THE DRIVE TO INSTITUTIONALISE:

SUSTAINED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN

VORARLBERG AND MADRID

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Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned **Niamh Webster** hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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Abstract

Democratic governance is changing with the rise in popularity of representative deliberative democracy, where citizens are involved in decision-making. Previously 'one-off' processes have been increasingly institutionalised with a legal basis as permanent fixtures. Despite being successful, some permanent processes are discontinued which undermines trust and legitimacy. Revealing the challenges of sustained institutionalisation, there is still more to be learnt about what works. Scholars have analysed deliberative democracy, institutionalisation, and identified developments that leads to these processes being initiated. However, less is known about what makes these processes last. Thus, this thesis seeks to identify the conditions which contribute to sustained representative deliberative processes. The method used is comparative case study and expert interviews on two processes: Citizens' Councils in Vorarlberg, Austria, which have proved sustainable for almost a decade, and the City Observatory in Madrid, Spain, which was discontinued shortly after being made permanent. This research finds there are eight main conditions that contribute to sustained processes: culture, structure, power, leadership, drive to institutionalise, context, simplicity and experience. Analysis suggests cultural and structural aspects, leadership and power are the most important. Findings inform future practice in the global trend towards institutionalisation where sustained, permanent processes can strengthen democratic governance.

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Introduction

The last two decades have seen considerable development in new forms of participatory and deliberative democracy. Influential work in the field has termed these new citizen participation processes 'democratic innovations' (Elstub and Escobar 2019; Smith, 2009), a name which implies the novelty of these processes. Representative deliberative processes as a specific form of democratic innovation have become increasingly popular, where citizens are randomly selected to advise or decide on policy proposals. Debates in the literature cite the benefits of deliberative democracy as a primary means for governments to address dwindling public trust in democratic institutions and faltering legitimacy (Dryzek et al. 2019; Geissel and Newton 2011; Geib 2021; Smith 2009). Recent research recorded a 'deliberative wave', identifying almost 600 deliberative processes, most of which took place in last 20 years, and 101 of which took place in just the last two years (OECD 2021, 7).

To date, these democratic innovations in citizen participation have largely been ad-hoc in nature or "one offs" (Niessen and Reuchamps 2022, 2), but there is a trend towards institutionalisation in an ambition to make these processes permanent fixtures in democratic systems. Scholars advocate institutionalisation instead of continuing the current trajectory of "unsystematic" practice (Geissel 2020, 416), one-off, individual processes (Gastil and Wright 2019; Hartz-Karp and Briand 2009; Setälä 2017; Warren 2007). Institutionalisation is a commonly used to describe permeance of these processes by leading authorities in the field (Bua 2017; Bua and Escobar 2018; Courant 2021; Niessen and Reuchamps 2022; OECD 2020; Ravazzi 2016; Warren 2007). Figures from the OECD from 2020 reports 14 out of the total 282 cases are institutionalised (OECD 2020).

Despite the trend towards permanence, there is limited knowledge of what conditions contribute to processes that last as long-term as intended. In the empirical evidence on institutionalised processes, scholars identify seven conditions which are important: culture, structure, power, actors, motives, context and legitimacy. Single case studies are frequently used in the literature and focus on the developments that led to institutionalisation, rather than the conditions that sustain it (Bua, 2017; Lewanski 2011; Macq and Jacquet 2021; Niessen and Reuchamps 2022). Furthermore, there are challenges and risks in moving from temporary to permanent (Courant 2022, 3). The risk is that if they are institutionalised promising permeance, but not sustained, governments could lose legitimacy and citizen trust that they sought to repair through these processes. There is only a small selection of institutionalised processes from which to learn, most of which are relatively recent, and all of which have taken different approaches to institutionalisation ranging from laws, regulations, or constitutional amendments (Courant 2022, 6; OECD 2021). Though these innovations offer a potential solution for governments, they should also be viewed through a critical lens if they are a trend that is here to stay. Thus, the question prompting this research is: what are the conditions that contribute to sustained institutionalised representative deliberative processes?

The methodological approach used to explore this question is an interpretivist analysis of a series of expert interviews and a comparative case study of two institutionalised representative deliberative processes. Expert interviews with former elected representatives, government officials, practitioners and experts from the OECD provides insight into these processes. Cases were selected based on being sufficiently similar at local level government. While both were successfully established, they are slightly different models and on different scales. One major difference makes them conducive to comparison on sustained processes; one has been sustained

for almost a decade in Vorarlberg, Austria, and one was discontinued shortly after being made permanent in Madrid, Spain. Findings may be generalisable to inform practice in similar European regional governments. An evaluation of the specific model or design of citizen participation processes is beyond the scope of this research, so too is an in-depth exploration of their place in policymaking cycle or democratic governance systems.

The main findings of this research are that the following **eight** conditions play a role in sustaining institutionalised processes: **culture, structure, power, leadership, drive to institutionalise, context, simplicity and experience.** These are ordered on an interpretation of importance, with the contextual aspects, simplicity and experience being supplementary to the main findings.

The primary contribution of this research is a better understanding of which conditions enable sustained processes. This could enable governments, policymakers and academics to learn not only how to develop and institutionalise from the known existent literature, but how to sustain them, informed by the findings of this research. Rapid developments in practices across the globe brings urgency to this question of understanding what works in institutionalised processes. Thus, this is a timely analysis of existing attempts to institutionalise. This research also questions whether the goal of institutionalisation is worth striving for, and whether it is necessary. Results could lead to a more informed discussion about institutionalising citizen participation in future, to improve practice and thus, strengthen democratic governance.

This thesis has seven chapters. The first chapter reviews the literature on deliberative democracy and institutionalisation, and the learning from existing empirical evidence on the conditions for sustained institutionalisation. The method and interpretive approach to analysis of interviews is explained in the second chapter. Chapters three and four explore the two case studies,

Citizens' Councils in Vorarlberg in Austria, and the City Observatory in Madrid, Spain. The fifth chapter is the discussion of findings. The main conclusions of this research theory are explained in the conclusion.

1. Literature review

This review explores the theoretical background of deliberative democracy, how institutionalisation has been conceptualised in the literature and the debate on whether to institutionalise or not. Revealing what has already been learnt from existing examples of sustainable institutionalised processes identifies the gap in existing knowledge.

1.1 Deliberative democracy

Major theory underpinning this field is democratic theory, espousing the normative ideals of democratic governance and citizen participation. Although a broad field, due to the 'slipperiness of democracy as an object of study' (Dean et al. 2019, v), debates in the field can be understood as differing interpretations of what democratic *is* and what it *should* be. Traditional conceptions of representative democracy, where citizens are limited to voting in elections, can be contrasted with more participatory democracy or deliberative democracy, where citizens play a more involved role, an influential vision in the book 'Against Elections' by David Van Reybrouck (2018).

For those who share this perspective, the arguments in favour of citizen participation usefully summarised as contributing to improved governance, community cohesion and citizen empowerment (Involve 2018). Citizen participation can also help build trust and legitimacy (European Commission 2019, 56).

Nonetheless, the way citizen participation processes are implemented has an impact on whether these normative benefits are realised. Scholars warn that motivations of those driving

citizen participation processes matter because they could be using them as "legitimation tools" (Macq and Jacquet 2021, 14) resulting in processes that are not meaningful and are "perverse in terms of democratic quality" (Batory and Svensson 2019, 2). Another challenge is that citizen participation has the potential to exacerbate rather than alleviate problems of inequality, a paradox defined as the 'participation gap' (Dalton 2017). Emerging from this vision of what democratic practice should be, is deliberative democracy, the central topic of interest in this thesis.

