

Process or Outcome? How the Citizens' Initiative to Ban Fur Farming affected Political Trust among Users of Avoin Ministeriö

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In 2012, Finland introduced the citizens' initiative to boost political support among citizens by extending possibilities for popular involvement in political decision making. However, it is still unclear whether the introduction had the intended effects. This article examines how the first decision by the Finnish parliament on a citizens' initiative affected political trust among users on the website Avoin Ministeriö. The data come from a quasi-experimental survey study with 421 respondents before and after the decision of the Finnish parliament on the first citizens' initiative in Finland. In particular, it is examined whether outcome satisfaction or process satisfaction were the most important factors for shaping the developments. The results suggest that both outcome and process satisfaction matters for the developments in political trust, but satisfaction with the process is the more important predictor. The implications for the effects of the Finnish citizens' initiative are discussed in the conclusion.

Keywords: Citizens' initiative, political trust, democratic innovations, democracy, political participation

Introduction

Finland introduced a citizens' initiative in 2012 to revitalize democracy and strengthen the bond between citizens and authorities. Several countries have supplemented their representative structures with so-called democratic innovations; i.e. institutional innovations that aim to give citizens a more direct say in the political decision-making between elections (Smith, 2009; Geissel & Newton, 2012). The hope is that offering citizens channels of influence between elections will enhance citizens' trust in the democratic regime and thereby cure the perceived ails of representative democracy.

However, it is by no means certain that democratic innovations have the expected positive effects on political trust. It is possible to identify two different accounts of why becoming politically active can shape the political trust of participants. Accounts emphasizing the importance of output legitimacy claim that democratic innovations enhance political support by ensuring outcomes that reflect the will of citizens. Those emphasizing throughput legitimacy assert that new means of participation enhance political support by improving the quality of the decision-making. It is worth noting that while positive effects are almost taken for granted, both accounts entail that democratic innovations may also weaken political support when citizens fail to get their preferred outcome and/or find the quality of decision-making unsatisfactory.

Empirical assessments of the purported effects of democratic innovations are still scarce, since few studies examine the effects of democratic innovations on political trust with 'before and after' studies (Geissel, 2012: 214). It is therefore unclear whether and how these two accounts shape developments in political trust (Papadopoulos & Warin, 2007).

This study contributes to this research agenda by examining whether and how the outcome of the decision on the first citizens' initiative in Finland affected political trust among users of Avoin Ministeriö (English translation: Open ministry). Since 2012, it has been possible for Finnish citizens to submit a citizens' initiative to the Finnish Parliament by gathering 50,000 signatures in support for the proposal. The Internet website Avoin Ministeriö supports these efforts by providing a platform where citizens can cooperate to draft initiatives. The empirical analysis examines whether outcome or process satisfaction shaped the developments in political trust in political institutions and politicians following the decision by the Finnish Parliament to reject a citizens' initiative to ban fur farming. The results suggest that both satisfaction with the outcome and the process matter, but process satisfaction was the most important factor in determining how the result affected political trust among the users.

Political trust and the Finnish citizens' initiative

Declining levels of political support or political trust¹ have been considered a problem for democratic legitimacy in several European democracies (Mair, 2006; Hay, 2007). While

¹ Political support and political trust are inherently intertwined concepts that are here used as synonyms (cf. Hetherington, 1998; Hetherington & Husser, 2012), although others conceive political support as a broader concept that also includes indicators such as satisfaction with democracy (cf. Christensen, 2015).

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some argue that critical attitudes are beneficial for democracy (Norris, 1999; Rosanvallon, 2008), low levels of political trust inhibits the ability of decision-makers to govern effectively since citizens who consider the authorities untrustworthy are less likely to comply with legal and social norms (Hooghe & Zmerli, 2011: 2). Political support constitutes a reservoir of support that the political system requires to function effectively, and when it becomes depleted, the political system may lose legitimacy in the eyes of citizens (Easton, 1965: 249). Furthermore, since low levels of political trust can erode the general support for the system (Hetherington, 1998: 806), declining levels of political trust are a cause for concern.

Worries over these developments led Finland to introduce the citizens' Initiative on 1 March 2012 to involve citizens in the political decision making between elections. Citizens' initiatives allow citizens to bring new issues to the political agenda through collective action by collecting a certain number of signatures in support of a policy proposal (Schiller & Setälä, 2012: 1). This proposal can either be followed by a referendum (full-scale initiatives) or a decision by parliament (agenda initiatives).

The Finnish citizens' initiative is an agenda-initiative. The rules allow all Finnish citizens entitled to vote to organize a citizens' initiative that can be a proposal for new legislation or amending an existing act. If the initiative gathers support from at least 50,000 Finnish citizens within six months, the organizers can submit the initiative to the Finnish Parliament. After receiving an initiative, Parliament has to consider the content, but it can decide to amend the proposal or even reject it altogether. Citizens therefore gain agenda-setting powers otherwise held by elected politicians in representative democracies.

