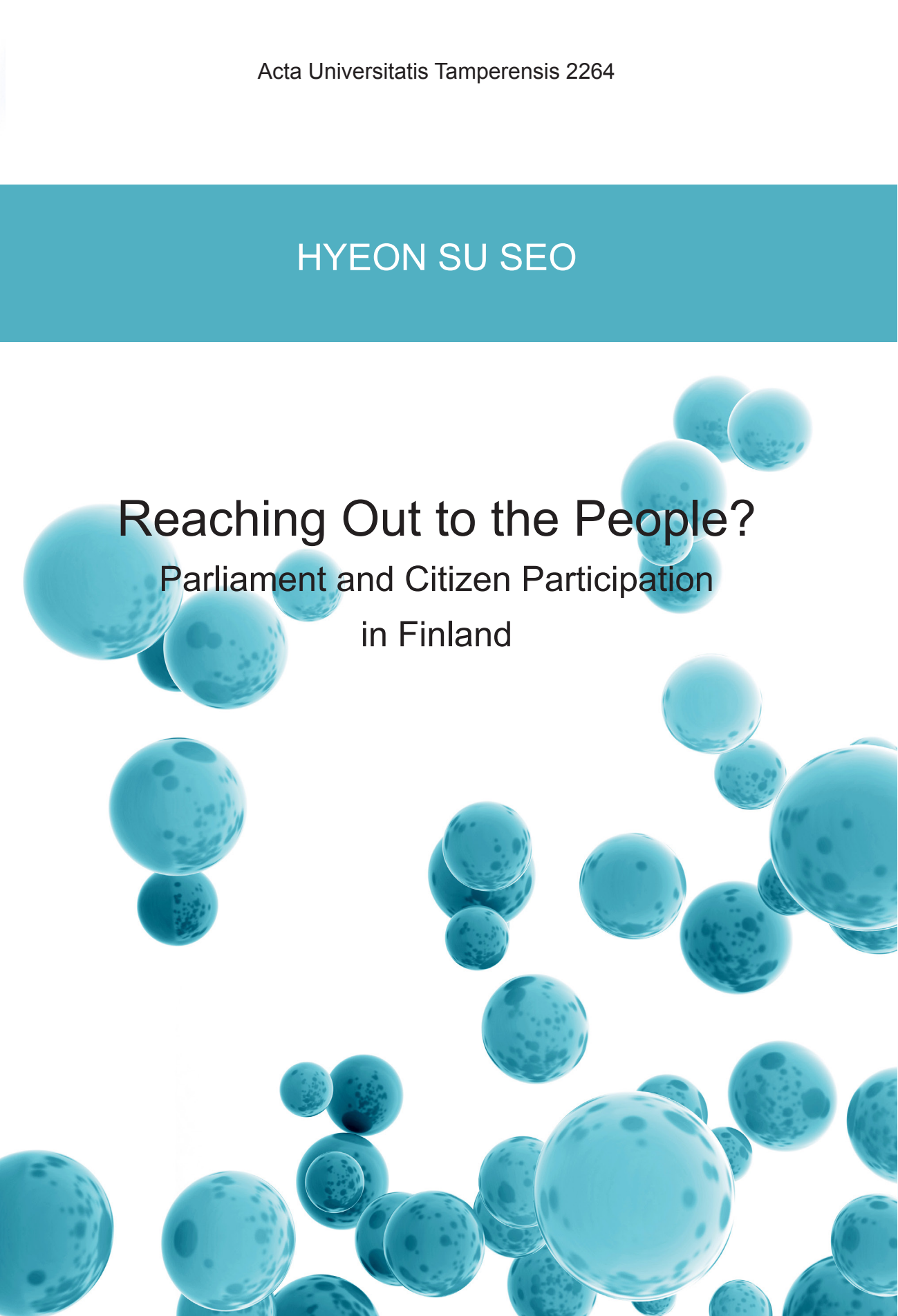## Parliament and Citizen Participation

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies a frontier topic in legislative studies – the relationship between parliaments and citizens between elections. Legislative scholars have mainly focused on the formal functions of parliamentary institutions, legislative-executive relations or party influence on parliamentary decisions, while democratic innovations discourses often ignore or bypass the central roles that parliaments play when linking the government and the people. The multi-dimensional linkages between contemporary legislatures and their electorates have not been sufficiently explored, although recent years have seen an increase in related literatures. (Norton 2002; Leston-Bandeira 2012a) The transformational political challenges facing most of established democracies have urged scholars to investigate this 'ignored' agenda from new perspectives. However, there is an increasing need for conceptual and empirical studies about the evolving nature of parliamentary representation, and the dynamics or tensions between established systems of representative democracy and new forms of citizen participation.

This study fills the gap in the literature by providing a systemic empirical study of parliaments and citizens in the context of Finnish democracy. Finland offers a particularly important case. While exercising a strong model of party-based representative democracy like the other Nordic countries, Finland is currently standing on the frontline of political and social innovations. Its 2000 constitutional reform has strengthened the roles of parliament (Eduskunta) and the PM in national politics while reducing the powers of the president. It also established the Citizens' Initiative Act in 2012, which enables the public to participate in legislative agenda-setting. The study primarily seeks to investigate how the Eduskunta has responded to the increasing public demands for more transparent, accessible and participatory decision-making and what political dynamics have been created through expanding public engagement.

To this end, this dissertation sets up a series of new analytical frameworks: (1) a comprehensive framework combining core normative principles of democratic parliaments (IPU 2006; Arter 2012) – visibility, accessibility, permeability, and inclusive and sustainable democracy – with full-scope empirical indicators for parliamentary public engagement activities; (2) 'Committee Consultation Index' scaling the civic engagement practices in parliamentary committees, ranging from standard (expert) consultation, co-consultation, to extensive outreach practices; and, (3) five-dimensional empirical criteria for evaluating the citizens' initiatives. Multiple types of data are utilized: (1) a wide range of parliamentary documents; (2) longitudinal and comparative statistical

data measuring the engagement activities of Eduskunta; and (3) around 30 in-depth interviews with MPs, parliamentary staff and civil society leaders.

Guided by systemic analytical frameworks, the study presents a 'legislative audit' style of empirical assessment on the public engagement of Eduskunta – (1) parliament as public space, (2) sharing of information, (3) accessibility of MPs, (4) media and digital engagement, (5) transparency of legislative process, (6) actual participation in legislative decision-making, (7) civic education and outreach, (8) parliament as future forum, and (9) strategy and leadership. A variety of measures and reforms are identified, from Citizen Information Center, free working environment for journalists, broadcasting of plenary sessions, Youth Parliament, to the unique role of the Committee for the Future. The analysis also includes a critical review of the closed nature of committee procedures.

The dissertation scrutinizes specifically the working methods of Eduskunta committees and the practical use of citizens' initiatives. Through a case study on the Social Affairs and Health Committee and its dealing with the Governmental Proposal of the Alcohol Act (HE 70/2013 vp) in 2013, as well as a full-scale analysis of the Eduskunta committees' legislative consultation practices during 1998-2014, it shows the committees held to the standard mode of consultation. Despite the advantages of confidential negotiations between committee members and party groups behind the closed doors, as well as a wide-scope 'functional' representation based on neo-corporatist mode of associational democracy, limited committee transparency and lack of public consultation channels like e-Parliament platforms cast a challenge on the future role of Eduskunta.

The study submits the latest empirical assessment on the institutional implementation of the citizens' initiative in Finland during its first parliamentary term (March 2012 – April 2015). The mechanism was introduced through a 'top-down' project of Finnish government. It has basic limitations of an 'agenda initiative' without a link to popular vote. Nevertheless, this participatory institution has been rapidly consolidated as an alternative channel of legislative agenda-setting. New political dynamics are developed by enhancing direct inputs from civil society. Demonstrating the potential of democratic innovations 'coupled' with formal decision-making institution, the Finnish experiment may provide a significant example of cultivating a dynamic and compatible relationship between established representative democracy and new forms of post-representative democracy. However, the adaptive capacities of parties and interest groups, and its long-term influence on democratic citizenship remain to be observed during the second parliamentary term (2015-2019).

Based on empirical findings and comparisons with the other Nordic legislatures, as well as the UK and Scottish Parliaments, the study finally presents key agendas for making the Eduskunta a more open and inclusive legislature, including opening up the closed committee system and facilitating the role of citizens' initiatives. It also argues for new

theoretical perspectives to conceptualize the changing nature of parliamentary representation, as well as of Nordic / Finnish democracy, beyond formalistic and conventional approaches.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee parlamenttien ja kansalaisten välistä suhdetta vaalien välillä, mikä on keskeinen kysymys tutkittaessa parlamentteja. Lainsäädäntöelimiä tutkineet ovat tähän saakka keskittyneet tarkastelemaan parlamentaaristen instituutioiden muodollisia tehtäviä, lainsäädäntöelimen ja toimeenpanovallan välisiä suhteita sekä puolueiden vaikutusta parlamentin päätöksiin. Keskustelu demokraattisista innovaatioista taas jättää usein huomiotta sen, että parlamenteilla on keskeinen rooli hallituksen ja kansalaisten välisenä linkkinä. Näitä monitahoisia yhteyksiä lainsäädäntöelimien ja niiden valitsijoiden välillä ei ole tutkittu tarpeeksi, vaikka viime vuosina tutkimus onkin jonkin verran lisääntynyt. (Norton 2002; Leston-Bandeir 2012 a.) Koska useimmat vakiintuneet demokratiat kohtaavat nykyisin suuria poliittisia haasteita, tutkijoille on syntynyt tarve tarkastella parlamenttien ja kansalaisten suhdetta uusista näkökulmista. On lisääntyvä tarve tehdä käsitteellistä ja empiiristä tutkimusta parlamentaarisen demokratian muuttuvasta luonteesta, sekä vakiintuneiden edustuksellisten demokratioiden dynamiikasta ja jännitteistä suhteessa kansalaisosallistumisen uusiin muotoihin.

Tämä tutkimus täyttää tutkimuskirjallisuudessa havaitun puutteen ja tarjoaa systemaattisen empiirisen tutkimuksen parlamenttien ja kansalaisten suhteesta suomalaisen demokratian kontekstissa. Suomen tapaus on tässä suhteessa erityisen tärkeä. Kuten muut Pohjoismaat, Suomi on vahvasti puolueisiin perustuva edustuksellinen demokratia. Samalla Suomi on usein poliittisten ja yhteiskunnallisten innovaatioiden etulinjassa. Vuoden 2000 perustuslakiuudistus vahvisti eduskunnan ja pääministerin asemaa kansallisessa politiikassa suhteessa tasavallan presidenttiin. Kansalaisaloitelaki tuli voimaan vuonna 2012, mahdollistaen kansalaisten osallistumisen lainsäädännöllisen agendan muodostamiseen. Tutkimus tarkastelee, kuinka eduskunta on vastannut julkiseen vaateeseen läpinäkyvämmästä, saavutettavammasta ja osallistavammasta päätöksenteosta. Se tarkastelee myös niitä poliittisia dynamiikkoja, joita laajeneva kansalaisten mukaan ottaminen on luonut.

Väitöskirja esittelee (1) kokonaisvaltaisen viitekehyksen, joka yhdistää demokraattisten parlamenttien keskeiset normatiiviset periaatteet (IPU 2006; Arter 2012) – näkyvyys, saavutettavuus, läpäisevyys sekä kansalaisia mukaan ottava ja kestävä demokratia – empiirisiin indikaattoreihin koskien eduskunnan toimintaa; (2) 'valiokuntakuulemisindeksin', joka tarkastelee kansalaisten osallistumista eduskunnan valiokuntien toimintaan, ulottuen tavanomaisista (asiantuntija)kuulemisista kansalaisten kanssa käytäviin neuvotteluihin ('co-consultation') ja käytäntöihin koskien kansalaisten

laajaa mukaan ottamista; ja (3) viisiulotteisen empiirisen kriteeristön kansalaisaloitteiden arvioimiseksi. Tutkimuksen aineisto on moninaista ja se koostuu (1) laajasta eduskunnan dokumentaatiosta; (2) pitkittäisestä ja vertailevasta tilastollisesta aineistosta, joka mittaa eduskunnan toimintaa kansalaisten mukaan ottamisessa; sekä (3) noin 30 syvähaastattelusta kansanedustajien, eduskunnan virkamiesten ja kansalaisyhteiskunnan edustajien kanssa.

Tutkimus esittää, että eduskunta voidaan 'auditoida' tarkastelemalla empiirisesti sen avoimuuteen ja kansalaisten mukaan ottamiseen liittyviä käytäntöjä. Tarkastelun kohteina ovat (1) eduskunta julkisena tilana, (2) tietojen luovuttaminen, (3) kansanedustajien saavutettavuus, (4) eduskunnan läsnäolo mediassa ja digitaalisesti, (5) lainsäädäntöprosessin läpinäkyvyys, (6) kansalaisten varsinainen osallistuminen lainsäädännölliseen päätöksentekoon, (7) kansalaisten informoiminen ja kansalaisten pariin jalkautuminen, (8) parlamentti tulevaisuuteen suuntautuvana foorumina, sekä (9) strategia ja johtaminen. Tutkimuksessa identifioidaan joukko keinoja ja uudistuksia Kansalaisinfosta journalistien vapaaseen toimintaympäristöön sekä täysistuntojen televisioinnista Nuorten parlamenttiin ja tulevaisuusvaliokuntaan. Analyysiin sisältyy myös kriittinen arvio valiokuntatyöskentelyn suljetusta luonteesta.

Väitöskirja tarkastelee erityisesti eduskunnan valiokuntien työskentelyä ja sitä, miten kansalaisaloitetta käytetään. Tapaustutkimus sosiaali- ja terveysvaliokunnasta koskien hallituksen esitystä alkoholilaiksi (HE 70/2013) sekä eduskunnan valiokuntien kuulemiskäytäntöjen kattava analyysi vuosilta 1998–2014 osoittavat, että valiokunnat pitäytyivät tavanomaisissa kuulemismenettelyissä. Huolimatta valiokuntien ja eduskuntaryhmien suljettujen ovien takana käytyjen luottamuksellisten neuvotteluiden hyvistä puolista, ja huolimatta laajasta uuskorporatistisesta yhdistysdemokratiaan perustuvasta 'funktionaalisesta' edustuksesta, valiokuntien rajattu läpinäkyvyys ja julkisen keskustelun puute (esimerkiksi hyödyntäen sähköisiä alustoja) muodostavat kasvavan haasteen eduskunnalle.

Lisäksi tutkimus esittelee viimeisimmän empiirisen arvion kansalaisaloitteesta vaalikaudelta, jolloin se otettiin käyttöön (maaliskuusta 2012 huhtikuuhun 2015). Aloitemekanismi syntyi Suomen hallituksen projektina, siis eräällä tavalla ylhäältä annettuna. Kyseessä on 'agenda-aloite', ja sellaisena siihen liittyy rajoitteita, muun muassa yhteys mahdollisuuteen järjestää kansanäänestys puuttuu. Siitä huolimatta tämä osallistava instituutio on nopeasti vakiintunut vaihtoehtoiseksi kanavaksi lainsäädännöllisen päiväjärjestyksen muodostamisessa. Uusia poliittisia dynamiikkoja kehittyy, kun kansalaisyhteiskunnan suoria vaikutusmahdollisuuksia edistetään. Kun demokraattisten innovaatioiden merkitys yhdistetään formaaleihin päätöksentekoinstituutioihin, tämä suomalainen kokeilu saattaa tarjota tärkeän esimerkin vakiintuneen edustuksellisen demokratian ja jälkiedustuksellisen demokratian uusien muotojen välisestä dynaamisesta ja kilpailullisesta suhteesta ja sen kehittämisestä.

Perustuen empiirisiin tuloksiin, sekä vertailuihin muiden Pohjoismaiden parlamentteihin sekä Iso-Britannian ja Skotlannin parlamentteihin, tutkimus esittää uudistuksia eduskunnan tekemiseksi avoimemmaksi ja kansalaisia enemmän mukaan ottavaksi. Näihin uudistuksiin sisältyy suljetun valiokuntajärjestelmän avaaminen ja kansalaisaloitteiden käytön edistäminen. Väitöskirjassa argumentoidaan myös uusien teoreettisten näkökulmien puolesta formalististen ja perinteisten lähestymistapojen sijaan, jotta parlamentaarisen edustuksen, samoin kuin pohjoismaisen ja suomalaisen demokratian, muuttuva luonne tulisi paremmin ymmärretyksi.

Hakusanat: parlamentit, kansalaiset, edustus, avoimuus, osallistuminen, valiokunnat, kansalaisaloite, eduskunta

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When I received an admission letter for the doctoral programme of political science from the Faculty of Management, University of Tampere, in a summer evening of 2011, I had no concrete idea about the actual ways that I would walk through for next five years. Of course, I had a deep interest in the Finnish and Nordic model of democracy demonstrating consensual policy making process and strong citizen engagement in public affairs, since I was passionately looking for an alternative model for young, troublesome democracy in my home country. However, it remained yet a very beginning stage of research plan. In order to realize my new vision, I had to begin with learning Finnish language and reviewing a broad scope of literature about the political systems and culture in Finland and other Nordic democracies. Through the course, I have encountered indeed many challenges and difficulties, from securing my family life in a very different environment in this Northern Europe to conducting an advanced-level academic research about a challenging topic of 'parliaments and citizens relationship in transition'. It would not have been possible to accomplish this venturous task without the support and cooperation of numerous colleagues and friends whom I have met during this journey. Here I would like to remember with a great respect some of their names and thank for their contributions to the project.

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politics, which became a great chance for me to learn about the ongoing debates over human rights and rule of law in Finland and Europe. Taking a cup of morning coffee and discussing with him in 'Tammelantori' (a historical market square in Tampere) has been a pure pleasure from time to time. Tarja Seppä has been an 'Enkeli' (Angel) to me, like she has been to many other students. Her warm attitude to everyone and value-based approach to things has shown a real example of good university lecturer and human rights scholar. She has always cared about my situation as an international researcher and encouraged me to be active and move forward vigorously. I am so grateful for this. Thank you, Tarja!

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Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my families. My parents have always supported my ways of life, including this challenging journey. I also owe my infinite gratitude to other family members, especially to my mother-in-law's warm regards. I hope this dissertation to be a small reward for their long wait in patience. Still, there remain two names to whom I would like to dedicate this dissertation: My lovely wife Mija Hong and my dear boy Sunjae Seo. This work would not be born in a true sense if there were no support from you! Mija has become almost an expert in the topic since she has listened to my thoughts and presentations so frequently. For my side, I also liked to hear her wise advice. I am really thankful for her love and enduring friendship since our 20s. 5 year-old child when coming to Finland, Sunjae is already in a fourth-grade class of 'Kissanmaan Koulu'. He has also endured very much increasingly busy schedule of father, particularly during the last year. However, he has been doing very well with many friends in school and I am truly proud of that. Thank you and I love you, Sunjae and Mija!

Tampere, Finland – February 17th 2017

Hyeon Su Seo

CONTENTS

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1 INTRODUCTION

Despite 'participatory turns of democracy' and notions of 'democratic parliament' (IPU 2006), the relationship between legislatures and citizens remains seriously under-researched. Legislative studies have mainly focused on institutional systems and behaviors of legislatures and the 'issue of power' such as relations between the legislature and executive, or parliament and party. An essential dimension of modern representative democracy – the linkage between legislators (both parliament and parliamentarians) and the electorate has been neglected for a long time, with several exceptions (Leston-Bandeira 2012; Norton 2002). Meanwhile, the discourse of 'democratic innovations' based on the premises of participatory and deliberative democracy have paid much attention to unconventional (online-based, personalized, and direct) forms of citizen participation or 'mini-public' style of single deliberative forums. (See, for example, Smith 2009; Grönlund, Bächtiger & Setälä (eds.) 2014) Despite their important contributions to expanding direct or qualitative public engagement with political decision-making process in many countries, a significant limitation is that the central roles of parliaments in contemporary representative democracy and their relationship with the public are often ignored or 'bypassed' in those new democratic experiments and related literature. (Beetham 2011) Hence, the changing relationship between legislatures and the public under the transformative challenges on standard forms of representative democracy, and the macro-level of political-institutional impacts of rapidly expanding democratic innovations are underexplored.

This dissertation fills the gap in the literature by studying the multiple dimensions of the relationship between parliament and citizens in the context of Finnish democracy. The Finnish democratic order has undergone extensive Constitutional reforms which have rearranged power relations among the central representative institutions – President, Parliament (Eduskunta) and the Executive, while strengthening universal human rights of the people in accordance with the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights) since the 1990s. (Raunio 2011; Husa 2011) The Eduskunta has also taken diverse reforms and measures to make its procedures more transparent and improve physical and digital accessibility. For example, its Committee for the Future (Tulevaisuusvaliokunta) was the first case of a 'future-oriented' parliamentary committee in the world when it was established in 1993. (It has been functioning as a permanent committee of Eduskunta since the 2000 Constitutional reform.) Citizens' initiative (kansalaisaloite), a new institutional channel for direct participation, was introduced by Eduskunta in 2012, to share the legislative agenda-setting power with citizens at the national level. However, Arter's (2012) study of the

relationship between parliament and citizens in Finland concluded that the legislative culture of Eduskunta remains 'closed' and 'elitist' (ibid. 291), which is starkly contrasted against the popular perception of open and intimate political culture in Nordic democracies. This study pays attention to this gap or disjunction between the real functions of the parliamentary institutions and the normative standards of democratic parliaments which require more open and responsive legislature and legislators. It addresses the issue by providing a systemic case study on the Finnish Eduskunta and its relationship with the public, based on a comprehensive analytical framework with detailed empirical indicators. Presenting a 'legislative audit' style of assessment on the whole scale of parliamentary public engagement activities, it places a specific focus on (both quantitative and qualitative) investigations of how the Eduskunta committees interact with civil society in legislative process. Furthermore, it contributes to the literature by adding a systemic evaluation on the implementation of citizens' initiatives in Finland between March 2012 and April 2015, analyzing their institutional design, practical experiences and political impacts.

1.1 Transformation of Democracy? Participatory and Deliberative Claims

Contemporary forms of representative democracy have faced structural challenges and declines of legitimacy since the late 20th century. There are growing concerns of the 'qualities of democracy' in most advanced industrial countries and it has been an increasing trend to question "whether a fundamental commitment to the principles and institutions of representative democracy is sufficient to sustain the legitimacy and effectiveness of current mechanism of self-government." (Dalton, Scarrow & Cain 2008: 1) Most of all, primary representative mechanisms like elections, parties and parliamentary institutions are losing public attachment and the alienation of the public from political institutions has deepened. Often blamed of 'money politics' heavily influenced by the special interest of financial and business sectors and too adversarial and non-compromising legislative culture (especially, in the US Congress and UK House of Commons), parties and parliaments have commonly experienced a decline of public trust.[1] On the other hand, less satisfied with conventional channels of political participation and equipped with ICTs (information and communication technologies) such as the Internet and SNS, citizens are demanding more transparency and accountability from their political systems, as well as more direct

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[1] The UK Parliament suffered a serious crisis of public trust in 2009, when a scandal took place over MPs' unethical and (in some cases) illegal expense claims. (Norton 2012) Gutmann and Thompson (2012) addressed the issue of too adversarial legislative culture in the US Congress which has experienced continually serious crises of legislative gridlock, highlighting the increasing gaps between the logics of governing and campaigning. The Finnish Eduskunta also suffered from a decline in trust after a campaign funding scandal during the 2007 election was exposed in 2008.

involvement in democratic decision-making processes. At the same time, a sheer division has been observed between 'active' and 'passive' citizens depending on factors such as education levels and socio-economic status. (Alsonso, Keane & Merkel (ed.) 2011; Cain, Dalton & Scarrow (ed.) 2008; Beetham 2011; Coleman & Blumler 2009; Ministry of Justice, Finland 2014)

With transitional challenges facing the late modern times of democracy, political institutions and actors are demanded to adapt their systems and culture to new political conditions. Moreover, some scholars argue that new modes of democracy such as 'advocacy democracy' (Cain, Dalton & Scarrow (ed.) 2008) or 'monitory democracy' (Keane 2009) have advanced, in parallel with increasing pressures to reform the traditional mode of representative democracy and to enhance direct forms of participation. In practice, greatly a wide range of 'democratic innovations' to engage the public to democratic process have been exercising across the world. (Smith 2009[2]; participedia.net[3]) Despite the debates over practical, macro-level effects of these numerous participatory experiments, the "classic – standard, or 'textbook' – model of democracy based on the role of political parties and representative institutions no longer adequately describes our political system." (Papadopoulus 2013: 3)[4]

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[2] Smith (2009: 1) defines democratic innovations as 'institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process.' In this book, he categorized such various institutions of democratic innovations into four groups: (1) 'popular assemblies' which are open forums to all citizens from New England town meetings, Chicago Community Policing, to participatory budgeting (PB); (2) 'mini-publics' – assemblies constituted by the mode of random selection, which includes a variety of deliberative experiments such as the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly (BCCA), consensus conferences, citizen juries, citizen panels and deliberative polls; (3) 'direct legislation' indicating referendums and popular initiatives connected to binding votes such as in the United States (at state level) and Switzerland; and, (4) 'e-democracy' indicating various forms of ICT-enabled citizen participation such as 21st Century Town Meetings, open or restricted scope of online discussion forums, online deliberative polling, and e-voting for direct legislation.

[3] *Participedia* (*PP*) is "an open global knowledge platform for researchers and practitioners in the field of democratic innovation and public engagement that was brainchild of two prominent democratic theorists, Archon Fung and Mark Warren." (Smith, Richards Jr. & Gastil 2015: 245) In total 616 cases of participatory experiments over the world have been registered on the *PP* website since it launched in 2011. This is regarded as a small amount of the experiments actually taking place. Around 50 different methods have been used in more than 38 countries – including participatory budgeting (89 cases), deliberation (44), collaborative governance (41), citizen dialogue (38), deliberative polling (21), 21st century town meeting (18), citizen conferences (14), online consultations (14), e-deliberation (10), participatory democracy (10), and so on. (accessed 21 January 2016)

[4] Papadopoulus (2013) offers one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the contemporary challenges of representative democracy, while covering a broad scope of issues in political theory and practice: challenges of party democracy, mediatization of politics, Europeanization and multi-level governance, collaborative governance and cooperative policy-making, deliberative and participatory experiments, and judicialization of democracy. Moreover, he argues that "the circular model of democratic 'inputs' feeding the political system and the 'outputs' it produces" – the 'formal' concept of representation based on the process of 'authorization' and 'accountability' - is increasingly being questioned since "a gap between the spheres of 'front-stage' and 'back-stage' politics" has considerably widened along with "the highly mediatized spectacle of party

Against this backdrop, participatory and deliberative democracy has challenged the electoral model of democracy. Advocates of participatory democracy have called for a 'democratization of democracy' since the 1960s and 1970s. They criticized the Schumpeterian elitist model of representative democracy which did not encourage civic participation beyond voting in regularly scheduled elections – the formal mechanism of delegating power to elites in which people vote for representatives who decide on behalf of voters while competing against each other for re-election. Against this 'thin' model of democracy (Barber 1984[5]), participatory democrats argue that every citizen has the right to participate in decision-making 'in their everyday lives as well as in the wider political system', and call for changing the existing 'undemocratic authority structure' into a 'participatory society'. (Pateman 2012:10) The 1990s witnessed the 'deliberative turn' of democracy theory (Dryzek 2000). Criticizing the limitations in an 'aggregative' model of collective decision-making, deliberative democrats emphasized the 'deliberative' roles of (formal and informal) public spheres mediating and circulating the political system and civil society. Its core argument can be summarized as follows: "the institutionalization of a greater degree of citizen participation and deliberation in the processes of political decision-making will improve the legitimacy of decisions by fostering mutual understanding, improving the quality of decision, and by developing better citizens." (Davision & Elstub 2014: 369) Habermas (1996) and Rawls (1993) elaborated theoretical justifications of legitimate democratic constitutional states in 'post-metaphysical' conditions of contemporary politics. Bohman (1996), Gutmann and Thompson (1996) developed the normative theories of Habermas and Rawls while making them encounter the complex realities of cultural pluralism, social inequalities and large scale of organizations. In addition, Young (1996) advocated 'communicative democracy' emphasizing a more inclusive concept of public communication beyond the rationalist interpretation of deliberation and public reasoning. (For the development of deliberative democracy theory over years, see Elstub 2010) Deliberative democracy theory has evolved to become a mainstream theory of democracy. In particular, the 'empirical turn of deliberative democracy' took place when a variety of empirical researches came up to supplement theoretical discourses by studying 'implementation, institutional design, and evaluation' of deliberative democracy. (Ryfe 2005)

Despite the success and broad expansion of 'participatory budget programmes' introduced in Proto Allegro, Brazil and the remarkable achievements of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly and the Danish Board of Technology (see, for example, Wampler 2004; Warren & Pearse 2008; Joss 1998), assessments of the impacts of such democratic innovations are ambiguous. A variety of issues have been raised in their

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competition and the intricacies of complex policy-making processes that largely escape public attention." (Ibid. 3-4)

[5] In this seminal book, Barber advocated a 'strong democracy' with 'strong civil society', in which private individuals can be transformed into public citizens through active participation in community.

designing, implementation and outcomes: How to ensure the representativeness and inclusiveness of 'mini-publics'? How to guarantee the impartial fairness of the organizing groups or mediating experts? To what extent are citizens able to control the policy agenda and influence in political decision-making process? Does the government have a comprehensive strategy for democratic innovation? Do the mainstream media have the proper scope of broadcasting or news reporting on deliberative initiatives? (Grant 2013; Smith 2009; Grönlund, Bächtiger & Setälä (eds.) 2014) Moreover, the contexts of political institution and culture do matter when implementing those experiments. For example, the same type of consensus conferences on the same issue of genetically modified food in Denmark, France, and the US were investigated to have shown different proceedings and different results, mainly due to different political system types among the three countries. (Dryzek & Tucker 2008)

A notable feature, or a limitation, of participatory and deliberative democratic innovations is that they usually focus on 'mini-public' types of single deliberative forums and non-parliamentary practices. As a result, the importance of their findings is difficult to establish. Moreover, they neglect the continuing significance of parliament - the singular representative body for legislation in modern democracy as well as the top-level national democratic forum for deliberative politics. In this context, a group of deliberative theorists envisioned 'a systemic approach' to deliberative democracy, which can be understood as a theoretical attempt to revive the ideas of Habermas (1996), who advocated a discursive democracy where parliament and civil society communicate vigorously through deliberative politics. Considering the limits of the 'empirical turn' of deliberative democracy, they emphasize the need to study the 'interactions across the various parts of the deliberative system as a whole.'(Mansbridge et al. 2012: 1-26; see also Chamber 2012)

1.2   Rethinking the Concept of Representation and a Lack of Legislative Studies

Developments in democratic theories and practices in recent decades have also affected new scholarly interest in the concept of representation. In her classic work, Hanna Pitkin theorized the concept in a comprehensive perspective, spanning 'formalistic', 'descriptive', 'symbolic', to 'substantial (political)' representation. (Pitkin 1972 [1967]) Formalistic representation focuses on the institutional mechanism of 'authorization and accountability' (Ibid. 38-59), while descriptive and symbolic representation deal with another aspects of representation where a representative does not 'act for' but 'stand for' the represented (Ch. 4 and 5). Meanwhile, substantive representation focuses on the activity of representing itself taking place in the political life: A representative - as an individual or a part of collective representative institutions - can and should 'act for' the interests of the represented while

maintaining more responsive attitudes to public opinions. (Ch. 6 and 10) Pitkin argues that the concept of representation includes these various characteristics of human political activity, so we should not simplify this concept into one single model of representation. In particular, the 'genuine' features of political representation are more likely to be found in the level of substantive representation.

Mansbridge also contributed to expanding our understanding of the concept of representation. In her influential article - "Rethinking Representation" (Mansbridge 2003), she distinguished four forms of representation in contemporary democracy: 'promissory', 'anticipatory', 'gyroscopic', and 'surrogacy' representation. Promissory representation refers to the traditional principal-agent model of representation, similar with the formalistic concept in Pitkin. (Ibid. 516) Anticipatory representation indicates the situation that "the representative tries to please future voters" while considering the impact of 'retrospective voting.' (516-517) Gyroscopic representation conceptualizes the representatives who act like 'gyroscopes' – voters place predictable candidates as representatives who can act just based on the internal belief and principles, without external incentives. (520-521) Surrogate representation indicates the possibility that a representative represent (social) constituencies residing in other districts where she was not elected. (522-525) Whereas promissory representation is based on the formal sanction mechanism of accountability, the latter three concepts of representation suggest alternative selection mechanisms of accountability – the possibility of 'good representation'. Pitkin and Mansbridge's work reminds us that there are multiple forms of democratic representation to be explored further; political representation or the relationship between the representatives and the represented should not be assessed only from the formalistic concept of principal-agent relationship. (Mansbridge 2003; Dovi 2011)

Of course, this does not mean that the electoral mechanism for selection and accountability, and the delegation chains of parliamentary governance are losing significance in contemporary democracy. The point is, rather, that the 'standard account' of democratic representation that understands representation most of all as a 'principal-agent' relationship based on the electoral cycle of 'authorization and accountability' may not fully understand dynamic and mixed forms of interaction between the representatives and represented beyond elections. (Urbinati & Warren 2008) Although the electoral mechanism provides the most stable foundation to ensure a legitimate and accountable government during a defined period, the highly competitive, costly and partisan characteristics of electoral campaigning combined with specific arrangements of electoral system are likely to show 'democratic deficiencies' in regards to fair representation of the socially marginalized, genuine deliberation and considered judgement of public policy. (Ibid. 390-391, 397-402) The formalistic concept of representation is also limited to understanding new forms and venues of democratic representation such as increasing numbers of 'self-authorized representatives' – a variety of civil society organizations and international NGOs,

individuals and new media, etc. - and new phenomena of 'citizen representatives' like in citizen juries, citizen panels, citizen assemblies and other new forms of public forums. (403-406)

This discussion leads to the relationship between parliament and citizens, 'one of the least studied areas in legislative studies' (Leston-Bandeira 2012: 265). Despite the thesis of the 'decline of parliament' and challenges from diverse areas and multi-levels of representative channels, parliaments still play a key role in linking the national political system with citizens, through legislating acts, controlling governments, exercising budgetary power, and offering a formal public forum for political will and opinion formation. (Kelso 2007; Norton 2002) At the same time, they are under the increasing demands to be more open and responsive to citizens. For example, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2006) has recommended five principles that 'democratic parliaments in 21st century' should aim to achieve: representative, open, accessible, accountable, and effective. Along with declining public trust in political institutions, alternative channels of political participation put pressure on contemporary parliaments to 'open up' their proceedings. Here, the real issue is how to narrow the representative gap between the parliament and citizens[6] – or how to connect the legislature more closely to the public. Several parliaments have tried to enhance public engagement through providing more information to the public, improving physical, technological and personal accessibility, and embracing more direct involvement of the public in legislative decision-making. In many cases, such innovations have not been pursued in a comprehensive and strategic manner, and it appears that there is a gap between public expectations for reforms and the reality of parliamentary operations. (IPU 2012)

Beetham who led the 'democratic audit' project for assessing the parliament and public engagement, as well as the above IPU (2006) report recommending a framework for contemporary democratic parliaments argue that more effective parliamentary reforms are needed to 'incorporate' various democratic innovations such as deliberative forums, citizens' initiatives and consultative mechanisms into the parliamentary institutions, and ultimately, to 'reinvent' more democratic legislative institutions and cultures demanded by the late-modern era of political regimes. (Beetham 2011) Vigorous political will with popular support, as well as coherent and effective programmes for parliamentary reforms and innovations are necessary. As the above discussion suggests, further studies are needed to

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[6] It does not intend to abolish all the distance between legislators and the electorate; rather, it will preserve the space for dynamic interaction 'between' them while advancing institutional reforms to cultivate the public trust and engagement. For example, 'advocacy democracy' is described to advance in parallel with the existing representative democracy system as well as the direct mechanisms of democracy. "Representative democracy is a base, and citizens also work through other channels of access to influence policy-makers between elections." (Dalton, Can and Scarrow 2008: 256) Also, John Keane argues: "The age of monitory democracy is not heading backwards; it is not motivated by efforts to recapture the (imagined) spirit of assembly-based democracy – 'power to the people'(…)"; "(…) all of the new power-scrutinizing experiments in the name of 'the people' or citizens' empowerment rely inevitably on *representation*."; and "Monitory democracy in fact thrives on representation." (2011: 219-220, *Italic* is original.)

understand better the relation between legislatures and citizens and to assess the real-life effects of parliamentary public engagement activities, while rethinking our understanding of the key concepts of contemporary democracy such as 'representation', 'participation' and 'deliberation.'[7]

1.3   The Nordic Parliaments, Citizens and Democracy in Transition

Despite their reputation for transparent and consensual decision-making systems and intimate relationships between political institutions and the public, the Nordic countries also face institutional challenges common in representative democracies. Since the 1970s, economic uncertainty, transformation of societal structure and political cleavage, and growth of a new political generation have created large challenges for the Nordic party democracies and welfare states. Although Nordic citizens still show a higher level of satisfaction with democracy and trust in their national political institutions than those of other West European countries, the trends of volatile and decreasing voter turnouts in elections, declines in party identification and increasing political detachment of the public, etc. are commonly found in the Nordic region, too. (Bergman & Strøm (eds.) 2011) Traditional class-based politics – particularly, the dominant power of Social Democratic Parties in three Scandinavians (especially in Sweden) and their five-party system have been shaken up. New parties like the Green parties and EU-skeptical nationalist populist parties like the Danish Peoples' Party, Finns Party, Norwegian Progress Party, and Swedish Democrats have become increasingly popular (Arter 2016). Meanwhile, the neo-corporatist system of collective interest negotiation and extensive public policy making has been considerably modified with variations in individual countries. Moreover, the EU integration and economic globalization have placed greater external constraints on the individual Nordic states' sovereignty and policy capacity, albeit the degree of influence varies by the countries.[8] Economic concentration and inequality have become deeper than before; voluntary associations and grassroots social movements attenuated; and international

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[7] As discussed above, these three concepts are not necessarily mutually exclusive; Rather, a new, inclusive understanding of those concepts which indicate respectively some essential aspects of contemporary democratic politics needs to be constructed (see, for example, Hendriks 2010), while asking how new forms of participatory and deliberative politics 'relate to' traditional forms of representative institutions. Geissel and Newton argue, "There is something wrong with this assumption that the new and the old are incompatible and alternative forms of government. New forms of direct democracy – whether referendums, co-governance, or citizens juries and mini-publics – are inevitably developed within and by the institutions of old forms of representative democracy." (Geissel & Newton 2012: 11)

[8] For example, Finland, Sweden and Denmark joined the EU but Norwegians rejected that option in referendum in 1994, and Iceland remains outside the whole process. (After the financial crisis in 2008, the Iceland government applied for EU membership, but the next government withdrew the submission.) Among 5 Nordics, only Finland joined in the Eurozone by the parliamentary decisions without a separate referendum.

immigration and (anti-) multiculturalism became to have much greater influences on politics. Those changes have undermined the foundations of consensus politics – that is, consensus-seeking political practice and culture based on the traditions of pragmatist-scientific approach to social problems as well as of broader involvement and compromise among the main stakeholder groups in policy making process - in the Nordic democracies while inserting new elements of 'antagonistic' political competition. (Andersen 2007; Einhorn & Logue 2003; Christiansen & Togeby 2006; Heidar 2004; Persson & Wiberg 2011)

Against this backdrop and sense of crisis in Nordic democracies, Denmark, Sweden and Norway have launched periodically the 'Power and Democracy Studies': Norway (1972-1980, 1998-2003), Denmark (1978-1982, 1998-2003), and Sweden (1985-1990, 1997-2000). 'Power and Society in Finland' (2007-2010) is the latest research project of power and democracy in Nordic countries, although it focused more on the challenges of the Finnish power structure. The recent results of those studies in the early 2000s revealed an interesting picture of diversity related to the 'health of democracy' in this region. The Norwegian study expressed a serious concern regarding the decline of democracy, such as the 'eroding quality of representative democracy', 'weakened parliamentary governance' and 'losing capacity of parties' mobilization.' (Østerud & Selle 2006; NOU 2003:19) Meanwhile, the Danish power study reached an opposite conclusion: "Denmark has done surprisingly well. The Danes are still democratically active, and the political institutions are democratically robust." (Togeby et al. 2003: 50) The Swedish Commission for the power study, on the other hand, concluded that the traditional political system and culture of Swedish democracy based on strong state-driven social engineering model has dissolved and recommended the government to adopt 'democracy policy' aimed at implementing participatory and deliberative democratic experiments. (SOU 2000:1; Lindvall & Rothstein 2006) The 'democracy policy' adopted by the Social Democratic Government in the early 2000s was, however, implemented in hesitant and non-centralized ways, due to the resilient power of political parties and a widely shared faith among political elites in the 'top-down' style of representative democracy in Sweden. (Montin 2007)

Although there are considerable deviations among 5 countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, they all have strong models of 'party-based' representative democracies; the Nordic style of 'working parliaments' appear reluctant to open up the committee deliberation process to the public. New forms of citizen participation have not vigorously and equally been pursued in all the Nordics. (Bergman & Strøm (eds.) 2011; Arter 2004, 2006, 2016) Finland offers particularly an interesting case as it has strengthened the power of the executive and legislature (Eduskunta) while limiting the President's power through a series of Constitutional reforms since the 1990s (Raunio 2011). In addition, the Eduskunta recently institutionalized citizens' initiatives at the national level to share the

legislative agenda-setting power with the public by a new enactment in 2012.[9] With the purpose of addressing the current challenges of democracy and particularly decreasing turnouts in municipal and parliamentary elections, the Finnish government also initiated long-term policy programmes for citizen participation (1998-2002, 2003-2007). (Ministry of Justice, Finland 2014)[10]

1.4   Main Research Questions and Data

Against this backdrop, this dissertation provides a systemic empirical study of the relationship between legislature and citizens in the context of Finnish democracy. The key research question leading the study is: *Whether and how does the Finnish Parliament 'reach out' to the people?* Three empirical questions are examined in detail: (1) How open and accessible is the Eduskunta to the public?; (2) How do parliamentary committees communicate with civil society actors in the legislative process?; (3) What are the distinctive features of citizens' initiative institution in Finland and what are the political effects of this direct form of citizen participation?

First, the study identifies what measures have been made to connect the Eduskunta to the Finnish citizens and assesses their real-life effects. It also contributes to the literature by introducing a comprehensive analytical framework to assess the parliamentary public engagement activities in a full scale. To this end, three normative standards of 'visibility', 'accessibility' and 'permeability' from Arter (2012) are adopted and combined with empirically useful criteria refined from various policy reports and literatures. The framework is then applied to the Finnish case. A 'democratic audit' style assessment of public engagement practices of the Eduskunta is presented in a full scale - (1) parliament as public space, (2) sharing of information, (3) accessibility of MPs, (4) media and digital engagement, (5) transparency of legislative process, (6) actual participation in legislative decision-making,

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[9] To date (16 January 2016), Finland is the only Nordic country to adopt citizens' initiatives at the national level. Following its implementation, from March 2012 to April 2015, more than 370 initiatives were launched. 6 were transferred to the Eduskunta and 1 initiative, to legalize same-sex marriage, succeeded in passing through the legislative process. See chapter 6 for a detailed assessment of the practical use and political impact of this new mechanism of citizen participation in Finland.

[10] These policy programmes were driven by concerns about 'alienation of citizens from political parties', 'weakening of trust', and particularly 'diminishing turnout' in local elections which had shown a clear downward trend from 79.5% in 1964 to 70.9% in 1992, to 61.3% in 1996, and 55.9% in 2000, the lowest record of turnout in Finnish democracy. (Kettunen 2008: 79, 83) Voter turnout in national elections has also shown a similar trend in local elections. (Raunio 2011) The programmes implemented various projects to promote democracy and citizen education, improve interaction between civil society and public administration, advance local democracy, and measure the need of legislative change. Finally, the Ministry of Justice established the 'Unit for Democracy' to implement a Finnish version of 'democracy policy' including 'making direct democracy stronger'. (Kettunen 2008: 85-86)

(7) civic education and outreach, (8) parliament as future forum, and (9) strategy and leadership.[11]

Second, after a general assessment of the Parliament-citizen relationship, the study specifically explores 'the world of parliamentary committees', which is regarded as the 'backbone' of the Nordic working parliaments where legislative deliberation and interaction with external policy stakeholders mainly takes place. It investigates the ways the standing committees of Eduskunta work in legislative processes by examining the following questions in detail: How do the committees communicate with their policy partners in civil society in legislative process? What methods and approaches are utilized for public engagement with committee process? How narrow or wide is the scale of these methods and approaches? How have consensual modes of policymaking changed under the legislative committee system? What different features are observed among different committees in legislative deliberation?

Third, the dissertation addresses the topic of parliament and direct forms of citizen participation by focusing on the recently legislated citizens' initiative institution and its political impacts. Following the general framework of Schiller and Setälä (ed.) (2012) mapping the diverse constellation of popular or citizens' initiatives in European countries, it asks the following empirical questions: Why did the Eduskunta enact the citizens' initiative legislation, which acts as a direct channel for civic engagement in legislative process? What are the distinctive features of the Finnish version of citizens' initiatives? Who have used them for what agenda and how has the Eduskunta responded? How has this affected the parliamentary decision-making system in Finland?

Multiple types of empirical data are used: (1) a wide range of parliamentary documents were analyzed, including legislative bills, committee reports and statements, memoranda and verbatim records of plenary debates, as well as parliamentary administrative documents and website materials, etc.; (2) longitudinal and comparative statistical materials were employed to measure the public engagement activities of the Eduskunta, committee meetings, hearings and other forms of public consultation, and parliamentary treatment of citizens' initiatives, etc.; (3) about 30 in-depth interviews with MPs, parliamentary staffs and civil society representatives were conducted.[12]

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[11] Each dimension of those criteria is comprised of several numbers of concrete indicators, which can be extensively applied to the further comparative or case studies of legislatures and citizens relationship. For more detail, see the Table 2.1 in chapter 2.

[12] All the interviews were made in Finnish language intending to let the interviewees speak as freely as possible. They are recorded digitally and then transcribed into a series of documents. All the English citations in the chapters are the author's own.

1.5   Overview of Dissertation

The next chapter explores the theoretical perspectives and empirical analysis framework for the study. Based on a wide review on the literature of the legislature-citizen relationship, interaction of parliamentary committees with civil society in legislative process, and legislatures and direct mechanisms of citizen participation, it justifies why and how the parliament-citizens relationship should be studied. First, a comprehensive analytical framework combining three normative principles with detailed practical indicators for assessing the parliamentary public engagement activities is established. Second, a 'committee consultation index' is introduced to measure the scale of committee's activities to communicate civil society actors (both organized and individual citizens) in legislative process. Third, the chapter develops an additional framework to assess the citizens' initiative institution newly enacted by the Eduskunta – focusing on its institutional design, practical use and political impacts.

Before moving towards the empirical discussion, chapter 3 presents the Eduskunta and its historical-institutional characteristics in a comparative perspective with other Nordic parliaments. The Nordic states are often regarded as a singular model of universal welfare states, with neo-corporatist policy making systems and consensus politics. However, distinctive features are also found among the 5 Nordic democracies, which have grown in similar but also considerably different historical-political contexts. Recognizing contextual variations in the Nordic parliamentary systems, the chapter presents a basic analysis of the Finnish Eduskunta and its historical and institutional character (for example, recent changes of constitutional power structure, political party and electoral system, legislative-executive relation, parliamentary procedures and standing committee system, etc.) from a comparative perspective.

Applying the analytical framework established in chapter 2 to the Finnish Eduskunta, chapter 4 provides a comprehensive empirical assessment of parliamentary engagement with the Finnish public. The study finds that the Eduskunta have improved many functions and processes, including parliamentary facilities, information services, digital engagement and committee proceedings to some extent, and championed media accessibility. The Committee for the Future is assessed as a pioneering example of a new parliamentary role for future-oriented, long-term policy forum. However, the study argues that despite the measures for more visibility and accessibility, the Eduskunta still lacks the political will to embrace a more positive approach for more civic engagement with parliamentary decision-making process, particularly regarding the operating ways of its influential committees.

Chapter 5 examines the working ways of parliamentary committees which deliver the main linkage between the state and civil society in legislative process. Guided by the 'Index of Committee Consultation', a case study of the Finnish Parliament (Eduskunta) - the Social Affairs and Health Committee's dealing with the Governmental Proposal of the Alcohol

Act (HE 70/2013 vp) is presented. The study demonstrates how the legislative committees actually work and interact with civil society in deliberating controversial social policy issues. Based on parliamentary document analysis, in-depth interviews, as well as longitudinal and comparative statistical materials of committee activities, the study finds that committee consultation in the Eduskunta is practiced mainly within the boundary of standard (expert) consultation; ordinary citizens seldom influence the committee stage of legislative deliberation. It indicates a challenge for the future role and working methods of parliamentary committees in Finland, which shares the features of consensual and associational democracy with other Nordic countries.

Chapter 6 deals with the topic of parliament and direct or 'crowdsourced' legislation by assessing the political impacts of newly introduced citizens' initiative institution in Finland. The Eduskunta established the Citizens' Initiative Act in 2012, which allows the citizens to participate in legislative agenda setting. Based on parliamentary document analysis and in-depth interviews with citizen initiators, MPs and parliamentary staffs, this chapter offers a systemic assessment of the institutional design, practical use and political impacts of the citizens' initiatives in Finland. Despite a basic limitation of 'agenda-initiative' without linking to popular votes and the 'top-down' project of Finnish government for democratic innovation, the institution of participatory democracy has quickly proven its 'functionality' as an alternative channel of legislative agenda-setting, while giving voice to 'hidden agendas' that the coalition government and established parties would not raise and expanding public discussions of them. The study finds, however, the publicity of committee deliberation remains still very limited and long-term impacts on the state of democracy and citizenship needs a careful observation.

Chapter 7 summarizes the study results of the relationship between the Parliament and citizens in Finland and reflects on the current state of democracy and citizenship. It provides a comparison of the Finnish case with other Nordic and European parliamentary practices and identifies the ways for parliaments to be more open and responsive to the demands of electorates. Identifying the contributions of this study to the literatures of legislative studies, democratic theories and Nordic politics, it suggests finally the direction for further academic and practical commitments to parliamentary reforms and innovations to respond to transformative challenges facing the contemporary representative democracy.

