

Creating Democratic Citizens?

An Analysis of Mock Elections as Political Education in School

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Preface

Teaching and learning on the topics of politics and democracy have received little academic attention, in particular when it comes to the education taking place in practice in schools. In a Norwegian context, curriculum studies, textbook analyses and the kinds of political education that *should* take place in classrooms have been studied more extensively than what *actually* takes place in schools. When I was working on the research proposal for the scholarship in *fagdidaktikk samfunnsfag* at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Bergen, to my surprise, I realized that we know very little about mock elections in school in Norway, *skolevalgene*. There is a gap in the literature about political education in practice in school in general, and mock elections in particular.

My purpose here is therefore to shed light on the case of mock elections as political education in schools. The dissertation is rooted in political science literature, but the academic interest in mock elections as political education has guided both the research questions and the analytical approach.

A part of my PhD contract with the Faculty of Social Sciences has been to take *Praktisk Pedagogisk utdanning*, PPU, and I was a part-time student at *Høgskolen i Buskerud*. This included six weeks of practice as a teacher at an upper secondary school in Bergen, three weeks at a lower secondary school, and three weeks of teacher education at the University of Bergen.

While working on this dissertation I have been constantly reminded of the importance of research on teaching and learning on the topics of politics and democracy and political participation among youth: first, youth political participation became the center of attention in 2011 after the Utøya terror attacks; second, while cooperating with international scholars I came into contact with people who had been reprimanded for writing and talking about political education, a research interest I take for granted. Finally, when writing these words, the responses to the European refugee crisis are, in many cases, a reminder that democracy and democratic values are not to be taken for granted.

Abstract

Mock elections at school have been a part of the political education in Norway since the end of the Second World War, and have become an institution of political education. One of the main objectives of democratic institutions is to create democratic citizens. Nonetheless, no one has yet researched mock elections as political education.

In this dissertation, I define the concept of mock elections in the Norwegian context, and show why a study of the Norwegian case, with youth politicians visiting the school, is an important research contribution to the currently limited knowledge about mock elections as political education. I examine the role mock elections at school play in motivating young people towards political participation through a mixed methods study combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. I argue that mock elections at school can be defined as top-down (TD) political education that simulates an ordinary election with the main objective of stimulating turnout among the future generation of voters.

A main finding from the fieldwork is that mock elections as political education in school present voting as the norm and that students vote in the mock elections because they are told to do so, and not as a way of expressing the political identities of youth today. The results of a logistic regression analysis (N=1611) show that voting in mock elections at school has a positive impact on students' willingness to vote in Parliamentary elections. There were no significant effects of participating at the school debate or the election square. I argue that one of the things that matter for whether the students accept or reject the political identities presented in the mock elections is whether they are able to identify with the politicians and the party members who visit the school. The interview data suggests that the politicians in the school debate are interpreted as being different from the students in school as well as distinct from the image the students have of politicians. Accordingly, the mock elections present political identities that the students who are not themselves active in political parties distance themselves from.

Consequently, mock elections as political education in practice is a simulation of an ordinary election. Meanwhile, the voice of youth in the present is neglected. The findings in this dissertation suggest a political education in schools that educates students for political participation in the future rather than the present.

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PART I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to highlight mock elections as political education in school with regards to the creation of democratic citizens.

The idea that political education is important for the whole of the political system is not new. Adjusting citizens to the political regime to maintain stability has been a main task of the school and education system through the centuries and ambitions to integrate young people into the political process of the political system can be found in national curricula of many countries. Every political regime seeks to instill in young people values, beliefs, and behaviors consistent with the continuance of its own political order (Greenberg, 1970, p. 4). In political science research, this process is often referred to as part of political socialization, with the primary function of enabling system persistence.

In the extensive models of state and nation building in the 1800s in Western Europe, developed by Stein Rokkan (1987), safeguarding the functional dimension of education, and who was in control of education was crucial for the democratization process. Rokkan explained how introducing mandatory schooling for all children in society challenged the established rights of the church and led to waves of mass mobilization. In line with this March and Olsen (2000) write:

During the twentieth century, political democracy and mass school-based education have attained extraordinary success. Democracy is virtually unchallenged as a legitimate form of governance, and formal schooling is widely recognized as an indispensable component of democratization and economic development (p. 149).

In the institutional perspective of March and Olsen (1995) and their concept of “democratic governance”, democratic states depend on institutions, like the school, to create democratic citizens.

One way the school could create democratic citizens, was first mentioned by the education reformist Olav Storstein (1946) who suggested integrating mock elections at school to ensure future democracy. Gradually more and more schools have been conducting mock elections, to the point where all upper secondary schools in Norway include them every

election year. In Norway, mock elections at school have become an institution of political education (Børhaug, 2010).

In this dissertation, I am particularly interested in how institutions can give meaning to participation, and I suggest applying theories on motivation for political participation to analyze how institutions can enable action.

When it comes to youth in particular, politicians, media and researchers alike are concerned about their political participation. Many emphasize a declining electoral participation in advanced democracies and argue that it alerts a disengagement from the community and political life (Putnam, 2000; Wattenberg, 2012), political apathy (Øia, 1995), a lack of political knowledge (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Galston, 2001) and a political alienation especially among young people (White et al., 2000).

It is of great interest to analyze how youth can be enabled for political behavior and the role political education in school play in this process. In this dissertation, I ask: *Which role does mock elections as political education in school play in motivating youth for political participation?*

No one has yet researched mock elections as political education, and there are many things we would like to know about mock elections. In this introduction, I will start out by presenting the Norwegian case of mock elections at school. The case of Norway when it comes to mock elections is unique. In the following paragraphs, I will further define the concept of mock elections in Norwegian schools and show why the Norwegian case is an important research contribution to the currently limited knowledge about mock elections as political education. This is followed by the research design and the context of the study.

1.2 Mock elections in Norwegian upper secondary schools: concept and background

In the Norwegian context, there is a long tradition for inviting young politicians and youth representatives from political parties to school for a few days every election year and the students can meet and interact with the members of political parties or youth organizations. The concept of mock elections encompasses three elements of political education: the school debate, the election square and the ballot casting.

First, the mock elections at school involve the youth organizations from the political parties that visit the schools and take part in political debates. Which parties are represented in the debate can vary from school district and county, but the largest parties are generally present. As of 2015 these are: The Progress Party [*Fremskrittspartiet*], The Conservative

Party [*Høyre*], The Liberal Party [*Venstre*], The Christian Democratic Party [*Kristelig Folkeparti*], The Green Party [*Miljøpartiet de Grønne*], The Center Party [*Senterpartiet*], The Labour Party [*Arbeiderpartiet*], The Socialist Left Party [*Sosialistisk Venstreparti*], and Red [*Rødt*].

With the exception of the latter, all of the parties are represented in the Norwegian Parliament [*Stortinget*]. The debate usually lasts for about one and a half hours. The school debate has been referred to in the media and these news stories typically report on a school debate that concerns humor, sexual issues and unrealistic political promises¹.

Second, since 2011 the mock elections involve an election square. An election square is a market place where the students can meet and interact with party members from the political youth organizations. The youth party representatives set up party booths for the students to visit and the students can ask questions and pick up brochures and campaign material along with assorted merchandise such as balloons, candy and condoms². The election square takes place for a few hours following the debate.

Third, the students can vote in the mock election, which is conducted on either the same day or a few days after the politicians have visited the school. The ballots in the mock election do not elect politicians, but the results of the mock election are collected and presented in the news (such as *VG*, *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet*)³. These results are covered in the national newspapers and on television with the aim of revealing how the ordinary election results may look, because mock election results have been shown to predict voting tendencies for the whole electorate (Aardal, 2011). Since the mock election is conducted about a week before Election Day, it gives an indication of the outcome of the ordinary election at a time when all eyes are directed towards the turnout and opinion polls. However, in general the results in the mock election have been more radical than the ordinary election results. For example, according to the national mock elections result, the Pirate Party, advocating amongst other issues personal data protection, would have gained eight representatives in the Norwegian Parliament in 2013, compared to none in the Parliamentary election⁴. Despite such

¹Romerike Blad, August 31, 2015.
Bergens Avisen, September 2, 2015.
Nordlys, August 26, 2013.

²Østlendingen, August 28, 2015.

³VG, September 8, 2015.
Aftenposten, September 8, 2015.
Dagbladet, September 8, 2015.

⁴NRK, September 4, 2013.

irregularities, the results often predict the general tendencies of the outcome of the ordinary election.

In relation to the Parliamentary election in 1989, Geir Helljesen, from the public broadcaster NRK, took the initiative to coordinate the results of the mock elections at a national level for the first time⁵. Through applying the same data service, IBM, to the mock elections as to the ordinary elections, the election results from the schools could easily be reported. Consequently, IBM Norway coordinated the elections from 1989 to 1994. The results were presented in the news, in special election broadcasts on NRK, and on teletext.

At the same time, the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, the NSD, with financial support from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, started conducting an election survey among students in upper secondary school. Since 1995 the NSD has also been responsible for coordinating the mock elections and presenting the results. The NSD has created a web page with teaching materials⁶ in which it is possible for the students to examine the results using data and reports from NSD, and compare and contrast political preferences at a school level and to use this survey data to analyze political attitudes among students. The NSD also distributes information to the schools. About four months prior to the ordinary election, all upper secondary schools in Norway receive a letter with an invitation to participate in the project and, since 1989, all Norwegian upper secondary schools have participated every election year. Since there is an election every second year, all students, regardless of whether they attend vocational or general education programs, have the opportunity to participate in mock elections at school at least once before being given the right to vote at 18⁷. The number of schools, students and votes are presented in the table below. The turnout is around 80% each election year. This is the case regardless of whether the mock election is conducted in a year of parliamentary or local elections⁸.

⁵ NSD Samfunnsveven

⁶ NSD Samfunnsveven

⁷ Mock elections are organized at the upper secondary level (11-13) in both vocational and general education programs. About 96% continue their education after completing the lower secondary level (1-10).

⁸ This is in contrast to the turnout rates in ordinary elections in which there has usually been a lower turnout in local elections compared to parliamentary elections (see Table 2).

Table 1: Mock elections in Norwegian upper secondary schools: number of schools, students and votes.

Year	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
Schools	404	411	411	424	424	402	370	402	382	389	416	405	419	395
Votes	N.A	N.A	N.A	120964	117072	108847	101907	113706	126012	124041	137564	136936	151548	149872
Students	137468	162562	161991	150705	144375	139475	132828	149229	160650	171757	179587	179134	186864	185869
Turnout	N.A	N.A	N.A	80.3%	81.1%	78.0%	76.7%	76.2%	78.4%	72.2%	76.6%	76.4%	81.1%	80.6%

Source: NSD

1.3 Mock elections as top-down (TD) and bottom-up (BU) political education

There is a twofold character of the Norwegian mock elections in upper secondary schools. On the one hand, the mock elections simulate an ordinary election to prepare students for future participation. There are polling stations set up at school and students place their vote during the school day. The students engage in the practical skill of casting a ballot.

On the other hand, the mock elections involve democratic citizens in the present by presenting the aggregate voice of youth. Although the votes do not elect any politicians, the results are made public. The votes paint a picture of the political preferences among youth.

Therefore, empirically the mock elections have traits that can be categorized as top-down (TD) or bottom-up (BU) political education, in which the first is more concerned with political education for the future, and the second is defined by a stronger focus on political participation among youth in the present.

1.4 Mock elections as political education in an institutional perspective

I examine the mock elections as “democratic governance” in the institutional perspective of March and Olsen (1995), and argue that one of the main undertakings of democratic institutions is to create democratic citizens. I explain how institutions can stimulate action by offering a typology of four perspectives for the study of political motivation.

There are limits to what can be accomplished by institutions when it comes to creating democratic citizens, and March and Olsen (1995) are vague about these restraints. I further supply the institutional perspective with the students’ interpretations of the motivations offered by political education in school. In the mock elections, students are presented political

identities through face-to-face interaction and interactive experience with the politician, the party member and the voter. I explore identity as a motivation for political participation and emphasize the students' interpretations of the identities presented through the mock elections at school. I argue that individuals will participate if participation has become a part of the individuals' *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990). I apply the concept of habitus as an analytical tool to give insights into the process of how youth navigate the political identities presented in the mock elections. The theoretical reasoning of the dissertation will be further elaborated in the theoretical framework in chapter 3.

The students' motivations for political participation become important as both top-down and bottom-up political education.

1.5 Research questions and methodological approach

To provide the best understanding of the research problem “*Which role does mock elections as political education in school play in motivating youth for political participation?*”, I refined the main research question into the following three areas:

- What kinds of political motivation do the mock elections at school offer? (STUDY I)
- Which political identities do the mock elections at school present, and how do the students navigate and come to accept or reject these identities? (STUDY II)
- Does voting in mock elections have an effect on students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election? (STUDY III)

The dependent variable of the study is “motivations for political participation”, but it is, for analytical purposes, operationalized in slightly different ways in the three studies. In the first study, I elaborate on the mock elections as an independent variable and analyze the political motivation offered by the mock elections. In the second article, I look deeper into one of the motivations for political participation, *identity*, and I argue that political motivation can come from the acceptance of the political identities presented at the mock elections in school. The dependent variable is whether the students come to accept or reject the political identities presented. In the third study, I examine the students' motivation for political participation and the dependent variable is the students' *willingness to vote* in the upcoming election.

The dissertation has one main research question, “*Which role does mock elections as political education in school play in motivating youth for political participation?*”, and I have used a pluralistic approach, including both qualitative and quantitative methods, to derive knowledge about it. There is little available research and data on mock elections as political education, and therefore I employed qualitative methods at the outset of the study. I started out by conducting fieldwork in schools. Through observation during the mock elections and interviews with students, I was able to collect data in the field on mock elections as political education in practice. Furthermore, because of the surveys conducted by the NSD, I was also able to quantitatively examine the effect of participating in mock elections on the students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election on a broader sample of students.

On the one hand, quantitative methods are often considered appropriate when analyzing large amounts of data with many observations and few variables, but on the other hand, qualitative methods have the strength of offering the researcher closeness to the research object (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994; George and Bennett, 2005). Therefore, a growing amount of research employs mixed methods that share the same research question, but uses different methods.

According to Creswell (2015), mixed methods research is:

An approach to research in the social, behavior and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed -ended) and qualitative (open -ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems (p. 2)

Although the study develops through three distinct research questions, they all aim to investigate and shed light on the main research problem of the role mock elections in school play in motivating youth for political participation. In this way, the value of the different approaches to research can contribute more to understanding a research problem than one form of data collection could in isolation (Creswell, 2015, p.3). This is an important distinction to the term multimethod research, which combines multiple forms of either qualitative or quantitative data.

Mixing methods brings additional value to the study of mock elections in school. The first study is a qualitative analysis of what kinds of political motivation mock elections at school offer. The data are collected through fieldwork in five upper secondary schools in the Western part of Norway during the election years of 2011 and 2013. I primarily draw on field notes when analyzing the three elements of the mock election: (1) school debate, (2) election

square, and (3) ballot casting. The school debate and the election square offer the students an instrumental and an identity-based motivation for political participation. On the whole, mock elections offer entertainment as a motivation for political participation. The politicians in the school debate tell jokes, sing songs and use humor as an appeal. A main finding is that the mock elections communicate voting as a norm.

In the second article, I move to consider how the students navigate the political identities that are presented to them in the three elements of the mock election, based on qualitative in-depth interviews with 18 students. I ask how and whether mock elections that invite youth politicians and political parties to school contribute to the creation of democratic citizens through the political identities presented. In this article, I argue that the mock elections present political identities that the students who are not themselves active in political parties distance themselves from. A main finding is that the students vote in the mock election because they are told to do so. They are less concerned about expressing their political identities in the present.

The third study analyzes whether participating in mock elections has an effect on students' *willingness* to vote in the following Parliamentary election. The survey data is based on the national School Election Surveys (N=1611) provided by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)⁹ in relation to the Parliamentary election of 2013¹⁰. In this study I conduct a multivariate logistic regression analysis to test if voting in mock elections proves to have an effect on the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election and whether this effect persists after controlling for background student characteristics (gender, geography, immigrant status and study program), political socialization in the home environment (parental level of education) and political action experiences (participation in demonstrations, petitions and membership in organizations). The results strengthen the case for political education in school, indicating that practice and participation in activities in school is a means of motivating youth to participate in the political process. However, the effect is limited to voting in the mock election, and not partaking in the other activities of the mock election: the school debate and the election square. Additionally, the findings from this study emphasize the continued relevance of the parents' education level and the students' educational track.

⁹ NSD is not responsible for the analysis of the data presented here.

¹⁰ The surveys have been conducted since 1989, but 2013 is the first year a question about the election square (a new phenomenon from 2011) was included. (Questions about the school debate have been included since 1997). By analyzing a snapshot of the 2013 election year, I therefore have a unique opportunity to examine the effects of this element of the mock elections as well.

These findings have implications for political education because they convey both the strengths and limitations of political educational efforts.

Overall, the three studies address the role mock elections in school play in motivating young people for political participation. A main argument I make is that the mock elections offer norm as a motivation for voting by conveying to youth that they should participate. Consequently, the findings in this dissertation imply an existing top-down (TD) political education in Norwegian schools today that educates youth for political participation in the future rather than the present.

1.6 The context of the study: Turnout in Norwegian elections and the terror attacks at Utøya

In the following section, I will briefly contextualize the study by accounting for the Norwegian political system and the special circumstances under which the data was collected.

Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system, where the executive branch [*Regjeringen*] is dependent on the direct or indirect support of the legislature [*Stortinget*]. Every four years in September, *Stortinget* is elected through a proportional system. There are 169 seats in parliament elected from the 19 counties in Norway. A majority of the Storting can vote the sitting government out of office at any time. The prime minister appoints the cabinet which in 2015 consists of 18 ministers. There is also a local election for the 428 municipalities and 19 counties of Norway every fourth year between the Storting elections.

The turnout in Norwegian elections has traditionally been high. However, turnout is lower among youth than the general population¹¹, and lower in local elections compared to parliamentary elections. In the tables below, the turnout for the Parliamentary and local elections is presented for the general population and the first-time voters.

¹¹ The voting age is 18, but 16 and 17-year-olds gained the right to vote for the first time as a trial project in 20 municipalities in 2011 and 2015. This was initiated by the government as a way of strengthening democracy (Stortingsmelding 33), but was supported by the national council of youth organizations (LNU) and *Venstre* and *SV* argued that this should be permanent (Venstre, May 27, 2010 and SV, June 6, 2012).

Table 2: Turnout in Norwegian Parliamentary elections

Parliamentary election	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013
General population	75,8%	78,4%	75,5%	77,4%	76,3%	78,2%
First-time voters (18-21)	63,1%	54,2%	53,3%	53,5%	56,2%	66,5%

Source: Bergh (2013)

Table 3: Turnout in Norwegian local elections

Local elections	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015
General population	63%	60%	59%	61%	65%	60%
First-time voters (18-21)	43%	33%	37%	33%	46%	48%*

Source: Ødegård and Bergh (2011) / Statistics Norway. *18-19 year olds.

The first part of the mock elections fieldwork was conducted in schools in August 2011, in the aftermath of the terror attacks at the Labour Party's youth camp at Utøya on the 22nd July 2011, where 69 people were murdered. Doing research on the topic of young people and politics so soon after the terror attacks has influenced the study in various ways.

Firstly, although there has been a low and decreasing level of voter turnout during recent years and, as presented in the table above, particularly among youth, this dissertation is written in a time and place where young people are actually voting. There has been talk of a "Generation Utøya" where those who were in their formative years when the attack happened are more likely to participate in elections and become members of political parties than those who were not (Wollebæk et al., 2012). In the local election in Norway of 2011, 46% of first-time voters decided to cast a ballot on Election Day compared to 33% four years earlier (Bergh 2013). Though this might be an atypical burst of electoral participation, data from the Parliamentary election in 2013 shows a corresponding trend. The turnout rate for first-time voters increased from 56% in 2009 to 67% in 2013. This increase could only be seen among first-time voters. We need further studies to learn more about these relationships.

Another way in which the terror attacks directly affected the data collection in this study was that the 2011 school debate was cancelled out of respect for the many politicians who lost their lives at Utøya. The debates were replaced by election squares. Some school leaders and a few politicians argued that the election square provided more information than the debate, and have been in favor of permanently replacing the school debates with election

squares¹². In 2013 and 2015 the election squares were conducted in addition to school debates.

Furthermore, when conducting the interviews, I would not, unless the students told me, know whether they had themselves been at Utøya or had friends or relatives there. In such situations, the researcher must be particularly conscious of thoughts and feelings, distrust, loss, prospects of mourning, and adapt to the situation in an open manner (McLean, Kapiszewski and Read, 2015). This was taken into careful consideration when developing the interview guide and in the interview setting.

The next chapter will review the literature on political education in school and consider mock elections as a part of a broader political education with the aim of enabling youth for participation in the political process. The theoretical framework is established in chapter three. In chapter four I elaborate on the research design, methods and data, before presenting a summary of the findings in the three articles in chapter five. I conclude with a discussion of the role mock elections as political education in school play in motivating youth for political participation, drawing on interpretations based on the combined strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative data. This final section in chapter six suggests some implications for our understanding of mock elections as political education.

¹² Aftenbladet, August 15, 2013.

NRK, March 2, 2013b.

2 POLITICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOL

2.1 Introduction

Political education can take place in many forms in different places, institutions and settings such as organizations and activities, but in this dissertation, I focus on the political education taking place in school and the contribution of mock elections as an institution of political education in the creation of democratic citizens.