Deliberative democracy is an offshoot of democratic theory and has been enjoying a wave of popularity as the current "zeitgeist" (Elstub and McLaverty 2014, 1) in literature and practice. Popular configurations of deliberative democracy are based on the Athenian idea of using sortition, where citizens are randomly selected to be part of a representative forum and play a formalised role in the traditional political decision-making process (Bouricius 2013, 3). Stemming from early work by a leading scholar, Habermas (1981) on public opinion in the public sphere, it now holds a dominant position as a major theme of contemporary democratic theory (Dryzek, 2002; Smith 2009). Literature points to continued dominance in recent years (Elstub and Escobar 2019; Geib 2021), which describes the pace of innovations in this field the "dizzying speed of these developments" (Curato et al. 2020, 1).

With recent trends of low trust presenting a challenge for modern democracies (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015), governments are responding to this democratic "malaise" by turning to citizen participation (Newton and Geissel 2011, 3). Scholars argue that deliberative democracy can help fix this "crisis" (Dryzek et al. 2019, 2) and democratic deficits (Geib, 2021, 5). With a range of different formats and ways for citizens to have a say in political decision making, the use

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of representative deliberative processes has become popular. Often referred to as 'mini-publics', the defining feature of these processes is that citizens are selected randomly by lot (Harris 2019, 45). Citizens' Assemblies has been one of the most popular conceptions, of which early examples are Ireland since 2016 (Citizen Assembly, 2022) and Iceland in 2010 (Participedia, 2022b). However, the Irish process is not institutionalised with an underpinning legal basis, and the Iceland example was not a repeated, permanent processes. Thus, these kinds of examples are not considered within this paper's analysis as they do not align with the definition of institutionalisation guiding this research.

There are contradictions in the literature on the benefits and challenges of deliberative democracy. Proponents of deliberative democratic theory advocate that collective decision making can produce better outcomes that are more legitimate (Curato et al. 2018, 35; Fung 2005, 401; Warren, 2007, 10). Influential scholar Hélène Landemore (2020) makes a convincing argument for deliberative democracy resting on the normative ideal of sortition, which makes political decision making more accessible and inclusive to citizens. Some research suggests deliberative processes can help counter polarization (Dryzek et al. 2019, 2).

Nonetheless, the 'turn' towards deliberative democracy (Dryzek and Niemeyer 2010) has not been without critique. Scholars warn that group deliberations could tend towards polarisation (Sunstein 2002, 3). Scholars also acknowledge that the claim of legitimacy can be limited to those who directly participate (Parkinson 2006, 4). To counter this ongoing critique, scholars insist efforts should be made to connect and communicate outcomes and reasoning to the wider system and public sphere (Curato et al. 2020, 1; Elstub and McLaverty 2014; Niemeyer 2011, 128).

1.2 Institutionalisation

Defining institutionalisation and reviewing the language used in literature contributes to a better understanding the core concept of this research. An authoritative definition of outlines institutionalisation as "incorporating deliberative activities into the rules of public decision-making structures and governance arrangements in a way that is legally-constituted to establish a basic legal or regulatory framework to ensure continuity regardless of political change" (OECD 2020, 122). Recognition of the importance of social norms also incorporates a strong cultural aspect (OECD 2020, 122).

There are many different forms or structures of institutionalisation of representative deliberative processes observable in the literature. The structure of institutionalisation is relevant for this research in so far as it is a condition which contributes to sustained processes. Variation documented by the OECD (2021) over the last decade ranges from different types of legal frameworks, different institutions and different levels. A summary is provided below.

- decrees by the parliament (Ostbelgien, Belgium, 2019)

- internal regulation of the parliament (Paris, France, 2021)

- internal regulatory reforms of the parliament (Brussels, Belgium, 2019),

- resolution of the city council (Bogota, Columbia, 2020),

- constitutional amendments (Vorarlberg, Austria, 2013),

- a law defining participation in civil law (France, 2011)

- an Act of Parliament in common law (Victoria, Australia, 2020).

To add to this, a law was also used to institutionalise broader participation in region of Tuscany, Italy in 2013 (Lewanski 2013). A regulation of the city council was used in Madrid, Spain 2019 (Ganuza and Menéndez 2020).

Despite this distillation of knowledge, governments are still grappling with the question of how to institutionalise. Variance in practice reviewed underlines the complexity in finding a coherent, one-size-fits-all recipe for sustainable institutionalisation. Presenting yet another divergence from existing models are recent plans by the Scottish Government (2022, 25).

While there are semantic differences in the language of institutionalisation in the literature, it is possible to identify shared assumptions and a high level of academic interest in this subject. Institutionalisation is the most frequently used term to describe permeance of these processes by reputable leading work in the field (Courant 2021; Bua 2017; Bua and Escobar 2018; Niessen and Reuchamps 2022; OECD 2020; Ravazzi 2016; Warren 2007). This body of scholarship informs this research, the findings of which are discussed later in this review. Nonetheless, there are other terms used. Popular with scholars too is 'connecting' (Setälä 2017, 852) or 'sustained' (Geissel 2020) and 'practiced repeatedly' (Hartz-Karp and Briand 2009, 184). 'Integration' is referred to in the literature, for example, into representative decision making (Setälä 2017, 857) or within political systems (Courant 2021, 3).

From this detailed review of the literature, this research arrives at a definition of institutionalised processes using the same conceptualisation provided by the OECD (2020, 122) which defines institutionalisation as permanent processes, constituted with legal basis, has a cultural element, and which are sustained (i.e., both sustainable or successful as processes, and which are not discontinued in the face of external changes). Using the definition from the OECD

holds weight as the first large-scale cataloguing of representative deliberative processes, thus enabling like-for-like comparison with similarly defined processes. Having established a definition of institutionalisation, this discussion now turns to the academic debates on institutionalisation.

The debate in academia on institutionalisation has been going on for "about two decades" (OECD 2020, 121) but practice remains largely ad-hoc rather than institutionalised. Scholars are advocating institutionalising these processes instead of continuing the current trajectory of one-off, individual processes (Gastil and Wright 2019; Hartz-Karp and Briand 2009; Setälä 2017; Warren 2007). Fuelled initially by prominent academics in the field, (Fung et al. 2005, 8) contemporary scholars now argue these processes have nonetheless remained "under-institutionalised" (Courant 2021, 2), focussing too much on ad-hoc processes. Research evaluating democratic innovations in Europe found most processes to be ad-hoc in contrast to Latin America, where innovations are "systematically embedded" (Geissel 2020, 416).

Among the literature on the subject either for or against institutionalisation, one claim is that having a repeatable model saves time and money, and builds trust (OECD, 2021). Another claim is that "sporadic" use affects too few people to address the core problem of low trust in democracy (Niessen and Reuchamps 2022, 151). On the other hand, opponents stress that it may "suffocate societal spontaneity" (Lewanski 2011, 2).

Thus, there is a gap for further research on whether they should or should not be institutionalised, with no agreement in the literature on the place for deliberative democracy in the system of governance. Scholars propose systems with "multiple locations for deliberation" (Dryzek et al. 2019, 4) where deliberative processes and public deliberation "co-exist" (Lewanski 2011, 1). Proponents of a hybrid model claim that this resolves the paradox that "neither election

nor sortition can fully satisfy all democratic values" (Deligiaouri and Suiter 2021, 8).

1.3 Conditions for sustained processes

Prompting this research is the gap in knowledge on what aids sustained permanent processes. While there is some empirical evidence presented here on the factors which are important, most studies do not critically engage with this question. Instead they engage with the developments that made the institutionalisation possible, design, or evaluate the process. While this informs this research, it exposes the limited pool of knowledge. This is compounded by the fact there is only a handful of examples, all of which are relatively recent, and thus a limited amount of empirical evidence available from which to learn (OECD 2020, OECD 2021).

From this limited body of literature, **seven factors** are identified which play an important role in development and success of institutionalised processes. These are **culture, structure, power, actors, motives, context and legitimacy**, and are explored in turn below.