2 STUDYING THE PARLIAMENT AND CITIZEN RELATIONSHIP: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

As described in the previous chapter, the transformational challenges facing contemporary representative democracy have resonated with the continual 'turns' of democratic theories – 'participatory' and 'deliberative' turns of democracy, including 'empirical' and 'systemic' turns of deliberative democracy. Participatory democracy calls for more transparent and accessible public policy making processes in which ordinary citizens can participate. Deliberative democracy requires vigorous political communications through the various levels of formal and informal public spheres and deliberative civic engagement with the process of political opinion and will formation, in order to meet the pressures of permanent justification in producing the legitimate political decisions and authorities in the late modern society. (Pateman 1970; Barber 1984; Habermas 1996; Dryzek 2000; Elstub 2010; Mansbridge et al. 2012) Evolving concepts and theories of representative democracy have also contributed to enriching our understanding of political representation beyond the 'standard accounts' that focus on the electoral legitimacy mechanism of authorization and accountability on the basis of territorial constituency. In particular, the changing roles of political parties having functioned since the late 19th century as the main political agent to represent and mediate the conflicting social interests and as the key forces to control the whole legislative process and MP behavior as well as governmental programmes, have opened the door for new perspectives on modern representative democracy. How to conceptualize the multifaceted and interactive relationship between the represented and the representatives, not just relying on the formalist concept of principal-agent relationship in the delegation chain of parliamentary governance, became a frontier issue of contemporary democratic theory. (For example, Pitkin 1972[1967]; Mansbridge 2003; Saward 2006; Urbinati & Warren 2008)[13]

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[13] Despite their excellent theoretical contributions, Pitkin (1967) and Mansbridge (2003) still treated the concept of representation mainly within the framework of the electoral mode of selection and accountability. Meanwhile, many contemporary theorists emphasize the need to explore normatively and empirically the new and various notions of political representation without electoral connections, given the transitional changes of democratic governance in the late modern societies. In particular, Saward (2006) led the 'constructivist turn' of

In particular, the changing relationship between legislatures and the people 'between elections' have become a new focus of academic and practical commitments.

> "All in all, the reinforced discourse of political disengagement, together with the visibility brought in by tools such as new media, has caused a transformation of the parliament-citizen relationship into a key priority, putting parliaments under the spotlight to develop mechanisms for more effective linkages with public." (Leston-Bandeira 2012a: 269)

The parliament-citizen relationship remains, however, to be explored further, notwithstanding growing scholarly interests in new forms of democratic participation and the recent parliamentary investments for strengthening the linkage with the public. After a long time of 'neglect' in legislative studies, several pioneering studies have recently been published with sporadically expanded academic articles and policy reports dedicated to the topic. (Norton, ed. 2002; Leston-Bandeira 2012a) However, there is a need for further empirical studies with a more comprehensive analytical framework involving both normative and empirical criteria. Multi-dimensional parliamentary communications with the electorate – from MP-constituent linkages, effectiveness of new media and online engagement, publicity of parliamentary procedures, scale of the committee legislative consultation, to citizenship education and outreach activities – must be measured with a wide array of empirical indicators and evaluated from a more extensive perspective of parliamentary representation. It is needed, more specifically, to examine whether and how ordinary citizens can make influence in the parliamentary decision-making process beyond elections. Public consultation activities of legislative committees and citizen-initiated legislative engagement tools are particularly worth exploring in-depth.

This chapter addresses theoretical perspectives and analytical frameworks for studying the relationship between citizens and the legislature. First, it reviews the literatures of legislative institutions and their relationship with the people and a comprehensive framework is set up to analyze the whole scale of parliamentary activities for public engagement. Second, it focuses on legislative committees and their communication with civil society in the legislative process. In reviewing the literatures of legislative committees and civil society, the study introduces a 'committee consultation index' to measure the levels and scales of committee consultations with citizens. Third, the issue of parliament and direct or 'crowdsourced' legislation is addressed. While discussing the theoretical contentions between direct and representative democracy, the institutional features of *citizens' initiative* as a direct channel of citizen participation in the legislative decision-making are examined. A

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representative democracy theory - in his term, 'representative claim-making', highlighting the constitutive and performative character of political representation, which is evaluated to enhance the possibility to capture the dynamic – 'diverse' and 'complex' relationship between the representatives and the represented. (Ibid. 297-318; See also Rehfeld 2011; Disch 2011; Näsström 2015)

set of empirical criteria for systemic evaluation of the political impacts of citizens' initiative is also developed.

2.2 Previous Studies of the Parliament and Citizens Relationship

2.2.1 Addressing a lack of legislative studies

There is a paucity of systemic parliamentary audits that empirically examine whether and how legislatures connect with citizens. In his seminal three-volume work on Western European parliaments, Norton explored the relationships between parliaments and governments (1998: Vol. 1), parliaments and pressure groups (1999: Vol. 2), and finally parliaments and citizens (2002: Vol. 3). Highlighting that, "Much of the literature on parliaments focuses on the institution and its relationship to government. Less attention is given to the relationship between members of the legislatures and citizens", the third volume aimed to study the linkage of legislatures and citizens between elections. (Norton 2002a: 1-2) Providing a collection of case studies on the 'ignored' agenda, it focused on 'specific representation,'[14] or MPs activities to represent the 'interests of particular groups and individuals' through direct contact with citizens, addressing individual grievances and providing constituency services. (Norton 2002a: 3-4) Examining the MPs' constituency roles[15] in the context of the British parliamentary democracy, Norton stated:

> "Contact between constituents and MPs is (…) more extensive than it was before. MPs are kept busy fulfilling a number of constituency roles, especially those of a safety valve, local dignitary, and powerful friend. They are roles MPs take seriously and are increasingly time-consuming. The constituent-MP link is an important part of the political process in the UK. The MP is the most important means of contact between citizens and central government in the United Kingdom." (Ibid. 28-29)

The accessibility of MPs and their link with constituents constitutes a crucial dimension of parliament and citizen relationships (Mezey 2011) and there are growing demands for active constituency roles of MPs (IPU 2012). Diverse forms of public engagement with parliament as a collective institution of legislature and central public forum at the national

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[14] Norton distinguishes 'specific representation' from the 'general representation,' which means legislators' activity to advocate the 'collective' interest of citizens. General representation is exercised through political parties by aggregating the public opinions and translating them into public policy proposals. (Norton 2002a: 3)

[15] He identified seven constituency roles for MPs: '(1) *safety valve*, allowing constituents to express their views; (2) *information provider*, giving information, or advice, to those constituents who seek it; (3) *local dignitary*, attending local events; (4) *advocate*, giving support to a particular dispute on behalf of a constitution; (5) *benefactor*, providing benefits to particular constituents who seek them; (6) *powerful friend*, intervening in a particular dispute on behalf of a constituent; and (7) *promoter of constituency interests*, advancing the case for collective interests (such as employment) in the constituency'. (Norton 2002a: 21)

level remained under-researched in the volume. Some country-specific studies included the institutional levels of parliamentary engagement practices, but with a limited scope. For example, Saafeld (2002) analyzed the practical use of the Committee on Petitions in the German Bundestag. The Committee was given strong legal powers for independent investigation and the numbers of petitions have increased over decades. However, the proportions of successful petitions are different by sessions; many petitions were related to issues of 'conscience' and 'new politics' promoted by new social movements. (Ibid. 48-51, 61-62) Della Sala (2002) provided a broad description of the 'openness' and 'accessibility' of the Italian Parliament on the basis of historical-political contexts of Italian democracy after war, which has experienced increasingly turbulent changes in political systems and culture. He pointed out that despite 'a gradual opening of parliament to greater transparency and accessibility' since the 1970s and 'the rapid and impressive improvement of the information services' of parliament as well as ICT investments for more parliamentary accessibility (e.g. web-broadcasting of parliamentary debates), the dominance of 'oligarchic' political elites' of political systems including parliamentary institutions is strongly maintained. The gap between the '*palazzo*' (palace – political institutions) and the '*piazza*' (square or street – civil society) has not been reduced. (Ibid. 66-88) Notwithstanding those contributions to the literature, the focus of the volume was on studying MP-constituent linkages. The collective dimensions of legislature-citizen relationships – particularly, new forms of public engagement beyond conventional mechanisms of electoral participation and party democracy were not sufficiently investigated.[16]

Moreover, the actual relationships between parliamentarians and citizens vary by country. While the link of MP-constituency is 'extensive and frequent' in the UK and Ireland, it is hardly visible in Portugal and Italy, for example. The public perception of the constituency work of MPs also varies: It is positively seen in the UK, while Belgian constituents regard such activity as working for 'self-interest and for the benefit of special interests'. (Norton 2002b: 185, 191) Given such variations between countries depending on different electoral systems as well as different historical-institutional contexts, measuring the parliament-citizen relationship by relying on a specific dimension like the MP-constituent relationship might have a limitation. This is particularly true in Northern European parliaments, where PR-based election systems are common and MPs constituency services are hardly visible, contrary to the cases in the Westminster style of parliamentary systems.[17]

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[16] In that regard, *Parliament in British Politics* (Norton 2013: 199-279) gives a source of more integrative framework to analyze the multiple dimensions of parliament and citizens relationship, which sheds light on not only MPs' relationship with constituents but also parliamentary interaction with interest groups, institutional efforts to reach out to the people, and parliamentary reforms, etc.

[17] According to Mezey (2011: 29), "single member district systems, weak political parties, and short terms are a nearly perfect recipe for a locally oriented legislative body that are likely to fail in its role as a national policy

2.2.2   Recent literature and frontier issues of the parliament-citizens relationship

The 2000s saw an increase in literature on new forms of parliamentary interaction with citizens, such as the parliamentary e-petition system or online legislative consultation and MPs' exercise of new ICT tools, etc. (Coleman 2004; Norton 2007; Lindh & Miles 2007; Carman 2010; Linder 2011, etc.) Parliamentary reforms and new strategies of the UK Parliament (both Houses of Commons and Lords) as well as new public engagement practices of the devolved Scottish Parliament have attracted scholarly interest. (Arter 2004; Coleman 2004; Carman 2010; Halpin, MacLeod & McLaverty 2012; Leston-Bandeira 2015; McLaverty & MacLeod 2012; Norton 2013, 2007) However, those studies did not fully cover the multiple aspects and changing nature of the parliament-citizen relationship. Besides, the Hansard Society has published annual audits of 'Public Engagement' since 2004 and a series of policy reports about, for example, evolving representative democracy, connecting citizens to parliament, and citizenship education, so as to measure systemically the 'health of representative democracy' in the UK. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has also published two important reports (2006, 2012) which analyzed new features of 'parliamentary representation' in the contexts of 21st century democracy. Identifying parliamentary reforms and good practices to be more responsive to the public opinions and constituents' demands, they presented a guiding framework to make legislatures more 'representative, open, accessible, accountable and effective'. However, these policy reports are practical documents in their nature, which lack a robust theoretical examination of the issues.

It was the special issue of *Journal of Legislative Studies* in 2012 that gave full academic treatment to the relationship between legislatures and citizens. Reflecting a significant gap in the literature, Leston-Bandeira (2012a) presented a common analytical framework for the country-specific studies, combining structural variables and indicators of practice. Structural variables include 'historical context', 'institutional context', 'political culture of expectations'[18], and 'perceptions of parliament'[19], while practical indicators set up a list of questions regarding (1) parliamentary engagement programmes or resources, (2) access to parliament, parties and MPs, (3) contact mechanisms between parliament and citizens, (4) institutional design and functions of petition system, etc. (Ibid. 271-272) Each contributor provided a country-focused case study of European democracies (France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands and UK). Three additional regional

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maker. The United States House of Representatives is the prototype of such an institution. In contrast, multi-member constituencies, with strong political parties, and relatively long terms will encourage a greater focus on the part of representatives on national policy issues. The Norwegian Storting is an example of such an institution."

[18] This refers to cultural expectations of the relationship between parliament and citizens.

[19] It measures, for example, the trust levels in parliamentary institutions (parliament, parties and MPs).

case studies of Latin America, Africa and Asia (Bangladesh) were also examined. Moreover, two thematic and comparative researches examined the effectiveness of legislative petition systems and new media engagement which are regarded as 'the most visible tool of the parliament-citizens relationship' (Ibid. 272).

The case studies indicate that many parliaments have sought to enhance institutional communication with the public by using new ICT-tools, but there are considerable variations in actual parliamentary linkages with citizens. (Leston-Bandeira 2012b) Drawing on global parliamentary survey data, Griffith and Leston-Bandeira (2012) found that despite the potential of the Internet and 'new media'– particularly, 'social media'[20] – for making traditionally 'closed' parliamentary institutions more open, accessible and accountable, 'complex and slow processes' and the 'political' nature of parliamentary institutions, as well as limited financial and organizational resources, different legal frameworks of institutional procedures [21], and income divides at the global level act as barriers for effective parliamentary communication (Ibid. 496-513).

Studies also found that contact between MPs and constituents are strengthened generally but the characteristics of their relationship are extremely varied depending on constitutional, electoral and party systems, as well as the historical-cultural contexts of each polity. The studies revealed "how diverse the relationship between parliament and citizens can be, indicating that we should look beyond the formal representative mechanisms and focus instead on the activities, and the meaning, that permeate interaction between parliamentary institutions and the public." (Leston-Bandeira 2012b: 516)

Parliamentary petition systems have recently been revived by new technologies and citizens' initiatives have shown the potential for more and direct citizen engagement. These new participatory democratic mechanisms have yielded a mixed result in their political impacts. (Ibid. 518-520) Presenting a comparative review on the developments of parliamentary petition systems over the previous decade, Hough (2012) identified the main functions of petition system as: (1) 'providing a link between parliament and citizens'; (2) 'informing policy development and executive scrutiny'; and, (3) 'affecting policy change.' (Ibid. 481-483) Finding that some parliamentary petition systems like in the UK Parliament work very poorly – functioning like 'black holes', while others (e.g. the Scottish Parliament) work more effectively to deliver individual grievances and affect policy change (Ibid. 481). He identified several factors for effective petitioning system: clearly defined functions,

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[20] 'New media' is defined as 'the means of providing access to information and documents and of communicating with others by using ICT-based systems and services available through the internet and mobile communication devices'; while, 'social media' is defined as 'a subset of new media specifically designed to support interaction and two-way communication, such as Facebook, Twitter, or generic text messaging.' (Ibid. 497)

[21] For example, differently mandated roles of the legislative committees can affect different scales in adopting e-consultation schemes. (Ibid. 499-500)

procedural accessibility and fairness, adequately resourced system, and political will of the legislators. (Ibid. 487-491)

Finally, highlighting that the 'endless pursuit' of parliamentary transparency and accessibility is not necessarily led to the increase of trust, Leston-Bandeira argued for re-focusing on 'symbolic representation' (Pitkin 1972 [1967]) or 'representation as identification' (Vieira & Runciman 2008), which is not just about 'acting for the interests' of the represented, but about 'establishing connections' between citizens and representatives through identifying common identities. She claimed that this concept of 'representation as connection' would enable us to understand better the 'complexity' of relationship between parliament and citizens. (Leston-Bandeira 2012b: 521-524)[22]

2.2.3   Towards in-depth case studies based on a comprehensive analytical framework

Arter (2012) pointed out that the practical indicators which Leston-Bandeira set up to analyze parliament-citizen relationships were not derived from normative principles of democracy. Whilst sharing the framework of 'democratic audit' approach, he suggested a set of normative standards by adopting two principles of 'openness' (visibility) and 'accessibility' from the five standards for democratic legislatures presented by the IPU Report (2006), and by adding the principle of 'permeability' to measure the extent to which citizens can take part in the legislative process. Moreover, practical indicators in Leston-Bandeira's (2012a) framework appear to have room to be developed further, to cover the full scale of parliamentary reforms and outreach activities. There are multiple dimensions to be scrutinized besides the parliamentary petition systems and new media engagement.

Further empirical studies are needed to grasp the changing relationship between the parliaments and citizens from new theoretical perspectives. To this end, a complete analytical framework of which empirical criteria are derived from the normative principles of democracy should be established. In his own contribution, Arter applied these three normative standards to the case study of the Finnish Eduskunta and concluded (2012: 291):

> "Whilst the Eduskunta itself (the buildings/ plenary proceedings) is more accessible, both
> physically and digitally, the legislative culture has remained closed and elitist. Parliamentarians
> on the whole have internalized (…) the norms of classical representative democracy and have

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[22] Wolff (2013: 75) also argued that 'being represented' is not sufficient. Instead, 'feeling represented' is decisive for the legitimacy of contemporary representative democracy. Following Rosanvallon (2010), she stated, "Legitimate representation in postmodernity depends primarily on the continual interaction between constituents and representatives, based on the exchanges of arguments and the justification of decisions." (Wolff 2013: 27) It is notable at the same time that symbolic representation should be 'reflexive' without 'symbolizing the government with the images of historical national glory or evoking new threatening fears', and furthermore be permanently 'interactive' and facilitate meaningful (qualitative) engagement of the public with democratic governance. (Ibid. 75; See also Rosanvallon 2010: 214-215)

viewed with skepticism any attempts to change their established work practices. (…) with legislative scrutiny closed to the public, a lack of structured access for citizens through a petitions committee and a legislative culture largely content with the status quo and suspicious of forms of participatory democracy, the Eduskunta gives a lie to the Scandinavian reputation (not entirely deserved) for open decision-making."

Despite its valuable contribution to the literature, Arter's (2012) study of the Finnish Eduskunta and its relationship with citizens remains a 'rudimentary legislative audit' (Ibid. 276). Though it provided a broad analysis over the recent changes and measures for parliamentary communication with the public, the focus was on scrutinizing the changing nature of the relationship between parliamentarians and citizens. A full scale of practical indicators was not introduced to measure the relationship between citizens and the parliament as a collective institution of legislature. In particular, the parliamentary committees and their interaction with civil society in the legislative process need to be scrutinized deeply in both quantitative and qualitative ways. In addition, citizens' initiative allowing eligible citizens to share legislative agenda-setting power was institutionalized recently by the Eduskunta. The political impacts of this new mechanism of direct politics have not yet been addressed in detail.

2.3 A Comprehensive Analytical Framework for Studying the Relationship between Parliament and Citizens

The above discussions demonstrate why and how we should study the relations between legislatures and citizens and assess the real-life effects of parliamentary public engagement activities. This dissertation contributes to the literature in two ways. First, drawing on the previous academic literatures[23] and various policy reports[24], a comprehensive analytical framework for studying the relationship between parliament and citizens is developed. Then, based on interviews, parliamentary documents, and statistical data on parliamentary activities, the framework is applied to the Finnish Eduskunta in chapter 4, which offers a particularly interesting case of the changing relationship between the parliament and the public. In this section, a general framework for analysis for identifying and assessing the parliamentary practices for public engagement in a full scale is presented.

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[23] Norton (2002a; 2013) and the special issue of *Journal of Legislative Studies* (2012) particularly gave us the main references. Especially drawing on Arter (2012)'s approach, we combine his three normative principles with practical indicators to assess the parliament-citizens relationship in a full scope.

[24] Refer to, most of all, the IPU reports (2006, 2012) and publications of the Hansard Society (e.g., Hansard Society 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). The Hansard Society reports were particularly useful in setting up the practical dimensions and indicators of our framework below, as well as in identifying good parliamentary practices for interactive engagement with citizens (see chapter 4 for detail).

Following Arter (2012), *three normative principles* required for legislatures to be more open and responsive to the public - 'visibility', 'accessibility' and 'permeability', guiding a value-oriented legislative audit, are adopted. Arter defined these principles as below. (Ibid. 276)

- *Visibility:* "The extent to which parliamentary proceedings and the activities of MPs can be viewed by (are visible to) the public. This corresponds to the role of the citizen as spectator and the question asked is 'when can citizens spectate (in person and/or electronically) and what can they view?'"

- *Accessibility:* "The degree to which citizens have access, physical or digital, to MPs and the legislature. This corresponds to the role of the citizen as constituent and the attendant question is 'when do citizens have access to the parliament and their elected representative(s) and how readily available are MPs to citizens?'"

- *Permeability:* "The degree to which parliament is open and responsive to legislative initiatives and policy input from outside the legislature. This corresponds to the role of the citizen as policy partner, participating in the process of legislative change individually or collectively and the relevant question asked is 'are there structured mechanisms allowing citizens to participate in law making and does the political culture facilitate such participation?'"

In addition to the above principles, a fourth dimension of normative values for contemporary parliaments – inclusive and sustainable democracy, defined below, is introduced.

- *Inclusive and sustainable democracy*[25]: The extent to which parliament practices to reach out to the people, particularly socially marginalized groups, and to represent the 'future' or 'the planet'. These subjects have long been seen to exist as 'non-citizens' with a lack of legal, political or social citizenship in modern democracies. They are not heard in public spaces and under-represented in political and legislative systems. This requires a rethink of the conventional understanding of citizenship. The related question would be 'What institutional reforms and parliamentary activities have been made to involve 'hard-to-reach' groups and have their perspectives been incorporated into legislative decision-making processes?'

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[25] The principle of inclusive citizenship and political equality has been recognized as the core value of democratic ideals by many democratic theorists, from Dahl (2006) to Smith (2009). Nussbaum (2006) explored an alternative social justice theory to extend the principle of political equality and inclusive citizenship beyond the three traditional boundaries of disability, nationality and humanity, based on her 'capability approach' and re-interpretation of social contract theory. How to ensure democracy to be sustainable has been also a very familiar issue in the long tradition of Western political philosophy, which started from the reflections on the historically vulnerable (internal and external) conditions of democratic city states in ancient Greece. Crick (2000, 2002) and Ostrom (2000) emphasized the essential requirement of 'continuous civic engagement' and 'active citizenship culture' for sustaining democracy over generations. The Swedish Power Study Commission's final report (SOU 2000:1) also aimed to vision the sustainable future of Swedish democracy based on active participation and influence of citizens.

This fourth normative criterion indicates new parliamentary roles in responding to the contemporary challenges of increasing political inequality and the gap between active and passive citizens. It also indicates a need, or challenge, to transform the traditional mode of parliamentary representation in both horizons of time and space, in order to redress the multiple and systemic crises from the global climate change to the European refugee crisis. Table 2.2 demonstrates how these normative principles relate to the practical indicators, which are introduced below.

In order to arrive at a robust and generalizable operationalization of the normative principles, *nine practical dimensions with detailed indicators* covering the entire range of public engagement with parliamentary work are proposed. These nine indicators are listed below.

1. *Parliament as public space:* "Parliamentary institutions are symbols of democracy, generally hosted in iconic buildings that bear witness to their country's / region's political history and culture. In keeping with the democratic principles of openness and accountability most institutions are treated as public space, though the degree to which the buildings are truly accessible to the general public is increasingly restricted due to security concern." (Hansard Society 2011b: 27)

2. *Sharing of information:* Information sharing is now regarded as a clear requirement of open governance. Legislatures can share information through various means, such as operating a visiting center, publishing material on and offline, or having parliamentary libraries more open and accessible to the public.

3. *Accessibility of MPs:* The relationship of MPs with constituencies and citizens. Individual legislators can influence the public image of the parliament, and active communication or constituency work by MPs can contribute to improving the psychological access of the public to the parliament.

4. *Media and digital engagement:* Considering the rapid development of information and communication technologies, media and digital tools are now the easiest ways to make parliament visible to the public and to engage citizens with parliamentary work.

5. *Transparency of process:* Depending on the standing orders of legislatures, parliamentary processes may be designed quite differently regarding the publicity of the proceedings and the related documents. Distinctive characteristics are observed particularly in the publicity of committee meetings.

6. *Actual participation in legislative decision-making:* This criterion relates directly to 'permeability', the notion of degree that citizens can influence parliamentary decision-making (Arter 2012). Actual civic participation in legislative processes could be distinguished between various procedural stages or alternative participation mechanisms, such as initiating a legislative agenda, signing a petition or a citizens' initiative, or public committee hearings.

7. *Civic education and outreach:* As political inequality among different social groups has increased, democratic education for youth and citizens and outreach to socially

vulnerable groups are now acquiring more importance. Legislatures can use various methods such as youth parliaments and civil society partnerships to foster such links.

8. *Parliament as future forum:* Parliaments are now required to respond actively to future-related issues such as rapid technological development, climate change, or the changing global order. This places demands for innovative parliamentary approaches for examining long-term prospects based on scientific research and broader societal participation.

9. *Strategy and leadership:* As parliaments are inhabited with their own 'ways of doing things', parliamentary reforms or innovations may not be easy to launch and sustain. Apart from political will, effective communication strategies and fostering links with citizens depend on factors such as the allocation of sufficient resources and committed leadership (Leston-Bandeira 2014).

Table 2.1 Empirical criteria to assess parliamentary public engagement activities

No	Practical dimensions	Indicators in detail
1	Parliament as public space	• Are there formal programmes to open the parliament to the public, like Open Day/ Night/ Week programmes? • How open and accessible is the architecture and facilities of the Parliament to the public, in particular, to people with various disabilities? • Does the Parliament organize regularly public events such as exhibition of democracy or political festival?
2	Sharing of information	• Does the Parliament operate the visiting center with hired professional staff to communicate better with the public? • Are there special programmes like thematic tours that allow public guests to explore the parliamentary operation in more detail? • Does the Parliament provide information on not only parliamentary roles and processes but also parliamentarians, in easy language, foreign languages, and digital media, as well? • How open and accessible is the parliamentary library operating system? • Does the Parliament operate regional offices and info-kiosk?
3	Accessibility of MPs	• Do MPs organize meetings with the constituents on a regular basis? • Do MPs organize day visits or tour programmes of parliamentary building for 'hard-reach' groups in their constituents? • Is there a correspondence between MPs and individual constituents? How much time do MPs invest in answering questions sent by mail/e-mail/social media? Do MPs give practical help to constituents?

		• Do MPs keep in contact with constituents via social media (open Facebook page/ twitter / blog)?
4	Media and digital engagement	• Are there live TV programmes to broadcast the parliamentary proceedings? • Are there special TV programmes like documentary or current affairs programmes? • Are there radio programmes dedicated to deliver the parliamentary affairs? • Does the Parliament operate its own TV or radio channel? • Are there cooperative practices with newspapers to inform better the public of the parliamentary affairs? • Does the Parliament publish regularly its own journal or magazine? • How well designed is the parliamentary website, including individual websites or committee pages, from the viewpoint of ordinary citizens? • How active is the parliament to use new digital technology such as SNS, and interactive online game and App., etc. for communicating with the public?
5	Transparency of process	• Are plenary proceedings (debates/ministerial questions etc.) open to the public? • Are standing committee deliberations open to the public, including such processes as expert hearings and investigating visits? • How broad is the scope of broadcasting on parliamentary processes? • To what extent are the documents and records of parliamentary proceedings, including committee works, publicized and available by the public?
6	Actual participation in legislative decision-making	• To what extent can citizens participate in initiating legislative agendas, for example, through petitions and E-petition committees, or the mechanism of citizens' initiatives? • To what extent does the parliament open the legislative processes of scrutinizing and expert hearings to the public – for example, through online-forum (e-Parliament) and 'public reading stage'; submissions; open seminar and site visits for investigation, etc.? • What efforts have been made by the parliament for utilizing such methods of deliberative democratic forums as citizens' jury, consensus conference, and citizens' assembly? • Is there direct involvement mechanism of the public in making final decision of legislation, such as citizens' initiatives linked with (consultative) referenda?

7	Civic education and outreach	• Does the parliament operate youth education programmes such as school visits, youth parliament, and teacher programme? How do they work? • Does the parliament make efforts to develop community partnership and outreach initiatives to engage 'hard-to-reach' groups like regional and socio-economic minorities, disabled people and immigrants? • What are the main impacts of such programmes on narrowing the gap between the parliament and the public, especially the youth and marginalized social groups?
8	Parliament as future forum	• What is the main role of the 'Committee for the Future' (Tulevaisuusvaliokunta), including its functions for agenda-setting, developing methods and process of future policy making, civic education, and forum about the future of democracy? • What are the primary impacts of the Committee from the perspective of democratic innovations and parliamentary communication with civil society?
9	Strategy and leadership	• Is there a comprehensive strategy for parliamentary reforms and innovations to connect it to the citizens? • Is there well-established organizational structure and resources for such reforms? • Is the leadership and political will for the long-term policy for public engagement with parliament solid enough?

The nine practical dimensions are comprised of detailed indicators (see the Table 2.1), which aim to identify the areas and levels reflecting the multifaceted relationship between citizens and the parliament. It includes both collective and individual dimensions of parliamentary communication with the public – that is, institutional communications of parliament with citizens as well as the contact between MPs and the constituents. Each practical dimension is corresponding closely or broadly to the normative standards of visibility, accessibility and permeability.

The first five criteria from 'parliament as public space' to 'transparency of process' are closely related with the principles of visibility and accessibility as preconditions of civil participation. As previously noted, the MP's availability to be contacted by constituents and opening up the parliamentary proceedings to the public through the use of new media and digital technologies have recently attracted the attention of legislative scholars. Rapidly developing ICT-tools and new social media could increase public engagement with political processes while reforming conventional communication methods between the represented and representatives. However, the effectiveness of increasing visibility and accessibility of parliamentary work requires a careful assessment because technological innovations and an

increased use of new media do not automatically lead to an increase of public trust in parliamentary institutions, as Leston-Bandeira (2012b) observed.

The sixth criterion of 'actual participation in legislative decision-making' is directly connected to permeability, which indicates a core dimension of institutional level of communication between parliament and citizens. It can be identified by different forms and levels of civic participation in various parliamentary decision-making processes. Whether it is a parliamentary petition or citizens' initiative system, enhanced public/ online consultation in the committee process, deliberative citizen forums linked to legislative mandates, or direct involvement through popular votes, these mechanisms and practices need to be identified and assessed, with particular focus on their institutional characters, actual working methods and effects on the structural contexts of parliamentary politics.

The final three criteria of 'civic education and outreach', 'parliament as future forum', and 'strategy and leadership' focus on the long-term parliamentary strategy for public engagement aiming at more inclusive and sustainable democracy in the future. These dimensions indicate new challenges to be addressed by contemporary legislatures. Parliaments are now expected to reach out to the groups politically under-represented in conventional mechanisms of democratic governance – for example, child and youth, people with (mental) disabilities, immigrants, and indigenous people or residents living in remote rural areas. How and to what extent to integrate people who are likely to exist as the 'other' in modern democratic systems casts a difficult question regarding the physical/ social boundary and normative quality of parliamentary representation. The notion of the 'Parliament as future forum' also raises a challenging theoretical problem of whether it is necessary and possible to represent 'the future' or 'the planet' in order to overcome the typically limited time and space horizon, and human-centered modern representative politics. (Vieira & Runciman 2008: 182-192)[26]

All the dimensions necessarily overlap to some extent, also regarding their relations with normative principles. Table 2.2 demonstrates how these practical dimensions relate to normative principles.

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[26] Although the above authors cited in their book the example of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) which has operated the Commission for the Future Generation since 2001, it is the Finnish Eduskunta that under the parliamentary mandate first established in 1993 the Committee for the Future. The committee became a permanent parliamentary committee through the constitutional reform of 2000. (See chapter 4 for more detail.) Scholars like Eckersley, Dobson, and Goodin have also explored the concept of representation to advocate 'the interests of future generations and non-human nature'. (Saward 2006: 297)

Table 2.2 Inter-relations between normative principles and practical criteria of parliamentary public engagement activities

Normative principles	Practical criteria
Visibility and accessibility as preconditions of participation	• Parliament as public space • Sharing of information • Accessibility of MPs • Media and digital engagement • Transparency of process

Permeability and actual forms of citizens' participation	• Actual participation in legislative decision-making
	  - Direct involvement of final decision making
	  - Participation in deliberative forums
	  - Engagement with the committee deliberation
	  - Initiating legislative agenda: E-petitioning or citizens' initiative

Inclusive representation and sustainable democracy	• Civic education and outreach • Parliament as future forum • Strategy and leadership (political will)

2.4 Interactions between Parliamentary Committees and Civil Society

Based on a general assessment on the parliamentary practices for public engagement, two more specific empirical studies are added to examine deeper the 'permeability' question – that is, how and to what extent citizens are enabled to participate in the parliamentary decision-making process. In this section, the parliamentary committees and their interaction with civil society actors (both organized groups and ordinary citizens) in the legislative process are addressed, and a 'committee consultation index' with an aim to analyze the scale and methods of legislative consultation in the committee process is introduced. The next section will address the topic of legislatures and direct legislation through citizens' initiative and develop an analytical framework to study its institutional features, political impacts and parliamentary response.

2.4.1 Literatures of legislative committees and their relationship with citizens

Parliamentary committees have a crucial role in linking the nation-state and civil society by deliberating legislative bills and launching inquiries. Legislative scholars have paid little

attention to studying the practical ways in which parliamentary committees engage with civil society. (Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen 2015; Leston-Bandeira 2012) The literature of legislative committees had focused on explaining the origin and institutional design of the US Congress' committee system, exploring the reason for its strong power and policy influence on the Executive. Since the late 1970s, various theoretical approaches such as 'distribution theory', 'informational theory', 'party cartel theory', and 'bicameral-rivalry theory' have competed to explain Congressional committees. (Martin 2014)[27] On the European side, Mattson & Strøm (1995) provided a seminal work for the systemic and comparative analysis on the 'power, structures and procedures' of parliamentary committees, measuring the strength of committees in 18 European parliaments in accordance with a set of detailed criteria. In addition, the 1998 special issue of *the Journal of Legislative Studies* was devoted to the topic of 'the New Roles of Parliamentary Committees.' Confirming "parliamentary committees have emerged as vibrant and central institutions of democratic parliaments of todays' world" (Longley & Davidson 1998: 7), the authors examined the roles of parliamentary committees and their external and internal relations in change with a global scale. The main interest of this research was in the relation between parliament (committees) and political parties or government. The relationship between legislative committees and civil society are under-studied in those literatures.[28]

Interest group studies have paid attention to the 'strategic interactions' between parliaments and interest groups. Contrary to the US Congress, European parliaments were not the main target for lobbying of interest groups. The neo-corporatist model of collective interest bargaining has fluctuated since the 1970s and parliaments have returned to the centre stage of political decision-making in Europe. Scholarly interest in the legislative relationship with pressure group has grown as well. Increasing legislative roles of European Parliament (EP) and strategic approaches of European interest organizations to the EP contributed to the growth of literature. (Binderkrantz 2014: 527-530, 535) The studies indicate that interest organizations approach parliaments for policy influence - at least to affect agenda-setting in parliamentary stage of legislation, while legislators allow access to acquire 'information' and 'expertise' that are scarce resources, and further the support of 'social constituencies' or financial resources needed for re-election. (Ibid. 530-534) In that

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[27] Distribution theory argues that "committees exist to allow members to distribute particularistic benefits to their constituencies" for the re-election of MPs. (Martin 2014: 353) Information theory explains committees was created "to maximize members' acquisition and sharing of information" which contributes to MPs' specialization and policy expertise. (Ibid. Ibid. 356) Party cartel theory highlights the key role of political parties to shape the committee system and activities; "the party leaders 'cartelize' the allocation of assignments and use the assignments strategically to reward loyal partisan and punish members who have defied the leadership during roll-call votes." (Ibid. 358) Bicameral-rivalry theory explains that strong competition for policy influence between two chambers gave birth to strong committee system with delegated authority. (Ibid. 359)

[28] Rommetvedt (1998) offers an exceptional case study, which included the committee relation with lobbyists in Norwegian Storting. But it was treated only as a part of analysis on the external relations of the committees.

process of strategic interaction, committees are also utilized as a significant institutional channel for policy influences, through the contacts with committee members ('lobbying'), attendances in committee hearings and submitting evidences of legislative bills. (Norton 1999: 10; Saalfeld 1999: 57-61)

Interactions between legislatures and interest groups may increase the legitimacy of democratic decision-making process, which may be beneficial to the entire political system. Although government is usually the most decisive actor in public policy formation and ministers and civil servants are the main target of lobbying, parliaments are also appreciated channel for delivering the demands of civil society to government to change government bills or at least affect policy agenda-setting. In addition, 'outsider groups' without access to the government can make their voices heard through parliamentarians or parliamentary committees. This may increase the legitimacy of parliamentary decision-making, which provides the political system with a 'safety valve'. (Norton 1999: 13; 2013: 254-6) There is a risk for the parliament and entire political system to lose public trust when "pressure groups appear to enjoy privileged access to parliament at the expense of individual citizens, or some groups enjoy privileged access at the expense of other groups […]." (Norton 1999: 15) When illegal or unethical MP behavior closely connected to special interests are revealed, parliament and the entire political system can face a massive decline in public trust. Further, some societal sectors are still not sufficiently well organized to make their presence known in democratic decision-making processes. (Norton 2013: 256-259)

Beyond strategic interaction with interest groups – especially with 'usual suspects', how the legislative committees communicate with civil society actors including both organized groups and individual citizens remains under-researched, though. Recently, several case studies have examined civic engagement with parliamentary committees, particularly surrounding the new Scottish Parliament after the devolution process. Guided by principles of power sharing and participatory democracy, the Scottish Parliament committees were 'designed to enhance the role of civil society in the legislative process,' while involving the socially marginalized. (Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen 2015: 410) Arter (2004) examined new characteristics of the Scottish Parliament's committee system, comparing them with the Scandinavian parliaments', above all with the Swedish Riksdag and Iceland's Althingi. Suggesting a 'systematic' framework to measure the strength of committee systems on three dimensions of 'input', 'throughput' and 'output' (Ibid. Ch.2), he also shed a light on the 'exceptionally open and accessible character' of the Scottish Parliament's committees, as well as a broad scope of public engagement in committee consultation process, which is contrasting to the Scandinavian partners'. (Ibid. 23, 112-119)

McLaverty & MacLeod (2012) measured the legislative activities practiced by Scottish Parliamentary committees to engage with the public. Identifying various channels of civic engagement such as public hearings, committee meetings outside the Parliament and outreach travels, they pointed out that despite its effort for more civic engagement, there is

still a gap between principles on paper and real committee practices, especially in terms of equal participation of the socially marginalized. In addition, Halpin, MacLeod & McLaverty (2012) examined 'who' participated in the committee hearings of the Scottish Parliament during 1999-2007. Their finding appears to be ambiguous: Individuals (18.1%) and citizens groups (16.9%) occupied a large portion of 'activity', meaning evidence-giving to committees, while small numbers of interest organizations were heavily involved with committee consultations. (Ibid. 6-10) Leston-Bandeira & Thompson (2015) added a case study of legislative engagement in the UK Parliament. They studied a public reading pilot for scrutinizing the Children and Families Bill in 2013, which allowed the citizens to comment on the bill through the online forum. They found the majority of commentators were individuals (69 %); however, many of them seemed to be heavily mediated by specific interest groups. The authors pointed out also some limitations such as confusing process and lack of interactive discussion, which led the participants to feel skeptical on the effects of engagement.

One issue to be examined further is the claim of the 'trade-off' between open procedures and representative diversity or between transparency and effectiveness of legislative committee. Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen (2015) studied the contacts between legislative committees and external actors (institutions, interest groups, experts and individuals) in the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands. Analyzing the collected data of evidence-givers to the parliamentary committees in three countries, the authors argued that institutional procedures like the openness of committee access and agenda affect the 'composition' and 'concentration' of external actors who engage with committee process. They concluded there is a "trade-off between open procedures making room for many voices but also highly dominated by the political professional, on the one hand, and closed procedures reducing the amount of evidence but increasing the diversity in the actors providing it, on the other". (Ibid. 425) Fasone and Lupo (2015) studied a 'trade-off' relation between transparency and effectiveness of legislative committees. In a comparative case study of the US House of Representatives, Italian Chamber of Deputies and European Parliament, they argued that opening legislative procedures was 'forced' by recent technological developments, but new demands for transparency led to 'unintended consequences' which undermined the effectiveness of the committee's capacity to "[rely] on a certain degree of informality and confidentiality". (Ibid. 355) These trade-off or dilemmatic phenomena between openness and diverse representation or between committee transparency and effectiveness seem to raise an important challenge on reforming legislative committee system and culture, which requires more a balanced and integrative approach.

2.4.2 The 'Committee Consultation Index'

The previous literature – particularly recent studies of the Scottish Parliament[29] offer useful references for an empirical research framework to assess how Finnish Eduskunta committees communicate with civil society actors during the legislative process. Here, an 'index of committee consultation' [30] is introduced, which consists of three levels of legislative communication with which the committees incorporate public views into the legislative process. This is shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Committee Consultation Index

Methods and levels	Indicators
Expert consultation	• How broad or narrow is the scope of expert hearings? • How often do committees hold public hearings? • How open and accessible is the information of committee hearings and meetings?
Co-consultation	• Are individual citizens allowed to give committees their opinions and evidence on legislative bills? • Does the Parliament operate online forum or e-consultation system for citizens to participate in committee consultation? • What effects have these mechanisms had on parliamentary politics and the relationship with citizens?
Outreach meetings and fact-finding visits	• How often do committees hold committee meetings outside the Parliament properties? • Do committees organize fact-finding trips around the country and how frequently? • Do the committees initiate own inquiries or public events for civic engagement in their policy area?

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[29] For example, McLaverty and MacLeod (2012) and Halpin, MacLeod and McLaverty (2012) were particularly helpful to identify the possible channels of civic engagement with legislative committees.

[30] I am especially grateful to David Arter for his advice to set up this index, based on which I could develop the definitions of three levels of committee consultation, as well as their practical indicators.

1. **Expert consultation:** A low level of committee engagement with the public, which is a standard parliamentary mechanism corresponding to the traditional neo-corporatist models of policy making in Western European and Nordic countries. The committee can invite the civil society stakeholders and experts to submit written statements or present their opinions orally in the expert hearings, which can be held in public or private settings; the latter way is usual norms in Nordic parliaments. The invited groups provide the basic 'functional representation' to the parliamentary stage of policy making process and contribute to facilitating the 'output legitimacy' by giving their knowledge and special expertise in the field of corresponding policy area. (Wolff 2013) However, access is likely to be limited to privileged interest groups – particularly, the so-called 'usual suspects' (Halpin, MacLeod & McLaverty 2012:2) – and the representatives of those groups constitute, together with ministries, MPs, experts at research institutes and mass media, a regulated range of 'policy communities' or 'policy networks' in specific segments of public policy. (Norton 1999b; Jordan & Carney 2013; Rommetvedt 1998: 45-46) Systemic levels of 'over-representation' may cause a decline in the legitimacy of public policy, as well as of entire political systems. Narrow scope and limited publicity of committee hearings may imply a distant relationship between the legislature and citizens.

2. **Co-consultation:** A middle level of committee engagement with the public, which allows individual citizens to take part in the committee deliberation through on and off-line public consultation process. The UK Parliament in both Houses has made use of E-consultation since the parliamentary reform of 1998, where individual citizens who are interested can add their comments or submit evidence on bills in the committee deliberation process. Committees respond collectively to publicly submitted comments and evidence in a stage of the committee process. Furthermore, some commentators can be also invited to present their viewpoints orally in public committee hearings, which introduces more diversity and new perspectives into the formal consultation process. (Coleman 2004; Norton 2012: 415) In particular, the new ICT tools can facilitate such activities through various types of online forums such as 'E-Consultation' of the UK Parliament or '*Senador Virtual* (Virtual Senate)' of Chile (Hansard Society 2011b).

3. **Outreach meetings and fact-finding visits:** A high level of committee engagement with the public, which is more than a participative form of parliamentary efforts to be responsive to the real voices of ordinary citizens. Committees can hold meetings outside the parliament and organize fact-finding trips, which can be extended to arrange round-table meetings with citizens or residents. Moreover, they can develop various forms of outreach programmes or events to make the voices of socially vulnerable groups or under-organized sectors of society. For example, Scottish Parliamentary committees are reported to practice various activities to enhance civic participation, such as 'fact-finding visit, outreach meeting, round-table or seminar, civic participation event,

commissioned research, informal meetings, ICT initiative, etc'. (McLaverty & MacLeod 2012: 461)[31]

Guided by this index, the scales and levels of committee consultation activities in the legislative process of Eduskunta are examined in chapter 5.

2.5   Parliament and Direct Legislation through Citizens' Initiative

Another specific theme to be examined further is the relationship between parliament and direct legislation through popular or citizens' initiatives – more specifically, the questions of how parliaments respond to new civil demands of more direct involvement in legislative process and what political impacts are brought up by direct politics through citizens' initiative mechanism. This section reviews the literature of direct citizen participation in order to develop an analytical framework to evaluate the changing relationship between parliamentary institutions and the public in the wake of introducing the citizen initiative system. The discussion begins with a brief review of the historical development of direct democracy in the modern world and of debates over direct and representative democracy. Recent studies of popular or citizens' initiatives systems in Europe provide a common analytical framework for the case study of the Finnish citizen initiative system.

2.5.1   Debates over direct democracy in modern political conditions

Notwithstanding traditional fears of the 'tyranny of majority' or the rise of reckless populism, the ideas of direct democracy have inspired many participatory democrats from Rousseau (1762) to Pateman (1970) and Barber (1984) for reviving the classical ideals of assembly democracy while redressing democratic deficits in the electoral forms of representative governments. However, academic and public debates have centred on the institutional feasibility of direct democracy, policy outcomes and political impacts of referendums and citizens' initiatives, and the relationship between direct and representative

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[31] In the above committee consultation index, one more category might be added in the future - 'deliberative citizen forums' in case they are experimented or institutionalized in linking with parliamentary committee procedures. Whether citizen assemblies, consensus conferences or participatory budgeting councils, if a mini-public for deliberative citizen participation based on the principle of 'random selection' (Smith 2009) is incorporated into the formal legislative process of national parliaments along with appropriate legal mandates and financial and organizational resources, it might be able to make much meaningful impacts in the macro-level of democratic politics. However, it may require strong political will for parliamentary reform - in particular, when aiming to create a permanent status of and independent or new parliamentary organization.

democracy. (For example, Gamble 1997; Donovan & Bowler 1998; Lupia & Matsusaka 2004; Budge 2006, 2013; Altman 2011; Kiersi 2013; Fatke 2015; Hendricks 2010, etc.)

Rousseau ([1762] 2015: 76) famously proclaimed, "sovereignty, for the same reason as makes it inalienable, cannot be represented; it lies essentially in the general will, and will does not admit of representation … The deputies of the people, therefore, are not and cannot be its representatives." Criticising the limitations in representative governments, he advocated a direct democracy in which free and equal citizens participate actively in public decision-making process. His progressive education philosophy also involved the crucial claim of participatory democrats that citizens can transform from private individuals to public citizens through the process of participation in public affairs – that is, citizenship education through participatory experiences. (Doughty 2014) In addition, there is the example of Switzerland, where "direct democracy is central to the political process" (Lutz 2012: 18), which has proved that direct democracy can be implemented at multiple levels of democratic institutions in modern society. However, modern democracy is essentially founded on the representative government system, different from the 'assembly-based democracy' in ancient Greek. (Keane 2009; Manin 1997) John Stuart Mill ([1861] 2008) and the writers of the *Federalists Paper* ([1787] 2015), such as Madison and Hamilton, argued that representative democracy was 'inevitable' and furthermore 'desirable' because of the instability of (direct) democracy and incompetence of the people. Even the universal franchise was introduced and expanded only after modern industrial capitalism led to a wide range of social and political upheavals and an explosion of popular movements through the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Switzerland introduced referendum-based democracy after its 1848 revolution; popular (facultative) referendum and (full-scale) initiatives were institutionalized by constitutional reforms in 1874 and 1891, respectively. Many states in the US followed this example by making use of referendums and popular initiatives. (Lutz 2012; Smith 2009: 112) Despite the increased use of referendums for deciding national issues after the First World War, the collapse of the Weimar Republic and abuse of mass participation in totalitarian regimes negatively affected the notion of direct democracy. (Dalton, Scarrow and Cain 2013: 4-7) Public interest in direct democracy revived in the 1960-70s. With advent of new social movements, 'critical citizens' called for more legitimate and transparent government and direct public engagement with all collective decision-making process. Direct democratic mechanisms contouring the representative institutions – particularly, the legislatures and political parties have since been used more frequently over the world. (Ibid. 7-11) According to Altman (2011), 949 uses of direct democracy mechanisms (citizen-initiated mechanisms: 328, top-down mechanisms: 621) have occurred at national levels worldwide between 1984 and 2009 (36.50 events per a year). (Altman 2011: 204-205)

Debates about direct democracy and its feasibility and desirability in modern political conditions have continued, based on the classical dichotomy between direct and

representative democracy. Budge (2013) summarized the main criticisms against direct democracy as follows: (1) It is 'impossible' to assemble all the citizens in modern society to discuss and vote together. (2) Electorates already chose a legitimate government and programmes through general elections. (3) Ordinary citizens are not capable of 'informed judgement' and lack policy expertise. (4) The threat of majority tyranny and violations of minority rights are real. (5) Undermining 'intermediary' institutions like parties and legislatures is likely to lead to 'no coherent, stable or informed policies'. (Budge 2013: 26-32)[32]

Advocates of direct democracy argue that general elections do not guarantee the right aggregation of voter preferences for individual policies. They emphasize the traditional fear of majority tyranny or doubt of people's competence relates to democracy itself - not only to direct democracy. Indeed, modern democracy is based on the principle of universal franchise. Furthermore, citizens have become more educated and informed, and better citizens are educated through participatory experiences. (Ibid. 26-27, 31-34; see also Altman 2013: 52-58) Moreover, the proponents of direct democracy highlight the 'compatibility' of direct and representative democracy. They argue that 'mediated' forms of direct democracy with carefully-designed procedural rules may not sacrifice representative institutions, like in Switzerland, Italy and Quebec[33]; 'policy-specific elections' can bring up advantages to 'representative elections'. Rapid technological developments enable citizens to participate easily in debates and vote through online forums, e-collecting or e-voting systems. (Budge 2013; Altman 2013; Smith 2009)

Though the counter arguments from advocates of direct democracy sound reasonable, there are still important issues that require further empirical and conceptual examination. The core issues relate to three levels (input, throughput and output) of legitimacy questions: (1) What kind of institutional design, including legal framework, threshold levels and procedural requirements makes direct democracy work effectively without undermining the crucial functions of representative institutions?[34] (2) To what extent do intermediary representative institutions affect or intervene with the procedural treatment of 'citizens-initiated' mechanisms of direct democracy?[35] (3) Whether and how direct democracy

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[32] Budge listed 7 points of criticisms of direct democracy; we present here 5 by integrating closely related issues.

