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The costs of voting: barriers to voting among young, low-socioeconomic and migrant voters in New Zealand and Sweden

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Abstract

Governments in a number of established democracies have introduced changes in election administration procedures in the hope of raising turnout by reducing the cost of voting. The hypothesis that underpins these changes is that election administration processes may exacerbate the inability of some eligible voters to vote by making it too difficult, costly or inconvenient. Such an exacerbation of costs of voting can happen unintentionally, as a result of institutional drift; that is, changes in the environment without a corresponding change in procedures.

However, the results of these convenience voting initiatives, as measured by the changes in voter turnout, have been mixed at best. One possible reason is that the reforms do not address the actual costs of voting. Despite a vast body of literature that demonstrates that some electoral procedures are related to decreased voter turnout, there has been limited qualitative research on the causal mechanisms of costs of voting and the relative importance of these costs.

This thesis seeks to examine how voters experience the costs of voting, what institutional arrangements exacerbate and ameliorate these costs and why. It does this by conducting a qualitative comparative study of New Zealand and Sweden, using interviews with election officials and focus groups with voters from groups that, in many jurisdictions, exhibit lower voter turnout than average: young people, people from a low-socioeconomic background and people who have migrated from countries with a different political system. Data from the qualitative research are then used as a basis for the choice of variables included in a composite indicator of costs of voting, which facilitates comparison of costs of voting between countries.

The results of the study suggest that the ‘traditional’ costs of time and money that are the focus of much of the scholarly literature (and convenience voting initiatives) are not the most important in the context of a developed democracy. Rather, less tangible costs such as access to information, risk and emotional/identity costs are more important. Subsequently, this thesis argues for broadening the scholarship on costs of voting and the directions of convenience voting reforms.
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Chapter 1: Election administration, barriers to voting and voter turnout: definitions, research questions and design

I think most of your management should be sacked. The dreadful manner in which your agency has gone out of its way to disenfranchise the vote of so many New Zealanders living in Poverty [sic] and fleeing from abuse has directly resulted in fewer and fewer New Zealanders participating in elections. How you all keep your jobs amazes me.


Today’s Mt Albert by-election could - and should - have been New Zealand’s first online voting trial, claims a veteran Auckland councillor concerned change is being held back by political fears of activating young voters. Hulse said ... the democratic process is being hamstrung by what she describes as “resistance” to making the voting system as relevant and accessible as possible.

"I think some of the resistance to this change comes from the fact some people are nervous it actually opens up voting to an entirely new demographic - and that demographic might not be the people who vote for them," Hulse said. "I think we need to be really honest about that."

Hulse: Mt Albert vote lost chance to go digital, NZ Herald, 22 February 2017

1.1. Introducing election administration

Election administration - the set of ‘administrative processes through which citizens’ names are compiled on to the electoral register and votes are cast’ (James, 2011b, 220) – is usually assumed to support free and fair elections. However, election administration processes may also, perhaps

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unintentionally, exacerbate the inability of some eligible voters to vote by making it too difficult, costly or inconvenient (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). Thus, governments in a number of established democracies, concerned about the decline in voter turnout, especially among young and socioeconomically disadvantaged voters, have introduced changes in election administration procedures in the hope of raising turnout by reducing the costs of voting (Blais and Rubenson, 2013, 95, Gronke et al., 2008). In the last two decades, officials from electoral management bodies (EMBs) have argued that election administration needs to change to better fit the needs of contemporary voters, given the world has changed since the regulations were first implemented (Australian Electoral Commission, 2009, Electoral Commission UK, 2003, James, 2010, 190, James, 2011a, 38, New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2015). For example, a number of jurisdictions, including several US states, Germany and New Zealand, removed the need for justification for early or absentee voting, and other jurisdictions such as Switzerland and the state of Oregon implemented postal voting (Funk, 2010, Gronke, 2013, 134, Kousser and Mullin, 2007). The two main directions of these changes are increasing the convenience of voting and identifying and removing remaining barriers, for example simplifying voter registration procedures, as happened in the United States (US) (Hanmer, 2009).

However, the results of these initiatives, as measured by the changes in voter turnout, have been mixed at best. This thesis seeks to investigate this paradox by examining how voters experience the costs of voting, what institutional arrangements exacerbate and ameliorate these costs and why. My investigation focuses on the costs experienced by groups that, in many jurisdictions, exhibit lower voter turnout than average: young people, people from a low-socioeconomic background and those who have migrated from countries with a different political system. This focus will aid in assessing whether the specified election administration reforms succeed in reducing the costs of voting for these groups or whether their impact serves groups that are already over-represented in the electorate. Moreover, election administration is embedded in broader institutional arrangements of the state and these arrangements can affect electoral procedures as well as the burdens experienced by voters. Therefore, I examine election administration and the costs of voting in the context of other institutions, such as the welfare state.

The term ‘election administration’, as used in this thesis, includes the administrative processes governing voter enrolment and voting. These processes are governed by a wide range of legal regulations, administrative arrangements, rules, procedures and sometimes even informal
norms. However, I exclude the electoral formula, suffrage legislation, candidate nomination, electoral boundaries, electoral finance and electoral governance (cf. James, 2011b, 220). A broader definition of election administration, which includes some or all of the above, is often used in scholarship on new democracies. However, a narrower definition is more useful to interrogate the costs of the act of voting as experienced by the voter and is more appropriate in the context of established democracies. Established democracies, for the purpose of this thesis, are defined as having a Freedom House rating of one or two for both civil liberties (CL) and political rights (PR) components and being included in the International Monetary Fund Advanced Economies List. Such democracies are unlikely to experience serious dysfunction in other parts of electoral institutions. Therefore, such dysfunction is less likely to interfere with implementation of voting procedures or otherwise impact on the voter experience. Similarly, the advanced economy criterion ensures that the implementation of regulations is not hindered by a lack of resources or insufficient infrastructure. Finally, most studies on various explanatory variables of voter turnout focus on industrialised democracies (Wass et al., 2015, 408).

Election administration has been the subject of scholarly and political interest because of its links to democratic legitimacy, political participation and equality. The link to legitimacy is reflected in Dahl’s inclusion of ‘an equal and effective opportunity to vote’ in his criteria for democracy (Dahl, 1998, 37). Governmental concern that the legitimacy of the elected government may be questioned if the implementation of the right to vote failed to ensure a free and fair election is raised most often in relation to new democracies. These concerns are evidenced by the growing prevalence of international monitoring of election administration and integrity in newly democratised countries (Dahl, 1998, 37, Elklit and Reynolds, 2002, 86, Kelley, 2008, 222, Norris, 2013). However, examples from the US and Canada show that the risk of the election outcome being questioned due to issues with the implementation of the voting process is not limited to new democracies (McLean, 2006, 11, Norris et al., 2014, 789).

These include how citizens get on the electoral roll and how they get removed from it; what the electoral roll is used for and who can access it; how voters are assigned to voting places; procedures at voting places; identification required (to register to vote or to vote); timing of registration and voting; and whether the vote is cast in person or through other channels (James, 2011b, 220, Norris, 2002, 25, Pallister, 2013, 4).

See, for example, Elklit and Reynolds (2002).


Complaints of inadequate resourcing of election administration do exist in countries from this dataset, especially in the US (for example, Stewart (2013)) but such inadequacy is a result of political choices rather than a result of an absolute scarcity of resources.
Where the integrity of the electoral process is not in question, election administration has been a topic of political and academic debate mainly because of its potential link to voter turnout. There is an extensive literature on what influences the voter turnout rate. Research in this area traditionally has been divided into aggregate-level studies, which look at correlates of overall turnout, and individual-level studies, which explore the characteristics or circumstances of an individual that affect his or her decision to vote or not to vote (Blais, 2007, 621). Aggregate-level studies have identified a number of variables positively correlated with turnout rates. However, these variables often have only a weak or moderate relationship with turnout and do not explain all of the variation (Aldrich, 1993, 264, Geys, 2006a, 653, Matsusaka and Palda, 1999, 439). As a result, Matsusaka and Palda (1999, 440-2) hypothesise the missing variables are likely to be individual-level costs.

Within the individual-level research on turnout, there have been two main approaches: economic and sociological (Barry, 1978, 4). The sociological approach, with its roots in the works of Parsons (1937) and Lipset (1969), includes a diverse range of scholarship and focuses on both internalised norms and motivations, and the social, political and institutional context which shapes them (Barry, 1978, 48, Smets and van Ham, 2013, 344). The resource or civic voluntarism model proposes that individual resources such as time, money, education and civic skills are what drives turnout (Almond and Verba, 1963). In contrast, psychological models stress the role of internal factors - attitudes and predispositions such as political interest, partisanship, and political efficacy (Campbell et al., 1976 (1960)). Mobilisation (agency) theories shift the focus towards the external environment and highlight the role of mobilising organisations and social norms and sanctions (Putnam, 2000, Rosenstone and Hansen, 1996). Similarly, the institutional model sees the decision to turn out as a by-product of the political and institutional context in which citizens live (Jackman, 1987, Powell, 1986). Modernisation theories look at how changes in this context, such as rising standards of living, change citizens’ preferences regarding forms of participation (Bell, 1973, Dalton, 2008, Inglehart, 1990).