Culture is are observable as a key theme in the literature. Implying institutionalisation by structural means is not sufficient on its own, with Bussu et al. (2022) highlighting the need for the informal elements that sustain participatory processes. This is link between mutually reinforcing components of culture and legal structure is supported by those who identity "cultural…legal, institutional, and budgetary requirements" (OECD 2020, 122) for sustained processes. Existing analysis suggests the "slow-changing culture of public administration in representative democracies" (Bua and Escobar 2018, 11) means cultural aspects are important in processes becoming routinised in the system. In alluding to the "novelty and uniqueness" of the Madrid

example, scholars bring to light the new-ness of this experiment as an important factor (Ganuza and Menéndez 2020, 106).

Intertwined with the discussion of culture is the structure of institutionalisation through legal means. A concern that a process could be discontinued because it does not have constitutional status highlights the critical role of legal basis, where a change in "political dynamics" (Reuchamps 2020) could mean the end of the process without appropriate

The role of power is important because challenges lie in the power imbalances caused by "unsettling established relationships" (Escobar 2021, 13) in which processes are in competition with other institutions and processes in systems of governance (Fung 2006), because politicians are unlikely to want to share power. (Ravazzi 2016, 84). The level of power that the institutionalised process has consequences for the level of autonomy it holds, whether limited power or more ambitious as "agenda-setters" (Bua, 2017, 1). A highly relevant study on the City Observatory in Madrid points to the operational, structural, and cultural challenges in sustainable institutionalisation, and concerns about unprecedented power distribution (Ganuza and Menéndez 2020, 108). Thus, scholars insist on being mindful of "power imbalances" (Curato et al. 2018, 4) in institutionalisation.

Both the importance of limited power and political support are emphasised by Asenbaum's (2016, 8) study of the Vorarlberg Citizens' Councils, suggesting implementation is dependent on "goodwill". Political support was critical to the development of an institutionalised process in Ostbelgien, Belgium (Niessen and Reuchamps 2022, 6). The literature hints at the dangers of politicisation of processes, where elections can be disruptive to institutionalised processes (Bua and Escobar 2018, 4), illustrating the importance of political support.

Actors' willingness and commitment is an important feature of the Brussels example (Reuchamps 2020) and the Ostbelgien process (Niessen and Reuchamps 2022, 7). Similar research on institutionalisation in Tuscany points to the importance of policy entrepreneurs to lead the institutionalisation (Ravazzi 2016, 82). Other scholars point to the critical role of "public engagers" as the key actors in institutionalising participatory governance (Escobar 2021, 147), who fight to change cultures and overcome internal barriers.

Of the literature studied, some scrutinise the motives behind leader's choices of institutionalising citizen participation (Macq and Jacquet 2021, 11; Ravazzi 2016, 82), suggesting the drive to institutionalise is an important factor.

Context is important because the "conditions under which deliberative democracy thrives may be quite rare and difficult to achieve" (Thompson 2008, 500). Scholars recommend "to understand the effects of institutionalization, it is useful to empirically examine specific contexts" (Lewanski 2013, 1). This is reinforced by other scholars' consideration of contextual factors in analyses of processes, for example, in highlighting the geographical factors of "small size" and "local nature" which plays a role in successful development of the process in Ostbelgien (Niessen and Reuchamps 2022, 137).

Legitimacy is a theme in the literature as a condition by which to evaluate effective processes. Legitimacy can be limited by institutional constraints (Bua 2017, Bua and Escobar 2018). Courant's (2021, 164) understanding of institutionalisation in terms of "temporality, legitimacy, and power or role within a system", and Curato and Böker's (2016, 174) articulation of "systemic qualities of deliberation-making, legitimacy-seeking and capacity-building" both make a clear intention to make connections with the democratic system of governance.

In summary, there are four lessons gleaned from this review of literature which informs this research. Firstly, the discussion of democratic theory, deliberative democracy, and the normative benefits of citizen participation situates this research in context. Secondly, the conceptual framework emerges from the definitions and exploration of the main concepts of institutionalisation and deliberative democracy, which is discussed in the next chapter. Thirdly, reflecting on the debate on to institutionalise or not, this research finds the arguments both for and against are lacking in the literature. While the trend towards institutionalisation is evident, further research on this line of enquiry would be beneficial.

Lastly, findings from empirical research suggests **<u>seven factors</u>** are relevant for successful processes: **culture, structure power, actors, motives, context, and legitimacy**, but the evidence does not engage with the question of how to sustain processes once they are institutionalised. There is a lack of research that has evaluated processes through the lens of sustainability, thus a gap in knowledge. This research will explore whether these conditions are found in the case study analysis. Further research into institutionalisation is recommended in the existing scholarship, demonstrating the eagerness for more empirical research in this field (Niessen and Reuchamps 2022, 151). One area recommended for future research is on the "conditions and design features" of these processes, investigating the potential for a greater role for strengthening democracy and governance (Bua 2017, 161). The methodological approach to addressing this gap through this thesis is explained in the following section.

2. Methodology and conceptual framework

Taking an interpretivist approach, this research elucidates findings from a rich, contextual, case study of two comparable representative deliberative processes. Guiding this research is an interest in understanding the phenomenon of institutionalising representative deliberative processes that are sustained in different jurisdictions. This section first explores the rationale for case study and selection, the method of interviews, authors influence, the approach to analysis and the conceptual framework.

An exploratory case study approach was chosen purposely to discover rich, detailed empirical information. The rationale stems from evidence in literature that democratic innovations are highly context dependant, with Thompson (2008, 500) finding that the "conditions" for deliberative democracy to succeed are challenging. Case studies allow for "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a real life' context" (Simons 2009, 21), which makes it well-placed as an approach to studying this contemporary phenomenon. Combined, these are persuasive arguments for assessing deliberative processes the context in which they take place. Case studies are complemented with a thick description (Geertz 1973) of the phenomenon to reveal meaning behind the actions in institutionalisation.

The two cases selected are institutionalised representative deliberative processes; Citizens' Councils, in Vorarlberg, Austria, and the City Observatory, in Madrid, Spain. The justification for the case selection is based on being sufficiently similar for the following reasons.

- Both take place at the same level of democratic governance,

- Both are representative deliberative processes, with citizens selected by sortition,

- Both are 'institutionalised', according to the definition provided in the Literature Review.

However, they differ in two key respects. One is permanent and long-established (Vorarlberg), and one was recently shut down (Madrid). One is a permanent procedural process, allowing for future, Citizens Councils to be initiated (Vorarlberg) and one is a permanent body, akin to establishment of a new institution (Madrid). These were selected in preference to other recent prominent cases of Ostbelgien (Niessen and Reuchamps 2022) and Brussels processes (Reuchamps 2020), which have both been explored in academic literature recently, and therefore would unlikely uncover new findings. Further, academic literature has approached these as single case studies (Bua, 2017; Lewanski 2011; Macq and Jacquet 2021; Niessen and Reuchamps 2022). Combining two under-explored cases makes for a novel approach in this field. Generalisability of findings from case studies is possible where the findings can be abstracted to other sufficiently similar circumstances and contexts (Yin 2013, 325).

A total of five semi-structured, epistemic interviews were conducted to gain empirical evidence, using online video conferencing. Conversational interviews allowed for both the researcher and the interviewee to produce knowledge through conversation (Brinkmann and Kvale 2018, 166) and thus co-create the learned output through "inter-action" (Brinkmann and Kvale 2018, 17). Semi-structured interviews involved predetermined open-ended questions whilst allowing new follow-up questions to emerge (Brinkmann and Kvale 2018, 64).

Interviewees were comprised of elected representatives, local government officials and key practitioners from civil society who work or worked on the selected case studies, supplemented by experts knowledgeable in the field. An anonymised list of interviewees is provided in Annex A.

Three interviewees were identified through extensive preparatory work, including four background interviews with experts in the field. An additional two interviewees were identified on recommendation by interviewees. A summary of the primary guiding questions for semi-structured interviewees are provided in Annex B.