[33] California is regarded as a closer example of the 'unmediated' direct democracy where populist policy agendas like prohibiting raising the property tax were often voted to win. But US States also see 'party intervention on important proposals.' (Budge 2013: 33)

[34] This question is particularly relevant when aiming to provide systemic typologies of the direct democracy institutions and evaluate their institutional arrangements. (e.g. Altman 2013; Setälä & Schiller (ed.) 2012; Smith 2009)

[35] This question requires a deeper examination of the relation between representative institutions and direct democratic mechanisms, including adaptive powers and roles of political parties and parliaments, and mixed process of direct politics in reality.

contributes to redressing socio-economic inequalities and various forms of injustice – otherwise, stoking populist/ conservative agendas and leading to the restriction of minority rights?[36]

2.5.2   Citizens' initiatives as as an institution of participatory democracy

Along with referendums, citizens' initiatives are a main institutional mechanism for the public to participate in the political decision-making process directly. Citizens' initiatives are not a particularly new form of democratic innovation. For example, they have been in place in Switzerland since 1891 and in Liechtenstein since 1921. Following political upheavals and constitutional reforms in Europe, they were expanded to other countries like Austria (1920/ 1963), Italy (1947/ 1970), Spain (1984) and regional states of Federal Republic of Germany (1990). Eastern European and Baltic countries have integrated direct democracy mechanisms, including initiative institutions, in their new constitutions following the democratic transitions of the 1990s. Most recently, the European Union adopted the EU Citizen Initiatives in April 2011, which influenced Finland to establish the Citizens' Initiative Act in the same year. (Setälä & Schiller, eds. 2012)

The different historical and political contexts in which citizens' initiatives have been introduced are reflected in their institutional designs, practical experiences and political dynamics, which show great variations. For instance, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Latvia use 'full-scale initiative' connected to referenda; Austria, Spain, Poland, the EU and now Finland run 'agenda initiative' allowing citizens to bring their agenda to representative bodies without binding process of popular vote; while, both types of citizens' initiatives are practiced in Italy, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia. (Schiller & Setälä 2012a, 2012b) The procedural requirements for organizing initiatives, like the number of signatures required and name collecting periods are varied. Full-scale initiatives usually have stringent requirements while agenda initiatives have relatively lower thresholds. Both exhibit many variations by countries. For example, a full-scale initiative in Switzerland requires 100 000 signatures (2 % of the electorate) within 18 months, while that of Lithuania does 300 000 (11.4 %) signatures within 3 months. Agenda initiative in Slovakia demands 100 000 signatures (2.3 %) without time limits, but Italian system requires 50 000 signatures (0.1%) within 6 months. (Schiller & Setälä 2012b: 248-249) There are considerable variations in parliamentary procedures dealing with the initiatives submitted. For example, the Italian parliament does not regulate the procedural rules for citizens' initiatives in detail, so it has

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[36] Many studies have tried to answer this question by studying the outcomes of direct democratic experiments. Though the experiences of Switzerland imply positive consequences of direct democracy at the macro level of economy, social integration and civic participation (e.g. Krieri 2013; Feld & Kirchgässner 2000; Moeckli 2007), but there are still controversies of the policy effects of direct democracy.

no obligation to deliberate them. The Polish Sejm, on the other hand, has specifically regulated parliamentary procedures regarding citizens' initiatives. (Schiller & Setälä 2012b; Uleri 2012; Rytel-Warzocha 2012)

Citizens' initiatives have played different roles in different political contexts. In Switzerland, they have had a prominent impact on the policy agenda as well as the political system. Based on 'oversized government coalitions' and a broader scope of policy consultation with all parties and major stakeholders, a Swiss version of consensus democracy has been developed to avoid the challenges of citizen initiatives and linked referendums. (Luts 2012: 30-31) However, the right-wing populist movement recently succeeded in mobilizing popular support through a citizen's initiative over controversial issues like prohibition of immigration. This led to a debate on the need for 'stricter parliamentary control over the contents of initiatives'. (Schiller & Setälä 2012b: 256) In other countries, citizen initiatives have played quite 'marginal' roles – particularly in Eastern European countries where civil society has not matured and political systems are suffering from polarization or authoritarian legacies. In many countries, political parties (and well-established organizations) have played key roles in utilizing citizens' initiatives in raising their agendas and mobilizing voters. (Ibid. 257) The ECI is taking 'baby-steps', though it has a significant potential as the first tool for transnational democratic participation, a higher threshold level – requiring 1 million EU citizens' signatures from at least 7 countries - and the complex system of EU decision-making (and probably the weak will of European Commission) give main barriers to be addressed. (Kaufmann 2012)

Given the variations of citizen initiatives in European countries, the latest reform in Finland is worth paying attention. First, Finland is at present the only Nordic country that has adopted citizens' initiatives at the national level. Nordic democracies are well known for their consensus model of policymaking, indicating continuously higher levels of trust in representative institutions. The political background of the legislation of citizens' initiatives in Finland and institutional-political roles of this new participatory mechanism deserve thorough inspection. Second, the threshold level of Finnish citizen initiatives is quite moderate. A unique feature of its institutional design is that it permits e-collection for citizens' initiatives, which gives an exceptional example along with the ECI. (HE 46/2013 vp; Setälä & Schiller, eds. 2012) Practical experiences and outcomes of Finnish citizens' initiatives can establish an important reference for introducing e-collection system in other established democracies. Third, the first parliamentary term of its implementation (March 2012 – April 2015) saw a considerable amount of initiatives launched. Six cases were transferred to the Eduskunta and 1 initiative regarding the legalization of same-sex marriage in Finland successfully passed through the legislative process. New democratic dynamics have been developing in the wake of implementing citizens' initiatives in Finland. While it is still at an early stage of institutional operation, its policy and political effects need to be examined in more detail.

Though Setälä and Schiller (2012) offered a collective volume of case studies on the practical use of citizen initiatives in Europe, the Finnish case could not be included due to the timing of publication. In fact, very few studies have been conducted on newly introduced citizen initiatives in Finland. A case study of Christensen, Karjalainen and Nurminen (2015) examined the attitude change of users at a Finnish website (*Avoin Ministeriö*) through the online deliberation process to develop ideas for citizen initiatives. The research implies that direct outcomes of initiatives and fair and proper treatment in parliamentary process may affect the perception of political legitimacy. However, the scope of survey sample is limited and does not offer a comprehensive and systemic analysis on the practical use and political impacts of Finnish citizen initiatives.

2.5.3   Evaluating framework of citizens' initiative

To fill this gap in literature, a case study of the institutional features and political impacts of the citizen initiative in Finland is presented here. Setälä and Schiller (ed.) (2012) gave a basic analytical framework from which each contributor examined institutional design, practical use and political roles of citizen initiatives in specific countries and the EU. Through these studies, they also raised a normative question of "how initiative institutions should be designed in order to serve democratic ideals" such as political equality, inclusiveness and citizen empowerment. (Ibid. 5)

Following the above approach, an evaluating framework is developed with five empirical dimensions to scrutinize the institutional design, implementation and effectiveness of citizen initiatives. These include: (1) Political contexts and purpose of legislation; (2) Institutional features; (3) Practical experiences; (4) Parliamentary treatment; (5) Outcomes and political impacts. Evaluating the institutional features and practical use of the citizens' initiatives in Finland, we put a particular interest in examining how the Parliament has responded to this new institution of direct participation and what changes have been brought up in the parliamentary decision-making process in Finland. Given the centrality of the Parliament as the legislature and highest national forum in modern representative democracy, parliamentary procedures and rules, legislative deliberation process and results, as well as legislator attitudes towards citizens' initiatives would have crucial influences on the institutional success of the new tool of civic participation. On the other hand, citizen-initiated direct engagement in legislative process can affect the institutional dynamic of parliamentary decision-making, including the changes of MP behaviour, committee process and culture, and PPGs' strategies, as well as the relation between the executive and the legislative – for example, the governmental coalition and opposition parties - at least, to some extent.

Normative questions about direct democratic mechanisms and the three levels of democratic legitimacy (input, throughput and output) presented previously are tested through the empirical examination of these five dimensions. Each dimension has a set of concrete indicators, listed in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4 Assessment criteria for the political impacts of citizens' initiative

Practical dimensions	Empirical Indicators
Political contexts and purpose of legislation	• Historical use of direct democracy mechanisms in the country • Political backgrounds of legislation to establish the citizens' initiative • Policy making process of the government bill and policy stances of the PPGs • Political debates about the introduction of citizen initiatives in parliament and civil society
Institutional features	• Formal type of institution: full-scale, agenda or mixed • Threshold levels and procedural requirements: number of signatures, signature-collecting period, eligible age, etc. • Contents scope and forms of initiative • Methods of signature collecting – Whether to allow e-collection and how to verify authentication? • Parliamentary procedures: institutional status and priority in parliamentary treatment, period for parliamentary deliberation, obligation of committee deliberation, expiring, etc.
Practical experiences	• Numbers of initiatives launched and transferred to parliament • What agendas are raised up?: Constitutional reform and changing political system, socio-economic issues, value-oriented or identity issues, or mixed topics • Who does initiate?: Political parties or individual politicians, established interest organizations, voluntary activist groups or individuals • Campaigning ways and resource: Online campaign, offline mobilization, role of SNS and media, financial and cultural resources, etc.
Parliamentary treatment	• Debates in establishing parliamentary rules and practices • Transparency of parliamentary proceedings: Presence of citizen initiators, holding public hearings, publication of documents and related data, media engagement and online broadcasting, etc.

	• Scope and methods of committee consultation treating citizen initiatives
	• Attitudes of committee chairs, MPs and staff towards citizen initiatives
	• Distinctive features in chamber debates and voting
Outcomes and political impacts	• Consequences of legislative treatment: Voting results, numbers of successful initiatives, and policy recommendations
	• Indirect policy effects: Raising public agenda and media attention, opening up parliamentary process, increasing public interest in politics, and evaluation of citizen initiators, etc.
	• New political dynamics: Changes in MP legislative behaviors and party discipline, new political cleavages and change of committee culture observed
	• Extent of institutional consolidation and long-term implications

2.6   Applying the Analytical Framework to Empirical Studies

As stated before, the main objective of this study is to identify and assess the multi-dimensional and interactive relationship between the legislature and citizens from the new perspectives of parliamentary representation. Both theoretical and practical developments of contemporary representative democracy indicate an increasing demand for qualified studies to measure what parliamentary reforms and practices have been made to engage with the public and evaluate to what extent the core normative standards of democratic parliaments are realized in that process. In particular, the changing nature of democratic governance requires new (more inclusive and communicative) approaches beyond the institution-centered legislative studies and formalist concept of parliamentary representation based on electoral chain of delegation and accountability. Empirically, a variety of subjects need to be studied further, as listed in the practical dimensions of parliament and public engagement (see Table 2.1). In particular, the actual forms and degrees of citizen participation in parliamentary decision-making process are worth examining carefully. How the parliamentary institutions such as legislative committees, PPGs and individual parliamentarians have responded to the increasing demands for more direct and qualitative civic engagement in the legislative process needs to be explored deeper.

Drawing on the previous literature and relevant data sources, this chapter developed a series of analytical frameworks to study the multi-dimensional and dynamic parliamentary

communication with the public from new angles of democratic representation. First, it developed Leston-Bandeira (2012a) and especially Arter's (2012) approaches, by introducing a comprehensive framework to assess how open and accessible parliaments are to the public by connecting normative principles to empirically useful indicators. In chapter 4, this framework is applied to the case of Finnish Eduskunta. The chapter offers a systemic 'legislative audit' of the parliamentary civic engagement practices, from openness and accessibility as preconditions for citizen participation to parliamentary outreach activities and strategic programmes for inclusive and sustainable democracy. The central focus of the study is on the claim of 'permeability' – the actual extent to which citizens are able to influence the legislative decision-making process.

The study then pays specific attention to the legislative committee interactions with civil society actors in the legislative process. This chapter reviewed theoretical discourses around the topic – from the institutional roles of legislative committees, strategical interactions between committees and interest groups, new forms of legislative engagement activities in the committee process, to the trade-off problems between the committee transparency and effectiveness. Arguing for the need to study the 'world of committees' from a more inclusive perspective not just focusing on the institutional functions of legislative committees or on the 'functional representation' of interest groups close to the aggregative model of democracy, a 'committee consultation index' is proposed to assess how narrow or wide the legislative consultation of the committees is. Chapter 5 applies this index to studying the communication between the parliamentary committees and civil society actors including both interest organizations and individual citizens in Finland. It provides a case study of the typical committee's legislative deliberation process. It also analyzes the longitudinal and comparative statistical data about the general scope of legislative consultation activities in the Eduskunta committees.

Another subject to be explored deeper is the political impacts of a new participatory democratic mechanism in parliamentary process – the citizens' initiative. Reviewing the debates about direct and representative democracy, and the literatures of the citizens' initiative institutions in Europe, Setälä and Schiller (2012)'s general framework is developed further to evaluate more systemically both the institutional functions and political impacts of the citizen initiative system. Based on that framework, chapter 6 presents an empirical analysis of the Finnish citizens' initiative, investigating empirical dimensions such as the political contexts of enactment in the Eduskunta, institutional design, practical experiences, parliamentary responses, and political and policy effects. The special interest of study is in parliamentary interactions with the public and dealing with the new institution of citizen-initiated direct legislation.

3 THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE EDUSKUNTA: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, a comprehensive analytical framework for studying the relationship between parliaments and citizens was established by connecting the core normative principles of contemporary democracy with a set of practical indicators. Before proceeding to the empirical examination, this chapter addresses the historical and institutional contexts of the parliamentary relationship with the public. What are the distinctive characteristics of the Finnish parliamentary system to emerge over time? How have legislative-executive relations changed? In what electoral systems are MPs elected, and how does this affect voting patterns? How have party-voter linkages changed? How is the Eduskunta organized internally? Specifically, what structures, procedures and powers are given to legislative committees? Finally, how do Finnish citizens perceive their national Parliament, MPs and parties? In answering these questions, this chapter aims to provide a basic analysis of the parliamentary system in Finland from a comparative perspective of Nordic parliaments.

Nordic parliaments are often thought to provide the 'most similar' cases for comparison. All of the Nordic countries have strongly party-centered political systems and 'working parliament' models based on specialized and permanent committee systems. However, recent comparative studies have drawn attention to variations in Nordic democracies, which, while similar, have nevertheless emerged from national polities in specific historical-institutional contexts (See, for example, Esaiasson & Heidar 2000; Bergman & Strøm 2011; Persson & Wiberg 2011). A number of differences are identified within the five Nordic parliamentary systems. The Finnish variation exhibits unique features. These include a strong preferential election system, a highly fragmented party system and supermajority-seeking government formation practices. It has recently implemented a complete Constitutional reform. It also is the only Nordic country to have a Committee for the Future, and introduce a citizens' initiative system at the national level.

The following section begins with describing the historical landscape of modern parliamentary democracy in Finland from the establishment of the Eduskunta to the latest total Constitutional reforms. The institutional characteristics of the Eduskunta and Finnish parliamentary system are then analyzed, focusing on multiple parliamentary linkages connecting citizens to democratic decision-making. Third, we examine the legislative

committee system of Eduskunta; its structure, procedures and powers, as well as the role of committee consultation in the legislative process. The final section reflects on the historical-institutional context of the relationship between the Finnish parliament and citizens and considers its implications for further empirical study.

3.2   Historical Landscape of Finnish Parliamentary Democracy

The Eduskunta is the modern Finnish National Parliament, which was established through the transitional reform of the Diet of four Estates in 1906. The Diet was first convened at Porvoo in 1809, when Finland was ceded from Sweden to Russia as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. Having the special status of a Grand Duchy under the Russian Empire, Finland was given considerable domestic autonomy. Consequently, Finnish society witnessed development of the principle of liberal constitutionalism. However, the process of 'Russification' and late industrialization in the last decades of 19th century caused an upsurge of Finnish demands for national self-determination and massive social reforms. With a variety of trade organizations and social movements, the first Finnish political parties – the nationalist Finnish Party (1863), the 'counter-nationalist' Swedish Party (1870), the Social Democratic Party (SDP) (1903) and the Agrarian Party (1906) emerged as the result of several political cleavages: (1) the language conflict between Finnish and Swedish-speaking Finns, (2) the left and right cleavage and (3) the urban (industrial) and rural (agrarian) divide.

   After the defeat of the Russian Empire in the war with Japan and following political unrest in St. Petersburg as well as in the industrial towns of Finland, the Parliamentary Act (1906) was legislated to replace the outdated Diet with a modern unicameral (200 seat) legislature with universal suffrage and a PR electoral system. All citizens over 24 years including women were given the right to vote and to run for parliamentary election.[37] In the first Eduskunta election in 1907, Social Democrats occupied 80 of the 200 seats (40 %). 19 women (around 10 %) were elected as MPs - the first female parliamentarians in the world. However, social reforms through parliamentary processes were hindered by the majority (bourgeois) parties and leftists were radicalized in the wake of the Soviet Revolution in Russia. Immediately after the conservative Senate (the cabinet) declared independence on 6 December 1917, Finland fell into a bloody civil war between Whites and Reds in 1918. The war ended with the victory of White Finland, leaving a deep scar in Finnish society and political culture. Finland established a new Constitution in 1919, which adopted the republic

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[37] Finland was the first case in the European countries who introduced universal franchise system. Universal suffrage was introduced in Norway in 1913, Denmark and Iceland in 1915, and Sweden in 1921.

form of government and a semi-presidential system.[38] (Karvonen 2014: 12-13; Arter 2016: 22-24, 66-71)

Finnish society was deeply polarized in the inter-war period. After a vulnerable period of newborn democracy, Finland fought the Soviet Union during the Second World War; many restraints were imposed by the unequal YYA Treaty (1948-1992) with the USSR. The difficult relationship with its Eastern 'neighbor' (Russia to the Soviet Union) heavily affected not only international relations but also domestic politics. Restraining the practice of normal parliamentarism, the President enjoyed stronger power than the government and Parliament. In particular, Urho Kekkonen secured the unchallengeable authorities of President in both domestic politics and foreign policies through intervening in the government formation process as well as by effectively exploiting (potential) threats from the East. (Raunio 2011) The task of constructing the welfare state was also delayed until the tripartite negotiation system in the labor market was established in 1968. In a collaboration between the SDP and the Centre Party, significant enactments regarding labor market relations and social affairs took place from the 1960s to the 1980s. (Alaja 2011; Jussila et al. 1999) The Eduskunta was forced to pass related legislative proposals in order to confirm the results of income-policy negotiations. Parliamentary politics and labour market relations transitioned 'from conflict to consensus.' New consensus politics resulted in increased cabinet stability since the early 1980s, with Finland governed by strong surplus majority cabinets. (Karvonen 2014: 39-40)

New political challenges emerged as the President Kekkonen's era ended and the Cold War order winded down. During the presidential terms of Mauno Koivisto (SDP, 1982-1994), Finnish society witnessed the fall of Soviet bloc regimes, an economic crisis and the beginning of a constitutional reform process. After the serious economic recession during the early 1990s, Finland has rapidly transformed into a post-industrial information society and the expansion era of welfare state ended. Consensus politics has evolved into the 'Rainbow Government' seeking an oversized parliamentary majority in the mid-1990s. The conservative NCP could also join the cabinet in 1987 after a long time in the opposition (1961-1987). Liberated from the constraints of the Cold War in international relations, Finland joined the European Union (1995) and Eurozone (2002). These international and domestic changes led to the first major constitutional reforms since the late 1980s. First, strong Presidential power was limited. Presidencies were limited to two six year terms. The power to dissolve the Eduskunta as well as veto power for legislation was seriously limited.

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[38] In the five Nordic democracies, two peripheral countries (Finland and Iceland) have the semi-presidential system while three Scandinavian Countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) maintain the constitutional monarchies with parliamentary systems.

Moreover, citizens would vote for the President directly in a two-round system.[39] Second, Finland made a full amendment of the constitutional provisions of fundamental rights in 1995 in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights. It involved the economic, social and cultural rights in the constitutional rights and guaranteed the protection of universal human rights beyond the boundary of citizenship. Furthermore, the new Constitution entered into force in 2000. It strengthened the power of the Eduskunta and the government by limiting Presidential power of government formation and submitting government bills. Although Finland is still semi-presidential in terms of constitutional provisions, it is now considered closer to the standard mode of parliamentary democracy. (Parliament of Finland 2013; Husa 2011; Jussila et al. 1999; Nousiainen 2007; Raunio 2011)

3.3   The Eduskunta: Connecting Citizens to Decision-Making

The Eduskunta as the central representative institution plays a crucial role in linking the government with citizens. As the sole legislative body, it is given the constitutional mandate to deliberate government bills and parliamentary motions for legislation and the state budget. It carries essential functions for political decision-making through electing the PM, approving governmental programmes and budgets, overseeing executive activities, discussing EU matters, and ratifying the international treaties and agreements. With improved media and digital accessibility as well as increasing parliamentary debates in the floor, the chamber offers the most significant public forum for Finnish democracy. Parliamentary committees provide the main link for functional representation between the Eduskunta and civil society in the legislative process. In addition, the Eduskunta now has the right to deal with citizens' initiatives after more than 50 000 eligible signatures have been collected. (Husa 64-84; Tiitinen 2007: 66-73)

The main institutional characteristics of the Eduskunta are examined below. Five dimensions of parliamentary linkages between the representative government and the people are discussed: (1) Constitutional rearrangements of the relation between the legislature and executive; (2) Parliamentary election system and its institutional effects, (3) Voting turnouts and weakening linkages between parties and voters; (4) Socio-demographic features of MPs and 'descriptive representation'; and (5) Public perceptions on the parliamentary institutions.

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[39] Direct election of the President was introduced in the early 1990s and the turnouts of presidential election are usually higher than of parliamentary election. President has also commonly enjoyed higher levels of public trust than both the Eduskunta and the government in Finland. It may hint the potential 'tensions between the cabinet and the president, particularly in foreign policy issues'. (Raunio 2011: 145)

3.3.1   Constitutional reforms and transition to a standard mode of parliamentarism

The recent Constitutional reforms have transformed the basic institutional characters of representative democracy in Finland, which was 'the oldest semi-presidential country in Europe' (Raunio 2012: 574). Most of all, the 2000 Constitution transferred the power of government formation to Parliament, which had been 'strongly influenced' by the President under the 1919 Constitution. As 'the supreme executive power', the President had the power to appoint the 'formatuer' – negotiator for coalition-building after general elections, and generally became the PM. There has been no single majority party in Finland. The process of coalition-building was inevitable and beneficial for the Presidential influence. When negotiations did not succeed in forming a coalition government, the President could appoint a 'caretaker' government comprised of bureaucrats, which has happened six times in Finnish history. Moreover, he often influenced the selection of ministers (Raunio 2011: 118-119).

In the new Constitution, meanwhile, the Finnish government is accountable not to the President but to the Parliament. (Raunio 2012: 574) Limiting those powers of the President, the Constitution entered into force in 2000 states clearly that the PPGs are to negotiate the governmental programme and composition and then the PM is to be elected in the parliamentary chamber (Section 61). The President still performs functions like appointing the PM and other Ministers, but this remains primarily a formal procedure to approve parliamentary decisions. The Presidential power to dissolve the parliament before general election was tied with to the PM's prerogative. President can temporarily suspend legislative bills approved by the Eduskunta without actual veto power. In addition, new governments are now required to submit the governmental programme to the Eduskunta immediately after the cabinet formation. This has contributed to an increase in the influence of the legislature by virtue of its power to approve and limit the boundaries of governmental programmes. Due to these constitutional rearrangements, Finland is now recognized to be closer to the standard mode of parliamentarism although it is still semi-presidential constitutionally. (Raunio 2011, 2012; Constitution of Finland)

The new Constitution also strengthened the legislative capacities of the Eduskunta to influence foreign policy making – particularly, in deliberating EU-related affairs, while reducing the powers of the President to a considerable extent and giving the government 'exclusive' jurisdiction over EU policies. During the postwar era, foreign affairs had been regarded as under the exclusive jurisdiction of the President, especially in matters related to the Soviet Union. The 2000 Constitution has rearranged the powers of foreign policy making between the President and the government as well as between the executive and legislative. The PM and the cabinet now have the mandate to deal with EU affairs while the President plays the leading role in non-EU related foreign policies based on cooperation with the government. (Raunio 2011, 2012) Section 93 of Constitution states that, "The

foreign policy of Finland is directed by the President of the Republic in cooperation with the Government." However, this provision of co-leadership of foreign policy between the President and the government has made 'drawing a clear line between the EU and foreign policy' difficult (Raunio 2012: 579). The 2012 Constitutional amendment clarified the issue by stating that "The Prime Minister represents Finland on the European Council. Unless the Government exceptionally decides otherwise, the Prime Minister also represents Finland in other activities of the European Union requiring the participation of the highest level of State." (Section 66)[40] The Eduskunta has also been given the power to influence EU policy making. For example, the Grand Committee, which was originally introduced to function like a second chamber, was reoriented to work as the EU Committee. The Foreign Affairs Committee considers the common foreign and security policies (CFSP) of the EU; and other specialized standing committees also scrutinize EU matters within their jurisdictions and frequently submit reports or statements to the Grand Committee. The Constitution states that the PM and government should provide Eduskunta committees with proper information of EU matters. (Section 96)[41] This increased role of the Eduskunta in dealing with EU matters serves as an example that the national parliament can work effectively to respond to the challenge of EU integration processes. (Husa 2011; Helander & Pekonen 2007; Nousiainen 2007; Raunio 2011)

3.3.2   PR-based open list electoral system and 'personalization of politics'

The Eduskunta is a unicameral assembly comprised of 200 MPs, of which the number has not changed since the 1906 establishment of the modern parliament. After a recent reform of electoral districts, constituencies are now divided into 12 electoral districts in accordance with population size and one single-member district of Åland, an autonomous province of Swedish speaking residents.[42] There is no formal electoral threshold in Finland. This differs from both Sweden and Norway, which operate at a minimum of 4 per cent. However,

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[40] Nevertheless, there seems to be still a room of disputes between the President and the government about the legitimate jurisdiction of the EU and foreign policies. Furthermore, the Finnish President are continually playing an active role in forming and implementing the foreign and security policies – especially in recent critical developments in international relations like the Russian intervention on Ukraine matters. (Raunio, Tapio. "Presidentit koettelevat valtansa rajoja", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31 October 2015.)

[41] The Section 97 states also that "The Prime Minister shall provide the Parliament or a Committee with information on matters to be dealt with in a European Council beforehand and without delay after a meeting of the Council. (…) The appropriate Committee of the Parliament may issue a statement to the Government on the basis of the reports or information referred above."

[42] The North Savo and North Karelia districts were merged into the Savo-Karelia district, while the Kymi and South Savo districts were integrated into the South East Finland district, before the 2015 general election. (Nurmi & Nurmi 2015)

differences in district magnitudes between Northeastern rural areas and Southern urban regions - from 7 at Lapland (12.5 %) to 35 at Uusimaa (2.75 %) - function as an 'effective electoral threshold.' (Nurmi & Nurmi 2015: 434)

Finnish parliamentarians are selected by the PR system of voting like other Nordic countries, but the Eduskunta have since 1954 exercised an open list system which forces the voters to select a candidate on a particular party or electoral alliance list; there is no option for the electorates to cast 'a party vote'.[43] The voting results are calculated by the d'Hondt's formula. (Nurmi & Nurmi 2015; Karvonen 2015: 16, 60-61) This type of 'strong preferential PR electoral system' has a tendency to emphasize the 'personality candidate' more than 'party democracy'. (Arter 2006) In Finland, the numbers of voters who consider the candidate more important than the party in their voting has continuously grown since the introduction of the open list system in the 1950s, although it began to decrease slightly after the 2007 election. (Arter 2016: 122-123; OSF 2011, 2015) Moreover, the open-list system is likely to accelerate 'intra party candidate competition'. This means that Finnish candidates must compete with not only candidates from other parties but also the rivals in the same party. The "index of intra-party defeats has been relatively high and their number has often exceeded the number of inter-party defeats" in Finland. (Arter 2016: 133)[44]

Particularly the Finnish system is regarded as the 'strongest' one in terms of the incentives for personal campaigning. (Karvonen 2014: 61) Since 1975 reform of the electoral act, the role of national-level party organizations in selecting candidates has been removed 'almost completely'. They are now selected through balloting among local party members. Furthermore, ideological distances between the parties have been reduced to a considerable extent and parties commonly take blurring stances on the main political issues in the campaigning period in consideration of potential coalition partnerships after the election. As a result, candidate-oriented campaigning has become more salient during the last decades. (Raunio 2011: 118)[45] Candidate visibility has a significant impact in elections. So-called 'celebrity candidates' are frequently recruited from the media and sport arenas as an electoral strategy. This phenomenon has been a focus of criticism of the Finnish electoral system. (Arter 2006; Karvonen 2014: 67-69) For Arter (2016), the Finnish open list electoral system approaches the 'ideal-type of personalized candidate campaign' in all 'substantive',

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[43] Denmark and Sweden has run the semi-open list system in which citizens can vote for a party or a candidate since 1921 and 1998, respectively. But Norway and Iceland operate the closed PR systems. (Arter 2012: 277)

[44] A statistical analysis on the general elections between 1962 and 2003 indicates that "Of the 200 MPs, approximately 170 run for re-election. Of these, roughly 40 fail to gain re-election. The better part of these – 5-60 per cent – lose to an intra-party competitor, while the rest fail to gain seats to losses to other party lists." (Karvonen 2014: 67-68)

[45] According to Raunio, "The candidate-centered character of the electoral system is also reflected in parliamentary work. (…) group cohesion in the Eduskunta has been lower than in the other Nordic legislatures, with Finnish MPs also valuing group discipline much less than do their opposite numbers in the other Nordic parliaments." (ibid. 119)

'organizational' and 'communicative' dimensions[46], while the closed list system in Norway demonstrates the opposite type of candidate campaign seeking for 'party votes' than 'personal votes'. Denmark and Sweden are located in the middle of spectrum, where personalized campaigns have increased to some extent, but there are 'significant cultural variations between the non-socialist parties and the traditional left.' (Ibid. 140-141)

3.3.3   Decline of electoral participation and weakening linkages between parties and voters

Table 3.1 Voters' turnouts in general elections in Nordic countries, 1945-2015 (%)

Denmark		Finland*		Iceland		Norway		Sweden	
Year	Turnout	Year	Turnout	Year	Turnout	Year	Turnout	Year	Turnout
2015	85.89	2015	66.85	2013	81.44	2013	78.23	2014	85.81
2011	87.74	2011	67.37	2009	85.12	2009	76.37	2010	84.63
2007	86.59	2007	65.02	2007	83.60	2005	77.44	2006	81.99
2005	84.54	2003	66.71	2003	87.70	2001	75.48	2002	80.11
2001	87.15	1999	65.27	1999	84.07	1997	78.33	1998	81.39
1998	85.95	1995	68.58	1995	87.38	1993	75.85	1994	86.82
1994	84.25	1991	68.39	1991	87.62	1989	83.16	1991	86.74
1990	82.85	1987	72.06	1987	90.10	1985	84.03	1988	85.96
1988	85.70	1983	75.73	1983	88.60	1981	81.99	1985	89.85
1987	86.74	1979	75.31	1979	89.34	1977	82.89	1982	91.45
1984	88.44	1975	73.80	1978	90.27	1973	80.24	1979	90.72
1981	87.77	1972	81.40	1974	91.44	1969	83.84	1976	91.76
1979	85.62	1970	82.23	1971	90.44	1965	85.43	1973	90.84
1977	88.70	1966	84.94	1967	91.37	1961	79.07	1970	88.28
1975	88.23	1962	85.09	1963	91.14	1957	78.32	1968	89.29
1973	88.72	1958	74.99	1959	90.63	1953	79.33	1964	83.86
1971	87.16	1954	79.90	1956	92.07	1949	82.02	1960	85.91
1968	89.28	1951	74.58	1953	89.90	1945	76.36	1958	77.42
1966	88.61	1948	78.25	1949	89.03			1956	79.84
1964	85.51	1945	74.87	1946	87.41			1952	79.11
1960	85.84							1948	82.74
1957	83.73								
1953	80.80								
1950	81.87								
1947	85.78								
1945	86.29								

Source: Data from Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) http://www.idea.int/vt/ (Accessed 11 March 2016)

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[46] *Substantive dimension* indicates that not the party but the candidate decides particular agenda of candidate campaign. *Organizational dimension* indicates that candidate operates own campaign organization independent from the local party, relying on the extra-party funding sources. *Communicative dimension* indicates that candidate utilizes the various communication channels to build an individualized relationship with voters. (Arter 2016: 140)

The candidate-oriented electoral system and weakening linkages between parties and citizens are regarded as the primary causes of declining voter turnout in Finland since the 1970s. Notwithstanding the slight decline in recent decades, the Nordic countries have commonly demonstrated much higher levels of voter turnouts in general elections than other Western democracies. In particular, Denmark has not experienced decline of turnout in general elections and continuously recorded more than 80 % of voting rates since 1939. Iceland has also maintained more than 80 % of voter turnouts in all general elections between 1946 and 2015. Sweden and Norway have witnessed declines of turnouts since the 1980s, but they are still demonstrating higher turnout rates than 80 % and 75 %, respectively.

Figure 1.   Voters' Turnouts in Parliamentary Elections in Finland, 1945- 2015 (%)*
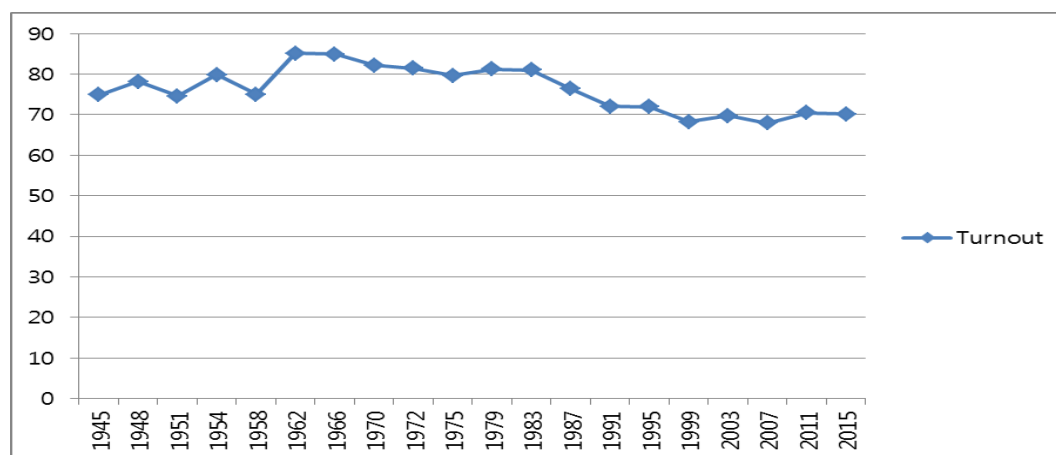
Source: Data from the *Statistics Finland*. (www.stat.fi/)

*Turnouts of voters who live in Finland - that is, voters living abroad are excluded in the calculation. Finland has allowed participation of the latter in elections since the 1970s, but their voting rates have remained very low, at under 15 per cent.

The situation in Finland is worse when considering voter turnout in municipal elections, recorded at just 55.9 per cent in the 2000 election – the lowest in the history of modern Finnish representative democracy, with the exception of European Parliament elections. One reason behind lower electoral participation in recent decades is the candidate-centered electoral system. With the personalization of electoral campaigns, too many options for giving a vote may reduce a genuine opportunity for the electorate to select the appropriate candidate due to the limited scope of information, as well as the low efficacy of voting activity. On the other hand, Finland has 'the most fragmented party system' in the West European democracies. As seen below in Table 3.2, the absence of dominant parties like

the Social Democratic Party in Sweden and 'bipolar dynamics' between left and right blocs appears to function as the main barrier for voting participation. Along with the decrease of party membership over recent decades (See the Table 3.3 below)[47], the weakening linkages between parties and voters - particularly, between the left parties and their supporters since 1990s have affected heavily the political disengagement of the electorate. (Setälä 2010: 70; Karvonen 2014: 146-147; Raunio 2011:113-117, 121-126)

In this regard, it is notable that the consensus politics developed during the late 20th century also seem to have had unintended side effects. Cabinet formation in Finland based on collaboration between three major parties – the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Centre Party (*Keskusta*), the conservative National Coalition Party (NCP, *Kokoomus*) – has evolved into the practices of so-called 'rainbow government' based on a supermajority coalition involving both the left and right parties since the Lipponen Government of 1995. This Finnish style of government formation seeking for an extremely broad 'anything goes' (Arter 2011: 1285) parliamentary majority allows for the extensive participation of small parties in governmental policy making. For example, the 'Six-pack' government led by the PM Jyrki Katainen (2011. 4- 2014.6) involved 6 parties in the ruling coalition – the NCP, SDP, Green League, Left Alliance, CD (Christian Democrats), and Swedish People's Party (*Svenska Folkpartiet*, SFP). The small SPP had been able to participate in the government without a break between 1979 and 2015. But the 'blurring of programmatic differences' between parties and 'the lack of transparency that characterizes coalition-cabinet decision making' bring up a legitimacy question on the electoral mechanism, linked with the lower-level accountability of parliamentary governments in Finland. (Karvonen 2014: 147; Raunio 2011: 121-126)

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[47] Meanwhile, the indicator of party identification in Finland shows somehow a complicated trend. According to the previous study, 60 percent of the voters identified with one party in 1991 while 47 percent did so in 2003. (Raunio 2011: 115) But the rate rose again to 55 percent in 2007 and 2011. (Ministry of Justice, Finland 2013: 31-33)

Table 3.2 Voting shares and seats distribution among parties, 2007-2015 parliamentary elections, Finland

Parties	Voting shares (2007, %)	Seats in the Eduskunta, 2007	Voting shares (2011, %)	Seats in the Eduskunta, 2011(change)	Voting shares (2015, %)	Seats in the Eduskunta, 2015 (change)
The Centre Party	23.1	51	15.8	35 (-16)	21.1	49 (+14)
The Finns Party	4.1	5	19.1	39 (+34)	17.7	38 (-1)
National Coalition Party	22.3	50	18.2	44 (-6)	20.4	37 (-7)
SDP	21.4	45	19.1	42 (-3)	16.5	34 (-8)
Green League	8.5	15	7.3	10 (-5)	8.5	15 (+5)
Left Alliance	8.8	17	8.1	14 (-3)	7.1	12 (-2)
Swedish People's Party	4.6	9	4.3	9 (0)	4.9	9 (0)
Christian Democrats	4.9	7	4.0	6 (-1)	3.5	5 (-1)
Other	2.3	1	2.0	1 (0)	2.5	1 (0)
Total	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0	200

Source: OSF 2007, 2011, 2015; http://www.stat.fi/

Table 3.3 Party membership in Finland, 1970-2013[48]

Year	Left Alliance/ FPDL	SDP	Green League	Finns Party/ Rural Party	Centre Party	NCP	SFP	CD/ CL
1970	52 000	61 000	n/a	27 000	288 000	81 000	49 000	3 000
1980	45 000	100 000	n/a	20 000	305 000	77 000	42 000	20 000
1995	16 000	70 000	1 000	n/a	257 000	47 000	37 000	16 000
2004	11 000	57 000	2 000	2 000	206 000	39 000	32 000	13 000
2008	9 600	51 000	3 100	2 700	176 000	40 000	32 000	12 000
2011	9 100	50 000	4 600	5 000	163 000	41 000	28 000	13 000
2013	10 800	45 800	8 000	8 600	151 600	40 000	30 800	10 700
Change* (Share of change, %)	- 41 200 (- 79.2%)	- 44 200 - 44.2 %)	0	- 18 400 (- 68.1 %)	- 153 400 (- 50.3 %)	- 41 000 (- 50.6%)	-18 200 (- 37.1 %)	-9 300 (- 46.5 %)

FPDL=Finnish People's Democratic League (until 1990); Rural Party (until 1990); NCP=National Coalition Party; SFP= Svenska Folkpartiet (Swedish People's Party); CL=Christian League (until 2000)

*Change: The number of 2013 – the largest number in each column.

Source: Data from Demokratiaindikaattorit 2013, p.29.

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[48] Numbers below 100 are omitted.

Table 3.4 Cabinet formations in Finland, 1995-2015

Prime Minister (Party)	Terms of Office	Parliamentary Seats (Share, %) of the Coalition Parties	Parties in Cabinet
Lipponen (SDP)	13.4.1995 - 15.4.1999	145/ 200 (72.5)	SDP, National Coalition Party (NCP), Swedish Peoples' Party (SFP), Left Alliance, Green League
Lipponen Ⅱ (SDP)	15.4.1999 - 4.1.2002.	140/ 200 (70)	SDP, NCP, SFP, Left Alliance, Green League
Lipponen Ⅲ (SDP)	4.1.2002 - 17.4.2003	129/ 200 (64.5)	SDP, NCP, SFP, Left Alliance
Jäätteenmäki (Centre Party)	17.4.2003 - 24.6.2003	117/ 200 (58.5)	Centre Party, SDP, SFP
Vanhanen (Centre Party)	24.6.2003 - 19.4.2007	117/ 200 (58.5)	Centre Party, SDP, SFP
Vanhanen Ⅱ (Centre Party)	19.4.2007 - 22.6.2010	126/ 200 (63)	Centre Party, NCP, Green League, SFP
Kiviniemi (Centre Party)	22.6.2010 - 22.6.2011	126/ 200 (63)	Centre Party, NCP, Green League, SFP
Katainen (NCP)	22.6.2011 - 25.3.2014	125/200 (62.5)	NCP, SDP, Left Alliance, Green League, SFP, Christian Democrats (CD)
Katainen Ⅱ (NCP)	25.3.2014 - 24.6.2014	111/ 200 (55.5)	NCP, SDP, Green League, SFP, CD
Stubb (NCP)	24.6.2014 - 26.9.2014	111/ 200 (55.5)	NCP, SDP, Green League, SFP, CD
Stubb Ⅱ (NCP)	26.9.2014 -29.5.2015	101/ 200 (50.5)	NCP, SDP, SFP, CD
Sipilä (Centre Party)	29.5.2015 -	124/ 200 (62)	Centre Party, NCP, Finns Party

Source: Data from Raunio (2011: 122-124), updated from 2011 onward by Hyeon Su Seo; http://valtioneuvosto.fi/; www.stat.fi.

With rapid social transformations and growing socio-economic inequality in Finland, recent elections have also seen an increase in protest votes against establishment parties and an upsurge in nationalist sentiment. The Finns Party (*Perussuomalaiset*), who succeeded the populist Rural Party in 1995, has had groundbreaking successes, winning 39 seats (19 %) in 2011 and 37 seats (17.7 %) in the 2015 elections. (Nurmi & Nurmi 2015) After the 2015 election, the Finns Party joined the coalition government with the leading Centre Party and the conservative NCP. During its first year in cabinet, the party suffered from a rapid decline of support, probably due to its cooperation with the Sipilä Government on the issue of increasing spending cuts and, more importantly, internal disputes over governmental immigration policy in the wake of the European refugee crisis. In a latest survey published by YLE, the public broadcasting company, on 3 March 2016, the party recorded only 9.0 per cent of popular support, which is under the half of the 2015 election result.[49] It appears to prove the 'dilemma between popular rhetoric *versus* executive responsibility' as well as the 'inherently unstable and vulnerable' tendency of the populist parties 'to internal disagreements'. (Karvonen 2014: 149)

3.3.4   Composition of the Eduskunta and 'descriptive representation'

The composition of parliament and social backgrounds of elected MPs such as gender, age, ethnicity, education and income levels offer a number of important indicators to evaluate the degree of 'descriptive representation' (Pitkin 1972 [1967]). First, 83 female parliamentarians were elected in 2015 election, which indicates 41.5 per cent of all MPs in the Eduskunta. Since the 2007 election, the proportion of female parliamentarians has been consistently higher than 40 per cent. (OSF 2015: 10)[50] Compared with the average rate (16.4%) of female parliamentarians worldwide, female membership of Eduskunta is at the highest level, which is true for all of the Nordic democracies. (IPU 2006:19-23) Second, regarding the variable of age, the 2015 election witnessed many more young people to be elected as MPs than previous elections. The proportion of elected MPs under the age of 35 increased considerably up to 17 per cent, while shares were 12 and 13 per cent in 2007 and 2011 elections, respectively. The average age of elected MPs was 47.2 in 2015, which indicates also differences between genders: Male MPs' average age was 49.1 while female MPs' was 44.4. (OSF 2015: 15-19) Third, the 2015 election was a breakthrough regarding the representation of minority ethnic groups, as 2 Representatives (1 %) with foreign

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[49]   http://yle.fi/uutiset/yle_poll_sdp_rising_govt_coalition_slipping_voters_more_uncertain/8716073 (accessed 6 March 2016)

[50] The proportions of women MPs were 37.5 percent in 2003, 42.0 percent in 2007 and 42.5 percent in 2011 elections. (OSF 2015: 10)

backgrounds were elected as new MPs (1 SDP, 1 Green League).[51] However, this is still a low percentage given that the proportion of the population with foreign origins was estimated to be about 5.5 percent at the end of 2014. (Ibid. 20-22) On the other hand, the median income level for MPs was reduced considerably in the 2015 election due to the long-term economic recession in Finland. However, the level is still much higher (2.7 times) than average voters. (Ibid. 33-36) Table 3.5 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of elected MPs (except education level) in the two recent parliamentary elections.

Table 3.5 Socio-demographic characteristics of elected MPs, 2011-2015 parliamentary elections, Finland

Variables	2011	2015
Gender (Share of Women)		
Elected MPs	42.5 %	41.5 %
Candidates	39.0 %	39.4 %
Eligible citizens	51.6 %	51.5 %
Average age		
Elected MPs	48.0 years	47.2 years
Male MPs	50.2 years	49.1 years
Female MPs	45.0 years	44.4 years
Candidates	45.3 years	45.8 years
Eligible citizens	49.5 years	50.3 years
Age under 35 among elected MPs	13%	17%
Foreign origins[52]		
Elected MPs	-	1.0 %
Candidates	2.9 %	2.5 %
Eligible citizens	1.3 %	2.0 %
All population	3.5 %	5.5 %
Income levels (median of disposable income[53])		
Elected MPs	82 566 €	55 200 €
Candidates	32 042 €	28 290 €
Eligible citizens	21 561 €	20 390 €

Source: Data from OSF 2011, 2015.

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[51] To compare, no candidate with foreign background was elected in the previous election of 2011. (OSF 2011)

[52] Person with foreign origin indicates the person whose mother tongue is not the Finnish, Swedish or Sami.

[53] Disposable income means the 'monetary income after taxes', including the earned income, property income and transfer income. (OSF 2015)

Table 3.6 Education levels of elected MPs, 2011-2015 parliamentary elections, Finland (%)

Education level	Voters	Candidates	Elected MPs
2015 parliamentary election			
Basic levels	27.2	9.1	3.0
Upper secondary	42.2	33.3	19.6
Lowest level tertiary	10.7	8.6	9.5
Lower-degree level tertiary	10.3	16.6	17.1
Higher degree level tertiary doctorate	9.6	32.4	50.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
2011 parliamentary election			
Basic levels	30.8	11.9	2.5
Upper secondary	40.7	37.6	25.0
Lowest level tertiary	11.3	11.1	14.0
Lower-degree level tertiary	8.8	11.9	10.0
Higher degree level tertiary doctorate	8.4	27.5	48.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Data from OSF 2011, 2015.

Although the 2015 election demonstrated continually higher level of descriptive representation of women and some improvements in representing young people under 35 and people with foreign backgrounds, it seems that the MPs are most frequently recruited from the small population group with a higher level of education. While just 9.6 per cent of ordinary voters hold doctorates, the same proportion of elected MPs reached 50.8 per cent in 2015. (Ibid. 22-24; See Table 3.6)

3.3.5   Public Perceptions on the Parliamentary Institutions

Nordic citizens have shown the highest levels of trust in their political institutions, including national parliaments and governments. They are also highly satisfied with the way democracy works in their countries. (Bergman & Strøm 2011: 45-49) According to the latest *Eurobarometer Report on Public Opinion in the European* Union (Standard Eurobarometer 84, 2015, Autumn), Sweden, Denmark and Finland demonstrated the highest level of trust in

their national parliaments: Sweden with 69 percent, Denmark with 60 percent and Finland with 58 percent, while the average rate in the 28 EU countries at just 28 percent. An interesting feature is that national parliaments enjoy relatively higher levels of public trust than national governments. Political parties, on the other hand, face very low trust levels, even in the Nordic democracies: Sweden with 34 percent, Denmark with 32 percent and Finland with 24 percent, although these numbers are still the highest of the 28 EU countries, where citizens show only a 15 per cent of trust rate in political parties on average. Nordic citizens show relatively more skeptical attitudes in the EU institutions than national representative institutions. Trust rates in the EU and European Parliament (EP) are as follows: Sweden, 46 percent in the EU and 59 percent in the EP; Denmark, 47 percent in the EU and 58 percent in the EP; Finland, 44 percent in the EU and 54 percent in the EP. These trust levels are still higher than the EU average. Table 3.7 below shows the level of public trust in the national and European representative institutions among the 28 EU countries.

Table 3.7 Trust in political institutions in the 28 EU countries (%)

Countries	National Parliament	National Government	Political Parties	EU	European Parliament
Belgium	42	39	21	39	52
Bulgaria	14	23	13	44	45
Czech Republic	17	29	13	27	31
Denmark	60	47	32	47	58
Germany	42	38	24	28	36
Estonia	35	43	15	40	45
Ireland	27	26	13	33	45
Greece	15	16	6	18	26
Spain	11	14	7	25	27
France	20	19	8	26	33
Croatia	23	25	15	44	53
Italy	18	16	9	31	40
Cyprus	14	16	7	17	29
Latvia	21	23	8	37	41
Lithuania	17	32	12	59	60
Luxembourg	52	60	24	45	60
Hungary	30	33	16	41	51
Malta	47	51	22	46	55
Netherlands	52	52	33	42	50
Austria	39	33	22	26	35
Poland	19	20	14	37	43
Portugal	19	15	11	42	43
Romania	17	23	12	58	59
Slovenia	11	16	6	30	30
Slovakia	29	33	16	39	41
Finland	58	49	24	44	54
Sweden	69	55	34	46	59
UK	34	31	15	23	26
EU 28	28	27	15	32	38

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 84 (Autumn 2015).