Democratic innovations such as the Finnish citizens' initiative may improve the low levels of political support (Zittel & Fuchs, 2007; Geissel & Newton, 2012). Different definitions of these institutional practices exist, but Smith (2009:1) offers an appropriate description for the current purposes: institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process. Hence, democratic innovations are not necessarily original institutional solutions since inspiration often comes from similar institutions in other political systems. However, they are innovative by being purposeful institutional modifications that aim to increase popular involvement in a particular political system (cf. Geissel, 2009a: 53). By providing new possibilities for citizens to take part in the political decision-making the aim is to reinvigorate the representative structures and boost political trust among citizens (Talpin, 2012).

The dimensionality of political trust has been a debated topic in the literature. Most studies build on the work of Easton (1965, 1975), who distinguishes between political support for three political objects: the political community, the regime, and political authorities. He furthermore distinguishes between diffuse and specific support, where the former comprises deep rooted attitudes towards the political system that constitutes a reservoir of support for the politi-

cal system whereas the latter involves attitudes towards the authorities and their specific actions (Easton, 1965: 249). While specific support is related to the actions of the political actors, diffuse support is an evaluation of what an object is or represents for a person, not what it does (Easton, 1975: 444). This work has provided the framework for most of the subsequent work on political support or political trust. Later work elaborated Easton's framework by using different objects of trust to operationalize the distinction between diffuse and specific support (Norris, 1999; Linde & Ekman, 2003; Dalton, 2004). Norris (1999) develops Easton's model to distinguish between five objects of support: the political community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and regime actors. These are treated as a continuum of political support ranging from diffuse support for the political community to specific support for particular political actors (Linde & Ekman, 2003: 393). The distinction highlights the importance of distinguishing between trust in political institutions and actors, as is done in subsequent studies in this tradition (Grönlund & Setälä, 2007; Bäck & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2014). Nevertheless, other studies argue that political support or political trust is at least empirically a one-dimensional phenomenon (Marien, 2011; Hooghe, 2011). While it is beyond the present purposes to settle this debate conclusively, it certainly shows the importance of examining the dimensionality of political trust to verify the dimensionality in the data at hand.

This study aims to examine how the decision-making process in connection to the Finnish citizens' initiative affected developments in political trust in political institutions and actors.² It is still unclear whether and how democratic innovations help improve attitudes towards political institutions and actors (Papadopoulos & Warin, 2007). Studies suggest that involvement can increase levels of trust and other civic virtues among the participants (Grönlund et al., 2010; Michels & De Graaf 2010). Smith (2002) finds a positive connection between the use of ballot initiatives and the civic abilities of the users, but his cross-sectional data offer inconclusive evidence for causal effects. Others challenge the notion that these innovations can fundamentally alter the situation. According to Blaug (2002), political elites introduce democratic innovations as token gestures that may amplify the problems with low levels of political trust. Smith (2009: 17-18) notes that authorities often resist giving citizens a proper say in the decision-making since they doubt the capabilities of the general public to engage in strategic decision making. Geissel (2009b: 410) finds that involvement can even erode trust between citizens and the administration. It is therefore still unclear whether introducing democratic innovations builds political trust.

Different ideas exist about why democratic innovations should shape political trust in a positive direction. It is here helpful to use distinguish between approaches emphasizing either outcome or process satisfaction (Schmidt, 2013; build-

² For effects on political attitudes more generally, see Christensen et al. (2015).

ing on Scharpf, 1999).³ Those emphasizing outcome satisfaction consider the ability of the political system to deliver policies preferred by most citizens as the main factor shaping political trust. Several scholars argue that a drop in policy performance caused the surge in political dissatisfaction (Hay, 2007; Norris, 2011: 202-209). Budge (2012) considers it one of the strengths of direct democracy that it brings policy outcomes closer to the preference of the median citizen, thereby creating greater satisfaction and democratic legitimacy. Accordingly, democratic innovations enhance legitimacy by ensuring a policy outcome that reflects the preferences of citizens. Whether participants become more trusting as a result of their involvement therefore hinges on whether they achieve the desired outcome.

The second approach emphasizes process satisfaction, whereby the impact of democratic innovations on political trust hinges on the perceived quality of the processes leading to the decisions (cf. Schmidt, 2013). Previous studies suggest that individuals may accept outcomes other than their preferred one if they believe a fair decision-making process led to the final outcome (Carman, 2010: 736). Furthermore, both normative theories and experimental research suggest that procedural fairness is important for legitimacy beliefs and that users must consider decision-making processes as fair and balanced to be willing to accept the outcomes (Esa-Iasson et al., 2012: 788-790). Accordingly, democratic innovations may increase political trust even when the participants fail to get their desired outcome when the participants believe the outcome came about through a fair and balanced decision-making process.

Both approaches entail that participatory involvement may also have a negative effect on political trust, since those who fail to get the desired outcome or feel the decision making was unfair are likely to experience negative developments. The relative merits of the two approaches are, however, still unclear.

The current study contributes to this research agenda by examining how the decision making in connection to the first citizens' initiatives in Finland affected levels of political trust among users of the website Avoin Ministeriö. This is an Internet website (www.avoinministerio.fi) that facilitates the popular use of the citizens' initiative by enabling citizens, NGOs and citizen movements to change legislation by crowdsourcing citizens' initiatives. The site allows participants to discuss proposals for citizens' initiatives and to receive advice from experts to ensure that the proposals function in accordance with the intentions within the existing legislative framework. It was established immediately following the launch of the citizens' initiative, but all features were not in place before autumn 2012. The site has played a key role in gathering support for several of citizens' initiatives that so far managed to collect the necessary 50,000 signatures (For more on the role of Avoin Ministeriö in drafting citizens' initiatives, see Heikka, 2015).