A useful place to start is to refine the concept of political education from the extensive academic work on *civic* or *citizenship* education. Arthur, Davies and Hahn (2008) define citizenship education as: “instilling in young people the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them *to participate in the communities* of which they are a part, locally, nationally and globally” (p.5, own italics).

Solhaug (2012) gives a thorough and systematic introduction to the research field of *citizenship education*, and describes this as the most common term globally. The concept of citizenship contains many elements of participation, of which the political constitutes one. It is necessary to not only do research on citizenship education in general, but also that of political education within citizenship. I therefore define political education as instilling in young people the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them *to participate in the political process*.

What it means to participate in the political process is disputed. In the literature, there is a distinction between the modes of participation that may be referred to as “formal” or conventional forms of participation such as voting and joining political parties, and participating in demonstrations, protests and (social media) campaigns, typically described as unconventional or “informal” forms of participation (Dalton, 2008). I am, in this dissertation, mostly concerned with political education in relation to the formal forms of political participation because voting and political parties are essential parts in the Norwegian mock elections.

In the following chapter, I elaborate on the concept and research on political education in school.

2.2 Political education in school: intentions and practice

Political education in school can be divided into *intentions* and *practice*. According to Goodlad (1979), both these perspectives belong to the curriculum. He suggests five different domains of curricula¹³. The two first address the intentions: (1) ideological ideals behind the curriculum, and (2) formal curriculum as it is approved by the politicians. The three last address the practice: (3) the *perceived* curriculum, meaning the interpretations made by in particular teachers and parents, (4) the *operational* observed curriculum which captures the daily routine of what actually goes on hour upon hour in the classroom, and (5) the *experiential* curriculum, which addresses the students' learning outcomes.

When applying the five domains of curricula developed by Goodlad (1979) to the mock elections in schools in Norway, the lack of curriculum becomes evident. First, *intentions*, or (1) *ideological* ideals, behind the mock elections surprisingly do not exist. The only suggestion to conduct mock elections was articulated after the Second World War in the reformist work of Olav Storstein (1946) who believed that mock elections should be integrated into school as a way of ensuring democracy and democratic participation among the future generations. Second, there is nothing in the *formal curriculum* (2) about mock elections. This is in contrast to the subjects at all grades where there are detailed competence aims approved by politicians at the national level. There is thus no formal curriculum of mock elections that the teachers and parents can interpret, in what Goodlad refers to as the *perceived* (3) curriculum. Further studies would benefit from exploring in particular how the teachers perceive the mock elections as political education.

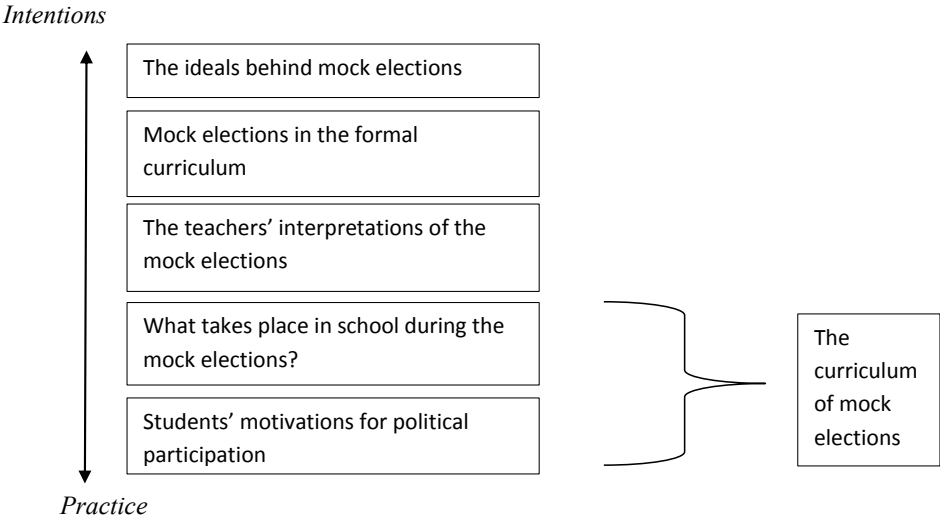
The lack of curriculum emphasizes the importance of examining the political education of mock elections in *practice*, and the main academic attention of this dissertation is directed towards the two latter forms of curricula, what actually takes place in school during the mock elections; the *operational* (4) observed curriculum and (5) the *experiential* curriculum referring to the students' learning outcomes. Particularly with regard to the latter, it is important to make explicit that intentions versus practice is also an epistemological question. For example, do students learn what is being taught? Is education and being educated the same? In this context, Biesta and Lawy (2006) argue that there should be a shift from *teaching* democracy to *learning* democracy. "It is only by following young people as they participate in different formal and non-formal practices and settings, and by listening

¹³ There are various approaches to the concept of curriculum, some referring to only the formal curriculum while others take a broader approach. Goodlad takes a broad approach when he includes five different forms.

carefully to their voices, that their learning of democracy can be understood” (ibid, p. 65). This is in line with Piaget (1970), who was a founder of the constructivist epistemology. Piaget holds that the individual constructs knowledge based on personal experiences. Consequently, the students attend school with various personal experiences that influence their learning. The constructivist perspective also permeates this dissertation. I apply the concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990) as an analytical tool to give insight into the process of how young people approach political education in different ways based on their individual previous experiences. While using the concept of *education*, I am therefore simultaneously concerned with *learning*.

Mock elections at school and the five domains of curricula based on Goodlad (1979) are presented in figure 1 below. In order to be relevant to the work in this dissertation on mock elections as political education, the experiential curriculum (5) refers to the students’ motivations for political participation. The students’ motivations are constructed in separate ways based on the students’ individual previous experiences and the operational (4) curriculum, what actually takes place at school during the mock elections.

Figure 1: Mock elections at school and the five domains of curricula



The research on political education and political participation will be elaborated in the next section. Political education can be understood in terms of instilling in students the

knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for political participation, and the study of mock elections as political education contributes to all three elements of political education.

2.3 Political education and political participation

For organizational purposes, the research on political education and political participation can be broadly divided into three themes: political knowledge, political attitudes and political skills as explanations for political participation. These are, however, strongly connected and overlap to a certain extent.

A first thematic branch of research states the importance of political *knowledge*. To increase young people's political involvement, several political education programs are introduced and developed around the world with the objective of instilling the political knowledge in young people that will enable them to participate in the political process. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) suggest that "all things being equal, the more informed people are, the better able they are to perform as citizens" (ibid, p.219). More precisely, they show a highly significant independent effect of political knowledge and the probability of voting (ibid, p. 226-227). In accordance with this, Popkin and Dimock (1999) conclude that "the dominant feature of nonvoting in Americans is lack of knowledge about government" (p. 142). Accordingly, a great deal of effort focuses on the importance of increasing the political knowledge. Political knowledge can be defined as knowing "*what* the government is and does and *who* government is" (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996, p.65, own italics).¹⁴

Therefore, political education in school has often been centered towards factual material about institutions and constitutional principles. In a study of Norwegian political education, Børhaug (2010) states that "It seems that the formal structure of parliament, cabinet and the courts - sometimes with a parallel outline of the local government structure - remains the dominant teaching content" (ibid, p. 72). This is sometimes referred to as learning *about* democracy (Stray, 2011, p.107). In a popular book in Norwegian social studies teacher education, Koritzinsky (2012) operationalized this learning about democracy into: (1), the

¹⁴ However, there is an ongoing debate on how to operationalize political knowledge. For example, the American National Election Studies use questions such as "Which Party Had Most Members of Congress Before the Election" and "Which Party Had Most Members of Congress After the Election" (<http://electionstudies.org/nesguide/gd-index.htm>). In addition, there is debate regarding how to measure political knowledge. Mondak (2000) problematizes how conventional measures of political knowledge — constructed by summing a respondent's correct answers on a battery of factual items — are of uncertain validity because incorrect and "don't know" responses are defined into a single absence-of-knowledge category.

factual knowledge such as names and numbers (2) laws, meta-level knowledge about structure and organization, and (3) knowledge about relationships such as processes and causality (ibid, p. 248). He claims that the focus in the curricula is on knowledge. Although teachers may interpret the curriculum and textbooks in various ways, Børhaug (2014) explains that teaching contents are often influenced by textbooks and that textbooks can therefore be an ‘empirical indicator for subject matter contents’ (Børhaug 2014, p.434).

One example of textbook research is Eikeland (1989), who looked to Swedish research and summarized Norwegian political education as primarily being a *paternalistic* tradition; where he argued that the curriculum and textbooks used in schools promoted loyalty to the political system and the nation state. He discerns the same tendencies after the Second World War, both in Norway and in Sweden, as well as in most of the Western world: the function of education was to create democratic citizens to avoid future dictatorships. As the political and social contexts changed in the 1970s, so too did the curriculum. It took a *democratic* turn. That meant that the students were regarded as active and problem-solving individuals with the ability to not only support democracy, but also to actively change society.

Therefore, in this context, political education can be described as the traditional *transmission*, to prepare students for the world as it is, or *transformation*, preparing students for the society that *ought* to be. These are two very different functions. Stanley argues (2015, p. 17) that:

Schooling has functioned, in general, to transmit the dominant social order, preserving the status quo, and it would be more plausible to argue that the current economic and political systems would need to undergo radical change before fundamental change in education could take place.

Political education has traditionally emphasized transmission over transformation. Børhaug states that “there is only one discourse to be found about the political system, and within it only one understanding of the system is articulated: the political system is a flawless representative democracy (Børhaug, 2014, p. 437). In other words, there has been a struggle for the democratic institutions, which is now accomplished. The fight for a democratic system is over, which has resulted in a “flawless representative democracy” that citizens support:

...there is no critique of it [the Norwegian political system] at all, and the textbooks insists without any reservations that the Norwegian system is fully democratic, sometimes labeling the political system “our democracy”. Those who are being criticized are those who do not endorse the Norwegian political system, i. e., those who do not vote (Børhaug 2014, p.439)

The textbooks present the Norwegian political system as fully democratic, and one way the citizens can show support to the democratic system is by voting. Accordingly, an overall trend in political education is a strong focus on voting as political participation. Although an increasing number of textbooks emphasize different channels of participation compared to previous textbook versions (Solhaug and Børhaug, 2012), political participation is still primarily presented as a matter of voting. For example, Børhaug (2008) has analyzed the knowledge schools make available for the students, and the teachers he interviewed and the discussions he observed in class had a strong emphasis on voting and the different political parties (ibid, 596). In fact, elections and political parties are major issues every year irrespective of whether or not there is an election (ibid, p.586).

However, it is not a given that greater knowledge about political institutions motivates political participation. For example, Chareka and Sears' (2006) study of voting among youth in Canada shows that, for the most part, young Canadians exhibit a sophisticated understanding of voting and its place in the political system. However, *because* of this knowledge, they questioned the influence of one simple vote on the outcome - causing them to abstain. Hannam (2000) goes even further and suggests that knowledge about the political system can actually be counterproductive. Youth are not yet eligible to vote, thus: "Learning about democracy and citizenship when I was at school was a bit like reading holiday brochures in prison. Unless you were about to be let out or escape, it was quite frustrating and seemed pointless" (ibid, p.24).

Other academics have claimed that the problem is the content itself and not necessarily the lack of suffrage. Beck and Jennings (1982) argued that one explanation for the lack of effect of the number of civic courses taken on young adult political participation was primarily due to the content being redundant for all but a few students. In accordance with this, Niemi and Junn (1998) suggest that political education should focus on aspects of government that students are able to observe or immediately understand, for instance in the local community. Their argument is that students could generalize from local situations to the state and national levels much more easily than the other way around. Børhaug (2010) finds that "the reasons to be politically active have entered as an issue" (p.74) in political education and argues that knowledge of participatory arrangements in itself does not lead to action; somehow students must be taught how such participation is meaningful and worthwhile.

Therefore, an important question is what *kind* of political knowledge the political education conduces. Solhaug (2012) holds that the clearest trend in international research and

in teaching citizenship is criticizing a fact- and knowledge-based education which is partially irrelevant and with no sure effect on students' participation. Consequently, what seems to matter more than factual knowledge about the political system is the effect of knowledge on how individuals create their own meaning systems, such as the belief people have in their ability to influence politics, their *political efficacy*. Niemi et al. (1991) refers to two types of political efficacy; *external*, which is the confidence that the system is responsive to attempts to influence it and *internal*, which describes how a person feels about his or her own abilities to participate. Findings from the *Civic studies*¹⁵ show that although students may receive a high score on political knowledge about institutions and organizations, their confidence and belief that they have the necessary abilities to participate, and that it matters to participate, might be low (Mikkelsen 2011). For example, Hahn (1998) argues that, compared to youth in other countries, American students stand out for their belief in the effect of influencing governance and their abilities to influence it. The students were familiar with both contemporary and historical examples of citizens influencing government decision-making (ibid, p.102). This increased the belief that they themselves could influence governance. Beaumont (2011) further examines how young adults' backgrounds and political education intersect to influence their sense of internal political efficacy, arguing that it can be created and co-created by students themselves through well-designed programs (ibid, p.216). Nonetheless, Beaumont et al. (2006) state that one can rarely find such education programs in schools.

A second theme of research on political education can be grouped into studies that concentrate on the development of democratic *attitudes* or values. Contrary to the traditionally strong focus on the importance of knowledge to promote political participation, academics in this branch of research argue in favor of instilling in youth the *attitudes* that will enable them for political participation.

In regard to political education in school, one argument is that the general democratic atmosphere of the school is important for the development of democratic attitudes. According to Hooghe and Dassonneville (2013), an open classroom climate promotes a willingness to vote in future elections among adolescents. An open classroom climate includes five elements; (1) students should be encouraged to make up their own minds, 2) students should

¹⁵ An extensive cross-national study of civic attitudes conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has been urged due to the presumed diminishing interest in involvement in democratic processes and participation among young people (ICCS 2009). It started out in 1975 with nine participating countries, and the third time the study was conducted, in 2009, views on democracy and citizenship from 14-year-old pupils, teachers and principals in 38 countries were analyzed.

be encouraged to express their own opinions, (3) current political events and debates should be brought into school, (4) several sides of the political issues should be presented and, (5) students should be encouraged to discuss the issues with people who have different opinions. The research on open classroom environments suggests that having an open classroom format encourages students to express their own opinions and to discuss issues from several perspectives (Sherrod, Torney-Purta and Flanagan, 2010). This, in turn, aids the development of democratic attitudes among youth.

Tønnesen and Tønnesen (2007) express the aim of promoting democratic attitudes in creating democratic citizens, and argue that concept of democratic education is preferred to that of political education in Norwegian textbooks. Democratic citizens would know when to act in political life, and how to do it in the most efficient and responsible manner (Tønnesen and Tønnesen, 2007, p. 82). Both the quantitative Civic studies (Mikkelsen 2011) and qualitative studies (Winther 2015) have indicated that Norwegian adolescents are positive towards democracy and democratic participation. However, Amnå and Ekman (2014) find empirical evidence for the existence of a particular “standby citizen”. They state that “such ‘standby’ citizens are those who stay alert, keep themselves informed about politics by bringing up political issues in everyday life contexts, and are willing and able to participate if needed” (ibid, p. 262). Even though these citizens are willing to participate, and prepared for political action, they appear politically passive when it comes to actual participation. This illustrates that it is not a given that democratic attitudes lead to democratic participation. Democratic attitudes also include critical perspectives and the choice not to participate. In line with this, Børhaug (2007a) holds that it is important to invite and promote critical discussion and reflection in the classrooms.

Third, although students may have democratic attitudes and/or knowledge about the political system, they may not have the skills to be able to participate. In the project “Education for Democratic citizenship” Audigier (2000) aims to find out which skills individuals require in order to become participating citizens, how they can acquire these skills and how they can learn to pass them on to others. He identified the skills as at least three frequently mentioned capacities for action; (1) the capacity to live with others, to cooperate, to construct and implement joint projects and to take on responsibilities, (2) the capacity to resolve conflicts in accordance with the principles of democratic law and (3) the capacity to take part in public debate, to argue and choose in a real-life situation (p. 23). Koritzinsky’s (2012) definition of skills is formulated in more general terms as the analytical, methodological and social abilities to use and apply concepts, collect and present data needed

and to work together with others (p, 248). The curriculum reform in 2006 (K06)¹⁶ in Norway has emphasized skills as well as attitudes and knowledge in social studies¹⁷, but the specific competence aims in the curricula almost exclusively relates to knowledge (Koritzinsky 2012, p. 103).

While academics continue to wrestle with the effect of knowledge and/or democratic attitudes and skills on political participation, a recent body of research foregrounds *active learning*. This is sometimes referred to as learning *through* participation (Stray 2011). While participating, people are empowered to participate in political action. Much of this research has the objective of enabling youth to participate in their communities, and can therefore be placed in the broader civic education literature. These studies focus, for example, on the value of service learning and real-life civic contexts (Youniss 2012; Galston, 2001).

However, Lo (2015) states that traditional classroom practices and experiences such as simulations and role-play are overlooked in active learning research. Active learning in school can take the form of live simulations in class; hands-on experiences with political campaigns and voting (Coffey, Miller & Feurestein 2011) mock trials (Benston & Sifferd 2010) mock congress and other forms of project-based learning (Parker 2013). These active learning experiences through practice “interrupts the well-established classroom routine in which the teacher gives lectures, homework readings from the textbook, and quizzes and tests” (Parker 2013, p.1430).

The underlying theoretical assumption of active learning is that participatory experiences in school are transferred to the “real world”. Through engagement in an activity, individuals change and handle a later situation in ways prepared by their own participation in the previous situation (Rogoff 1995, p. 153). Practice and participation in activities in school might therefore have spillover effects for promoting further participation. The whole idea about active learning and schools as democratic institutions is to enable students to participate and thus learn from their democratic experiences (Solhaug 2003). Carol Pateman (1970, p. 45) argues that “Participation in some way leaves the individual better psychologically

¹⁶ There is an ongoing debate about what the social studies are and should be and this is reflected by the changes in curricula; in the subject title and contents. After a curriculum reform in 2006 (K06) in Norway, the students attending general education programs in upper secondary school can specialize in five hours a week courses of *Politikk og menneskerettigheter [Politics and human rights]*, *Samfunnsgeografi [Human Geography]*, *Sosialkunnskap [Social sciences]* and *Sosiologi og sosialantropologi [Sociology and Anthropology]*. There exist competence aims for each subject.

¹⁷ There are also cross-national differences to what is included in the term social studies. In the United States, history is the foundation (Parker 2015). In Scandinavia however, it depends on the educational level. In the Norwegian Ungdomsskolen (grade 8-10) social studies also include history and geography. However, in Videregående skole, upper secondary school (grade 11-13), history and geography are separate subjects and the “rest” is social studies.

equipped to undertake further participation in the future”. Therefore, engaging in political activities will promote future political participation in itself; because the more individuals participate, the better equipped they become to do so.

From the perspective of active learning, the active learning experience in school must empower youth for political action in order for it to have spillover effects on present or future democratic participation. This is a challenge. For instance Børhaug (2007b) has conducted classroom observations and analyzed the student democracy in schools, the student councils, and he finds that it is: “difficult to claim that the student council is democratic participation, even though the curriculum states that it is supposed to [be]” (ibid, p. 98).

Therefore, further studies could benefit from investigating the active learning experiences. This study is one such contribution. Mock elections at schools are examples of active learning experiences, but the role they play in the creation of democratic citizens have not yet been studied.

As described in paragraph 1.3, there is a twofold character of the mock elections with elements of both present and future participation. The empirical traits of the mock elections can be categorized as top-down (TD) or bottom-up (BU) political education. The results of the mock election become the expression of the political preferences among youth in the present. At the same time the mock elections simulate an ordinary election, as the votes do not actually elect anyone.

The study of mock elections as an active learning experience contributes to all three branches of literature on political education and political participation, because political knowledge, political attitudes and political skills as explanations for political participation are strongly connected and overlap. The three categories are interdependent. As Audigier (2000,p. 23) explains:

The peaceful resolution of conflicts implies knowledge on the democratic principles that organize this resolution, a personal attitude which involves controlling one’s own violence and accepting not to take the law into one’s own hands, and the capacity for action in connection with the debate.

When current political events and debates are brought into school, this might promote the development of democratic attitudes among youth in addition to their knowledge about political parties, and their skills to engage in the debate themselves.

The research on mock elections as active learning experience is limited, but that does not mean that empirical examples of mock elections do not exist in schools around the world.

I will therefore devote a section to reviewing what we know about mock elections in other contexts.

2.4 Mock elections as political education from a comparative perspective: Scandinavia and the USA

Mock elections are conducted in many schools around the world. I have chosen to cite examples from three different ways of organizing mock elections in schools that can be found in the USA, Sweden and Denmark, and compare them to the Norwegian case. Although these are not the only countries to conduct mock elections, each represents a different approach to the concept of mock elections at school.

In the USA, there are mock elections in school, but it is up to organizations and/or local initiators in schools to conduct them¹⁸. Whether students experience a mock election or not during their school years is therefore dependent on whether such an initiative exists. One example is the Kids Voting USA (KVUSA) organization, which is one of the programs making its way into schools. There has also been some research on the effects of this program. For example, in a working paper from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, Michael McDevitt and Spiro Kiouisis (2006) summarize (*ibid*, p. 2): “Parents got caught up in their children’s enthusiasm for politics. Student-parent conversations stimulated by Kids Voting in 2002 predicted parent civic involvement in 2004”. An earlier study of the KVUSA program by Linimon and Joslyn (2002), also showed that parents are mobilized by their children’s involvement in the program. Students cast ballots alongside parents and this increased their parents’ electoral participation. Through doing so, they add another dimension to mock elections: the spillover effect on parents’ political participation¹⁹.