Concerning the author's influence in interpretivist research, I attribute the development of this research interest to my own experience in the field. With six years professional experience working in citizen participation in an international civil society organisation, and in national government in the UK, I have knowledge of the field which aids a skilful handling of the literature and empirical evidence. However, I am acutely aware of influencing interpretation in "meaning-making" (Beach and Kaas 2020, 215). The risk is mitigated by a deliberate design choice of investigating case studies on regions unfamiliar to me and where I do not speak the languages. Thus, I bring a useful depth of knowledge to a new context, which enables a curious exploration of the phenomena from an advanced critical mindset.

Analysis follows a highly interpretivist abductive approach, using grounded theory. As an approach, it is distinguished from other analytical approaches by an "open-minded, framework free orientation to the research domain at the outset" balanced with knowledge and informed by literature (Bryant and Charmaz 2007, 18-20). Combining the researcher's experience with the review of existent literature, makes this a suitable approach, without precluding results. Defined as an iterative process (Bryant and Charmaz 2007, 13), the analysis begins while data collection is ongoing and informs early ideas about potential theory, which guides further data collection. Emergent theory is the main goal with the analytical processes, where theorising involves "moving back and forth constantly between observations and analysis" (Pawluch and Neiterman 2010, 7). Applying grounded theory involves identifying key findings from interview transcripts by

allowing the "cream to rise to the top" (Stern 2007, 5). Reflecting on field notes, memos are written to enable coding of transcripts, which in turn, aids the identification of categories. In re-categorising and re-fining coding, the sorting process allows the "appearance of the theory begins to take shape" (Stern 2007, 7). The conditions which contribute to sustainability identified in literature are then built on or confirmed by the analysis of empirical evidence.

The conceptual framework is situated within the aforementioned literature and is a combination of two key concepts: deliberative democracy and institutionalisation. These concepts are explored in detail in the review of existing literature, including an overview of the definition, terminology used and a description of institutionalised processes, and legal and structural means by which existing examples have been institutionalised. Deliberative democracy theory informed a discussion of the benefits and challenges of citizen participation in the literature and narrowed the focus to representative deliberative processes. As an underpinning theory, appraisal of the normative benefits or challenges can be held constant while exploring the key concern of this research combining both concepts: the sustained institutionalisation of deliberative democracy. The next two chapters explore the case studies.

3. Case study 1 – 'Citizens' Council', Vorarlberg, Austria

The Citizens' Council ("Bürgerrat") representative deliberative processes in the region of Vorarlberg, Austria, are small-scale citizen participation processes run by the regional government. Following experimentation and ad-hoc practices since 2004, the model was institutionalised as a permanent process in the constitution in 2013 (Cesnulaityte 2020). The constitutional amendment set out the ways in which processes can be initiated, and since then, multiple processes have run at municipal, regional, and State-wide levels (Cuffy et al. 2020, 2). The idea for the Citizens' Council was inspired by an example from the USA of a 'Wisdom Council' (Buergeraat 2020). As a model for participation, it exists in a purely consultative form, with its purpose to inform policy decisions. An overview of the model is provided in Figure 1 below, where a randomly selected group of 12-15 citizens meet for 1-2 days, guided by a facilitator using a method called 'dynamic facilitation' to reach consensus (Buergeraat 2020).
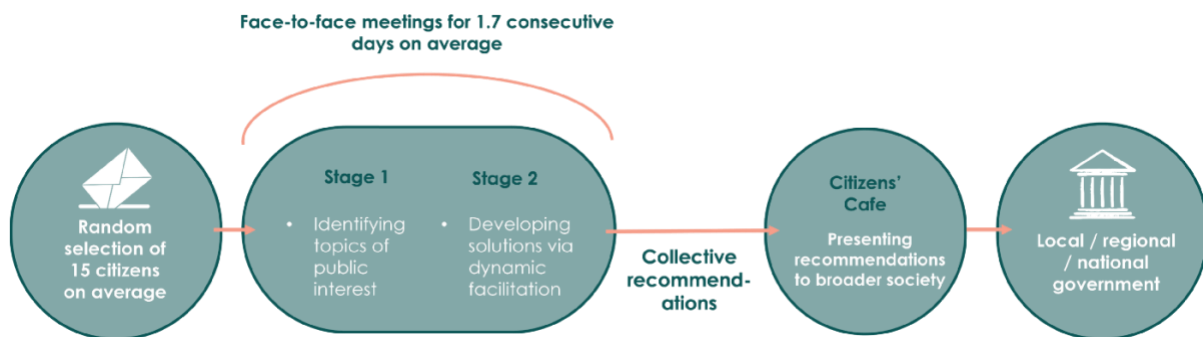

Figure 1: Citizens' Council model (OECD 2020)

Conditions that may have contributed to sustained permeance of the institutionalised process are as follows.

A culture of participation through successful of experimentations since 2006 has led to them becoming "widely accepted by politicians, policymakers and citizens as the usual way of public decision-making" (Cesnulaityte 2020). This is supported by evidence from interviews, suggesting that proving the concept and establishing a repeatable process, has been critical in securing success of institutionalisation. As such, interviewees sited the clarity of process and a sense of confidence in the process.

> "The flexibility is clearly one point. The other thing is that because we have this guidance and a clear framework, we had no discussions within the last ten years of putting the model away again …It wasn't questioned." (Government official)

Evidence from interviews suggests the unique structure, remit and role of the office, and its work in building an enabling culture and connecting with the community.

> "We try to really focus on that **cultural aspect** of that's really needed for good participation processes. We build communities of practice and have a network[ed] approach going on here, not implementing any model from top down." (Government official)

In extensive discussion of related cultural aspects with one interviewee, when asked if the process would continue even if the law was taken away, the interviewee confirmed they believed this would continue, thus suggesting that the cultural aspect of institutionalisation is very strong. This does not suggest that the legal basis is not needed, but that once established (through establishing practice and growing a culture of participation), the legal aspect becomes less important.

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Structurally, evidence from interviews suggested that the constitutional amendment, the means by which the process was institutionalised was strategically important for the sustained process as a big opportunity for growth in this area. Linked to structure, flexibility is an important structural consideration which enables adaptation of the process to navigate differing circumstances, and which interviewees said was a major factor in its success.

> "[the] constitutional amendment …was really a **big chance** for us, **having the will of the state** to focus …on direct and participatory democracy. (Government official).

Flexibility as an important factor is evident in the chosen legal basis for institutionalisation. The Office considered implementing this either through law or a constitutional amendment. Following advice by the government legal team that the law would need to be very prescriptive, and not offer enough flexibility, they chose a constitutional amendment instead. The 2013 amendment stated a commitment to 'participatory democracy' and supporting guidelines on the way the process should work, and the ways in which it could be initiated (Cesnulaityte 2020). The guidance and the framework combined gave a clear outline of the process with flexibility retained.

> "We have to be flexible for the process … **flexibility** is really valuable for the outcome" (Government official)

Power plays an important role in Vorarlberg, where alleviating fears and making it non-threatening to established power in the representative system helped sustain the processes. Evidence from interviews suggested they demonstrated that it was not dangerous for politicians, and that it delivered good outcomes. With consultative remit only, the powers are limited.

> "…the **big learning** for the politicians and for the government, …**it's not dangerous to do a citizen participation,** but it's had some **great outcomes.**

So, then they decided we want to have more of those processes established"
(Government official)

Political support is also evidently important. Being perceived as non-threating to politicians with limited power for consultation may have been fundamental in sustainability of this process. An evaluation from 2014 concluded that it is "a useful addition to the existing political system; it is not in competition with them" (Büro für Zukunftsfragen 2014, 4). Thus, there is the sense that the Citizen Councils works with the existing democratic processes and institutions.