The study examines whether outcome and process satisfaction shaped developments in political trust among the participants following the first citizens' initiative to go through the entire decision-making process. The initiative concerned

a ban on fur farming which was a controversial topic. The fur-farming industry is a major industry in some Finnish regions and Finland is among the largest producers of fox pelts and a mink hides, meaning that considerable economic interests were at stake. In contrast, animal rights groups had documented several instances of animal cruelty on fur farms and generally argued that the abolishment of fur farming was necessary to ensure animal welfare. The industry counter-argued that a ban would only increase fur farming in China, where animal cruelty is (even more) widespread and a ban would therefore cause worsened animal conditions.

The initiative to ban fur farming in Finland collected almost 70,000 statements of support. After the organizers submitted the proposal to Parliament in March 2013, committees and plenaries debated the proposal in the following months. In the end, the Finnish Parliament followed the recommendation of the Agriculture and Forestry Committee and rejected the initiative. In the plenary vote on 19 June 2013, 146 of 200 MPs voted against the initiative. The Green League was the only political party uniformly supporting the initiative while all other political parties in Parliament generally opposed the idea of a ban on fur farming.

This study examines the developments in political trust among the users of Avoin Ministeriö following this final verdict on the initiative.

Data and methods

The study examines the following hypotheses:

H₁: Outcome satisfaction with Parliaments' decision to reject the citizens' initiative to ban farming affects developments in political trust.

H₂: Process satisfaction with Parliaments' decision to reject the citizens' initiative to ban farming affects developments in political trust.

The users of Avoin Ministeriö are unlikely to reflect the general population in Finland. Nevertheless, their involvement on the site show they are more engaged in issues concerning the citizens' initiative and they are therefore more likely to be affected by the decision making on the citizens' initiative to ban fur farming. The study thereby resembles a crucial 'most-likely case' (Eckstein, 1975), which offers the ideal circumstances for studying the relationships of interest.

The data come from a survey repeated two times:

T₀ (September 2012): Initial survey to collect pre-test attitudes.

T₁ (July 2013): Post-test survey following Parliament's decision to reject initiative to ban fur farming.

Such 'before and after' studies are relatively rare when it comes to democratic innovations (Geissel, 2012: 214). This study therefore provides a unique possibility for examining

³ Schmidt uses the term throughput satisfaction but process satisfaction is preferred here instead. An additional source of satisfaction or legitimacy concerns input legitimization involving political participation by the people (Scharpf, 1999; Schmidt 2013). This aspect is not considered here since it is not possible to assess the extent to which Avoin Ministeriö mobilizes otherwise passive segments with the current data.

Table 1
Sociodemographic characteristics and attrition.

	All respondents (T ₀ , n=815)		Dropouts (only T ₀ , n=394)		Sample (T ₀ and T ₁ , n=421)		Finland %	χ^2	Eta
	#	%	#	%	#	%			
<i>Age</i>								0,05	0,12
0-20	92	11,5	55	14,1	37	9,1	23,6		
21-30	311	39	159	40,7	152	37,3	12,6		
31-40	214	26,8	105	26,9	109	26,8	12,2		
41-50	90	11,3	37	9,5	53	13	13,2		
51-60	48	6	18	4,6	30	7,4	13,9		
61-	43	5,4	17	4,3	26	6,4	24,5		
Total	798	100	391	100	407	100	100		
<i>Gender</i>								0,33	0,04
Male	525	66	249	64,3	276	67,6	49,1		
Female	270	34	138	35,7	132	32,4	50,9		
Total	795	100	387	100	408	100	100		
<i>Education</i>								0,01	0,12
Basic education or less (ISCED 2 or less)	74	9,2	48	12,2	26	6,4	32,3		
Upper secondary /post-secondary non tertiary (ISCED 3/4)	318	39,7	164	41,6	154	37,8	39,5		
University degree or similar (ISCED 5)	379	47,3	169	42,9	210	51,6	27,4		
Second stage of tertiary education (ISCED 6)	30	3,7	13	3,3	17	4,2	0,8		
Total	801	100	394	100	407	100	100		
<i>Language</i>								0,12	0,07
Finnish	756	94,7	366	93,1	390	96,3	89,7		
Swedish	38	4,8	24	6,1	14	3,5	5,4		
Other	4	0,5	3	0,8	1	0,2	5		
Total	798	100	393	100	405	100	100,1		
<i>Municipality</i>								0,65	0,1
Helsinki	179	22	89	22,6	90	21,4	11,1		
Tampere	80	9,8	34	8,6	46	10,9	4		
Espoo	62	7,6	31	7,9	31	7,4	4,7		
Turku	52	6,4	27	6,9	25	5,9	3,3		
Jyväskylä	35	4,3	11	2,8	24	5,7	2,5		
Oulu	30	3,7	17	4,3	13	3,1	3,5		
Vantaa	23	2,8	11	2,8	12	2,9	3,8		
Other	354	43,4	174	44,2	180	42,8	67		
Total	815	100	394	100	421	100	100		

Note: The entries are number of respondents and percentages belonging to each category who filled in the survey at T₀, those who dropped out, and those who filled in both rounds. Data for Finland from Statistics Finland. χ^2 and eta scores indicate the strengths of the relationships between the categories for each characteristic and dropping out.

how the citizens' initiative affected political trust among participants of Avoin Ministeriö.