¹⁸ Based on field visits to schools in Washington, Spring 2015.

¹⁹ Jamie Bleck (2015) argues in her book “Education and Empowered Citizenship in Mali” that citizens who send (or sent) their children to public school are more likely to report voting or campaigning in the 2007 presidential elections and more likely to have a voter ID card than any other citizens or any other parents. There are two possible mechanisms: first, educated, literate children can act as “linguistic brokers” – drawing their parents into politics and secondly, that the use of a good public service reinforces a citizenship identity that can be further fulfilled by voting through a policy feedback mechanism. She argues that these findings suggest that state expansion of public education has had a secondary, and perhaps unintended, effect on democratic deepening to the extent that it gets more citizens involved in the electoral arena.

Mock elections in the USA have been included in the Advanced Placement government and politics course²⁰ in high school as part of an experiment²¹. However, this course is not available in all schools and to all students. Even so, a textbook in social studies teacher education in the USA describes that a mock election (Parker, 2009, p. 68):

...is and is not a real election. It is not an actual election because one need not be a citizen or a registered voter or at least 18 years of age to participate, and the votes cast in a mock election do not actually elect anybody. It is a real election, however, because voting does occur, and so do all the learning activities that lead up to and prepare children for the voting; namely deliberation, press conferences, speech writing, research on candidate positions and so forth

In the USA, the students organize press conferences where the students are assigned roles as candidates, reporters and journalists, the moderator, audience and reporters representing television stations²².

The Norwegian mock elections were an inspiration for Denmark to conduct mock elections on a national level for the first time in 2015. The Danish mock election at school was arranged six months prior to the Parliamentary election, and a three-module curriculum was introduced and integrated in classrooms including a separate teachers' guide with teaching methods in relation to the mock elections, videos and an organizing plan (Undervisningsministeriet 2015). A part of the plan was to organize a party at the school when the results were revealed, and the results were released to the press immediately.

In Sweden, it is up to the student councils in each school, *elevråd*, whether or not they conduct a mock election (MUCF 2015). The students have been in charge of facilitating mock elections for more than a decade. However; the mock election is not integrated into the classroom education with teaching materials and plans. In fact, it is made explicit that the mock election is a separate event from class education. The Norwegian and Swedish mock elections are conducted immediately before the ordinary election. However, only the mock election results in Norway are made public straight away. As earlier mentioned, mock elections in Norway have traditionally been an indication of the outcome of the ordinary election. For this reason, to avoid influencing the result, the results of the Swedish mock elections in school are not published until after the ordinary election results are presented (MUCF 2015).

²⁰ Seattle times, March 1, 2014.

²¹ AP College Board (2014).

²² Based on interviews with teachers at two high schools in Washington state, Spring 2015.

In Norway, the mock elections are conducted at a national level, financed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and facilitated by the NSD who has been in charge of the project since 1989 and will remain so until at least 2021. The mock elections have gradually evolved to the point where all upper secondary schools conduct them. A report commissioned by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion concludes that mock elections should be made mandatory for upper secondary schools to participate in (NOU 2011, p. 108). However, all schools already conduct mock elections, although it is not rooted in the formal curriculum.²³ As Norwegian elections are held every second year, alternating between elections for the Parliament and local elections, the students have the opportunity to participate in at least one election²⁴. This means that all students, regardless of whether they attend vocational or general education, have the opportunity to vote in the mock election before they gain the right to vote at 18.

It is only the NSD in Norway that has formulated a statement about learning outcomes. According to the NSD, one of the effects is expected to be a higher turnout among the first-time voters in real elections:

Mock elections are a frequently used pedagogical tool to make the teaching about politics more interesting, and the effect is expected to be increased political awareness and competence among the pupils, and a higher turnout among the first-time voters in real elections²⁵.

Although there is no formal curriculum in Norway concerning the mock elections, a subject in which mock elections could be integrated does exist. It is mandatory for all students in upper secondary school to take a course three hours a week (3 *45 minutes) of *social studies*²⁶ the first or second year. The students who attend general education

²³They also recommend mock elections for younger students. A few lower secondary schools already organize mock elections by their own initiative.

²⁴ There was a mock election also in relation to the EU referendum in 1994.

²⁵ Samfunnsveven.no (2013). Om skolevalgene. [About the mock elections in school].

²⁶ When I use the subject of social studies I refer to the mandatory three-hour course. However, it is not always clear what is included in the concept of social studies. According to Evans (2015) there are five major competing camps in the US that debate what social studies are and should be: (1), the traditional historians who argue that history is the core of social studies, (2) social studies as a structure of the disciplines approach, (3) applying standardized business techniques and a functional curriculum to social studies, (4) the Dewey experimentalists which aim to contribute to social improvement and a final camp, (5) consisting of critical pedagogues who cast social studies in schools in a leading role in the transformation of American society (Evans, 2015,p.25-26). After the curriculum reform in Norway in 2006, the subjects developed more along the lines of the second camp. For this reason, Sandahl (2015) uses the concept social sciences instead of social studies to describe "an interdisciplinary subject consisting of several academic disciplines such as political science, sociology and economics" (ibid,p.19). I agree with this useful distinction to separate the three-hour social studies course, mandatory for all, from the five hours specialization of social science.

[*studiespesialiserende*] usually graduate from this subject after the first year (vg1). In vocational education [*yrkesfag*] it is typically the second year (vg2).

A common characteristic of the Scandinavian mock election is that youth politicians visit the school, interweaving the “ordinary world” and the “school’s” world. Typically, the mock elections in the Scandinavian context include a political debate with the youth politicians at school. Even though there is nothing in the formal curriculum about mock elections, Børhaug (2008) finds that in Norway: “All the observed teachers spent some time on the mock election debate in class afterwards to hear how the students felt about it” (p. 585).

The mock elections at school vary in respect to the actors involved, the place in the formal curriculum, how they are integrated into class and the presentation of the mock election results. In the table below I present an overview of four different types of mock elections as political education.

Table 4: A comparative overview of mock elections as political education in Scandinavia and the USA.

	USA	Sweden	Denmark	Norway
Organizers	Organizations/ Local initiators	Student councils at schools	National level (from 2015)	National level (NSD)
Involvement of the political parties' youth organizations	NO	YES	YES	YES
Curriculum	NO (In the AP government course)	NO	YES (three module curriculum)	NO
Class education	YES	NO	YES	NO
Public results	NO (In class)	YES (the results are made public after the ordinary election)	YES (mock election conducted six months before ordinary election)	YES (a week before the ordinary election)

In this chapter I have argued that mock elections can be seen as examples of active learning that have previously not been studied as political education. I have defined the concept of political education in school as instilling in young people the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them to participate in the political process and shown that mock elections at school can be considered a part of a broader political education.

In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the theoretical perspective of the mock elections as institutions that give meaning to participation and provide guidelines and resources for acting.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In political science research, the process of integrating young people into the political system is often referred to as part of the *political socialization*. In this chapter, I start out by presenting the work of David Easton (1965) on the persistence of political systems which in many ways has laid the foundations for political socialization research. I further argue that a helpful approach in working with issues that aim to integrate young people in democratic political systems is through the concept of “democratic governance” in which democratic states depend on institutions to create democratic citizens (March and Olsen, 1995).

Of particular interest in this dissertation is how institutions can give meaning to participation, and I supply the institutional perspective of James G. March and Johan P. Olsen (1995) with theoretical perspectives on motivations for political participation based on political science research. More precisely, I develop a typology of four perspectives for the study of political motivation to analyze the role mock elections as political education play in motivating youth for political participation.

A second main interest in this dissertation addresses how students interpret the motivations offered by political education in school. There are limits to what can be accomplished by institutions in the creation of democratic citizens, because, from a constructivist perspective, young people approach political education in different ways based on their individual previous experiences. March and Olsen (1995) are vague about the individuals interpretations, and I expand the institutional perspective with analytical tools found in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1990).

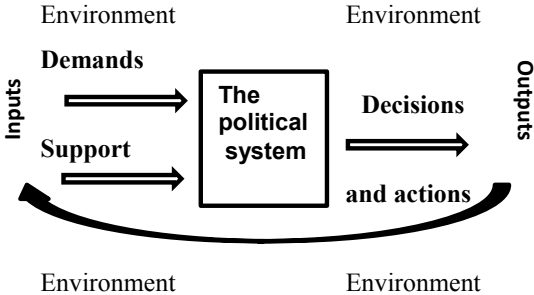
3.2 The political socialization paradigm

When the new political sub-discipline of political socialization developed in the 1950s and 1960s, the dominant explanatory model considered the process of political socialization a transfer of knowledge to passive absorbers, a process by which political behavior and attitudes were transmitted from one generation to another (Easton, 1965; Hyman, 1959; Greenstein, 1969; Sigel, 1970). Individuals were inducted into the political culture and formed to be suitable to the established political system through a learning process of political socialization.

For decades, David Easton’s political systems theory dominated the limited research by political scientists on childhood and youth. Easton developed the systems theory as a holistic view of politics, a theory of what makes political systems adapt and survive. The model in “A Systems Analysis of Political Life” (1965) is presented in figure 2 below.

The model is simple, yet complex in its ambition to explain how political systems manage to persist in a world of both stability and change.

Figure 2: A simplified model of a political system



Source: A Systems Analysis of Political Life, New York (Easton, 1965, p. 32).

In brief, the model explains how changes in the environment create “inputs”, i.e. support and demands that lead to “outputs” - new decisions and actions. These, in turn, stimulate feedback, and the system turns into a never-ending cycle of inputs and outputs, support, decisions and feedback. He further articulates in “*Children in the Political System. Origins of Political Legitimacy*, co-written with Jack Dennis (1969) that:

...for some kind of system to persist over time - either with the same authorities, regime, or community, or with one or another of these changed - most of the political relevant members must have learned to put in a minimal level of diffuse support of the various political objects, whatever their form (ibid, 1969, p.64, original italics).

Easton and Dennis hold that (ibid, p. 91): “It is during childhood that we may look for some of the basic commitments about a political system, whether they are positive or negative, to take shape”. However, they are vague about how these basic commitments, or the

diffuse support, take shape; more precisely the active role the institutions play in developing images of political authority such as government (p. 111) and the president (p. 193).

In the following, I explain how the institutional perspective of March and Olsen (1995) is a better approach to analyze how young people become integrated into the political system.

3.3 Political education in an institutional perspective

March and Olsen are, like Easton, also concerned with building support for the regime, but they emphasize the active role played by institutions in this process. March and Olsen (1995) develop the concept of “democratic governance” in which democratic states depend on institutions to create democratic citizens. In order for democratic systems to persist, future democratic citizens must be created, and it is institutions that define and give meaning to participation.

Institutions can give meaning to action in different ways. Scott (2001) distinguishes between different conceptions of institutions and underlines that important differences exist among the various institutional scholars (p. 50). Scott (2001) describes:

Varying definitions of institutions call up somewhat different conceptions of the nature of social reality and social order. Similarly, the institutional definitions relate to varying conceptions for how actors make choices: the extent to which actors are rational and what is meant by this concept (p. 48).

Comparing three pillars; the regulative pillar, the normative pillar and the cultural cognitive pillar, Scott (2001) holds that the regulative pillar is a stable system of rules, either formal or informal, backed by surveillance and sanctioning power (p.54). A normative system of beliefs as prescriptions of how the specified actors are supposed to behave, make up the normative pillar. The elements in the cultural-cognitive pillar stress the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made (p. 57). Although three contrasting models of institutions are identified, they all have in common that they seek to explain how institutions constrain and regularize behavior. However, Scott argues that institutions also can enable social action (2001):

Institutions impose restrictions by defining legal, moral, and cultural boundaries setting off legitimate from illegitimate activities. But it is essential to recognize that institutions also support and empower activities and

actors. Institutions provide guidelines and resources for acting as well as prohibitions and constrains on action (p. 50)

March and Olsen (1995) are particularly concerned with the development of identities as an element that gives meaning to participation. They argue that institutions “build and support identities, preferences and resources that make a polity possible” (p. 28). Moreover, they state that “individuals come to define themselves in terms of their identities and to accept the rules of appropriate behavior associated with those identities” (ibid, p. 50). They emphasize the role institutions play in developing political identities (ibid, p. 73):

Democracy requires citizens and officials whose beliefs, commitments, and conceptions of self and society sustain processes of civilized democratic politics. Being a citizen or public official means accepting an identity and understanding its implications. Governance involves affecting how identities are formed and changed and how they are interpreted.

Democratic governance involves presenting political identities and reminding individuals of the obligations of their identities. March and Olsen (2000) further argue that identities can motivate action if the rules of the political identity match the situation.

The political self is constituted by an identity. The presumption is that most of the time a political actor acts by asking “what does a person such as I do in a situation such as this”. Action requires matching the rules of that identity to a definition of a situation (p. 152).

According to March and Olsen, individuals approach a situation by interpreting the situation in the light of one’s identity. In doing so, they ask questions such as “Who am I?” “What are appropriate actions for me to do?” before selecting the alternative that appears to be the most appropriate in the situation. Overall, the institutions present a “logic of appropriateness” in which institutions offer rules, codes and principles of conduct of appropriate behavior (March and Olsen, 2008).

Even though March and Olsen (1995) emphasize the development of identities, they also articulate that institutions offer roles, accounts, rules, practices, and capabilities that construct political life. Institutions can thus define appropriateness beyond presenting fixed identities. This is in line with their broad interpretation of an institution. March and Olsen (2008) define an institution as:

... a relatively stable collection of rules and practices, embedded in structures of *resources* that make action possible -- organizational, financial and staff capabilities, and structures of *meaning* that explain and justify behavior – roles, identities and belongings, common purposes, and causal and normative beliefs (p.691, original italics)

Institutions are complex and may give meaning to participation in ambiguous ways Scott (2001) places March and Olsen in the normative pillar of institutions (p. 52). One of the institutions that define the democratic citizen is the school. For instance March and Olsen (2000) write that “schooling in a democracy contributes to the creation of citizens and officials, to the construction of their preferences, values, senses of civility and capabilities” (p. 159). However, it is not precisely clear what these preferences, values, senses of civility and capabilities might be and how they can motivate action.

In this dissertation, I will supplement the institutional perspective of March and Olsen on two aspects. First, I will elaborate on how institutions can enable action by developing a typology of political motivation. Based on political science research, I include four perspectives for the study of motivations for political participation. Second, March and Olsen (1995) are vague about the individuals’ interpretations and the limits of institutions in creating democratic citizens. What motivates youth for political behavior is of particular interest, and I expand the institutional perspective by turning to the analytical tools of Bourdieu (1990) to investigate how young people interpret the motivations offered by political education in school in different ways.

3.4 Political motivation: four main perspectives on motivations for political participation

The institutional perspective is concerned with how institutions can enable action, and there may be multiple motivations behind the choice to participate. Political science research on what makes people vote, has primarily been concentrated around contextual factors, (Campbell, 2006), institutional frameworks (Lijphart, 1999), socio-demographics such as age, gender, race and the effects of socio-economic status (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980), along with the resources the individual possesses (Brady et al., 1995) or a combination of these factors (Strømsnes, 2003).

Bernt Aardal (2002) argues that we also need to look to the *individual explanations* people may have for participating. In this respect, a main contribution in understanding the individual’s relationship to politics came from Almond and Verba’s (1963) cross-cultural

study in the 1960s. They claim that cognitive, evaluative and affective factors determine how people relate to the political system. However, there are different ideas regarding which beliefs, understandings, evaluations and emotions motivate voting.

Aardal includes instrumental motivations, norm as a motivation and expressive motivation (2002, p. 24-29). In line with Aardal, I underline the importance of the three motivations for political participation. I add emotions, and structure the main perspectives on political motivation into four categories of motivations: instrumental, duty, identity and emotions.

Although the literature presented here predominately draws on research relating to voting, I believe that the perspectives are useful when addressing motivations for political participation in general. I define motivation in accordance with Ryan and Deci (2000) as the drive that give rise to - and upholds - action, what they call the *why* of actions (p.54, own italics)²⁷. Consequently, political motivation describes the motivation to participate politically, the motivation to vote (at all), and not political partisanship.

First, the rational choice theory proposed by Downs (1957) considers the decision to vote as purely instrumental and the motivation behind voting to be *the power of one vote* in promoting interests. However, the puzzle has been, and continues to be, why seemingly rational people turn out to vote when voter turnout should always result in greater costs than benefits. The rationalist justification for voting is easily countered by arguing that one vote makes no difference. Riker and Ordeshook's (1968) solution to this is to "reinterpret the voting calculus so that it can fit comfortably into a rationalistic theory of political behavior" (p.25). In doing so, they broaden the view of "benefits" to include other forms of gratification, not only the political goals of pushing the preferred candidate to the top.

At a collective level, *the power of the votes of the group* can influence the results. Joining with others who share the same preferences makes rational choice more reasonable as a political motivation. If the stakes are high, and an individual believes they can easily find others to join, then maximizing preferences makes sense as a justification. This is the pluralist argument; people form interest groups and make a difference (Dahl, 1971).

²⁷ There is also an important distinction to be made between justifications and motivations. Although at a macro level the institutions can present justifications for political behavior, motivations exist and function at a micro level. By this, I mean that motivation is subjective. However, for the purpose of this study, I will not further discuss psychological and neuroscientific explanations for the mechanisms at work when an individual is 'motivated'. This said, there is a helpful reference in Ryan and Deci's (2000) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They also use the concept of motivation when explaining how other, external factors can motivate the individual. The concept of political motivation in this dissertation will therefore be applied with regards to both justifications operating at a more extrinsic level and motivations operating at an intrinsic level.

The second perspective is rooted in the various forms of considering voting a social *norm*. Theoretical approaches in this tradition highlight the limitations of rational choice theory. These academics conclude that voting - the fundamental political act - is typically irrational. The underlying suggestion is that human action must be understood in terms of social norms rather than individual rationality (Elster, 1986, p.23). Social norms are prior to individuals in the explanatory order, and many actions are performed out of adherence to these societal norms. Social norms come in different forms and regulate behavior in different ways. Family, friends, local community, cultural associations and the workplace represent local cultures that may also convey expectations about political participation, sanctions when such expectations are not respected and gradual internalization. Such micro-level structures are linked to broader cultural and social patterns in society (Bronfenbrenner 1998).

To what extent such norms are justified and made explicit may vary. Social norms can take the form of duty. Duty is often measured as a variable based on the question: “To what extent do you consider voting a duty?”. These studies show that whether or not voting is considered a duty has a strong effect on the likelihood that someone will vote (Blais, 2000; Petterson and Rose, 2009). However, the concept of duty is not the same as that of norms. A duty is more explicit and often more clearly defined and justified than other social norms. It is worth noting that norms make small requirements on knowledge and understanding of political life, while the concept of duty may include a wider cognitive reflection. Duty may, from a Rousseauian perspective, be based on the idea of a *contractual agreement*. For example, this could be where voting can be considered a part of the contractual arrangement of rights and duties with the state in which the individual receives rights, and in return legitimizes the regime by voting. Citizens vote to uphold the organized state as a democracy. Through voting, the citizens fulfill their part of the contract, but not beyond that. As noted by Pateman (1970), this also implies that political participation is a cost, i.e. something that will be reduced to the level requiring the least effort - voting.

The third perspective elaborates on identities as a motivation for participation. As presented in the previous section, individuals define themselves as political subjects and construct their political identities through interaction with their environments that present various identities and alternatives. The identities are molded to a specific set of historical and political experiences and conditions (March and Olsen, 1995, p. 49). Identities can be fairly fixed by the institutions in which they are embedded, such as the political identities defined by the labor movement or other political movements that gradually mobilized the main groups of society politically (Rokkan, 1987), or be more fluid.

Political identity has both collective and individual dimensions. At a collective level, the political identities are tied to *joining a collective* or belonging to a group. The individual becomes a part of a group by joining a community of others who share the same political identity. After joining a group, an individual can signal their identity to others, and state that ‘I am a part of this group and I am someone who participates’. The motivation to participate is rooted in signaling to others, inside and outside the group, a belonging and a political identity. As March and Olsen (1995) formulated, “a political actor acts by asking what does a person like me do in situation like this?” Institutions present various political identities and a logic of appropriateness for action. The appropriate actions can be defined by the group and vary according to the situation.

In relation to this, many researchers have argued that young people’s political identities do not, for instance, include formal politics such as voting, but rather other forms of political participation, such as demonstrations and social media campaigns, typically described as unconventional or informal ways of participation (Dalton 2008, Ødegård 2010, Taft 2010). Youth often use outer expressive markers to express their political identities (Krange and Øia, 2005; Rogstad and Vestel, 2011). In that way, voting is not a good way of expressing your political identity, because it is anonymous; no one can observe it, and no one can actually know whether or not you voted unless you tell them. Although your presence at the polling station may be noticed by friends, co-workers and neighbors, and only a small number of people might see you participate in the midst of a hundred others in a demonstration, at a collective level, young people may be more motivated to express their views to those they consider to be peers, the group, and participate in the same arenas as them, such as Facebook or demonstrations.

A motivation to participate might also relate to a desire to resemble admirable others. These could be respected peers or adults, or it could be celebrities. A basic logic in marketing theory is exactly this, to appeal to more or less conscious desires to be like the ‘more’ attractive person. Therefore, when promoting a product the task is to show desirable and attractive people using the product to get others to use, be or act as he/she does. Following this, when famous pop cultural icons and other celebrities go public with their choice of party or president candidate, this might be a motivation for people who want to be like them.