Key actors in this process includes the government officials and the Governor. The Governor was instrumental in making institutionalisation happen, and leadership by government officials suggests there are multiple actors demonstrating leadership qualities. The constitutional amendment gave government officials permission to implement innovations in this space, demonstrating the necessity of obtaining support from leadership.

The primary motivation behind institutionalising and making it permanent was political will. Motivations of the Governor to institutionalise are relevant, based on their ambition to make a political statement, and based on a widely-accepted belief that the process worked. Following an election, the new Governor saw the process as an opportunity to connect with citizens and announced it would be institutionalised.

"…new governor ...**wanted to make his political position** and profile **clear**…He's the kind of politician where he really has his ears on the citizens, what they're interested in and what their concerns are." (Government official).

Contextual factors of geography and size are relevant factors. Vorarlberg is a region of Austria remote from the capital and surrounded by mountains, and is a "a frugal, rural State" (Cuffy et al 2020, 2). Geographic composition of the area was highlighted in evidence from interview,

who said that due to its small size and close community it is easier to implement initiatives. The idea of "model region" well encapsulates the unique context, supporting the idea that the small size of the process is important, as well as conditions of a small state at regional level.

> "The **structure and mentality** of Vorarlberg plays a role as well. … Vorarlberg is a **really small state**… **Everybody knows everybody**, and that really helps, …. we are often a 'model region' …because it's easier to implement an idea of political will here, than in other regions because you have a great outreach, very quick and efficient way." (Government official)

Simplicity of the model is a further relevant factor. Evidence suggests the size of the model may have contributed to its sustainability. Interviewees suggested that it was institutionalised as a model because it was affordable, and "small and efficient", thus aligning with the guiding "mindset" in Vorarlberg (Government official).

> "it's kind of a **mindse**t in Vorarlberg that we would want to have everything a little bit **small and efficient**…and not that expensive (Government official).

Developments that made the institutionalisation of the Citizens' Council possible largely rests on experience. The process has been run by the same Office in government since initiation, with staff developing significant expertise.

> "There is a kind of long tradition and especially within our team, there are **big competencies** in how to design processes" (Government official).

Following early experimentation with different models the model of Citizen Council coalesced (Cuffy et al. 2020). Evidence from interviews thus suggests this then became embedded in the culture, largely prompted by positive experiences: "we started to kind of transfer the model

into our **political culture**… and …. over the years there was a kind of **positive resonance**"
(Government official).

This exploration of Vorarlberg case study presented the observed conditions which play a role in its successful and sustained permanence since 2013. The contrasting case of Madrid is presented in the next section.

4. Case study 2 – 'City Observatory', Madrid, Spain

The 'Observatorio de la Ciudad' (City Observatory) was the "first permanent deliberation chamber with randomly chosen participants in a local European government" (ParticipaLab et al. 2019, 88) and one of the first to be discontinued. Following the 15-M political movement in Spain, a coalition of left-wing activists ('Ahora Madrid') were elected on a mandate for more citizen participation (Mendiharat and Carson 2020, 1). The City Observatory was implemented in Madrid's City Council, in 2019 through a legal regulation, repurposing a defunct body which had previously been comprised of experts. An overview of the process is provided in Figure 2, with the main element including 49 citizens chosen randomly by sortition per year, with the purpose of deliberating on proposals, making decisions or putting forward recommendations for referendum (Mendiharat and Carson 2020, 4). It is notable example for its extensive range of powers which were unprecedented in relation to "power distribution" (Gunuza and Menéndez-Blanco 2020, 108). Following an election, where a new governing coalition was elected, it was closed, revealing "the challenges of institutionalisation" (Participedia, 2022b).
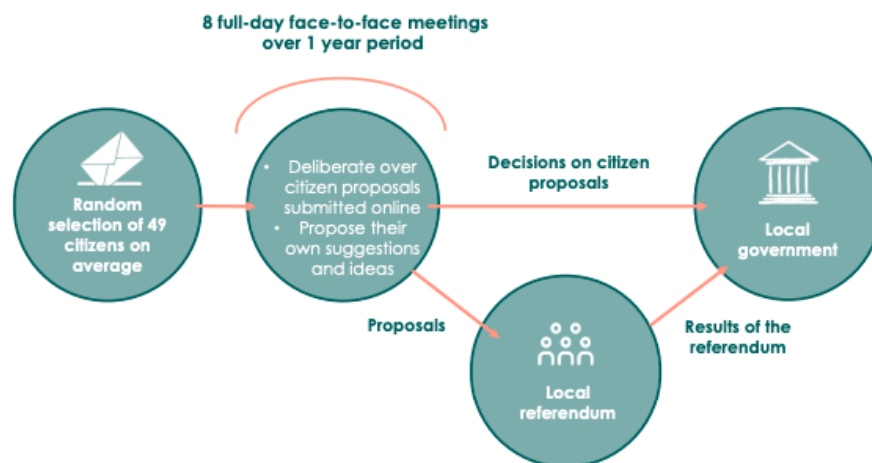
Figure 2: City Observatory Model (OECD 2020)

Conditions that may have contributed to the lack of sustained permeance of the institutionalised process are as follows.

Opportunities to embed a culture of the process was limited because it did not have the time to run as planned before the election and change in governing party, so there was no time to foster culture change. Interviewees said that "a problem with this Observatory was that we just implemented in the very last year... there was no time to produce this cultural change" (Former elected representative). In contrast, a participatory budgeting initiative (another participatory process), that was set up earlier was sustained, even though it was not institutionalised. Interviewees suggested this was due to politicians seeing that it worked.

> "It was something that **we would see the results in years**, not like participatory budgeting, where everybody gets to see the results in one or two years" (Former elected representative)

Interviewees raised the importance of the cultural aspect of institutionalisation, rather than formal institutionalisation through legal means.

> 'The important thing to institutionalise something or not [is] **cultural change**. It **doesn't really depend on the legal tool** that you use' (Former Government official)

Although the method used to institutionalise was the highest law available to the City Council, it did not provide stability. Some pointed to the weakness of this approach, saying it was "it is still not really a law, more an agreement of the council" (Former Government official), and "It can be easily changed, it doesn't matter that you create the law. If there is a new majority, they can change it" (Expert practitioner). Consequently, it could be affected by a change in power. However, one interviewee argued that it was unprecedented it would be removed; "there are not

many laws that have that level and are gotten rid of… It was probably the first time" (Former elected representative).

Power is a relevant factor because being both ambitious and complex made it challenging for it to be sustained. There was a lack of joint ownership and it was regarded as a "left-wing agenda" (Participedia, 2022b). This is reinforced from interviews saying opposition parties did not support it so they removed it.

> "In Madrid, it was pushing too hard to institutionalise…**if the parties in the opposition…don't like it, they will erase i**t" (Expert practitioner)

The process was part of a vision to renew democracy, where "they were very radical in trying to change the system of representation" (Expert practitioner). The Observatory was designed as a "second chamber" (Former elected representative), alongside the chamber of elected politicians in the council. Its power stopped short of the Mayor being able to make final decisions (Former Government official). Evidence from interviewees suggests the less radical initiatives were more sustainable (referring to the participatory budgeting initiative) and that efforts to institutionalise smaller-scale initiatives could have resulted in longer-lasting changes.

> "Even if they are not so powerful but institutionalised, it might be better in the long-term than trying to build really radical stuff that is not institutionalised ... But the thing is that the reality proved right the opposite! The things that we institutionalised got wiped in no time by the new government" (Former elected representative)

Similarly, the model was also too complex in being linked to the participatory budgeting digital platform.

> "It is difficult to arrive at the correct decision of what to do and how to do it… if you really want to institutionalise, I suggest be very simple… …. In Madrid...**it was forced to fit the platform ecosystem**. I would say that that was also a bad idea" (Expert practitioner)

Actors, specifically leaders, were important in implementing the process, with the Mayor being described as the "most radical pro-democracy activist" (Former elected representative). This leader was influential in giving officials permission to innovate, a rare opportunity in the public sector.