The economic approach, the foundational works of which are Downs’s (1957) *Economic theory of democracy* and Olson’s (1965) *The logic of collective action*, is where the idea of costs of voting

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originated. Rational choice theory, which informs the economic approach, sees individual decisions as resulting from a rational calculation in which the costs and benefits are weighted against each other. Downs (1957, 260) applied this view to voting, arguing that a citizen votes if the return outweighs the cost. If not, he or she abstains. Downs borrows his understanding of cost from economic theory, namely ‘a deflection of scarce resources from some utility-producing use’ (Downs, 1957, 209). Specifically, the main costs Downs (1957, 265-6) identified were time (to register to vote, to gather information, to go to the voting place and to vote), money (travel, lost income) and information. Downs (1957, 7, 276) explicitly excluded ‘psychological considerations’ from his discussion of the costs of voting to avoid a model in which any behaviour could be explained by subjective feelings. Downs hypothesises that costs of voting and information are why low-income citizens are less likely to vote: such people have fewer resources and may have less access to information and less ability to utilise it (Bäck et al., 2011, 76, Downs, 1957, 223,99).

In Downs’s cost-benefit model, the individual benefit for the voter is unclear in the light of the usually minuscule probability that an individual vote will affect the outcome of an election (Aldrich, 1993, 258). This ‘paradox of voting’ has generated considerable debate, which is outside the scope of this thesis (a comprehensive review can be found in Geys (2006)). In summary, rational choice theorists have been open to extending the understanding of the benefits of voting (or, costs of non-voting) to include those that are non-tangible or indirect, such as the satisfaction of expressing one’s preferences or benefits derived from the continuation of democracy. However, the understanding of costs of voting was not broadened in a similar way (Barry, 1978, 21-2, Copeland and Laband, 2002, 351, Riker and Ordeshook, 1968, 25).

The measurement of costs of voting has also been a methodologically challenging task (Sigelman and Berry, 1982, 421). In more recent election administration studies, as I will discuss in Chapter 3, the problem was typically circumvented by focusing exclusively on a specific, measurable cost (such as the cost of travel or obtaining identification documents), without spelling out a clear definition of the costs of voting or discussing the theory behind them. Despite these theoretical problems, the hypothesis that costs of voting, if they are sufficiently high, can affect voter turnout has been universally accepted, even by critics of rational choice theory (Green and Shapiro, 1994, 66). Of course, opinions vary about when costs are high enough to affect turnout and which costs matter.\(^8\) Green and Shapiro (1994, 66) argue that only a very high cost such as a poll tax can affect

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\(^8\) For example, Niemi (1976, 115) called voting in the US ‘relatively costless’ but Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980, 73) argued that the costs of voting in the US are too high. These comments referred to very similar situations because there were no major cost-increasing changes in election administration in the four years between these publications.
turnout while Verba et al. (1995, 359) state that in the context of a contemporary established
democracy resources play virtually no role in voting (which implies negligible costs). However,
Aldrich (1993, 261) argues, echoing Downs, that the turnout decision is easily affected by even
small changes in costs. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980, 73), along with other scholars whose
work is discussed in Chapter 2, find significant effects of some administrative procedures on voter
turnout, which supports the hypothesis that even small costs of voting may matter for voter
turnout. The concept of the costs of voting was also incorporated in research outside of the
economic model. For example, the role of mobilising organisations such as parties has been
interpreted as lowering the transaction cost and cost of information for voters (Jones and Hudson,
1998, 175) and the resource model implies that participation comes at a cost, which is easier to
bear for those who have more of the relevant resources.

Costs of voting can be created or exacerbated by electoral administrative regulations that make
voting impossible or risky for some voters. For example, Sobel (2014) argues that voter
identification requirements in the US act as a barrier to voting in cases where the voter does not
have identification. He quantifies the cost of voting by noting that in some cases obtaining the
required documents costs in excess of US$100. In Australia, voter enrolment regulations such as
residency requirements make it difficult to register to vote for voters who move many times a
year (Edwards, 2007). The public availability of the electoral roll in New Zealand puts registered
voters at risk of being found by ex-partners or debt collectors (Mullord, 2011). Similarly, Preller
(2012) proposes that the use of electoral rolls for summoning citizens for jury duty in the US may
act as a deterrent to registration because of the psychological cost of serving on a jury or the time
commitment required from jurors.

Such procedural factors are among many factors previously explored that may affect voter
turnout. The impact of these administrative factors may not be the most important driver of voter
turnout. Indeed, aggregate-level estimates of effects of electoral administrative procedures on
turnout rarely exceed 10 percentage points. Nevertheless, these effects have been a subject of
political and scholarly interest because election administration is one of the few factors relevant
to voter turnout that are under the control of the state. This control by the state over electoral
administrative procedures implies that the outcome of the election may be influenced by
hindering the access of specific groups of voters to voting either as a result of deliberate
manipulation (Kelley et al., 1967, 375) or nascent neglect (James, 2012b). Downs (1957, 266)
points to this possibility of manipulation when he proposes that ‘the returns from voting are
usually so low that tiny variations in its cost may have tremendous effects on the distribution of
political power’. Such deliberate manipulation has been documented in the US where literacy tests and poll taxes were used to disenfranchise African Americans after Reconstruction (Filer et al., 1991). For this reason, election administration reforms have been a contentious issue in the US and debates about registration reform and voter identification laws have long been polarised along partisan lines (Burden et al., 2017, Hanmer, 2009, Vercellotti and Anderson, 2006). The common perception amongst politicians in the US is that expanding the electorate would benefit left-of-centre parties, based on the demographic characteristics of the non-voting population (Calvert and Gilchrist, 1993, 696), despite conflicting evidence. Election administration studies within the US is a long-established field with extensive scholarly literature, discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The decentralisation of electoral administration in the US to state and sometimes county or even parish level has enabled scholars to compare systematically the effects of different electoral arrangements over time while controlling for several relevant variables such as characteristics of the elections. The resulting scholarship has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the link between election administration and voter turnout, but the unique features of the US political system raise questions about the generalisability of some of these findings.

By contrast, in established democracies other than the US, charges of electoral manipulation by means of voting procedures are less common. These democracies typically have regulations governing election administration that are based on laws more than a century old and rarely updated (Geddis, 2014, James, 2012b, 3). Yet James (2012b, 3) proposes that election administration in countries where the laws remain unchanged has been subject to institutional drift - a change in the outcomes of a policy due to changes in the external environment (Hacker, 2005, 40). Policymakers agree, as evidenced by a broad range of so-called convenience voting reforms which aim to make voting easier and more user-friendly for the contemporary voter.

Many of these convenience voting reforms are an attempt to halt or reverse the decline in voter turnout evident since the 1980s. This decline in voter turnout has presented scholars and practitioners with a new challenge because average education levels, and other socioeconomic characteristics correlated with voting on an individual level, increased in the same period that

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9 For example, the voter registration reforms in the US did not have the expected effect on the socioeconomic composition of the electorate (Highton and Wolfinger, 1998) and in Norway, radical right parties benefited from early voting reforms (Finseraas and Vernby, 2014). However, there is some evidence that the broadest expansion of the electorate, achieved by compulsory voting, benefits left-of-centre parties (Jackman, 1999).
voter turnout has declined (Blais and Rubenson, 2013, 96, Gray and Caul, 2000, Mair, 2006, 34).<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the influence of electoral institutions and many other factors examined in aggregate-level studies have tended to remain constant. Attempts to explain this puzzle of turnout decline have not produced conclusive results (Flickinger and Studlar, 1992, 5-6, Gray and Caul, 2000, 1092, Teixeira, 1987, 23). Governments and scholars fear that this decreased participation may affect democratic legitimacy and policy choices, especially when it deepens the existing socioeconomic bias in political participation (Hajnal and Trounstine, 2005, Hill and Leighley, 1992, Lijphart, 1997, Norris, 2002). These concerns stimulated interest in election administration by non-US scholars and policymakers. After a long period of stability, election administration studies outside of the US is an emerging field, seeking to assess the impact of innovations in election administration.

Some of these innovations gave rise to debates and controversies, for a number of reasons. First, some of the reforms that aim to make voting less costly for voters require trade-offs with other requirements, such as security and secrecy or cost-effectiveness; opinions on what trade-offs are acceptable differ (Wilks-Heeg, 2009). Second, a number of scholars express concern about the secondary impact of changes in election administration on civic culture, campaigning and the political life (Nordlinger, 2003, Orr, 2015, Thompson, 2008, Watt, 2006).<sup>11</sup> For example, Thompson (2008) argues that early voting and free choice of voting place may reduce the communality of voting experience by dispersing voters in time and space. Early voting can also transform political campaigning by extending the period of campaign intensification and therefore increasing campaign costs, which can disadvantage parties with limited funds (Nordlinger 2003). Third, these changes in previously stable systems can give an opportunity for ‘hidden politics’ in which policies which change the distribution of burden between the individual and the state are introduced or changed outside of the channels of political deliberation to achieve political goals (Moynihan et al., 2014, 43). In other words, amid convenience voting reforms, changing electoral procedures with the goal of affecting election results now becomes a possibility also in countries other than the US.