However, at an individual level, the question becomes whether the *individual defines oneself as a political actor*. For example, Beaumont, Colby, Ehrlich and Torney-Purta (2006) make the claim that political identity can be broadly defined as “the extent to which being politically engaged is experienced as central to one’s sense of self” (Beaumont et al., 2006, p.

255). According to this definition, questions become “Am I someone who participates? Am I a voter? Is political participation a part of my identity?” In this case, the political identity is defined by the individual, and identity construction is an individual matter. Beaumont et al. (2006) further argue that an individual with a political identity will engage in political action to maintain consistency between their political values, goals and beliefs and their behavior. At the individual level, the expressive motives of stating your opinion in elections may be more important than actually getting heard (Lafferty, 1983; Fischer, 1996). These expressive incentives for participating are not connected to influencing the results, or directly connected to belonging to a collective.

Thus, identity has a double sense. I understand identity as both a social and personal construction, operating at the collective and/ or individual level. People construct their identities and selves, but not in a vacuum, through dynamic interactions with the environment. At a collective level, identity refers to a social category or a group with certain characteristics, and at an individual level, a political identity is an individual characteristic more – or less unchangeable²⁸.

A fourth perspective is based on emotions. Studies in cognitive science highlight that emotion often intertwines with cognition and is required for attention and commitment to any issue (Marcus, Neuman and MacKuen, 2000). Emotion therefore also plays an important role in political participation. Hart, Richardson and Wilkenfeld (2011) demonstrate how the motivation to vote can be deeply rooted in the emotional core of the body. They refer to an example from voting in Iraq where a voter stated, “even if I was dead, I would still participate, the vote comes from the bottom of my heart” (ibid, p. 771). Regarding an activity as exciting, and thus feeling emotionally gratified through participation, is a motivating factor (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995).

However, the role played by emotions when it comes to political participation remains underexamined. Early works on political socialization observed affective elements of vague, positive feelings towards the political order (Easton, 1965). This was also the case in the affective dimension of Almond and Verba (1963). Historically, national sentiments have been important in this respect and also in political education at school (Eikeland 1989). These include feelings of patriotism, love for your country, or a pledge of allegiance (Westheimer, 2007). One example being the core civic ritual widely required in US schools of “The Pledge”

²⁸ A disputed subject matter regards the interplay between personal and social processes of identity construction. The essentialist view holds that there is something determined about whom one is and that this is constant over time whereas postmodernists argue that there is no such thing as a constant identity (Merry 2010).

- the pledge of allegiance. One of the reasons the pledge of allegiance is still employed in American schools is to cement national pride after 9/11 and foster students' love for the country and the principles of a constitutional democracy (Parker, 2007, p.73). Twenty-five states require the pledge to be recited daily during the school day, and thirty-five require time to be set aside in school for the pledge (Parker, 2007, p. 172). The direction has come from the US Department for Education, from local and state boards of education, and from politicians²⁹.

Furthermore, studies support that specific emotions *may* be evoked through the words, framings, narratives, songs, codes, and discourses, providing motivation for further participation (Scott, Street and Inthorn, 2015). The emotional response engendered by music, for instance, has been found to be particularly important in helping young people to connect their personal lives with the political world (ibid, p.510). The emotion you have is therefore related to how you evaluate an experience³⁰.

Equally, participation may have entertainment value. Katznelson et al. (2006) highlight that, in the US, the candidate with the biggest campaign funds normally prevails, because political advertising plays such a critical role. Accordingly, approaches to motivation that have the marketing of consumer goods as their source appear to have become more important. The showbiz factor in US campaigning specializes in the engagement of the senses through vivid visuals and music, adding a feeling of festivity - in which people will wish to play a part. The mass media works in numerous ways to present voting and campaigning in ways that make voters wish to come closer and join in the feeling. At an individual level the *individual enjoyment* of participating in elections can be one way of coming closer to the fun. Voting for one side makes the voter part of the exciting drama that is taking place.

Lerner (2014) has a few helpful criteria when analyzing how democratic participation can be enjoyable at a collective level. His main argument can be summarized as follows: if democratic participation is set up as a game, it will be more fun to participate, which would make people more likely to do it. One of the criteria is engagement of the senses, in which food, music and visual effects all play a part. Another is taking part in physical activities,

²⁹ There is some doubt whether this actually has the wanted effect however. Parker (2006), for instance, states that recitation without interpretation is like fishing in a dry lake.

³⁰ The individual may have positive or negative evaluations of his or her encounters with politics. The point here is how positive feelings can motivate further participation, but no doubt, negative feelings also play a strong part in motivating behavior. Not wanting to participate may be connected to feelings of distrust, being skeptical towards nationalism, the increasing marketing and entertainment business in politics etc.

which Lerner refers to as enjoyable core mechanics. Through these political events the participants have fun and *share the enjoyment* of participating.

3.5 A typology for the study of political motivation

Although we can make a distinction between the motivations, it is not uncomplicated. They are not mutually exclusive, and overlap to some extent. In addition, the four motivations for political participation can operate at an individual and a collective level at the same time. Table 5 illustrates how the four perspectives may be integrated into a typology.

Table 5: A typology for the study of political motivation

Political motivation	<i>Instrumental</i>	<i>Duty</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Emotions</i>
<i>Collective</i>	The power of the votes of the group	Norms	Join a collective	Shared enjoyment
<i>Individual</i>	The power of one vote	Contractual agreement	Define oneself as a political actor	Individual enjoyment

The vertical distinction presents an individual or collective motivation for political participation, but this distinction is not dichotomous. From left to right, the horizontal categories are the various approaches to political motivation, starting with the instrumental perspective. Within this perspective, participation can be strongly motivated by the power of the group or more of the individual. Second, duty offers a category to place both social norms and the contractual agreement with the state. Compared to norms, the contractual agreement emphasizes more of an individual motivation presuming a certain extent of individual cognitive reflection behind the choice to participate. In the third category, identity is divided into two to show that there exists a difference between a collective motivation of joining a group and defining oneself as a political actor at the individual level. The last category covers emotions, here exemplified by the joy of participation. While emotions, as the other motivations, work at both levels simultaneously, political participation at a collective level can be organized on the basis of Lerner’s (2014) criteria for making participation fun and

shared enjoyment, while the individual's feelings of enjoyment, of wanting to be a part of the festivity works at the individual level.

A center argument in this chapter is that the mock elections are institutions of political education that give meaning to participation and present motivations for political participation for young people in various ways. After developing the political motivation typology, the aspect of how young people interpret the motivations offered by political education in school still remains.

3.6 Identity as a motivation for participation, and the analytical tool of habitus

According to March and Olsen, identity can be a motivation for action. How the individual comes to accept or reject the identities presented is, however, not explained in March and Olsen's perspective. They observe that "there are limits to what can be accomplished by influencing identities" (p.73) and that there are variations in how the identities are interpreted, but they are vague about the processes of how individuals interpret the identities.

Political socialization research also failed to explain how individuals make sense of the political world in their own ways (Niemi and Heburn 1995). The long lasting paradigm of political socialization carried with it a view of the individual as "what is being socialized" (Connell 1987), but the new generations were not integrated in an orderly manner into the existing political system. Rather, young people's political behavior in many cases stray from the path of expected behavior. Youth are not a homogenous group, unconditionally taking on the identities they are offered, and how the students in school interpret the political identities offered may vary. In addition, adolescence, in particular, may be a time when various identities are tested and discarded (Krange and Øia 2005)³¹. Youth may choose to accept or reject these identities.

In relation to the study of mock elections at school, the question becomes whether the students accept or reject the identities presented to them. In the following, I therefore emphasize identity as one of the motivations for political participation. In order to analyze

³¹ Theories about the development of identity have argued that the adolescence stage distinguished by Erikson (1968), namely the years from 12-18, are also the politically formative years. Krosnick and Alwin (1989) argue that individuals are highly susceptible to changes in attitude during late adolescence and early adulthood and that susceptibility drops precipitously immediately after and remains low throughout the rest of the life cycle. This is further supported by Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995), who state that what happens during these years is considered to have a strong effect on political perceptions, attitudes and behavior during adulthood.

how youth interpret the identities, I argue that a helpful analytical tool can be found in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1990).

From a Bourdieuan perspective, individuals will participate if participation has become internalized as a part of their habitus. He (1990) describes *habitus* as:

A system of internalized structures, common schemes of perception, conception and action, which are the precondition of all objectification and apperception: and the objective co-ordination of practices and the sharing of a worldview could be founded on the perfect impersonality and interchangeability (p. 60).

Habitus is a set of socially learned dispositions, skills and ways of acting that are often taken for granted, and which are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life. These are framed by the agents' personal histories, social class, education, upbringing and past choices. An individual's social position therefore consists of embodied dispositions, the habitus, and effective resources. Society consists of what Bourdieu terms fields. While entering the different fields, the individual always brings their habitus with resources (the capital). These resources can be economic capital (money), social capital (networks) and cultural capital (knowing the right cultural codes, what works in various settings, knowing how to behave). This capital is transformed into symbolic capital automatically when the individual enters the field. The concept of cultural capital according to Bourdieu (1997) was initially:

The theoretical hypothesis making it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e. the specific profits which children for the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions (p. 47).

In other words, when the students enter the school, the habitus of the offspring of academics fits better with the school's habitus than the working-class habitus. Education therefore, according to Bourdieu, contributes to social reproduction. Following this argument, the student comes to school with a habitus - or certain dispositions - that make some choices more acceptable than others. Although a general habitus is a system of dispositions and ways of thinking about and acting in the world that is constituted early in life, a specific habitus is acquired later through education, training, and discipline within particular settings (Bourdieu 2000, p.164). The dispositions lead students to accept the specific habitus more easily. Habitus trigger action (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 148):

Through the cognitive and motivating structures that it brings into play (which always depend, in part, on the field, acting as a field of forces, of which it is the product) habitus plays its part in determining the things to be done, or not to be done, the urgencies, etc. which trigger action

However, habitus also allows for individual agency. As stated by Reay (2004) a choice is at the heart of habitus: “Bourdieu sees habitus as potentially generating a wide repertoire of possible actions, simultaneously enabling the individual to draw on transformative and constraining courses of action” (p.433). Reay further argues that the (p. 435):

Choices are bounded by the framework of opportunities and constraints the person finds himself/herself in, her external circumstances. However, within Bourdieu's theoretical framework he/she is also circumscribed by an internalized framework that makes some possibilities inconceivable, others improbable and a limited range acceptable.

While the habitus allows for individual agency, it also predisposes individuals towards certain ways of behaving. In these tensions, youth interpret, navigate and develop their political identities.

In the second study of this dissertation, I apply the concept of habitus as an analytical tool to give analytical insights into the process of how youth navigate the political identities presented in the mock elections. In the mock elections, students are presented political identities of the politician, the party member and the voter. How students find meanings in the political identities presented and what they communicate can differ. As Crossley (2004) notes (p, 108):

The perceptual and linguistic schemas of the habitus shape the ways in which agents make sense or fail to make sense of each other's communications. This may mean that they find different meaning in communication to those which the authors of those communications identify in them. It may mean that they “miss the point” or just fail to make any sense of what is communicated.

To simplify Bourdieu's complex theoretical arguments, individuals will choose to accept a political identity if this identity has become internalized as a part of their habitus. For the purpose of this study, habitus is defined as an analytical tool. It is a concept for revealing how the diversity in the dispositions the students bring to the field (the school), generates a wide repertoire of possible action in navigating political identities.

3.7 Summing up the theoretical argument

In the theoretical framework established in this dissertation, I argue that mock elections at school can be viewed as “democratic governance” in the institutional perspective of March and Olsen (1995). However, theoretically, March and Olsen are unclear about the limits of institutions in creating democratic citizens and I supplement March and Olsen on two aspects.

First, they are vague about what empowers action. I explore how institutions can motivate action by developing and applying a typology of political motivation. I assume that the individual motivations for political participation can range from a wide array of explanations, and that there are multiple motivations behind an individual’s actions. The school is one of the institutions that present motivations for young people and motivate political participation in different ways. Based on the simplified, but important tensions in the typology, it is possible to analyze political education in school and whether the motivation operates at an individual or collective level. Biesta and Lawy (2006) have stated that there is an individualistic trend in British citizenship education assuming that what is lacking in society is active and committed individuals, “most notably in the premise that the alleged crisis in democracy can be adequately addressed by (re) educating individuals (p.65).” Further, they are critical towards “blaming individuals, rather than paying attention to and focusing on the structures that provide the context in which individuals act” (p.69). Motivations for political participation in Norwegian political education have also been framed in a rather individualistic fashion (Børhaug 2010, p. 74). It is interesting to explore whether the mock elections as political education contribute to this individualistic trend. This will be discussed in the final chapter.

Second, March and Olsen (1995) are vague about the individuals interpretations of the motivations presented. I explore the students interpretations of the motivations offered by political education in school and argue that youth come to navigate the political identities presented to them in school through the concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990).

The different parts of the study draw on separate aspects of motivations for political participation. In the first article, I analyze the political motivation offered by the mock elections. In the second article, I focus on the process of how students interpret the political identities in different ways and whether they are accepted and thus motivate youth. In article three, I examine the effects of voting in mock elections at school on students’ motivation to

vote operationalized by the students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election.

In this chapter, I have established the theoretical framework for the dissertation. In the following, I will present the methods and data.

4 METHODS AND DATA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will begin by presenting the methodological approach in this dissertation. I analyze the research question “Which role does mock elections as political education in school play in motivating youth for political participation?” through the following three studies.

- What kinds of political motivation do the mock elections at school offer? (STUDY I)
- Which political identities do the mock elections at school present, and how do the students navigate and come to accept or reject these identities? (STUDY II)
- Does voting in mock elections have an effect on students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election? (STUDY III)

To derive knowledge about the main research question, I apply both qualitative and quantitative methods, both fieldwork and survey data. The study is grounded in mixed methods. There are many aspects to take into consideration when applying mixed methods. I have therefore chosen to divide the chapter into the qualitative phase of the study and the quantitative phase of the study.

The fieldwork conducted is elaborated in detail, particularly in regard to data collection and the analysis of the data. Ethical issues that came up during the fieldwork, and might come up when conducting research involving youth are specifically discussed in the final part of this chapter.

4.2 Mixing methods in political education research

The critics of the political socialization paradigm argued that there was a methodological monism based on a positivistic approach in many of the early studies. As Connell (1987) stated:

The empirical research within this framework of ideas consisted mainly of cross-sectional surveys of schoolchildren, using paper and pencil questionnaires with forced-choice items to measure political attitudes and

information. The technique was adapted from attitude research on adults, along with a characteristic method of analysis, the statistical cross-classification of response on different items (ibid, p. 218).

In line with this, Bhavnani (1991) claims that previous studies of youth and youth culture have been limited by too great a reliance on simple survey techniques:

Survey based studies do not provide the space for participants to put forth their own understanding of politics and, therefore, cannot adequately address the discursive and meaning making aspects of teenagers' political consciousness (ibid, p. 5)

The large-scale quantitative endeavors that took place were part of a positivist trend in research at the time. The debate in the social sciences about the use of qualitative vs. quantitative methods has at times been heated (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994, Ljiphart, 1971). While quantitative methods are appropriate when analyzing large amounts of data with many observations and few variables, qualitative methods have the strength of providing the researcher closeness to the research object (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, George and Bennett, 2005). However, a growing number of researchers conduct studies where the different methods share the same research question. This combined approach presumes a clear understanding of the comparative strengths and limits of various methods, and how they complement each other (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 5). Accordingly, Yin (2009) states that mixed methods research can permit investigators to address more complicated research questions and collect a richer and stronger array of evidence than can be accomplished by any single method alone (p. 63).

Consequently, an advantage of the methodological approach in this dissertation is that it applies both quantitative and qualitative methods to the study of political education. While one study examines the overall relations between political education and political participation in a "paper and pencil questionnaire" (Connell 1878, p. 218), the other two are based on fieldwork in order to explore the mock elections in practice and how individuals create their own meaning of the political education in which they participate. I seek a deeper understanding of how students come to construct their political identities in the context of political education at school. Therefore, the constructivist perspective also permeates this dissertation.

The constructivist approach put forth by Piaget (1970) regarded individuals as active constructors of their own knowledge, not merely as what Connell (1987) referred to as "what is being socialized". Piaget was interested in the development process of the child and how

knowledge is constructed. He argued that the concepts of science are mental constructs proposed in order to explain sensory experience, explaining that the individual constructs knowledge based on personal experiences through the process of assimilation and accommodation. This creates a schema or a mental framework for interpreting experiences. Therefore, the epistemology of constructivism considers knowledge a subjective construct rather than a positivistic compilation of empirical data.

The constructivist learning theories are based on a view of the child as active and encouraged to experience the world by him or herself, based on real, authentic experiences. According to constructivism, people construct their identities and selves in the process of interaction with one another (Abbott, 2004, p.47). Saskatchewan Education states (2001, p. 30):

The last decades of research in human learning have presented new insights into the ways that learners are active in constructing their own understanding. Constructivist learning theories have shown the limitations of viewing 'learning' as something we can 'give' to students that they will 'receive' or learn in exactly the same form, at exactly the given time.

Applying mixed methods allows for both the large-scale endeavor and the constructivist perspective to be utilized in a single study. This brings additional value to the study of mock elections in school as the different approaches contribute more to understanding the research problem together than separately.

I examine mock elections at schools in Norway as a case of political education. Case studies can also benefit from applying different methods. While case study research has been confused by the use of similar terms with different meanings (Gerring 2007, p. 17), many seem to have faith in its favorable characteristics when investigating a phenomenon in depth (Yin; 2009; Creswell; 2013; George and Bennett, 2005). Yin (2009) believes that case studies are the preferred method when firstly *how* or *why* questions are being posed, secondly, the investigator has little control over events and thirdly, the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin 2009, p.13). The case study is suitable for investigating, for example, an event, a program or activity (Creswell 2013, p. 104). Mock elections at schools in Norway exemplify a contemporary event I have little control over in a real-life context.

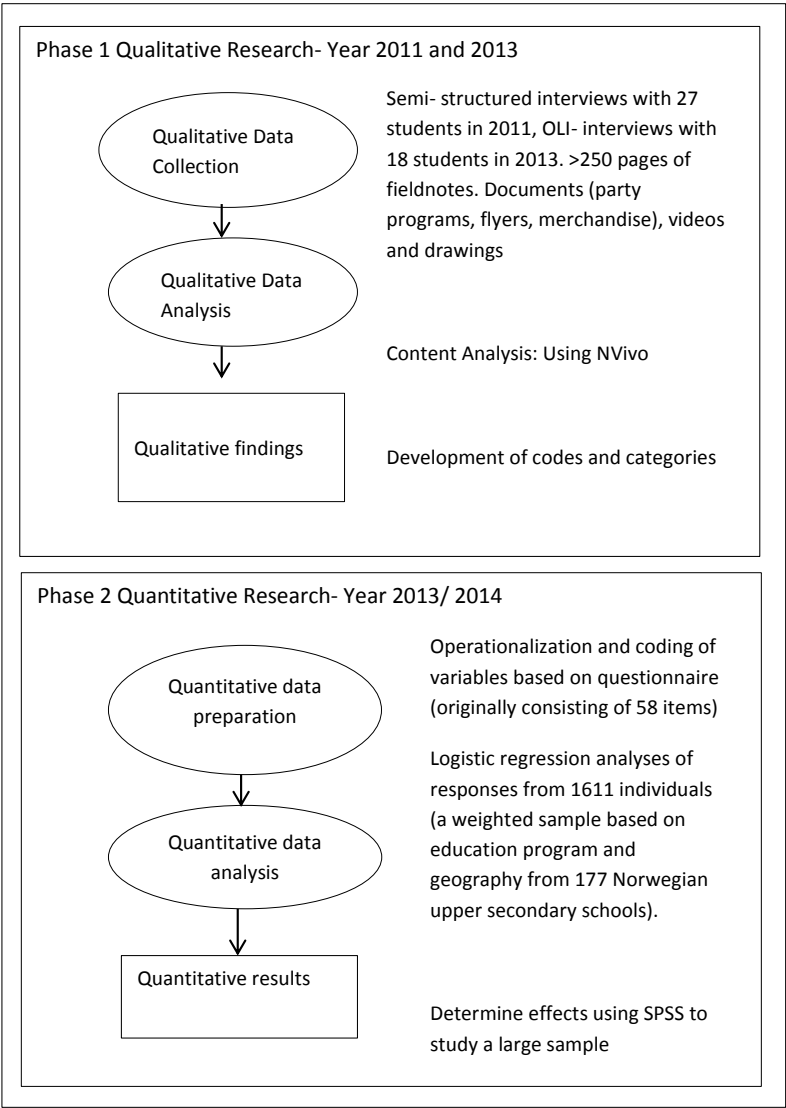
The three research questions in the study employ different methods. First, I take an ethnographic approach to mock elections in schools based on written fieldnotes from mock

elections at five different schools to explore what kind of political motivation they offer the students. Second, drawing on interview data from 18 interviews with students in schools, I analyze how youth navigate the political identities presented to them in the mock elections. Third, I analyze survey data *within* my case study of mock elections at schools in Norway to examine whether voting in mock elections has an effect on students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election.