The research design has a quasi-experimental character. Contrary to other types of experiments, such as experiments in the lab or natural experiments, quasi-experimental studies lack random assignments to treatment groups (Shadish et al., 2002: 13-14).⁴ While the lack of random assignment means it is not possible to determine unequivocally whether the treatments cause the observed effects, the design can help determine systematic differences in the developments in attitudes between groups (Morton & Williams, 2010: 46-50).

The design here includes treatment groups and pre-tests (Shadish et al., 2002: 136). The pre-test is carried out at T₀,

while the treatment groups consist of participants who have high or low outcome and process satisfaction at T₁. The time span of about 10 months between the two surveys means the study does not pertain to explain overall developments in political trust during this period. Instead, the aim is to examine whether there are significant differences in the developments

⁴ The research design may also be considered a two wave panel study. However, the quasi-experimental design is a more apt description for the current purposes since panel data generally require three waves or more to adequately examine change over time (Singer & Willett, 2003: 9-10). To use this terminology thereby acknowledges the inherent limitations of the data.

between the treatment groups that can be attributed to outcome and process satisfaction.

The recruitment of participants at T_0 was done with self-selection by placing an invitation to take part in the Avoin Ministeriö website when the site started to collect signatures in late September 2012. This was visible to the user until he or she either took the survey or declined to do so. A total of 872 respondents filled in the initial survey.⁵ Of these, 57 had missing data on several variables, most likely due to technical problems, and were subsequently dropped from the dataset, leaving us with 815 respondents who filled in the first round. Following the decision of Parliament on the initiative to ban fur farming, an email was sent to all members of Avoin Ministeriö inviting them to fill in the second round of the survey at T_1 .

Loss of participants from one round to another is a common problem for this type of research (Hooghe et al., 2010; Shadish et al., 2002: 323; Morton & Williams, 2010: 182-192). To reduce attrition, two reminders about the survey were sent to the users to get as many as possible to complete both rounds. A total of 421 completed both rounds adequately, which equates an attrition rate of 48.3. Although the drop-out is large compared to traditional surveys, similar response rates are common in this type of research (Shadish et al., 2002: 324; Manfreda & Vehovar, 2002). Furthermore, attrition is only problematic when it is non-random (Hooghe et al., 2010: 92). It is therefore important to ascertain whether systematic differences exist between respondents.

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of all participants who filled in the first round (all participants), those who filled in both rounds (sample) and those who only filled in the first round (dropouts) to examine the patterns of attrition (cf. Shadish et al., 2002: 334-336). Two measures of association, χ^2 and eta, are used to examine whether these characteristics determine who filled in both rounds. χ^2 indicates whether a significant relationship exists between a variable and the respondents filling in both rounds without taking into consideration the direction of the relationship, while eta shows the strength of the relationship when taking into account the direction of the relationship.

The respondents differ from the general population in Finland, mainly by being younger, better educated males from Helsinki. Although this may compromise the external validity of the study, this problem is present in all experiments making use of student samples for experimental research (Hooghe et al., 2010). The findings can still shed light on the mechanisms underlying how democratic innovations affect political trust.

The non-response causes few noticeable developments in the characteristics of the participants. The χ^2 tests indicate that there are only significant changes for age and education, which previous studies also find to predict attrition (Karjalainen & Rapeli, 2015). For age, those who filled in both rounds tend to be older than those who only filled in the first round. Nevertheless, the eta score suggests that the relationship is weak (cf. Cohen, 1988); meaning age does poorly in explaining who filled in both rounds. Furthermore, the differences for the age groups 21-30 and 31-40 have most

Table 2

Factor analysis with two components extracted.

	Component	
	1	2
Political trust: Parliament	0.79	0.17
Political trust: Political parties	0.78	0.20
Political trust: President	0.69	-0.36
Political trust: Government	0.86	-0.01
Political trust: Politicians	0.10	0.92
Eigenvalue	2.51	1.00
% Variance explained	50.26	20.06
Correlation	0.079	
KMO	0.76	
Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 , df, P)	(1068.4, 10, 0.000)	

Note: Entries are the result of a principal component analysis with oblimin rotation. Loadings above 0.6 are bolded.

respondents, and here the differences are slight. For education, the higher-educated are more likely to fill in both rounds. The eta value again shows that the classification does poorly in predicting who fills in both rounds, suggesting that the differences are less decisive than what the χ^2 value indicates. The characteristics of the participants therefore remain largely unaffected by the attrition.

The dependent variable is political trust. The data include a battery of questions concerning the level of trust for five democratic institutions and actors: Trust in parliament, Trust in politicians, Trust in political parties, Trust in president, and Trust in government. For each of these, the respondents indicated the level of trust on a scale 0-10 with 10 indicating the highest level of trust at both T_0 and T_1 .