In this thesis, I contribute to the emerging field of election administration studies in contexts other than the US, using as my case studies New Zealand and Sweden. The political and social context in these countries differs from that in the US in several ways. New Zealand and Sweden have a

<sup>10</sup> Blais (2007, 624) estimated the decrease to be 9% from 1980 to 2004; estimates vary depending on the methodologies but there is agreement regarding the downward trend.

<sup>11</sup> Primary impact is the impact on turnout; secondary impact includes effects which do not directly affect turnout but change the voting environment, for example a change in campaign spending patterns when early voting is introduced (Gronke, 2008).
proportional electoral system, historically high turnout, sizeable populations of enfranchised migrants (who are one of the groups of interest in this research) and consistently rank among the top ten least corrupt countries in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. At the same time, they differ in many characteristics that can be potential explanatory variables for voter turnout, such as for example the voter registration process or the welfare system. In the field of election administration studies, a comparative approach has been widely utilised within the US in the form of making comparisons between states (for example, Huefner et al., 2007, Rugeley and Jackson 2009, 57). However, there are very few inter-state comparisons of election administration and these tend to either not focus on established democracies (for example, Pallister, 2013) or not focus on the costs of voting and voter experience but on other aspects of election administration (for example, James 2012a).

1.2. Research questions

My central research questions are whether and how some electoral regulations hinder some voters from voting by making it too costly for them, how we should understand the costs of voting and how we can use this understanding to ameliorate these costs. Although these questions have been asked before, the novelty of my research lies in my approach to finding the answers. First, I combine different theoretical approaches and methodologies to arrive at a holistic picture of the costs of voting, whereas research on costs of voting has been mostly fragmented. Second, to this end, I use a comparative case study including two countries in which research on election administration is limited and which have not been compared with regard to costs of voting and institutions that are relevant to these costs. Third, I propose an instrument (composite indicator) to facilitate further comparisons of the costs of voting and election administration. Therefore, this research contributes both to theory building in the emerging field of election administration studies and costs of voting studies outside of the US, and to policymaking.

The main theoretical questions are:

1. What are the costs of voting? What subcategories of costs of voting can be identified? Is there support for extending Downs’s (1957) framework of time, monetary and information costs and adding new categories of costs?

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Downs does not provide a formal definition of a cost of voting; instead, he discusses specific categories of costs. Some possible costs of voting are excluded from Downs’s discussion because, as he admits, the approach he uses is not suitable for exploring those (Downs, 1957, 10). Since the publication of *The economic theory of democracy*, an extensive and methodologically diverse literature has emerged on people’s interactions with election administration and on the correlations between electoral procedures and turnout. Many of the more recent studies use new institutionalist approaches – rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. Each of these approaches has a different focus and different preferred methodologies.

As a result of this diversity, many findings highlight previously under-researched aspects of election administration and costs of voting. At the same time, the majority of this literature has an applied character and presents empirical findings but stops short of theory building. Therefore, I examine the contributions of these approaches and identify what, implicit or explicit, understanding of the costs of voting they represent. I ask whether this diverse scholarship supports adding new categories of costs of voting to traditional Downsian costs of money, time and information. Subsequently, I construct a framework which proposes three new types of costs of voting, namely 1) disruption, 2) risk, and 3) emotional or identity costs. This new framework is a starting point for my empirical examination of whether it indeed reflects voters’ experiences of the costs of voting.

Understanding the costs of voting is valuable from a practical point of view because it will aid states in providing more equal and effective opportunities to vote (Dahl 1998, 37). Answering this question also has a theoretical utility: mapping out the categories of costs of voting will help guide further research to explore the aspects of the costs of voting where research has been limited.

There are also a series of phenomenological questions that are at the heart of this thesis:

2. What particular costs of voting, and under what conditions, affect low-turnout groups such as youth, low-socioeconomic status voters and some migrant groups? What are their perceptions of these costs of voting and their impact? What electoral regulations and arrangements exacerbate or ameliorate these costs? What other institutions affect or mediate these costs?

In answering these questions, I focus on exploring the mechanisms by which voting procedures result in costs of voting. Studies have found that a procedure like voter registration is linked to lower voter turnout. However, the possible mechanism behind this link cannot always be deduced from available data. For example, it may be that the deterring factor is the length of the
registration form, the intrusiveness of the questions asked, time required to fill out the form, concerns about how the data will be used, or something else. Thus, to understand how specific procedures translate to costs of voting as experienced by voters, it is necessary to study voters’ perceptions and experiences. I take up this challenge using qualitative methods.

Further, to successfully ameliorate these costs by means of electoral reforms, we need to know which of these costs matter most to the decision taken by voters to turn out. Literature suggests that some institutions outside of election administration can also generate costs of voting or mediate the costs of voting that originate within election administration. Understanding these costs of voting external to election administration is important if we want to know what reforms, within election administration and in the broader institutional environment, can counteract these costs.

Why focus on the three groups listed, namely those who are young, from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and migrants not from established democracies? These groups have voter turnout lower than average in a range of countries, including the two countries selected for this research. Because equal access to an opportunity to vote is important, focusing on groups most likely to experience barriers or difficulties in access to voting can highlight how these barriers work.

Apart from the above consideration, the choice of these specific groups of voters also reflects my interest in the role of election administration in social justice. According to Verba et al. (1995, 11), the interests of groups under-represented in the electorate may not be protected to the same extent as the interests of groups with higher levels of participation. Armingeon and Schädel (2015, 3) suggest this lack of protection of interests may be caused by a lack of information about the needs of the under-represented groups or by a lack of incentive on the part of politicians. Jacobs et al. (2004, 18) fear that this lack of protection of interests may in turn lead to political disengagement of affected groups and eventually to a weakening of democracy (see also Verba (2003, 667) and Engelen (2007, 24)). Voting requires the least resources compared to other forms of political participation and therefore should be a counterweight to forms of political participation available to the socioeconomically advantaged. Thus, if turnout is socioeconomically biased, it can reinforce economic, social and political inequality (Lijphart 1997, 2, Teixeira 1992, 4, Verba 2003, 667).13

13 In US states where voter turnout was comparable across social classes, lawmakers were less likely to pass restrictive welfare eligibility rules, which supports the hypothesis that under-representation leads to weaker protection of interests (Avery and Peffley, 2005, 47).
My third, practical research question is:

3. What options are available, in the case study countries, to remedy these costs? Have newly introduced reforms effectively remedied these costs? What are best practices in designing the procedures of election administration to make voting easier?

Here I am looking to make a practice-oriented contribution to policy developments in election administration. I offer actionable recommendations for the two cases and evaluate convenience voting reforms in election administration against the findings of my study. I build a composite indicator of costs of voting to rank other countries on their costs of voting. In this way, my study will support new policy design and facilitate comparison of reform results between countries.

Interviews conducted with election officials in both countries also inform policy recommendations and help to clarify the constraints associated with election administration reform. Apart from financial, legal and institutional barriers, initiatives to make voting easier must also preserve electoral integrity. Sometimes there is tension between convenience and integrity. For example, Heckelman (1995, 107) shows that the secret ballot reform increased the cost of voting, because it stopped vote-buying. Yet secrecy of the vote is considered essential for free democratic elections and ought to be prioritised over lowering the cost of voting. Today, some of the proposed reforms such as remote voting (Internet, postal) are also viewed by some as a potential threat to electoral integrity. These reservations and other normative factors, such as the values reflected by the ritual of voting, should be taken into account when considering convenience voting reforms.

### 1.3. Approaches, methods and limitations

The vast literature on the costs of voting and election administration, which I will discuss in the following chapter, utilises a variety of theoretical approaches and methodologies. These include behaviourist approaches grounded in rational choice theory which use statistical methods and a range of new institutionalist approaches. These new institutionalist approaches focus on various aspects of voting: the physical infrastructure such as polling places, the formal and informal institutions involved, voters’ resources, perceptions and feelings and the symbolism of voting. In doing so, these approaches employ diverse methods, from statistical analyses and descriptive case studies to interviews and focus groups. As I aim for a holistic view of the costs of voting from the
point of view of voters, it is appropriate that I draw on a range of approaches and methodologies from the new institutionalist tradition.

These approaches, namely historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism, each have strengths which make them particularly suitable for investigating specific parts of the election ecosystem. I utilise focus groups with voters from New Zealand and Sweden to explore the experiences and perceptions of voters. I supplement these data with a comparative case study of New Zealand and Sweden, in which I explore the institutional and social context in which election administration operates, drawing on institutional histories and interviews with election officials. Finally, I construct a composite indicator of the cost of voting which shows how the findings can be used to compare and assess other cases. The composite indicator communicates the findings to audiences who will not engage with qualitative research and broadens the geographical scope of the study, but at a cost of losing the richness of context highlighted in qualitative data.

This mixed approach allows a wide range of institutional factors to be explored. It also facilitates analysis and interpretation of findings from one channel of inquiry against findings from other channels. As a result, many of my initial expectations and hypotheses were challenged, to reveal a more complex picture. For example, based on focus groups with voters in New Zealand, it would be easy to conclude that a public electoral roll is a barrier to voting for a segment of the population due to privacy concerns. However, the Swedish case study shows how other institutions, such as the welfare state, can mediate the effects of the public electoral roll so that it may not be a problem, or a cost/barrier, at all. This interaction between electoral administrative procedures and the broader institutional and social environment is a major theme of this research. My findings suggest that election administration should be tailored to ameliorate specific costs of voting generated by this broader institutional and social environment (of course, reform could also focus on changing the environment, but such change is usually more difficult to achieve than a change in electoral procedures). When constructing the composite indicator, I take into account this interplay between election administration and other institutions and characteristics of society.