Table 3.8 Satisfaction with democracy in the 28 EU countries (%)

Countries	Satisfaction with democracy in the country	Satisfaction with democracy in the EU
Belgium	68	59
Bulgaria	28	50
Czech Republic	49	44
Denmark	87	62
Germany	63	36
Estonia	47	43
Ireland	63	52
Greece	27	27
Spain	38	33
France	49	41
Croatia	44	58
Italy	35	39
Cyprus	23	25
Latvia	47	55
Lithuania	37	59
Luxembourg	77	61
Hungary	45	47
Malta	70	64
Netherlands	73	44
Austria	57	36
Poland	62	65
Portugal	36	40
Romania	34	62
Slovenia	30	41
Slovakia	35	40
Finland	72	52
Sweden	80	49
UK	62	37
EU 28	52	43

Source: *Standard Eurobarometer 84* (Autumn 2015)

Nordic citizens also continually demonstrate a very high level of satisfaction with the way democracy works in their countries. In particular, Danes are surveyed as the most satisfied (87 %) in the 28 EU member states, while 80 per cent of Swedes and 72 per cent of Finns also expressed satisfaction with the national democracy. They appear relatively more skeptical of democracy on the EU level: 62 percent of Danish citizens are satisfied while 52 per cent of Finnish and 49 percent of Swedish citizens are satisfied with the working ways of democracy in the EU. Table 3.8 shows the rate of satisfaction to democracy in both national and EU levels among the 28 EU democracies

Although public trust in Parliament and satisfaction with national-level democracy have been high in Finland like in other Nordics, Finnish citizens have shown higher levels of trust in the President, police and legal institutions than Parliament, parties and politicians. (Rapeli 2014: 53) The question of how to promote public engagement with parliamentary institutions in proportion to the increased power of the Eduskunta under the new Constitution is regarded as a crucial challenge. (Raunio 2011: 149-150)

3.4 Legislative Committee System in Finland: Institutional Functions and Characters

This section examines separately the institutional characteristics of the Eduskunta committee system because the committees have important influencing power in parliamentary decision-making. Their legislative roles and working methods – particularly, committee consultation with civil society in the legislative process – will be a specific focus of the empirical examinations in the following chapters.

The legislative committee system of each parliament has its own structure, power and procedure developed in a unique political context. Mattson and Strøm (1995) presented an extensive list of empirical indicators to measure institutional features of parliamentary committee system. First, the *structure* of parliamentary committees can be analyzed by the criteria of (1) types and tenure, (3) size of legislative committees, (4) jurisdiction and correspondence with ministries, (5) multiple membership restrictions, and (6) subcommittees. (Ibid. 257-274) Second, the committee *procedure* showing how a parliament is organized – particularly, defining how the legislative committees work – can be measured by the criteria of (1) committee assignment, (2) selecting committee leadership, (3) committee transparency, (4) minority report, and (5) legislative deliberation process in committee stage. (Ibid. 275-284) Third, the formal *power* of committee can be examined by (1) the right to initiate legislation; (2) authority to revise the bills; (3) power to control the committee timetable; and (4) right to call witnesses and documented evidences. (Ibid. 285) In accordance with these criteria, the structure, procedure, power of the legislative committee system in Finland is analyzed. The committee's role in the overall deliberative

process is also examined. Table 3.9 summarizes the main features of Eduskunta's legislative committee system.

3.4.1 Committee structure and the committees with distinctive characters

Eduskunta has 1 Grand Committee and 15 specialized committees[54] with their own policy areas corresponding to specific ministries in the Finnish government structure with a few exceptions: The Audit Committee and Committee for the Future do not correspond to specific ministry policy areas. The Finance Committee is currently divided into 8 standing subcommittees covering different areas of the state budget; The Grand Committee has a subcommittee for planning and preparing the work of the committee. All committees have permanent status and have four-year terms. Eduskunta can establish temporary committees to investigate specifically mandated issues but temporary committees were last used in the 1960s. Each committee is comprised of 17 members and 9 deputy members, except the Finance Committee, which has 21 members (19 deputies), the Audit Committee which has 11 members (6 deputies), and the Grand Committee, which has 25 members (13 deputies).[55] There is no restriction to prevent multiple memberships of committees; the Finnish MPs commonly belong to two different committees. (Mattila 2014: 119-122; Eduskunta 2008)

There are several distinctive committees in the Eduskunta. First, the Grand Committee (*Suuri valiokunta*) has been reformed to work as the EU committee, and deals with all EU-related bills and reports submitted by the government. In addition, the Committee deliberates legislative bills that are transferred from the plenary. It does not correspond to any specific ministries because of the general characteristics of its dealing matters. (Eduskunta 2008: 10)

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[54] The number of committees is close to the average among European parliaments. (Mattila 2014)

[55] Committee size is indicative of a strong committee system since it is easier for MPs to monopolize their expertise and reach a consensual decision based on mutual trust in small committees. The size of committees varies by countries and the Finnish case is located at the median among the European countries. (Mattson & Strøm 1995: 268-269)

Table 3.9 Institutional features of the legislative committee system in Finland

Dimension	Indicators*	Main Characteristics
Structure	- Types and tenure - Numbers of members - Committee size - Correspondence with ministries - Multi-membership - Subcommittees	- Specialized permanent committee system: Grand Committee and 15 special standing committees - 17 (9) members (deputies) with a few exceptions - Corresponding to specific ministries: except Grand Committee, Audit Committee and Committee for the Future - Grand Committee working as the EU Committee; Constitutional Committee gives parliamentary preview of legislative proposals' constitutionality; Committee for the Future to incorporate the future-oriented approach into legislative decision-making - Two committee membership - Existence of subcommittees in part
Procedure	- Committee assignment - Selecting leadership - Transparency - Minority report - Legislative deliberation process	- Member assignment and chair selection by the proportionality between parties, and the standards of seniority and professional expertise within parties - Closed and professional style of committee deliberation with limited numbers of public hearings and meetings - Allowing members to submit 'dissenting statement' or 'different opinion' - Full scope of committee deliberation and providing own report to the chamber, or statement to the main responsible committee
Power	- Initiating legislative bills - Revising the bills - Control of timetable - Calling witnesses and evidences	- Three channels of legislative agenda-setting: governmental proposal, MP's motion and citizens' initiative - No committee power to initiate legislation with an exception (Audit Committee), but influencing power to rewrite the bills 'quite freely' and recommend necessary policy measures - Autonomy to control the time schedules - Frequent calling a wide range of policy stakeholders to submit evidences and speak in the expert hearings - Right to demand relevant information from government

Indicators from Matton & Strøm (1995)

The Constitutional Law Committee (*Perustuslakivaliokunta*) adds a unique feature to the Eduskunta. Given the constitutional preview of legislative bills, it performs a similar role of Constitutional Court not existing in Finland and plays an important role in public policymaking. The Committee also deals with the Constitutional matters such as the electoral acts, citizenship, languages, political parties and the self-government of Åland Islands and the Sami people. (Eduskunta 2008: 10-11; Vainio 2007: 230-231)

The Audit Committee *(Tarkastusvaliokunta)* was established in 2007 by merging the tasks of the State Auditor's Office and the functions of parliamentary auditing at the Government and Audit Subcommittee of the above Finance Committee. Its main task is to deliberate the annual report of the government about financial accounting and the report of the State Auditor's Office, in monitoring the legality of governmental financial management. It may raise its own initiative to address the matters belonging to its jurisdiction and submit the committee report to the plenary session. (Eduskunta 2008: 12)

Finally, the Committee for the Future (*Tulevaisuusvaliokunta*) was established in 1993. It has become a standing committee since the Constitutional reform in 2000. The Committee is the first parliamentary committee in the world dedicated to future-oriented policy making at the national level. Examining the governmental Future Policy Report made every four years, it envisages technological and societal changes in the future and promotes governmental strategies and innovations responding to future challenges. It has also paid particular attention to the future of democracy in Finland, embracing more participatory and deliberative approaches to democratic decision-making. (Arter 2000; Eduskunta 2008; Tiitinen 2007: 80-81; Vainio 2007: 254-260)[56]

3.4.2   Committee procedure and power

The committee seats of chairs and members are allocated first by the 'principle of proportionality' among PPGs, reflecting the result of parliamentary election.[57] According to Forsten (2005), about 86 per cent of all committee chairpersons between 1945 and 2002 had been appointed from the four largest PPGs. After negotiation between parties, each PPG appoints their MPs to committees. The preferences of MPs are considered, but seniority, gender, social representation and professional specialty in the related policy area are also significant factors. The studies found that the 'principle of seniority' - that is, career endurance as a parliamentarian – has been the most influencing factor in the Eduskunta,

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[56] We examine in more detail the roles of Committee for the Future in the next chapter.

[57] The committee assignment is an important mechanism for party leadership to impose party discipline on their MPs seeking for special expertise and policy influences. Selection of committee leadership is also important for the parties and individual MPs as the committee chairs may influence more in handling the committee matters. (Mattson & Strøm 1995: 275-276)

like in other Nordic parliaments. (Forsten 2005: 130-131; Mattila 2014: 123-124; Helander & Pekonen 2007: 110, 121-124)

Committee meetings in the Eduskunta are not commonly open to the public; only the committee reports or statements and minutes are offered as public documents. Minutes contain only the agenda items and the names of experts invited to committee hearings or meetings, etc.; the verbatim records for actual discussion are not produced. In the early 1990s, there was a debate in the Eduskunta on whether to open the deliberation processes at committee level or not. Some MPs supported the idea to make the committee deliberation public, at least the expert hearing stage. A majority of MPs thought committee meetings should be closed to the public in order to maintain trust between committee members. (Helander & Pekonen 2007: 48) They argued that "increasing publicity might jeopardize the consensus politics so characteristic of Finnish parliamentary politics" and "the best way to attain consensus is thought to be closed committee meetings in which the most important interest groups become represented through their experts and in which decision making is based on confidential non-political professional talk between committee members." (Pekonen 2008: 224) As a result, the Finnish parliamentary committees continuously meet and discuss issues behind closed doors. A limited numbers of public hearings and meetings have been organized despite an increasing trend for open hearings. (Arter 2012: 281-282)

Every committee member has the right to submit a minority report. Committees commonly seek unanimous decisions to demonstrate their 'unity, working capacity and influences.' Studies found that the accommodating committee culture has weakened as cases attached with minority reports have grown since the 1990s. (Eduskunta [2000] 2012; 2008: 95-96; Mattila 2014: 129-130; Helander & Pekonen 2007: 70)

Finnish parliamentary committees do not have power to initiate legislation. Besides governmental bills and citizens' initiatives recently introduced, individual MPs are able to submit legislative initiatives – but not the committees or PPGs. The Finance Committee is an exception since it can propose an amendment of the tax law if it is necessary to balance the state budget. (Vainio 2007: 163-164) The Audit Committee can establish own initiative to address important issues within its working areas. Meanwhile, Eduskunta committees have the right to rewrite bills 'relatively freely', indicating the agenda-setting power of the legislature. Changes proposed by committees must be related to the contents of the bill and substantial changes are not allowed. Due to political regulation, the changes of bills are usually limited to technical issues. (Mattila 2014: 126-7) In addition, the parliamentary committees in Finland can control of their own timetables and the plenary chamber cannot reallocate the bills to other committees.

Eduskunta committees have the right to invite citizens to attend hearings. Though there is no means to enforce attendance, committee invitations are rarely rejected. This right is exercised through expert testimonies, which increases the committees' expertise and independent information collection. In addition, committees have the right to demand the

government submit relevant information regarding legislative bills. (Mattila 2014: 125-126; Eduskunta 2008: 83-86)

3.4.3 Legislative deliberation process and the roles of committee consultation

There are now three institutional channels for initiating legislative bills: a governmental proposal (*Hallituksen esitys*), a Representative's legislative motion (*Kansanedustajan lakialoite*)[58], and citizens' initiative (*Kansalaisaloite*). After a bill is introduced to the chamber, the Eduskunta discusses it preliminarily in the form of a 'dispatch discussion' and the Speaker decides which committees are to deliberate on the bill. Normally two relevant committees are called. The responsible committee prepares the 'report' (*mietintö*) for the plenary debates on the bill, while another relevant committee offers the 'statement' (*lausunto*) for the discussion in the responsible committee. The committees then begin the deliberative process, which is divided into two stages: expert hearings and debates among members. The committee process takes usually one or two months. For an urgent case, it can take only a few days, while primary legislative projects may take several months to several years. Normally at least 2/3 of members need to attend committee meetings if it is to be valid. Some issues may require a larger number. (Eduskunta 2008: 36)

Table 3.10 Legislative deliberation process in the Finnish Eduskunta

Main Steps	Legislative proceedings with notable features

Legislative agenda-setting	1. Governmental proposal (*Hallituksenesitys*)
	  - Ministry stage of legislative proposal making including civil society consultation process
	2. MP's legislative motion (*Kansanedustajan lakialoite*)
	  - Without support of majority (100 and more) MPs, the bill is not usually deliberated in the committees.
	3. Citizens' initiative (*Kansalaisaloite*)
	  - 50 000 eligible citizens' signatures within 6 months

Beginning of the parliamentary process (Chamber)	• Introduction of the bill • Dispatch discussion (*lähetekeskustelu*) - Not limiting the committee deliberation of the bill

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[58] Finnish parliamentarians have the right to put forward: (1) 'legislative motions, containing a proposal for the enactment of an Act'; (2) 'budgetary motions, containing a proposal for an appropriation to be included in the budget or a supplementary budget, or for another budgetary decision'; and (3) 'petitionary motions, containing a proposal for the drafting of a law or for taking other measures'. (Constitution of Finland, Section 39)

	• Allocation of the responsible committee and related committees

Committee deliberation process	• Arrival of the bill in the committee
	• Setting up the timetable and list of experts to be invited
	• Experts hearing
	  - Legislative consultation with ministries, interest groups and academic experts, etc.
	  - Verbal presentations with documented statements
	  - Mainly closed proceedings, with limited cases of public hearings (not offering verbatim records)
	• Committee discussion
	  - Preparatory discussion
	  - Detailed examination
	  - Considering the statements from related committees
	• Concluding committee deliberation by unanimous agreement or voting
	  - Drafting the report (*mietintö*) or statement (*lausunto*)
	  - 'Dissenting statement' (*vastalause*) can be attached
	  - Publishing the final documents

Plenary debates and final decision-making	• First Reading
	  - General discussion and deciding the main contents of the bill to be considered in the further proceeding
	• Second Reading
	  - Detailed examination of the bill, section by section
	  - Final decision-making by unanimous agreement or voting

Ratification and Enforcement	• Sending the final document (Parliament's Response) to the President for ratification - In case the President refuses to sign the bill, it returns to Parliament. If the Eduskunta approves it once again, it comes into force immediately.

Expert hearings are the main channel for the committees to get information and communicate with policy stakeholder groups. The committee decides whom to invite; attendance at the committee hearings is not enforceable. In general, the responsible ministry's presentation is heard first, and then, the representatives of interest organizations and NGOs in related policy areas, as well as academic experts in universities and research institutions are invited to voice their opinions. Organizations and individual experts are allowed to give brief verbal presentations in committee hearings, and documented statements are typically submitted at the same time. The committees can receive additional statements from other groups or individual experts. The scope of expert consultation varies depending on the committees, as well as on the issue. Eduskunta committees invite many experts from a diverse background. For example, in 2014, around 10 000 experts were invited to Eduskunta committees to present their opinions of legislative matters orally or in document form; 60.5 per cent came from the public sector, 2.7 per cent from the private sector, 27.4 per cent from the third sector, and 9.1 per cent from academic institutions. (See the chapter 5 for a more detailed analysis on the scope of legislative consultations) Committees may decide to hold follow-up hearings where needed. In addition, the committee has the power to collect information through scrutinizing the bills, making fact-finding visits, and demanding the government to submit necessary information. Committees may also request other relevant committees to submit their reports or statements on the matters at hand. (Eduskunta 2008: 83-87)

After expert consultation, the committee proceeds to a 'preparatory discussion' (*valmistava keskustelu*), in which the committee members have the right to express their opinion fully – MPs can suggest opinions including agreement or rejection as well as alternative proposals. Committee secretaries draw up a draft report or statement reflecting the results of scrutiny and preparatory discussion. Based on the bill and the above draft, committee meetings are organized for the process of 'general discussion' (*yleiskeskustelu*), which is to discuss the suggested draft and possible amendments more generally. Then, discussions are followed by 'detailed examination' (*yksityiskohtainen keskustelu*) on the contents of draft. The secretaries may draw up a new draft, reflecting discussions among MPs. Finally, the committee makes a decision on the bill. If it fails to reach a unanimous conclusion, the decision is made by a vote. Every member has the right to leave a 'dissenting statement' (*vastalause*) or 'different opinion' (*eriävä mielipide*) on the committee report or statement. The legislative deliberation process in the committee stage then ends. (Eduskunta 2008: 96-97) The committee statement (*valiokuntalausunto*) is delivered to the main responsible committee so that the latter may consider the statement in their deliberation process, while the committee report (*valiokuntamietintö*) is presented in the floor with the result of committee deliberation on the bill in question.

The committee presents to the floor the result of its deliberation. It can suggest several options for final decision of the Eduskunta such as agreement without any changes,

considerable changes to the bill, or even a whole rejection of the bill. The chamber discusses the bill based on committee report through two readings of a general debate and detailed examination. Then, the Eduskunta reaches the final decision of the bill through unanimous agreement or voting. The bill passed through the legislative process is sent to the President for a proclamation of the legislation. If the President does not sign the bill, it is sent back to the Eduskunta. If the Eduskunta approves the bill again, it enters into force immediately without the approval of the President.

3.5   Conclusion

The transformation of the outdated Diet of four Estates into a modern unicameral Parliament in 1906 was a significant innovation in Finnish democracy, which connected huge numbers of citizens to the political decision-making process. During the 20th century, historical factors have severely tested the sustainability of the new democratic republic, especially regarding the relationship with the Soviet Union. This course of history has been reflected in unique institutional features of the political and parliamentary systems of Finland, such as a fragmented party system, the exceptionally strong power of the President during the Cold War era, and the transition from a deeply polarized political system to consensus politics and seeking of oversized coalition and neo-corporatist policy making, etc.

With the new Constitution totally reformed in 2000, the Eduskunta has once again entered into a new transitional phase of its democracy. The strong semi-presidential system paved the way to a normal mode of parliamentarism, when the Eduskunta was given the power of government formation; meanwhile, Presidential powers to dissolve Parliament and to veto legislation were seriously limited. As the PM and cabinet now fully rely on the confidence of parliamentary majority, the plenary Chamber has become the most significant national forum where the PM and other Ministers are continuously present and debate governmental policy lines and national political issues on daily basis. Furthermore, the Eduskunta has secured its position in governmental policymaking processes relating to EU matters as well as general foreign policy affairs, coming out from the shadow of strong Presidential power. The Grand Committee's new role as the EU Committee as well as the Foreign Affairs Committee and other standing committees' policy capacities to deal with EU matters are regarded as a successful example of national parliaments in adapting themselves to a new working environment of multi-level governance in the EU.

The powers and capacities of specialized standing committees to deliberate bills have generally been strengthened. The Eduskunta shares the basic institutional feature of the 'Nordic working parliament'. The plenary chamber provides the most public face of parliamentary institutions, but actual legislative deliberative processes take place in the

standing committees. Besides the Grand Committee, there are 15 specialized permanent committees in the Eduskunta. Each of them corresponds to a specific Ministry, with a few exceptions like the Audit Committee and Committee for the Future. The committees deliberate government bills or parliamentary motions (and now citizens' initiatives) and provide the plenary session with reports or statements for the final decision-making of the Parliament. In the process, they may invite external stakeholders. In this regard, they play a crucial role linking government and civil society in the legislative stage of public policymaking. Like in other Northern European parliaments, however, committee meetings and hearings are generally convened behind the closed doors in the Eduskunta in order to allow for trust-based free discussion and negotiation among MPs. This closed feature of legislative consultation in the committee stage has been to some extent improved as public hearings and meetings have gradually increased across different committees in recent years. It nevertheless remains considerably limited even after the introduction of the citizens' initiative mechanism.

Although the constitutional and political powers of Eduskunta have been much strengthened as a whole and the public trust level in the national parliament is relatively high in Finland, parliamentary linkages with the public reflect important challenges for the future of Finnish representative democracy. The most pressing challenge is the lower level of voter turnouts in general elections during the last decades, particularly when compared with other Nordic democracies. The strongly candidate-oriented electoral system and weakened linkages between parties and voters, as well as 'unintended' effects of oversized coalition-building consensus politics, have affected the situation significantly. Increasing inequality in political participation among different electoral groups is regarded as a problem to be tackled vigorously. The current challenges require coherent and effective institutional reforms and practices to make the parliamentary system and culture more open, accessible and accountable while enhancing public engagement with multiple dimensions of legislative work and process. Despite recent parliamentary efforts to increase institutional communication with citizens, the strong attachment of Finnish legislators to traditional concepts of representative democracy – particularly the closed character of the legislative deliberation process in the parliamentary committees which is a common norm in the Nordic working parliaments – provides a critical point to be examined in more detail. The following chapters will address these issues through the legislative audit types of empirical studies in a series.

4 HOW OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE IS THE EDUSKUNTA TO THE PUBLIC?

4.1 Introduction

On 28 November 2014, when the Eduskunta made a historical decision by a vote in the chamber to approve the citizens' initiative demanding the legalization of same-sex marriage, around 5 000 citizens were gathering in the park square near the Eduskunta buildings. Demonstrating a popular will to back the initiative, they congratulated themselves as the news arrived from the chamber across the road and even 'thanked' the Eduskunta for its first passage of a citizens' initiative. On the other side, a small group opposing the initiative was also present under the steps of the Eduskunta building to protest the vote.[59] The plenary process was broadcast through the parliamentary website and events surrounding the Eduskunta were followed by the mainstream media, while citizens communicated by using social media like Facebook and Twitter. This scene offers a snapshot of the changing nature of the relationship between parliament and citizens in the Finnish context.

In fact, many contemporary parliaments have taken a variety of measures to strengthen institutional communication with the electorate between elections in the last decades. (See, for example, IPU 2006, 2012.) However, parliamentary institutions usually have their own working ways with long historical traditions and complicated institutional settings. It is rather difficult to implement parliamentary reforms or changes needed to (re)engage with the public in comprehensive and coherent ways. As a result, the core deficits of contemporary representative democracy such as the decline of political legitimacy and increasing public disengagement from parliamentary institutions are often left without effective solutions. Moreover, new forms of communication and participatory mechanisms may have unintended effects which do not necessarily increase public trust in parliaments and established political systems. (Leston-Bandeira 2012b) A systemic legislative study is needed to identify and assess how parliamentary institutions try to reach out to the people and the political impacts of new participatory tools and parliamentary civic engagement programmes.

Towards this end, a comprehensive analytical framework was established in Chapter 2. This is now applied to the case study of the Finnish Eduskunta and its multi-dimensional

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[59] M. Nalbantoglu, "Avioliittolain kannattajat huusivat 'Kiitos', vastustajat veisasivat 'Kun on turva Jumalassa'", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 28 November 2014.

relationships with citizens between elections. Guided by core normative principles such as visibility, accessibility and permeability (Arter 2012) as well as inclusive and sustainable democracy, this chapter presents a 'legislative audit' style of empirical assessment on how open and responsive the Parliament is to the public in Finland. First, the whole range of parliamentary activities for enhancing public engagement is identified. These rely on both on and offline parliamentary materials, interview documents and comparative legislative literatures. Nine practical indicators – (1) parliament as public space, (2) sharing of information, (3) accessibility of MPs, (4) media and digital engagement, (5) transparency of legislative process, (6) actual participation in legislative decision-making, (7) civic education and outreach, (8) parliament as future forum, and (9) strategy and leadership – are measured step by step. These focus on the possibility for citizens to influence parliamentary decision-making. The empirical findings are then synthesized to answer three central questions: (1) how visible and accessible is the Eduskunta is to the public? (2) To what extent can ordinary citizens take part in parliamentary decision-making? And (3) what parliamentary actions have been taken to promote an inclusive and sustainable democracy in Finland?

While conducting a systemic investigation on the various reforms and practices to connect citizens to parliamentary affairs during the recent years, the study sheds light on deficiencies of the legislative system and culture of Eduskunta, which require further institutional reforms or active measures to remedy. Providing a mixed picture of the parliamentary engagement activities, it discusses the difficulties in reconciling traditional forms of representative democracy with alternative and more direct channels of political participation.

4.2   Assessing the Parliamentary Public Engagement Activities in Finland

4.2.1   Parliament as public space

In operation since 1907, the current building of Eduskunta in central Helsinki was inaugurated in 1931, when a new space was needed for a unicameral parliament with 200 MPs. It was expanded in 1978 to meet the practical needs of more space for MPs and the Parliamentary Library and Parliamentary Office's Administrative Department. In 2004, another new building was annexed and named Little Parliament. Its round glass wall is designed to make parliamentary work more visible to the public. The information center and Ombudsman Office are located in this building. This is regarded as a symbolic effort

to improve the transparency and accessibility of the buildings as well as the work of Eduskunta.[60]

In addition, the Eduskunta has tried to remove various barriers for the public, in particular, for people with disabilities.[61] A working group for the accessibility of Eduskunta published its final report in 2006.[62] Wheelchair users or citizens with baby carriages can also join guided tours of the parliamentary buildings. However, even after the current renovations to all the parliamentary buildings except the Little Parliament are complete (by 2017), accessibility still leaves room for improvement because the main building was constructed in the 1920s without considering the current standards for accessibility at public buildings and facilities. (Interview with Könkkölä) The newly renovated Eduskunta will be unveiled in the centenary Independence celebrations in 2017, but a fundamental change is not expected.[63]

The Eduskunta holds an annual Open Day in September. For example, it organized an Open House in the Parliament Building on September 16, 2013 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the start of regular legislative work in Finland in 1863.[64] In 2007 the Eduskunta organized a special cultural programme to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Finnish democracy, including a floating exhibition.[65] In addition, the commercial TV station MTV3 and the city of Pori organized the event '*SuomiAreena*' since 2006, in cooperation with the Eduskunta.[66] It is a public debate forum benchmarked from the Swedish *Almedalen Week* (*Almedalsveckan*), with active participation from MPs and ministers.

4.2.2   Sharing of information

Eduskunta has operated the Citizens' Information Center (*Kansalaisinfo*) since 2004. It offers open seminars and panel discussions on various topical issues, as well as guided tours based

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[60]   http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/parliament/aboutparliament/presentation/parliamenthouse.htx (accessed 28 February 2014)

[61] In 1983, when Kalle Könkkölä, one of the first Green MPs in Finland, entered the Eduskunta on his wheelchair, there was no lift or ramp for wheelchair users (Könkkölä & Saraste, 1996).

[62]   Eduskunnan   esteettömyystyöryhmä.   2006.   *Demokratia   kaikille*. (http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/eduskunta/tervetuloa/esteeton.htx?lng=fi)

[63] The Swedish Riksdag opened more a modernized chamber hall after a renovation from 2004-2006, with a more vivid and open atmosphere with devices for facilitating debates among MPs, as well as enabling more accessibility for the disabled. (http://rundvandring.riksdagen.se/en/, accessed 28 February 2014)

[64] http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/pubman/templates/56.htx?id=5960 (accessed 28 February 2014).

[65] http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/eduskunta/ek100/tapahtumat/nayttelyt.htx (accessed 28 February 2014).

66 http://www.mtv.fi/sa-historia/historia.shtml (accessed 28 February 2014).

on a pre-booking system. However, special programmes like thematic tours are not offered.[67] An introductory brochure about the history of Eduskunta, main tasks and working methods, MPs and PPGs, etc. is provided in the two national languages and ten foreign languages, with basic information also provided online in simple Finnish, Swedish and English.[68] Now the more significant way to distribute information about the Parliament is the Internet and other various new media channels. These information outlets are included in the media and digital engagement section below.

Parliamentary libraries can be important in sharing of information. The Eduskunta library has been open to the public since 1913, although some parliamentary documents and materials can only be accessed upon request. Parliamentary documents have been available online since 1995. The library has adopted the principles of openness and good interaction with citizens as strategic core values. The library also offers diverse services like information service on parliamentary, legal and political issues (including information packages on legislative projects), information management trainings, online service, and a photo archive. (Bergström 2012; Korkeila 2012; interview with Korkeila) Interestingly, the Swedish Riksdag has been operating several regional information centers in cooperation with local public libraries since 2004; the idea came originally from Finland, but the Eduskunta no longer operates regional info-kiosks (Hansard Society 2011b: 29-30; Brundin 2005: 26; interview with Korkeila)

4.2.3   Accessibility of MPs

It is often said that Finnish MPs and politicians are easily contactable by ordinary citizens by phone, email and online, and even in buses, trams, markets, pubs, cafés and on the street in everyday situations. MPs also invite frequently targeted groups from their social and local constituencies to the Eduskunta to attend guided tour programmes, but also sometimes to give evidence in committee hearings. MPs are now also highly active in utilizing new social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, which make their activities more visible whilst at the same time facilitating quicker responses to the demands or questions of citizens. (Interviews with Tiimonen, Tynkkynen, Rehula, Kiuru, Niikko and Toivola)

Most Finnish parliamentarians (176 of 200 MPs) operate their own blogs to report on their speeches and activities as well as to discuss a variety of public issues (nine MPs were

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67 http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/eduskunta/tervetuloa/kansalaisinfo.htx (accessed 28 February 2014).

68 After the recent, total renovation of Eduskunta website in April. 2015, the language version in French has been removed. The Swedish Riksdag website offers similar information in 22 foreign languages. It also produces more diverse material, both in terms of forms and contents, to the public.

operating two blogs.).[69] According to a recent study by the Finnish news agency STT, around 75 per cent of Finnish MPs use Facebook and Twitter and around 25 per cent of MPs use Instagram, while 10 per cent (20 MPs) do not use any social media at all. The study also found that all 15 Green MPs use Facebook and Twitter, while the populist Finns Party MPs are least active – 10 of 38 parliamentarians do not use any social media. Left Alliance, Christian Democrats, and the Swedish People's Party parliamentarians are also active in communicating through Facebook and Twitter. The first elected MPs and young MPs are likely to be more active in social media. However, political communication through social media has been found to diminish after elections to a considerable extent.[70]

The Eduskunta website contains a page of for each MP with their personal backgrounds, political and legislative careers, contact information and links to their own websites.[71] However, these webpages are not very informative, and do not enable MPs to interact online (Mustajärvi 2011: 61), even after the website was totally redesigned in April 2015.

Previous studies indicate that Finnish MPs do not hold usually open meetings with constituents on a regular basis, even though the 'open list' electoral system should provide strong incentives for developing active constituency links (Arter 2011, 2012). However, this aspect of parliamentary work remains seriously under-researched in the Finnish context (and is beyond the scope of the analysis here). No definite conclusions can be made regarding the accessibility of MPs.[72]

4.2.4   Media and digital engagement

The Eduskunta guarantees that journalists can work as freely as possible (interview with Tiimonen). There are around 250 reporters and 80 photographers registered to work at the Eduskunta, and they can easily interview MPs in the halls, lobbies and café of the parliament buildings.[73] Besides everyday news reports and interview or debating programmes, key parts of the plenary such as the question time on Thursday afternoons and interpellations (that are always followed by a vote of confidence) as well as topical debates, prime minister's

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69 http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/eduskunta/organisaatio/kansanedustajat/blogit.htx (accessed 16 September 2014).

70 STT, "Twitter antaa uudelle kansan-edustajalle puheenvuoron", Länsi-Suomi, 20 July 2015. (https://ls24.fi/stt/twitter-antaa-uudelle-kansan-edustajalle-puheenvuoron, accessed 14 April 2016)

71 http://www.eduskunta.fi/thwfakta/hetekau/hex/hex3000.shtml/ (accessed 18 September 2014).

72 This dimension is least covered by the data. It was nevertheless included in the empirical analysis as it forms a key part of the analytical framework as the interaction between parliaments and citizens cannot be fully understood without incorporating MPs or their party groups into the equation.

73 One journalist who has been reporting on the Eduskuntafor almost 30 years told us that the atmosphere in the Eduskunta has changed considerably during that time. One example is that now they can contact and interview even the prime minister quite easily on a daily basis, which could hardly be imagined a generation ago.

announcements and the opening of the parliament, are broadcast live on the Finnish public broadcasting channel (YLE TV 1).[74]

Moreover, there is nowadays more to show. The major constitutional reform that culminated in the new constitution from 2000 weakened presidential powers and turned Finland into an essentially parliamentary regime. This has also benefited the Eduskunta, which is now much more at the center of things than before. A good illustration of this transformation is the number of plenary speeches held by prime ministers. Whereas in the early 1980s the annual number of plenary speeches made by the prime minister could be as low as one or two, this number has increased rapidly since the early 1990s. The prime minister and other cabinet ministers now appear almost on a weekly basis in the Eduskunta to defend government's actions. Also, question time has been reformed in the direction of more spontaneous and lively dialogue between the cabinet and MPs. (Raunio & Wiberg 2008)

There is no TV or radio channel fully dedicated to parliamentary affairs, operated either by the Eduskunta or by the public broadcasting company.[75] On engagement with printed media, the main weekly agenda and timetable of Eduskunta is published in the leading national daily *Helsingin Sanomat*, but there is no special cooperation between the Eduskunta and newspapers.[76] Nor does the Eduskunta publish its own journal or magazine.[77]

The Eduskunta website was recently completely re-designed and re-launched in April 2015 when a new parliamentary term began. Adopting more a visual design, it aimed at addressing criticisms for not being user-friendly (e.g., search functions difficult to operate, difficult language). (Korkeila 2012; Interviews with Korkeila and Tiimonen). Since 2008, the Eduskunta has broadcast live plenary sessions as well as public expert hearings, open meetings and seminars of the standing committees through its website. Additional information pertaining to matters under discussion is shown, and the documents connected to the decisions made on the floor are linked together with the video clips. On the website,

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74 http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/eduskunta/verkkolahetys.htx (accessed 28 February 2014).

75 For example, the South Korean National Assembly has been operating its own TV channel called NATV since 2004 (http://www.natv.go.kr/renew09/brd/info/history_vw.jsp, accessed 19 November 2014). In the UK, the BBC has a separate TV channel 'BBC Parliament', dedicated to UK and EU politics (http://www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/bbc_parliament/, accessed 28 February 2014). In the United States, the proceedings of the Houses of Representatives and Senate have been televised C-SPAN since 1979 (http://www.c-span.org/about/, accessed 12 January 2015).

76 Both houses of the Australian parliament notify the public of all current inquiries every other Wednesday with half page advertisements in the national daily The Australian, and request citizens to submit evidence (Hansard Society 2011b: 21).

77 The House of Representatives in Australia publishes a free, quarterly magazine About the House, the readership of which is estimated at more than 80 000. The magazine, enjoying a high reputation in terms of topics, content, readability and design, is sent to a wide range of public opinion leaders and ordinary citizens across the country, and is also utilized in school classes and universities. The Swedish Riksdag has also published a current affairs journal, Riksdag & Department, since 1976 (www.rod.se). (Hansard Society 2011b: 23-24)

all material can be searched and viewed via video archives.[78] Although the new Eduskunta website meets the basic *Guidelines for Parliamentary Website* by IPU (2009), it still leaves room for improvement. For example, the information searching system is still not so user-friendly or functional and the legislative activities of individual MPs are not easy to follow. In addition, it is still hard to find important statistical data on the legislative work of Eduskunta such as on the number of public committee hearings and meetings, outreach activities of the committees or the hours of plenary debates.[79]

Eduskunta operates Facebook and Twitter accounts. The latter has 19 044 'followers' while the former enjoys 3 705 'likes' (as of 12 August 2015). Eduskunta also operates a YouTube channel to share videos and a mobile version of the website. However, it is hard to say whether the Eduskunta as a collective body interacts with citizens actively through such SNS tools when considering the real traffics and qualities of those online communications; they usually remain intermittent, short and formal announcements of parliamentary schedules, news and events, without real discussion and feedback. More experimental uses for ICT tools, such as interactive online games or applications have not yet been found.[80]

4.2.5 Transparency of process

The legislative process is regulated in the constitution and in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure (Eduskunta [2000] 2012).[81] A legislative bill is introduced in the plenary, and after a preliminary debate, it is transferred to a standing committee or committees. The committee normally hears experts before drafting a report for the plenary, where the issue is approved or rejected in two readings.

The most distinctive feature of Eduskunta on this front is that while the plenaries are open to the public, committees meet behind the closed doors. After registering through the website one hour before, people can watch the plenary proceedings from the public gallery

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78 http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/parliament/mediacentre/livebroadcast.htx (accessed 28 February 2014).

79 In July 2015 the Eduskunta library released data on experts heard by committees in 1997-2014. This makes it much easier to study, for example, the number and background of such evidence-givers, and to establish variation between individual committees. (https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/tietoaeduskunnasta/kirjasto/aineistot/eduskunta/valtiopaivaasiakirjat-tietopaketti/Sivut/Valiokuntien-asiantuntijakuulemiset.aspx, accessed 1 October 2015)

80 The British parliament developed an application 'MyPolitics UK' that offers various information including news, photos, videos and blogs of governmental and parliamentary affairs, and enables the public to submit their opinions on various current issues (https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/my-politics-uk/id349169443?mt=8, accessed 28 August 2014). Similarly, the applications 'MyPolitics Canada' and 'MyPolitics USA' are also available.

81 Eduskunnan työjärjestys (http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2000/20000040).

on the second floor. The events on the floor are broadcast on the website of Eduskunta, the recorded clips can be accessed afterwards, and the core proceedings of the floor are broadcast live on YLE. All plenary documents can be accessed by the public, including the verbatim transcripts.[82]

Committee meetings are mainly not open to the public. This is a common feature of Nordic countries, which emphasize the advantages of trust-based negotiation behind closed doors, in which views can be exchanged easily among committee members. Normally only a condensed version of the minutes, containing the agenda items and related documents, participants and final decisions, is publicized after each committee meeting. Only in exceptional cases when the committee decides to hold public hearings or open seminars can proceedings be followed by the public.[83] In fact, committees have increased the number of public seminars and expert hearings, but their number is still very small, with notable variations between committees. Except for the Committee for the Future, which is committed to promoting parliamentary engagement with the public, most other committees seem reluctant to embrace transparent legislative decision-making processes. Table 4.1 below shows the numbers of public meetings and hearings held by committees as well as the variations between them.

Table 4.1 Public committee meetings and hearings (2008-2014)

Committee	No. of public hearings and meetings	Public hearings on citizens' initiatives
Grand Committee	4	
Constitutional Law	1	
Foreign Affairs	1	
Finance	2	
Audit	6	
Administration	0	
Legal Affairs	2	2

[82] According to the rules of procedure (§71), 'parliamentary documents shall be made available to the public in an information network.' This provision applies to documents like the minutes of the plenaries, government proposals, statements and reports, the reports and statements of the committees, parliamentary motions, interpellations and questions. However, committees may decide not to make documents available to the public, for example if they can cause significant harm to Finland's international relations or financial markets or when they contain confidential commercial or professional information or personal health or financial information (§43a).

[83] Public hearings and meetings can also be followed via the parliamentary website simultaneously as well as after they are concluded. Even in those cases, however, the verbatim transcripts are not provided too, which makes it difficult for viewers to scrutinize efficiently participant arguments and discussions in detail.

Transportation and Communication	0	
Agriculture and Forestry	1	1
Defence	0	
Education and Culture	2	2
Social Affairs and Health	1	
Commerce	2	
Committee for the Future	15	
Employment and Equality	2	
Environment	5	1
Total	44	6

4.2.6   Actual participation in legislative decision-making

4.2.6.1   Direct involvement in final decision-making

According to the Constitution of Finland, national-level referenda can be organized "by an Act, which shall contain provisions on the time of the referendum and on the choices to be presented to the voters." (Section 53) Referenda are consultative and non-binding; the final decision lies with the Parliament. There have been only two such referenda: the first in 1931 on the prohibition of alcohol and the second in 1994 on European Union membership. Despite their consultative character, the Eduskunta has typically acted in accordance with referenda results, which indicates a 'de facto constitutional bindingness'. (Husa 2011: 75-78) MEP Paavo Väyrynen is a prominent Centre-right politician who launched a citizen initiative to demand a referendum on Eurozone participation. The initiative gained more than 50 000 signatures and was transferred to the Eduskunta for deliberation. Given the general stances of PPGs and individual MPs, however, it is unlikely that this initiative will survive the parliamentary process. The possibilities of direct involvement in final decision-making through referendum are therefore very rare and limited in Finland.

4.2.6.2   Deliberative forums linked to parliamentary process

From citizen juries, planning cells, deliberative polling, consensus to Citizens' Assembly, there has been a variety of deliberative democratic forums organized over the past few decades. Usually based on the random selection method and facilitating roles of experts, various scales of sampling groups have been gathered over the short and long-term to discuss controversial issues in order to reach a more considered judgement or engender a more consensual form of decision-making. Despite their various forms, methods, and not-

fully established outcomes and institutional effects, they have been more frequently implemented in diverse political contexts. They are regarded as a useful and complementary channel for standard forms of representative decision-making. (Smith 2009, 2013) A challenging issue in deliberative democratic theories and practices is whether and how to expand new institutional designs and outcomes of deliberative innovations to the whole range of political systems – especially, how to incorporate them into established parliamentary institutions. (Beetham 2011)

There have been several experimental cases for deliberative participation of citizens at the national level of policy making in Finland. The first case was the 'Citizen Deliberation' experiment in Turku organized by Åbo Academy in 2006, which dealt with the issue of building the sixth nuclear power plant in Finland. (Setälä, Grönlund & Herne 2010) It was followed by experiments to deliberate on the future of the EU or global climate change, etc. The University of Vaasa conducted a four-year research project (2010-2014) to practice deliberative democracy regarding health care policy reform. (Raisio 2010) However, they are usually organized by academic institutions or linked with the EU or international projects. There have been no cases of deliberative civic engagement experiments connected to legislative decision-making process in the Eduskunta.[84]

4.2.6.3   Engagement with committee deliberation

As in other Northern European parliaments, the Eduskunta committees have significant roles in the legislative deliberation process. Committees allow civil society stakeholders, including interest groups and academic experts, to submit their statements on the bills. Some are invited (together with ministry officials) to have their voices heard in expert hearings held behind closed doors. The number of committee hearings and the scope of invited experts vary depending on the issues and committees. According to the study's analysis of the recent parliamentary data[85], the Eduskunta invited in total 10 030 experts in 2014. Among them, 60.5 per cent were from the public sector. 2.7 per cent were from the private sector, while 27.4 per cent came from the third sector. 9.1 per cent were academic experts. This proportion varies according to committees, however. Committees closely related to basic state functions typically invite public sector agents more than other groups, while social affairs related committees, especially the Education and Culture Committee,

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84 This can be contrasted with Denmark, which is characterized by frequent referenda and a strong commitment to deliberative democracy. For example, the Board of Danish Technology provides a good model of consensus conferences institutionalized in connection with parliamentary decision-making (Setälä 2011; Raisio 2010).

85   https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/tietoaeduskunnasta/kirjasto/aineistot/eduskunta/valtiopaivaasiakirjat-tietopaketti/Sivut/Valiokuntien-asiantuntijakuulemiset.aspx. (assessed 1 October 2015)

invite more experts from the third sector. Meanwhile, the Constitutional Law Committee heavily relies on a small number of legal professors and experts. Each committee appears to have its own 'usual suspects' who are more frequently invited to the committee consultation process. (See the chapter 5 for more detailed analysis on the scope of expert hearings in the Eduskunta committee.)

According to a study conducted by *Helsingin Sanomat*, between 1998 and 2013 representatives from business and industry were invited to hearings twice as often as trade-union representatives. That data suggests that organized interest groups are much more represented in parliamentary work than under-organized social minorities or value-oriented civil society organizations.[86] In addition, examining expert consultations in the 2005 Eduskunta, Holli and Saari (2009) showed that women were invited less frequently to men in committee hearings (33.9 per cent compared to 66.1 per cent). There is no data on whether socially marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, young people and ethnic minorities or immigrants are represented in the committee consultations of Eduskunta.[87]

In addition, parliamentary committees do not commonly practice outbound trips for field investigation and public consultation. There are no additional processes to allow citizens to express their opinions or give comments on bills under committee deliberation, such as the E-Consultation of the UK Parliament[88] or *Senador Virtual* (Virtual Senate) of Chile.[89] (See also the chapter 5 for more information about the Eduskunta committees' civic engagement practices.)

4.2.6.4   Parliamentary petition system

Petitions are acknowledged as a useful institutional channel to link the parliament with citizens. Through the parliamentary petition system, citizens can voice individual grievances or public agendas to parliamentary institutions. Despite the unintended consequence of adding to the already over-burdened parliamentary workload and a low level of success, a number of legislatures have reformed or strengthened their petition systems. For example,

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86 T. Peltomäki, 'HS-selvitys: Heitä eduskunta kuuntelee', Helsingin Sanomat, 28.4.2013.

87 Halpin et al. (2012) offer an example of such research about the extent to which the socially disadvantaged groups are heard in the committee hearings of Scottish Parliament.

88 Both houses of the British parliament allow ordinary people to submit their views or relevant material of the processed bills through 'Open calls for evidence' at the stage of committee deliberation. Both houses have tried to utilize such online consultations in various national issues like domestic violence, food management, role of prison officers, and the future of post office (Hansard Society 2011b: 42; Norton 2012: 415)

89 The Chilean Senate introduced an online forum in 2003 where citizens can participate in voting for or against policy proposals deliberated by the Senate. Citizens can also leave their comments on the issue, to which the Senate gives feedback at the committee stage. (Hansard Society 2011b: 40-41)

the UK Parliament modernized it by introducing the e-petition system.[90] The Scottish Parliament embraced the petition system as their primary tool of parliamentary civic engagement, in which individuals and organizations can submit their petitions to the Public Petitions Committee, which has a duty to address each petition and make a decision. The German Bundestag established a similar e-petition system in 2005, which has been regularized since 2007. The Australian House of Representatives established the Petition Committee in 2008. The Dutch Parliament allows citizens to submit two types of petitions such as individual grievances and policy petitions. (Carman 2006; Hough 2012; Lindner and Riehm 2011; Andeweg 2012)

There is no petition or e-petition in the Eduskunta, nor is there any form of Petition Committee. Instead, citizens can file a complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsperson elected by the Eduskunta, a common Nordic tradition originating in Sweden in the 19th century. Working independently, the Ombudsperson can investigate complaints on their own initiative and take actions to remedy the situation caused by illegal activities or neglect by public officials. Over 5 000 complaints were submitted in 2013, of which over 800 (16 %) were investigated.[91] Recently, the Ombudsperson has been given additional mandate to investigate violations of human rights guaranteed by international treaties and Constitution. (Paunio 2009) The Ombudsperson Office submits the annual report to the Eduskunta. The Ombudsperson thus offers an indirect link between the Eduskunta and citizens.[92]

4.2.6.5   Citizens' initiatives

A more significant reform allowing citizens to participate in legislative decision-making is the citizens' initiative introduced in 2012 through a new enactment linked with constitutional amendment. An initiative for legislation can be submitted to the Eduskunta if it is backed by more than 50 000 enfranchised citizens within six months. Between March 2012 when the reform entered into force and September 2015, 12 initiatives have passed the hurdle of 50 000 signatures; six initiatives were fully deliberated by the Eduskunta and one of them, on gender-neutral marriage, was approved by the Eduskunta. (See chapter 6 about the topics, initiators, campaign ways, parliamentary responses and results of the 6 initiatives.)

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90 In the new petition system, a petition collecting more than 10 000 signatures shall get a response from the UK government, while the one with more than 100 000 signatures is deliberated by the UK House of Commons. (https://petition.parliament.uk/, accessed 14 April 2016)

91 http://www.oikeusasiamies.fi/Resource.phx/pubman/templates/5.htx?id=1038 (accessed 28 February 2014).

92 http://www.oikeusasiamies.fi/Resource.phx/pubman/templates/5.htx?id=1038 (accessed 28 February 2014)

Citizens' initiatives in Finland belong to a type of 'agenda-initiative' (Schiller & Setälä 2012: 1), which is not linked to popular voting. The Finnish government operates an online platform (www.kansalaisaloite.fi) for organizing citizens' initiatives so that ordinary citizens can more easily submit initiatives and collect signatures through an online system. A volunteer NGO (Open Ministry) and its online platform (www.avoinministerio.fi) plays an important role in the earlier stages by facilitating the discussion of ideas based on 'crowdsourcing' tools, launching initiatives and gathering signatures, while giving practical and legal advice to citizen initiators. (Interview with Pekkanen; Christensen, Karjalainen & Nurminen 2015) The Ministry of Justice (2014: 38-42) has argued that this new mechanism has increased citizen interest in politics — with the media also reporting actively on initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta. Institutionally, it has expanded the possibilities of citizens and civil society actors to participate in legislative agenda setting. Initiating various issues of collective campaigns, civil society organizations and activists seem to find new forms and venues for civic mobilization. Moreover, the transparency of parliamentary work has improved to some extent since the committees dealing with citizens' initiatives are expected to organize open hearings and meetings when processing the issues (interviews with Pekkanen and Wilhelmsson).

After the first parliamentary term, the citizen's initiative has quickly been consolidated as the third institutional channel for legislative agenda setting in addition to governmental proposals and MPs' initiatives. (Interview with Vahasalo) Bringing up the 'hidden' policy agenda that the coalition government as well as other established parties would not put forward in the normal legislative process, citizens' initiatives contributed to expanding public discussions through the parliamentary arena as well as other political public spheres in media and civil society. However, it is in the very early stage of institutional implementation; long-terms of institutional impacts and new democratic dynamics generated by this citizen-initiated participatory politics should be observed carefully. (See the chapter 6 for a full assessment of the institutional features and political impacts of Finnish citizens' initiatives.)