The features of the research design can be described as a sequential exploratory design (Creswell et al., 2003). A sequential exploratory design is conducted in two phases, characterized by an initial phase of qualitative data collection and analysis followed by a phase of quantitative data analysis. In this dissertation there are two separate data analyses: first the qualitative findings from the fieldwork and interviews, followed by the results of the survey. The findings of these two phases are then integrated during the interpretation phase. According to Creswell et al., the design is useful to a researcher who wants to explore a phenomenon but also wants to expand on the qualitative findings (*ibid*, p.227). The sequential exploratory design requires a substantial length of time to complete both data collection phases. As I could analyze survey data collected by the NSD, it was possible to include both a substantive qualitative analysis and a limited quantitative data analysis despite the time limits of a PhD student.

The two-phase mixed methods study is presented in the figure below. There are three levels introduced in the visualization of procedures (*ibid*, p.235). First, the phases are organized into qualitative research followed by quantitative research for each year of the project. Then, the more general procedures of data collection and analysis are presented in the circles and boxes on the left and finally, the more specific procedures are identified on the right. Arrows help readers to see how the two phases are integrated in to a sequential process of research (*ibid*, p. 235).

Figure 3: Visualization for mixed methods procedures in the study



Source: Based on Creswell et al., 2003, p. 235.

4.3 The qualitative phase of the study: conducting fieldwork in schools

As there was limited available research on mock elections as political education, I needed to conduct fieldwork in schools to provide information about the case of mock elections as political education. In fact, much of the academic work on political education in school is based on textbook analyses and curriculum studies, and not actual fieldwork in schools.

The definition of what constitutes fieldwork is contested within and across disciplines. Mac Lean, Kapiszewski and Read (2015) describe field research in political sciences as “research that requires leaving one’s home institution to collect data or information that significantly informs a research project” (p. 1). Moreover, that “as soon as a scholar enters and engages in a context beyond her home institution in order to gain information related to her research, she has begun to do field research” (p. 9). They further state that there is conceptual baggage among political scientists towards using the terms ethnography or participant observation³². Therefore, they suggest the concept of “site-intensive methods” to underline that field research is not limited to the length of time spent on site, the number of sites studied or the types of context (ibid, p. 238). While I agree with the definition, I argue that we can still refer to the “site intensive methods” as ethnographic work because the ethnographic approach is a well-established qualitative path with developed techniques on how to conduct fieldwork and on writing and analyzing fieldnotes.

Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) describes that the field worker takes part in another way of life by participating as fully and immersively as possible. They state that “immersion in ethnographic research, then, involves both being with other people to see how they respond to events as they happen and experiencing for oneself these events and the circumstances that give rise to them” (ibid, p. 3).

Therefore, taking an ethnographic approach to the mock elections makes it important to experience the events of the mock election and the circumstances around them for oneself -

³² Political scientists increasingly use ethnographic approaches in their work (Wedeen 2008, Pachirat 2011). Without explicitly mentioning ethnography, a few decades ago Richard Fenno spent a total of 3-11 working days with different political representatives participating in and observing their lives (Fenno 1978). Timothy Pachirat worked in a slaughterhouse for months to write an analysis of the politics of sight and power relations. However, in their study of field research in political science, Mac Lean, Read and Kapiszewski (2015) find that political scientists in general are reticent about self-identifying as “an ethnographer” and are unsure about the definitions and whether their research actually fit into those categories.

how the youth politicians and students interacted, and how the students responded to the events.

The fieldwork was conducted in five upper secondary schools in the Western part of Norway, during the mock elections of 2011 and 2013. The schools choose between two sequential dates to conduct mock elections, making it difficult to attend more than five schools, and also decreasing the possibility of extending the analysis to more than one regional area.

I conducted fieldwork in both rural and urban areas. Schools were selected based on diversity of geography, size, private/public, education programs and turnout in mock elections. The sample is presented in the table below. In 2009, there was a wide variety in turnout in the mock elections, ranging from 40% to over 80% making it important to include schools with both a high and low turnout in the study. Schools A and D were chosen as examples of schools where turnout was lower than the other schools in the region.

Table 6: The five schools included in the study

School ID	Geography	Size (no. of students)	Private/public	Education program	Mock elections turnout 2009
School A	RURAL	125	PUBLIC	Programs for vocational education & general studies (Vg1)	56%
School B	URBAN	519	PRIVATE	Programs for general studies	84.4%
School C	URBAN	560	PUBLIC	Programs for general studies	76.1%
School D	URBAN	1059	PUBLIC	Programs for vocational education	41.5%
School E	RURAL	326	PUBLIC	Programs for general studies; Sports & Physical Education and Music, Dance and Drama	84%

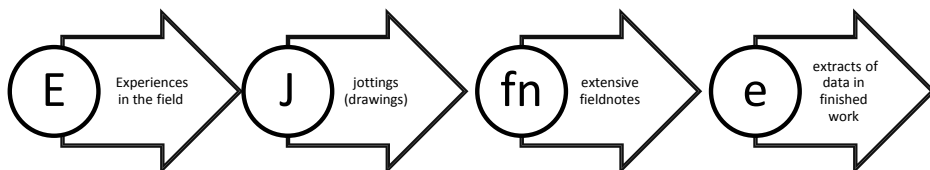
4.3.1 Fieldnotes

I needed data to shed light on what kind of political motivation the mock elections offered. A significant part of my data collection is therefore the amount of time I spent at schools, “hanging around” during the election and the preparations, taking fieldnotes. I also observed class education, and I made sure that I was present if there were any particular events planned in relation to the mock election.

How ethnographers write fieldnotes becomes as consequential for readers and those depicted as *what* they write (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 10, own italics) The goal is to depict a scene for the reader (ibid, p. 57). Moreover, they state (ibid, p. 35):

Ethnographers learn to experience through the senses in anticipation of writing: to recall observed scenes and interactions like a reporter; to remember dialogue and movement like an actor, to see colors, shapes, textures, and spatial relations like a painter or photographer, and to sense moods, rhythms and tone of voice like a poet. Details experienced through the senses turn into jottings with active rather than passive verbs, sensory rather than analytic adjectives, and verbatim rather than summarized dialogue

The experiences from the field (E) turn into jottings (J) that turn into fieldnotes (fn) before extracts from them may be used as data in the finished work (e). This process is summarized in the figure below.



Source: Based on Writing Ethnographic fieldnotes (Emerson et al., 2011).

I attended and took extensive fieldnotes at the schools’ activities, including the (1) school debate, where young politicians visit the school and debate current issues from a stage in an auditorium, (2) the election square, where the students can deliberate with the youth party representatives and visit the party booths, and (3) the mock election itself, where

students cast a ballot. In order to organize my notes from the observations and interviews, I used a toolbox separating descriptive, analytical and personal reflections.

In 2011, the field notes consisted of 120 A5 pages and 40 pages on a journalist's pad in handwriting. The fieldnotes from 2013 consist of 97 A4 pages transcribed to the computer using Calibri 11 and 18 photos. In addition to these fieldnotes, there were a couple of notebooks full of jottings from classroom visits that were not transcribed into extensive fieldnotes as they were jotted down more for contextual than analytical purposes. In addition, party programs, flyers and merchandise handed out by the political parties were all collected to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. Finally, I recorded short videos and made several drawings. Emerson et al. (2011) further underline the importance of sketches, defined as "describing a scene primarily through detailed imagery" (p. 75). These do not necessarily rely only on visual details but, by evoking all senses, they depict a snapshot of a setting. Descriptive sketches of people standing around or of a person's expression and posture as they look at someone, can reveal qualities of social relations even when nothing much is apparently happening (p. 77).

To contextualize the interactions and visualize the setting at the mock election and the participants involved, I have included visual details. An example of a visual sketch is presented in Appendix A.

4.3.2 Interviews

I not only wanted to explore what political motivation the mock elections offered the students, but also the students' perspectives and how they interpreted the political identities presented to them.

Therefore, I set out to interview 30 students from the five different schools, six from each school. In table 7 below, the participants included in the study are presented. Students attending both general studies (including sports and physical education, music, dance and drama) and vocational education (building and construction, design, arts and crafts, electricity and electronics, agriculture, fishing and forestry, and technical and industrial production) participated in the study. The students were 15-16 years old and were all attending first grade in upper secondary school.

The principal at each school helped facilitate contact with relevant teachers, and the teachers helped in coordinating the interviews. I was interested in interviewing a wide array of students, and I was clear about this when talking to the teacher. According to constructivism,

individuals may interpret things differently based on their various previous experiences; therefore, it was important to include a variety of students with a range of experiences. In addition to including students who attended vocational education programs as well as general education programs, I was interested in both interviewing politically active and non-politically active students, along with outgoing students and not so talkative students. In one case, the students were selected randomly by drawing lots.

Sixteen male and 13 female students participated in 2011. Two interviews were excluded from the data after the interviews were conducted because, as it turned out, the students were older than 16 (N= 27).

Table 7: Participating students in the interview study: 2011 and 2013

School ID		Participants	Participants
		2011	2013
School A	Programs for vocational education & general studies (Vg1)	5	2
School B	Programs for general studies	6	5
School C	Programs for general studies	6	6
School D	Programs for vocational education	4	0
School E	Programs for general studies: Sports & Physical Education and Music, Dance and Drama	6	5
N		27	18

In 2013, 18 out of the 27 students were interviewed a second time. Three of the 18 had switched schools. One was in full time work as a part of his vocational training, the rest were at the same school and in the same class as they had been two years earlier.

Choosing to involve a broad variety of students at the outset is a bigger challenge when it comes to second interviews than, for instance, involving only people attending educational programs where they plan to stay put throughout school. What we see from the sample is that there was a high dropout of the participants attending vocational school. There were no participants left from school D in 2013, and only two out of five left at school A. One of the students from school A did not want to meet for a second interview, and another had

moved away. A student from school D agreed on the phone to meet me, and I set up a meeting three times, but he never appeared.

Second interviews, and especially after two years, are always a risk when it comes to participant dropout (Bhavnani, 1991). Therefore, making it as convenient as possible for the participants to meet was a top priority. I used a number of methods to get them to attend a second interview. In schools B and E, the teacher helped facilitate all the interviews. In schools A and D, the school did not know where the students were, but they had some phone numbers. The teacher helped with two phone numbers at School C. What became apparent was that, when the students have left the schools to begin work, the school loses contact with them and it becomes increasingly more difficult for the researcher to conduct a second interview. However, when I started conducting the interviews, some of the students knew each other, and they helped me obtain the correct contact information. In addition to calling them, I tried using Facebook and Google with no success.

In table 8 below, I have chosen to include the students' participation in the mock election. In 2011, 23 of the 27 students participated in the mock election. Two were absent that day. Two of the six students interviewed in school C reported that they did not even know the election had taken place, until after it had been conducted. In school C, the organizing teacher, together with a few students, had put up voting booths in the hall, and the students who wanted to could drop by during recess or mid break to cast their ballot. They were not followed to the ballot box by the teacher, and they were not given time off from class to vote, though this was not the case for the other mock election activities - the school debate and the election square.

In 2013, 15 of the 18 students participated in the mock election. Three of them did not participate because they were absent that day. One of 15 students participating was actually sick, but the teacher had placed a vote for him upon his request. Twelve of the students participated in the school debate. Five did not have a debate at their school and one was at work. All of the students participated at the election square, except for the one student at work.

Table 8: Participating students in the interview study and participation in the mock elections of 2011 and 2013

School ID	Participated in the mock election of 2011	Participated at the election square 2011	Participated in the mock election of 2013	Participated in the school debate 2013	Participated in the election square
A	5	5	0	1	1
B	6	6	5	N.A	5
C	3	5	5	6	6
D	3	0	N.A	N.A	N.A
E	6	6	5	5	5
N	23	22	15	12	17

In 2011, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with students covering eight different themes regarding political attitudes and behavior. I asked questions about the mock elections and what would motivate them for political participation in general and voting in particular. The interview guide is included in Appendix B. The first interview was more structured than the second interview. As the students were two years older and more familiar with the situation, I expected them to talk more freely and I did not depend on a set of prepared questions. The approach was an ordinary language interview (Schaffer 2013). The researcher starts out by drafting a list of questions, with many follow-up questions on hand to help elaborate the initial answers. Ordinary Language Interviewing (OLI) often starts with judgment questions such as, in this study: “Is politics good or bad”. This is supported by elaboration such as “Can you explain? How so? Can you elaborate?” and, finally, encouraging the interviewee to give examples. Through OLI, the interviewee is also given the opportunity to reflect more deeply about what he or she is saying. The interviewer is able to refer to earlier questions to enhance internal logic and uses restatement questions in order to confirm that the researcher understands what the interviewee is saying. This is a preferred method of ensuring the validity of the interpretations during the interview. The topics discussed in 2013 are included in appendix C. In this interview, I explored students’ motivations for political

participation in relation to the mock elections to open up for deeper reflection of the mock elections as political education regarding motivations for political participation. I asked about whether they had voted in the Parliamentary election and why/why not, and their perspectives on the mock election at school.

4.4 Reliability and validity issues in the qualitative study

Reliability issues were addressed using a high-quality recording device. All the data were safely stored according to the data protection for research laws. Transcriptions of the semi-structured, ordinary language interviews lasting from 35 minutes to 90 minutes were all processed and structured through NVivo 10, as well as the fieldnotes.

Creswell (2013) views validation as a distinct strength of qualitative research in that the account made through extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the study all add to the value or accuracy of a study (p. 250). A validation strategy that I have used is engagement and (persistent) observation in the field in which I have aimed at building trust with participants and checking for misinformation during my fieldwork at the schools in two separate election years. I also performed a pilot in August 2011 of six interviews with students in one of the schools to trial the semi-structured interview guide before going into the field. Through doing so, I could work on the questions in order to develop examples to which the teenagers could relate and, in that way, make sure that I obtained a valid impression. Following this, I went back to the office and developed an interview guide for the 2011 interviews.

Another way to ensure validity in qualitative data, practiced in this study, is *member checking* (Creswell, 2013, p. 252); letting the interviewees read the interview transcripts, the quotes used in the text, or the whole analysis in the finished work. The students received the final draft of article two where direct quotes were used, and they were encouraged to comment on the accuracy. None of them challenged the accuracy of the statements.

In the interviews, the participants choose their own alias. This way, when they read the text, they were identifiable. Using an alias is advantageous for this kind of work for three reasons in particular. First of all, the participants like it and it creates a pleasant atmosphere in the interview setting. Secondly, they get a sense of ownership to the project, being something more than a number when they receive the text for perusal. Finally, it benefits the data presentation, making it easier to tell a story and not merely reporting numbers.

Interviews with a sample of students cannot be generalized to a broader population - neither at a national level, nor beyond the student population. However, the in-depth interviews are useful for explaining and grasping the complexity in how youth navigate identities in various ways and the role mock elections as political education play in this process. The interviews with a sample of students give the opportunity for generating and testing hypotheses about this process.

4.5 Analysis of the qualitative data

To analyze the qualitative data, a qualitative content analysis was conducted consisting of three parts. The first part of the process was open coding. This initial process led to numerous codes (in NVivo called free codes). These codes are very close to the empirical data. This is in line with the framework of qualitative approaches. Mayring (2000) argues that the categories should be developed as near as possible to the material and formulated in terms of the material. In the second part, subcategories were devised by sorting the codes into different groups (tree nodes). The third part of the analysis was at a higher level of abstraction relating more to theory than the first two. A few of these categories were grouped as main categories. An example of coding is presented in table 9 below. The raw data and codes are originally in Norwegian, but have been translated to English for the purpose of the example.

Table 9: Example of coding of both interviews and fieldnotes

Data	1 Open coding	2 Categorization	3 Abstraction
<p>Interview quote:</p> <p>Looking at many countries in the world where you don't have the possibility to vote, or you can vote, but it doesn't matter, because the votes disappear and corruption and everything. I think we are so fortunate so we should vote (2013) Peter</p>	<p>Other countries in the world, voting right, voting not matter, votes disappear, fortunate, corruption</p>	<p>Voting in a comparative perspective</p> <p>Support democracy</p> <p>Lucky to live in a democracy</p>	<p>Duty motivation (contractual agreement)</p>
<p>Fieldnotes extract:</p> <p>Another class consisting of 12 boys are standing in a line. The teacher points towards the registrations desks. He points one more time, a guy loiters across the newly swept floor and up to the voting booth. The teacher gives him a thumbs up.</p>	<p>Class, boys, line, teacher aid, voter registration, teacher satisfied.</p>	<p>Voting is the right thing to do</p>	<p>Norms-based motivation</p>

4.6 The quantitative phase of the study

Based on national data from the School Election Surveys (SES) provided by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data in relation to the Parliamentary election of 2013, the quantitative phase of the study aims to investigate the effects of political education in school. Does voting in mock elections have an effect on students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election?

Through building a multivariate model and applying logistic regression, the research question illuminates the current debate about the political education efforts in mobilizing youth for political participation. If the mock elections prove to have an effect on the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013, and this effect persists even after controlling for background variables such as pre-adult socialization factors (Person 2015, p.

691), this strengthens the case for political education in school. If not, it helps reveal the importance of background factors in explaining what makes first-time voters willing to cast a ballot on Election Day. The data is analyzed using SPSS.

4.6.1 Data and operationalization

The School Election Survey is separate from the mock election. The survey is conducted in the classrooms either later the same day or a few days after the mock election has taken place. In 2013, there were 177 participating schools in the survey, but all 419 upper secondary schools across the country participated in the mock election. To avoid selection bias due to school variances, this study is based on a sample weighted on education program and geography (N= 1611).

The dependent variable is “students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013” and the question asked is “*Do you have the right to vote in the forthcoming election, and do you intend to vote?*” excluding all the respondents who do not yet have the right to vote. This study is therefore based on data of the voting intentions among students in 2nd and 3rd grades in upper secondary school. They are referred to as “first-time voters” in the study, not because they have voted in the mock election, but because this is the first year they are *eligible* for voting in a Parliamentary election. This is a sample of a particular age group who are students, and the results may not be generalized to other groups.

The independent variables are presented in table 10 below. First, since the research problem in this dissertation is concerned with political education, a key interest in the quantitative study is the effect of what I refer to as the political education “efforts” of the mock election. According to the absolute education model, education has a direct causal effect on political participation (Persson, 2015, p. 691). In this conventional view, the more education individuals have, the more likely they are to participate in politics. I operationalize the absolute education model as the three elements of participating of voting in the mock election, attending the school debate and the election square. The surveys have been conducted since 1989, and questions about the school debate have been included since 1997. However, 2013 is the first year a question about the election square, which is a new phenomenon from 2011, was included. By analyzing a snapshot of the 2013 data, I therefore have the unique opportunity to examine the effects of participating in the three elements of the mock elections.

Second, Persson (2015) holds that the extreme alternative to the “absolute education model” is the “pre- adult socialization model”. He suggests that examples of such pre-adult factors are personal characteristics, family socioeconomic status and political socialization in the home environment. According to the pre-adult socialization model, it is factors like these rather than education that effect participation. The problem is that the measurement of such pre-adult factors is often omitted in surveys (Persson, 2015, p.691). In the SES, the variables included are background student` characteristics, political socialization in the home environment and political action experiences.

As presented in the table below, when it comes to background student characteristics, the sample includes female and male students, living in different geographical areas, with and without immigrant backgrounds, and attending General studies (including sports and physical education, music, dance and drama) and Vocational education (building and construction, design, arts and crafts, health and social subjects, electricity and electronics, agriculture, fishing and forestry, technical and industrial production).

Regarding political socialization in the home environment, the students are asked about the parents` educational level, which can be an indicator of family background (Lauglo and Øia 2006). The students are also asked about previous political action experiences.

Table 10: Operationalization of the independent variables in the School Election Survey

Theoretical perspectives	Variable	Operationalization
<u>Political education in school</u>	Did you vote in the mock election?	Voting in the mock election (yes=1, no= 0)
	From which party did you get the best impression during the school debate?	Attending the school debate (mentioned a party =1 , did not attend = 0)
	From which party did you get the best impression during the election square?	Attending the election square (1 = mentioned a party, 0 = did not attend)
<u>Student's background characteristics</u>	Are you male or female?	Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)
	Which county do you live in?	Geography (0 = Southern part of Norway, 1 = Northern part of Norway: Troms, Finnmark, Nordland)
	Are you an immigrant?	Immigrant (0 = no, 1 = yes, immigrant from outside West-Europe/N. America)
	Which education program do you attend?	Attending general studies (0= no, 1= yes)
<u>Political socialization in the home environment</u>	What is the highest level of education attained by one of your parents?	Parental level of education (1= parent went to college)
<u>Student's political action experiences</u>	Have you ever signed a petition?	Sign petitions (1 = yes)
	Have you ever been involved in a demonstration?	Demonstrate (1 = yes)
	Are you a member of a political party?	Member of political party (1 = yes)
	Are you a member of a political organization?	Member of political organization (1 = yes)
	Are you a member of a sports/music organization?	Member of sports/music organization (1 = yes)
	Are you a member of a religious organization?	Member of religious organization (1 = yes)

4.7 Reliability and validity in the quantitative study

There are a few comments to be made about the reliability and validity issues when it comes to the quantitative phase of the study.

Participating in mock elections had a positive and significant effect on the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013. When I talk about the "effects" of voting in the mock election, it is important to keep in mind that the study does not have an experimental design. The notion of an ideal experiment would include two students who were identical in nearly every way, except that one of them votes in the mock election and the other does not. As everyone does it, because all schools conduct mock elections and almost all students participate, it is difficult to provide comparable individuals that did not have the opportunity to vote in mock elections (for further elaboration on causality issues see article three).