As noted in the theory section, the dimensionality of political trust is disputed. An exploratory factor analysis therefore examined the dimensionality of political trust in the data at T_0 . The results are shown in table 2.

The results suggest that political trust is a two-dimensional phenomenon in this data since four of the five items load onto the first component while trust in politicians loads onto a second component.⁶

⁵ The number of registered users when terminating data collection at T_0 was about 10,400, meaning about 8.1 per cent filled in the questionnaire.

⁶ This result was obtained with the traditional Kaiser criterion, according to which all dimensions with an eigenvalue larger than 1 are extracted. Several studies find that this method overestimates the necessary number of components to retain (Zwick & Velicer, 1986: 434). Using parallel analysis to determine the number of components to retain suggests that the most correct solution is a one-dimensional model, a solution which is also found at T_1 using the Kaiser criterion. A confirmatory factor analysis shows that the differences between the one-dimensional and the two-dimensional model in the model fit are negligible (One-dimensional AIC 18827.68; Two-dimensional AIC 18823.68). Although it is therefore unclear whether political trust is best described as one- or two-dimensional, the analyses rely on the two-dimensional model

Table 3
Descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	VIF
<i>DEPENDENT VARIABLES</i>						
Political trust: Institutions T_0	419	0.57	0.20	0.00	0.98	
Political trust: Institutions T_1	413	0.49	0.23	0.00	0.95	
Development Political trust: Institutions, T_0-T_1	411	-0.08	0.19	-0.60	0.55	
Political trust: Politicians T_0	420	0.58	0.30	0.00	1.00	
Political trust: Politicians T_1	420	0.42	0.25	0.00	1.00	
Development Political trust: Politicians, T_0-T_1	419	-0.15	0.36	-0.90	1.00	
<i>INDEPENDENT VARIABLES</i>						
Process satisfaction	343	1.46	0.50	1.00	2.00	1.20
Outcome satisfaction	377	1.64	0.48	1.00	2.00	1.38
<i>CONTROL VARIABLES</i>						
Age	407	34.84	12.88	16.00	72.00	1.22
Gender	408	0.32	0.47	0.00	1.00	1.20
Education	407	1.54	0.68	0.00	3.00	1.28
Social class (ref. Working class)						
Lower middle class	405	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00	1.85
Middle class	405	0.32	0.47	0.00	1.00	3.14
Upper middle class & Upper class	405	0.15	0.36	0.00	1.00	2.48
Not to any class	405	0.30	0.46	0.00	1.00	2.79
Place of living	406	3.11	0.80	1.00	4.00	1.05
Political interest (T_0)	420	3.39	0.66	1.00	4.00	1.07
Left-Right Ideology (T_0)	410	4.19	2.35	0.00	10.00	1.61
Voted last election	412	0.88	0.32	0.00	1.00	1.13

This model differs from the model of Bäck and Kestilä-Kekkonen (2014) since trust in political parties loads onto the institutional dimension. Nevertheless, it does suggest that a similar division between trust in institutions and trust in actors can be observed in the data. Considering the central role of political parties in the Finnish representative system and the relative stability of the party system (Karvonen, 2014), it is reasonable that respondents see these as institutional parts of the system rather than political actors.

Political trust is therefore measured with two indexes measuring political trust in institutions and in politicians. The first variable is an additive index consisting of the scores for trust in parliament, political parties, government and President (Cronbach's alpha $T_0=0.78$; $T_1=0.89$), while the second variable is measured with the score for trust in politicians. Both indexes were recoded to vary between 0 and 1 with 1 indicating the highest level of political trust. To achieve a measure of the developments in political trust, I subtracted the level of trust at T_0 from the level at T_1 , meaning a positive value indicates a positive development in political trust.

The main independent variables are outcome and process satisfaction.⁷ To examine how outcome satisfaction affects developments in political trust, a question concerning whether the respondent signed the citizens' initiative to ban fur farming is used to measure outcome satisfaction (Did you sign the initiative to ban fur farming?). While some respondents may have changed their minds after signing the initiative or some did not sign the initiative even though they

supported the aims, this question makes it possible to compare developments between those who explicitly supported the initiative and all others who were against, or at least undecided about, the initiative. Those who indicate having signed the initiative have low outcome satisfaction since the initiative was rejected, while those who did not sign have high outcome satisfaction since they prefer the status quo. Since 44 respondents failed to remember whether they signed, only the 377 respondents who filled in the question with a yes or no were used in the analyses.

To examine how process satisfaction affected the developments in political trust, a question is used where the respondents indicated the extent to which they thought Parliament handled the initiative in a suitable manner on a five-point scale 'Strongly agree'-'Strongly disagree'. Respondents who agree with this statement have high process satisfaction since they believe Parliament gave the issue due consideration while those who disagree have low process satisfaction. The analyses exclude 78 respondents who nei-

since it is of particular interest to examine possible differences between trust in institutions and politicians.