4.2.7   Civic education and outreach

Parliaments can function as important forums of civic education for a sustainable democracy. Democracy education for the youth and minority groups such as people with disabilities, immigrants or residents of remote areas, and the promotion of equal opportunities for political participation have been widely acknowledged as significant tasks. Nordic parliaments are endeavoring to develop democracy education through a variety of

innovative methods.[93] Finland has also made efforts to promote democracy education and youth participation through the Youth Parliament and youth councils of municipalities. Youth Parliament were first introduced in France in 1994. They have subsequently been introduced to many European countries, including Finland in 1998. Its main aims are (1) to help young people perceive society from the perspectives of different actors; (2) to familiarize young people with the Eduskunta and Finnish democracy; (3) to develop the capacity needed for participation in Finnish political institutions; (4) to allow young people to express their views on social issues; and (5) to provide legislators the opportunity to hear young people's voices. The Finnish Youth Parliament consists of 199 youth parliamentarians. Upper secondary school students from across the country participate. Parliamentary clubs in local schools select their representatives and send them to the Youth Parliament convening once every two years. A gap between geographic locations and gender is observed among the participants. Between 1998 and 2008, 1 189 students had participated in the Youth Parliament; 273 students (23.0 per cent) came from Uusimaa, the largest constituency while only 19 students (1.6 per cent) came from Etelä-Savo, the smallest constituency.[94] Data shows female students participating at a higher rate than male students, with 760 girls taking part compared to just 429 boys (the proportion is about 1.8:1). 507 parliamentary clubs from 207 schools have sent their representatives in the same period, including 44 schools in Uusimaa and 4 schools in Etelä-Savo. (Nuorten Parlamentti 2008: 2-6)

A recent example on 28 March 2014 shows how the Finnish Youth Parliament works on the day of plenary convening. Youth parliamentarians were allocated in the morning session into 7 standing committees to explore the legislative work in the Eduskunta. Student MPs belonging to the Grand Committee could discuss European matters with Martin Schulz, President of the EU Parliament, who visited Helsinki. After then, they joined the plenary session to participate in 'Question Time' chaired by the Speaker of Eduskunta. 14 Ministers attended to answer the questions of youth parliamentarians. The event was broadcast by YLE TV 1 and the Eduskunta website.[95] Although this parliamentary event for young students is impressive on its scale, it is difficult to assess whether the Youth

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[93] The Danish Folketing operates the highly popular 'Politician for a Day' programme for students. Students are divided into mock-political parties and participate in various parliamentary activities. These range from committee deliberation to plenary decision-making. The Norwegian Storting runs a similar 'MiniTing', which attracts about 6 000 students per year. (Hansard Society 2011b: 63-65)

[94] The numbers of seats in Youth Parliament are also allocated according to the size of normal constituencies.

95 http://verkkolahetys.eduskunta.fi/webtv.case#c=2394863&v=39239550&p=0&l=fi&t=0 (Accessed 9 September 2014) The latest Youth Parliament was convened on 15 April 2016, in which the PM and other Ministers took part to answer the questions of student MPs who raised also several critical issues like the recent refugee crisis, NATO membership, and governmental austerity schemes. E. Pyykkönen, "Koululaiset hiillostivat ministereitä", Helsingin Sanomat, 16 April 2016. Refer to the website of Finnish Youth Parliament (www.nuortenparlamentti.fi), as well.

Parliament has achieved its goals or how representative and influential it is, due to the lack of concrete feedback data. (Eduskunta, 2013)[96]

In January 2014, the Eduskunta operated an additional programme that 150 MPs visited local schools in their constituencies. In average, each MP visited 3.2 schools and about 110 students participated in a meeting in which students could discuss with MPs the work of parliamentarians. This event contributed to increasing the interest of attendant students, teachers and MPs themselves. (Interview with Tiimonen). Special initiatives targeting social minority groups such as people with disabilities, immigrants and residents of remote regions do not exist.[97] Apart from the Youth Parliament, there thus appears to be a lack of political will for reaching out to disadvantaged groups or for designing more innovative methods for civic education. (Interviews with Könkkölä, Rämö, and Salin)

4.2.8   Parliament as future forum

On this criterion, the Eduskunta has been acknowledged as a leading pioneer in the world through its Committee for the Future, which was established in 1993 and made a permanent committee in 2000 (Arter 2000). It does not have legislative but 'initiative and visionary' roles in national policy making. Its main tasks are to prepare the parliamentary response to the future policy report of the government (once every four years), to issue statements to other committees on future-related issues, to initiate studies on future using innovative research methods, and to assess technological development and its societal consequences (Eduskunta, 2012; Tiihonen, 2011, 2014).

Regarding itself as a think-tank of the Eduskunta, the committee has pursued innovative methodological approaches to its work. In addition to responding to governmental future policy reports[98], it has conducted annual future research on its own initiative, of which one project focused on the future of democracy. The committee has also tried to facilitate social dialogue in various forms such as through a 60-member 'Forum of the Experienced and

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[96] For example, in Scottish survey data of youth MPs is collected for further developing the Youth Parliament. The Scottish case provides youths from minority social groups with the opportunity to be represented in the Youth Parliament in connection with diverse affiliated groups. (Patrikios & Shepard 2014)

[97] The Scottish parliament has since 2008 developed the 'Community Partnership Programme' to target young people in social groups under-represented in terms of parliamentary engagement. The core target groups are 'blinded and partially sighted young people, ethnic minority youth, and hard-to-reach young people.' (Hansard Society 2011b: 58-59)

[98] Over the last two decades, the Committee has deliberated on 7 future-oriented government policy reports prepared by the PM. See: *Report on the long-term future* (1993); *Finland and the future of Europe* (1996); *Honest and courageous – A Finland of responsibility and competence* (1997); *Finland of balanced development 2015* (2001); *A good society for people of all ages* (2004); *Towards a Finland of low emissions* (2009); *Sustainable growth for welfare* (2013). (Tiihonen 2014)

the Wise' (former leaders of public and private sectors), a seminar series 'Turning Innovations into Resources', regional meetings across the country, and cooperation with business sector, municipal committees for the future, youth councils, and so on. In particular, it has embraced deliberative democracy and 'crowdsourcing democracy' (Aitamurto 2012). In 2013, it cooperated with the Ministry of Environment that launched a crowdsourcing legislative process for making a governmental proposal on off-road traffic law, while testing 'the methods of participatory and direct democracy in an online context' (Aitamurto & Landemore 2013: 4). In addition, a project of 'Crowdsourcing' to build the presence of the committee in social media was led by the committee deputy chair Oras Tynkkynen. A topical project on the future of the welfare state was conducted by combining various methods, such as expert hearings, thematic studies, and participatory online consultation, to produce the final report. Although the Committee for the Future does not have legislative or budgetary power and its status is not very high in the committee hierarchy, it has been successful as an agenda-setting committee, and has contributed to concrete long-term policies. However, the committee has been criticized for relying too much on online dialogue, which may be due to a shortage of resources. (Interviews with Tynkkynen and Tiihonen)[99]

4.2.9   Strategy and leadership

Despite a general boost for parliamentary reforms to engage with the electorate between elections, there is likely to be a gap between the envisioned ideal (or rhetoric) and real functions of new participatory initiatives and mechanisms. Political pressures to respond to systemic-level crises or significant political changes, as well as new establishment of parliament such as the case of the Scottish Parliament after the devolution process, or celebrating parliamentary founding moments might give impetus to parliamentary reforms. (Hansard Society 2011b: 75) In any cases, successful parliamentary reforms or innovations require a comprehensive strategy with a clear agenda and strong political will among legislators, as well as sufficiently allocated resources. (IPU 2012; Norton [2005] 2013: 280-294)

The Eduskunta has made various efforts to connect with citizens, such as operating its information center, digital engagement through its website and social media, close links with journalists, holding more public committee hearings or experimenting with a Youth Parliament. These activities are implemented in line with the 'Communication Strategy of Parliamentary Office: 2011-2014'. It looks quite similar as the communication strategy of

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[99] The Scotland's Futures Forum of the Scottish parliament which benchmarked the Finnish model is evaluated as 'a more expansive model of public engagement'. It is led by a ten-member board, but also 2 000 civil society members are joining it. (Hansard Society 2011b: 45; Groombridge 2006)

the Danish Folketing, which has a vision and strategic aims, core target groups for communication services, and concrete tasks and action plans (Hansard Society 2011b: 77-78). Nevertheless, it appears more as an administrative document. It remains to be seen whether there is the political will for developing more ambitious long-term communication strategies.

4.3 Towards an Open and Participatory Parliament? Evaluating the Parliamentary Communications with Citizens in Finland

4.3.1 Visibility and accessibility as preconditions of participation

After applying the analytical framework to a wide range of empirical criteria, parliamentary activities to engage the electorate with various legislative affairs in Finland have been identified. The first five practical criteria, 'parliament as public space', 'sharing information', 'accessibility of MPs', 'media and digital engagement' to 'transparency of parliamentary process' are closely related to the principles of visibility and accessibility. These function as preconditions for civil participation in parliamentary decision-making. A number of measures taken by the Eduskunta to improve transparency and accessibility were identified. As the central space for national political life, physical accessibility of the Eduskunta facilities has been improved to accommodate the people with special needs. The Citizens' Information Center and the Parliamentary Library have contributed to sharing information about the Eduskunta with the public. Finnish MPs have become more active in using new media to communicate with their constituents. The Eduskunta offers a highly informal working environment to the media and journalists. As the Eduskunta has gained increased political importance as a result of constitutional reforms, the plenary chamber functions as the most visible and accessible parliamentary arena. Key parts of plenary session are televised while the Eduskunta webcasts most plenary discussions and publishes discussions verbatim.

Research findings also indicate the need to strengthen parliamentary transparency and accessibility continuously. The classical architectural design of the main building limits accessibility for people with disabilities and limits a more dynamic and lively atmosphere of parliamentary debates. Eduskunta has redesigned the website as a whole and relaunched it in April 2015 to make it more visually appealing and user-friendly. Despite notable improvements, there are still limitations for the public to easily access detailed information of legislative activities. Moreover, "Eduskunta has clearly fallen behind in the development and adoption of solutions associated with e-democracy that, for example, provide greater opportunities for citizen participation." (Mustajärvi 2011:60)

However, the closed nature of committee work attracts the most critical point of evaluation. As a Nordic 'working' parliament, the Eduskunta has permanent and specific committees in which actual legislative scrutinizing and negotiation take place. These committee meetings are usually held behind closed doors. Although closed settings are advocated by many parliamentary personnel as facilitating trust-based free discussion and thus reaching more consensual decision-makings (interviews with Rehula, Mäkipää, and Laine; Pekonen 2011), the current committee system and procedure of Eduskunta inevitably and fundamentally restricts committee transparency and accessibility of the public to central legislative activities.

Recently Finland has witnessed increasing use of public committee hearings and meetings, but the number of them remains still few and exceptional. Committees publish the final report or statement when they reach a conclusion of legislative deliberation, but a full verbatim record is not provided except a memorandum with very limited information. Even written statements submitted by external stakeholders have only recently been made public during the period of committee deliberation (since 2015). Despite the potential advantages of closed meetings, they function as the main barriers for the public to engage with parliamentary decision-making process. Increasing pressures on the contemporary parliaments to open up their proceedings, combined with the claims of transparent and participatory public policy making, are casting a significant challenge on the legislative system and culture of Finland, as well. After renovations are completed in2017, Eduskunta committees are expected to hold more frequent public hearings and meetings with the help of new technological facilities. However, the key factor to enhance public engagement with committee process is not just technical improvement but the political will of legislators. For example, the Eduskunta may reform the committee procedure so that expert hearings could be held publicly as a basic rule with exceptional provisions for private settings.

4.3.2 Permeability and actual forms of citizen participation

The sixth criterion of 'actual participation in legislative decision-making' is directly linked with the 'permeability' claim (Arter 2012), which indicates to what extent citizens can take part in legislative decision-making process. From direct involvement in final decision-making, deliberative citizen forums, public engagement with committee consultation, to petitions and citizens' initiatives, the forms and degrees of citizen participation in the parliamentary decision-making are scrutinized.

The findings show that parliamentary engagement practices are exercised mainly through traditional forms of representative democracy, despite the potential contribution of citizens' initiatives to enhancing new forms of participation. Direct democratic mechanisms such as referenda are rarely used at the national level of decision-making and citizens' initiatives are

not connected to popular voting. There have been no parliamentary trials to incorporate deliberative public forums into the legislative process, although the Committee for the Future has embraced the ideas of deliberative and participatory democracy. The parliamentary committees deliver a significant link between the government and citizens in legislative process, but their legislative consultation mainly relies on the traditional channels of neo-corporatist policy making, in which various policy stakeholders including public officials, interest groups and academic experts are invited to the committee hearings. The committee consultation scale is assessed to be large but committee transparency is generally limited. Moreover, parliamentary channels for ordinary citizens to engage with the committee process are hardly found, although citizens can contact their MPs in private and a wider public consultation takes place at the ministerial stage of proposal making.

The most significant reform to improve public access to parliamentary decision-making is the enactment of citizens' initiative in 2012. By gathering a certain number (50 000) of eligible signatures, citizens are entitled to participate directly in legislative agenda setting. Having moderate procedural requirements, the Finnish citizens' initiative introduced an e-collection system, which has contributed to facilitating active use of this participatory tool in the early stage. In the first parliamentary term between March 2012 and April 2015, citizens' initiatives have proved their institutional 'functionality' while putting forward various policy issues and expanding political discussions in and outside the parliamentary arenas. (Chapter 6 addresses this topic fully.) There is no parliamentary (e-) petition system in the Eduskunta. Instead, the Parliamentary Ombudsperson offers indirect linkages between parliament and individual citizens. The potential of (online) parliamentary petition systems to improve links between citizens and the parliament has not yet been explored in Finland.

4.3.3   Inclusive representation and sustainable democracy

Three more dimensions, 'civic education and outreach', 'parliament as future forum' and 'strategy and leadership' are also examined. These criteria are useful to assess parliamentary initiatives involving minorities and young people and long-term policy programmes for sustainable democracy. Apart from the Children Parliament (*Lastenparlamentti*) operating in major municipalities since 2001, the Youth Parliament has been a major programme for the parliament to engage with young people at the national level. Based on a local school network for student club activities, 199 youth parliamentarians meet in the Eduskunta once a second-year to experience how the parliament works. What is impressive is that the Speaker of Eduskunta presides the plenary session of Youth Parliament and many Ministers are present there to answer the questions of young MPs. The event is broadcast on the national public broadcasting channel. However, it remains to be researched whether and

how youth parliamentarians represent ordinary children and young people as a whole, and what influences they can make on parliamentary affairs through Youth Parliament. Given the number of youth participants, the Danish Folketing's a 'Politician Day' programme and Norwegian Storting's 'Mini-Ting' programme seem to provide more massive scales of youth education for political literacy and active citizenship. Besides the MPs' school-visit programme organized in 2014, parliamentary programmes or initiatives involving so-called 'hard-to-reach' groups such as people with disabilities, immigrants or ethnic minorities, and remote local area residents are not identified. Considering the increased political inequalities in participation between different social groups, the Eduskunta needs to take more active measures in reaching marginalized groups.

The Eduskunta is a genuine pioneer in the world parliamentary institutions, in that it has operated a standing committee fully dedicated to deliberate on future policy issues. The Committee for the Future exercises a 'visionary' power based on an innovative and consensual approach towards future-related matters. It has also endeavored to increase public engagement with democratic decision-making. Paulo Tiihonen having served as the Committee Secretary since its establishment in 1993 compares democracy with a '*Puutarha*' (garden) that requires continuous caretaking. She emphasizes the parliaments should consider 'the rights of future generations' in treating contemporary matters. (Interview with Tiihonen) However, the Committee for the Future has a lower status in the committee hierarchy and limited resources. In addition, there is a risk to treat crucially important public issues from a technology-oriented managerial perspective while neglecting the presence of conflicting social interests with competing political claims. Recent debates about the major reform project of social and health care system in Finland (*SOTE-uudistus*) or the problematic process in preparing the future report of the Katainen Government in 2013 imply a danger embedded in making future policies.[100]

4.3.4   Democracy policy and reform agendas from the citizens' perspective

Having been 'a state-centered society' (Husa 2011: 75), Finland has developed a strong tradition of representative democracy, which emphasizes the decisive roles of elected institutions and representatives. The Eduskunta has been also criticized to maintain a strong attachment to the traditional forms of parliamentary roles. (See, for example, Arter 2012) Facing the common challenges of contemporary representative democracy, Finland has recently undergone a complete constitutional overhaul which has reoriented not only legislative-executive relations but also the relationship between parliament and citizens,

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[100] Raisio, Harri & Lundström, Niklas, "Vaikeat ongelmat ratkaistaan yhdessä kansalaisten kanssa", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 15 January 2013; K. Kartunen *et al.*, "Oikeuskansleri: Hyvä hallinto ei toteutunut Himas-tutkimuksessa"*, Helsigin Sanomat* 7 September 2013.

including the enactment of the citizens' initiative. Along with strengthened provisions of basic human rights, the new Constitution states, "the public authorities shall promote the opportunities for the individual to participate in societal activity and to influence the decisions that concern him or her." (Section 14) Under the new constitutional framework, the Finnish government has launched a variety of national policy programmes for democracy, equal participation and civic education since 2000s: Citizen Participation Policy Programme (2003-2007); Child and Youth Participation Programme (2012-2015); Human Rights Policy Report (2009) and the National Action Plan (2012-2013, 2014-2015); Democracy Policy Report – "Open and Equal Participation" (2014), and so forth.

The democracy policy report suggests various policy reforms to confront significant democratic challenges such as the decline of voter turnout and increasing political inequality among social groups. The report was drafted through a participatory policy making process, including deliberative forums of civil panels (*kansalaisraati*)[101], public discussions through an online platform (*Otakantaa.fi*) operated by the Finnish government to involve citizens in public policymaking at local and national levels, and policy consultation with various civil society organizations. The results of citizens' deliberation and online consultation reveal how ordinary Finnish citizens perceive the state of democracy and what reforms to prioritize.

Declining voting turnouts were regarded as the first issue to be tackled. Developing citizens' initiatives was ranked second as a means to increase political interest. The third issue was the insufficient roles played by the Eduskunta in making the government more accountable. People demanded a more discursive political culture, facilitating more parliamentary debates and active roles by opposition parties. The fourth issue regarded invisibility and inaccessibility of the Eduskunta such as the use of complicated language.[102] Various suggestions were made to remedy these problems: making the legislative process more open to the public; introducing citizen panels; publicizing lists of lobbyists and statement-givers; writing parliamentary documents in easy language; and improving information sharing about the Eduskunta, etc. Fifth, citizens wanted to increase online communication using the latest technologies. They called for user-friendly websites and using social media to encourage youth participation. Sixth, new forms of democratic participation such as the use of referendums, deliberative civil forums and citizens' initiatives were demanded to be used more in order to narrow the gap between voters and decision-makers. Apart from them, various agendas were listed and discussed, including

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[101] 30 civic panels are selected based on the population registration data of Finland, considering their representativeness of gender, age, residential area, and party preference at voting etc. Deliberative forums were held twice on 8 June 2013 and 14 September 2013. (Peura-Kapanen et al. 2013: 2-4)

[102] In the online discussion and voting through the Otakantaa.fi, this issue was ranked on the top agenda with 20 percent of support among participants. (ibid. 6)

uncritical agreements of EU decisions and too frequent use of consultants in political decision-making, etc. (Peura-Kapanen *et al.* 2013)

The results of deliberative citizen panels and online consultation imply that the public wants to make the Eduskunta more open and accessible, and that new forms of citizen participation be used more frequently in decision-making. However, these agendas put forward by the public were incorporated into more broadly defined policy tasks in the final democracy policy report. Specific reform policies to change the legislative procedures, systems and culture of the Eduskunta were not highlighted sufficiently. The parliamentary discussion in the Eduskunta about the government report proceeded in a similar way. (Eduskunta 2014: PTK 26/2014 vp)

4.4   Conclusion

Societal changes and new demands of civil participation are putting pressure on political systems to 'open up' their procedures and to engage more actively with citizens. Parliaments are also facing challenges in combining traditional representative democracy with new forms of participatory and deliberative democracy. A primary goal of this thesis is to contribute to the literature through developing a comprehensive analytical framework for analyzing the multiple and dynamic relationships between legislatures and citizens. Considering the challenges facing representative democracy, such as decreasing turnout and trust in political institutions, the study argues that scholars should pay more attention to how legislatures 'reach out' to citizens.

The application of the framework to the case of the Finnish Eduskunta produced mixed findings. A number of recent reforms that have contributed to transparency and accessibility were identified, ranging from architectural renovations, information center, better links with the media, webcasts and TV coverage of plenaries, to occasional public committee meetings. In particular, the Committee for the Future can be considered a genuine innovation and a pioneering example of future-oriented parliamentary deliberation. The committee has made various efforts to enhance public engagement with parliamentary decision-making, but it remains a low-ranking committee with quite limited resources.

The most critical aspect of the findings relates to the closed nature of committee work. The Eduskunta, along with other Nordic legislatures can be classified as a 'working' parliament as opposed to a 'debating' parliament like the House of Commons. Working parliaments are characterized by standing orders that emphasize committee work over plenary debates, with a legislative culture where MPs focus on the scrutiny of documents in committees instead of grand speeches on the floor. In addition, debating legislatures are, on average, less consensual, with the opposition using the plenary to criticize the government. (Arter 2016: 214-215; Bergman & Strøm 2011) In line with the 'working parliament' thesis,

committees are the backbone of the Eduskunta. They meet behind closed doors and are the central arena for constructive argumentation and party-political cooperation, including between government and opposition parties. (Helander & Pekonen 2007; Pekonen 2011; Raunio & Wiberg 2014) We recognize the advantages of closed meetings: they allow the confidential exchange of information, both between parliamentary groups and between the legislature and the executive, which in turn facilitates more informed decision-making (Fasone & Lupo 2015).

However, the reliance on closed negotiations with the 'usual suspects' may cause a decline in legitimacy when they dominate access to parliament at the expense of ordinary citizens and socially marginalized groups (Norton, 1999: 15). For this reason, committees should expand the scope of legislative consultation by involving a more diverse array of actors and enhancing legislative engagement with the public. At minimum, the process of expert hearings could be open to the public as a rule, unless there is a special reason for secrecy. However, one recent study suggests that open hearings may result in committees receiving testimony from a less diverse set of actors (Pedersen *et al.*, 2015). Institutional mechanisms like online consultation or 'E-Parliament' could be designed for citizens to submit their opinions and evidence to the committees.

While measuring political will inside the Eduskunta is difficult, Finnish parliamentary culture does not appear conducive to embracing more participatory channels of influence. There is a strong attachment to traditional representative democracy and a lukewarm attitude towards democratic innovations, including the citizens' initiative (Arter 2012). The citizens' initiative might in the long-run bring about a more participatory legislative culture, especially in light of the success of the same-sex marriage initiative. Apart from opening up the committee process to some degree, it has contributed to societal debate by putting on the agenda issues that would not have been raised by the government or the established parties. However, it is still too early to draw any conclusions about the impact of this new mechanism. The Eduskunta focuses very much on controlling the government and specifically on the scrutiny of government bills, not on 'reaching out' to citizens. Beyond election campaigns and perhaps constituency work, there is hardly any widely shared political will in the parliament for engaging more actively with citizens.

5 HOW DO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES COMMUNICATE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN FINLAND?

5.1 Introduction

Legislative committees are a core organizational feature of modern democratic parliaments. A strong committee system is generally regarded as 'a necessary if not sufficient' requirement for an effective legislature with influential power in policymaking. (Martin 2014: 352; Strøm 1998: 47) Contrary to the Westminster parliamentary system, continental European and Nordic working parliaments put a priority on committees to scrutinize government bills and oversee the executive more than via plenary speeches and debates. (Norton 1998; Arter 2016) Nevertheless, the UK Parliament has strengthened the roles of selective committees through parliamentary reforms in 1979 and 1998. Likewise, the Scottish Parliament sought a Scandinavian style of committee-centered, working parliament after devolution in 1999. Parliamentary committees have gained more importance in their status and functions in many representative assemblies. (Norton 1998, [2005] 2013; Arter 2002, 2004; Longley & Davidson 1998)

   Committees provide a significant institutional channel to link the state and civil society in the legislative process. In scrutinizing legislative bills, committees invite external policy stakeholders in hearings and hear evidence from them, which gives the parliament the primary sources of legitimate and effective public policy making. Scholars have paid attention to the roles of parliamentary committees and their strategic interactions with interest groups in the legislative process. (Martin 2014; Binderkrantz 2014; Norton 1999) Civic engagement activities within Scottish parliamentary committee have recently contributed to increase in literature in this topic. (e.g., Arter 2004; McLaverty & Macleod 2012; Halpin, MacLeod & MacLaverty 2012) Nevertherless, the actual working methods of parliamentary committees and their communications with citizens beyond established interest groups need to be studied further.[103]

   The Eduskunta has a strong committee system. (Mattson & Strøm 1995; Mattila 2014) Committees are specialized and permanent, having their own policy areas corresponding to specific ministries. They scrutinize bills and motions, hold expert hearings, take written statements from interest groups, and produce reports and statements after detailed debates,

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[103] For an extensive literature review on the legislative committees and their relationship with civil society, see the chapter 2.

and negotiate among members and PPGs. Government bills are given a priority in committee work. Motions introduced by parliamentarian are commonly left untreated unless backed by a majority of MPs. "Governmental proposals are treated first, and then other things are dealt with", according to Juha Rehula, Chair of Social Affairs and Health Committee (personal interview). Since 1 March 2012, the committee also considers citizens' initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta once they have reached the 50 000 eligible signature threshold. With their strengthened capacity, Eduskunta committees make frequent amendments to legislative bills while approaching matters in consensual and practical ways. (Pekkonen 2011; interview with Laine) The committee process is mainly closed to the public in Finland, as previously noted. Notwithstanding the potential benefits of trust-based, free negotiations between decision-makers in private settings, the Eduskunta has been often criticized for its limited transparency during committee deliberations. (See, for example, Arter 2012) Although transparency has gradually increased with the introduction of public hearings and meetings, they remain very few even after the introduction of citizens' initiatives. Furthermore, the actual scope and quality of legislative engagement activities in the committees needs to be studied in detail.[104]

For a systemic empirical measurement, the 'committee consultation index' was introduced in chapter 2. The index consists of three-levels of committee engagement activities: (1) 'expert consultation' - a standard parliamentary mechanism to interact with external stakeholder groups; (2) 'co-consultation' – a collaborative mechanism allowing the public members to engage with committee deliberation by commenting and submitting evidence; and (3) 'outreach meetings and fact finding visits' - more proactive parliamentary efforts to reach out to ordinary citizens as well as socially marginalized groups for hearing their voices during legislative consultation. Each dimension consists of several empirical indicators to measure the methods and scale of civic engagement activities in the legislative committees. (See the chapter 2 and Table 2.3.)

The framework is now applied to assess how the Finnish parliamentary committees communicate with civil society in the legislative process. Towards this end, the following questions are asked: How do the Eduskunta committees actually work during multiple processes of legislative agenda-setting, scrutinizing governmental proposals, holding expert hearings, making amendments and submitting reports or statements to the chamber? By what methods and through which channels do they interact with civil society actors (both organized and individual citizens)? How open or closed are committee procedures and how wide or narrow is the scale of committee consultation activities? Furthermore, what political dynamics between party politics and consensus-seeking committee culture are observed through the committee deliberation process? How does the level of committee transparency

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[104] See the chapter 3 for the main features of the Finnish legislative committee system.

affect the legislative capacity of parliamentary committees? What are the effects of extensive or participatory forms of committee consultation activities?

To answer these questions, the chapter presents a case study of the Eduskunta - Social Affairs and Health Committee (*Sosiaali- ja terveysvaliokunta*) and its treatment of the Governmental Proposal of the Alcohol Act (HE 70/ 2013 vp) in 2013. The study shows how a typical legislative committee communicates with civil society in treating a controversial public policy issue in Finland. (The next section explains in more detail why the above committee and bill was chosen for the case study.) In addition, a series of longitudinal and comparative statistical data about the committee consultation activities is provided in order to mitigate the effects of the possible limitations of a single case study. Guided by the index, co-consultation and outreach activities of the Eduskunta committees are investigated together. The study finds that committee consultation at the Eduskunta is practiced mainly within the boundary of standard (expert) consultation. Ordinary citizens outside established organizations and experts largely have limited access to the parliamentary deliberation process. The study argues that this presents a significant challenge for the future role and working methods of parliamentary committees in Finland, which shares the features of consensual and associational democracy with other Nordic countries.

5.2   Methods and Data

This section addresses further the methods and data used for the study. As mentioned above, a case study of the Social Affairs and Health Committee and its treatment of the Alcohol Act is used. The Committee is a typical legislative committee with a relatively high status in the Eduskunta's committee hierarchy. (Holli 2014: 139)[105] Dealing with a broad range of social policies including social and health care, social insurance and pension systems, it serves as the primary parliamentary committee responsible for key legislation pertaining to social welfare in Finland. (Vainio 2007: 201-202)[106] Two statement committees – the Constitutional Law Committee and Education and Culture Committee – are analyzed to show a more complete picture of parliamentary processes and compare different characteristics between committees. Alcohol policy has been an important and controversial policy issue since the emergence of modern welfare systems in Nordic democracies. The main political and societal changes are reflected in alcohol policies and legislation from the

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[105] The evaluation of committee hierarchy varies by scholar. The Social Affairs and Health Committee can be regarded as important inasmuch as its deliberations affect a wide array of social legislation. These policies typically exert a large influence on the direction and size of public expenditures. (Interview with Rehula)

[106] Recently it has functioned as the responsible committee to deliberate governmental proposals for a total reform of the social and health care system. (*SOTE-uudistus*, HE 324/2014 vp)

era of the temperance movement and total prohibition act, to limited access in the state monopoly system, to gradual liberalization under the common EU policy framework. The 2013 government bill reinforcing regulations for alcoholic beverage advertisements has been debated extensively.

For the study, various legislative documents were collected to analyze the parliamentary treatment of the bill and committee activities for legislative consultation, which include (1) the governmental proposal and related policy documents, and (2) various parliamentary documents such as the plenary memoranda containing verbatim records, committee reports and statements, and written statements submitted by the interest groups and experts. Semi-structuralized in-depth interviews with 11 research targets were conducted: 2 MPs, including the Chair of Social Affairs and Health Committee, 3 committee secretaries, and 6 representatives of stakeholder groups. The interviews highlighted the real working methods of Eduskunta committees and the political dynamics surrounding the deliberative process.

A single case study may have limitations to generalize research findings and establish meaningful implications. To address this problem, further quantitative analysis on the full scope of committee consultation activities was undertaken. The Eduskunta library recently released a complete list of experts consulted by committees between 1997 and 2014.[107] Examination on this primary data source resulted in a series of longitudinal and comparative statistical analyses, which demonstrate the distinctive long-term characteristics of expert consultation in Eduskunta committees. Co-consultation and outreach activities are measured and assessed together in accordance with the above committee consultation index. The related data were gathered through the parliamentary website.

The next section gives a contextual explanation of alcohol policy and law in Finland. Section 4 analyzes the parliamentary treatment of the above government bill in accordance with legislative proceedings in the three committees. Section 5 presents an assessment on the scope and quality of legislative communication between the committees and civil society, focusing on the expert consultation mechanism. Apart from the analysis of parliamentary documents and interview records, a series of longitudinal and comparative statistical data are produced to assess the entire scale of legislative consultation activities in the committees. Section 6 investigates how committees try to engage with the public and reach out to socially marginalized groups beyond the standard channels of legislative consultation. Finally, the central research findings are presented and their implications in studying the changing relationships between parliamentary institutions and the public are discussed.

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[107]   https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/tietoaeduskunnasta/kirjasto/aineistot/eduskunta/valtiopaivaasiakirjat-tietopaketti/Sivut/Valiokuntien-asiantuntijakuulemiset.aspx. (assessed 1 October 2015)

5.3   Alcohol Policy and Law in Finland

Like in Sweden and Norway, alcohol policy has been an important public issue in Finland since the 19th century, when it experienced rapid industrialization. The temperance movement promoted sobriety and discipline within the working class. The need to secure the welfare of working class families was first embraced by national elites, but evolved into a popular campaign combined with the labour movement and early feminist activism. The movement succeeded in mobilizing a huge collective passion around the county. It was deeply embedded in civil society networks and political party organizations. Its influence lasted until the 1980s. The success of the temperance movement resulted in the enactment of Prohibition Act (*Kieltolaki*) by the newly established Eduskunta in 1907, which came into force in 1919 after independence. The law was abolished after the first referendum in Finnish history in 1931. (Sulkunen 1990: 1-26; Karlsson and Österberg 2002: 143-144) After the law was abolished, the Finnish government introduced a state monopoly system of alcohol (*Alko*). Alko strictly regulated the alcohol business, including production, sales, import and export, and even restaurant licenses to sell alcoholic beverages. Given considerable autonomy, Alko was an important agent in alcohol policy making and implementation. Despite a partial liberal turn of alcohol policy in 1968, the strict monopoly system of Alko lasted until 1994, when Finland joined the EU through the second national referendum. (Koski 2012)

A fundamental change in Finnish alcohol policy took place because Finland had to adapt itself to the EU's common market policy framework. The 1994 Alcohol Act deregulated considerably the comprehensive state monopoly system, by separating Alko's key functions, liberalizing the regulations of alcohol sale and advertisement, and reforming the alcohol tax system. The liberal direction of reforms continued. (Karlsson & Österberg 2002: 146-148) Finland abolished traveler's import quotas in 2004 because of EU obligations, which increased dramatically traveler alcohol imports from Estonia. Traveler imports peaked around 2005. The 'impact of Europeanization' is significant on national alcohol policy and tax legislations. (Karlsson 2014: 45) Although total alcohol assumption in Finland is currently at the mid-level relative to other European countries, it has consistently increased in Finland during the last 50 years, with some fluctuations. In the Nordic countries, Finland consumes the most alcohol, along with Denmark. As a result, alcohol-related injuries have also increased rapidly during the last two decades. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006: 7-8)

In order to meet these new challenges, the Finnish government has recently endeavored to re-establish a more restrictive alcohol policy. The regulation of TV and radio advertisement was reinforced and the alcohol tax (excise duties) has increased. In addition, Finland introduced the National Alcohol Programme (2012-2015) containing such governmental measures as renewal of alcohol taxation, regulating alcohol advertisement for

child and youth protection, improving early intervention, and a total reform of the Alcohol Act. (WHO 2013: 61) In December 2013, the Government Proposal of the Alcohol Act (HE 70/2013 vp) seeking to reinforce the regulation of alcohol advertising was approved by the Eduskunta. However, the total reform of the Alcohol Act was delayed to the next government after parliamentary elections in April 2015, due to the sudden change of PM and his Cabinet in June of 2014.[108]

5.4   Parliamentary Treatment of the Governmental Proposal of Alcohol Act

5.4.1   Ministerial consultation process for drafting the bill

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health established a working group in September 2009, urged by the Eduskunta, to address the needs to regulate image advertisements of mild alcohol beverages. Publishing a memorandum of the working group in 2010, the Ministry received statements from administrative bodies, interest groups in alcohol industry and communication business, and NGOs in health and child protection areas.[109] The Ministry prepared a draft of bill in January of 2011 that included prohibition of TV and radio advertising between 7 and 23:00. The draft was not submitted to the Eduskunta until the parliamentary term ended in spring of 2011 because of strong dissent in the ruling coalition parties. In 2012 spring, the Ministry drafted new governmental proposal. In the circulation process, it received a total of 40 statements from various stakeholder groups: 8 public sector organizations including 3 ministries, 3 administrative bodies, 1 municipality and the Ombudsman for Children in Finland; 19 organizations in market and industry sectors across the alcohol industry, advertisement and media companies and associations; 10 non-profit organizations in education, health and welfare, child and youth protection, and sports organizations; 2 central research institutes and 1 political party (the Christian Democrats). The viewpoints were clearly divided into two groups. While administrative authorities, health and children organizations, and general sport organizations supported the proposal, alcohol industry associations, media and advertisement groups and the Finnish Ice Hockey Federation objected to the stricter regulation of alcohol advertising. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2012)

After the consultation process, the bill was reformulated into a compromised version. The new bill contained (1) extending the prohibition hours of TV and radio advertisements

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[108] S. Lampi, "Moni pettyi hallitukseen – Alkoholilain uudistus ei etene," *Suomenmaa,* 7 February 2015.

[109] How many and who were consulted in the consultation process of the memorandum is not identified in the documents and website materials of the Ministry.

on alcohol beverages by one hour from 7-21:00 to 7-22:00; (2) prohibiting alcohol advertising in public places - for example, bus-stops, mass transportation areas, and large outdoor video advertisements in city centers except during public events or sport games; and (3) banning advertisements based on lotteries, competition, gaming and contents produced and shared by customers, e.g. via the SNS. Image advertisements of mild alcohol beverages were not prohibited. (HE 70/2013 vp: 18-19)

This bill was submitted to the Eduskunta on 6 June 2013. The Eduskunta combined the proposal with two previous private bills (LA 10/2012 vp; LA 90/2012 vp) which treated the same issue for the parliamentary deliberation – that is, regulating alcohol advertisements by changing the Section 33 of the Alcohol Act.[110]

5.4.2   Legislative deliberation process on the bill (HE 70/ 2013 vp)

Table 5.1 below shows the parliamentary deliberation process on the bill. After arrival of the proposal, Eduskunta held the dispatch discussion (*lähetekeskustelu*) in the plenary on 11-12 June 2013. The Minister of Social Affairs and Health presented the bill and 16 MPs debated it over the course of two days. (3 MPs spoke twice) 9 MPs came from coalition parties (NCP 4, SDP 5) while 6 MPs came from opposition parties (Centre Party 3, Finns Party 3). (Eduskunta 2013c, 2013d) Dispatch discussions revealed the main cleavages across four major PPGs. Policy stances were apparently different between governmental and opposition parties. However, a considerable gap was observed within the two main ruling parties (the NCP and SDP). After discussion, the bill was forwarded to the Social Affairs and Health Committee, which was responsible for providing the report, while the Education and Culture Committee and Constitutional Law Committee were required to make their statements to the Social Affairs and Health Committee.

After arrival of the bill, the Social Affairs and Health Committee held three expert hearings in the closed committee room. In total 13 experts were invited to present their opinions on the bill. The Committee also received 8 additional statements from stakeholder groups or individual scholars who did not participated in the hearings. (Eduskunta 2013b) After the Constitutional Law Committee's statement arrived on 29 November 2013, the

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[110] There was one more Member's Initiative to reinforce the alcohol ad regulations, which was submitted to the floor with a majority of MPs' signatures (106/ 200) in 2010. (LA 51/2010 vp) It failed to pass through the parliamentary process, despite the will of a majority of legislators. It expired automatically after the end of parliamentary term in 2011. The reason for this failure was the lack of will in governmental parties, especially the conservative NCP, which was influenced by strong lobbies from the alcohol industry organization. (Eduskunta 2011a, 2013b, 2013c; interviews with Rehula and Virtanen) After the 2011 election, the demands for alcohol policy reform were refelected in the policy programme of the Katainen government. The government bill was expected to be submitted to parliament in 2012, but it was delayed due to troubles in the ministerial stage of proposal drafting. Opposition MPs launched two private initiatives in 2012 to urge the coalition government to submit the bill on time. (Eduskunta 2013a; interviews with Rehula and Virtanen)

Social Affairs and Health Committee concluded the expert consultation process and held the preparing debate (3 December 2013). Two days later, the final committee meeting was convened. After a detailed examination of the bill, the Committee made a final decision by vote, not a unanimous conclusion. The committee report was drawn up based on the majority opinion, but a dissenting statement (*vastalause*) was annexed by opposition MPs. (StVM 29/2013 vp)

Table 5.1 Legislative deliberation processes on the Bill of HE 70/2013 vp

		Initiating stage of the bill	
Initiating the bill	6.6.2013	• Submission of the bill to the Eduskunta by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	
Dispatch discussion	11-12.6.2013	• Presentation of the bill by the Minister of Social Affairs and Health; Discussion of 16 MPs: 9 from ruling coalition parties(NCP 4, SDP 5); 6 from opposition parties (the Central Party 3, Finns Party 3)	

		Committee stage of legislative deliberation	
StV (Social Affairs and Health Committee)	12.6.2013	• Notification of arriving of the bill	
	15.10.2013	• Arrival of the Statement of SiV	
	6.11.2013	• Approving expert hearings	
	13.11.2013	• Expert hearing (1): 3 experts from public sector	
	20.11.2013	• Expert hearing (2): 7 experts from private sector and non-profit civil society organizations	Arrival of written statements
	27.11.2013	• Expert hearing (3): 3 experts from research institute and universities	
	29.11.2013	• Arrival of the Statement of PeV	
	3.12.2013	• Concluding expert hearings; Preparatory discussion	
	5.12.2013	• Detailed examination on the draft of Committee's Report (StVM 29/2013): an opposite opinion (*vastalause*) was annexed.	
PeV (Constitutional Law Committee)	19.6.2013	• Notification of arrival of the bill; Approving the plan of expert hearings	
	27.9.2013	• Expert hearing (1): 1 public servant from the Ministry and 2 professors in legal studies	Arrival of written statements
	2.10.2013	• Expert hearing (2): 2 representatives from the outdoor advertising association	
	26.11.2013	• Concluding expert hearing; Preparatory discussion	
	28.11.2013	• General discussion and detailed examination of the draft of Statement (PeVL 40 2013 vp)	
SiV (Education	14.6.2013	• Notification of arriving of the bill	
	19.6.2013	• Informal discussion	
	6.9.2013	• Expert hearing (1): 3 public servants from two ministries	

and Culture Committee)	13.9.2013	• Expert hearing (2): 4 experts from the areas of education, health and welfare, and child protection		
	20.9.2013	• Expert hearing (3): 4 experts from sports organizations	Arrival of written statements	
	25.9.2013	• Expert hearing (4): 2 experts from Panimoliitto and EHYT ry		
	4.10.2013	• Concluding expert hearings; Preparatory discussion		
	11.10.2013	• General discussion and detailed examination in preparing the Statement (SiVL 15/2013 vp)		

<center>Final stage of decision-making in the Plenary</center>

Agenda setting	5.12.2013	• The Report of the Social Affairs and Health Committee (StVM 29/2013 vp)
First Reading	10.12.2013	• General Discussion of the Bill based on the Committee Report (Debating by 10 MPs)
	11.12.2013	• Voting on the Report: Yes 99, No 70, Abstention 2, Absent 28
Second Reading	16.12.2013	• Discussion of the Report (speeches of 6 MPs) • Final Decision: The Governmental Proposal is approved in the form suggested by the Report of the Social Affairs and Health Committee, while two integrated Member Initiatives are dismissed.

Processes in the other two committees were similar. The Education and Culture Committee held four expert hearings (6, 13, 20, 25 September 2013) and the Constitutional Law Committee held two (13 September and 2 October 2013). In addition, the former received 10 more written statements, while the latter received 1 more statement from a legal expert. After the hearings, both committees reached the unanimous agreement of their statements. They were sent to the Social Affairs and Health Committee to be considered when preparing its report. (PeVL 40/2013 vp; SiVL 15/2013 vp)

The statement of the Education and Culture Committee (SiVL 15/2013 vp) called for more holistic and strict approaches to reduce alcohol consumption, especially among youths, although it recognized the bill was heading in right direction. It recommended for the Social Affairs and Health Committee to consider extending the time-limit of alcohol advertising on TV and radio until 23:00, and prohibiting image advertisements of alcohol beverage that are highly influential on young people. The statement of the Constitutional Committee (PeVL 40/2013 vp) examined whether the bill (the provisions to regulate alcohol advertisement) violates the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution (Section 12). It approved the bill as constitutional in general, but also raised doubts about

allowing exceptions for public events or sport games, where children and youths are exposed to advertising regardless of their will. In addition, it raised concerns of the provision to ban advertisements using contents produced or shared by consumers, because the rules were not so clearly defined that it could limit fundamental freedoms of expression, such as the right to send and receive messages.

The report of the Social Affairs and Health Committee (StVM 29/2013 vp) was published on 5 December 2013. The majority of Committee members supported the Governmental Proposal. However, the statements of two committees on the extension of prohibition hour in TV and radio advertising (Education and Culture Committee) and exceptional characteristics of public places to which child and youth are exposed (Constitutional Law Committee) are also important. They indicated those issues must be revisited in the next legislative process for the total reform of the Alcohol Act, including the issue of prohibiting image advertisements. The report recommended that the provision to restrict advertisements based on consumer-created or shared content be revised clearly as the Constitutional Law Committee suggested.

Dissenting MPs argued that image or lifestyle advertisements on alcohol beverage be prohibited; only the advertisement containing basic information of products like picture, price, store accessibility, material sources should be allowed. They argued for the reinforcement of time restrictions for TV and radio advertising (prohibition between 7 and 23:00). Moreover, they criticized that the bill for allowing outdoor advertising in public events or sport games, calling for a total restriction of alcohol advertisement in public spaces. 6 members in opposition parties (Centre Party, Finns Party) including the Committee Chair signed the dissenting statement.

Eduskunta held the first reading of the bill on 10 December 2013. First, MP Anneli Kiljunen (SDP, Vice-Chair of the Social Affairs and Health Committee) presented the committee report, advocating for more consistent and effective policy measures while a total alcohol legislation reform is prepared. Against this, MP Juha Rehula (Center Party, Chair of the Committee) presented the dissenting opinion. Advocating for more restrictive alcohol advertising, he requested that the dissenting opinion be adopted as the basis for first reading in the chamber. (Eduskunta 2013d) The general discussion (*yleinenkeskustelu*) went on similarly with the preliminary dispatch discussion. In total, 10 MPs made speeches. There were 6 MPs from coalition parties (NCP 1, SDP 4, Swedish People's Party 1), while there were 4 opposition MPs (Centre Party 2, Finns Party 2). The former (especially Social Democrats) argued: Although they were unsatisfied with the bill in light of social and health policy and preferred stronger regulations for protecting children and youths, the bill an inevitable compromise given the conflicting interests and viewpoints within society. The opposition MPs (particularly the Centre Party members) criticized the bill as well as the Committee report because it presented watered-down solutions although almost all civil

society organizations and experts except those from the alcohol producers' federation (*Panimoliitto*) preferred strong regulations. (Eduskunta 2013e)

The next day, the Eduskunta restarted the first reading procedure (11 December 2013). It decided on which suggestion the further plenary dealing should be based - the committee report or dissenting statement. A vote resulted in the approval of the committee report. (Yes 99, No 70, Abstentions 2, and Absent 28) All approving ballots came from the ruling parties while all objecting ballots were cast by the opposition parties, with a few exceptions. Thus, the Eduskunta agreed with the Governmental Proposal and dismissed two Member Initiatives, as the committee report recommended. (Eduskunta 2013f)

The second reading was held five days later (16 December 2013). 6 MPs from ruling coalition parties (NCP 3, SDP 3) and 3 MPs from opposition parties (Centre Party 1, Finns Party 1) made speeches in the chamber. Discussion proceeded in a similar pattern. The governing PPGs' members advocated for the bill, whereas opposition MPs criticized its inconsistency and limitations. However, there was no thorough debate - perhaps because it was known that the government bill was already going to be passed. After discussion, the Speaker declared that the Eduskunta approved the Governmental Proposal. The Second reading came to an end. The entire parliamentary deliberation of the bill ended, too. (Eduskunta 2013g) Later the Eduskunta sent the replying document containing its final decision on the bill. (Eduskunta 2013h) The new Alcohol Act was confirmed on 28 February 2014 and entered into force on 1 January 2015.

5.5   Expert Hearings as the Standard Channel of Legislative Consultation

5.5.1   Basic functions of expert hearing

As shown above, the standard channel of communication between the parliamentary committees and civil society in Finland is the expert hearing, in which selected representatives of stakeholder groups are invited to present their opinions on the proposed legislation. When the committees deliberate legislative bills or motions, expert hearings are usually organized at least once. In this case, the Social Affairs and Health Committee held three hearings. The Education and Culture Committee held four and the Constitutional Law Committee held two. Three basic functions of expert hearing can be identified: (1) They serve to inform members about the bill and related issues, (2) present legislators with diverse perspectives on the issue from different social sectors and groups, and thus (3) give the MPs the means to assess matters and make decisions.

> "It is partly about familiarization with the law. Whether it is what kind of law, we here and there come up with different viewpoints. Then, it affects, sure, so that we make changes on

the basis of those hearings. […] in the same hearing there might be people with totally conflicting perspectives and then a part of our work is to measure what matters." (Rehula)

By what procedures and criteria do the committees select experts to be invited to hearings? Experienced committee secretaries commonly draw up experts lists for invitation, which are approved in the committee meetings. According to Rehula, "this is also now related with professional skills so the Committee Secretary has a big role here." MPs can also propose specific experts whom they like to hear, which is usually approved as well. "It is never an unconditional obligation, but the Committee decides whom to be heard and suggestions are commonly accepted", said Laine (Deputy-secretary, Education and Culture Committee). In the course, the committee chair plays a decisive role by establishing the time-frame for committee deliberation and guiding the principle of expert invitation. Mäkipää (Secretary, Social Affairs and Health Committee) described how the committees prepare in practice the experts hearing, as follows.

> "[…] when it (the bill) arrives, as an official task the secretaries prepare and plan how the matter is treated in the committee. […] In a manner driven by officials, the deliberation process begins to move forward. MPs can, to be sure, always add the list to be heard or suggest their own, make their own suggestions of whom to be heard. In general, the suggestions of MPs are not rejected; instead, if MPs have suggestions, they are accepted together. […] To be sure, we are very experienced secretaries. I myself have taken care of this secretary work for almost 15 years, and my vice-secretary has held her position for 12 years. We can anticipate pretty well what the committee wants. But the planning work, yes, is done quite much in the hands of officials. Of course, on the other hand, (it is) in quite close cooperation with the Chair."

5.5.2 The scope of experts consultation in the legislative committees

How narrow or wide is the scope of expert consultation in the Eduskunta committees? The number of experts per each committee hearing seems to vary depending on the characteristics of issues. In many cases, 1-3 experts can be enough, but some cases more than 10 or 20 are invited.

> "It is considered, particularly, how many expert hearings would be necessary, whether one occasion is enough. In many matters, one time is almost enough. […] but then, in other hearings, there may be 6, 7 or 8 organizations at the same time. But when we prepare the list (of experts) to be heard, we find that this requires more frequent hearings." (Mäkipää)

In some extreme cases, however, even 70 or 100 people can be called on. "For example, in this current reform of social and health care (SOTE-*uudistus*), we had 10 hearings in total and heard the perspectives of 50-55 different experts", said Rehula.[111]

In this case, the Social Affairs and Health Committee invited 13 experts. The Education and Culture Committee invited 12 experts; and the Constitutional Committee invited 5 experts to their hearings. In addition, the first committee received 8 more written statements, the second 10 more, and the third 1 more. These numbers indicate that the Social Affairs and Health Committee and Education and Culture Committee had a broader scope of expert consultations when they deliberated the Alcohol Act (HE 70/ 2013 vp). Alcohol policy is a sensitive issue in Finland and reinforcing the regulation of alcohol advertisements was highly controversial. The committees were therefore required to hear many stakeholder opinions across sectors and groups. The Constitutional Law Committee focuses on not a 'political' but a 'legal' evaluation of the constitutional issues in the bill. Hence, expert consultation is usually narrower in scope than typical legislative committees.