One aim of this study is to test the effects of voting in the mock election at school, controlled for background factors, on students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election. This effect persisted in the multiple regression analysis. However, I also controlled for political interest in the preliminary analyses³³. Political interest is one of the variables commonly included in survey research to explain variation in political participation. Those who are interested in politics are more likely to vote (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995, p.285). The analyses revealed a positive and significant effect of political interest on the students' willingness to vote in the following election, indicating that political interest can explain some of the variance in the students' attitudes. Yet, what is particularly interesting in relation to the research question is that the effect of voting in mock elections was still positive and significant even when controlling for political interest.

The analyses were conducted several times, and I ran cross-sectional analysis for each year to examine whether the results from 2013 were outliers or atypical data points. There was available data on the effect of voting in mock elections on students' willingness to vote from 1989 to 2013, and voting in the mock election had a positive and significant effect at all data points on the students' willingness to vote in the following election.

Whether the students had attended the school debate was included in the survey every year from 1997 to 2013, except in 2011 when the debates were cancelled. The lack of significant effect of participating in the school debate in 2013 was supported because there was no effect of the debate at either data point.

One challenge in the SES questionnaire is that the students are not actually asked whether they participated in the debate or the election square, they are asked about whether

³³ Political interest was excluded from the final analysis to substantiate the theoretical argument in the article which emphasizes the effect of voting in the mock elections controlled for student's background characteristics, political socialization in the home environment and student's political action experiences.

the school organizes a debate/election square. However, whether the school conducts a debate does not answer the question of whether the student has been present at the debate. Therefore, the question was operationalized as described above: from which party did you get the best impression? In this way, I assume that the students who choose a political party in their response have been present at the debate. The students can choose between all the political parties and “not present”. An improvement of the questionnaire would be to ask: did you attend the school debate/election square?

Furthermore, many of the values on the variables range from 1-4, and were therefore recoded into dummies. A wider range in the values could improve the validity of the research.

Finally, the twofold question asked “*Do you have the right to vote in the forthcoming election, and do you intend to vote?*” excludes all the respondents who do not yet have the right to vote. Further studies will benefit from splitting the question in two, to include younger students’ attitudes towards future voting. There was a highly skewed sample of 1459 students who reported intentions of voting, and 152 who stated that they did not want to vote. Thus, methodological considerations were made to avoid a small- sample bias (for further elaboration see article 3). A broader sample, including first graders’ willingness to vote, might increase the variation in the dependent variable.

4.8 Ethical considerations of the study

There are also ethical considerations that might come up when conducting research involving youth and when engaging in fieldwork in schools.

First, a general consideration is about *reflexivity*. There is no neutral way of entering the fieldsite (Goffman 1989, p. 123)

Subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their situation.

How does the positionality of the researcher influence the research? In what ways does my inclusion or exclusion advance or inhibit the understandings of students’ perceptions? In other words, there are things we cannot leave behind. For instance, I am a young female political scientist, and the question is, “in what way does my presence as a researcher influence the field?” I tried to fit in, but it became clear that I was an outsider. Even though I

was sitting in the midst of the others on the floor during the school debate, I had my notebook and I was an unfamiliar face. Moreover, even though I still consider myself as young, I felt much older than the students, and I am sure the few who noticed me wondered who I was and what I was doing there. To make room for the personal reflections regarding reflexivity, my fieldnotes were organized into descriptive, analytical and personal reflections. This was also important because, in one instance, I needed to hire a student assistant to write fieldnotes in one of the schools to cover all the activities at one day. Having a toolbox prepared made it easier for her to write fieldnotes in a similar way and to discuss the various aspects of the fieldwork when returning to the office.

Second, the evolving norms of transparency and sharing of data in qualitative research inspired me to include an example of the fieldnotes as an appendix to the dissertation summary. However, the ethical considerations made me abandon the idea. There might have been unacceptable risks of the identification of teachers and students because of the rough drafts jotted down by the researcher. Despite this, I do encourage data sharing, and I would argue that we need the resources to prepare data for sharing.

To be able to conduct research involving youth, I applied and received authorization from the Norwegian Data Protection Official for Research dealing with human subjects protection, the Norwegian Institutional Review Board (IRB).

According to the National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway (2006, p.16): “When children and young people participate in research, they are entitled to special protection that should commensurate with their age and needs”. For example, parental consent is usually required when children under the age of 15 take part in research. This is based on the Children Act which establishes that children can choose their education and organizational affiliation from the age of 15.

This study relates to political behavior and attitudes and therefore fits into the “organizational affiliation” category. Even so, some of the schools requested letters for the parents about the project. I sent letters of introduction to the principals, and they all agreed that their schools would participate in the study. For every student interview, they would be able to bring a letter to their parents. This was not for the purpose of obtaining consent, but rather that the students could inform their parents about the study. The letter, approved by the Norwegian IRB, is included in appendix D.

All of the students gave their consent to participate in the study before the interview was carried out. No one refused to participate and none withdrew their participation from this study in the first round of interviews. However, as it was a challenge to get hold of the

interviewees the second time, it is difficult to know whether the withdrawal was due to practical or other reasons. Nonetheless only one of the participants specifically declined the second meeting and further participation. All of the participants were informed about the two rounds at the first meeting.

An important part of science is communication (2006, p. 33). According to the National Committees for Research Ethics, “Many people would like to know what researchers have discovered”. In line with this, and their argument that communication is a requirement of democracy, I have made arrangements to visit the schools and present the findings.

The findings are presented in the next chapter.

5 SYNOPSIS OF THE ARTICLES

In this chapter, the main findings from the three studies are presented. More specifically, the political motivation offered at the mock elections (study I), how the students navigate the political identities presented (study II) and the effect of mock elections on student's willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election (study III). The results are summarized in table 11 below.

Table 11: The three studies (I, II & III) and the results

Study	Focus	Data	Data analysis method	Results
I Mock elections in school and political motivation. A qualitative study of how mock elections justify voting.	The political motivation offered at the mock elections	Fieldnotes from observations during the mock elections in 2011 and 2013 in the five different schools.	Qualitative content analysis of fieldnotes	Political motivation in the: <u>School debate:</u> - Rational (instrumental) - Expressive (identity) - Entertainment (emotions) <u>Election square:</u> - Rational (instrumental) - Expressive (identity) - Entertainment (emotions) <u>Casting a ballot</u> - duty (contractual agreement) and norms - Entertainment (emotions)
II “Trickling down” formal politics: Navigating Political Identities in the Context of Mock Elections at School	The students’ perspectives on the political identities presented in the mock election	Semi structured, OLI, interviews 18 students, all in 3 rd grade in upper secondary school	Qualitative content analysis of interview data	-The political identities are navigated in different ways depending on whether the students can identify with them -The political identities do not motivate the students who are not active members of political parties - The mock elections “trickle down” a norm of voting which is accepted as a school assignment by the students
III Tuning in to formal politics: Mock Elections at School and the Intention of Electoral Participation among First-Time Voters in Norway	The effects of mock elections on students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013	School Election Surveys. N = 1611 Students in upper secondary school eligible for voting	Logistic regression	- Factors have a positive impact on students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election are (1) voting in mock elections (2) parents’ education level (3) attending general studies -Participating in the school debate or the election square does not have an effect on students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election

5.1 The political motivation offered at the mock elections at school

The first study is a qualitative analysis of what kinds of political motivation mock elections at school offer. The data are collected through fieldwork in five upper secondary schools in the Western part of Norway during the election years of 2011 and 2013. The main argument in the study is that the three elements of the mock elections offer various categories

of political motivation. These are: (1) instrumental, (2) duty, (3) identity and (4) entertainment-based motives.

Through the school debate and the election square, the students are offered a political motivation based on the instrumental and identity perspective. In itself, casting a ballot may communicate voting out of duty as a part of the contractual agreement to support democracy. However, a main finding is the strong focus on a norm of voting.

Finally, the mock elections overall offer entertainment as a motivation for political participation. The politicians in the school debate joke, sing songs and make humorous appeals. At the election square, the students are offered balloons, condoms and candy. There are also entertainment motives during the casting of ballots. In this regard, the mock elections are part of a larger trend in society in general of “politainment”, in which politics and entertainment merge to the point of being indistinguishable.

5.2 The students` perspectives on the political identities presented in the mock election

Based on in-depth interviews with 18 students eligible for voting in the Parliamentary election of 2013, the aim in the second study is to reveal how political identities made available in political education in school are interpreted by students. The argument in this study is that students navigate the political identities presented to them in different ways. The students who share the habitus as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1990), accept the political identities. The argument is that students` dispositions make up this internalized framework that allows some choices to be more acceptable than others, depending upon the student. The mock elections present three identities related to formal politics: being a politician, a party member and a voter. Instead of bridging the gap to formal politics, the identities are interpreted in a way that upholds the distinction of politics as something in which youth do not participate. This is both because the politicians in the school debate are interpreted as different from the students in school, but also because the politicians in the debate are different from the image the youth have of “real” politicians.

The findings indicate that, in many respects, the election square appears to communicate better with the students than the school debate, because the students are able to identify with the concept. However, the party members are accepted as being more like “peers”, than the politicians. These are youth already on their way of becoming politicians, which contrasts with most students in this study. The more politically involved and interested people become politicians.

A final argument in this study is that the mock elections simulate an ordinary election. The mock elections “trickle down” a norm of voting, which is accepted as a school assignment by the students. The students consider it more as an assignment than a way of expressing the political identities of youth today.

5.3 The effects of mock elections at school on students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election

The third article examines the effect of participating in mock elections on students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013. The argument is that, if the mock elections prove to have an effect on the voting intentions of the students, and this effect persists even after controlling for background factors such as pre-adult socialization factors (Person 2015, p. 691), this strengthens the case for political education in school. Moreover, if not, it helps reveal into the background factors in explaining what makes first-time voters willing to cast a ballot on Election Day.

Theoretically, the study is founded in political science research on individual level predictors of participation i.e. socio demographics and previous political action experiences.

Empirically, the study draws on the unique data of the school election surveys (SES), a survey conducted in upper secondary schools in relation to the mock election. The study is concerned with what I refer to as political education “efforts” of the mock election. As described in paragraph 4.5.1, the year 2013 is taken as an empirical snapshot of the mock election because this is the first time the survey included questions about election squares. The election squares were introduced as an alternative to school debates in 2011. Consequently, 2013 is the first year it has been possible to collect information about this activity as a part of the mock election in Norwegian schools.

The results give merit to both political education in school and background factors. However, the final model explains less than 20 percent of students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election, thus further studies should look into the individual motivations for electoral participation. This would help clarify what makes first-time voters tune in to formal politics.

The results also indicate no significant effect of participating in the school debate and the election square on the students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election. Thus, the study taps into the debate about what active learning is. Further studies should elaborate on the form and scope of mock elections as a case study of active learning, but also

political education in practice in schools in general with regards to present and future political participation among youth.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

All upper secondary schools in Norway conduct mock elections, and many of them have been doing so for decades. In this dissertation I ask “*Which role does mock elections as political education in school play in motivating youth for political participation?*”

In this concluding chapter, I discuss the findings from the three articles presented. The three studies analyze the research question from different angles, and the discussion draws on interpretations based on the combined strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative data.

6.2 The role of mock elections as political education in school

By applying different methods to the study of mock elections as political education in school, this dissertation makes several important empirical findings that contribute to our prior understanding of the role played by mock elections in school in motivating youth for political participation. The main findings are summarized in the table below:

Table 12: The role played by mock elections as political education in school in motivating young people to vote

<p><u>Mock elections as political education in school:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• present voting as a norm• offer entertainment as a motivation for political participation• present political identities of the politician, the party member and the voter• emphasize the power of one vote in influencing the outcome <p><u>The students’ perspectives on the political motivation offered by mock elections as political education in school:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students accept a norm of voting• Voting in mock elections has a positive impact on the students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election• Most students do not choose to accept the political identities of the politician and the party member• Participating in the school debate and the election square does not have an impact on the students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election

In the following I will start by discussing the motivation offered by the mock elections before moving to the students perspectives on the political motivation.

First, according to the typology of political motivation presented in the theoretical framework, the findings in particular underline the strong role played by norms as a motivation for political participation. The data from the qualitative part of the study (in the first article) based on fieldwork in five upper secondary schools suggest that voting is presented in schools as one of the things that go without saying that all citizens participate in. The students are directed towards the voting booths by their teachers, and “everyone” participates. It must be underlined that there is no such thing as mandatory participation in mock elections. However, in this dissertation I have shown that, *in practice*, it is mandatory. The fieldnotes presented, illustrate how much emphasis the teachers put on increasing turnout and getting all students to vote in the mock election. In four out of five schools, the students are followed to the voting booth, and the teachers or “poll workers” strongly encourage them to vote. It is therefore likely that the variation in turnout in these schools may be explained by factors such as absence from school, for example in relation to workdays in vocational training. This also fits with the lower turnout in vocational schools.

Second, a reasoned hypothesis to be developed from this study is that “politainment”, in which politics and entertainment merge to the point of being indistinguishable, is also making its way into school. The mock elections offer entertainment as a motivation for political participation. Personalization, humor, engaging music, and visuals are all parts of the “politainment” trend making its way across the World Wide Web. Politicians singing songs and joking in the school debate is just one example of how the mock elections offer entertainment as a motivation for political participation.

Third, during the mock elections, the students can interact with members of political parties. The political identity of the politician presented in the school debate and the party member identity presented in the election square are tied to *joining a collective* and belonging to a group. The individual can become a part of a group by joining a community of others who share the same political identity and signal to others, outside and inside the group, a sense of belonging and an identity as “someone who participates”.

Finally, the mock elections emphasize the power of one vote in influencing the outcome. At the school debate, representatives from the youth organizations of the major political parties in the Norwegian Parliament arrive prepared to talk about various political issues and the political differences are made clear. The students are thus presented with the alternatives, for instance which party is in favor of oil drilling off the Norwegian coast and

which party wants stricter immigration laws. These topics are current political issues. The politicians promote their perspectives on the political issues, and the individual student can influence the outcome in the preferred direction by voting. This is also the case with the election square. The party members ask the students about the issues they care about and then they elaborate on these issues so that the students are prepared to make a decision and choose between the parties. The politicians and party members motivate the students for political participation by saying that they should vote according to their preferences because the voter has the potential of influencing the outcome in the preferred direction. I stated (in the first article) that there is little focus on the results of the mock election, both among the teachers and the student poll workers. The Danish mock elections organize an Election Day party at school when the results are ready, but I have not found comparable events in my research. Further studies may benefit from examining post-mock election classroom education more closely or examining teachers' perspectives on integrating the results of the mock election in class.

Even though the mock election is effective in presenting various perspectives of political motivation, what is important is to analyze how the students interpret the motivations for political participation offered.

First, a main finding is that the students' perspectives on the political motivation offered by mock elections underline voting as a norm. The students vote in the mock elections because they are told to do so. In this regard, I argue that the mock elections offer norms as a motivation where voting is about participating, and not political preferences. The students generally do not view voting in the mock elections as a way of expressing the voice of youth today, or pay attention to the outcome of the mock elections. Rather the students I interviewed described voting in the mock election as a school assignment. The results of the logistic regression analysis (in the third article) show that voting in mock elections at school has a positive impact on students' willingness to vote in Parliamentary elections. The students are more willing to vote in Parliamentary elections after voting in the mock elections at school. This might indicate that they accept the norm of voting presented to them in the mock election. However, one question becomes whether norms are enough to motivate political participation. As argued in chapter 2, it is not a given that the students actually participate even if they say they are willing to do so. Mock elections as political education in school nurture norms as a motivation for participation, by presenting to all students that voting is the right thing to do. Imbuing voting as a norm is not a sufficient condition for participation. Norms operate at a collective level and motivates action because there are sanctions from the

society, school, friends, family etc. if the norms are violated. When the students partake in the mock election, they observe other students casting ballots and the teachers encouraging them to do so. Will the students participate in ordinary elections where there might not be any sanctions, or the fear of being sanctioned disappears?

Norms as a motivation for political participation also might challenge the creation of *critical* democratic citizens. Norms are norms because people engage in the practice without really questioning the activity; however democratic attitudes also include critical perspectives. Børhaug (2007a) argues that a part of political education should also be to promote critical discussion. Previous research on Norwegian political education has declared that “there is only one discourse to be found about the political system, and within it only one understanding of the system is articulated: the political system is a flawless representative democracy (Børhaug, 2014, p. 437). There is a lack of critical perspectives in political education. Børhaug further states that “those who are being criticized are those who do not endorse the Norwegian political system, i. e., those who do not vote (Børhaug 2014, p.439). The findings in this dissertation (in particular in the first article) support this argument. Data from the fieldwork indicate that the students who have critical comments towards voting, are told to vote anyway and thus to support the institution of elections without question or dissent.

A second finding related to the students’ interpretations of the political motivation offered by mock elections, is that although the mock elections offer identity as a motivation for political participation, it is questionable whether these identities actually motivate youth. When interviewing students it became evident that the politicians in the debate were considered older than the youth themselves, more engaged, talking a different language and addressing other issues than what the students were interested in. What was important was that these things made the students unable to identify with the identities presented in the debate- it resulted in rejection of the political identities presented in the debate. Both because the politicians were different from the students and because they were not what the students described as “real politicians”. They were unserious and unprofessional. An image unfit for what the students thought politicians *should* be like and how they *should* behave. The survey data revealed no significant effects of participating in the school debate on the students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election.

The interview data also showed that the election square in many ways communicated better with the students than the school debate because the students were able to identify with the party representatives. They were the same age, talked the same language and talked about the issues that the students were interested in. The students accepted the party members more

as “peers” than politicians. However, the students were also clear about the distinctions between themselves and the party representatives at the election square. The party members were more politically involved and already on their way to becoming politicians in contrast to most young people. The survey data also revealed no significant effects of participating at the election square on the students’ willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election.

The interview data suggests that the students did not choose to accept the political identities of the politician and the party member presented in the mock election. Bourdieu (1997) would perhaps describe it as cultural reproduction, since the teenagers who are already political, are the ones who accept the political identities presented. The family is one institution in which this cultural reproduction might take place. The findings in this dissertation also show support for political education at home in the family environment because the results from the quantitative study indicated that parental education level had a positive impact on the students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election. Further studies should look into the effects of political education at home.

In the theoretical framework established in this dissertation, the political motivation typology operated at an individual or collective level. Biesta and Lawy (2006) stated that a trend in citizenship education has been to emphasize the individual. They were critical towards an individualistic conception of citizenship “blaming individuals rather than paying attention to and focusing on the structures that provide the context in which individuals act. Ironically, therefore, active citizenship exemplified a depoliticization and privatization of the very idea of citizenship” (ibid, p. 69).

The findings in this dissertation paints a more ambiguous picture of political education than described by Biesta and Lawy (2006). I find support for a political education offering both collective and individual motivation, but emphasizing collective motivation. The reason for this is that the school debate and election square presents a collective motivation where political identity is tied to joining a group and becoming a part of a collective. A strong norm of voting presented in the mock election can also be considered as collective motivation.

At the same time the findings indicate that the politicians and party members motivate the students for political participation by saying that they should vote according to their preference. In this case voting is presented as an individual act, in which the voter has the potential of influencing the outcome in the preferred direction. Accordingly, they present a single vote with the power to influence the outcome of the election, and the political motivation in the school debate and election square can be described as offering individual motivation. However, it might be difficult to insist that one vote ever really makes a

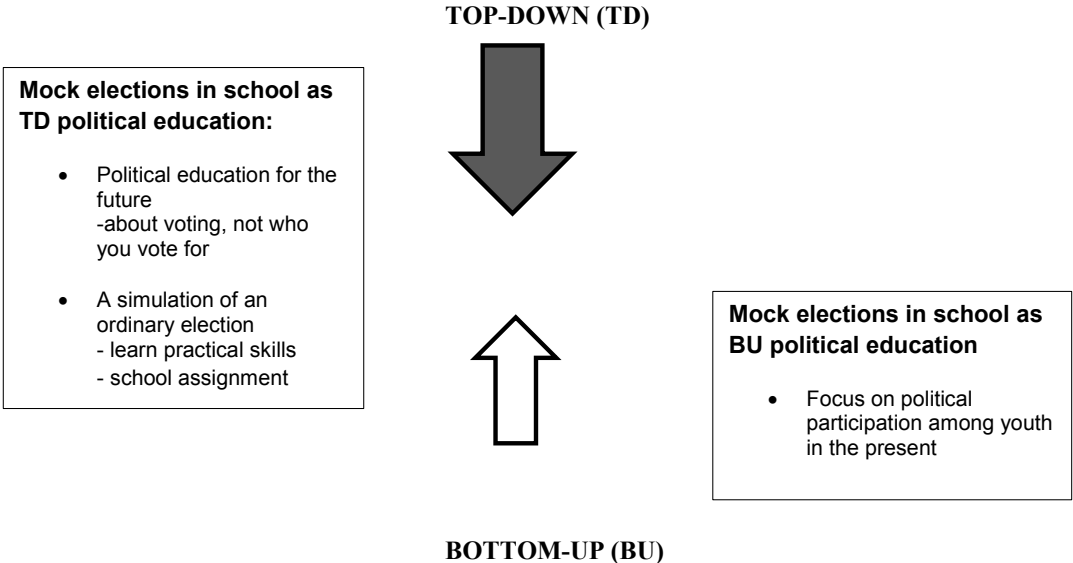
difference. It is the power of the group that makes the benefit larger than the cost, and an individual can influence the result by joining forces in interest groups and vote to get the preferred outcome. The findings in this dissertation in many ways give support to a Norwegian political education described as *voter education* by Børhaug (2008, p., 596). There is a strong emphasis on voting and political parties as carriers of political alternatives.

