



Do Deliberative and Participatory Processes Matter? Crafting Trust in Political Institutions

Julie Hassing Nielsen

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Abstract: Why do people trust certain political institutions and not others, and how best to account for trust's relationship with democratic participation? This dissertation focuses on the relationship between deliberative participation, and its influence on political trust. It is based on a puzzle, showing almost as high a level of political trust in the European Union vis-à-vis the national democracy. This finding is counterintuitive. Most recent research on the EU emphasizes a converse relationship. A popular interpretation of the "EU democratic malaise" is that the EU is neither transparent nor understood by its people. Hence people cannot trust it, and they reject or show reluctance towards further integration, for example, in popular referendums.

The dissertation asks the question: to what degree does enhanced deliberation and participation lead to increased political trust? Thus, it tests the relationship between political trust and different kinds of participation. The dissertation is empirically based with Denmark as a case. Based on the results of a large-N survey data and laboratory experiments, it has two main conclusions:

- The relationship between trust and deliberative participation is curvilinear. If provided with too much or too little deliberative participation, people have less political trust.
- Differences exist between what constitutes trust at the EU level and the national level as well as between two different political systems (Italy and Denmark)



Pepper Culpepper (EUI), Sven Steinmo (EUI) (Supervisor), Julie Hassing Nielsen (candidate), Marlene Wind (University of Copenhagen), Bo Rothstein (University of Gothenburg) (via Skype)

Bio: Julie Hassing Nielsen holds a MA in Political Science from the University of Copenhagen and an MPhil in Contemporary European Studies from the University of Cambridge. Before attending the European University Institute (2008), she worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark and at the embassy in Slovenia. During her PhD, she was a visiting fellow at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) (2009), the New York University (2010) and was an affiliated researcher at the Centre for European Politics at the University of Copenhagen. She is currently employed at the University of Copenhagen. Next to European studies, her research interests include quantitative research methods with particularly focus on experiments, political psychology and comparative politics.