A second major surprise was which costs of voting were discussed by research participants most often and were most important. Based on the scholarly literature and the direction of convenience voting reforms, I expected that the cost of time (including opportunity cost) would be the most important cost of voting. Also, my initial focus was on issues that could be called technical, such as the location of voting places or the difficulty of bureaucratic procedures such as voter enrolment. These issues were indeed important for many participants. However, some
participants chose to talk more about the less tangible, emotional factors than these technical elements. In the narratives of many participants, voting turned out to be an emotionally charged act of interaction with the state. The willingness to engage in this act was linked to one’s perception of belonging to society, one’s place in this society, and relationship with the state. I identified factors which for many participants made voting unpleasant, that incurred emotional costs. Such factors included perceived disrespect shown by poll workers, the quality of interaction with other government agencies or the inability to celebrate voting in a way that expresses one’s culture. For voters from some cultural backgrounds, the possibility of ‘losing face’ by making a mistake or not knowing what to do in a voting place was enough to deter them from even entering the voting place unassisted. These findings imply that the arrangements and implementation of election administration generate symbolic messages which need to be taken into account in policy design. On the other hand, the importance of information – not just information about voting procedures or party policies, but about how the system works – was not a surprising finding and confirmed hypotheses from literature on civic education.

The idea for this thesis was inspired by my long-term volunteer work that put me in contact with people from the groups included in this study (although for the study itself, I recruited people who I did not know). This contact enabled me to observe animated and sometimes well-informed discussions about politics and policy issues. Later, I learned that few of the people who participated in these discussions voted, despite their interest in politics. In my opinion, their non-voting had the potential to contribute to the continuation of their socioeconomic disadvantage. Thus, this inquiry into barriers to voting is motivated by a desire for social justice. Therefore, apart from contributing to scholarly knowledge about election administration and the cost of voting, the aim of this thesis is to provide useful material for policymakers and to make the voices of my participants heard. To this end, in my thesis, especially in the discussion of findings and recommendations, I aim to write in a clear, direct and unpretentious style that is accessible not just to academics, but also to policymakers and my research participants. In doing so, I follow the advice of, among others, Badley (2017, 1) and Sword (2009, 334), who advocate for transparent writing. I also aspire to heed the warning of Derrida (1979, 124) that writing can be an instrument of abusive power if, instead of communicating knowledge and ideas clearly, it becomes ‘secret and reserved, diverted from common usage’. In other words, obscure writing excludes those unable to understand the jargon. Those so excluded are in turn unable to offer criticism or comments and thus are excluded from participating in creation of knowledge.
The idea for Chapter 8, in which I propose the composite indicator, is also linked to my experiences in non-governmental organisations. Such organisations are required to report metrics to government and funders and need to present their complex work in numerical form. The composite indicator illustrates a transparent approach to the “translation” of rich qualitative data into a metric.

This study has a number of limitations, which are worth mentioning, but which do not impact on the findings in a meaningful way. Reforms in election administration have become more frequent so some of the data may be in need of updating when this thesis is published. This study also does not examine other factors that may affect turnout, such as campaign expenditure, competitiveness of the election, and the electoral and party system. In addition, because the focus of this thesis is the cost of voting borne by the voter, procedures with which voters have little or no contact, like vote counting, are not the focus of this study. Convenience voting solutions that are not present in the case study countries, like Internet voting, are not considered in detail because empirical data are insufficient. My focus is on voting in national-level, general (parliamentary) elections rather than second-order elections such as local government elections or elections to the European Parliament in Sweden. The reason for this focus is that national elections are more likely to be familiar to participants and data about them are more likely to be available. Also, local elections in New Zealand and Sweden are too different to be meaningfully compared due to the degree of decentralisation of power in Sweden and their use of combined voting in national and local elections. Finally, qualitative studies with purposive sampling conducted under the time and resource constraints of doctoral study necessarily result in a limited group of participants, and may not represent all views and experiences of the groups from which they were recruited. My participants are not a representative sample in a probabilistic sense, because the aim of data collection was to identify rather than to quantify the existence of perceptions of costs of voting and the stories about these costs. Some perceptions, experience and stories will be missing as a result. The construction of an indicator leads to a loss of information, which is a trade-off for parsimony. The choices made during the construction of the indicator are subjective, which I acknowledge by making these choices transparent. As such, my study does not exhaust the topic and further research is required to advance our understanding of the costs of voting and barriers to voting.

1.4 Outline of the thesis
The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows.

In Chapter 2, I discuss scholarly literature on election administration and the costs of voting. I start with a brief theoretical discussion of why low voter turnout and unequal rates of participation across socioeconomic and other groups are considered undesirable. I also discuss when and why barriers to voting should be of concern, when a legal right to vote exists. In this discussion, I explicitly situate my research within relevant democratic theory. I then review empirical literature on election administration and costs of voting. Behaviourist studies were dominant for a long period. These studies built the foundations of election administration research by proving that election administration can affect voter turnout. The subsequent advent of new institutionalist approaches diversified and enriched the field in terms of topics and methods. However, it also fragmented it, with most studies being narrowly focused and applied. In my thesis, I aim to bring the discoveries from these diverse strands together to create a holistic framework of the costs of voting, which expands upon that proposed by Downs (1957).

I build a framework of the costs of voting in Chapter 3, starting with a review of Downs’s theory as regards the costs of voting and the operationalisation of his theory in scholarly work. Based on Downs’s canonical work and the literature discussed in Chapter 2, I propose an extended framework of costs of voting. This extended framework, apart from the traditional categories of money, time and information costs, includes risk, disruption and emotional costs. To link these categories to specific voting procedures, I discuss popular convenience voting reforms with reference to this framework to find out which categories of cost are addressed most often by policymakers. To further broaden the view, I draw from behavioural economics on choice architecture to explore what possible solutions to making voting easier are under-represented in election administration reforms. Finally, I examine the possible mediating effects of institutions other than election administration, such as the welfare state and education system, on the costs of voting. Based on the body of literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, I list hypotheses about factors that may affect the cost of voting, which will guide my own research.

Chapter 4 lays out the theoretical grounding and the methods used in this research. I review the epistemological assumptions and preferred methodologies of various strands of literature discussed earlier and their strengths and limitations. This leads to selecting a set of methods suitable for this project. This set has three parts, each guided by another strand of new institutionalism—historical, sociological and rational choice. The historical institutionalist part is a comparative case study of New Zealand and Sweden in which I describe, compare and place in a historical context, institutions potentially relevant to the cost of voting. I comment on case choice
and the comparative case study method. The sociological institutionalist part utilises focus groups with voters to explore voters’ understandings and experiences of the cost of voting. Both the historical and sociological institutionalist parts are supplemented by interviews with election officials in both countries. The final part, inspired by rational choice institutionalism, converts the findings of the previous two parts into a parsimonious composite indicator, which can be used to rank countries on their costs of voting.

Chapter 5 introduces the two case studies and discusses, in a comparative and historical perspective, the institutions of election administration and the broader institutional environment in both countries. These institutions include voter registration and the electoral roll, the welfare state, immigration and integration policies (relevant for the migrant subgroup), education, residential patterns such as ethnic segregation, voting procedures and the management of the voting process. The comparison highlights similarities and differences between the two cases and provides the context for interpretation and analysis of qualitative data.

These qualitative data are presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 discusses findings pertaining to ‘practical’ costs of voting such as time and information. Chapter 7 discusses findings relevant to the less tangible categories of costs of voting such as risk and emotional costs. To ensure that the participants’ voices are represented with maximum authenticity, I include a large number of direct quotes, interspersed with my interpretive commentary. Based on participants’ narratives, the time costs of voting seem less important than the literature on convenience voting reforms seems to suggest. Instead, disruption – the interruption of a routine, the necessity to redirect one’s attention – is prominent in participants’ narratives. Informational costs are also very pronounced, providing strong support for civic education in schools. However, different groups report different categories of information that they find difficult to access or would like more of. Risk is an important cost of voting for a segment of New Zealand participants but this concern is not reflected in what Swedish participants said, despite similar institutional arrangements with regard to the public electoral roll. The context discussed in Chapter 5 helps to explain this surprising difference. Emotional and identity costs, linked to feelings of being disrespected or not belonging, appear prominently among participants from groups that are particularly disadvantaged in society. There is a stark contrast between the feelings reported by migrants in New Zealand and in Sweden, again illustrating how broader policies can affect attitudes towards political participation. Each of these two chapters includes an evaluation of support for hypotheses from Chapter 3 and a list of actionable policy recommendations for the two countries.
Chapter 8 briefly reviews the qualitative findings from Chapters 6 and 7 and uses them as a theoretical basis for the choice of indices, weights and aggregation method for a composite indicator of cost of voting. I compile a dataset for 16 countries, which contains the variables selected for inclusion into the indicator. A cluster analysis reveals that similarities in election administration between countries reflect policy clusters identified with regard to other policy settings. This suggests that election administration is deeply embedded in overarching institutional structures of a country. After a discussion of groupings of countries identified by cluster analysis, I proceed to construct the composite indicator. In doing so, I aim for maximum transparency by explicitly discussing all the choices involved in indicator construction and exploring the effect of these choices on the indicator rankings, using uncertainty analysis. Finally, I calculate and discuss the rankings for countries from the dataset and comment on the utility and the limitations of the composite indicator.