How can the general scope of expert consultations made by the legislative committees be identified? Holli & Saari (2009) provide useful data in this regard. Focusing on a descriptive representation (by gender), they studied the distinctive features of expert consultation in Eduskunta's committee process. According to them, Eduskunta committees invited 4 630 experts for 600 parliamentary activities to produce committee reports and statements in 2005.[112] On average, 7.6 people per issue were invited to present their viewpoints orally or in written documents. The lowest level comprised of seven committees (the Foreign Affairs Committee: 5.0; Environment Committee: 5.5; **Constitutional Committee: 5.8**; Economy Committee 6.5; Grand Committee: 7.3; Administration Committee: 7.6) which invited under 7.7 experts per issue. Four committees (the Transportation and Communication Committee: 7.9; **Social Affairs and Health Committee 7.9**; Defence Committee 8.1; Legal Committee: 8.9) comprise the mid-level group of 7.7 and 10 experts. The remaining four committees (The Agriculture and Forestry Committee: 10.8; Employment and Equal Opportunity Committee: 12.5; Committee for the Future, 13.0; **Education and Culture Committee: 13.6**) had the highest level, with more than 10 experts being invited per issue. (Holli & Saari 2009, 58-60; emphases added)

Recent data is presented below. Table 5.2 describes the scope of expert consultation in Eduskunta committees in 2013. In the same year, Eduskunta committees had 5 774 consultations in total (4 425 oral witnesses and 1 349 written statements) while producing

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[111] On this SOTE-reform issue, actually, the Committee held in total 20 hearings including one public hearing during the last parliamentary term of 2011-2015; 115 experts participated as a whole and 16 additional written statements were submitted. (Eduskunta 2014. *Valiokuntakäsittely asiakirja* HE 324/2014 vp)

[112] Holli & Saari (2009) excluded a part of written statements which were submitted by the names of organizations because they focused on the gender issue of invited experts.

605 legislative documents (253 reports and 352 statements). On average, 9.5 consultations with external experts per legislative document took place, an increase from those of the previous study. The average number of consultations increased considerably in the Foreign Affairs, Administration, Defence and Commerce Committees while decreasing in the Grand Committee, Committee for the Future, and Committee of Employment and Equality. It has remained stable in the Social Affairs and Health Committee and Constitutional Committee, while having decreased in the Education and Culture Committee but remaining at a high level overall.

Table 5.2 Number of expert consultation in the legislative committees in Finland (2013)

Committee	No. of legislative documents published by committees			No. of experts attended at hearings	No. of written documents submitted additionally	Consultations per legislative document
	Reports (*mietinnöt*)	Statements (*lausunnot*)	Total (reports + statements)			
Grand Committee	1	1	2	4	1	2.5 (5/2)
Constitutional Law	7	43	50	226	65	5.8 (291/50)
Foreign Affairs	8	9	17	176	16	11.3 (192/17)
Finance	35	8	43	293	70	8.4 (363/43)
Audit	10	8	18	113	57	9.4 (170/18)
Administration	26	30	56	509	305	14.5 (814/56)
Legal Affairs	18	27	45	305	66	8.2 (371/45)
Transportation & Communication	19	31	50	294	123	8.3 (417/50)
Agriculture & Forestry	22	37	59	471	163	10.7(634/59)
Defence	2	12	14	126	13	9.9 (139/14)
Committee of Education & Culture	16	25	41	374	135	12.4 (509/41)
Social Affairs & Health	30	23	53	349	67	7.8 (416/53)
Commerce	38	44	82	636	162	9.7 (798/82)
Committee for the Future	0	4	4	34	2	9(36/4)
Employment & Equality	11	17	28	251	48	10.7 (299/28)
Environment	10	33	43	264	56	7.4 (320/43)
Total	253	352	605	4425	1349	9.5 (5774/605)

5.5.3   Who presents evidence to the committees?

Who is actually invited to give evidence in oral and/or written form to the parliamentary committees, and what societal sectors and groups do they represent? In this case, the Social Affairs and Health Committee invited 13 experts: 3 public officials in the ministry and administrative bodies; 4 representatives from business and industrial sector such as the alcohol industry, media and advertisement industry associations; 3 representatives from umbrella NGOs from the areas of health, education, and sport; and 3 experts from research institutes or universities. The Education and Culture Committee invited 12 delegates: 3 public officials; 1 representative from the alcohol industry organization; 8 representatives from civic associations for education, children, health and welfare organizations, including 3 representatives of sporting organizations. The Constitutional Committee invited 5 experts: 1 ministry official; 2 legal professors; and 2 representatives of the outdoor advertisement association.

   The Social Affairs and Health Committee Secretary highlighted that the Committee tried to hear the representatives of four main social sectors and groups in balance.

> "First of all, it begins with looking at the relevant public officials. It is related with implementation and supervising […] Then, we look at the business and industry representatives to whom it is particularly relevant. It relates to the alcohol industry, brewing industry, it touches retailers that advertise outside their stores. It relates also to media linked to the advertisement industry. Then, very certainly, this field of the advertisement industry. It employs many of them, so then it must have influence. If it is regulated, it affects the number of jobs [in that field]. […] and then there is one, which is important in our estimation: hearing from organizations working in the health promotion field. […] This alcohol issue is always sensitive and so we have to hear both sides in balance. […] Then, to be sure, in this state of affairs, the research field is frequently considered, too. We have for example alcohol research (which) is also very well-known and broad, and then in that case advertising researchers were also heard, that is, what is the impact of advertisement and what kind of means are used in advertising so that it can influence on the human mind. The academic world […], however, unfortunately has a small role in this stage of deliberation. […] there were these fields: public officials, the stakeholders – the industrial sector and then civic organizations, and world of science." (Mäkipää)

Committees also have their own lists of 'usual suspects' who are frequently invited to speak. [113] An expanded tripartite negotiating system of the neo-corporatist model is observed in the case of Social Affairs and Health Committee. Beside the government, the

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[113] As already mentioned, a special report of *Helsingin Sanomat* implied that business and industry sectors, as well as well-established interest groups have been over-represented in the expert hearings of Eduskunta during the last 15 years (1998-2013). T. Peltomäki, "HS-selvitys: Heitä eduskunta kuuntelee", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 28 April 2013.

central labour market organizations (both employer and employee associations) have been core agents in the Committee's legislative consultation process – particularly regarding social insurance issues. (Interview with Mäkipää) In the Education and Culture Committee, "in general, we hear first the Ministries and possibly central administrative bodies, and […] the Committee has the central statement-giver such as the Teachers' Union and The National Board of Education, which always participates jointly in expert hearings based on expertise."(Laine). Meanwhile, the Constitutional Law Committee usually invites legal experts. In dealing with the Alcohol Act (HE 70/2013 vp), the Committee decided to invite two experts from the Finnish Outdoor Advertisement Association for its second hearing, but it was an exception to the practice of the Committee. The Committee Secretary stated,

> "The suggestion of the Secretary did not include those interest groups' representatives. The Secretary's opinion, at least my opinion is that the Committee should not hear actually interest groups because it should not confuse the legal assessment with substance of the matter in question. In this case, the secretary's presentation did not include the interest group hearings, and if I remember it rightly, first we heard those legal experts, and then, after that, some MP asked in the Committee, whether it would be good to also hear those representing outdoor advertisers, and then the Committee decided to hold another hearing for background knowledge of the matter. But this is very rare, as such." (Helander, Secretary of Constitutional Law Committee)

5.5.4   A full-scale statistical analysis: Experts in the Eduskunta committees, 1997-2014

Here a further empirical analysis on the parliamentary data is added – a complete list of experts who gave oral or written evidence to the committees during the period of 1997-2014. Table 5.3 shows the number of experts and from which sectors they were invited to committee consultations in 2014.

Table 5.3 Evidence-givers at the committee consultation in the Eduskunta (2014)

Committee	Public sector (%)	Private sector (%)	Third sector (%)	Academic experts (%)	Others (%)	Total
Grand Committee	54 (62.8)	0 (0)	20 (23.0)	11 (12.6)	2 (2.3)	87
Constitutional Law	237 (45.8)	2 (0.4)	26 (5.0)	251 (48.5)	2 (0.4)	518
Foreign Affairs	545 (94.0)	2 (0.3)	24 (4.1)	16 (2.8)	2 (0.3)	580
Finance	833 (60.0)	60 (4.3)	411 (29.6)	83 (6.0)	2 (0.1)	1 388
Audit	351 (80.0)	5 (1.1)	45 (10.3)	36 (8.2)	2 (0.4)	439
Administration	765 (76.1)	4 (0.3)	188 (18.7)	48 (4.8)	0 (0)	1 005
Legal Affairs	471 (65.3)	3 (0.4)	177 (24.5)	62 (8.6)	8 (1.1)	721
Transportation & Communication	283 (65.5)	34 (7.8)	106 (24.5)	7 (1.6)	1 (0.2)	432
Agriculture & Forestry	489 (53.6)	26 (2.8)	327 (35.8)	64 (7.0)	6 (0.7)	913
Defence	252 (94.0)	0 (0)	11 (4.1)	4 (1.5)	1 (0.3)	268
Committee of Education & Culture	302 (37.6)	21 (2.6)	386 (48.1)	88 (11.0)	5 (0.6)	802
Social Affairs & Health	470 (54.7)	15 (1.7)	310 (36.0)	64 (7.4)	1 (0.1)	860
Commerce	482 (51.6)	69 (7.4)	309 (33.0)	73 (7.8)	2 (0.2)	935
Committee for the Future	21 (63.6)	0 (0)	2 (6.1)	10 (30.3)	0 (0)	33
Employment & Equality	290 (49.7)	11 (1.9)	227 (38.9)	49 (8.4)	7 (1.2)	584
Environment	226 (48.6)	14 (3.0)	178 (38.3)	47 (10.1)	0 (0)	465
Total	6 071 (60.5)	266 (2.7)	2 747 (27.4)	913 (9.1)	41 (0.4)	10 030 (100 %)

Table 5.4 Representation of third sector in the committee consultation, Eduskunta (2014)

Committee	Business/industry sector	Trade unions	Occupational organizations	Social and cultural civic groups	Third Sector Total
Grand Committee	5	5	1	8	20
Constitutional Law	0	2	7	17	26
Foreign Affairs	1	0	0	23	24
Finance	182	47	71	111	411
Audit	8	7	3	27	45
Administration	28	69	45	46	188
Legal Affairs	26	37	47	67	177
Transportation & Communication	73	9	6	18	106
Agriculture & Forestry	71	12	179	65	327
Defence	1	7	1	2	11
Education & Culture	75	91	94	126	386
Social Affairs & Health	68	98	65	79	310
Commerce	215	34	32	28	309
Committee for the Future	2	0	0	0	2
Employment & Equality	74	72	18	63	227
Environment	69	9	41	59	178
Total	898	499	610	739	2 747
	32.7 %	18.7 %	22.2 %	26.9 %	100 %

According to the data, Eduskunta committees invited 10 030 experts in 2014, as a whole.[114] 6 071 (60.5 %) came from the public sector; 266 (2.7 %) from the private sector; and 2 747 (27.4 %) from the third sector. 913 (9.1 %) came from the research institutes or university people, while 41 persons (0.4 %) are categorized as 'others'.[115] The data indicates the public sector was overwhelmingly represented in 4 committees engaging with formal (basic) state functions (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Audit, and Administration Committees: more than 70 %), while being least represented in the Education and Culture Committee (37.6 %). The other 10 committees are located between 40 and 70 percent in terms of public sector's representation. (Social Affairs and Health Committee: 54.7 %; Constitutional Law Committee: 45.8 %) In detail, ministry officials and central administration bodies occupied the vast majority of public sector consultations (4 611 times, 76.0%) while representatives of municipalities and local agencies were invited 643 times (10.6 %).[116] After the public sector, the third sector was the second large group represented in the committee consultation process.[117] The Education and Culture Committee invited experts from the third sector most frequently (48.1%), which is even larger than the portion of public sector. The committees closely linked to social policy areas showed relatively higher percentage of

[114] Usually in the year immediately before parliamentary election (2006, 2010 and 2014), the number of governmental proposals is higher than the previous three years in each parliamentary term, which increases the number of expert consultations. In particular, the Eduskunta experienced an exceptional increase in 2014 since it was unusually lower in 2011, 2012 and 2013. (*Eduskunta vuosikertomus 2014*, 2: https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/tietoaeduskunnasta/julkaisut/Documents/Eduskunta_vuosikertomus_2014_ FI_netti.pdf)

[115] It is controversial to classify the societal sectors and groups that the individual experts or organizations represent. Since the development of modern civil society and welfare states based on coordinated market economy, the borders have blurred between the public, private and third sectors, as well as between their sub-sector groups in Finland. The recent privatization of public services in line with new public management schemes has had an impact. There are currently multiple hybrid-style organizations whose legal forms and practical functions appear to somewhat contradict the traditional framework of public, private and third sectors.

[116] The *Suomen Kuntaliitto ry* (Association of Finnish Local Authorities) was categorized into a third sector organization ('Occupational organization') because it defines itself as a central interest group of municipalities and local authorities. However, it seems to function much like a public agency with a great influence in public policy. In 2014, it was invited 187 times by the Eduskunta committees. If this number is calculated together, the total number of municipalities and local agencies increases to 830, or 13.7 % of all public sector consultations.

[117] Here the 'third sector' is defined as societal arenas or horizontal networks of various civic groups and individuals, freely associated to realize their interests, values or identities through diverse forms and channels of collective activities. These involve: (1) labour market organizations such as business/ industry sector groups and labour unions; (2) other occupational organizations not belonging to the employer and employee organizations; and, (3) a broad range of social and cultural civic groups, while research institutes and higher education institutions are categorized into a separate group. (For the classification ways of stakeholder groups involved in the legislative committee consultation process, see also Holli & Saari 2009; Halpin & MacLeod 2012; Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen 2015.)

inviting third sector representatives: The Committee of Employment and Equality (38.9 %), Environment Committee (38.3 %), Social Affairs and Health Committee (36.0 %), and Committee of Agriculture and Forestry (35.8 %). The so-called 'scientific world', i.e. research institutes, academic professionals and higher education institutions were invited 913 times (9.1 %). Meanwhile, the Constitutional Law Committee invited academic experts most frequently (48.5 %) most of whom are legal scholars, indicating its unique character. The private sector (business companies)[118] was least represented (2.7 %) as a whole, but they were invited to the Transportation and Communication Committee more frequently (7.8%), the Commerce Committee (7.4 %), and Finance Committee (4.3%). The low-level presence of private sector stakeholders can be offset by the higher frequency of business and industrial associations in the third sector. Finally, a very small group (0.4 %) does not fit into the above-stated categories. They are listed without specific links to organizations.[119] Some of them might be classified as 'individual citizens' like in the case of several citizens' initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta[120], but these were not separated because their proportion is too small in the whole dataset.

Table 5.4 presents more detailed data on the representation of the third sector in the process of expert consultation. With some variations in numbers, the main result shows quite a consistent pattern with the previous study. (Holli & Saari 2009) Among 2 747 consultations with the third sector in 2014, business and industry was represented 898 times (32.7 %) and labour unions 499 times (18.7 %), while other occupational organizations such as farmers and fishers' interest groups, pensioner and student organizations were invited 610 times (22.2 %)[121]. Besides, the social and cultural civic groups including health and welfare, child and youth, disability, immigration, religion, sports and leisure organizations and value-seeking NGOs were invited 739 times (26.9%). As expected, business and industry representatives were more frequently called on to the Commerce Committee (219 times, 69.6 %) and Finance Committee (182 times, 44.3 %). Labour unions were represented more than the business/ industrial sector in the Education and Culture Committee, Social Affairs and Health Committee, and Administration Committee. Other occupational organizations are well represented in the Committee of Agriculture and Forestry (179 times, 54.7 %). Social and cultural civic groups are best represented in the Education and Culture Committee (126 times, 32.6 %), but also frequently heard in the Finance, Legal, and

[118] Private health and welfare centers established by municipalities and private schools are included in this category although their actual functions may carry public missions at least in part.

[119] Here we exclude academic professionals who are categorized into a separate group in our analysis.

[120] For example, the Legal Committee heard three individual citizens who submitted the initiative for strengthening punishment of drunken drivers in the public hearing on 16 October 2014. However, citizen initiators are also often listed as the representatives of their organizations.

[121] Many professional associations which aim to promote their members' professional interests but have not joined in the labour market organizations (both the employers' and employees') are categorized into this group.

Environment Committees. On the whole, the result indicates that the Social Affairs and Health Committee plays a central legislative role in the neo-corporatist public policy making system in Finland, based on an extensive tripartite negotiating process between central interest groups and governmental bodies. Demonstrating a similar feature, the Education and Culture Committee appears to be the most civil-society oriented committee in terms of legislative consultation activities.

Now a vertical dimension is added to the analysis. In order to look for long-term indicators, the data of expert consultations in the Social Affairs and Health Committee, and Education and Culture Committee, during the period of 1997-2014 is analyzed. Table 5.5 shows the result of the analysis.

For the same period, the Social Affairs and Health Committee received 9 315 testimonies in oral and/or written forms. The whole picture appears very similar to that of 2014. Public sector experts were invited 4 884 times (52.4 %); third sector representatives 3 559 times (38.2 %); academic professionals and research institutes 631 times (6.8 %); and private sector 214 times (2.3 %). As in the case of 2014, business/ industrial groups, trade unions, and other occupational organizations were represented in balance in the committee's consultation with third sector. The portion of social and cultural civic groups is higher in 2014 than in the total period, which seems to have grown recently. On the other hand, the case of Education and Culture Committee offers an interesting picture to be compared with that of 2014. Between 1997 and 2014, the Committee invited 6 684 experts for committee consultation: experts from the public sector were invited most frequently (3 070 times, 45.9 %), followed by the third sector at 2 583 times (38.6 %). These numbers and rates reveal a different picture from 2014, while approaching the cases of other legislative committees in social policy areas. It indicates that the Education and Culture Committee has enhanced the scope of expert consultation towards civil society organizations rather than public sector agencies.

Table 5.5 Evidence-givers at the Social Affairs and Health Committee and Education and Culture Committee, Eduskunta (1997-2014)

Evidence-givers	Social Affairs and Health Committee			Education and Culture Committee		
	Attending at hearings	Submission of written statement	Total (%)	Attending at hearings	Submission of written statement	Total (%)
Public Sector	4 688	196	4 884 (52.4)	2 847	231	3 070 (45.9)
Ministries and central administration bodies	3 662	132	3 795 (40.7)	1 909	69	1 978 (29.6)
Local governments and agencies	567	35	602 (6.5)	492	96	588 (8.8)
Other public organizations	458	29	487 (5.2)	446	66	512 (7.7)
Private Sector	195	19	214 (2.3)	147	21	168 (2.5)
Third Sector	3 118	441	3 559 (38.2)	2 136	447	2 583 (38.6)
Business and industrial interest associations	820	117	937 (10.1)	419	105	524 (7.8)
Trade unions	993	181	1 174 (12.6)	395	91	486 (7.2)
Occupational organizations	598	68	666 (7.1)	631	96	727 (10.9)
Social and cultural civic groups	707	75	782 (8.4)	682	155	837 (12.5)
Academic and Research Institutions	588	43	631 (6.8)	657	137	794 (11.9)
Research institutes	430	22	452 (4.9)	80	7	87 (1.3)
Academic professionals	144	18	162 (1.7)	351	81	432 (6.4)
Others	14	3	17 (0.2)	226	49	275 (4.1)
Others	26	1	27 (0.3)	55	6	61 (0.9)
Total	8 615	700	9 315 (100)	5 842	842	6 684 (100)

Table 5.6 shows the top 20 participants in the legislative consultation process of the Social Affairs and Health Committee from 1997-2014. As expected, the ministries and central administrative bodies are ranked in the top places and the central organizations of both employers (EK, *Suomen Yrittäjät*) and employees (SAK, STTK, Akava) have been frequently invited. The policy influence of national research institutes such as THL is impressive, and many testimonies of the *Suomen Kuntaliitto* and HUS imply the voices of municipalities and local agencies have been heard frequently. Although a wide range of civil society organizations including disability, child and youth, and other minority groups were invited by the Committee, these groups did not rank in the top lists of frequent participants.

Table 5.6 Most frequent participants in the legislative consultation of Social Affairs and Health Committee (1997-2014)

Rank	Organization	No. of evidence-giving	%
1	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	1 961	21.0
2	Kela (Social Insurance Institution of Finland)	553	5.9
3	Suomen Kuntaliitto (Association of Finnish Local Authorities)	353	3.8
4	THL/ STAKES (National Institute for Health and Welfare)	286	3.1
5	EK (Confederation of Finnish Industries)	279	3.0
6	SAK (Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions)	254	2.7
7	Finance Ministry	246	2.6
8	Suomen Yrittäjät (Federation of Finnish Enterprises)	202	2.2
9	STTK (Finnish Confederation of Professionals)	195	2.1
10	Akava (Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland)	178	1.9
11	The Finnish Centre for Pensions	138	1.5
12	Ministry of Employment and Economy/ Ministry of Employment	131	1.4
13	Ministry of Justice	121	1.3
14	Ministry of Education and Culture / Ministry of Education	85	0.9
15	Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health)	78	0.8
16	The Finnish Medical Association	73	0.8
17	State Treasury	69	0.7
18	Ministry of the Interior	66	0.7
19	MTK (The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forestry Owners)	62	0.7
20	HUS (The Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa)	53	0.6
	Top 20 Total	5 383	57.8
	Total	9 315	100.0

The Constitutional Law Committee usually invites legal experts. Table 4 shows that the presence of third sector associations in this context is very rare. Previous studies found that several legal scholars dominate the consultation process. (E.g. Keinänen & Wiberg 2012) Similar conclusions were reached when analyzing parliamentary documents of the Constitutional Law Committees' legislative consultations in 2013. Three legal experts gave evidence to the Committee during the same year 58 times in total (orally 37 times and in written for 21 times). This amounts to 18.0 per cent of all external evidence-givers (58/323). In total of 50 legislative consultations for the Committee in 2013 (7 reports, 43 statements), the cases that at least one of the three above experts participated in the Committee consultation reached 80.0 per cent (40/50), and even up to 88.4 per cent (38/43) when only calculating consultations for Committee statements (*lausunnot*).

The overall picture indicates that Finland maintains a highly associational democracy like other Nordic countries and the legislative consultation process of committees is mainly driven by dialogue with public agencies (ministries most of all), and well-established associations and experts, in which individual citizens seldom have any influence. This is quite different, for example, from the case of the Scottish Parliament, in which individual citizens participate actively in the committee consultation process, with 18.1 % of evidence submitted by private citizens. (Halpin, MacLeod & McLaverty 2012: 6)[122]

5.5.5 Communication ways and quality in the expert hearings

Returning to the case analysis, the qualitative features of the legislative deliberations and political dynamics in the committees is now examined. First, the actual operational methods of committee hearings seem to be limited. For example, there were too many experts in the Social Affairs and Health Committee's second hearing on the bill of Alcohol Act. Due to limits of time and space, each expert presented briefly without visual material. The Chair of Social Affairs and Health Committee said, "[…] 5-10 minutes orally, so our hope is that written statement can be as long as possible. But then came this kind of time frame that if we have a hearing where there are a dozen names and the committee's meeting time is two hours […]" Mutual discussion between experts was not allowed; only MPs could question and responding experts answered. Some experts criticized that meetings did not provide the possibility of genuine discussion facilitating a more in-depth understanding for MPs because the discussion is largely restricted by the short time-schedule and formal hearing process.

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[122] Also, a recent study implies that individual citizens do participate in the consultation process of legislative committees with a considerable portion in the UK, Netherlands and Denmark. (Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen 2015: 419, 422)

"To speak frankly, the committee hearings were not so communicative in my mind. That is, all the experts presented their own perspectives and then committee members questioned them, but there was not much interaction. In this particular hearing, the Chair hoped in advance that experts would not comment on other presentations, because he might know that there are very different opinions, and he thought that the event (would) be extended and not necessarily bring additional value if we start to conflict with one another in the hearing." (Aalto-Matturi, EHYT ry)

"No. I was not satisfied with it since the time was so short and then there was not enough time. It was a bit… In my opinion, if I was in the committee, I would take a certain view at a time. This is how other committees operate. The Social Affairs and Health Committee always wants different opinions [to be heard] at the same time for some reason. […] Perhaps if I myself were there as a parliamentarian, I would want to go more deeply into a certain argument; I would not mix those all there at once." (Ussa, Panimoliitto ry)

An expert pointed out that the space arrangement of committee rooms was not appropriate to facilitate active discussion. Malmberg (Finnish Ice Hockey Federation) described the meeting as follows: "The room was arranged in such a way that there the parliamentarians sat beside each other on a long table. The (Education and Culture) Committee Chair was at the head, as far as I remember. The experts went to sit alongside the wall, so that some MPs sat with their backs against the experts. […] Yes. They couldn't see unless they turned around, which was very a strange arrangement in my feeling. Nevertheless, we spoke to them. Then spoke behind them". She also recalled critically the atmosphere in the committee discussion: "I have very unpleasant memories of the whole hearing. Some MPs reacted so harshly to the Finnish Ice Hockey Federation's stance. […] Even though this issue was largely settled. They concentrated, over the issue, on other matters and then, commented and questioned." "In my view they were unfair to the position of Finnish Ice Hockey Federation." (Malmberg)

Those experiences of limited communication in the committee room raise doubts as to real significance and the impact of committee consultation for some participants. Participants wanted the committee to facilitate more interactive communication and examine more varied viewpoints.

"Perhaps there (we) could have genuine interaction more than this and something more discursive. If we are asked to be heard, then we might do also something to make discussion more open. Otherwise, what is the meaning of the hearing after all? During meetings, of course, I always wonder that when there are no hard questions being asked, why I am invited there to be heard. It could be at least one point of improvement - that is, increasing interactivity." (Muuronen, Central Association for Child Protection)

"[…] in that stage when we moved to the issue of regulating freedom of expression, we talked about social media, which I would argue our decision-makers knows very little about, more experts should be heard. It should be more emphasized that various organizations should be consulted on this issue and their perspectives considered, whether this is possible or not. […]" (Ussa)

5.5.6 Party politics and impact of committee deliberation

Although the committee power of Eduskunta is strong in a comparative perspective and has been recently empowered to further scrutinize governmental activities and alter bills, the case study indicates that the PPGs and competition between the ruling and opposition parties play a larger role in parliamentary decision-making. After expert hearings, the committee tries to reach a unanimous decision at PPG representative meetings. (Each PPG including small parties has one representative in the committee who is responsible for its committee work.) They meet informally and negotiate problematic issues in the bills, even late into the night if needed. In particular, governmental party groups concentrate on pushing the bill through the legislative procedure. Besides talks and discussions in the closed room for each PPG, the governmental coalition party groups as well as opposition party groups hold their own meetings to plan strategies, decide the stances, and examine report drafts or dissenting opinions in private. Some experts who attend the hearing attend party meetings to discuss their common stances in the committee proceedings. When formal and informal negotiations end but a unanimous agreement still cannot be reached, the committee decides the final position by voting. In that case, dissenting opinions are also drafted. (Interview with Rehula)[123]

In particular, it is evaluated that essential decision was made by the 'compromise' between the governmental parties in our case, and the committee deliberation could not change it.

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[123] A documentary film, *Liikkumavara* (English title: 'Within Limits', directed by Annika Grof in 2008) dealt with the legislative deliberation process in the Social Affairs and Health Committee on the governmental proposal to raise the fees to use health and daycare centers. The film shows the committee process in the closed committee room, PPG rooms, individual MP offices, as well as in hallways, café, and floor of the Eduskunta. Notable features of real parliamentary politics and dynamics are described in detail through the document, which are in line with the findings here. (1) Treating a controversial public policy issue, the experienced Committee Chair (Juha Rehula) played a significant role in maintaining deadlines, establishing the basic hearing framework, and even regulating the way the issue was discussed in hearings and meetings. (2) The MPs endeavored to utilize the selection process of experts to be invited in the hearings in order to drive the hearing discussion in favor of their policy stances. Opposition MPs especially tried to invite as many experts as possible, who were opposed to the governmental proposal. The Chair who was then a member of coalition party group instead emphasized that the selection of experts should be based on the possibility of hearing new perspectives on the issue and that they must be focused on the practical issues, not ideological debates or rhetorical speeches. (3) MPs and party leaders met continually (formally and informally) in the private PPG rooms to discuss their strategies in committee meetings and media debates, etc. Some representatives of interest groups also joined the PPG's meetings to discuss their stances at the committee hearing. (4) As the negotiation between coalition and opposition parties went tough, both camps convened, respectively, closed co-meetings to coordinate each party's position into common policy stances. But the negotiation for making a compromise continued until the final moments. (5) A compromise between coalition and opposition parties was not successful since a major party in coalition rejected it finally. The committee decided its position by vote and the opposition MPs drafted a dissenting statement. The chamber adopted the committee report by vote in the first reading and then approved the governmental proposal in second reading. MPs voted along party lines.

"[…] the question was about the governmental compromise. In the government, especially the NCP regarded it as important that the advertisement, as the issue was solved as such, should be: outdoor advertisement prohibition and social media advertisement prohibition, no prohibition of so-called image or life-style advertisement. The governmental compromise was kept until the end, that is, governmental proposal came… or the Eduskunta decided in accordance with the governmental proposal, even though it was seen in the committee that as a matter of fact it would have been reasonable to prohibit the image advertising […] at least in this issue, governmental decision had much greater influence than the parliamentary treatment." (Aalto-Matturi)

Assessment of experts on the outcomes of legislative deliberation varies with their policy stances on the bill. Interest groups in market and industry sector were very critical of the governmental proposal as well as the parliamentary outcome, while the civil society organizations in health and welfare, and child protection areas admitted improvements in new legislation although they were not satisfied fully with the compromised result. In addition, they appreciated representing their own organizations or sector's standpoints in the legislative process. "In that sense, certainly, we did not achieve our aims that we had driven, but that law is surely heading in the right direction. It is great that attention has been paid to it and properly considered, what are they… or where in all Finnish society alcohol should be associated with. […] It is very positive that the discussion has been awakened […]", said an NGO representative (Muuronen).

5.5.7 Transparency of committee consultation

The case study confirms the closed nature of committee consultation. All 9 expert hearings were held behind the closed doors in the three committees. With the exception of the hearing schedule and list of invited experts, the detailed information in the committee room is not made public. The committees do not offer any verbatim record of committee meetings and expert hearings, including open hearings. Written statements submitted by invited experts or other stakeholders are released to the public only after the legislative process ends (through individuals asking to the parliamentary library). This closed feature of committee consultation has been frequently criticized, and the procedure has become more transparent over time as a result. One recent change is that written statements submitted by external actors have been published simultaneously on the Eduskunta website since the beginning of the new parliamentary term in 2015.[124] Open hearings and meetings remain uncommon in Eduskunta committees, however. (See the chapter 4) The newly introduced citizen initiatives have contributed to more transparent legislative deliberation

124 https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/lakiensaataminen/valiokunnat/Sivut/default.aspx, accessed 10 September 2015.

by increasing the number of public hearings. Yet, their effects have been limited: just once for two hours in the whole committee consultation process per initiative. For example, the Legal Affairs Committee held 11 expert hearings to deal with the 'Initiative for the legal allowance of same-sex marriage in Finland'; the public hearing was organized only once in the early stage. (See the chapter 6 for detailed information.)[125]

Many interviewees agreed with the need to open up the committee consultation process - at least, the expert hearing process. At the same time, however, some parliamentary personnel including MPs and committee staff expressed their worries or skepticism about the issue of committee transparency: "[…] Too much publicity of committee work would take away the final decision-making process from the committee." (Laine); "If […] all the hearings would be open […], in reality, those decisions would be made by very a small group somewhere in the parliamentary cabinet" (Rehula).

This discussion leads to a dilemma facing democratic parliaments when they pursue more transparency and accessibility in legislative procedures and activities. As already noted in chapter 2, Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen (2015) found that there is a trade-off between openness of committee procedure and concentration in committee consultation activities. Fasone & Lupo (2015) also highlighted that an increase of committee transparency forced by new ICTs are likely to reduce committee effectiveness. Hence, there needs to be a balanced and effective way to promote open deliberation in the committees while not undermining the policy capacities of legislative committees.

> "I think that there must be room for both open discussion and confidential discussion. […] In my opinion, both are necessary. In particular, these expert hearings would be better to be open, but instead I would give MPs the possibility to have confidential discussion also. Perhaps then, if expand committee hearings, it could be good that parliamentarians should for example write a lobbying diary, whom they meet. This kind of lists could be also publicized, when citizens could have the opportunity to see whose advice the MPs have sought for their own work. But I would leave the room also for confidential discussion." (Aalto-Matturi)

Currently, renovation of the Eduskunta buildings is being undertaken; one improvement will be the committee rooms newly equipped with a technical system to broadcast committee meetings online, which is expected to contribute to the transparency of committee deliberation. (Interviews with Rehula and Mäkipää)

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[125] An interesting finding is about lobbyism. Without registration system of lobbyist activities, it is loudly alleged that some market and industrial groups made strong lobbies to the coalition government, particularly the NCP. (Interviews with Rehula and Virtanen; Eduskunta 2013e)

5.6   Co-Consultation and Outreach Activities

Apart from the expert consultation, it is hard to find more open and broader scale of civic consultation mechanism or activities in the Eduskunta committees. Eduskunta has not introduced on and offline channels of public consultation, through which individual citizens can express their opinions or submit evidence for legislation under committee scrutiny. Alcohol policy and the bill for regulating alcohol advertisement in public events and cyberspace are very controversial issues in Finland, and many young people have been involved in public debates on and off-line. However, parliamentary committees did not attempt to incorporate these debates into the legislative consultation process, including online consultation, outbound meeting or fact-finding visits, and so on. The Committee for the Future has committed to practice online public deliberation on some topics[126], but those experimental cases remain exceptional in the entire legislative consultation activities of Eduskunta committees.

There have been only a few committee meetings outside the Eduskunta building or outbound visits for fact-finding. For example, the Social Affairs and Health Committee has a summer travel program to different places in Finland to meet local organizations and their representatives discussing some topical issues like SOTE-reform. However, this is organized only once a year during the summer holiday season and the meetings are informal, and only half of committee members participate. (Interview with Mäkipää) There were 22 outbound meetings or field study visits to both domestic and foreign destinations by parliamentary committees in 2014.[127] These occupy only a very small portion of the whole number of committee meetings in the same year. (Usually outside meetings and field trips are grouped together.) Most committees organized such meetings or trips once in 2014. Three committees did so twice and the Finance Committee and Environment Committee did so three times. The Constitutional Law Committee did not hold any outside meetings. Those activities are usually not related to formal inquiries initiated by the committees. Table 5.7 summarizes the data of outbound meetings and field study trips of Eduskunta committees in 2014 (data gathered from the Eduskunta website).

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126 The Committee, for example, organized an online forum to collect citizens' opinions and ideas on a specific topic, 'The Future of Finnish Welfare State and Society', in 11 April – 31 May 2014. (https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/tiedotteet/Sivut/Osallistu%20tulevaisuusvaliokunnan%20Suureen%20kansal aiskeskusteluun%20verkossa.aspx, accessed 14 September 2015)

[127] Given a budget of 83 000 euro, each standing committee is able to travel abroad twice (once for the European countries and once for the other far-distant region) in a parliamentary term. The Grand Committee, Finance Committee and Foreign Affairs Committees have a larger budget. O. Pohjanpalo, "Päättäjien kaipuu kaukomaille", *Helsingin Sanomat*, 17 April 2016.

Table 5.7 Outreach activities of the Eduskunta committees in 2014

Committee	No. of committee meetings	No. of outbound meetings or field study trips	Destination (domestic and abroad)
Grand Committee	61	1	Moscow
Constitutional Law	108	0	
Foreign Affairs	98	1	Brazil
Finance	54	3	Rovaniemi; Varkaus; Canada
Audit	72	1	France
Administration	102	1	Oulu
Legal Affairs	85	1	China
Transportation and Communication	87	2	Lapland; Kuopio
Agriculture and Forestry	108	1	Varsinais-Suomi
Defence	62	2	Hämeenlinna, Riihimäki; Kuopio
Education and Culture	96	1	Kaustis; Kokkola
Social Affairs and Health	83	1	Tampere, Sastamala
Commerce	117	2	Pyhäjoki; Kotka
Committee for the Future	39	1	Pori (Suomi Areena)
Employment and Equality	79	1	Kainuu
Environment	85	3	Vantaa; Jyväskylä, Jämsä; Varsinais-Suomi
Total	1336	22	

At the individual level, MPs have said, "we nowadays have huge amounts of feedback, tens of citizens send feedback every day, and many come to me too." (Rehula) They are also said to be active in meeting stakeholder groups and their representatives in meetings, seminars and conferences in and outside the parliamentary building. (Interview with Mäkipää) No evidence was found that the committees exercise co-consultation mechanisms in the legislative process. Likewise, there has been no outreach by committees to socially marginalized groups. Overall, the methods and scale of civic engagement with the legislative process in Eduskunta committees are limited and narrow, notwithstanding the broader scope of expert consultation.

As noted when the committee consultation index was introduced, the UK and Scottish Parliament give good examples of how parliamentary committees could engage with the public in the legislative process. The Scottish Parliament allows ordinary citizens to submit written evidence by email to committee inquiries or legislative bills under committee consideration. (Video statements are also welcomed.) A list of topics calling for input is found on the parliamentary website. Each topic page outlines the main issues and offers a guide to submitting evidence. All submitted evidence is published on the website, with a few exceptions. At present, there are 8 calls for submissions. [128] Moreover, Scottish Parliament committees frequently hold outbound meetings and fact-finding visits. According to Arter (2004: 23-24), about 50 committee meetings were held outside Edinburgh in the first parliamentary session (1999-2003), which enabled 'the views of ordinary people to be heard more easily'. It is also reported that the Scottish legislative committees made 139 fact-finding visits between 1999 and 2007, which was 'the most common method of involving civic actors' at the Scottish Parliament. (McLaverty & MacLeod 2012: 461) Outside meetings and fact-finding trips can be combined as well. Committees can also launch their own initiatives or inquiries for enhancing civic engagement in their own policy areas. By demonstrating the will of Parliament (committees) to reach out to the people, those activities improve the committee's capacity to identify real issues in various local contexts.

The UK Parliament also allows members of the public to submit written evidence on bills through parliamentary website. It has experimented since 1998 with a number of online forums to deal with specific public issues, ranging from domestic violence to e-Petitions. Through online forums, individual citizens and parliamentarians can communicate interactively by posting, commenting and polling. (Hansard Society 2011) For example, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee in the House of Commons launched an inquiry into the 'Future of the BBC' in October 2013. In 2014, it took written submissions from around 120 groups and individuals and conducted five fact-finding visits to domestic and foreign

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128 http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/current-consultations.aspx, accessed 9 September 2015.

destinations. It also held a three-week 'e-consultation' using a student online forum ('The Student Room') to 'hear younger people's opinions on the BBC'. "In total, there were over 500 comments posted by 224 respondents. In one of the polls on viewing preferences over 600 votes were cast […]" The final report was published in February 2015, containing the main findings and key quotes from the written submissions and e-consultation. (House of Commons 2015: 9-10, 134)[129]

5.7   Conclusion

Nordic countries are commonly characterized as examples of consensual democracy with a neo-corporatist public policy making system. Specialized and permanent parliamentary committees function as a key institutional channel to link the state and civil society in the legislative stage of policy making. Nordic parliaments, especially the Finnish Eduskunta, have maintained highly closed procedures for committee deliberation. Despite the potential advantages of confidential negotiations between MPs and PPGs in sustaining committee effectiveness and policy influence based on mutual trust and practical approach to the issues, they limit the opportunity for the public to follow and learn in detail about what legislators and invited external actors discuss in meetings. Along with the rapid transformation of the societal structure into a post-industrial information society and advances of new forms and channels of political communication, the closed characteristics of the parliamentary committee system are likely to be more problematic. The prevailing discourses of democratic governance and 'citizens as policy partners' (Gramberger 2001) also put pressure on legislatures to open up their proceedings and enhance civic engagement in the legislative consultation process.

   This chapter addressed those issues by presenting a case study of the Eduskunta - Social Affairs and Health Committee and its deliberation on the Alcohol Act of 2013. To make study more generalizable, longitudinal and comparative statistical data on expert consultation activities in the Finnish parliamentary committees since 1997 was also provided. The study results demonstrate a number of discernable features in the legislative civic engagement practices of Eduskunta. First, the committee consultation is mainly exercised within the boundaries of standard consultation. As the case study indicates, committees usually hold expert hearings and take written statements when scrutinizing bills. Public officials, interest organizations representing diverse social sectors and groups, and academic experts are the main participants in committee hearings. The selection process of experts is often utilized by the MPs who want to hear more experts regarded as supportive

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129 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcumeds/315/315.pdf, accessed 12 September 2015.

to their policy stances, while experienced committee chairs and secretaries skillfully handle the legislative deliberation process in the committees. The general scope of expert consultation has been considerably wide, but the number of experts invited to hearings varies by committees, depending on the issues. In this case, the controversial character of the government proposal (reinforcing the regulation of alcohol beverage advertisement) resulted in a wide array of expert invitations to the committees. The bill was introduced to the Eduskunta after a complicated and long proposal-drafting process due to the strong objection of core interest groups in industry sectors, and expert opinions were clearly divided between the business/ industry sector groups and public NGOs in social policy areas. In this context, the interviewed MPs and committees' staff emphasized their role to hear various societal sectors and groups in balance.

The analysis of statistical data indicates: (1) the public sector is overwhelmingly represented in the committee consultation process, especially in committees related to formal state functions; (2) committees in social policy areas, particularly the Education and Culture Committee, invite relatively more representatives from the third sector than other committees; and, (3) each committee is likely to have its own list of 'usual suspects' who are more frequently invited for committee consultation than other groups. Central labor market organizations are often invited in the Social Affairs and Health Committee while several legal professors dominate the consultation process in the Constitutional Law Committee. On the other hand, communication in the hearings is not very interactive, due to the limited time available, lack of space and, more importantly, traditional (formalistic) working methods in the committees. As the interviews indicate, there is a gap between the viewpoints of parliamentary personnel and civil society representatives. While the latter called for making the committee process more open and communicative, the former emphasized the formal roles of legislators to measure various stakeholders' arguments impartially and make decisions under tight timeframes and a heavy workload.[130]

Although established civil society groups and elite experts are allowed to engage with committee deliberation in regular modes, individual citizens seldom participate in the same process. In this case, the committees did not organize open hearings and other forms of public consultations, although the bill was debated extensively in the media and online spaces, particularly among young. In general, there is no parliamentary mechanism for co-consultation with the public; Eduskunta committees have not introduced such institutional channels to involve ordinary citizens and under-represented groups into the legislative consultation process, which have been advanced in several legislatures such as the UK and

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[130] The case adds an interesting picture of the internal dynamic of committee work. With variations of consensus-oriented culture in each committee, a 'compromise' within coalition government party groups and competition between government and opposition parties limited real 'maneuvering room' in committee deliberations. The evidence implies that small numbers of interest groups are over-represented in the legislative process through strong lobbying.

Scottish Parliaments or the Chilean Senate. Moreover, outreach activities and fact-finding visits of parliamentary committees in the Eduskunta remain unusual. Although the Committee for the Future and Environment Committee appear to be more active in this regard, committee activities aimed reaching out to ordinary people remain exceptional events or peripheral to the legislative process.

Finally, the methods and scale of committee consultation in the legislative process is narrow, despite the wide scope for expert consultation, which involves diverse social sectors and groups. The influential roles of intermediary civil society organizations and broad participation by their representatives in the legislative consultation process are certainly impressive and positive – A foundational process for associative democracy and higher level of social trust. However, a heavy reliance on the standard consultation mechanism restricts more open, wider and direct public access to the legislative deliberation process, which can casts doubt on the legitimacy of parliamentary decision-making in new political environments. To be sure, it is not an easy task to reconcile established forms of representative democracy with new forms of participatory politics. Innovative but balanced and integrative approaches would be essential in designing and implementing institutional reforms, without the 'trade-off' between committee transparency and effectiveness. However, this discussion does not justify a passive approach within the Eduskunta towards fostering a more accessible and participative committee culture. Considering the recent democratic challenges facing Finnish society such as declining voting turnouts, the rapid transformation of social structure and increasing inequality, Eduskunta committees should be more active in reaching out to the public and connecting them to the legislative process. In this regard, the citizens' initiative institution may contribute to making the committee process more open and accessible by increasing the number of public hearings and allowing citizens to press their agenda. Moreover, this new direct mechanism for civic engagement with the legislative process raises a challenging question about the traditional concepts of parliamentary representation in Finland. The next chapter addresses this topic.

6 PARLIAMENT AND DIRECT FORMS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

6.1   Introduction

Now the empirical focus of the study turns to scrutinizing the changing relationship between parliaments and the public in the wake of the introduction of direct forms of citizen participation in the legislative decision-making process. As reviewed in the chapter 2, direct democratic mechanisms such as referendums and citizens' initiatives have continually attracted the interests of policy makers, citizens and scholars who wish to explore alternative models of democracy based on more participatory politics. There have been traditional concerns and debates about the difficulties in implementing direct democracy in complex modern societies, as well as the fickle nature of the public and their lack of capacity to take informed stances when it comes to complicated public policy issues. Advocates of participatory democracy have argued that rapid and new technological developments enable both direct and qualitative involvements of the public in the political decision making process beyond regularly held elections while reducing the costs of mass participation. They also argue that citizens are now better educated and informed, and that participatory experiences contribute to transforming private individuals into good citizens committed to public affairs. Furthermore, some scholars point out that direct and representative democracies are not necessarily incompatible, distinguishing mediated forms of direct democracy from unmediated ones vulnerable to populist temptations. (Budge 2006, 2013; Altman 2011, Hendriks 2010)[131]

   Together with referendums, the citizens' initiative is a democratic institutional channel enabling citizens to be involved directly in the political decision-making process. Using this mechanism, the public can submit their policy agenda to representative bodies (usually the parliament) or even call for a referendum to be organized, when they collect a certain number of eligible signatures within a specific period. Such initiatives reflect the different historical and political contexts in which the initiative systems have been introduced. The

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[131] See the chapter 2 for more extensive literature review on the topic – that is, theoretical debates over the relationship between representative and direct democracy, as well as the comparative studies of citizens' initiatives used in European democracies.

main institutional types vary by country – (1) the 'full-scale initiative' connected to popular vote in Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Latvia; (2) the 'agenda initiative' without links to referendums in Austria, Spain, Poland, Finland and the EU; and, (3) mixed forms of initiative systems in Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, and regional-level Germany. There are significant variations between countries in the procedural requirements for organizing initiatives as well as in the parliamentary treatment process. Previous comparative studies have also shown that citizens' initiatives have different institutional effects within individual political systems. (Schiller & Setälä 2012 a, 2012b)

Continuing debates over the feasibility and desirability of direct democracy, and the considerably wide variations observed in the characteristics of citizens' initiatives require an examination of institutional designs and the political roles of each mechanism in a systemic and comparative way. Based on the previous literature, three levels of legitimacy regarding the design and implementation of direct democratic mechanisms (input, throughput and output) were presented in chapter 2. Following the basic analytical framework of Setälä & Schiller (eds., 2012), a comprehensive evaluation criteria was developed for more a systemic empirical examination of citizens' initiatives. There are five empirical dimensions: (1) Political context and purpose of legislation; (2) Institutional features; (3) Practical experiences; (3) Parliamentary treatment; (4) Outcomes and political impacts. Each dimension consists of a set of indicators. (See the chapter 2 and Table 2.4)

Applying that framework, this chapter now scrutinizes in-depth the Finnish version of the citizens' initiative, which was newly enacted by the Eduskunta in 2012. The Constitution of Finland ([1999] 2012) gives citizens the right to participate directly in national decision-makings regarding constitutional or legislative policy issues through referendum. According to Section 53, "The decision to organize a consultative referendum is made by an Act, which shall contain provisions on the time of the referendum and on the choices to be presented to the voters." As pointed out in previous chapters, however, its role is only advisory; moreover, there have been only two referenda in the history of Finland: the first about abolishing the (Alcohol) Prohibition Act in 1931; the second about joining the EU in 1994. This is in contrast to the case of Denmark, which has held 21 national referendums.[132] In addition, it is rare to find deliberative democratic experiments linked to the legislative decision-making process in Finland, which have been also exercised more actively in Denmark. Furthermore, there is no petition system in the Eduskunta; communication between parliamentary committees and civil society takes place mainly through the formal consultation mechanism such as experts hearing in the legislative process. (See the chapter 4 and 5.) Beyond voting at elections, the possibility for citizens to engage to the

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[132] There have been 6 cases of referendum in Norway; 4 cases in Iceland; and 6 cases in Sweden. Data came from the Research and Documentation Centre on Direct Democracy (University of Geneva) (http://www.c2d.ch/votes.php?table=votes, accessed 31 May 2015), and the governmental websites of Nordic countries.

parliamentary decision-making process through direct or qualitative forms of democratic participation is considerably limited in Finland.

A significant institutional reform, the Citizen´s Initiative Act (*kansalaisaloitelaki*) in combination with a constitutional change, took place in 2012. This enshrined Finnish citizens with the right to vote the right to present their agenda to the Eduskunta if they collect 50 000 eligible signatures within six months. For the first parliamentary term since it entered into force in 1 March 2012, more than 370 initiatives have been launched; 6 cases were transferred to the Eduskunta for parliamentary deliberation, and 1 initiative regarding same-sex marriage succeeded in passing through the legislative processes into law. The outcome is regarded as positive enough to demonstrate that it increased public interest in politics and generated a new institutional channel for direct civic involvement in legislative agenda setting. (Ministry of Justice 2014; Setälä 2013) However, there remains doubt over the real impact of citizens' initiatives in the political decision-making system, which is strongly based on traditional forms of representative democracy. (Korvela 2014)

Why did the Eduskunta enact the citizens' initiative? What are the distinctive features of the Finnish version of the citizens' initiative? Who has used them for what agenda and how has the Eduskunta responded to them? What impacts have they had on the parliamentary decision-making? To answer these questions, this chapter provides a systematic assessment of the institutional design, practical use and political role of the citizens' initiatives for its first parliamentary term (March 2012 – April 2015).