> "[Experts] would come up with crazy, great ideas.…and she [the Mayor] was always saying, 'Hell yes let's do that. Do it today. Don't wait until tomorrow.' …That is **very rare**, especially in governments" (Former elected representative)

Two contextual factors are relevant to consider. Madrid is a major capital city with a large population which is a challenging environment in which to initiate radical change. However, developments which made it possible is the political movement, which opened an opportunity for citizen participation, across the capital city and the nation. Emphasising the unique political context and developments, an interviewee said there is no "magic recipe to replicate this" (Former elected representative).

The leading motivation to make it permanent was to protect it in law, so that if power changed hands, as anticipated, it would prevent them reversing the policy or discontinuing the process. One interviewee said: "It was driven by fear of the opposition… my government was condemned by the parliament; it was super polarised" (Expert practitioner). An elected official interviewed emphasised the unusual circumstances, conveying the urgency of their ambition to create permanent change.

> "In Spain we had this huge social movement …asking for systematic change. … people created new political parties… This may not happen again, so we really need

> to **do everything as deep as possible, as radical in the change as possible and as long-lasting as possible**" (Former elected representative)

A development that made the City Observatory possible initially was the expertise inside and outside of government, where political leaders were unusually knowledgeable of citizen participation. Academics in the field at the time remarked that "it should be no surprise that an initiative like this emerged in Madrid" (Smith 2019), due to the existing involvement of experts working with the Council.

> "I had been studying these for years, but specific ideas on how to implement it came from a lot of people…was **crucial f**or that to happen" (Former elected representative)

This exploration of Madrid exposed the challenges in sustaining institutionalised processes, as well as the relevant contextual conditions. Comparative analysis of the findings from both case studies follows in the next chapter.

5. Discussion

The discussion of findings from case studies begins by comparing the results to the conditions identified in the literature. The purpose of this is to confirm and solidify findings, and to show where there are divergences from the existing literature, highlighting the new findings of this research from evidence. This is followed by a discussion of the results of comparative analysis.

In summary, the review of literature identified **seven factors** that are relevant for sustainable institutionalised processes: **culture, structure, power, actors, motives, context and legitimacy**. This research and empirical evidence confirm **six of the seven** findings of the literature review (culture, structure, power, actors, motives and context), thus confirming the importance of these factors in analysing institutionalised processes. The last factor, legitimacy, was missing, and thus is not confirmed, the relevance of which is discussed below.

Culture was identified as being an important theme in the literature, where repeated process is both a defining feature and contributes to its position as a repeated practice, and integration in the system. Culture was frequently discussed alongside a discussion of whether legal basis is needed, suggesting this combination is an important factor.

Structure was identified as important in literature and in the findings of these cases, reiterating the importance of a legal basis or structural mechanism to define institutionalised processes.

Power as a key finding in the literature is re-affirmed by the empirical evidence. The disruptive role and the differing amounts of power in each case signifies power as affecting sustainability. While political will was deemed an important theme from the literature review, however, what appeared more important in empirical evidence was the notion of cross-party

support, as a more comprehensive expression of political will. Although elections were identified as disruptive in the literature, and which was confirmed by the Madrid case, the institutionalised process has survived successive elections in Vorarlberg. Gaining support from opposition was a strong theme in the empirical evidence (Expert practitioner; OECD Official).

Actors play an important role in developing and sustaining processes in the literature, a finding that is mirrored in empirical evidence. However, the finding of actors is expanded to a more descriptive condition of leadership, which specifies the important role that specific actors play. Evidence from interviews confirms that actors inside government and experts outside help inspire, advise, and lead the process of institutionalisation.

Motives for institutionalisation in literature was scrutinised in empirical evidence informing this research. Analysis of these cases reveals that this is a further condition that can affect sustainability.

Context is identified in the literature such as geography and the notion of scale and size of processes being important for sustainability. This finding of small geographical context and the size of the body or the process (e.g., number of citizens, costs) is a relevant finding confirmed by the empirical evidence, given the simplicity and scale of the process in Vorarlberg.

Legitimacy is the only factor missing from the case studies, and cannot be confirmed in this research. This omission is interesting, as one might expect sustained processes would necessarily need to be perceived as legitimate, but no interviewees discussed legitimacy as a key condition. This is not to suggest *a priori* that processes do not need to be legitimate or perceived as such by citizens and political representatives in order to be sustained, but that the finding is not

confirmed, and thus, is not a decisive factor that contributes to longer-term permeance. The following sections discuss the main findings of the comparative analysis.

5.1 Main findings: Conditions for sustained processes

To sustain an institutionalised process, this research finds that the following **eight** conditions play a critical role: **culture, structure, power, leadership, drive to institutionalise, context, simplicity and experience.** These are ordered according to an interpretation of the importance in terms of contributing to sustainability, with context, simplicity and experience being supplementary to the five first and most important findings. This confirms **six of the seven** findings of the literature review (culture, structure, power, actors, motives and context) as key factors, and adds **five new findings** within these categories (flexibility, cross-party support, leadership, drive to institutionalise, simplicity and experience). Within the finding of power, political will is expanded to the more complete conceptualisation of 'cross-party support'. The main findings also expand the finding of actors to 'leadership', to emphasise the critical role of leaders within this broader notion of actors, thus changing the name accordingly. Similarly, the finding of motives is re-conceptualised as 'the drive to institutionalise' to encapsulate the broader notion of motivating factors that push institutionalisation and permeance. The finding of legitimacy is not observed and thus is confirmed. Thus, for clarity, the additional elements found in case studies are: flexibility (structure); cross-party support (power); leaders (actors), drive to institutionalise (motives); simplicity (context); experience (context).

5.1.1 Culture

Both case studies strongly suggested culture was important, in that the routinised process, supported by build-up of experience, helps proves the concept. This leads to the creation of a cultural aspect, which can contribute to the sustainability of processes. Interviewees suggested culture is preserved through social norms.

> "The **legal basis** for making something into an entity that is legally defined and laying out its remit and linking it into existing institutions. …creates another **sense of permanence**, of importance, of status, also continuing in time. But then obviously we also have experiences that show us **that on its own, doesn't necessarily guarantee that something will stay institutionalised** and embedded. [There is] a kind of **cultural aspect** of ensuring that. I guess the **social norms** also end up changing to preserve the legitimacy and the accountability.'" (OECD Official)

Some interviewees voiced this sentiment even strongly, saying the establishment of a culture through a "cultural change" (Former Government official) is what matters most in institutionalisation. Taking this further, one interviewee suggested it is "more important to make things that work" rather than institutionalising (Former elected representative). This chimes with the motives in Vorarlberg, premised on an acknowledgement that it worked and "positive" experience (Government official).

> "The lesson to be learnt … is it's not so important to institutionalise. It's **more important to make things that work**." (Former elected representative)

5.1.2 Structure

Structure is a necessary supplement to culture in institutionalisation in which the legal basis for permeance is provided. The backbone of a strong legal mechanism helps to sustain successful processes. This finding is reinforced by interviewees who described institutionalisation as including a legal aspect: "creating a regulation, …a normative law that describes how to do it and

when; this, for me, is institutionalisation" (Expert practitioner). It is convincing that without a legal basis, it risks sustainability as there is scope for it to be annulled, with interviewees saying: "It could just stop any day because there's absolutely nothing that's mandating this" (OECD Official).

Interestingly, and perhaps contrary to expectations, the existence of a legal basis is not interpreted as the most important factor for sustainability. Nonetheless, this research finds that it is necessary to provide a structure and mandate for the processes to take place. It helps establish a precedent. Interviewees emphasised the importance of both aspects, cultural and legal.