In the final chapter (Chapter 9), I bring together insights from the various stages of the research and comment on the major themes that emerge from this research. Then, I argue that the list of costs of voting should be expanded to include emotional costs and risk. I also emphasise that the institutional apparatus that facilitates voting is broader than just election administration. I discuss the interactions between electoral procedures and the institutional and social context in which these procedures are embedded. Advocating for this broader and more interdependent view of election administration, I also consider the limitations of election administration and its place in state structures. I draw conclusions on what the findings mean for convenience voting and election administration reform. I conclude by mapping out the directions for further research and drawing attention to the tension, visible in qualitative data, between a desire for easier, more casual, ‘on the go’ voting and voting as an important ceremony and ritual which ought to be special and celebrated. My overarching conclusion is that the framework of costs of voting based on Downs’s theory should be broadened to include subjective costs such as emotional costs and risk. These intangible costs are an important factor in the turnout decision of some voters from disadvantaged groups. Yet, popular election reforms, such as early voting, address primarily the traditional Downsian costs. I propose ways in which election administration can ameliorate these costs.
Chapter 2: An embarrassment of riches: what do we know about election administration, barriers to voting, costs of voting and voter turnout?

As part of a generation that dutifully trotted off to the polling booth on reaching voting age like everyone else in the street, what I did find curious in Jackson's argument, is that he sheets home all the blame for non-voting to society, to the political parties and to the Electoral Commission. There's not a single tut tut in the direction of the non-voter. It's society's fault for not providing "civics lessons" at school. It's the parties' fault for pandering only to the middle class. And, of all things, it's the Electoral Commission's faults for not having a secret, non-viewable electoral roll!

Brian Rudman, The real reason why young people don't vote, NZ Herald, February 22, 2017

2.1. Theoretical underpinnings: why worry about turnout and barriers to voting?

Research on election administration and voter turnout almost universally accepts, often implicitly, two assumptions. These assumptions are that low voter turnout is undesirable and that a lower rate of voting among social groups with less power in society, compared to those with more power, is also undesirable. I too, accept these assumptions, so I will preface my overview of empirical studies in election administration with a brief discussion of the political theory which underpins election administration studies.

In much of the literature on voter turnout and democracy, the two desirable norms are ‘maximal participation’ (higher voter turnout is better) and ‘representative participation’ (the more representative the voting electorate is, politically and demographically, of the whole society, the better) (Elmendorf, 2008, 686). These positions can be non-exclusive in practice: assuming universal franchise, full participation equals representative participation. Nonetheless, from a normative point of view, these two positions address different concerns. The maximal participation norm is concerned with the legitimacy of the political system. The representative participation norm reflects the democratic ideal in which election results represent the will of the people as a whole (Elmendorf, 2008, 690). In the absence of full participation, the maximal and

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representative participation norms may collide. For example, for adherents of the representative-turnout norm, even a very low-turnout such as 25% would be satisfactory, as long as those who participate are politically and demographically representative of those who do not. An attempt to increase turnout in a way that disturbs its representativeness would be, from the point of view of the representative participation norm, undesirable (Elmendorf, 2008, 690).

The legitimacy view, linked to support for high voter turnout, is government-centric and state-centric: higher voter turnout is interpreted as a reflection of voters’ trust in the integrity of the electoral system (Birch, 2010). High voter turnout also gives government decisions a mandate from the majority, making it less likely that these decisions will be questioned (Hill, 2006, 209). There are scholars who disagree with equating high voter turnout with legitimacy, for example Rothstein (2009, 311) argues that legitimacy is created on the ‘output’ side of the system (the actions of the government), rather than on the ‘input’ side (who participates in elections). Nonetheless, in elections with low voter turnout, the losing side or political commentators often point out the low percentage of all eligible voters who voted for the winner(s). Such comments imply that if more eligible voters participated, the outcome of the election could have been different. The fact that such arguments are used suggests that some people believe that high voter turnout confers legitimacy.

In contrast, the representative-participation view of voter turnout is citizen-centric and is concerned, first and foremost, with ensuring that each citizen’s interests and concerns will be considered by elected officials. Politicians will have limited incentives to focus on the concerns of the groups that vote at lower rates (Wattenberg, 1997, 132). To ensure such consideration by elected officials, it is desirable that all groups with distinct interests, concerns and lifestyles vote at equal rates, even if this does not change the election result compared to other distributions of participation (Wattenberg, 1997, 132). Apart from this practical concern with the representation of interests, the representative-participation approach views equal participation as both a reflection and a driver of inclusion of all groups in society. As a reflection of inclusion, equal participation rates can be seen as proof that all such groups with distinct interests, concerns and lifestyles have enough resources to participate. Equal participation rates may also be interpreted as evidence that all groups have a feeling of belonging to the political community. For this reason, as will be discussed later, some policymakers and scholars use the voting rate of enfranchised immigrants as one of the measures of immigrant integration. The view of equal participation as a

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15 For example, in the US, President Clinton’s mandate was questioned because in the 1992 election he received a number of votes amounting to fewer than 25% of all eligible voters (Hill, 2006, 209).
driver of inclusion is also expressed in a belief that increasing the participation of a group (such as young people) may remedy social problems affecting this group (Bessant, 2004, 387). Bessant (2004, 387) points out this belief is reflected in government policy discourse in many Western countries even if the mechanism of how this would happen is unclear.

The lack of equal participation is especially undesirable, from the point of view of upholding democratic values, if it is a result of manipulation. Election administration typically includes several low-profile policy instruments, like the wording and content of registration forms or location and opening hours of voting places. Such low-profile instruments can be changed with minimal consultation and deliberation and framed in a value-neutral way. Therefore, these policy instruments can be attractive to policymakers as means of ‘hidden politics’ when they can be manipulated to achieve electoral advantage by hindering the access of some groups to voting (Moynihan et al., 2014, 52). Schaffer (2002, 73) notes that manipulation of election results by means of uniform rules with disparate impact is more attractive to parties in countries where laws guaranteeing political equality exist and are enforced. In the absence of existence or enforcement of such laws, extra-legal means such as voter intimidation are an easier and less costly way of influencing election results. Disenfranchisement by regulations may also be attractive for policymakers in democracies where electoral integrity is high because it is easy to frame this disenfranchisement as unintended consequences of policies and deflect charges of manipulating the election outcome (Avey, 1989, 47). Disenfranchisement by regulations is easier when voters for a specific party have characteristics that can be singled out under the guise of universal legislation, such as low literacy or not having a specific type of identity document (Filer et al., 1991, 371, Schaffer, 2002, 74).

The concept of disenfranchisement by electoral administrative regulations stems from a substantive, rather than formal, view of the right to vote. In the formal view, only a legal exclusion of a group from voting would count as a barrier or disenfranchisement. In a substantive view of the right to vote (which I use in this thesis), a burden imposed on the right to vote excludes those for whom this burden is a barrier, regardless of their formal right to vote (Fishkin, 2011, 1338). Citizens can choose not to participate, but this choice should not be based on external restraints (Dahl, 1989, 211). Among those who adopt the substantive understanding of the right to vote, there are diverse views on how to apply this understanding in practice. For example, what burden is severe enough to call it a barrier? Do all barriers require remedy, or only some of them and what are the characteristics of barriers that require a remedy? The various points of view on these
issues depend on individualist versus structural or elitist versus egalitarian approaches to participation.

In an approach that emphasises an individual right to vote, non-participation is considered to be the voter’s fault, rather than a result of a barrier, if the voter ‘could have surmounted the barrier at issue through the exercise of reasonable civic diligence’, such as registering to vote in advance (Elmendorf, 2008, 659). In this individualistic approach, burdens on the right to vote are interpreted as costs of voting. Paying these costs, or not paying them, is the individual voter’s rational decision. A decision to not pay these costs is not disenfranchisement as long as the voter was, in theory, able to pay (Fishkin, 2011, 1337). Fishkin (2011, 1356) presents two arguments against this individualist-rational approach to the right to vote. First, when the voter experiences the barrier to vote, it is often too late to remedy it. The individualistic view assumes that the rational decision to pay or not pay the costs of voting is made at the same time as the decision to vote or not to vote. Therefore, argues Fishkin, the individual-right view should not be applied to situations where the voter could have only done something in the past:

[The voter] could have read the newspaper and found out that his [sic] address had been reassigned to a new polling place. He could have sent away for a birth certificate and then sought a non-driver’s identification card from the state. He could have reregistered after having been purged from the rolls. He could have made the decision to vote months ago, instead of tuning in to the election shortly before election day and suddenly deciding to vote (Fishkin, 2011, 1356).