⁷ While a connection between outcome and process satisfaction is theoretically possible – since those who do not get what they want tend also to be dissatisfied with the process that resulted in the outcome – the relationship is empirically weak with a correlation coefficient of about 0.19 between the two indicators. Hence it is possible to identify separate effects from process and outcome satisfaction.

Table 4
Outcome satisfaction and developments in political trust.

	Political trust: Institutions		Political trust: Politicians	
	<i>Low outcome satisfaction</i>	<i>High outcome satisfaction</i>	<i>Low outcome satisfaction</i>	<i>High outcome satisfaction</i>
Mean T ₀	0.55	0.57	0.56	0.57
Mean T ₁	0.44	0.52	0.39	0.44
Mean change	-0.11	-0.05	-0.17	-0.13
T-test Significance (Diff<0)	0.0010		0.1913	

Note: The table reports developments in mean scores of political trust for those who signed (low outcome satisfaction) compared with those who did not sign (high outcome satisfaction) the initiative to ban fur farming.

Table 5
Process satisfaction and developments in political trust.

	Political trust: Institutions		Political trust: Politicians	
	<i>Low process satisfaction</i>	<i>High process satisfaction</i>	<i>Low process satisfaction</i>	<i>High process satisfaction</i>
Mean T ₀	0.54	0.63	0.54	0.62
Mean T ₁	0.40	0.61	0.34	0.54
Mean change	-0.14	-0.02	-0.20	-0.08
T-test Significance (Diff<0)	0.000		0.0044	

Note: The table reports developments in mean scores of political trust for those who are satisfied (High process satisfaction) compared to those who are not satisfied (Low process satisfaction) with how Parliament handled the initiative to ban fur farming.

ther agreed nor disagreed, leaving 343 respondents who were clearly either satisfied or dissatisfied with the process.⁸

The analyses examine the differences in developments between those with high and low satisfaction with outcome and process. This is first done separately with independent samples t-tests. Following this, multivariate regression analyses will ascertain the relative strengths of the two explanations and that effects are not due to possible confounding factors. The OLS regression analyses examine how outcome and process satisfaction explain developments in political trust in institutions and politicians when including a number of control variables that may affect the relationships (Norris, 1999; Dalton, 2004; van der Meer & Dekker, 2011). This, first of all, includes the socio-demographic characteristics since these may affect levels of political trust and controlling for them can alleviate any possible problems due to attrition, as explained above. The models include age in years, gender, highest level of educational attainment, social class (categorical variable where respondents indicate sense of belonging to five social classes) and place of living (sparsely populated rural area – city/town centre). The analyses also control for political interest and left/right ideology, since these are relatively stable attitudinal attributes that may affect both political trust and the propensity for participation. The models finally include whether the respondents voted in the last national election to control for the participatory habits of the respondents. Descriptive information on all variables is shown in table 3.

There are some minor problems with multicollinearity for the categorical variable for social class. This may affect the significance for this variable, but it still functions as a control for any possible confounding effects.

Empirical analysis of developments in political trust

The analysis starts by showing the developments in political trust in institutions and politicians from T₀ to T₁ in Figure 1.

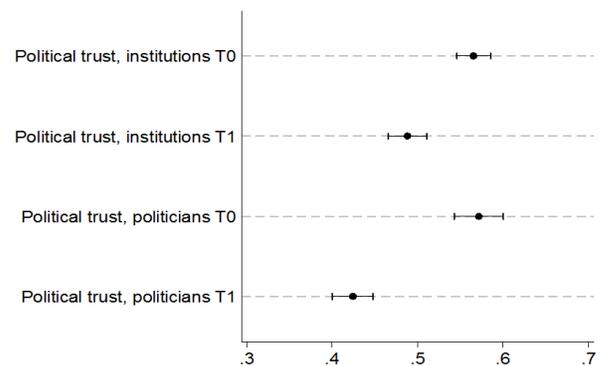


Figure 1. Developments in political trust in institutions and politicians, T₀-T₁.

Note: Figure shows the mean scores at T₀ and T₁ for Trust in Institutions and Politicians with 95 % confidence intervals. T-tests show both developments are significant at $p < 0.000$.

⁸ To examine whether the exclusion of the intermediate group and the subsequent loss of respondents affected the results, the analyses were rerun with a variable where the intermediate group was coded as low satisfaction since they did not explicitly approve of the handling of Parliament. This alternative coding did not substantially alter the results and the presented results exclude the intermediate group since this constitutes a more appropriate test of the hypotheses.

Table 6
Multivariate regression analyses of developments in political trust.