Within this finding of structure, a new finding of flexibility is identified. The relative strength of legal means varies; while a constitutional amendment, used in Vorarlberg, helped sustain the process, on the other hand, in Madrid, the law used was not sufficient to sustain it in the face of political change. The power of the law was thus relatively inconsequential, as "it can be easily changed...you are not protecting it" (Expert practitioner). Thus, this analysis finds that building in flexibility in institutionalisation mechanisms helped sustain the process in Vorarlberg. Where a law would have been too detailed, they required it to be "flexible" to adapt (Government official). Further, the norms that are produced could be "too rigid" (Expert practitioner) and hamstring future improvements.

> "When you institutionalise you **create norms for the process** and those norms could be **too rigid**…just do it once a year or next year if you like it, you change it" (Expert practitioner)

To get around this, flexibility is key, ensuring legal mechanisms are not too prescriptive on design and procedural aspects. This is supported by interviewees who suggest an iterative process, based on a constant cycle of learning.

> "embedding things, but also recognising **this is new and it's not perfect** and it will need to be evaluated and iterated" (Expert practitioner)

Therefore, on this interpretation, flexibility of the structural mechanism for institutionalisation is an important aspect observable in the case studies.

5.1.3   Power

Cross-party support and limited power of the institutionalised process are two new findings within the finding of power. The first finding is cross-party support, expanding the finding of political will to a broader conceptualisation. Crucially, to be sustainable, institutionalised processes needs to have the support, and be trusted, by politicians across the political spectrum.

> "**Political will and the cross partisan buy-in** and not making something that's something that's party political is really needed for this to be sustainable" (OECD Official)

Risks to destabilisation of these processes occurs if they are politicised or "party political" (OECD Official). This was problematic in Madrid, where the opposition felt "participation is coming from the left" (Expert practitioner).

> "…include all the politicians, not just in the government, but also in the opposition, that is the **way to make everyone own the processes**.... **when all those parties trust the processes** throughout deliberation and understand it, **then you start to think about institutionalisation"** (Expert practitioner)

Vorarlberg exposes elected members to the process to build trust in the innovation, demonstrating that it "is not dangerous for them" (Government official). This finding is strongly suggestive of the importance of gaining support from all politicians.

The second new finding within the concept of power is the limited power, which this analysis finds is an important trade-off for sustainability. The consultative nature of the Vorarlberg process made it less threatening to established power. Interviewees explained that this stems from its purpose: "it's clear that it's just on the level of consultation and not decision making" (Government official). With no extensive powers to make decisions, Citizens Councils can only inform decisions made by politicians who ultimately hold control. In contrast, the Madrid model's significant powers (i.e., ability to send issues to referendum) and positioning as a "second chamber" (Former elected representative) may have played a role in disturbing existing power relations. However, interviewees disputed this in saying that the Mayor had final control, so in this way, it was not that powerful (Former Government official). Nonetheless, only falling short of approval from the leader indicates significantly more power than the Vorarlberg example. The extreme novelty of the Madrid innovation, which was "really radical" may have prevented institutionalisation from being "long-lasting" (Former elected representative). It was "too new" to be ignored by the new politicians (Former Government official).

> "Even if they are not so powerful but institutionalised, it might be in the long-term **better than trying to build really radical stuff that is not institutionalised**" (Former elected representative.)

This analysis re-affirms the importance of power, introducing cross-party support as a new finding and limited power of the institutionalised process.

5.1.4 Leadership

In both cases, leadership from key actors internal to government enabled the process to take place, but a stable period of authority and establishing capacity enabled Vorarlberg to sustain the process. This finding specifies the concept of actors found in literature, highlighting the role of specific actors as instrumental in initiating and delivering processes. Authorisation to experiment is a strong enabling factor where leaders play a critical role. In Madrid, senior leadership gave officials permission to innovate, which was a "very rare'" opportunity (Former elected representative). This "great innovation capacity" (Former elected representative) in the government was the ability to explore options and try new ideas. In Vorarlberg, institutionalisation was directed by the new Governor, but the capacity to experiment in Vorarlberg was evident in the "long tradition" of the Office's evolution in which they developed significant "competencies" (Former Government official). The remit given to them in the constitutional amendment was also significant: "It was really a big chance for us, having the will of the state" (Government official).

5.1.5 The drive to institutionalise

Motivations behind the drive to institutionalise matter for sustainability, where motivation based on continuing a process that has been proved as successful is a condition for sustained processes. Evidence from interviews suggesting three related but differing combinations of motivations. One perspective considers it a first step towards a bigger ambition of renewing democracy.

> "This move towards institutionalisation is from a **desire of wanting to fundamentally renew democracy.** … to be changing things more profoundly. There are people who have this more radical view in mind of where this is all going" (OECD Official)

This ambition is apparent in Madrid where the drive for increased opportunities for citizen participation was part of the political movement calling for systemic change. As a secondary motivation, they wanted to safeguard it by making it permanent, saying, **"We really needed to do everything as deep as possible, as radical a change as possible and as long-lasting as possible"** (Former Government official). Quite the opposite motivation is evident in Vorarlberg, where a longer-term positive experience prompted calls for permanence. This third motivation is a result of proof of concept in demonstrating the value for policy outcomes.

> "It's had some **great outcomes.** So, then they decided, 'we want to have more of those processes established' …Over the years there was a kind of **positive resonance**"
> (Government official)

5.1.6 Context

Two highly context-specific factors may aide sustainable institutionalisation. Firstly, geographical context is particularly important in Vorarlberg, as a small region, where "everybody knows everybody" (Government official) and which helps innovations be successful, and which contrasts with the large, urban city of Madrid. Size is also relevant in contrasting Madrid, a capital city, with a rural region of Vorarlberg, with a smaller population that makes it easier to engage with citizens.

> "The **structure and mentality** of Vorarlberg plays a role as well. Vorarlberg is a really **small state**" (Government official)

As a result, it can be interpreted that smaller, close-knit communities in similar geographical structures is a ripe setting for sustainable institutionalisation. Two supplementary new findings relating to context are simplicity and experience, discussed below.

5.1.7 Simplicity

Relatedly, the scale and simplicity of the innovation makes a critical difference in likelihood of sustainability. Involving only a small number of citizens at a time, Vorarlberg processes are significantly smaller and less costly than in Madrid. Madrid was also complicated by linking to other initiative, making it more complex. Evidence from Vorarlberg attributes success to being "small and efficient" (Government official), with far fewer citizens involved for shorter periods of time, and an affordable process.

Although Vorarlberg does not show signs of growing in power or scale, this analysis does not mean it is not radical, by virtue of not being as large-scale as others. Bearing in mind the rural, secluded region of Vorarlberg, and that this process is happening almost exclusively in Vorarlberg, suggests this might be a well-kept secret. Interpreting this in the context of the global trend towards institutionalisation suggests large-scale processes and radical set-pieces are not the way to go. The simplicity of this small model has demonstrated consistent successful institutionalisation, officially since 2013 to the present day, which is itself a remarkable, if not radical, feat.

5.1.8 Experience

A new finding revealed in this research is the prior experience that plays a role in development and sustainability of these processes. Experience in citizen participation or expertise in this area is an enabling factor in the development of these processes, in actors who have expertise internal and external to the government, and building on prior experience in participation. The first of the developments that made initial institutionalisation possible in both cases was the critical involvement of experts, who inspired and advised. In Madrid, the activists-turned-politicians had been elected on a mandate for more participation, as well as being guided by expert.

Institutionalisation was an attempt to supplement existing citizen participation experiences. Officials in Vorarlberg had been innovating in this area since 2004, so institutionalisation was triggered by a "positive resonance" (Government official) and willingness to continue this tradition.

5.2 To institutionalise or to not institutionalise

There are three final aspects to deal with that emerged from the analysis; the definition of institutionalisation, the drive to institutionalise and the benefits of representative deliberative democracy.