Second, Fishkin (2011, 1356) argues that identifying the deficiencies in the voter’s actions does not mitigate the harm of exclusion from exercising one’s citizenship, especially when this citizenship is under question in many other areas of the voter’s life. Taking a different approach, Elmendorf (2008, 644) criticises the entirety of an individual understanding of the right to vote and proposes instead a focus on the consequences of voting requirements for the distribution of participation among different demographics. This is a structural rather than individual understanding of the right to vote which looks at the aggregate outputs (participation rates) rather than individual inputs as a measure of the substantive right to vote. This approach underlies many aggregate-level studies of impact of electoral administrative procedures on voter turnout among different groups.

Even if the existence of a specific barrier to voting or a cost of voting is widely accepted, opinions differ on if and when this barrier requires a remedy by the means of a change in laws, policies or regulations. Legal literature offers a view which emphasises the consequences of a barrier for the
distribution of political power. In this approach, the barrier to voting matters if it can affect election results or make the playing field uneven for political parties (Tokaji, 2004, 1243). In contrast, a voter-centric approach views the right to vote as fundamentally about citizenship and inclusion. Therefore, every barrier matters (including the subjective experience of disenfranchisement), regardless of its impact on election outcome (Fishkin, 2011, 1357-8). Because I am, too, taking a voter-centric approach, in my discussion of costs of voting I will follow the above argument that every barrier (even subjective) matters, regardless of its effects on election results.

Nonetheless, not all barriers to voting or costs of voting are considered undesirable. Some costs are a necessary by-product of ensuring electoral integrity, which is crucial for a well-functioning democracy. It is however important to note that, while this need for electoral integrity is uncontested in theory, in practice there may be a lack of agreement on whether a specific policy is indeed an anti-fraud measure or an attempt at voter suppression (Tokaji, 2004, 1207). Apart from this concern about electoral integrity, another set of arguments against lowering the costs of voting comes from the elitist or conservative tradition. This tradition views the majority of citizens as politically ignorant and without sufficient knowledge to make good decisions (Heater, 2004, 220, Walker, 1966, 285). Linked to this view is an argument that citizens who are not willing to make an effort to vote are not competent or not deserving to vote; therefore, measures which inhibit them from voting improve the quality of democracy. This sentiment was expressed, for example, in the parliamentary debate on the introduction of Internet voting in Estonia. One of the arguments against Internet voting in that debate was that it lowers the level of commitment required to vote by too much and that citizens unwilling to make an effort should not participate in governing (Madise and Vinkel, 2014, 56).

The assumptions of the ‘incompetent voter’ argument have been criticised by Heater (2004, 223) who questions the methodology of studies that claim to reveal voter incompetence. The assumption that some voters are not competent enough to vote also raises the question of whose responsibility it is to educate the voter. In the elitist conservative view, it is the responsibility of the voters to educate themselves and this is why voters who have failed to do so can be deemed undeserving to vote. However, the responsibility to educate voters can also be assigned to the education system or to election campaigns (Galston, 2004, 263, Nadeau et al., 2008, 229).

In this brief overview of relevant democratic theory, I have clarified that my voter-centric approach puts value on equal participation rates of different groups as a reflection of inclusion and that I embrace a substantive view of the right to vote. I also choose to use voters’ perspectives
to assess whether exclusion from participation has taken place. As we will see in the following overview of empirical research on election administration and voter turnout, valuing equal participation rates of different groups is common but the voter-centric approach is relatively rare.

### 2.2. The foundations: old institutionalism and rational behaviourism

The first works on election administration were written from an institutionalist approach (later called ‘old’ institutionalism (Lim, 2010, 93-4)) which was dominant in political science until the mid-20th century. The focus of this approach was describing, evaluating and comparing institutional arrangements (James, 2012a, 6, Peters, 2012, 7-11). Old institutionalism focuses on electoral integrity and efficiency rather than on the cost of voting. Nonetheless, it provides important baseline material upon which new institutionalist studies then build and it establishes state architecture as a key theme and an explanatory variable. Among the many examples of institutionalist works on election administration from the late 19th and early 20th century, the seminal work is Joseph Harris’s (1934) *Election administration in the US* (see James 2012a (6-7) for an overview). Harris’s work discusses comprehensively the aspects of election administration that remain of interest to scholars today (with the obvious exception of Internet voting). He also combines meticulous description of facts with advocacy for reform and vivid personal impressions:

> Voters had difficulty in edging their way through. Confusion reigned supreme, and in the turmoil it was difficult to know what was going on. Carloads of thugs and gunmen toured the ward, repeating, and intimidating the voters (Harris, 1934, 215).

Such detailed descriptions of institutions and the implementation of regulations, provided in old institutionalist works, have great historical value. Yet when discussing causal questions, such as why some people do not vote, old institutionalist authors were criticised by their contemporaries for offering their subjective opinions and ‘basing arguments on conjecture and hearsay’ (Holcombe, 1925, 202). Subsequently, old institutionalism was almost completely replaced by behaviourism from the mid-20th century, until some of its themes re-emerged in the new institutionalist literature. The links between election administration and voter turnout were discussed by a few authors in this early period (Gosnell, 1927, Merriam and Gosnell, 1924) but it was not until the advent of the behaviourist approach that these links were pursued in any depth.
Behaviourism developed as a response to old institutionalism and has become a dominant approach in political science from the 1950s onwards; it remains widely used in studies of election administration and turnout and electorate composition. The behaviourist approach tends to use quantitative, aggregate-level analysis of human behaviour to generate and to test hypotheses. The hypotheses are usually grounded in rational choice theory, which assumes that actors make decisions based on rational calculations of individual gain and loss. Whereas old institutionalist works on election administration address a wide range of topics, such as voter experience or recruitment of poll workers, behaviourism tends to focus on what is unambiguously measurable, that is voter turnout. Behaviourist studies of election administration typically aim to identify relationships between specific regulations (independent variables) and turnout (dependent variable), controlling for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the compared populations of eligible voters. Behaviourist research on election administration has been heavily dominated by US-based studies and linked to political debates about electoral reform.

The pioneering work in this strand, which predated behaviourism’s dominance, was Merriam and Gosnell’s (1924) *Non-voting: Causes and methods of control*. The book did not break fully with the qualitative methods typical of the institutionalist tradition but was praised by Mills (1925, 587) for using quantitative methods to process aggregate data. However, the foundational works of the rational choice theory of political behaviour are Downs’s *Economic theory of democracy* (1957) and Olson’s *The logic of collective action* (1965). Downs applied the assumption of rational choice theory - that individual decisions are a result of a rational calculation in which the costs and benefits are weighed against each other – to voting. The hypothesis formulated by Downs (1957, 324) is that ‘The returns from voting are usually so low that tiny variations in its cost may have tremendous effects on the distribution of political power’. Downs’s ‘calculus of voting’ triggered a debate on the benefits of voting, but the cost side of the equation did not receive the same attention from theorists in these early years. This was despite a lack of agreement on how to measure or model the distribution of the costs of voting in populations (Sigelman and Berry, 1982, 421). Downs’s hypothesis, cited above, has been criticised for overestimating the impact of the costs of voting (Niemi, 1976). Nonetheless, even critics of rational choice theory such as Green and Shapiro (1994) accept a weaker hypothesis, which shifts the focus from election outcomes to voter turnout and proposes that if the costs of voting are high enough, some people will be deterred from voting.

The behaviourist strand of research on election administration and voter turnout is dominated by US-based case studies to a greater extent than the institutionalist strand (James, 2010, 180,
Massicotte et al., 2004, 3). The decentralisation of electoral regulations in the US to state and county level is one possible reason. This decentralisation makes it easy to hold constant important control variables, such as the characteristics of a specific election, in quantitative comparative studies. Decentralisation also facilitates more frequent changes in regulations, which provide data for longitudinal studies. International comparisons, on the other hand, are complicated by problems with availability, comparability and accuracy of data, which poses problems for an approach that aims to be scientific (Blais, 2007, 627). The few quantitative international comparisons of election administration are parts of works addressing a broader range of electoral institutions (Massicotte et al., 2004, Norris, 2002) but Blais (2007, 627) notes that this literature has not produced consistent findings in terms of the impact of specific regulations on voter turnout.

Another factor in the concentration of election administration research in the US may be the greater political prominence of this topic compared to other countries. A majoritarian electoral system and a bipolar party system in the US make the hypothesis that even small changes in the composition of the electorate can affect election results more plausible than it would be in proportional, multi-party electoral systems. In addition, the US has a history of electoral regulations introduced specifically to hinder the ability of some eligible voters to vote by making it too difficult, costly or inconvenient to them. The best-known examples of such regulations are literacy tests and poll taxes introduced to hinder the access of African Americans to voting after Reconstruction (Filer et al., 1991, 371). This history lends credibility to concerns about possible manipulation of election results by changing administrative electoral regulations. The common perception amongst politicians in the US is that expanding the electorate would benefit left-of-centre parties, based on the demographic characteristics of the non-voting population (Calvert and Gilchrist, 1993, 696, Piven and Cloward, 1988). Despite mixed empirical support for this hypothesis, the backing for or protest against specific election administration reforms often reflects the divide between the political left and the political right (Calvert and Gilchrist 1993, 696, Lijphart 1997, 4). Examples of this divide could be seen in the debate in the US on the National Voter Registration Act (Calvert and Gilchrist, 1993, 696) and voter identification laws (Hicks et al., 2015, 1).