	Political trust: Institutions			Political trust: Politicians		
	<i>B</i>	(<i>SE</i>)	<i>Beta</i>	<i>B</i>	(<i>SE</i>)	<i>Beta</i>
Outcome satisfaction	0.05	(0.02)*	0.13	0.03	(0.05)	0.05
Process satisfaction	0.10	(0.02)***	0.26	0.09	(0.05) †	0.12
Age	0.00	(0.00) †	0.10	0.00	(0.00)	-0.03
Gender	0.03	(0.02)	0.07	0.03	(0.05)	0.03
Education	-0.04	(0.02)*	-0.13	0.10	(0.04)*	0.18
Social class (ref=working class)						
<i>Lower middle class</i>	0.06	(0.05)	0.10	0.18	(0.09) †	0.14
<i>Middle class</i>	0.02	(0.04)	0.04	0.11	(0.08)	0.14
<i>Upper middle class & upper class</i>	0.07	(0.04)	0.13	0.07	(0.09)	0.07
<i>Not to any class</i>	0.05	(0.04)	0.12	0.14	(0.08) †	0.17
Place of living	0.02	(0.01) †	0.10	0.04	(0.03)	0.08
Political interest (T0)	0.02	(0.02)	0.08	0.02	(0.03)	0.03
Left right Ideology (T0)	0.01	(0.01)	0.09	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.04
Voted last election	0.02	(0.03)	0.03	0.04	(0.07)	0.03
Constant	-0.55	(0.10)***		-0.77	(0.20)***	
Valid n	298		302			
Adjusted R2	0.12		0.06			

Note: Entries are unstandardized estimates (*B*) with standard errors (*SE*) in parenthesis and standardized coefficients obtained from OLS linear regressions explaining developments in Political trust: institutions and Political trust: politicians, T_0 - T_1 . Significance: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Both types of political trust deteriorated from T_0 to T_1 . This is most clearly the case for trust in politicians, which deteriorated from a mean of 0.57 at T_0 to 0.42 at T_1 . Nevertheless, the changes are also substantial for trust in institutions, which decreased from 0.57 at T_0 to 0.49 at T_1 . However, as noted previously, the decision on the citizens' initiative on banning fur farming are unlikely to explain these overall developments since other factors also affect the developments, not least the general deterioration of the economy in Finland during this period. While this study does not pertain to explain the overall developments, it is possible to examine whether there are significant differences in the developments in political trust depending on outcome and process satisfaction, which would indicate that these are important predictors for the developments in political trust. This is the topic for the subsequent analyses. The analysis in table 4 examines H_1 concerning differences in the development of political trust depending on outcome satisfaction.

As expected, both the satisfied and the dissatisfied experienced negative developments in political trust in both institutions and actors. However, for trust in institutions, the negative development was much stronger for those with low outcome satisfaction, since the mean dropped by 0.11 compared to 0.05 for those who were positive to the outcome (significance 0.001). Although the negative developments are more pronounced for trust in institutions, the differences between the two groups are slighter and not significant (significance 0.1913). This then only partly confirms H_1 since outcome satisfaction does not appear to be relevant for the developments for trust in politicians.

Following this, the attention turns to H_2 and process satisfaction in table 5.

For trust in institutions, those with low process satisfaction experienced a considerable drop of 0.14, whereas those with high process satisfaction only experienced a marginal drop of 0.02.⁹

This difference is clearly significant ($p = 0.000$), and shows that those who were dissatisfied with how Parliament handled the matter lost trust in political institutions as a result to such an extent that they move from being slightly trust full on average (0.54 on the 0-1 scale) to being clearly distrustful (0.40 on the 0-1 scale). There are also significant differences for the developments in trust in politicians. Those with low process satisfaction experience an even more marked drop of 0.20 compared to 0.08 for those with high process satisfaction; a difference which is also clearly significant ($p = 0.0044$). Here we also find that those with low process satisfaction move from being slightly trustful on average (0.54) to being clearly distrustful (0.34). Despite the possibility for a tautological relationship (see footnote 8), these differences are so pronounced that they are unlikely to be caused by this alone. This then supports H_2 and the impact of process satisfaction on political trust.

⁹ To examine whether the exclusion of the intermediate group and the subsequent loss of respondents affected the results, the analyses were rerun with a variable where the intermediate group was coded as low satisfaction since they did not explicitly approve of the handling of Parliament. This alternative coding did not substantially alter the results and the presented results exclude the intermediate group since this constitutes a more appropriate test of the hypotheses.

Table 7
Interactions between process and outcome.

	Political trust: Institutions			Political trust: Politicians		
	<i>B</i>	(<i>SE</i>)	<i>Beta</i>	<i>B</i>	(<i>SE</i>)	<i>Beta</i>
Outcome satisfaction	0.07	(0.04) †	0.17	0.14	(0.07)	0.19
Process satisfaction	0.08	(0.04)*	0.22	-0.03	(0.07)†	-0.04
Process * Outcome satisfaction	-0.03	(0.04)	-0.06	-0.18	(0.09)*	-0.22
Constant	-0.54	(0.10)***		-0.73	(0.20)***	
Valid n		298			302	
Adjusted R2		0.12			0.05	

Note: The models also include the control variables (see table 6), but only the results for the constitutive elements are presented. Entries are unstandardized estimates (*B*) with standard errors (*SE*) in parenthesis and standardized coefficients obtained from OLS linear regressions explaining developments in Political trust: institutions and Political trust: politicians, T_0 - T_1 . Significance: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Hence both outcome and low process dissatisfaction affected the developments in political trust, but process satisfaction seems the more important predictor for the developments. To establish their importance more firmly, table 6 displays the results of an OLS regression examining the relationship when taking into account the control variables.

For trust in institutions, both outcome and process satisfaction maintain their significant effects on the developments. The positive coefficients show that being satisfied has a positive effect on the developments in political trust when considering other factors. As might be expected considering previous results, process satisfaction has a stronger effect with a standardized coefficient of 0.26 compared to 0.13 for outcome satisfaction.