A broad scope of data was gathered and analysed. This includes (1) legal and parliamentary procedural texts, governmental proposals and memoranda, and various Eduskunta documents such as plenary minutes and verbatim records, committee reports and statements, the Council of Speaker's proposal, and documents submitted by citizen initiators; (2) statistical information indicating the numbers of citizens' initiatives launched and submitted to the Eduskunta, and documents detailing the parliamentary deliberation process and final results; and, (3) semi-structured in-depth interviews with 5 initiators, 4 MPs and 3 parliamentary staffers. The interviews provided a deeper understanding of the real experiences of citizens' initiatives, while revealing different perspectives of parliamentary personnel and citizen initiators, and highlighting new political dynamics emerging in the process of incorporating a new form of participatory politics into the established parliamentary decision-making system.

The next section examines the political context and central issues surrounding the enactment of citizens' initiative in Finland. The third section addresses the institutional features of the citizens' initiative system including the main type, threshold level and other procedural requirements, and regulation of parliamentary procedures. The fourth section presents a descriptive analysis of the six initiatives transferred to the Eduskunta, focusing on the characteristics of their topics, initiators, campaigning methods, and particularly, the parliamentary treatment of them. The political impact of the citizens' initiative is then

discussed. It addresses the remaining limitations or challenges of the system. The study finds that despite the basic limitations of 'agenda initiatives' and the 'top-down' nature of Finnish democracy, this institution of participatory democracy has quickly proven its 'functionality' as an alternative channel for legislative agenda-setting. Driven by inherent popular elements, it has generated new political dynamics in parliamentary decision-making, while expanding public discussion and making parliamentary procedures more transparent. However, the study finds that the publicity of committee deliberation remains limited and the long-term impacts on the state of democracy and citizenship need to be carefully observed.

6.2   The Citizens' Initiative in Finland: Basic Analysis

6.2.1   Enactment of Citizens' Initiative: historical and political contexts

On 7 December 2011, the Eduskunta proceeded to a second reading of the Governmental Proposal of the Citizens' Initiative Act (HE 46/2011 vp) and approved it. The bill was confirmed on 13 January 2012 and the new Act entered into force on 1 March 2012. (*Eduskunta Valtiopäiväasiat* HE 46/2011 vp) The main purpose the Act is to provide basic procedural requirements for organizing citizens' initiatives. Why and how did the Eduskunta legislate this Citizens' Initiative Act? In 2008, the Constitutional Examination Project (*perustuslain tarkistamishanke*) was launched to monitor the effects of the Constitutional reform of 2000 and address subsequent challenges. For the project, a working group known as 'Constitution 2008' was established under the Ministry of Justice.[133] This group submitted a report raising a new legislative agenda – that is, to complement representative democracy through direct democracy, particularly by introducing citizens' initiative. They paid attention to the European Citizens' Initiative adopted by the EU and started to consider whether to introduce this mechanism at national level in Finland. The 'Constitutional Examination Committee' (*perustuslain tarkistamiskomitea*), formed after the working group, also suggested a practical scheme that gives 50 000 electorates the right to submit a legislative bill. The Committee proposed the rights of citizens to participate in national-level politics be expanded through an agenda type

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[133] In the 1980s and 1990s, Finland experienced a series of constitutional reforms such as the introduction of direct popular vote for Presidential election, regulation on the extension of Presidential terms, and revising the chapter of fundamental rights in the Constitutional Act in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights. Furthermore, a total reform of Constitution took place in 2000. It rearranged the powers of President and Eduskunta and transferred the right to form the government from the President to the Eduskunta. (Husa 2011; Raunio 2011) See chapter 3 for a more extensive explanation of constitutional changes in Finland and their political implications.

of initiative. The Finnish government proposed the Constitutional Amendment Bill (HE 60/2010 vp) to the Eduskunta in April, 2010, which also included the provision of introducing the citizens' initiative. Eduskunta approved the bill in February 2011 and reaffirmed it immediately after the new parliamentary election on April, 2011. (HE46/2011 vp: 4)

The amended Constitution was scheduled to come into force on 1 March 2012. New legislation to implement the citizens' initiative institution before the date had to be enacted. Government proposed the related bill (HE46/2011 vp) and submitted it to the Eduskunta in October 2011. A working group under the Ministry of Justice drafted the bill in October 2010, which involved representatives from all 8 PPGs and the Council of Eduskunta, Ministry of Justice, Office of Population Registration, and two individual experts (1 constitutional expert and 1 political scientist). The working group held public hearings to gather various viewpoints of civil society organizations. Moreover, it organized an online forum in the formal online platform for public discussion (www.otakantaa.fi/), operated by the Ministry of Justice. In addition, publishing a report in April of 2011, the working group took the written statements from 24 civil society associations. Drawing on the report and those statements from civil society, the Finnish government drafted a final version of legislative proposal and submitted it to the Eduskunta. (HE46/2011 vp: 24; Ministry of Justice 2011: 8)

Eduskunta allocated the bill to the Constitutional Law Committee to submit its report to the plenary chamber. The Committee report recommended the chamber approve the bill: "The issue is about strengthening representative democracy, which serves the voters an opportunity to make influences directly on the agenda of political decision-making process and to bring up their initiative to the Eduskunta for consideration."[134] It also pointed out that "The legislative work of Eduskunta will be continuously based on the government proposal and Member's Initiative, but the citizens' initiative will bring up a new opportunity for active civil society to initiate the legislative agenda in the Eduskunta. The citizens' initiative can also work as the channel to open the public discussion and to raise new issues as the object of political discussion." (PeVM 6/2011 vp: 2) But it also stated that "As a new institution, citizens' initiative must be also approached positively in the parliamentary consideration. On the other hand, their consideration would never be uncritical, either. For example, the initiatives which contradict clearly fundamental human rights would be left without deliberation in the committee on the basis of the committee's perspective, although they could be formally submitted to the Eduskunta." (PeVM 6/2011 vp: 2-3) No special dissents were raised in the Two Readings of floor after the committee process. Since all PPGs had already taken part in the government proposal-drafting stage and there was no

[134] As mentioned in the introductory chapter, all the English translations are my own, where I cite them from the Finnish sources including parliamentary documents, interview transcripts and news articles, etc.

special objection, the bill passed unanimously by the suggestion of Speaker. (PKT 81/2011 vp)

To sum up, the enactment of citizens' initiative was a '*top-down*' project for democratic innovation led by the Finnish government, in an extension of continual constitutional reforms and under the external influence of the EU.[135] Before the government drafted the legislative proposal, there were no strong demands from civil society to introduce the citizens' initiative into Finnish democracy. There were no serious debates in the Eduskunta. Although some parliamentarians raised doubts about the importance of citizens' initiative and how the Eduskunta should treat citizens' initiatives, "All the parties considered the matter good. It was hoped to promote citizen participation, activeness and civil society. It was wished to invent something different from representative democracy. […] It should be invented too, how citizens' initiative could be treated in the Eduskunta. In general, however, it was regarded as a good thing and expected to increase the opportunity of civic influence. […] All the parties backed this." (Raija Vahasalo, Chair of Education and Culture Committee) The government proposal-making process demonstrated the typical character of consensual policy making in Nordic democracy, in which all 8 PPGs and the Council of Eduskunta were involved as the main stakeholders. A wide-range consultation with civil society groups was undertaken. Notably, an online forum was organized through the formal e-democracy platform (www.otakantaa.fi/) operated by the Ministry of Justice. It was emphasized continuously that the main purpose was not 'replacing' but 'complementing' and 'strengthening' representative democracy through the instrument of direct democracy. It explains why Finland adopted an agenda type of initiative system without a link to popular voting. On the other hand, it specified moderate signature thresholds. Specifically, the law permitted the gathering of signatures through an e-collection system and the government was given a mandate to provide an effective online platform for citizens' initiative (www.kansalaisaloite.fi), which provides a distinctive feature to the citizens' initiative mechanism in Finland.

6.2.2   Institutional design and key features

6.2.2.1   Agenda Initiative without linking with referendum

The main characteristic of the Finnish citizens' initiatives is that of an 'agenda initiative'. In contrast with a 'full-scale initiative' combined with a popular vote, an agenda initiative allows

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[135] Finnish government had also implemented a long-term project of Citizens' Participation Policy Programme (1998-2002, 2003-2007) to remedy the democratic deficiencies such as declining voters' turnouts and increasing political inequality in Finland.

citizens to submit their legislative agenda to the parliament but the right to final decision-making is reserved for the parliament. (Schiller & Setälä 2012a: 1) Although it is regarded as an institution of direct democracy, citizens' participation is limited to the stage of legislative agenda setting.[136] Despite such limitations, it is useful to maintain the stability of the political regime because it relies on the informed consideration and final decision-making power of parliament, which functions as a 'safety-valve' against the vulnerable elements of direct democracy that might be connected to the dictatorship of the majority or the violation of minority rights in specific conditions. Due to these complementary features, an agenda initiative is considered a 'compromise' between traditional forms of representative democracy and direct forms of popular democracy, increasing the incentive of individual parliaments to make use of the institution. (Setälä & Schiller (ed.) 2012) The Finnish government and MPs emphasized indeed that the main purpose of the citizens' initiative is not to 'replace' but to 'complement' and 'strengthen' the existing representative democracy through a moderate form of direct democratic participation, as observed in the governmental reports and parliamentary documents.

6.2.2.2 Thresholds or procedural requirements

Regarding the procedural requirements, several distinctive features of Finnish citizens' initiatives can be identified. First, the Constitution (Section 53) states that, "at least fifty thousand Finnish citizens entitled to vote have the right to submit an initiative for legislating an Act to the Parliament." The signature threshold has the most decisive influence on the success or failure of citizens' initiatives institution. An overly high threshold can make it hard to organize the initiative itself and thereby the purpose of institution cannot be fulfilled, while an overly low threshold may lower the priority of citizens' initiatives in the parliamentary deliberation process, which can reduce the political significance of the whole institution. (Interviews with Pauli Kiuru, MP, NCP; Kati Pulli, SEY ry) Stricter requirements have been imposed on launching full-scale popular initiatives or the initiatives containing constitutional proposal. (Setälä & Schiller (ed.) 2012) The current requirement of 50 000 eligible signatures corresponds to 0.9 per cent of the population and 1.2 per cent of the electorate, which is regarded as an appropriately challenging level – that is, not too low and not too high. The citizen initiators confirmed that 50 000 is 'never too low' (Joonas Pekkanen, *Avoin Ministeriö*), 'moderate' (Kati Pulli), 'never easy to achieve' (Senni Moilainen, *Tahdon 2013 ry*), or 'pretty realistic' and 'demanding a lot of work' (Kaija Savolainen, *Suomen Omakotiliitto ry*). MP Kiuru also stated, "It is probably high enough that it eliminates such

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[136] Due to this, some scholars exclude agenda initiative from direct democratic institutions. For example, Smith (2009) involved only referendums and full-scale initiatives in his analysis of 'direct legislation' as a form of democratic innovations.

initiatives that are not perceived as so important. However, initiatives soared up to the Eduskunta in the last parliamentary term, which indicates that it is possible to collect [50 000 signatures]. However, if they were tens of initiatives, then it would undermine other legislative work. The number seems to be pretty good." However, many parliamentarians thought "50 000 is pretty low" given the number of votes that MPs collect and represent. (Raija Vahasalo) For some Parliamentary staff "50 000 is now seen as not so significant amount, which might be increased at some extent" (Marja Ekroos, Secretary of Environment Committee) - for example, to 100 000 at some stage in the future. (Marja Tuokila, Secretary of Legal Affairs Committee; Laj Kaine, Deputy-Secretary of Education and Culture Committee)

Second, the Citizens' Initiative Act (Section 5, Moment 2) states that collecting supportive signatures should take place within 6 months after launching the initiative. There are no absolute evaluation criteria in the appropriateness of signature gathering period, either. The related legal provisions vary by country from 2, 3 or 6 months to 9, 12 or 18 months (Schiller & Setälä 2012b: 249, Table 14.1), which may have positive or negative effects. The Governmental Proposal considered 6 months sufficient time to gather the required number of signatures, and pointed out that if the period is longer, there can be a risk to change the contents of initiatives or the topic's significance may diminish due to changing conditions. [137] (HE 46/2011 vp: 29)

Third, citizens' initiative in Finland can take the form of a specific legislative bill (including the repeal of existing laws) or a general proposal to call for legislative measures. The former should contain the legislative text including specific provisions and grounds of the Act, while the latter can express just an opinion with grounds on the needs for the government or Parliament to take action for legislation. Both should be about legislative enactment or amendment. (HE 46/2011 vp: 27) Apart from legislative agenda, the matters relating to the Eduskunta's existing mandates are left outside the rights of citizens' initiatives. Important examples are parliamentary decisions on the acceptance of international obligations or their denouncement and those relating to the state budget, which are regulated by Constitutional provisions. However, citizens' initiatives can influence the legislative agenda regarding the state budget. (HE 60/2010 vp: 40)

Fourth, online collection of supportive signatures is permitted. The Act (Section 8) states that the Ministry of Justice should offer a proper online network service in order to facilitate the e-participation of citizens, which is a notable feature of the Finnish system of citizens' initiative. Section 7 provides the electronic identification procedure through e-banking certificates for online signing. This strict requirement for online signing was criticised by

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[137] Once the initiative is launched, it is not allowed to change the contents of it. In the case of the sixth initiative submitted to the Eduskunta, the initiators wanted to change the contents but it was not allowed; the Eduskunta deliberated it on the basis of its original form.(LaVM 31/2014 vp: 2)

MPs from the Green League and Left Alliance in both stages of governmental proposal-drafting and legislative deliberation. Others argued a strict system ensures that forged signatures can be ruled out, which would be essential for the functionality of citizens' initiatives institution. (Ministry of Justice 2011; PTK 81/2011 vp)

6.2.2.3   Parliamentary procedures

'The Parliamentary Rules of Procedures' provides the basic regulative framework of the parliamentary procedures for citizens' initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta. The Rules state that initiatives collecting more than 50 000 signatures be transferred to the Eduskunta within 6 months from the final date of examination at the Office of Population Registration and Ministry of Justice. The Eduskunta has the responsibility to deal with citizens' initiatives if they meet the requirements demanded by the Constitution and Citizens' Initiative Act. At the same time, it can decide whether to approve or reject as well as change the initiatives. There is no limit to the parliamentary deliberation period; if the initiative is not deliberated on within the parliamentary term it expires automatically and should be re-submitted. Initiatives presented to the Eduskunta are accepted by the Speaker and first debated in the dispatch discussion of the plenary after the notice process. It is then transferred to committees responsible for its deliberation. In the dispatch discussion, the representatives of the citizens' initiative are not allowed to speak on the floor. Instead, the committee can invite them to present their opinions. (Eduskunta [2000] 2012)

After the arrival of the initiative, the committee can decide whether to proceed. In the case it does not scrutinize the initiative or not invite the initiators to the hearings, it should inform them within 6 months of what measures will be taken regarding the matter. (*Valiokunnan opas 2015*: 111) In a formal rule, it is possible for the committee not to treat the initiative by its own judgement but only to deliver its stance to the initiators. In practice, however, it has become a *de facto* norm that the committee shall deliberate the citizens' initiative and draft the report for the plenary examination. The 'Committee Guidance 2015' (*Valiokunnan opas 2015*) states that citizens' initiatives can be treated like a governmental proposal and committees can organize hearings to investigate the issue while considering the holding of public hearings. After expert hearings, committees hold meetings to produce the report and submit it to the plenary. The Eduskunta proceeds the two readings and decides finally whether to approve, reject or amend the initiative by voting or by unanimity on the floor.

Table 6.1 Institutional characteristics of citizens' initiative in Finland

Dimensions		Features
Main type		Agenda initiative without links to referendum
Thresholds or procedural requirements	• Number of signature	No less than 50 000
	• Period for gathering signatures	6 months after launch date
	• Eligible age	18 and over
	• Forms of initiative	1. Initiative for the legislative bill; 2. Opinion initiative suggesting for legislative measures to be taken by the government or parliament
	• Methods of collecting signatures	Both on- and offline methods are allowed: - Online service through the formal website (www.kansalaisaloite.fi) operated by the Ministry of Justice - Signing online through e-banking code or mobile certificate
Parliamentary procedures	• Institutional status and priority in parliamentary treatment	The third channel of legislative agenda-setting; no formal provision of priority, but parliamentary treatment occurs in a similar way to governmental proposals or Member's Initiative with more than 100 signatures in practice
	• Period for parliamentary deliberation	The responsible committee should notify initiators of its own stance within 6 months.
	• Committee deliberation	No formal duty for the committee to deliberate citizens' initiatives, but this has become a de facto norm: - Adopting the report after holding expert hearings, in which the citizen initiators are invited to present their opinions - Open hearings can be organized
	• Final decision-making	In practice, the Eduskunta makes a final decision in the plenary through discussion and voting (or unanimity).
	• Expiring	Expired if the initiative is left undecided in the current parliamentary term; it should be re-submitted to the next term of parliament with 50 000 signatures.

6.3 Practical Use of Citizens' Initiatives and Parliamentary Treatment: Focusing on the 6 Initiatives Submitted to the Eduskunta

6.3.1 Overview of the first period of implementation: March 2012- April 2015

This section presents an analysis of citizen initiatives from when the Citizens' Initiative Act entered into force on 1 March 2012 to the present (8 June 2015). According to data from *kansalaisaloite.fi* and an NGO-based platform for *Avoin Ministeriö*, 373 initiatives were launched during that time. 322 initiatives ended within the signature collection period (6 months) while 48 cases are ongoing; 11 initiatives have passed the signature threshold (50 000). 6 initiatives have been sent to the Eduskunta, their merits assessed before the parliamentary election in April of 2015. The other 5 initiatives are on the list to be submitted to the newly constituted Eduskunta (2015-2019).[138]

On 5 March 2013, the first citizens' initiative to pass over the threshold was submitted to the Eduskunta. This initiative called for prohibiting the fur industry in Finland to protect animal rights and welfare. The Speaker of Eduskunta accepted the initiative, which received considerable media attention thanks to the controversial character of the issue and its symbolic significance as the first initiative to be transferred to Parliament. A public debate subsequently emerged over how parliament should deliberate citizens' initiatives. A practical norm has emerged that committees hold public hearing to produce a report and the plenary makes a decision on the initiative through discussion and voting. The first initiative was rejected after the plenary process on 19 June 2013.

After a short period of inactivity, the other 5 initiatives were submitted to the Eduskunta between November 2013 and June 2014. The fourth initiative proposed to reform the energy certificate system and the second to change the Copyright Act were rejected in June 2014 and October 2014 respectively. The Legal Affairs Committee also rejected in June 2014 the third initiative for the legalization of same-sex marriage. While causing a public scepticism on the institutional effect of citizens' initiatives, the rejections led to criticisms of the attitudes of the Eduskunta and MPs. Activists argued that if the rejection of citizens' initiatives continued in the Eduskunta, this would diminish public interest and participation, and render citizens' initiative in the earlier stage of development dysfunctional and deepen

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[138] *Avoin Ministeriö* (Open Ministry, www.avoinministeriö.fi) was established by a citizen activist in order to facilitate online communication among citizens running citizens' initiatives. It had served as the main online platform where citizens could suggest ideas, exchange opinions, and start initiatives while gathering the supporting signatures before the launch of the formal website of kanslaisaloite.fi. During that time, 3 initiatives had been launched including the first initiative – the Initiative for prohibiting the fur industry in Finland, which had collected more than 50 000 eligible signatures and was submitted to the Eduskunta.

disengagement from citizens with parliamentary politics.[139] But others argued that citizens' initiative cannot replace the role of parliament. Even if initiated by the public, bills lacking legal expertise will not be approved by the Eduskunta. Moreover, while the initiative to reform the energy certificate system was formally rejected, the Eduskunta nevertheless recommended the government take action on the issue.[140]

The initiative for the legalization of same-sex marriage law mobilized a large amount of popular support, with more than 160 000 signatures. This gave critical momentum to the prospects of this new participatory institution in Finland. The initiators and their supporters campaigned actively as the interests of media and the public continued to increase. Surveys revealed a deep division between the members of parliament on the issue. Finally, the Eduskunta decided to approve the bill by a vote on 28 November 2014, which passed with 105 votes in favour of legalization to 92 against (with 2 abstentions). Around five-thousand citizens gathered outside the parliamentary building to demonstrate their support. The initiative was sent to the Grand Committee for a re-consideration and then returned to the floor on 12 December 2014 to be reaffirmed by 101-90 (abstention 1, non-attendance 7). According to the national daily *Helsingin Sanomat*, "The Finnish Parliament made a historic decision on Friday."[141] In so doing, the new institution of the citizens' initiative passed over the first hurdle for its institutional consolidation, leaving behind the earlier period of critical scepticism.

The Education and Culture Committee have treated two other initiatives, submitted in April and June 2014. The fifth initiative regarding the Swedish language was a controversial issue which resulted in a wide public discussion before the general election scheduled in April 2015. The initiative was backed by the nationalist populist Finns Party and MPs across parties. It was rejected by a vote on the floor (134-48) on 6 March 2014. The sixth initiative for reinforcing the punishment of drunk driving was also rejected on 10 March 2015. The parliamentary process for all 6 citizens' initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta during the first parliamentary term thereby came to an end.[142]

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139 YLE, "All six citizen's initiatives have failed – activists accuse Parliament of intentionally slowing the process," 13 October 2014. (http://yle.fi/uutiset/all_six_citizens_initiatives_have_failed__activists_accuse_parliament_of_intentionally_ slowing_the_process/7525779, accessed 11 June 2015)

140 YLE, "Heinäluoma: Kansalaisaloite energiatodistuksista hyväksytty "de facto,"" 14 October 2014. (http://yle.fi/uutiset/heinaluoma_kansalaisaloite_energiatodistuksista_hyvaksytty_de_facto/7526647, accessed 11 June 2015)

141 Nieminen, Martta. Mäkinen, Esa. Junkkari, Marko. Teittinen, Paavo. Pohjanpalo, Olli. "Eduskunta hyväksyi avioliittolain muutoksen – katso listasta, miten edustajat äänestivät," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 28 November 2014.

142 After the parliamentary election on 19 April 2015, 6 more initiatives were submitted to the Eduskunta. (www.kansalaisaloite.fi/, accessed 19 May 2016) A very controversial initiative to abolish the legislation for marriage equality remains on the waiting list.

6.3.2 Practical experiences of the 6 Initiatives in the organizing stage

6.3.2.1 Initiative for prohibiting the fur industry in Finland

The Initiative to amend the Act of Animal Protection – particularly, Section 22 - for prohibiting the fur industry in Finland in the cause of protecting the rights and welfare of animals suffering in poor living conditions in industrialized fur factories. Touching both ethical and socioeconomic issues, this topic is already controversial in Finland, bringing up conflicting values such as advocating animal rights and securing employment and business interests. (MmVM 6/2013; PTK 45/2013 vp; PTK70/2013 vp) The Initiative was launched by 4 civil society organisations in the field of environmental and animal rights[143]. (M1/2013 vp) Being aware of the new participatory mechanism, they discussed the idea to organize an initiative for this topic. They calculated that the agenda could enjoy a rare opportunity to attract attention of media and the public as the first citizens' initiative in Finland, which proved the case. Planning and organizing the campaign in a professional way, they gathered 69 381 eligible signatures. Kati Pulli, Representative of the Initiative, said:

> "We had four organizations cooperating for this issue. […] Then while continuing the campaign, we had common meetings almost every week, in which we updated the situation and decided the next step. Then, we also sought partners with which to cooperate on some matters. For example, the youth organizations of political parties and some other organizations who then took part in helping to collect name for us. And there were hundreds of companies who took, for example, the chances to sign and publish in their own statements. 'Body Shop' was the biggest among them - that is, the Body Shop chain allowed us to collect signatures in all shops for half of the collection time. From there came many signatures. […] Then we cooperated with various parliamentarians in various ways."

Since e-collecting system did not yet exist, signatures were collected mainly through face-to-face campaigns involving many volunteers. "[…] almost 70 000 names were collected face-to-face, collected by huge number of volunteers." (Pulli)

6.3.2.2 Initiative for changing the Copy Right Act

The Initiative intended to repeal the Copy Right Act to reduce excessive online surveillance and punishment for persons downloading the copyright-protected music or movies illegally.

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[143] They are the Association of Animal Protection Animalia (*Eläinsuojeluliitto Animalia*), The Finnish Nature League (*Luonto-Liitto*), Justice to the Animal (*Oikeiutta eläimille*), and The Finnish League of Animal Protection Associations SEY (*SEY Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto*).

(M 9/2013 vp; SiVM 9/2014 vp)[144] It is notable that the initiative proposal was drafted by 'crowdsourcing' through the online platform of the Open Ministry (*Avoin Ministeriö*) and using internet co-working tools like 'Google Doc', as well as relying on the volunteer work of legal experts. "We used open co-writing tools. We were able to use at least Google Docs, in which we collected a large number of proposals from people on the problems with the Copy Right Act and how to correct them," said Joonas Pekkanen (Representative of the Initiative, Founder of *Avoin Ministeriö*). There were 13 initiators for this initiative; the founder of *Avoin Ministeriö* acted as the Representative. There was no well-established organization equipped with financial resources and staff behind the initiative. They largely relied on the Internet and SNS services such as Facebook and Twitter for distributing the information. They gathered 51 974 eligible signatures almost entirely through the online system.

> "There were more than 50 000 electronic signatures and less than 2000 were, in my mind, collected on paper. To a large extent, it was an online campaign accessed most of all through social media. People shared campaign messages on their own Facebook Walls or Twitter. […] It was not as visible in the traditional media as it was, *inter alia*, through Internet and social media." (Pekkanen)

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[144] The issue was brought to the public eye when a 10-year-old girl was charged for a fine in 2012 because she had downloaded a popular music file illegally. YLE, "Parliament likely to reject citizens' initiative on amending copyright laws," 8 October 2014. (http://yle.fi/uutiset/parliament_likely_to_reject_citizens_initiative_on_amending_copyright_laws/7517746, accessed 9 June 2015)

Table 6.2 Citizens' initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta (3.2012-4.2015): Issues, initiators and campaign methods

No	Issues	Initiators	Campaigns	No. of signatures	Notes
1	Prohibition of fur industry in Finland	4 organizations in the area of environmental and animal rights	Mainly a face-to-face campaign	69 381	First citizens' initiative submitted to the Eduskunta
2	Changing the Copy Right Act	Individual volunteers	Relying on an online campaign	51 974	'Crowdsourcing' way of launching
3	Legalizing same-sex marriage in Finland	Individual volunteers who established a temporary campaign organization	Mainly online gathering of signature, but active offline movements	166 851	The largest number of signatures
4	Changing the Energy Certification Act	A major interest organization in housing sector	On and offline campaigns half and half; utilizing 260 local branches and own magazine	62 211	
5	Making Swedish an optional subject in schools	A thematic campaign organization	On and offline by half and half	62 158	Cooperation with youth organizations of the Finns Party (and the NCP)
6	Tougher punishments for drunk drivers	Individuals (a victim's parents)	Mainly online communication through SNS	62 835	

6.3.2.3 Initiative for legalizing same-sex marriage in Finland

The Initiative proposed to change several laws to allow same-sex marriage and address related issues like adoption by same-sex couples. Same-sex couples have been allowed since 2002 to be registered as civil partners in Finland. But the initiators called for gender-neutral marriage law since Finland remained the only Nordic country that does not offer same-sex marriage on a legal basis. (M 10/2013 vp) A private bill with same legislative purpose was also introduced but it was not successful. Moreover, the governmental proposal could not be submitted to the Eduskunta over the objections of Christian Democrats, a coalition party.

In this context, an idea to launch the Initiative stemmed from a student (Ida Bergman) who was at the time studying for the law entrance exam. She then shared among a small number of people, of whom Senni Moilainen became the Representative of Initiative since she had the experience and skill for activism. They established a temporary campaign organization, *Tahdon 2013* with a dozen of volunteers. They launched the Initiative utilizing both face-to-face and online campaigns. They organized festival-type events such as music concerts and a flash mob performance in Helsinki. Famous politicians and more than a hundred business companies declared their support of the Initiative in public. (Interview with Moilainen, Chair of *Tahdon 2013*)

They collected 166 851 signatures in total in 6 months, the largest number among the citizens' initiatives launched in Finland. An interview with Moilainen revealed the distinguishing features of their campaign.

> "Facebook has been the most important media channel for us. We used also Twitter, which had also a big role, but Facebook is absolutely the most significant. In addition, we also had websites […]. We collected in the street […]. For paper signatures, we got, in my memory, around 10 000 […] the largest part came, however, through the website of 'kansalaisaloite.fi'. It played a large role and was important in those days when we launched the campaign, and then we gained more than 100 000 signatures in the first day, as such the service remained standing."

> "In that stage, we did not cooperate with political parties or parliamentarians. Cooperation with MPs and parties came in later phases, but they were not connected in this organizing stage. In that stage, people recruited their friends, colleagues, fellows or school mates. […] We formed a kind of core group of about 10-12 people, who were campaigning full-time. […] All were volunteers. No one had any salary. […] we have had very many (other) volunteers. Then, this core group coordinated all things and I coordinated this core group."

6.3.2.4   Initiative for changing the Energy Certification Act

The purpose of the Initiative was to reform the energy certification system. Despite the good intention to change housings more environment-friendly, the system was criticized as too expensive and unfair to the owners of small detached houses, especially to those who use electricity as the main energy sources due to unreasonable application of law and complicated calculation method of energy consumption rate. (M 1/2014 vp; YmVM 5/ 2014 vp) Perceiving the problems being issued and grievances of people who would be affected by newly reformed Act, the Finnish House Owners' Association (*Suomen Omakotitaloliitto*) launched the Initiative. Initiators collected in total 62 211 signatures half and half by online and papers. Because of complicated character of the issue, they relied on face-to-face campaigns targeting the directly affected stakeholder groups. They utilized 260 local branch-organizations of the Association and also made a series of advertisement utilizing own magazine of *Omakoti*. (Interview with Kaija Savolainen, Executive Director of *Suomen Omakotitaloliitto*)

> "[…] we collected half on online and half on paper. […] But we did so many footwork […] our organizational privilege was that we have 260 branch associations. People collected them in local events. Then, our magazine of *Omakoti*. […] Our magazine came out, however, we distributed to all 75 000 members. We did it twice. In addition, we paid the cost of post in behalf of them. It produced much. But truly many footwork. We attended in fairs and collected as such. […] and big saver was media because media started to write it very much."

6.3.2.5   Initiative for making the Swedish an optional subject in schools

This Initiative became a highly controversial issue, a question of national identity and Finnish language policy based on two official languages (Finnish and Swedish). It was not a specific legislative bill, but only a general proposal to demand the government to draft a bill making the Swedish language a selective subject in comprehensive school. The initiator was the Chair of Free Choice of Language (*Vapaa kielivalinta ry*) established in 2007. His background offers an interesting picture on this initiative: he works as a professor in social sciences in university and a member of the City Council of Tampere, while representing the municipal organization for the Finns Party, which enthusiastically backed this agenda in the Eduskunta.[145] The Initiative collected 62 158 signatures half physically and half online. Around 30 activists worked to gather signatures. Facebook also contributed to the campaign to some extent. According to the initiator, "it was hard to collect names on the Internet as people did not know the initiative was ongoing and collection [of signatures] was in process, because the media did not tell it. […]Almost half came from street collecting, which was

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[145] http://www.ilmarirostila.fi/, accessed 10 June 2015.

hard work done by maybe 30 activists." In addition, the youth organizations of the Finns Party and, partly, the conservative NCP gave their supports to the campaign. (Interview with Ilmari Rostila, Chair of *Vapaa kielivalinta ry*)

6.3.2.6   Initiative for tougher punishment for drunk drivers

This Initiative called for strengthening the punishment of drunk drivers who harmed innocent victims, given the damages and sufferings that victims and their families must endure. (M5/ 2014 vp; LaVM 31/ 2013 vp) It was launched by parents who had lost their 11-year-old daughter in an accident involving a drunk driver after they found that the sentence for the crime was relatively lenient and even lessened in the Court of Appeal. Although they were ordinary people who live in a small town in North Central Finland, they gathered 62 835 eligible signatures due to the tragic story of their daughter. The family got the attention of their neighboring citizens and then the media; SNS tools such as blogs and Facebook functioned well in disseminating information and exchanging opinions.[146]

6.3.3   Parliamentary responses: Process and results of legislative deliberation for 6 Initiatives

Given this was the earliest period of institutional implementation, it is crucially important to establish the rules and practices on how the Eduskunta deals with them. Since the Citizens' Initiative Act does not offer detailed provisions on this matter, it had to be resolved by changing the Parliamentary Rules of Procedures (Eduskunta [2000] 2012) before beginning parliamentary deliberation on the first initiative for banning the fur industry.

The Governmental Proposal (HE 46/ 2011 vp) already included a statement that "In the order of parliamentary deliberation process, the citizens' initiative could be equated to the Members' Initiative (*lakialoite*) having gathered at least 100 MPs' signatures." A Motion of Speakers for changing the Parliamentary Rules of Procedures (PNE 1/2011 vp) also made this point. Such a positive interpretation of the significance of citizens' initiative was not articulated clearly in the discussion of the Speaker's Council (*Puhemiesneuvosto*), consisting of the Speaker, 2 Deputy Speakers and 16 chairpersons of standing committees. Some of them agreed with the above statement, but others argued that citizens' initiative should be treated the same as the Member's Initiative - that is, it can be rejected without any committee

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146 YLE, "Citizen's initiative on drunk driving to be heard in Parliament," 2 May 2014. http://yle.fi/uutiset/citizens_initiative_on_drunk_driving_to_be_heard_in_parliament/7065321, accessed 9 June 2015.

deliberation by the committee's own judgement. Long-time Secretary-General of Eduskunta Seppo Tiitinen stated in an interview with *Helsingin Sanomat* that the statement on parliament's responsibility to treat citizens' initiative as a high priority in the Governmental Proposal was written 'carelessly'. "In the Constitution of Finland, there is no duty of Eduskunta to deliberate any such matters," he pointed out.[147]

It provoked wide public discussion, revealing a conflict in perspectives between those who emphasize the central (formal) power of parliament in the representative system of political decision-making and those who advocate the significance of the new instrument for citizen participation in the legislative process. Kati Pulli (Representative of the first initiator) argued that, "Regardless of the agenda of incoming citizens' initiatives, it is especially important in terms of citizen democracy that the initiatives are able to get careful treatment in the Eduskunta."[148] *Helsingin Sanomat* reported several MPs' responses, too. Mikael Junger (SDP) argued that "Citizens' initiative should be equated to the Member's Initiative holding a hundred signatures" because the main purpose of law as an instrument of democratic reform in Finland is "to open to the public an access to decision-making processes regarding what is to be discussed in the Eduskunta". Lasse Männistö (NCP) argued that Tiitinen was 'wrong' and it is 'the task of politician, not bureaucrats', to decide procedure.' Oras Tynkkynen (Green Leagues), pointed out that citizens' initiatives deserve being treated by legislators regardless of their contents, and "if the stance towards citizen activism is this, we should not wonder the decline of voter turnout." Meanwhile, Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner (Finns Party) demanded a careful consideration in mentioning a risk of 'initiative inflation'.[149] The interview with Raija Vahasalo (NCP, Chair of Education and Culture Committee) revealed a skeptical atmosphere among parliamentarians.

> "Sure, MPs themselves collect so many votes […] who makes the Members' Initiative and then there are many signatures. If there are more than 100 signatures of MPs, how many votes does it represent in comparison with a citizens' initiative? […] when members' bill can hardly pass, then why should this be in a better position? Such discussion has been made in the hall."

Public debate concentrated on the question of whether the parliamentary committee should produce reports on citizens' initiatives. Although all PPGs highlighted the importance of the citizens' initiative as a new democratic institution, their statements submitted to the

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[147] M. Rantanen, "Eduskunnan pääsihteeri sättii kansalaisaloitetta – lain perusteet 'varomattomia,'" *Helsingin Sanomat*. 12 March 2013.

[148] *Helsingin Sanomat*, "Kansalaisjärjestöt: Eduskuntaryhmiltä julkinen kanta kansalaisaloitteesta," 12 March 2013.

[149] L. Halminen, "Tiitisen puheille kansalaisaloitteesta tyrmäys: 'Hän on väärässä,'" *Helsingin Sanomat*, 12 March 2013. On the other hand, there were no plenary debates specifically devoted to this issue, although relevant arguments of individual MPs are found in the debates on the enactment bill as well as the first citizens' initiative.

Speakers' Council revealed different stances about the issue. The Left Alliance and populist Finns Party argued that the committees should always provide reports of citizens' initiatives. The NCP, SDP and Centre Party preferred to maintain the autonomous decision-making power of the committees pertaining to whether and how they consider the citizens' initiatives.[150] The NCP opposed to give 'fully general guidance because initiatives vary particularly on their contents,' so that the committee can decide about the treatment of initiatives 'at any stage of deliberation'. The SDP confirmed that the committees make decisions 'independently' on how to treat the citizens' initiative, while stating that initiatives should be deliberated by the committee "unless it is manifestly unnecessary on justified reasons". The Centre Party stated that citizens' initiative should be deliberated 'mainly' in the committee up to expert hearings, but the committee can decide 'independently' about the further treatment of it. The Green League's stance was slightly different, in that they emphasized the responsibility of committees to deliberate citizens' initiatives with the same priority as Members' Initiative with 100 signatures, but demanded that the committees make the report 'practically', not 'in compulsion'. In addition, the Swedish People's Party argued that any initiative violating fundamental human rights should not be deliberated in the committee. Christian Democrats also wanted citizens' initiatives to be treated the same as Members' Initiatives. [151] After the debate, they reached a compromising resolution. While not stating directly the parliamentary responsibility to deliberate citizens' initiative, it is expected that the committees would deliberate citizens' initiatives and provide their reports in practice.

After the resolution of parliamentary procedures, Eduskunta began to deliberate the first citizens' initiative. In the dispatch discussion (*lähetekeskustelu*, 25 April 2013), the Chair of Agriculture and Forestry Committee promised that the Committee would deal with the initiative 'objectively, widely, quickly and thoroughly'. (PKT 45/2013 vp) The Committee held expert hearings three times. The first was open to the public on and offline, while inviting the representatives of Initiative together with other stakeholders and experts. In total, 22 experts were invited to state their opinions in hearings with 8 additional written statements submitted. The Committee published a report after several meetings for general discussion and detailed examination in closed settings. The Eduskunta made a final decision by voting in the chamber through two readings on the basis of the committee report. (M 1/2013 *Valtiopäiväasiat & Asian valiokuntakäsittely*)

The first case offered an example for the next initiatives, so the other 5 initiatives were treated in similar ways. All responsible committees held open hearings once when dealing

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[150] J. Salokorpi, "Kansalaisaloitteiden kohtelusta eduskunnassa kahdeksan mieltä," YLE, 8 April 2013.

[151] 8 PPGs' statements are found in the links on the above news page of YLE website. http://yle.fi/uutiset/kansalaisaloitteiden_kohtelusta_eduskunnassa_kahdeksan_mielta/6569644, accessed 28 September 2015.

with each initiative. These usually last two hours and are broadcast online through the parliamentary website. Three committees (Agriculture and Forestry Committee, Legal Affairs Committee and Education and Culture Committee) held public hearings for the first time. The Environment Committee had previously held 4 public hearings and 1 open committee meeting. The number of invited experts in the hearings varied by the issues and committees, but the general scope of committee consultation was quite broad in comparison with normal cases, as seen in the Table 6.3 below.[152]

After the first expert hearing, all the following hearings and committee meetings were held in private settings. The pattern was the same in all 6 initiatives. This made it difficult for the initiators and the public to follow and know actually what was going on in the committee room. After meetings, the committees concluded the deliberation process and then decided the final stance of the committee through unanimous consent or voting procedure. They published their reports and submitted them to the plenary. When they could not reach a consensus of the issue, dissenting statements were annexed to the reports. The report of the Legal Affairs Committee about the 'Initiative for legalizing same-sex marriage in Finland' was accompanied by a dissenting statement of 8 MPs. In the case of the 'Initiative for prohibiting the fur industry' in Finland, two dissenting statements were added, while the 'Initiative for making Swedish a selective subject in schools' saw four statements annexed to the committee report. Committee reports for three other initiatives were written from a common standpoint.

Before and after the committee stage of legislative deliberation, the Eduskunta holds three discussions (a dispatch discussion and two readings) on the bills in the plenary, which also applies to citizens' initiatives. Notably, plenary discussions for 6 citizens' initiatives took considerably longer, due to increased public interest and the controversial nature of the topics. For example, the first reading in the plenary on the Initiative for the legal allowances of same-sex marriage lasted for 4 hours and 52 minutes[153], while the dispatch discussion for the same Initiative lasted for 3 hours 59 minutes in the plenary. As in normal legislative bills, all discussions in the plenary were open to the public on and offline, together with all parliamentary documents including verbatim transcripts of MP speeches.

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[152] See the chapter 5 for the scope of Eduskunta committees' consultation activities, including the number of experts invited in the committee hearings.

[153] http://verkkolahetys.eduskunta.fi/webtv.case#c=40799798&v=41450025&p=3842200&t=1, accessed 2 July 2015.

Table 6.3 Parliamentary deliberation process and outcomes of 6 citizens' initiatives

No	Issues	Date of arrival in the Eduskunta (Bill No.)	Committee Deliberation Process					Final decision of Eduskunta
			Responsible Committee	No. of hearings (open hearings)	No. of participants at hearings	No. of written statements additionally submitted	Conclusion of Committee Report (No. of dissenting statements)	
1	Prohibition of fur industry in Finland	5.3.2013 (KAA 1/2013 vp)	Agriculture and Forestry	3 (1)	22	8	Rejection (2)	Rejected: 146-36 (3/14) (26.6.2013, EK 19/2013 vp)
2	Changing the Copy Right Act	26.11.2013 (KAA 2/2013 vp)	Education and Culture	3 (1)	10	10	Rejection (0)	Rejected: 147-27 (14.11.2014, EK 33/2014 vp)
3	Legalizing same-sex marriage in Finland	13.12.2013 (KAA 3/2013 vp)	Legal Affairs	11 (1)	55	19	Rejection (1)	Approved: 105-92 (2/0); 101-90 (1/7) (28.11.2014; 12.12.2014, EK 41/2014 vp)
4	Changing the Energy Certification Act	25.3.2014 (KAA 1/2014 vp)	Environment	1 (1)	9	1	Rejection (0)	Rejected (17.6.2014, EK 18/2014 vp) *2 recommendations*
5	To make Swedish an optional subject in schools	24.4.2014 (KAA 2/2014 vp)	Education and Culture	4 (1)	18	13	Rejection (4)	Rejected: 134-48 (1/16) (6.3.2015, EK 54/2014 vp) *1 recommendation*
6	Tougher punishments for drunk drivers	6.6.2014 (KAA 3/2014 vp)	Legal Affairs	3 (1)	20	1	Rejection (0)	Rejected (10.3.2015, EK 56/2014 vp) *6 recommendations*
	In total			25 (6)	134	52		
	In average			4.2 (1)	22.3	8.7		

The outcomes of the 6 Initiatives are seen in Table 6.3 above. In formal terms, 1 initiative – the 'Initiative for legal allowance of same-sex marriages in Finland' – was approved by the Eduskunta, while the 5 other were rejected. For Initiatives (4), (5), (6), however, the Eduskunta added statements recommending (*lausumat*) that the government take measures to consider the needs of the reforms urged by those citizens' initiatives.

6.4   Discussion: Citizens' Initiatives – A New Dynamic of Democracy?

Three years after the implementation of citizens' initiatives, the scale of all initiatives launched, numbers and results of initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta, procedural treatment and political priority in legislative deliberation, characteristics and diversity of agenda, and increase of communication in public sphere demonstrate citizens' initiatives have been 'consolidated' institutionally.[154] In a relatively short time, the citizens' initiative has acquired the status of a 'third channel' for legislative input-legitimacy along with government bills and MP Initiatives. (Interview with Raija Vahasalo and Pauli Kiuru) Despite the first stage of debates in and outside the Eduskunta, the parliamentary treatment of 6 citizens' initiatives was 'comprehensive' (Jani Toivola); they were 'taken seriously' while enjoying 'significant priority in the committees as well as in the chamber.' (Marja Tuokila) Citizens' initiatives are now unlikely to be ignored by committees or expire. (Interview with Pauli Kiuru)

The results of parliamentary deliberation on the 6 initiatives suggest it would be possible to advance institutional reforms using direct inputs from civil society. The Initiative for legalizing same-sex marriage offers a successful case for institutional reform promoting human rights of social minorities.[155] Among the cases rejected, the Initiative for changing the Energy Certification Act has gained *de facto* approval since the Eduskunta gave the government concrete recommendations to take action to improve the system while rejecting the bill for technical reasons. The Initiative for making the Swedish an optional subject in schools had a similar outcome, in that the Eduskunta sought a pragmatic resolution by recommending that government begin experimental trials regionally. It seems clear that citizens' initiatives provided a useful 'tool for citizens to express their will,' particularly to certain civic groups or individual persons who were 'unsatisfied' and liked to 'raise some

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[154] *Helsingin Sanomat*, "Kansalaisaloite vakiinnutti paikkansa," (Main editorial), 2.3.2015.

[155] The counter initiative claiming for cancelling the same-sex marriage law will be addressed in the new term (2015-2019) of Eduskunta, which will offer another testing moment for the future role of citizens' initiative institution in Finland.

issues to decision-making bodies', which the existing system could not resolve. (Jani Toivola)

The citizens' initiative institution has contributed to some extent to a more open and accessible parliamentary deliberation process. After the deliberation of first initiative, a principle or practical norm was established that the committee would deliberate on initiatives and produce reports after a series of hearings, one of which would be open to the public. This has applied in all 6 cases, which were the first open hearings held by three committees. It is also expected that more open hearings could be held in the future now that each committee room is equipped with online broadcasting facilities. (Interview with Marja Tuokila) A committee secretary has claimed that citizens' initiatives have escalated 'the pressure to increase publicity.' Different from dealing with government bills, the committees "have to keep offering information about the deliberation (of citizens' initiative) so that it is shown better to the public, in what stage it proceeds, what is being done for it, and open hearings can be organized […]. It is the biggest thing." (Marja Ekroos) Despite the still-limited scope of openness, the change is notable considering that public hearings at the committee stage are rare in the Eduskunta that normally holds committee meetings behind closed doors.[156]

Apart from the formal results of parliamentary treatment, citizens' initiatives have raised agendas that the government and established parties would not necessarily put on the table. The 6 initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta have brought up a colourful spectrum of issues to the public sphere. The initiatives have covered issues such as environment and animal rights, social and economic interests, crime and security (life), copyright and information society, and sexual equality, etc.[157] Same-sex marriage had been rejected by the Legal Affairs Committee once before and the-then coalition government did not include the issue in the governmental programme. The Initiative for changing the Copy Right Act came originally from the claims of street artists and then developed into a legislative proposal by way of crowdsourcing democracy. The Swedish language Initiative, strongly backed by the right-wing populist Finns Party, successfully brought a highly sensitive issue into the public discourse. The initiative made a political cleavage on language and national identity issues more visible. Political debates and communications about the raised issues have

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[156] Chapter 5 presented a comprehensive analysis of the legislative consultation process in Eduskunta committees.

[157] The following citizens' initiatives submitted in Eduskunta's new term (2015-2019) have raised a variety of topical issues. These include maintaining maternity hospital services in local areas, strengthening punishment for sexual crimes against children, health care workers' right to conscientious objection (objection to abortion surgery), deportation of foreigners who have committed crimes, prohibiting 'zero hour contracts' in labour market, and calling for a referendum to decide again the Finnish membership of Eurozone. (https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/hae?searchView=pub&orderBy=createdOldest&show=sentToParliament &minSupportCount=50, accessed on 20 May 2016)

considerably increased in the media and a variety of public forums on and offline. For example, when searching online for '*kansalaisaloite*' (citizens' initiative) in the *Helsingin Sanomat* and YLE websites, the latter produced 2 390 articles or news clips while the former produced 448 articles during the first three years of its institutional implementation. Both were more than the corresponding numbers for the municipal election in 2012 (YLE 1 170; HS 294).[158] The indirect effect of increasing publicity has also offered a strategic incentive for citizen initiators to organize initiatives even when they know passing a bill would be difficult in reality. "From that perspective, it was really an important time to awaken broad discussion about fur animals' welfare. And surely we succeeded very well from that perspective," said Kati Pulli. In fact, the above initiative secured the support of 36 MPs in the final Eduskunta vote - almost twice more than the previous legislative debate of same topic two years prior.

A new political dynamic has developed in Eduskunta's legislative decision-making pertaining to the treatment of citizens' initiatives. Citizens' initiatives have raised several sensitive issues, which has enhanced the possibilities, or 'duties', for individual MPs to decide their stance more independently. "[…] for example, gender-neutral marriage law, I think there was probably the most pressure on MPs, whether to speak their own opinions or to echo their supporters' opinions. And there, everyone surely then made a personal decision by herself," said MP Pauli Kiuru. According to him, the Swedish language issue also put on 'pressure' and it was decided that "the NCP would not adopt a common stance but that each MP would vote by their own consideration." Thus, MPs gained 'very free hands' to decide their own positions under the pressure of the public. Moreover, the main political cleavages between parties have varied considerably, depending on the issue. Even inside one party, there might be a division among members. For example, in the Initiative for prohibiting the fur industry in Finland, a group of SDP MPs approved the bill while the majority of them rejected it; in the Initiative for the legal allowance of same-sex marriage, the conservative NCP revealed a clear internal division.

There has also been a change in committee culture. Due to the controversial nature of topics, committees could not easily reach a consensual decision, and often had to publish reports with dissenting statements. Furthermore, in the Initiative for legalizing same-sex marriage, the Eduskunta decided to approve the bill by voting in the plenary despite the objection of the Legal Affairs Committee, which is also a rare case. A new cleavage between cultural liberalism and conservatism surrounding post-modern issues seems to have emerged stronger in the wake of citizens' initiative institution. This can also been observed

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[158] www.hs.fi/haku/?haku=kansalaisaloite; haku.yle.fi/?8=kansalaisaloite, accessed 27 May 2015.

in the result of the recent parliamentary election in April 2015.[159] Whether and to what extent the citizens' initiative in Finland will become a vehicle for more political polarization and party mobilization for populist appeals, which became quite a common phenomenon in several countries in Europe, remains an open question.