The independent variables in election administration studies in the US were for a long time linked to voter registration, until the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) in 1995 made changes to voter registration. Pre-NVRA, registering to vote in the US was often more costly in terms of time and effort than voting itself (Timpone, 1998, 146, Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980, 22).
Registration processes have been long accused of deterring people from voting (Merriam and Gosnell, 1924, 151) but Rosenstone and Wolfinger’s (1978) seminal study on the effects of registration on turnout, and a subsequent 1980 book, *Who votes*, by the same authors, stimulated a new wave of research on this topic. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980, 73) estimated that liberalising registration requirements would increase turnout by 9.1 percentage points. Theirs was not the first major study on this topic (for example, Kelley et al. (1967, 367)) but the number of independent variables and the magnitude of the result contributed to its impact. This impact materialised both in the academic community and in policy circles and there was a wave of follow-up research (Filer et al., 1991, Mitchell and Wlezien, 1995, 191, Nagler, 1991, 1393, Squire et al., 1987, 45).

Highton and Wolfinger (1998, 79) argue that this body of new research influenced the introduction and content of the National Voter Registration Act 1995. Researchers in the US predicted that the liberalisation of registration requirements would have no impact on election results, but the debate on registration reform was nevertheless partisan, with Democrats supporting the reform and Republicans opposing it (Mitchell and Wlezien, 1995, 195, Rosenstone and Wolfinger, 1978, 39, Squire et al., 1987, 59). The supporters of liberalisation were successful and NVRA came into law on January 1, 1995, standardising many aspects of registration across states and making it possible to register during other activities such as motor vehicle registration (hence the law’s popular name, ‘Motor Voter’). Further changes were introduced by the 2002 Help America Vote Act, which focused on voting technology but included a requirement of state-wide voter registration databases (Hanmer, 2009, 21). However, the NVRA did not fulfil the expectations of its supporters. Contrary to predictions, its effect on turnout was minimal, and the increases in both the absolute number and percentage of citizens who are registered were modest (Rugeley and Jackson, 2009, 58, 72). In response, Highton and Wolfinger (1998, 90) initially pointed out flaws in the implementation of NVRA, such as insufficient funding, but Highton (2004, 511) later concluded that after NVRA it is no longer reasonable to hold registration costs responsible for low turnout in the US. This disappointing result of NVRA was one of the factors that led to a shift in researchers’ attention to other stages of the voting process and a re-examination of methodology and epistemological assumptions of previous studies on the costs associated with voting.

Despite NVRA not having the predicted effect, behaviourist research has made an enormous contribution to the study of the impact of electoral administrative and other institutions on voter turnout. First and foremost, the existence of the effects of such institutional factors was firmly established (Jackman, 1987, 412-6). This was instrumental in establishing election administration
studies as a valid topic in political science. Hershey sums up the contribution of the traditional approaches and the new research agenda in the following way:

A great deal of research shows that voter turnout declines as the costs of voting increase, and that even small increases in cost may make a real difference in turnout rates. But we know much less about some of the more specific and complex questions about turnout: what particular costs of voting affect the turnout of what types of individuals, and under what conditions? (Hershey, 2009, 87).

In other words, traditional behaviourist methods excelled at identifying relationships between variables but were less well equipped to investigate the causal mechanisms that underlie these relationships. The change in direction was also influenced by major changes in the political and social context, which made the traditional institutionalist and behaviourist approaches look inadequate across the field of political science and politics. The main features of the new political context included declining voter turnout and the appearance of new social movements as alternatives to the formerly exclusive mechanisms of solving political conflicts (Offe, 1985, 824). Institutional variables explained over 90% of variation in turnout from 1961 to 1980 but not after this period (Jackman, 1987, 412-6).

Therefore, many of the new research questions called for including more contextual factors into studies. For example, scholars wanted to know why a variable might have different effects on different people and how the effects of the reforms are mediated by the characteristics of pre-reform electorate and political parties’ responses to reforms (Ansolabehere and Konisky, 2006, 84, Hanmer, 2009, 26, Rigby and Springer, 2011, 420-244). Norris (2002, 63) called for more attention to the relative importance of electoral costs, how this importance may change depending on other factors and how voters perceive these costs. The interest in election administration outside of the US increased as a number of countries sought to modernise and improve their own voting regulations. The unique features of the US, enumerated earlier, naturally led to the question whether the findings from the US-based studies were generalisable to other countries. Scholars in the field started experimenting with new approaches and methods which promised to provide insights into some of these questions.

2.3. The changing world: the advent of new institutionalism
From the 1950s to the 1980s, average turnout levels in Western Europe remained relatively stable, but in the 1990s, average turnout across Western Europe fell significantly – a trend that is uniform across countries with different political institutions (Blais and Rubenson, 2013, 96, Mair, 2006, 34). The magnitude of the decrease differs depending on regime type, time period, which elections have been included and how turnout was calculated. However, there is agreement as to the trend; Gray and Caul (2000) provide an overview of studies on this topic. Blais (2007, 624) estimated the decrease to be 9% from 1980 to 2004. Denmark and Sweden are exceptions to the trend, showing a turnout increase or a decline smaller than in comparable countries (Gray and Caul 2000, 1096). The decline in turnout has been a puzzle because average education levels and other socioeconomic characteristics correlated with voting on an individual level increased in the same period, contradicting the resource-based and socioeconomic models of turnout. At the same time, electoral institutions and many other variables examined in aggregate-level studies have remained fairly constant (Gray and Caul 2000, 1092). Researchers proposed many explanations. Flickinger and Studlar (1992, 1) concluded that ‘none of the propositions purporting to explain the paradox is sufficient’.

Turnout decline is pronounced, and turnout is particularly low, amongst some specific groups. Thus, scholars began studying group turnout rather than aggregate-level turnout. Group-based research has focused on youth and the poor (Armingeon and Schädel, 2015, 1, Blais 2007, 629; Blais and Rubenson 2013, 96, Teixeira, 1992, 65). Migrants’ low-turnout also attracted interest, especially in cases where it contradicted the socioeconomic explanations of turnout (Xu, 2005, 682-3). This group-focused approach will inform my own research design.

The decline in turnout was accompanied by a growth in alternative methods of participation, especially new social movements, also called ‘protest movements’, ‘new politics’, ‘new populism’, ‘neo-romanticism’, ‘anti-politics’ and ‘disorderly politics’ (Offe 1985, 825). These movements include, as classified by Offe (1985, 828), environmentalist, human rights (including feminist and civil rights), peace and alternative economic movements. New social movements rejected the traditional channels of representative political institutions, opposed bureaucratisation and regulation and did not rely on established political or socioeconomic cleavages (Offe 1985, 820, 829-831). Inglehart and Baker (2000, 21) argue that these movements reflect a rise of post-
modern and post-materialist values such as self-expression and quality of life. Such values can be linked to rising levels of education and income and an unprecedented level of existential security. Norris (2002) proposes that this rise of new social movements shows that political engagement did not decline but merely has shifted to new forms. However, Dalton (2008, 176) (echoing Verba) raises concerns about equality, noting that many of the new political channels require more skills and resources than voting. In the new forms of participation, one person can use multiple channels, as opposed to one person having one vote. Research confirms that the dominant activists and supporters in new social movements are characterised by high levels of education and relative economic security (Offe 1985, 833).¹⁷

There were also important new developments in election administration which affected research in this field. The growth of convenience voting provided a new topic for research (Gronke et al., 2008, Persily et al., 2014, 56, Wilks-Heeg, 2009, 101).¹⁸ Authorities, hoping to increase turnout, have been increasingly offering alternative channels of voting to all voters rather than only to those who were unable to vote in person, in their electorate, on Election Day due to disability or travel (Wilks-Heeg 2009, 101). Studies on the impact of these reforms on turnout are inconclusive; evidence for a positive effect on turnout is strongest for all-postal voting and vote centres, however this effect seems to be mediated by factors that have not been fully explored yet (Berinsky, 2005, Stein and Vonnahme, 2008, 488, Rallings and Thrasher, 2007, 342). Aside from their impact on turnout, these new forms of voting have also raised questions about vulnerability to electoral fraud and effects on the political culture (Orr, 2015, Watt, 2006, 90, Wilks-Heeg, 2009, 101).

In the US, the debate on voter registration has been largely replaced by the debate on voter identification requirements introduced in many states in the US with support from the Republicans. Many Democrats view these identification requirements as a mechanism of suppressing the vote among groups such as Latinos (Hicks et al., 2015, 1). Several studies and reports that aim to prove that voter identification requirements are a barrier to voting enumerate tangible costs of obtaining identification, such as time spent travelling to a government office and the costs of supporting documentation (Barreto et al., 2009, 113, Gaskins and Iyer, 2012, 2). However, the complex topic of voter identification lends itself well to a broader approach which takes into account intangible factors such as the quality of interactions with government

¹⁷ These dominant activists share other characteristics – see the description of the ‘new middle class’ in Della Porta and Diani (2006, 55-62).