Despite the variance observable in the literature in language describing institutionalisation, the definition used in this research was confirmed by interviewees using the same term. Although framing from the invite to interview could have influenced the usage of the term, a shared common understanding was identifiable as interviewees used institutionalisation unprompted implying its acceptance as a meaningful concept.

A question that arose during the analysis concerned the worthiness and need for institutionalisation, critically appraising the drive to institutionalise. Observable in the interviews are value-laden statements on whether one 'should' or 'should not' institutionalise, and whether it was the "right thing to do" or not (Former Government official). This research does not find sufficient answers to this question but found that sustainability may depend on the motivation driving institutionalisation, either as a first step towards something bigger such as renewing democracy (in Madrid), or as a routine way to make policy (in Vorarlberg).

Arguments in favour of not institutionalising purport that there is no need to institutionalise formally if culture can build-up over time, and thus, can show it works (Former elected representative). This cultural dimension of sustainable institutionalisation is a key finding of this research, inferring that fostering a culture of participation contributes to sustainability. On the other hand, some evidence suggested that the legal basis is needed to secure a requirement for it (OECD Official; Expert practitioner).

Another nuanced area emerging from this research was disagreement on the normative benefit of representative deliberative processes. Some interviewees voiced strong belief in the radical capacity of these processes to renew democracy:

> "When you imagine that being multiplied that potentially everyone might do this once in their lives, I think that has a huge potential impact on reshaping society. ... I see the potential of a deliberative body as becoming a much more **consequential part of the heart of our democratic systems**." (OECD Official)

Diverging from this perspective, one interviewee argued that these processes, based on sortition, only empowers those selected to take part. Consequently, there is limited transformative potential on wider society.

> "There's a lot of people who think that citizen observatories or similar organism is absolutely **the right thing to do** because, it's supposed to better represent the citizens. But they tend to dismiss this other important fact that people are not empowered directly by it. This is important when we're talking about **political change**." (Former Government official)

While this is a downside of representative deliberative processes, it can be countered by the argument that once these processes are indeed permanent, there is increased scope for more people to be selected, and thus, potential for bigger impact and 'political change' in the long term.

While institutionalisation as a term appears well-established from the findings of this research, disagreement on the latter two issues discussed here exposes a space for continued debate on the future of institutionalisation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore the conditions that contribute to sustained institutionalised representative deliberative processes. The method used to achieve this was an interpretive analysis of empirical evidence from expert interviews, and a comparative case study of two similar but contrasting cases of institutionalised representative deliberative processes in Vorarlberg, Austria and Madrid, Spain. As a summary of the key findings, the analysis points to three theories on the importance of culture and structure, leadership, and power as the primary conditions for sustained processes. By bringing new evidence to this field, these findings inform practitioners and academics on the conditions needed not only to develop and initiate these processes, but how to sustain them in the long-run. The wider implication is that sustained permenant processes could help strengthen democratic governance. Future research is recommended to confirm whether these conditions are observable in other sustained institutionalised representative deliberative processes, and to pursue the line of enquiry on the drive to institutionalise.

Interpretation of the analysis of the empirical evidence leads to three tentative theories on conditions defining sustained institutionalisation. First, analysis points to the importance of cultural and structural aspects. Legal mechanisms need to be in place for it to meet the definition of 'institutionalised', through a strong structural mechanism such as a constitutional amendment, but the cultural aspect is more important and enduring. Once experience has been built up, the concept proved, it is more likely the process and routine will be sustained.

The second concerns leadership demonstrated by a range of actors who instigate and drive the process of permanent institutionalisation. Political leaders are critical in ultimately instigating the process, giving permission or implementing the legal change required. Government officials

figure out how to make it permanent through relevant legal frameworks and are instrumental in building up expertise through delivering citizen participation over time. External experts play an enabling role in providing inspiration and advising the design of the model.

Thirdly, and building on the above, power is critical to sustainable institutionalisation. A major hurdle could be gaining and securing cross-party political support, from those who have power and influence to prevent the process in future. Where processes are neither too radical nor too powerful as to be a threat to representative deliberative processes, their relatively limited power can contribute to sustainability.

Supplementary to these main conclusions, another important condition is the drive to institutionalise. Motives based on tried-and-tested experience may aid sustainability, as opposed to motivations to instil radical new political cultures in the face of a suspected change in government. A final challenge is contextual, where this research finds that the small, regional geographical setting evident in Vorarlberg may have aided sustained permanence. Taken together, this comparison emphasises the multitude of factors which affect sustainability, and illustrates the challenges in sustainable institutionalisation.

One limitation is that the findings are ordered in terms of importance according to this author's interpretation. A further limitation is that only one interviewee was available to provide expertise on the Vorarlberg case study, who chose to speak on behalf of colleagues. They are nonetheless an authoritative source, reinforced by the fact that in the search to identify other interviewees, background interview informants continually recommended the same interviewee already interviewed. A last limitation of this research is the limited exploration of the motivations for institutionalisation. This was not a core focus of this research, but emerged as an interesting avenue for enquiry.

These findings have implications for the growing academic field, as well as informing practice in a real-life context. A first implication of this research lies in the methodological approach, as a comparative study is a novel approach to examining these processes, beyond the single case studies typical of the literature. A second implication is that emergent theories can be abstracted to the level of generalisability suitable for sufficiently similar regional level democratic governments following this trend of institutionalisation. This research is not intended to be wholly generalisable nor suggest causality. Instead, the purpose is to offer contextualised findings to inform future attempts to institutionalise.

Thus, the specific contribution of these findings suggests a cautious approach to embarking on institutionalisation, with a critical eye on the motivations prompting institutionalisation. A more informed approach could result in more processes that last, rather than failing processes which risk harming already fragile trust in government. These findings could be applied in practice, aiding government officials, practitioners and the international community of deliberative democracy specialists.

Further research could pursue the line of enquiry on the drive to institutionalise, building on that started here and in existing literature scrutinising the motives (Macq and Jacquet 2021; Ravazzi 2016). Other questions emerging from this research include: are there other structural or legal means by which to provide sustainability? Does the combination of conditions found in this study explain sustainability in other institutionalised processes? It would also be beneficial to examine other examples from the perspective of their place in the policymaking cycle and what this means for the changing face of governance and strengthening democracy.

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Annex A – Interviewees

	Title	Role	Date
1	**Expert practitioner.** Participatory Democracy Consultant, Deliberativa, Madrid, Spain.	Led ParticipaLab at Medialab Prado, part of Madrid City Council. Helped design the City Observatory.	11 May
2	**Expert, OECD Official.** Innovative Citizen Participation Lead at OECD, Paris, France.	Author of OECD reports on representative deliberative democracy.	12 May
3	**Former elected representative.** Madrid City Council, member of Left-wing coalition party Ahora Madrid, Spain.	Head of Open Government; launched Decide Madrid and oversaw the City Observatory.	13 May
4	**Former Government official.** Madrid City Council, Spain.	Director of citizen participation of the Madrid City Council.	18 May
5	**Government official.** Head of Office for Voluntary Commitment and Participation, Vorarlberg (Büro für Freiwilliges Engagement und Beteiligung – Vorarlberg), Austria.	Integrally involved in the delivery of Citizens' Councils since initiation in 2004, to current time.	23 May

Annex B – Interview Questions

Case study interviewee questions:

1. **Context -** What factors made the development of the permanent deliberative body possible?

2. **Motivation -** Why did it happen? What was the motivation to make it permanent?

3. **What works -** Why did it not work (Madrid) or Why has it worked, what has made it sustainable? (Vorarlberg)

Expert interviewee questions:

1. **Context -** How do you define institutionalisation? Do we need a universally agreed definition?

2. **Motivation -** What is prompting or motivating this global trend of institutionalisation? Are there unique benefits inherent to representative deliberative processes that make them worth institutionalising?

3. **What works** - Many models exist, do you have a sense of what works in terms of how they are institutionalised (legal rules, constitution, cultural factors)?