The effects are weaker for trust in politicians, where only process satisfaction has a significant effect ($Beta=0.12$), which is only significant at a lenient 0.10 threshold of significance. The effect for outcome satisfaction grows insignificant when including other factors, suggesting that this may not have an independent effect on the developments in trust in politicians.

The effects of the control variables are generally meagre, suggesting that the developments are not explained by socio-demographic characteristics, political attitudes or previous participation in elections. One noticeable exception is the result for education, where the effect is negative for trust in institutions while it is positive for trust in politicians, which shows that having a higher. While it is not possible to explore this differing effect in more detail here, it at least shows that it may be important to distinguish different types of political trust to understand the mechanisms sustaining developments in this central political attitude.

To further explore the interplay between outcome and process satisfaction, table 7 presents the results when including interaction effects between the two independent variables of interest.

The results show that the interaction effect for outcome and process satisfaction is significant when it comes to trust in politicians. This may help explain the lacking effect found previously, since the effect of one type of satisfaction is contingent on the values of the other. Figure 2 presents the predictive margins to clarify what the interaction term entails.

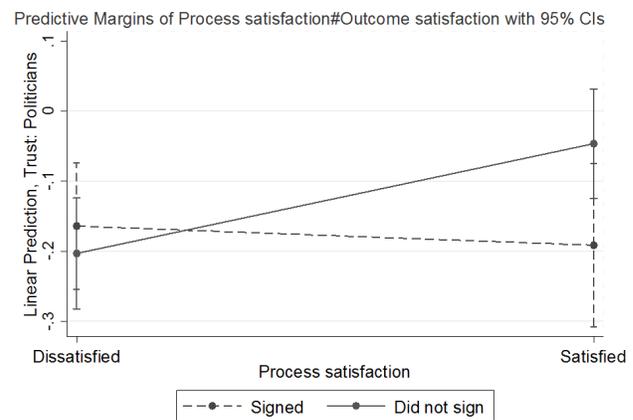


Figure 2. Predictive margins for outcome and process satisfaction.

This shows that the effect is largely similar and negative for three of the four possible combinations of outcome and process satisfaction. However, the effect is weaker for those who combine process satisfaction with outcome satisfaction. In other words, outcome satisfaction only matters when the participants are dissatisfied with the process as well.

Conclusions

Democratic innovations have been suggested to provide a potential cure for the democracy malaise since including citizens in the political decision making increases the political legitimacy of representative democracies. This was the *raison-d'être* behind the introduction of the citizens' initiative in Finland. The findings from this study of users of Avoim Ministeriö following the decision-making process on the citizens' initiative to ban fur farming present some challenges to this idea. When these findings were valid beyond the current sample, they challenge the idea that the citizens' initiative necessarily improves the confidence Finnish citizens put in their representatives and the key democratic institutions. While the introduction of the citizens' initiative per se may well have had a positive effect on political support in

Finland, the effects on political trust among participants of Avoim Ministeriö were more ambivalent.

The results for the first hypothesis suggest that the outcome of the decision making has some bearing on how political trust develops, showing that political trust may well decline when participants fail to get the intended result (cf. Budge, 2012). This is most clearly the case for trust in institutions, where all results suggested that those who were dissatisfied with the outcome experienced larger drops in their level of trust compared to those who were satisfied or neutral. When it comes to trust in politicians, the results were more ambivalent, but at least some results suggested that outcomes also matter here, but the effect is contingent on attitudes towards the process. This suggests that the citizens' initiative may have an adverse effect on political trust when the Finnish Parliament decides against adopting future initiatives.

The results for the second hypothesis showed that the outcome is not all that matters, since the participants were affected even more by the extent to which they believed Parliament handled the matter in an appropriate manner. Hence process satisfaction was the more important predictor for the developments in political trust in both institutions and politicians, although the latter effect decreased when taking into account other factors. Nevertheless, this shows that it is imperative that decision-making processes are conceived as fair and unbiased if democratic innovations are to have positive effects on political trust (cf. Carman, 2010; Esaiasson et al., 2012). This finding supports Blaug (2002), who argues that democratic innovations perceived as mere windows dressing could be harmful for democratic legitimacy. It is therefore important for representatives to treat each initiative seriously to convince citizens that their grievances are given adequate concern and that rejections are not caused by preconceived ideas of what citizens want or even what they should want.

These results do not come without reservations. The representativeness of the participants is uncertain and even if the results suggest that developments in political trust are only to a limited extent shaped by socio-demographic characteristics, the results are not necessarily valid for the general population. This is all the more the case since the study only included people using the citizens' initiative, whereas the establishment of the citizens' initiative may have improved political trust even among citizens not using the possibilities. While it cannot be ascertained that the results are valid for the general population, they do indicate that both outcomes and processes have important implications for developments in political trust for those using the possibilities.

Furthermore, the results may be specific for the initiative to ban fur farming, meaning they cannot necessarily be extended to other citizens' initiatives. The external validity of the study is therefore uncertain, and future research should examine whether similar results can be obtained for other decisions of the Finnish parliament on citizens' initiatives.

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