6.4 Mock elections as top-down political education in school

Mock elections have become an institution of political education in Norway. From an institutional perspective, it is necessary to stop and ask whether the institutions are actually effective in creating democratic citizens.

Recalling the twofold character of the mock elections with empirical traits of both top-down (TD) or bottom-up (BU) political education, the findings in this dissertation support that mock elections in school can be best described as top-down political education. This is illustrated in figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Mock elections as top-down political education in school



There are many traits of the mock election that fit into both categories of the model, but the point is to show the main differences in how the mock elections can be viewed. On the one side, the mock elections simulate an ordinary election to prepare students for future participation, on the other, there is less focus on political participation among youth in the present. The implications of the two alternative descriptions of the mock election is that the mock elections emphasize creating citizens for the future rather than how young people can actually be citizens today. The findings in this dissertation thus point towards a current political education in schools that educates youth for political participation in the future rather than the present.

The findings in this study strengthen the case for political education in school, while underlining that political education is a part of a broader process. What makes young people decide to participate politically is multilayered. When engaging in the topic of political education and motivations for political participation it is important to keep in mind that, as with age groups in the rest of the population, youth are not necessarily a homogenous group where the same motivations apply to all. Therefore, political education in school must draw on various motivations. The typology developed in this study can aid this work in schools in practice. The typology also lays the foundation for further studies that address motivations for political participation. Knowing more about what motivates political participation will help create democratic citizens for today and tomorrow.

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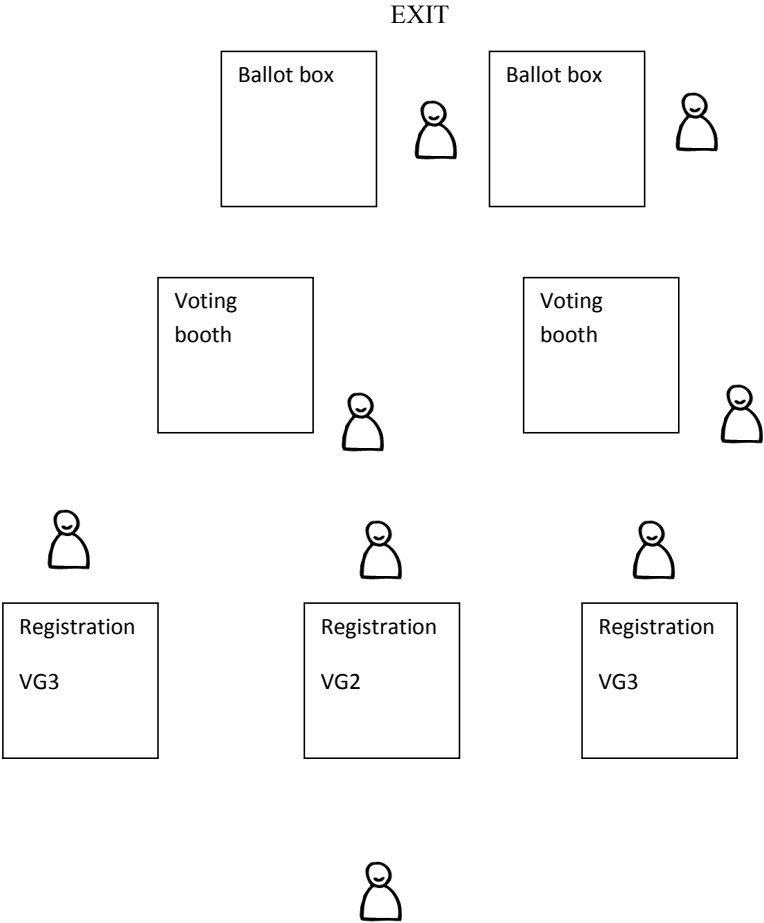
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APPENDIX A: A sketch of the polling station and polling officers on School Election Day, school C.



APPENDIX B

INTERVJUGUIDE FOR ELEVER I VIDEREGÅENDE SKOLE 2011

1. INTRODUKSJON

Om prosjektet

2. Innledning:

Hva tenker du når jeg sier ordet politikk (hvorfor tenker du slik)?

3. Skolen som arena for demokratisk utdanning

Hva har skolen gjort i forbindelse med forberedelsen til valget? (undervisningsopplegg)

Hvordan opplevde du skolevalget? Ikke med/med. Hvilket valg var det egentlig du var med på? Hvordan var det å komme inn i valglokalet/valgavlukket? Hva følte du da?

Snakket du med noen før og etter selve valget? Hvem? Hva snakket dere om?

Hva vil du si du har fått ut av å være med på skolevalget?

4. POLITISK INTERESSE

Hvor interessert vil du si du er i politikk? Hva tror du er årsakene til at du er interessert/ikke er interessert? (hvis ikke interessert tror du at du vil bli det, i tilfelle når?)

Hva slags folk vil du si er interessert i politikk? Hvorfor tror du de er det? Er de annerledes, på hvilken måte?

Vil du si at dette har endret seg etter at du har vært med på skolevalget?

5. Politisk deltagelse : ulike kanaler

Hvordan kan du eller andre unge få sine meninger hørt? (hvilke påvirkningsmetoder etc.)

Opplever du at dine meninger blir hørt? (Hva er det å bli hørt?)

Hvor lett er det for folk å endre på ting i samfunnet (for eksempel, nevne saker de er opptatt av), hvorfor?

Hva kan man gjøre/hvordan kan man gå frem for å endre slike ting (eks. saker man er opptatt av)?

Har du vært med å forsøke på å endre på noe i en sak du er opptatt av for eksempel på skolen eller i området der du bor? (hva, hvor nyttig?)

Har du noen formening om hva som kunne oppmuntre deg til å ta i bruk noen av disse påvirkningsmetodene du kjenner til?

Hva slags folk deltar gjennom sånne påvirkningsmetoder tror du, og hvorfor? Er de annerledes, på hvilken måte?

Vil du si at dette har forandret seg etter at du har vært med på skolevalget?

6. Politisk deltagelse: gjennom valg

Hva betyr det for deg å ha/ville få muligheten til å stemme? Synes du det er viktig å stemme?

Hvorfor, hvorfor ikke?

Jeg har noen påstander knyttet til valgdeltagelse. Hva tenker du om: (er du enig/enig-hvorfor?)

- En enkelt stemme har liten eller ingen betydning for resultatet
- Det krever for mye å stemme i forhold til hva jeg får igjen for det
- Det er viktig å stemme for å opprettholde demokratiet
- Det er en samfunnsplikt å stemme ved valg
- Man blir sett ned på hvis man ikke gidder å stemme ved valg
- Det er viktig å stemme for å påvirke hvordan samfunnet skal være
- Jeg tenker ikke så mye på nytteverdien av å stemme, men det er en mulighet til å delta i demokratiet
- Hvis du ikke er med å stemme, kan du ikke klage

Gleder du deg til å stemme, hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

Hva vil oppmuntre deg/motivere deg til å stemme?

Hva betyr det om unge stemmer eller ikke?

Noen sier at unge tenker på at de en dag skal bli gammel, mens de eldre tenker ikke på de unge. Hva tenker du om det?

Stemmerettsalderen er nå 16 år i 20 prøvekommuner i Norge. Hva tenker du om å senke stemmerettsalderen til 16 år?

Ekstraspørsmål til dem som har stemmerett gjennom forsøksprosjektet: Hvordan bestemte du deg for hva du skulle stemme? Grunner til det? Hvis du ikke stemte, er det noe som ville oppmuntret deg til å stemme, grunner til det?

Etter 22. juli er det mange som snakker om viktigheten av demokratiet og det å stemme. Vil du si det beskriver også hvordan vennene dine og du tenker?

Vil du si at dette har forandret seg etter at du har vært med på skolevalget?

7. FORVENTNINGOM YTRE POLITISK MESTRING

Hvor stor betydning tror du at resultatet av valget i høst vil få for hva som vil skje i din kommune de neste fire årene?

Jeg har noen påstander. Hva tenker du om:

- Det spiller ingen rolle hvem som blir valgt eller hvordan valgresultatet blir
- Gjennom valg kan jeg virkelig være med å bestemme hvordan landet skal styres

Vil du si at dette har forandret seg etter at du har vært med på skolevalget?

8. FORVENTNING OM INDRE POLITISK MESTRING

Noen sier at politikken er innviklet og vanskelig å forstå. Hva tenker du om det?

Hva vil du si det er å ha greie på politikk?

Hva slags folk er det som har greie på politikk? (Hvordan vil du beskrive dem)

Hva tenker du om deg selv, vil du si du har greie på politikk?

Vil du si at dette har endret seg etter at du har vært med på skolevalget?

10. AVSLUTNING

Hvordan opplever du at det du lærer på skolen står i forhold til det du for eksempel ser i media, hører hjemme eller fra venner? (evt. andre agenter)

Nå som vi har snakket sammen en stund, har du lyst å si om det er noe spesielt parti du vil si du sympatiserer med? Hvilket, hva er det du liker/støtter?

Er det noe annet du har lyst til å tilføye med tanke på unge og politikk?

APPENDIX C

INTERVJUGUIDE FOR ELEVER I VIDEREGÅENDE SKOLE 2013

1. INTRODUKSJON

Om prosjektet

2. Innledning:

Hva tenker du når du hører ordet politikk? Hva betyr ”politikk” for deg?/hvilken følelse får du av ordet?

Hva betyr valg for deg.

3. Skolevalg & forberedelser

Hva har skolen gjort i forbindelse med forberedelsen til valget? Kan du fortelle om det?

Valgtorg /debatt

Utdype begge deler

Hva husker du fra forrige valg? Var det bedre/dårligere?

Hva vil du si du har fått ut av å være med på valgtorg/debatt? Hvorfor tror du det finnes slikt?

Hva betyr skolevalget for deg?

-

Hvordan opplevde du skolevalget? Ikke med/med. Hva motiverte deg til å delta evt. ikke delta?

Hvilket valg var det egentlig du var med på? Hvordan var det å komme inn i valglokalet/valgavlukket? Hva følte du da?

Snakket du med noen før og etter selve valget? Hvem? Hva snakket dere om? Hva var læreren sin rolle?

Hva vil du si du har fått ut av å være med på skolevalget? Hvorfor tror du det finnes skolevalg?

4. Politisk deltagelse:gjennom valg

Hva betyr det for deg å ha fått muligheten til å stemme? Synes du det er viktig å stemme? Hvorfor, hvorfor ikke?

Hvordan var det å stemme for første gang? Skal du stemme neste gang? Er det forskjell på lokalvalg og stortingsvalg?

Hva tenker du om skolevalget nå som du har vært med på det ordinære valget? Vil du si skolevalget betydde noe for deg? Debatten/valgtorget i forhold til om du ville stemme ved valget?

Jeg har noen påstander knyttet til valgdeltagelse. Hva tenker du om: (er du enig/enig-hvorfor?)

- En enkelt stemme har liten eller ingen betydning for resultatet
- Det krever for mye å stemme i forhold til hva jeg får igjen for det
- Det er viktig å stemme for å opprettholde demokratiet
- Det er en samfunnsplikt å stemme ved valg
- Man blir sett ned på hvis man ikke gidder å stemme ved valg
- Jeg stemmer for å påvirke resultatet på en måte som er best for meg og mine
- Jeg stemmer for å si min mening, det er viktig for meg å gi den stemmen, selv om jeg ikke blir hørt
- Det spiller ingen rolle hvem som blir valgt eller hvordan valgresultatet blir
- Gjennom valg kan jeg virkelig være med å bestemme hvordan landet skal styres

Hva betyr det om unge stemmer eller ikke?

Noen sier at unge tenker på at de en dag skal bli gammel, mens de eldre ikke tenker på de unge. Hva tenker du om det?

Stemmerettsalderen er nå 16 år i 20 prøvekommuner i Norge. Hva tenker du om å senke stemmeretten til 16 år?

Etter 22. juli er det mange som snakker om viktigheten av demokratiet og det å stemme. Vil du si det beskriver også hvordan vennene dine og deg tenker?

5. AVSLUTNING

Hvordan opplever du at det du lærer på skolen står i forhold til det du for eksempel ser i media, hører hjemme eller fra venner? (evt. andre agenter)

Nå som vi har snakket sammen en stund, har du lyst å fortelle om det er et spesielt parti du vil si du sympatiserer med? Hvilket, hva er det du liker/støtter?

Hvordan har det være å gjøre opp din mening? Hvordan vil du si at skolevalget har bidratt?

Er det noe annet du har lyst til å tilføye med tanke på unge og politikk?



30.09.2011

Til elever/foresatte

Angående elevintervju knyttet til en studie av skolevalgene som politisk utdanning

I forbindelse med et doktorgradsprosjekt om politisk utdanning i videregående skole ved Universitetet i Bergen intervjuer jeg elever ved flere ulike skoler i Hordaland i tilknytning til valgene i 2011 og 2013.

Prosjektet handler om hvilken rolle skolevalgene har i den politiske utdanningen av elever i videregående skole. Tittel på prosjektet er "Politisk forståelse blant unge: en studie av skolevalgene som politisk utdanning i den videregående skole."

En økende bekymring knyttet til synkende valgdeltagelse og lavere politisk aktivitet i de fleste vestlige demokratier, har ført til et større fokus på unge menneskers involvering i demokratiske prosesser og deltagelse i demokratiet. Hvordan tilrettelegger skolen og hvilken rolle spiller skolevalgene i den politiske utdanningen? Skolevalg har vært arrangert av Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste på oppdrag fra Utdanningsdirektoratet i Norge siden 1989, og blir gjennomført i forkant av alle ordinære valg.

Jeg ønsker å gjennomføre dybdeintervju med elever som har begynt i første klasse i høst, og i utgangspunktet også intervju de samme elevene ved valget i 2013. Det velges ut en gruppe som har stemmerett som 16-åringer og en gruppe som ikke har stemmerett før fylte 18 år (kontrollgruppe). 30 elever intervjues høsten 2011 (kommune- og fylkesvalg) og 2013 (Stortingsvalg).

Dybdeintervjuene vil gjennomføres enkeltvis i etterkant av skolevalget og vare ca. 45 minutter avhengig av hvor mye elevene har på hjertet. Samtalene blir tatt opp på bånd. Deltagelse er helt frivillig, og personsensitive opplysninger vil ikke bli registrert. Datainnsamlingen vil være klarert av Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste i henhold til gjeldende regelverk.

Resultatene presenteres i en doktorgradsavhandling som skal ferdigstilles i 2015.

Takk for deltagelsen. Ikke nøl med å ta kontakt dersom det skulle være noen spørsmål.

Mvh

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PART II:

LIST OF ARTICLES

I

Skolevalg og politisk motivasjon - En kvalitativ studie av grunner skolevalget gir for hvorfor ungdom skal delta i valg. *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning* 2015, 56(3) p. 289–320.

II

“Trickling down” formal politics: Navigating Political Identities in the Context of Mock Elections at School. In review in an International Journal.

III

TUNING IN TO FORMAL POLITICS. Mock Elections at School and the Intention of Electoral Participation among First Time Voters in Norway. In process, revise and resubmit, in *Politics*.

TUNING IN TO FORMAL POLITICS

Mock Elections at School and the Intention of Electoral Participation among First Time Voters in Norway

Julie A. Ø. Borge

ABSTRACT

Does voting in mock elections at school have an effect on students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election? Empirically tested through the case of mock elections at schools in Norway in relation to the Parliamentary election of 2013, the multivariate logistic regression analyses of the data shows that voting in mock elections proves to have an effect on the students' willingness to vote and that this effect persists after controlling for background factors. The results strengthen the case for political education in school while simultaneously acknowledging its limits.

KEYWORDS

Electoral participation -Norway-political education-mock elections-first time voters

1. INTRODUCTION

Politicians, media and researchers alike are concerned about young people's attitudes towards political participation in general and voting in particular. A declining electoral participation in advanced democracies alerts a disengagement from the community and political

life (Putnam, 2000; Wattenberg, 2012), a lack of political knowledge (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Galston, 2001) and a generation of apolitical youth (Øia, 1995).

This study's objective is to examine the role mock elections as political education in school play in stimulating young people to vote. The research question is: "Does voting in mock elections at school have an effect on students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election?"

Much of the scholarly interest in the individuals relation to the political system grows out of the claim that voting is democracy's *sine qua non*, without which it cannot be. Thus, a decreasing voter turnout may not only challenge one of the core characteristics of a democratic regime but also question the effectiveness of the institutions in imbuing in young people the desired political behavior and support for the regime. At a macro level, this process, in which institutions legitimate support for the regime, is in political science research often referred to as *political socialization*, with the main objective of enabling system persistence (Easton, 1965; Hyman, 1959). Democratic states depend on institutions to promote democratic citizens (March and Olsen, 1995), and the school has, in many countries, been given the role of safeguarding this functional dimension of education (Rokkan, 1987).

Thus, it is of high relevance to study the field of *political education*, which, in this article, is defined as 'the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for citizens to *participate in the political process*'. This definition is distinct from "civic" or citizenship education, which in the literature, is treated in a broader manner; it is instilling in young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them 'to *participate in the communities* of which they are a part, locally, nationally and globally' (Arthur, Davies and Hahn 2008, p.5, own italics).

An example of institutionalized political education can be found in Norway where mock elections were introduced after the Second World War to promote democratic participation, values and attitudes for the future (Storstein, 1946). The mock elections have expanded through

the last 70 years to include all upper secondary schoolsⁱ. Norway is the sole country in the world with a long tradition for and a national frame to this activity, which is conducted every second year a week before the local or Parliamentary elections. The Norwegian mock elections involve other educational features than the act of voting. There is a school debate where youth politicians visit the school and debate current political issues, and since 2011 there has also been an election square. The election square is a market place where the students can meet and interact with party members from the political youth organizations.

This study is based on data from the 2013 School Election Surveys (SES), collected by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)ⁱⁱ, and conducted among students in upper secondary schools in Norway in the classrooms either later the same day or a few days after the mock election has taken place. In 2013, there were 177 participating schools in the survey across the country. To avoid selection bias due to school variances, this analysis is based on a sample of students weighted on educational program and geography (N=1611).

The relation between education and political participation is perhaps the most well-established relation that exists in research on political behavior (Persson 2015, p.689). However, we do not know the mechanisms at work. Persson (2015, p.691) asks whether education is a direct cause of political participation or if it works as a proxy for other factors. 'The Absolute Education Model' suggests that it is the skills and knowledge gained through education that matters; the 'Pre- adult Socialization Model' is the extreme alternative where education is merely a proxy for factors such as family socioeconomic status, or political socialization in the home environment and personal characteristics.

I conduct a multivariate logistic regression analysis to test if voting in mock elections proves to have an effect on the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election and whether this effect persists after controlling for background factors. It is important to keep in mind that the study does not have an experimental design. The mock election takes place earlier

in the day or a few days before the students answer the survey, and the causal effect might be understood as if participating in mock elections is responsible for students' positive attitudes towards voting. However, in general, a process has many causes. Statistical studies, which omit all contextual factors except those codified in the variables selected for measurement or used for constituting a population of cases, necessarily leave out many contextual and intervening variables (George and Bennett 2005, p.21). Therefore, it might be that the students who participated in the mock elections already were favorable towards attending elections and that other underlying factors can explain the relation between voting in mock elections and willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election. Comparisons made under "other things equal" have a causal interpretation, but real "other things equal" comparisons are hard to engineer (Angrist and Pischke, 2015). All schools conduct mock elections and almost all students participate, thus it is difficult to provide comparable individuals that did not have the opportunity to vote in mock elections.

However, one of the current debates in civic and political education research regards the role the school plays in comparison to background factors (such as parental socialization see for example Neundorf et al., 2015). In this case, the mock elections make an interesting test. If voting in mock elections prove to have an effect on the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election and this effect persists after controlling for background factors such as pre- adult socialization factors, it strengthens the case for political education in school.

Section 2 provides a brief overview of the literature on political education in school with regard to political participation before moving on to the presentation of the case of Norwegian mock elections in section 3. Section 4 presents the data and method applied in the empirical analysis. The results are presented in section 5. Finally, a discussion and conclusion follow.

2. POLITICAL EDUCATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In regard to research on *political education* in school, many scholars, based on the writings of John Dewey, argue in favor of active learning through participation such as live simulations in class, hands-on experiences with political campaigns and voting (Coffey, Miller and Feurestein, 2011), mock trials (Bengston and Sifferd, 2010), mock congress and other forms of project-based learning (Parker et al., 2013). Others focus on the general democratic atmosphere of the school, such as having an open classroom climate (Sherrod, Torney-Purta and Flanagan 2010; Hooghe and Stolle, 2004). For instance, Hooghe and Dassonneville (2013) show how an open classroom climate promotes the willingness to vote in future elections among adolescents by presenting several sides of the issues, encouraging students to express their own opinions, and encouraging them to make up their own minds and discuss issues with people having different opinions.

The whole idea about active learning and schools as democratic institutions is to enable students to participate and, thus, learn from their democratic experiences (Solhaug 2003). The underlying theoretical assumption is that participatory experiences in school are transferred to the “real world”. Through engagement in an activity, individuals change and handle a later situation in ways prepared by their own participation in the previous situation (Rogoff 1995, p.153). However, there is minimal knowledge regarding mock elections. The mock elections in Norway provide an excellent case study of active learning because it offers a meeting place between youth politicians and students in a school debate, an election square and the opportunity to vote in all upper secondary schools. Thus, the mock elections as political education also taps into the debate of what active learning is. This study tests the effects of three political education “efforts” as active learning: attending a school debate, an election square and voting in mock elections, on the students` willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election.