There are still unresolved issues regarding the implementation and institutional impact of citizens' initiatives. The first issue regards the openness of the parliamentary deliberation process, particularly in the committee stage. Even though committees held open hearings when dealing with citizens' initiatives, there has only been one two-hour public hearing per initiative. Subsequent hearings or committee meetings have been held in closed settings; only a short memorandum is published with the agenda, names and titles of participants, without publishing any verbatim transcripts.[160] Citizen initiators complained that they could not follow the ongoing situation in the committees and "there is no good reason why expert hearings should be held behind closed doors". (Joonas Pekkanen) They argued "the process should be more open so that initiators could be aware of what happens now and what will happen next. Also, all documents should be published during the deliberation period so that citizens can follow how the matter is decided, in what ways and what arguments were made, so that they could also react to it." (Senni Moilainen)

Some initiators have criticized the selection of experts for hearings as unfair. A gap between parliamentary personnel and citizen initiators is also identified as a problem. MPs and committee secretaries dispute this: "the committee tried to be extremely fair and to invite always both sides" (Kaj Laine) in balance because "the situation is so sensitive, so everything must proceed impartially." (Raija Vahasalo) However, a Finns Party MP described the political dynamic of the expert selection process as follows: "If the leadership of the committee is in the hands of a government party MP, and the ruling MPs and government's policy line is already decided, for example in the case of getting away the compulsory Swedish, that we do not agree with this, then they invite as many experts as possible who advocate their position". (Mikka Nikko) With some issues like intellectual property, when the committee sought for expert perspectives from larger stakeholder groups, the committee found "everyone except the initiators did not support it," recalled a committee secretary (Kaj Laine). The initiators argued this was not necessarily the case because society, including the academic world, is dominated by mainstream perspectives

[159] *Helsingin Sanomat*, "Tällainen on uuden hallituksen arvomaailma," 7 May 2015; K. Kallinpää, "Uusi eduskunta enemmistöltään liberaali: HS-vaalikoneen vastaukset kertovat: konservatiiviset arvot jäävät vähemmistöön," Helsingin Sanomat, 20 April 2015.

[160] An important change was introduced recently when the newly convened Eduskunta (April 2015) started to publish the written statements submitted by stakeholder groups through online website during the process of committee deliberation.

and interests. They called for a greater commitment within the committees to hear the perspectives of citizens who launched and supported the initiative beyond inviting the "same old groups […] who are always heard." (Joonas Pekkanen; also, interview with Ilmari Ristola)

The quality of committee deliberation was also doubted by some initiators. They pointed out that when they read the report of committee, they found a lack of thorough understanding of the issue and that it did not outline fully the concrete problems to be addressed. (Interviews with Pekkanen, Pulli, Rostila) Pekkanen demanded the committees and MPs interact more vigorously with citizen initiators. The successful same-sex marriage initiative has created a model: "The committees should go through initiatives in the same way as the *Tahdon*-Initiative, in which the supporting MPs considered together with the representatives of the Initiative how to form an improved version. […] in the committee, necessary adjustments could be made and then incorporated into the Report […]; the Report and the Initiative being corrected and improved along with Initiative's representatives could be brought up to the plenary for voting."

Another issue concerns the resources required to make a successful citizens' initiative, which touches on the issue of political inequality. There have been general concerns of the state of democracy and citizenship in established democracies, as outlined in the previous chapters. There is increasing disengagement of citizens from traditional democratic institutions as well as a growing gap of participation among social groups by level of income and education. (See, e.g., Blais 2010; Coleman & Blumler 2009; Ministry of Justice 2014) In Finland, citizens' initiatives contributed to giving voice to people in diverse areas and strata of society, for example, social minorities like LGBT people, old single house owners, and victims of crime and their families. The majority of those initiatives had the 'lowest budget' and there was 'no wealthy organization in the background.' (Joonas Pekkanen) The Initiative of same-sex marriage law was driven by "a sudden group of people with a particular will, who do not have any vanguard or interest organizations. As such, their voices also could be heard," and soon it developed into 'a popular movement.' (Jani Toivola) The Initiative for tougher punishment of drunk drivers has shown that with the right agenda and proper support, ordinary individuals can also bring issues connected directly to their daily lives to parliament and the public sphere by citizens' initiatives. However, if a citizens' initiative is to gain 50 000 signatures and passes the legislative process into law, it seems still crucial to mobilize skills, and financial or human resources for organizing effective campaigns and lobbies. Hence, a gap may emerge between those who can utilize cultural capital and those who cannot, despite the implementation of the Citizens' Initiative Act. This problem requires careful observation as well as practical solutions.

6.5   Conclusion

Despite numerous reforms and measures of contemporary democratic legislatures to enhance public engagement with parliamentary affairs, they are not likely to be pursued in coherent and effective ways across cases. Political disengagement with parliamentary institutions has steadily increased in many established democracies. The advance of new ICTs and multiple forms of participatory democratic mechanisms has escalated political pressure for parliaments to expand institutional communication with the public and to consider incorporating new forms of citizen participation into the legislative process. (IPU 2012; Cain, Dalton & Scarrow eds. 2008; Beetham 2011; Leston-Bandeira 2012) The citizens' initiative is an important mechanism of direct democracy that permits the public to put their agenda on the table in multi-level political decision-making. They have now been institutionalized in many European democracies, and at the EU level via the new institution of the European Citizens' Initiative. Institutional types of citizens' initiatives vary from full-scale initiatives to agenda initiatives and mixed forms. The procedural requirements, practical experiences and consequences of citizen initiatives are varied. They have diverse institutional designs and are contingent on the unique historical context of individual polities. (Setälä & Schiller (ed.) 2012) Citizens' initiatives have added a new, valuable element to the Finnish political landscape. This chapter contributed to the literature by providing a systemic assessment of the institutional features, practical experiences and political impacts of citizens' initiative in Finland, focusing on parliamentary responses to the 6 initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta during the parliamentary term (March 2012 – April 2015).

The citizens' initiative institution in Finland has proven the 'functionality' of an alternative channel of legislative agenda setting, while enhancing public engagement with the parliamentary decision-making process. Enactment processes indicate the reform was not a result of bottom-up civil society campaigns but a 'top-down' project led by the government. The main purpose of legislation was to 'complement' and 'strengthen' representative democracy in Finland, not to 'replace' it with direct democracy. A notable feature is that the Finnish citizens' initiative system adopted a moderate level of procedural requirements and notably permitted an e-collection system. First an NGO-based online platform (Open Ministry) and then the official website of the Ministry of Justice (kansalaisaloite.fi) have offered highly efficient tools for various civil society actors to launch initiatives and gather supportive signatures. Properly facilitating institutional design and collective activism of volunteer groups in civil society, as well as a self-reinforcing political dynamic generated since the introduction of participatory democratic instrument contributed to a rapid institutional consolidation, while overcoming the earlier stage of controversies and a skeptical atmosphere among high-profile political elites and MPs. After

the Initiative for legalizing same-sex marriage was finally approved in the Eduskunta, public belief in the effectiveness of citizens' initiative has increased significantly.

Using the citizens' initiative system, Finnish citizens have raised their own agendas to the center of public sphere beyond traditional channels of legislative agenda setting. All 6 initiatives transferred to the Eduskunta contained a 'more popular' political agenda (Jani Toivola), which attracted new interests among the media and the public. Citizen initiators varied from traditional interest organizations, (environmental) value-seeking public NGOs, volunteer civil activists and their 'pop-up' style associations, professional experts linked to a local (populist) party group, to ordinary citizens with a specific agenda. Campaign methods also varied depending on the issues, but the impact of online communication, particularly through new social media platforms such as Facebook, was clearly visible in most cases. Citizen initiatives have brought diverse and highly controversial issues to the public eye and escalating public pressure for more legislative (committee) transparency and direct engagement of citizen representatives in the legislative process. They have generated new political dynamics of parliamentary decision-making, which has resonated with increasing political division or polarization – particularly between cultural liberalism and conservatism - beyond party-based consensus politics.

The role of citizens' initiative nevertheless remains limited in several regards. A small number of citizens' initiatives have been submitted to the Eduskunta in comparison to the total numbers of government bills and MP legislative motions. Only one citizens' initiative has passed the formal legislative process into law as of 23 May 2016. This is being now challenged by a counter-initiative backed by many newly elected MPs. Moreover, the Citizens' Initiative Act provides no special legal recourse to citizens if initiatives are rejected by the parliament. A low rate of success of parliamentary treatments of citizens' initiatives may negatively affect the public perception of the effectiveness of institution, and further decrease trust and reduce engagement in the parliamentary institution and political system as a whole. In addition, there remains a possibility that citizens' initiatives can expire without proper committee deliberation in formal parliamentary rules. On the other hand, it seems obvious that citizens' initiatives have opened up parliamentary proceedings, especially the committee consultation process. However, the level of committee openness is still limited. Whether and how this participatory mechanism will be utilized by powerful political forces (elite politicians and parties) as well as well-established, traditional interest groups and what influences those developments will have on the political system remains to be seen.

Finland has maintained a strong model of representative democracy, with a prevailing faith that the people elect the representatives and the elected representatives (elites) make a decision. A committee secretary concluded his interview saying: "Our Parliament decides and citizens' initiative provides an opportunity to bring a matter to the Eduskunta, but the decision-making power is preserved there. It is the point that always has to be held onto.

That is, we have representative democracy." (Kaj Laine) Apart from such a strong attachment to the traditional concept of parliamentary representation, a Scandinavian style of consensus democracy is deeply ingrained in the legislative and governmental policy making process. A wide policy consultation process with related interest groups and professional experts is practiced in the committee stage of legislative deliberation and usually in closed settings. Interested individuals and ordinary people seldom take part. (See chapters 4 and 5.) Pragmatic problem-solving capacities built on mutual trust and a broader range of stakeholder consultations appear to have many advantages, but citizens now expect more direct and qualitative participation in the democratic decision-making process beyond the functional representative channels of interest negotiations and experts consultation. The advance of new ICTs – including the Internet and social media – has profoundly transformed the central patterns and character of political communication and civic engagement, as indicated in the analysis of the practical experiences and political impacts of new institution of citizens' initiative. What changes will the citizens' initiative - an institutional tool for participatory democracy - bring to the political landscape of representative democracy in Finland? The answer is yet open at large. We should observe carefully the developments of this issue through the new term of Eduskunta (2015-2019).

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Parliament and Citizens Participation in Finnish Democracy

7.1.1 Studying the parliament-citizen relationship

Parliament plays multifunctional roles in national politics as the central institution of modern representative democracy. Among the various parliamentary functions, 'the most crucial dimension' is 'ensuring the voices of the people are heard.' (Norton 2013: 281) "By providing a forum where the concerns of the electorate can be aired and (possibly) addressed, and where the actions of government can be explained and scrutinized, parliament facilitates the interest articulation and conflict resolution necessary for a healthy political system." (Kelso 2007: 365) The role of parliament to link the governments and governed has been mainly exercised through the 'representative' mechanism, not usually through direct civic participation in legislative decision-making. Legislative scholars have also focused on studying the formal systems of parliamentary institutions or their legislative behaviors, and the legislative-executive relations. The parliament-citizen relationship has not been sufficiently addressed in the literature until the recent. Following several pioneering works, a special issue of *Journal of Legislative Studies* (Leston-Bandeira ed. 2012) in 2012 was devoted to the topic. It provided a collective volume of country-specific case studies along with two thematic researches regarding the parliamentary usage of new media and impacts of parliamentary (online) petition systems. Growing public disengagement with parliamentary politics and the rise of new forms and channels of citizen participation using new ICTs prompted scholars to study the multiple and dynamic links between contemporary parliaments and their citizens beyond conventional electoral engagement. (Leston-Bandeira (ed.) 2013) But there are increasing needs for further conceptual and empirical studies to understand better the changing relationship between parliament and the public. This requires exploring new theoretical perspectives beyond the standard accounts of parliamentary representation, as well as to build more comprehensive and solid analytical frameworks for value-based legislative audit research.

This thesis aimed, most of all, to provide a systematic and robust empirical study of the parliament-citizens relationship between elections in the context of Finnish democracy. To this end, a comprehensive analytical framework was first established by connecting core normative principles of democratic legislatures – 'visibility', 'accessibility', 'permeability'

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(Arter 2012) and 'inclusive and sustainable democracy' – with practical indicators to identify and fully assess public engagement with the parliamentary affairs. Second, a 'Committee Consultation Index' was introduced to investigate civic engagement practices among parliamentary committees in the legislative process. Paying attention to the role of committees linking government and civil society in the legislative stage of public policy making, different types of committee consultation activities were identified, ranging from standard (expert) consultation, co-consultation with the public, to more extensive committee approaches. Third, another framework was developed to evaluate the institutional effects of citizens' initiative as a direct mechanism of legislative engagement. Following Setälä & Schiller's basic frame (eds. 2012), empirical criteria were advanced to assess the institutional features and political impacts of citizens' initiatives: (1) The political contexts and purpose of legislation; (2) Their institutional character; (3) Practical uses; (4) Parliamentary treatment; and (5) Outcomes and political impacts. (See chapter 2 for the analytical frameworks and practical indicators in detail.)

7.1.2   The state of democracy in Nordic countries

These frameworks were applied to the case study of Finnish Eduskunta and its multiple relationships with citizens. Although Nordic countries are often described as an ideal model of healthy and sustainable democracy, they are not exempt from the ongoing shifts of social structures and various political challenges. There have been growing concerns of the state of democracy and citizenship in the region, which is why 'Power and Democracy Studies' have been continually commissioned by Scandinavian parliaments since 1970s. (Arter 2006: 154-176) Describing the whole picture of the quality or state of democracy and citizenship in Nordic countries is not so simple, though. As noted throughout the dissertation, there are not only commonalities but also many differences and variations among the five Nordics, which reflect largely similar but also quite different historical-institutional contexts of modern democracies in the region. For instance, the latest two power studies in Norway (1998-2003) and Denmark (1998-2003) reached quite opposite conclusions on the state of their democracies.

The Norwegian power study describes its democracy as in decline: "The quality of representative democracy is eroding" and "the chain of parliamentary governance is weakened"; "political parties are losing the capacity of mobilization." The state has embraced a neo-liberal programme and market-oriented principles: "Local government has lost its autonomy" because of restrictions on welfare rights and budgetary control. There has also been a 'de-politicization of local democracy'; the traditional mode of corporatism has been reduced as popular movements have been weakened while 'here-and-now-organizations' have grown. The judicialization of politics, increasing influence of mass

media on public issues, and Europeanization have also weakened 'rule by popular consent'. (Østerud & Selle 2006; NOU 2003:19)

Meanwhile, the Danish final report concludes, "Denmark has done surprisingly well. The Danes are still democratically active, and the political institutions are democratically robust." (Togeby et al. 2003: 50) It states that participatory democracy has not transformed into 'a passive spectator democracy'. Although political parties are weakened, they have reached 'a new equilibrium' and the party system has stabilized. With new tools to control the cabinet and administration, the Danish Folketing has been strengthened rather than weakened. Despite globalization and a changing societal structure, the universal Danish welfare state remains robust and economic inequality has not grown; the power gap between people and elite has been narrowed. (Ibid. 15-55)

Such different evaluations of the states of democracy in Norway and Denmark have awakened discussions of how to interpret the results of the two studies, given the common characteristics of the Scandinavian social democratic welfare states. Appreciating the different directions of evolution in two democracies, as well as the problem of 'timing' when they had experienced transitional shifts in political systems[161], scholars have also pointed out the different approaches of the two studies. (Christiansen & Togeby 2006; Arter 2006) In particular, the framework of the 'parliamentary chain of governance,' which guided the Norwegian project, was criticized because of its limitation. It has a tendency to idealize a specific image of the political system that does not exist. Moreover, the role of citizens remains passive rather than active in the political decision-making system. It would be difficult using this framework to measure properly the ongoing transformational changes of democratic politics, such as multilevel governance beyond the nation-state and new modes of citizen participation. (Andersen 2007)[162]

On the other hand, the Swedish Democracy Commission (1997-2000) envisioned a desirable future of democracy by embracing 'participative democracy with reinforced features of deliberative democracy theory'. While confirming the decline of the 'strong state model of social democratic governance', the Commission made policy recommendations to

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[161] As the 'frontrunner', Denmark experienced political turmoil in the 1970s and then adjusted to the new domestic and international environments over three decades. Meanwhile, such changes – for example, the decline of party membership took place in Norway in the 1990s, which perhaps strengthened the feeling of crisis.

[162] Danish authors of the democracy study report tried to complement the model of 'parliamentary chain of governance' by adding an 'active element' in the relationship between citizens and administrative authorities in public policy formation and implementation. (See Christiansen & Togeby 2006) It still leaves many agents whose collective activities essentially encompass the entire democratic (deliberative) system, such as interest groups, media, the courts, supranational bodies, and members of the public who have various roles and identities in the policy making process, to be just 'external' variations or 'constraints' of the ideally presupposed core process of representative democracy. For this reason, Andersen recommended the Finnish colleagues not to adopt this framework in his keynote speech for the project conference of 'Power and Society in Finland'. (Andersen 2007)

promote citizen participation. (SOU 2000:1) The democracy policy was adopted by the Social Democratic government in 2002 only after controversial debates in parties and parliament. Furthermore, participatory and deliberative democratic innovations suggested in the policy programme was not implemented in a serious way, due to the strong faith of political elites in the 'top-down' style of representative democracy. A large group of social democrats stuck to the strong state model focusing on 'output' services rather than the 'input' side of democracy. A strong tradition of local self-government also affected policy implementation. (Montin 2007; Amnå 2006)

Finland shares many common features with other Nordic democracies, such as a strong party-based representative democracy system, committee-centered working parliament models, a neo-corporatist style of public policy making, and relatively higher levels of public satisfaction with national democracy and trust in democratic institutions. However, the Finnish political system also exhibits unique features. For example, it has the most fragmented political party system, a strong preferential PR electoral system, oversized coalition-seeking consensus politics, and rapidly declining voting turnouts. Finland has recently implemented a total reform of its Constitution which redistributed power between the President, PM and Eduskunta. Although the Eduskunta has had more legislative powers since the constitutional reforms, increasing public disengagement with parliamentary politics such as diminishing voter turnouts and a relatively low rate of public trust indicates serious challenges for the future role of Finnish parliamentary institutions. Governmental policy programmes and initiatives have been launched to address the changing relationship between representative institutions and the represented.[163] As a result, a new dynamic of democracy has developed, particularly since the enactment of the citizens' initiative on the national level in 2011. (See chapter 3 for a more extensive analysis on the political context of the Finnish parliamentary system.)

7.1.3   Summary of empirical findings: Reaching out to the people?

Departing from this contextual analysis, a 'legislative audit' style of comprehensive assessment on the public engagement activities of the Eduskunta was presented in chapter 4. Guided by the core normative standards of democratic parliaments, the study identified a variety of recent reforms and practical measures taken by the Eduskunta. For example, improving physical accessibility, operating citizen information center, providing free

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[163] To address increasing public disengagement and also affected by the Swedish democracy policy, Finnish government launched the citizens' participation policy programmes (1998-2002, 2003-2007), which resulted in the installment of 'Democracy Unit' in the Ministry of Justice. The influence of Scandinavian experiences is also observed in the launch of Finnish version of the Power Study, funded by the Academy of Finland (2007-2010), which focused on the 'power' aspect rather than 'democracy' or the 'citizen' sides. (Kettunen 2008)

working environment for media and journalists, broadcasting of plenary session through parliamentary website and public TV channel, gradually increasing number of public hearings and meetings in the standing committees, and so forth. The Committee for the Future is regarded as a remarkable innovation to pioneer a new outlook for a parliament wishing to approach governance from a long-term perspective and scientific research based parliamentary consensus. Providing an institutionalized 'future forum' to scrutinize the governmental future report prepared every four years, the Committee has also endeavored to promote participatory and deliberative ideas of democracy in Finland. Despite its low status in the committee hierarchy and limited resources, the Committee has been successful as an 'agenda-setting committee' performing not legislative but visionary and deliberative roles in the parliamentary decision-making process. (Arter 2000; Groombridge 2006)

The closed nature of committee deliberation process in the Eduskunta was given the most critical attention through the study. As a Nordic 'working' parliament, the Finnish Eduskunta has maintained a committee-oriented legislative system and culture with limited publicity. Practical negotiations among MPs and PPGs seeking consensual decision-making take place behind closed doors. Despite the basic advantages of confidential committee meetings and deliberations, the closed committee process is a significant obstacle to public engagement with real parliamentary work. With the exception of newly introduced citizens' initiative, there are few channels for ordinary citizens to engage with the parliamentary decision-making process. This indicates a strong attachment of the Eduskunta and parliamentary people (MPs and parliamentary staff) to the traditional concept of representative democracy.

Chapter 5 scrutinized communication practices between the Eduskunta committees and various civil society actors in the legislative process. Applying the committee consultation index, a case study of the Social Affairs and Health Committee and its dealing with the Governmental Proposal of the Alcohol Act of 2013 was conducted. To complement the potential limitations of a single case study, a full-scale analysis of longitudinal and comparative statistical data of Eduskunta committees' legislative consultation practices during 1998-2014 was also conducted. Identifying the key features and internal dynamics in the committee deliberation process, the study found that communication between parliamentary committees and civil society in Finland is practiced mainly through the standard channel of expert consultation. The scope of expert consultation appears to be considerably wide in this case. The data of committee consultation activities also confirms expert consultation as a common feature of Scandinavian style of public policy making system (that is, extensive democratic corporatism). However, the number of experts invited to committee hearings varied by committee and issue. Each committee seems to have its own 'usual suspects' with more privileged access to parliamentary consultation than others. Interview analysis also indicated the communication style in the committee hearings is not

particularly interactive. A perspective gap was found between parliamentary personnel and civil society experts regarding the committee process and roles. Very limited committee publicity, reliance on (a small group of) experts who closely networked with one another and a formalistic approach to legislative deliberation may raise public doubts on the legitimacy of parliamentary decisions. There are no public engagement channels to comment and present evidence on the bills under the consideration of Eduskunta committees, including an e-consultation mechanism. Outbound meetings, other types of outreach activities and more extensive committee engagement remain peripheral and sporadic. Overall, individual citizens beyond established organizations and professional experts are seldom able to influence the legislative deliberation process in Finland.

A remarkable parliamentary reform took place recently – the Eduskunta legislated the citizens' initiative (*kansalaisaloite*) at national level in 2011, in connection with a constitutional amendment. Applying an evaluative framework, chapter 6 provided an up-to-date empirical study of the main institutional features, practical uses and political impacts of the Finnish citizens' initiative system, and how it has been used in the first parliamentary term following its implementation (March 2012 – April 2015). Based on the analysis of parliamentary documents and in-depth interviews with citizen initiators, MPs and parliamentary staff, the study found that this new participatory democratic mechanism allowing citizens to propose their agenda to the Eduskunta has been rapidly 'consolidated' as the third institutional channel of parliamentary agenda setting. Introduced by a Finnish governmental project with the legislative purpose of 'complementing' and 'strengthening' the existing representative democracy, the institution was designed as a modest direct democratic mechanism. It is an 'agenda initiative' in which final decision-making power is reserved for the Parliament. The threshold level – that is, the procedural requirement, is regarded as properly challenging (50 000 signatures within 6 months).

Signatures can be gathered using an e-collecting system. The Citizens' Initiative Act obliged the government to offer an effective online platform service through which citizens can launch initiatives, and give and collect e-signatures. The NGO-based online platform (Open Ministry) and official website of 'kansalaisaloite.fi' have facilitated various ways for civil society actors to participate in the new democratic mechanism. During the first parliamentary term, more than 370 initiatives were launched. 6 cases were transferred to the Eduskunta and 1 initiative succeeded in passing the legislative process into law. Using this new tool, citizens have brought various sensitive issues into the center of the public sphere beyond traditional channels of political agenda setting. The most successful initiative, the legal allowance of same-sex marriage, demonstrated that a significant institutional reform (regarding the promotion of the human rights of social minorities) can be advanced through direct input from civil society and an interactive engagement between parliament and (not

well-established) civic groups. Less successful cases also generate 'indirect' policy effects by raising public awareness of the issues.

The parliamentary treatment process and outcomes of the 6 initiatives have generated new political dynamics based on the 'popular element' of each initiative, including changes in MPs' behavior, committee atmosphere and political mobilization patterns. The parliamentary process has become more open to some extent, since the committees have made their first hearing for initiatives public as a *de facto* norm. It is nevertheless too early to assess definitively the roles of the citizens' initiative system. Apart from the basic limitations of agenda initiatives, almost all citizens' initiatives submitted to the Eduskunta have been rejected (at least, formally); the closed nature of committee deliberation has not improved to a truly meaningful extent. Moreover, political parties (and elite politicians) as well as established interest groups may utilize the mechanism for strengthening their partisan causes or vested interests. The long-term influence of this participatory institution on the state of democracy and citizenship in Finland remains to be seen.

7.2   Reforming the Eduskunta: Towards an Open and Inclusive Parliament

There is a continuous need for coherent and effective parliamentary reforms and innovations to build a more open, accessible and inclusive relationship with the people and respond to new political challenges in this late modern era of democracy. These are not exceptional to the Nordic democracies. Despite the reputation for open and intimate relationships between political elites (politicians and governing institutions) and citizens and higher levels of public trust in representative democracy in Finland and other Nordic countries, the study finds many gaps between the normative principles demanded for contemporary democratic legislatures and the actual working methods of multi-dimensional parliamentary institutions.

7.2.1   Opening up the closed system of parliamentary committees

Among the issues awaiting further reform, the study focused on the agenda – that is, it tackled the closed style of committee deliberation process in the Eduskunta. The limited transparency of committees is a common feature of Nordic 'working' parliament models. This is perceived as having advantages in developing a practical approach to public policy making and thereby cultivating constructive legislative deliberation. However, this works at the expense of parliamentary visibility and accessibility; a limited level of committee publicity makes it difficult for external agents to follow and engage with core legislative work and process. The Eduskunta has recently increased the numbers of public hearings

and committee meetings – particularly, in the context of implementing the citizens' initiative institution – and decided to publish written statements of stakeholder groups on bills under committee deliberation simultaneously through the parliamentary website. Certainly, these moves are notable improvements. But public hearings and meetings still remain uncommon, and verbatim records of committee discussions are still not being made public.

When the Finnish case is compared to the Nordic parliamentary systems (not to mention the Westminster style of 'debating' parliaments and US Congress operating very open committee procedures), it is evident that Eduskunta committees maintain one of the most closed styles of legislative deliberation. For example, the Swedish Riksdag now stages public committee hearings 'as a routine procedure' after it introduced the process in 1987. This contributes to making government more accountable as well as increasing the publicity of parliamentary work. According to Arter, Riksdag committees held 507 public hearings between 1988 and 2006 and the average number per annum has increased to a considerable extent. Around 40 open hearings were held annually during the parliamentary term of 2010-2014. (Arter 2008; 2016: 238-239)[164]

Benchmarking the Swedish experiment, the Norwegian Storting also introduced open committee hearings in 1995. A distinct feature of the Norwegian model is that all committee hearings are in principle open to the public, with some conditional provisions. The committees hold multiple hearings on the same agenda, which contributed to the increase of number of open hearings. Public committee hearings have been implemented as a strategy of minority governments as well as by pressure from interest groups. (Arter 2016: 239-240) The Danish Folketing committees have frequently held 'open consultations', in which a Minister responsible for the legislative bill under deliberation is present to discuss with MPs. Open consultations are held when they are requested by 3 committee members and broadcast by the parliamentary website.[165]According to the Folketing website, which publishes public committee deliberations, the 26 Folketing committees held in total 203 open consultations in 2015; the Environment and Food Committee held the most open hearings (25 cases) with the Legal Affairs Committee staging 20 open hearings. In the same year, public hearings for expert consultation were organized 6 times by the parliamentary

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[164] The Riksdag committees can hold three different types of public hearings – that is, 'law-making' (pre-legislative and legislative) hearing; 'oversight' (investigative and policy review) hearing; and 'freehand' (thematic and public seminar) hearing. During the 2002-2006 parliamentary session, the Riksdag committees staged 147 public hearings, of which 34 cases (30.5 %) were law-making hearings, 60 cases (40.8) % were oversight hearings and 48 cases (32.7 %) were freestanding hearings. (Arter 2008: 131-135)

[165] http://www.thedanishparliament.dk/Committees_and_delegations/Committees.aspx, accessed 14 June 2016.

committees while the European Affairs Committee held 36 public committee meetings and the Foreign Affairs Committee staged 5 public meetings.[166]

The study findings and comparative analyses supports the claim that public visibility and accessibility for legislative committee process needs to be expanded in the Eduskunta. At minimum, the Eduskunta should consider changing the Parliamentary Rules of Procedures so that the process of committee hearings should be held public as a matter of routine, as in the Norwegian case. Moreover, a much broader range of public consultation programmes using well-designed online forums and e-democracy platforms needs to be implemented in the committee stage of legislative work, as in several legislatures like the British and Scottish Parliaments, as well as the Chilean Senate or Brazilian Parliament. Certainly, the inevitable needs of secrecy in deliberative forums to prevent 'plebiscitory' behavior of participants in front of cameras or public audiences, and the necessity of confidential meetings in legislative committees to allow free and trust-based discussions to reach consensual resolutions based on public reason should be acknowledged. (Chamber 2004) The 'trade-off' phenomena between open procedures and participant diversity or between committee transparency and effectiveness (Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen 2015; Fasone & Lupo 2015) should also be carefully addressed.

However, along with the Norwegian case that reformed the Storting committee hearings system, the example of Scottish Parliament having pursued a Scandinavian-style committee-centered legislative system while developing highly open and accessible parliamentary procedures and culture shows an alternative path for parliamentary reforms. Eduskunta committees are expected to hold public hearings and meetings more frequently after renovations of the main parliamentary building are completed in 2017, as the committee rooms will be equipped with technical devices for online broadcasting. Not only technical support but also the political will of parliamentary leadership and majority MPs is crucially important in opening up parliamentary proceedings in truly meaningful ways.

7.2.2   Connecting the public to the legislative decision-making process

Despite many visible measures taken by contemporary parliaments to enhance public access to parliamentary properties, the majority of visitors are likely to be tourists and students who do not seek to influence the legislative process. Legislatures do not usually welcome the 'purposive public' to demonstrate or raise their agenda in the core arena of legislative institutions. (Parkinson 2013) The question of how to connect citizens to the actual legislative decision-making process is a key challenge for democratic parliaments. In this

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[166]   Data were gathered from the broadcasting website of Danish Folketing. (http://www.ft.dk/webTV/Tidligere.aspx?selectedMeetingType=udvalg, accessed 14 June 2016)

regard, the Eduskunta should experiment with various forms and methods of citizen participation 'coupled' to the formal legislative process. As noted previously, referendums have rarely been used in Finnish history. The Eduskunta has not established deliberative citizen forums closely linked to the parliamentary law-making procedure, except in case of Committee for the Future, which cooperated with the Ministry of Environment to oversee a 'crowdsourcing' project for drafting the government bill regarding off-load traffic law (Aitamurto & Landemore 2013). It has already been noted that there are a number of debatable issues in designing, implementing and assessing new forms of civic engagement with democratic politics. These include mini-public types of deliberative forums, for example, how to ensure representativeness and inclusiveness of the selected groups of citizens while balancing the roles of facilitators and experts with those of citizen representatives and how to establish the results of those experiments in the wider political system. (See for example, Smith 2009; Parkinson 2003; Chambers 2012) Nonetheless, democratic experiments provide novel pictures of newly emerging modes of democracy. Their potential contributions to innovating or deepening contemporary democracy have not yet been exhausted. In order to overcome the trend of 'deliberative elitism', some scholars argue that more participatory forms of deliberative procedures should be 'tightly coupled to the formal decision-making process.' (Papadopoulos 2012: 150)

For example, citizens' assembly experiments in British Columbia and Ontario, Canada, have demonstrated the potential to complement or reform conventional forms of representative democracy through deliberative democratic innovations. In these models, a random sampling selects a group of citizen representatives from the general population by age, gender and region, etc. They deliberate on politically important but controversial issues (like the reform of the electoral system) that representative assemblies and established party groups are believed unable to reach a consensual resolution by themselves. After deliberation, their recommendations are voted on by the whole electorate through binding referendums. (Warren & Pearse (ed.) 2008; Smith 2009) Another example is the Danish Board of Technology (DBT), which is regarded as introducing the most effective democratic innovation closely linked to the formal decision-making process in the national parliament. Establishing a mini-public based on consensus conferences and scenario workshops, the DBT offered a model of public deliberation institutionally (not ad-hoc) connected to the parliamentary process. It has contributed to delivering the perspectives of ordinary citizens and their perspectives on controversial science and technology policies to the formal decision-makers in the parliament. (Einsiedel & Eastlick 2000; Hendriks 2016)[167]

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[167] The DBT now operates as a non-profit trading foundation, which has been formally separated from the Parliament since 2012, after a political dispute about the centre-left coalition government's proposal to abolish its parliamentary budget. (https://easst.net/easst-review/easst-review-volume-311-march-2012/a-pioneer-in-trouble-danish-board-of-technology-are-facing-problems/, accessed 14 June 2016) It is still working actively to provide various multi-level (international, national and local) civic consultation and research projects, funded

Such democratic experimentation has not been actively pursued by the Eduskunta. Even though the Committee for the Future pioneered a new role of 'parliament as future forum' and embraced the ideas of 'crowdsourcing democracy', it has not widely operated institutionally integrated deliberative mini-publics. For instance, the 60-member Forum of the Experienced and Wise organized by the Committee looks more like an experts club than a mini-public resembling the whole population.

Scotland's Futures Forum established by the Scottish Parliament has delivered similar functions as the Eduskunta Committee for the Future, while practicing a much wider range of public engagement. (Hansard Society 2011b) The Australian New South Wales Parliament provides another example of linking the public to the parliamentary committee process. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) established a mini-public in the form of citizen juries consisting of 54 members of the public who were selected by random sampling in 2011, when the Committee inquired into a governmental energy policy issue. Citizen panels gathered regularly for months to deliberate bills by studying, discussing and listening to the explanations of experts. The results of the citizen's deliberation were submitted to the Committee in the form of a citizen panel report and recommendations. PAC adopted the final report while taking into account seriously the viewpoints and recommendations of citizen panels. (Hendriks 2016) The PAC's experiment provides an important case to illustrate the need to connect various sites and institutions in which public deliberations take place – particularly, the need 'to find ways to couple mini-publics to the elite and empowered site in our political system.' (Ibid. 47) Overall, it remains a future agenda of the Finnish Eduskunta to create active deliberative forums facilitating qualitative civic participation linked to the parliamentary deliberation process.

7.2.3 Future role of citizens' initiatives

Given the elitist aspects of the legislative process difficult for the public to access, the citizens' initiative system represents one of the most significant changes in the recent history of Finnish democracy. This direct channel for civic involvement in legislative agenda setting was initiated by a top-down project of the Finnish government. A rapid consolidation of the participatory democratic mechanism and the emergence of new political dynamics it has created during the period after its initial implementation might be one beyond the general expectation of political elites. With an evaluation of the political impacts of this new

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by various domestic and international sources. (Refer to the DBT Foundation website: www.tekno.dk/ydelser/?lang=en) The fact that even the DBT, with a prominent reputation domestically and internationally has faced such political disputes of its status and role demonstrates the reluctance of political elites (including Social Democrats) and representative institutions to institutionalize new forms of citizen participation aiming at sharing policy making powers.

institution, the remaining challenges for its future role in Finnish democracy were also identified. A strong faith in the traditional concept of representative democracy and the right of the Eduskunta to deliberate on political decisions has long prevailed in Finnish political institutions. For example, while the threshold level of the citizens' initiative system is relatively modest, it may be revisited. Apart from the number of signatures and period for collecting them, the age limit to launch or sign the initiatives might be reconsidered. Some citizen activists have argued that the age requirement to launch a citizens' initiative should be lowered to 16 in order to provide opportunities for young people to experience and participate earlier in democratic politics and the decision-making process. This can enhance political literacy and encourage the active involvement of young people in the broader scope of public affairs. (Interviews with Rämö and Pekkanen)

The online platform (www.kansalaisaloite.fi) run by the Ministry of Justice provides an efficient tool for citizens to launch initiatives, collect and give signatures, and share practical information. However, the website does not allow interactive forms of communication between citizens. Although the NGO-based online platform (www.avoinministrio.fi) offers a more communicative forum facilitating the user comments, polls and even the development of ideas through crowdsourcing methods, such services suffer from a lack of resources and overlapping functions with the official website. Yet, it should be noted that such voluntary activism from civil society was crucially important in the early stage of institutional implementation and is essential for the future of participatory democracy in the country.

The more significant issue to be addressed in the near future is how to make the parliamentary process more open, deliberative and inclusive when citizens' initiatives are treated in the Eduskunta. For example, in the committee stage just one two hour public hearing is held when deliberating a citizens' initiative. Afterward, committee deliberation is again held behind closed doors. This is not sufficient if citizen initiators and the 'purposive public' are to be engaged in a meaningful way with the legislative process. Committee hearings dealing with the citizens' initiatives must be open to the public by default and the Eduskunta needs to establish more interactive dialogue channels with the public.

A specifically mandated parliamentary committee can also be established within the Eduskunta, while benchmarking the cases of the German Bundestag or Scottish Parliament public petition committees. Such a committee can contribute to promoting more accessible and inclusive relationship with the public. The mandates of the committee could include: (1) receiving citizens' initiatives and establishing parliamentary treatment schedules and methods while communicating with citizen initiators in coherent and citizen-friendly manners; (2) bridging the gap between citizen initiators and standing committees in charge of relevant legislative and policy areas; and, (3) evaluating regularly the institutional outlook of citizens' initiatives by analyzing the entire list of initiatives launched by the public,

examining and seeking public agendas or citizens' grievances to be addressed by parliament or governmental bodies, and revising the legal procedures and rules of citizens' initiatives, etc. If it is too burdensome to establish a new standing committee in the Eduskunta, this mandate can be given (with sufficient human and financial resources) to the Committee for the Future that has endeavored to enhance the engagement of citizens with democratic politics.

As the only Nordic country operating a national-level citizens' initiative system, Finland appears to have entered a new phase of its democracy. The future role of this new institution will depend on (direct and indirect) policy outcomes and public efficacy of its institutional functions. The successful results observed in the first parliamentary term following its implementation (March 2012 – April 2015) need to be continued and deepened in the second term (2015 – 2019). There are already several important initiatives that have passed over the threshold – for example, the initiative calling for a referendum to reconsider the Eurozone membership, a counter-initiative intending to abolish the legislation allowing same-sex marriage, and the initiative for prohibiting the 'zero-hour contract', etc. Apart from the adaptive capacities of political forces (parties and elite politicians) and well-organized interest groups, and the trend of political polarization, the democratic contribution of citizens' initiative to fostering a more participatory legislative culture needs to be studied further. In the long run, the Finnish experiment may provide a significant example to demonstrate the dynamic and compatible relations between established forms of representative democracy and new forms of post-representative democracy.

7.3   Concluding Remarks

7.3.1   Reforms of parliament and political will of legislators

Norton (2013) distinguishes two directions of parliamentary reforms 'between reform *within* Parliament and reform *of* Parliament' (281, emphases in original); the former indicates the 'internal' reform aiming to change parliamentary procedures and rules, etc., while the latter refers to the 'external' reform which may contain major changes to the constitution. There are various reasons for parliamentary reforms. For example, the Commission to Strengthen Parliament (2000: 7; cited in Norton 2013: 282) categorized them into seeking 'efficiency, convenience, appearance and effectiveness' Norton adds to these one more dimension: 'enabling the voices of citizens be heard.' (Ibid.) Whether it is 'internal' or 'external', and whatever the purpose, parliamentary reform is not easy to achieve since parliaments are usually old and traditional institutions with their own working methods developed over time in the unique political contexts of individual countries. Kelso (2007) points out the

'evolutionary character of parliament' with its 'representational' rather than 'democratic' origin, particularly in the British context. This explains why parliaments have commonly experienced cumulative changes focusing on strengthening the existing representative functions over time, and are reluctant to adopt 'more radical, participatory mechanisms'. Parliaments are also likely to lack an 'identity as a holistic institution', which can make it difficult for the public to feel a meaningful connection with parliaments. (Ibid. 14)

Here we need to remember that modern parliaments emerged as the pinnacle of 'democratic innovations' in many countries. They were a genuine innovation of political representation – a transition from the traditional Diets of Estates based on social status or class into the modern democratic Parliaments based on mass franchises and territorial constituencies.[168] It was not an automatic process of historical progress but contingent consequences of risk-taking experiments and collective political activities affected by countless institutional and non-institutional variables.[169] Through turbulent political, economic and social upheavals, revolutions and wars, and other forms of crises and dynamic developments, modern democratic legislatures were (re)invented to incorporate new sources of political legitimacy into their institutional functions. As a result, the three core elements of modern democracy – 'representation', 'participation' and 'deliberation' have been integrated into the multiple functions of contemporary parliaments, which work as the people's (representative) assemblies constituted through mass participation in regular elections, while providing the central public sphere for deliberative politics.

Reflection on historical transitions to modern democracy leads us to think about the nature of ongoing challenges facing the contemporary forms of representative democracies and parliaments. One of the most critical challenges is the weakening link between voters and parliamentary institutions, provoking a serious 'deficit' in party-election-parliament linkages in many established democracies. It reveals a crucial limitation in the 'standard account' of representation focusing on the formal concept of electoral representation as the fundamental foundation of political legitimacy in modern society. (Urbinati & Warren 2008) 'Functional representation' through standard modes of consultation with established interest groups and professional experts do not provide sufficient legitimacy for public policymakers in the rapidly changing environments of contemporary democratic politics.

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[168] Such transformation required both theoretical and practical innovations on a massive scale over centuries. For example, there are multiple versions of social contract theory based on the concepts of individuals as political agents and their consent to establish civil (political) society, principles of popular sovereignty (public autonomy) and human rights (private autonomy), a constitutional state and rule of law, new values of freedom, equality and solidarity, etc. In practice, the emergence of a civil society based on freedom of speech and association (newspapers and journals, trade organizations and labor unions, as well as academic institutions), involved organizing mass parties tied with popular movements, competing ideologies like liberalism, republicanism and socialism, expansion of mass franchises and radical social reforms, and so forth. (See, for example, Habermas 1989, 1996)

[169] See also Keane (2009) for a latest and full-scale description of the history of democracy around the globe.

Here is the locus where we encounter a key challenge of contemporary forms of representative democracy and future roles of parliaments in mature democracies: *How to reform - or even reinvent - parliaments to be genuinely open, accessible and participatory (inclusive) institutions in the 21st century?* This question connects with three central dimensions of parliamentary reform: (1) Responding to increased demands for more interactive parliamentary communication with the electorate 'between elections.' This ranges from improving physical accessibility in public spaces, to enhancing digital engagement, to increasing procedural transparency. (2) Connecting citizens to the real decision-making process through various channels of civic engagement. For example, extensive committee consultation activities with civil society actors, direct legislation through popular or citizens' initiatives, deliberative engagement through mini-public type of citizen forums, and (online) parliamentary petition systems, etc. (3) Taking effective and long-term perspective policy measures to address new democratic challenges caused by transformational societal changes and growing political inequalities.

Many parliaments have enacted reforms and measures to (re)engage with the public and restore trust in public institutions. (See, for example, IPU 2012; Hansard Society 2011b) However, whether and to what extent those reforms or innovations result in truly influential changes in the relationship between citizens and the parliament is another question which should be examined thoroughly. It remains a crucial challenge to develop better links between parliaments and their citizens in many countries, despite the 'endless pursuit' of parliaments to regain public trust. Historical and cultural contexts, the institutional design of new measures, the policy outcomes of legislative work and conflict resolution capacities of major political actors, and 'symbolic representation' or interactive 'connection' between legislators and their constituents can make significant influences. (Leston-Bandeira 2012b) Norton (2013) called for a 'holistic approach' to understanding fully the dimensions of parliamentary functions in contemporary democracy – including both legislative and executive relations and the parliament-public relationship. (280-298) Moreover, he highlighted the importance of the 'political will' of legislators to achieve significant levels of parliamentary reform. For successful parliamentary reforms, there should be a clear agenda of reform and strong leadership within parliament. Ultimately, MPs "have to be willing to vote for it, even in the face of executive reluctance or hostility. […] That will may not exist; the point is that without it significant reform will not be achieved." (Ibid. 292-293) Such political will and the capacity to lead coherent and effective reforms would require new perspectives on the changing nature of democratic politics and parliament-citizens relationship.

7.3.2   Theoretical implications and areas for further study

This thesis contributed to the literature by providing a thorough examination of the changing relationship between national legislatures and the public in contemporary democracy, 'one of the least studied agendas in legislative studies' (Leston-Bandeira 2012a). A series of empirical studies were conducted first by establishing comprehensive analytical frameworks connecting normative principles with practical indicators, and then applying them to the case of the Finnish Parliament and its multiple dimensions of institutional engagement activities with the public. The study's findings indicate not only the continuing necessity for parliamentary reform and innovation, but also the needs for further academic study of the topic theoretically and empirically.

The study results suggest the need to rethink the concept of parliamentary representation. As reviewed in the introductory chapters, Hannah Pitkin (1972 [1967]) and Jane Mansbridge (2003) have already contributed to expanding our understanding of political representation beyond 'formalistic' concepts relying on the electoral mechanism of power delegation. However, the concept was still treated mainly within the electoral framework of 'selection and accountability'. Contemporary democratic theorists have attempted to reconstitute the concept by exploring various notions of representation beyond or without electoral connections. For example, citizen representatives selected through random sampling methods, interactive and even 'creative' processes to constitute the constituency through representational 'claim-making', and representation of the future or nature. (See, for example, Urbinati & Warren 2008; Saward 2006; Eckersley 2011) They criticized the limitations of the formalist approach in grasping the essential nature of representation, as well as of transitional democratic politics. To be sure, the formalist concept of electoral representation expressed as the 'principle-agent relationship' or 'delegation chain of parliamentary governance' has offered a very useful model to scrutinize the institutional features of parliamentary governments in accordance with constitutional and electoral systems and procedures. (e.g. Bergman & Strøm (ed.) 2011) But they promote a simplified understanding of the dynamic and complicated relationship between the represented and the representatives in contemporary democracy. Legislative scholars have concentrated on the formal mechanism of selection and accountability or legislative-executive relations. An essential dimension of modern democracy – parliaments (both the legislative institutions and individual legislators) and their multi-faceted and dynamic relationships with the public between elections through formal and informal venues and channels of engagement – remains to be explored in depth, notwithstanding the recent increase of scholarly interests in the topic.

On the other hand, new discourses of democratic innovations based on the premises of participatory and deliberative democracy have challenged the elitist model of representative democracy. Participatory and deliberative democracy theories have evolved over

generations and a variety of practical experiments has emerged across worldwide. A significant limitation of these democratic experiments is the tendency to focus on mini-public style of single citizen forums and 'bypass' the parliaments still playing central roles in contemporary representative democracy, while the governments utilize such experiments as 'another tool of depoliticization'. (Beetham 2011; Parkinson 2012)

Along with this trend, a theoretical gap has widened between the standard models of representative democracy, which sticks to the electoral legitimacy and formal decision-making roles of elite institutions, and alternative models of new citizen politics, emphasizing the importance of direct and/or qualitative public engagement with everyday democracy. The recent 'systemic turn' of deliberative democracy (Parkinson & Mansbridge (ed.) 2012), as well as the increasing scholarly interest in the topic of parliaments-citizen relationships (e.g. the special issue of *Journal of Legislative Studies* edited by Leston-Bandeira in 2012), implies a new shift in political studies to address such deficits or gaps in the literature. In line with these new academic commitments, this study has endeavored to identify the tensions between established systems of representative democracy and new claims of participatory and deliberative citizen politics and to seek feasible ways to reconcile the two, focusing on the changing relationship between parliaments and the public.

How and to what extent should contemporary parliaments open their physical spaces, working systems and procedures to the public? What is a desirable balance between the transparency and effectiveness of legislative committees when they communicate with civil society? How should parliamentary institutions (plenary chamber, committees, and MPs) treat citizen-initiated legislative proposals and what are the political impacts of direct inputs from the public? These were the questions raised in this study of the Finnish Eduskunta and its multi-faceted relationship with the public. The thesis added to the literature a useful case study of contemporary parliamentary politics and popular engagement.

Finally, this thesis reflects the need for new perspectives of comparative studies to identify and conceptualize the changing and dynamic characters of Nordic/ Finnish democracies beyond the formalist model of legislative studies based on the concept of 'parliamentary chain of governance', and other stereotyped approaches focusing on the neo-corporatist style of welfare democracy and consensual decision-making process. Current developments in democratic theories and legislative studies resulted in new theoretical perspectives and analytical frameworks being developed here to explore these dynamic elements of Nordic democracies. Recently, scholars have also paid attention to the different political and institutional features among the five Nordic countries. To be sure, a number of basic common characters are found over the region as a whole. For example, all maintain strongly party-centered representative democracies, democratic corporatism in conjunction with higher levels of trade union and civic association membership, and public trust in their national representative institutions. At the same time, recent comparative literatures have

identified many different characteristics among them. Finland, in particular, demonstrates many extreme variations in the mosaic of the five national political systems. This includes a more fragmented political party system, a strongly preferential electoral system, oversized coalition governments after transitioning from camp politics to consensus democracy, recent full-scale constitutional reforms and the new enactment of a national-level citizens' initiative system.

It has become evident that the Nordic countries are not exempt from the ongoing structural changes occurring in political, economic and social systems globally. A broad range of internal and external challenges and transitional shifts have been observed and debated in the Nordic countries in recent years, such as the impact of globalization and multi-level governance in the EU, the impact of international economic and financial crises, new tensions in international and regional relations; particularly in relation to Russia, mass immigration and the recent European refugee crisis, the adaption of social democratic welfare states to new economic realities, growing social and economic inequalities, the rise of far-right populist parties, and the mediatization and individualization of political communication. (Bergman & Strøm (ed.) 2011; Arter 2016; Persson & Wiberg (ed.) 2011; Raunio 2011; Karvonen 2014) These transformational challenges heavily affect the relationships between national parliaments and citizens, as well as the broader quality of democracy and citizenship in the region. To what direction will the Nordic democracies evolve in the future? This question suggests a significant research agenda, which needs to be addressed further. While presenting a case study of the Finnish Eduskunta and its relationship with citizens, this study also tried to present a Nordic perspective on these challenges. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full-scale comparative examination of the evolving characteristics of Nordic democracies and their political implications, which will remain a future task.

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