By now, it has become generally accepted that there is a wide array of factors that may be of importance when explaining the intentions of political participation. On the one hand, scholars stress contextual factors (Campbell, 2006), institutional frameworks (Lijphart, 1999), individual level predictors of socio-demographics such as gender, age and socioeconomic status (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980) or resources such as time, money and civic skills (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995). On the other hand, Almond and Verba's (1963) cross cultural study was a main breakthrough in the 1960s highlighting the role of individual level cognitive, evaluative and affective explanations. Researchers agree the following individual level background variables are of basic relevance, and they are expected to be so in the Norwegian case: gender, place of residence, educational program, socio-economics and previous political action experiences.

First, there has been persistence in the gender gap (Inglehart and Norris, 2003) where men traditionally have been found to participate to a higher extent than women in all forms of political participation. However, studies on adolescents have shown that girls and boys tend to prefer different forms of participation and that girls are in fact more likely to state that they will vote than boys (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2013; Hooghe and Stolle, 2004). In Norway, previous research has found no gender gap effect (Strømsnes, 2003).

Second, more political activity is predicted in urban rather than in rural settings according to the center-periphery paradigm (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). The levels of political participation vary, particularly with regards to voter turnout in the Northern part of Norway (lower voter turnout) and the Southern part. Additionally, immigrants from outside Western Europe typically have a lower rate of political participation in Norway than other groups. At the Parliamentary election of 2013, the immigrant turnout rate was approximately 50 percent compared to 78.2 percent (SSB 2014) for the general population.

Third, previous research has shown that students in general educational programs (academics) are more likely to participate and to intend to participate politically than students from vocational programs (Ekman, 2007). In Norway, school education is compulsory to the 10th grade, and nearly all students attend upper secondary school as well. However, upper secondary school offers both general educational programs, which approximately six of ten students attend; and vocational programs (SSB 2016).

Fourth, with regards to “the socioeconomic status model” of education, income and occupation, which has traditionally been a strong predictor of participation (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980), the students are naturally not asked about their income and occupation since they are students. However, the survey includes a question regarding the parents’ education level. Parents’ education level can be an indicator of family background (Lauglo and Øia 2006), and political socialization in the home environment.

The previous political action experiences the students have may be an indicator of a personal characteristic: whether “I am someone who participates” (Beaumont et al., 2006). Being a member of an organization can have a positive impact on participation and attitudes towards participation. Those who are already active in youth associations and volunteering are more likely to participate later on (Hooghe, 2003). A consistent finding in research thus far is that young people distance themselves from “formal” politics, for example, voting and becoming a member of a political party, whereas direct forms of participation such as boycotts, demonstrations and short-term engagements increase in scope (White, Bruce and Ritchie, 2000; Taft, 2006; Dalton, 2008; Ødegård, 2010). In accordance with this finding, Quintelier (2015) argues that organizations are the political socialization agents with the strongest effect on political behavior among adolescents. In Norway, the youth organizations of the political parties are essential parts of the mock election.

3. THE NORWEGIAN CASE OF MOCK ELECTIONS AT SCHOOL

At a macro level, political education is introduced in schools to imbue in young people the appropriate behavior to uphold the political system (Easton, 1965). According to March and Olsen (1995), democratic states depend on institutions to create democratic citizens. In Norway, the mock elections have become an institution of political education; however, there are mock elections conducted by organizations and school in countries around the world (McDevitt and Spiro 2006; Linimon and Joslyn, 2002; Undervisningsministeriet 2015, MUCF 2015). These mock elections differ with regards to educational policies such as school support and cooperation with organizations, age (who participates and when), curriculum, whether the mock elections are an integrated part and the teaching practices are related to them, the actors (roles of teachers and youth parties) and the publication of the results.

In Norway, the mock elections are nationally coordinated, administered by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) and financed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The NSD analyzes and reports the results. The mock elections have received increased attention from the media, politicians and society in general, and all schools arrange them prior to parliamentary and local elections in Norway. Thus, all students have had the possibility to vote at least once in school before actually receiving the right to voteⁱⁱⁱ. The activities proceed as follows: The school debate assembles one representative from each of the seven major political parties, and they present several political issues chosen by either the teachers or a few of the students. The duration of the debate varies from school to school, from one hour to two and a half hours; students gather in a gymnasium or assembly hall. During the debate, the politicians discuss current political events and issues. Thereafter, there is an election square where the students have the opportunity to participate in discussions with the party representatives and ask them about specific political issues they are interested in. Either the same day or a few days after the party politicians have visited the school; the school conducts

the mock election in a classroom, a gym or a common area. There was a turnout in the mock election in 2013 of 81.1 percent (NSD 2013).

4. DATA AND METHOD

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of voting in mock elections on the students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election. As was noted in the introduction in section 1, the idea is to test if voting in mock elections proves to have an effect on the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election, and whether this effect persists after controlling for background factors such as pre- adult socialization factors (Person 2015, p. 691).

The questionnaire used in the survey consists of 58 items on students' political attitudes and behavior in addition to background information. The dependent variable is *willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election*; this was phrased as follows in the questionnaire: "Do you have the right to vote in the forthcoming election, and do you intend to vote?" The problem with the twofold question is avoided by solely examining those who have the right to vote. When excluding everyone who did not have the right to vote, the sample consists of 1611 students. Of those, 9.4 percent responded that they have the right to vote, but do not intend to vote, and the significant majority of 90.6 percent said they have the right to vote and do intend to vote. This is a high number, particularly because first time voters at the age of 18-21 generally have a lower turnout than the remainder of the population. In the Parliamentary election in 2013, the turnout rate among first time voters was 66.5 percent, an increase from 56.2 percent in 2009. In the local election in Norway of 2011, 46 percent of first time voters decided to cast a ballot on Election Day compared with 33 percent four years earlier (Bergh 2013).^{iv} In this context, I want to emphasize two aspects.

First, this study addresses students' *willingness* to vote. The survey is conducted after the mock election, approximately one week before the Parliamentary election. Therefore, whether the students actually have voted is not the focus of the analysis. Nevertheless, asking about the likelihood of future political participation is, in most youth research, the sole means of grasping electoral behavior among a group that does not have the right to vote (Hooghe and Dassonville, 2013; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001). There is a large discrepancy between intentions to vote and actual turnout rates for first time voters. Two reasons may explain this. One regards how survey data may overstate turnout because respondents misreport their own participation (Denny and Doyle, 2008)^v. The other reason may be that abstainers are typically less likely than voters to participate in surveys overall. However, in this case, the students are encouraged to answer and complete the survey during class, which ensures a non-biased and high response rate.^{vi}

Second, there are methodological considerations to consider when working with a highly skewed sample. Of the 1611 students who had the right to vote, 1459 reported intentions of voting, whereas 152 stated that they had the right to vote but did not want to use it. One challenge is that the study may suffer from a small-sample bias (King and Zeng, 2001). What is important with regards to sufficient variation on the dependent variable in a logistic regression is that the total sample is sufficiently high to include a high number of cases on each value (1) or (0). The number of students who said that they did not intend to vote was three digits, and this is not an excessively small number. Because the research question has a dependent variable, which is a dummy, logistic regression was applied.

Two additional comments must be made before the presentation of the results. First, the sample in this study consists of a particular group of respondents, and the results may not be generalizable to groups other than students. Second, 2013 was chosen as an empirical snapshot of the mock election because this is the first time the survey included questions about election

squares. The election squares were introduced as an alternative to school debates in 2011^{vii}. I therefore have the unique opportunity to examine the effects of participating in the three elements of the mock elections on the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election.

The strategy of the analysis presented in the next section is to start out with a binary analysis of the impact of voting in the mock election, followed by the activities of the mock election in detail: the effects of participating in the school debate and the election square on students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election (Model I). The final model (Model II) examines the effect of participating in the political education of mock elections at school controlling for the background factors expected to have an impact on intentions of political participation.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Does voting in mock elections at school have an effect on the students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election? A high majority of the students in the sample voted in the mock elections at school. There were 1359 students who participated, and 221 who did not (N=1580, 31 respondents N.A). A correlation analysis was computed to examine the relation between voting in the mock election and the intentions of voting in the Parliamentary election. Overall, there is a weak and positive correlation ($r = 0.212, N = 1580, p = .000$) between voting in the mock election and the students' willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013.

Exploring the relations more thoroughly in a cross tabulation in Table 1 reveals that 88.4 percent of the students who voted in the mock election intended to vote in the Parliamentary election.

Table 1: The relationship between voting in the mock election and intentions to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013

		Intention to vote in Parliamentary election	
		YES	NO
Did you vote in the mock election?	NO	11,6 % (166)	36,7 % (55)
	YES	88,4 % (1264)	63,3 % (95)
Total		100,0 % (1430)	100,0% (150)

Moving to a binary analysis of the impact of voting in the mock election, the results presented in Table 2 below show that there is a positive and significant effect of voting in the mock election. Voting in the mock election increases the likelihood that students intend to vote in the following Parliamentary election. The Exp(B) column, the Odds Ratio, tells us that the students who have voted in the mock election at school are about 4 and a half times (or 340 percent) more likely to be willing to vote in the Parliamentary election than those who have not participated in the mock election. The explained variance of voting in the mock election on the willingness to vote is 7.3 percent.

Table 2: The impact of voting in the mock election at school on whether the students intend to vote

Voting in the mock election	4.408 (.188)***
Nagelkerke	.073
N	1580

*Note: The table shows the Odds Ratio (Exp (B) and (S.E)). *** p < .001*

Table 3 below explores the impact of attending the school debate and the election square on the intention to vote in the following Parliamentary election. In regard to the activities of mock elections, it is necessary to emphasize that all students do not engage in all activities. It

may very well be that a student participates in the debate but does not attend the mock election or vice versa. In addition, the election square has a different, less mandatory feel to it. In the sample (N=1611), 64.4 percent of the students attended the debate, whereas 40.5 percent attended the election square. There is a weak and positive correlation ($r = 0.137$, $N= 1611$, $p = .000$) between attending the school debate and the students willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election of 2013. This finding is also the case with attending the election square ($r = 0.115$, $N=1611$, $p=.000$).

The results in Table 3 show that students who were present at the school debate are 2.2 times (or 122 percent) more likely to be willing to vote in the Parliamentary election than the students who were absent from the school debate. Also, the students who attended the election square were about 2.3 times (or 129 per cent) more likely to intend to vote in the Parliamentary election than their schoolmates who did not visit the party representatives at the election square. In addition, voting in the mock election continues to have a strong and positive effect on the willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election. The overall goodness of fit experiences an increase to 12.4 percent.

Table 3: The impact of attending the school debate and election square on the intention to vote

	Model I
Voting in the mock election	3.778 (.194)***
Attending the school debate	2.218 (.179)***
Attending the election square	2.289 (.209)***
Nagelkerke	.124
Hosmer & Lemeshow test	.997
N	1580

Note: The table shows the Odds Ratio (Exp (B)) and (S.E). *** $p < .001$

From the results in Model I, the conclusion may be derived that the mock elections have a very important impact on the students’ willingness to vote in the Parliamentary election. What

is the effect of participating in the mock election activities when controlling for the background factors?

Table 4 summarizes the results when conducting a multiple logistic regression controlling for the following background characteristics; gender, geography, immigrant background, current educational track, and parental level of education and political action experiences^{viii}.

Table 4: Final model explaining the intention to vote

	Model II
Voting in the mock election	3.874(.300)***
Attending the school debate	1.337 (.268)
Attending the election square	1.661 (.291)
Gender (0=male, 1= female)	1.432 (.271)
Geography (0 = center, 1= periphery)	.562 (.319)
Immigrant (1= immigrant from outside West-Europe/N. America)	.599 (.396)
Attending general studies (1= yes)	2.498 (.276)***
Parental level of education (1= parent went to college)	1.779 (.277)**
Sign petitions (1=yes)	1.676 (.350)
Demonstrate	1.567 (.430)
Member of political party	1.772 (.559)
Member of political organization	1.080 (.593)
Member of sports/music organization	1.607 (.322)
Member of religious organization	.411 (.469)
Nagelkerke	.196
Hosmer & Lemeshow test	.923
N	1062

Note: The table shows the Odds Ratio (Exp (B)) and (S.E). * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

First, there is no gender effect. This supports research on political participation in Norway. This finding contradicts the youth-specific hypotheses suggesting that there is a gender gap among young people (Hooghe and Stolle 2004). However, the young people in this study are of sufficient age to have the right to vote; therefore, it is not possible to say whether there, up this point, has been an effect. Additionally, the results solely indicate that there is no effect of gender on the willingness to vote; however, a gender gap in regard to other forms of political participation may remain.

Second, there is also no effect of whether the students live in urban or rural areas nor the immigrant variable on their willingness to vote, contradicting the expectation that there is lower political participation among people in the Northern part of Norway and immigrants.

Third, membership in various organizations does not have an impact on the students' willingness to vote as opposed to Quintelier's findings (2015) that organizations have the strongest effect on political behavior among adolescents. In addition, partaking in demonstrations does not have a significant effect. This result supports the persistent finding in research on political participation among youth that there exists a distinction between informal and formal forms of political participation.

The results in Table 4 further show that two background factors, attending general studies and parent's educational program, have a positive and significant impact on the students willingness to vote. The students who attend general educational programs are about 2.5 times (or 149 percent) more likely of being willing to vote than the students who attend vocational education programs. Additionally, the students who have a parent who has attended college are about 1.7 times (or 77.9 percent) more likely to be willing to vote in the Parliamentary election than the students who do not have college educated parents.

A main finding in Table 4 is that participating in the mock election continues to have a strong and significant effect. The students who have voted in the mock election at school are about 3.8 times (or 287 percent) more likely to be willing to vote in the Parliamentary election than those who have not participated in the mock election. All the other variables lose significance with the exception of educational program and parental level of education. Although participating in the school debate and election square had significant effects on students intentions of voting in Model I, the significance of the effects were lost in the final model. Neither participation at the debate nor the election square have an effect on the students'

willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election when controlling for the background factors.

A brief summary of the models' explanatory power shows that the binary analysis had an explanatory power of approximately seven percent. The first model analyzed the effects of the activities of the mock election, explaining as much as twelve percent of the variance. However, the final model appears to fit better than the previous, explaining nearly 20 percent of the students willingness to cast a ballot on Election Day.

6. DISCUSSION

Examining the effect of mock elections is interesting in itself because it contributes to our prior understanding of what influences political participation. The persistence of the effect of voting in mock elections on students' willingness to vote after controlling for background factors strengthens the case for political education in school.

Political education can be defined as the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for citizens to participate in the political process. There is no doubt that voting in the mock election has an influence on students *attitudes* because the findings in this study show that voting in mock elections increases the willingness to vote. What may explain this?

When mock elections are conducted at school, it simulates a Parliamentary election because the votes cast do not actually elect anyone. As a simulation, mock elections become a part of the "curriculum", a school assignment for the students but also for the teachers who interrupt the classroom routine to make time for voting. Then, when the students partake in the election, they observe other students casting ballots and the teachers encouraging them to do so. Thus, voting at school becomes a means of promoting voting as the norm. It is an activity that interrupts the daily routine and that "everyone" participates in. However, the mock

elections are also a means for students to express their political identities: am I someone who votes? The results of the mock elections paint a picture of the political voice of youth today. Further studies are needed to explore these relations. First and foremost, what are the students' perspectives on mock elections as political education? Additionally, qualitative differences in how the schools conduct the mock elections can lay the framework for a comparative analysis of schools. For instance, are the students encouraged to participate by their teachers? Is the mock elections organized freely, or are the student followed to the voting booths? How do these school-level factors impact students' willingness to vote?

This study shows that practice and participation in activities in school is a means of enabling youth to participate in the political process. However, the effect is limited to voting in the mock election, and not partaking in the activities of the mock election: the school debate and the election square. This is interesting particularly because the school debate is the main event the schools organize, to the extent that it has become an institution of political education in itself. During this debate, young party politicians present their view on various political issues. According to the literature, a willingness to vote can be promoted by presenting several sides of the issues, encouraging students to express their own opinions and decide for themselves and to discuss issues with people having different opinions (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2013). Initially, the debate would fulfill the two criteria of bringing current political events and debates into school and presenting several sides of the political issues, therein promoting the students' willingness to vote. However, the debate has no effect on the students' intentions of voting. The election square in which the students can discuss the issues with people having different opinions also has no effect. This article tests the effect of participating in the mock elections as active learning. The findings show that the active learning experience of casting a ballot "matters more" than attending a debate or an election square. Without in-depth studies of the activities occurring in relation to the mock election, it is difficult

to explain their lack of effect. Thus, further studies need to explore what occurs when the political youth parties and the students meet and interact.

Additionally, the findings in this study emphasize the continued relevance of two background factors. First is the parents' education level. This factor suggests that the school is but one arena for political education, in which youth make up their minds regarding electoral participation. The influence of parents cannot be underestimated. The pre- adult socialization factor of what occurs at home has a significant impact. These findings have implications for political education because it emphasizes the limits of educational efforts. Political education can only extend so far because the students' background characteristics establish the guidelines. Second is the students' educational track. Although the latter may be a proxy for other underlying factors (Persson, 2012), which navigate certain students into vocational education and others into general education, there are also differences in the political education curriculum in the two tracks that can offer possible explanations. In the Norwegian upper secondary school (grade 11-13), social studies is a two-hour course per week the first or second year for all students. However, the students in general education can also choose to specialize in social studies. The different curricula give more time for political education in general than in vocational educational programs. There is no potential in the data to explore the possible effects of the students' specializations *in* the general program on the willingness to vote, which would provide more information about the effects of political education with regards to form and scope.

The findings in this study reveal certain factors that influence students' willingness to vote; however, most of the variance remains unexplained. In sum, the model explains 20 percent of the factors that impact students' willingness to vote. The question is what can explain the remainder? When surveyed, the students report an intention to vote; however, on Election Day, many young people who obtain the right to vote for the first time choose not to participate.

Thus, what actually makes first time voters decide to vote is yet another part of the story. Therefore, further studies should examine subjective factors and, particularly, the individual motivations to understand what makes young people tune in to formal politics.

7. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to examine the role mock elections as political education in school play in stimulating young people to vote. While voting in the mock elections has an effect on students' willingness to vote in the following Parliamentary election, partaking in the mock election activities of the school debate and the election square does not. This underlines the importance of research on teaching and learning on the topics of politics and democracy with regards to present and future political participation among youth.

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ⁱ The Norwegian school system can be divided into three parts: elementary school (Barneskole, age 6-13), lower secondary school (Ungdomsskole, age 13-16), and upper secondary school (Videregående skole, age 16-19). Although there is a dropout rate of approximately 30 percent (Markussen 2009), many return; in addition, 81 percent of the students have completed the course of five years (Falch and Nyhus, 2009).

ⁱⁱ NSD is not responsible for the analysis of the data presented here.

ⁱⁱⁱ There are 420 upper secondary schools in Norway: 341 county, 77 private and 2 at the state level (<http://www.udir.no/Tilstand/Utdanningsspeilet/Utdanningsspeilet/Utdanningsspeilet-2013/1-Fakta-om-grunnskole-og-videregaende-opplaring/110-Fortsatt-nedgang-i-antall-videregaende-skoler-i-Norge/>) In 2013, 419 of them arranged elections. One of the schools has students who are adults, and the school did not conduct a mock election.

^{iv} Whether this is a burst or a part of trend is a matter to follow with close scrutiny.

^v For instance, the questionnaire is distributed (immediately) after the mock elections, a week before Election Day. Thus, voting is all over the media, the school and (for some) at home. This may facilitate over-reporting.

^{vi} However, this may vary. It is an electronic survey, and there is of course a chance that the students do not actually spend the time provided to complete the forms but prefer other kinds of internet activities despite the teachers' recommendations.

^{vii} After the 2011 Norway terror attacks in Oslo and at Utøya, where the Labor Party's youth organization, AUF, was having a summer camp, the electoral campaign for the local elections were postponed. As a direct consequence of the attacks, the debates were canceled out of respect for the loss of many lives of young politicians. Instead, the politicians agreed to replace the school debate with an election square where the politicians would be available for questions. Although the debates were canceled in 2011, they returned in 2013 in addition to election squares. Therefore, 2013 is the second year with election squares in most schools.

^{viii} Controlling for gender (1= female; 51,6 percent), geography (1= Troms, Finnmark, Nordland 13,1 percent), immigrant background (1= outside West- Europe/N. America; 10 percent), current educational track (1=general studies; 61, 5 percent), and parental level of education (1= at least one parent has attended college; 47,1 percent). Political action experiences: (N= (+/-) 1500); here referring to whether the students have signed petitions (1= 28.1 percent), participated in demonstrations (1=17,2 percent), are members of political parties (12,2 percent), other political organizations (8,5 percent), sports or music organizations (34,1 percent) and religious organizations (8,6 percent).

Errata

- p.7, Contents, 6. Discussion and conclusion should read 6.2 The role of mock elections as political education in school, 6.3 Mock elections as top-down political education in school
- p.84, 6 Discussion and conclusion, should read 6.3 Mock elections as top-down political education in school
- p.29, should read (Bengston & Sifferd 2010)
- p.86, missing Bengston, T., J. and Sifferd, K.L. (2010) `The Unique Challenges Posed by Mock Trial: Evaluation and Assessment of a Simulation Course.` *Journal of Political Science Education* 6(1), pp.70-86.