¹⁸ Some forms of convenience voting include early voting, remote/absentee (postal, telephone, text or Internet) voting, and the possibility of voting in any voting place.
institutions or voters’ feelings of experiencing discrimination. Some studies explore these factors which were absent from earlier studies (Atkeson et al., 2010, 70, Cobb et al., 2010, 2).

Many of the recent approaches in election administration are representative of new institutionalist frameworks. New institutionalism developed as a reaction to the behavioural approaches and their perceived inability to deal with the new context. It includes diverse strands, which have some common characteristics but do not even share generally accepted definitions of major concepts such as an institution (Hall and Taylor, 1996, 936, Immergut, 1998, 5, Mackay et al., 2010, 576). The three main strands in new institutionalism are rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. Because it is traditional to work in these three channels, I will classify the recent literature on election administration accordingly.

2.4. Rational choice institutionalism

Rational choice institutionalism focuses on individuals and their strategic calculations which are affected by institutions (Koelble, 1995, 232). In addition to the quantitative methods used by the traditional rational choice approach, analytical tools from other fields are sometimes used, such as transaction costs (Moe, 1984) or game theory (Hall and Taylor 1996, 943; Mackay et al. 2010, 574). In the field of election administration research, the rational choice institutionalist approach is well rooted in the traditional rational choice/behaviourist tradition, using predominantly statistical methods and focusing on factors that can be easily quantified. What differentiates it from the traditional rational choice approach is a more nuanced approach to the costs of voting. This includes attention to how these individual costs are mediated by the institutional setting and other structural factors, novel attempts to quantify less tangible costs and an interest in how different groups may respond differently to the same costs or cost-lowering measures.

The focus on mediating factors and attention to less tangible costs is exemplified in studies of the relationship between the location of polling place and turnout, which is a major research topic in this strand. This topic has a long history, but a new surge of interest in spatial patterns of turnout was prompted by technological advancements in Geographic Information System tools (Taylor, 19).

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19 In election administration, the use of game theory has been limited mostly to the analysis of how the possibility of early voting affects voters’ incentives to vote, see Battaglini et al. (2007).
These tools allow researchers to analyse spatial patterns of turnout more efficiently and accurately than ever before (Haspel and Knotts, 2005, 570). Greater distance to the polling place is usually correlated with lower turnout; however, the magnitude of this effect varies. Gimpel and Schuknecht (2003, 476, 84) seek to explain this variation and find that the burden imposed by distance is mediated by the rural or suburban context and by how much the travel is obstructed by speed limits, traffic congestion and major intersections. Cases where voting places have been changed prompted Brady and McNulty (2004, 3) to isolate and quantify a so-called ‘disruption effect’ – that part of decline in turnout which is not explained by the increase in distance. Subsequent studies showed that the cost of acquiring information about the new voting place sometimes has a greater effect on turnout than travel costs (McNulty et al., 2009, 450).

A similar focus on mediating factors appears in studies of weather and seasonal factors, which is another major topic within the rational choice institutionalist approach. Several studies show support for the anecdotal knowledge that bad weather and holidays decrease turnout (Dubois and Lakhdar, 2007, 154, Gomez et al., 2007, 649, Rallings et al., 2003, 65). However, Fraga and Hersh (2010, 353) show that the impact of heavy rain and snow depends on the closeness of the elections and conclude that a competitive environment increases voters’ resilience to some costs, while Persson et al. (2014, 335-6) point to a proportional electoral system having a similar role in increasing resilience to weather costs.

Analyses of differential impact on different groups in rational choice institutionalist studies tend to divide voters into two groups only, such as Democrats and Republicans, frequent and infrequent voters, the highly educated and the rest. In part, this is because of a desire to use only high-quality, unambiguous and readily available data, such as election results, electoral roll data, public records or the socioeconomic characteristics of the neighbourhood (Brady and McNulty, 2011, 127-8, Bryant and Atkeson 2012, 13, Gimpel et al., 2006, 48, Gomez et al., 2007, 649, Stein and Vonnahme, 2008, 495). This approach is useful in showing that disparate impact exists, but does not provide a nuanced reading of the situation of particularly marginalised groups.

Rational choice institutionalism has been criticised for not including the formation of preferences into its analysis and neglecting culture, social structures, informal norms, beliefs and the meanings people assign to procedures (James, 2012a, 29, Koelble, 1995, 232). Another limitation of the majority of rational choice institutionalist studies of election administration is a utilitarian approach aimed at producing feasible policy recommendations rather than analysing the
mechanisms of the effect (Vercellotti and Anderson, 2006, 14). Studies of the effects of government communications and many of the studies cited above provide examples of such utilitarianism (Bergman and Yates, 2011, Monroe and Sylvester, 2011, 25). This practical orientation increases the impact these studies have on policy debates, but at the cost of less emphasis on theory building. In particular, the cost of voting, despite being central to this approach, is not theorised. Haspel and Knotts maintain that:

We need a better investigation of the sources of costs, an understanding of how some costs may differ from others, and a theory of how costs may interact with the potential benefits of voting (Haspel and Knotts, 2005, 570).

2.5. Historical institutionalism

Another major strand of new institutionalism, historical institutionalism, combines the ‘calculus’ approach of the rational choice with a ‘cultural’ approach. It assumes bounded rationality in which preferences are not fixed but depend on the cultural, socioeconomic, and political context. This context affects the calculations of rational actors in their interactions with institutions (March and Olsen, 1989, 9-20). Institutions can be formal or informal (such as social norms). The constraints such institutions impose on actors give rise to asymmetrical power relations, path dependence and unintended consequences (Hall and Taylor, 1996, 938). Historical events and political struggles are seen as important factors shaping institutions which then endure beyond the contingencies that created them (Mackay et al. 2010, 575).

In the study of election administration, the historical institutionalist approach aspires to an in-depth investigation of the institutional context and the interactions between factors. The term ‘election ecosystem’, coined by Huefner et al. (2007, 17), reflects this aspiration to study the interdependence between different parts of election administration. The historical institutionalist approach also gives special attention to disparate impacts and informal norms. A prominent topic is the unequal access to political participation, both as an unintended consequence of electoral

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20 One of such utilitarian topics not discussed at length here are ballot usability studies (which have a long history, see Allen (1906)). These studies have not produced consistent findings that voters prefer plain language and simpler rather than more complex ballots (Redish et al., 2010, 97).
regulations and as a result of discriminatory practices. However, few works trace the history of electoral regulations and the influences that shaped them, as the historical institutionalist approach typically does in other fields. While examples of such historical focus exist, most studies focus on the present (Saltman, 2006, Watt, 2006).

Compared to rational choice approaches, the emphasis on inequality and disparate impact within historical institutionalism shifts the focus of research findings from aggregate-level turnout to ingroup turnout. Thus, provisions that have an insignificant impact on aggregate turnout are considered worth studying if they may make a difference in turnout within a disadvantaged subgroup. For example, Hopkins (2011, 814) finds that language assistance increases turnout by 11 percentage points among those with limited English skills. Voters with limited English skills constitute a small percentage of the population and this difference of 11 percentage points is minuscule in terms of aggregate turnout. This emphasis on the representativeness of the electorate means that, unlike with the rational choice institutionalist approach, an increase in turnout is not always desirable. Reflecting the focus on representative-participation discussed earlier, Alvarez and Nagler (2001, 1152) state that increased participation can be a bad thing if it exacerbates an already existing bias in electorate composition. Thus, provisions that yield promising results in terms of increasing turnout are sceptically scrutinised for their impact on electorate bias. For example, various forms of convenience voting, especially Internet voting, have been criticised for not decreasing the socioeconomic bias of the electorate and sometimes exacerbating it (Anduiza Perea, 2002, 663, Brians and Grofman, 2001, 175,7, Gibson, 2001, 568).

Another characteristic of the historical institutionalist approach is that the analysis sometimes extends beyond election administration to search for mediating effects of other institutions. This attention to other institutions is perhaps the most pronounced in comparative analyses (Anduiza Perea, 2002, 650-1, Gallego, 2010, 239). For example, Scervini and Segatti (2012, 403) propose that parties and other institutions can effectively counterbalance the lack of individual resources, and Gallego (2010, 246) finds that simple ballots and state-initiated registration reduce the education-related inequality of participation.

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21 Internet voting is especially contentious in this respect. It can raise youth turnout and some argue that the socioeconomic digital divide in access to the Internet has been closing or even has been reversed (Alvarez and Nagler, 2001, 1139, Gibson, 2001, 576). However, others argue that the divide has shifted to types of usage and skills and still reflects real-world inequalities (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014, 507). Internet voting has also inspired a vast literature which discusses the technological aspects of voting such as security, privacy, problems with identification and potential for fraud (see Gibson (2001, 569-570)); however, these topics are outside of the scope of this thesis.
Another new direction of research in the historical institutionalist approach, previously almost absent from election administration studies, is the recognition of potential for bias in providing services and in the behaviour of election officials. White et al. (2015, 1) show that emails with questions to election officials sent from Latino aliases were significantly less likely to receive a high-quality response than identical emails sent from non-Latino aliases. Similarly, Cobb et al. (2010, 2) and Atkeson et al. (2010, 70) find in Massachusetts and New Mexico stark disparities in how often voters are asked for identification, depending on their race and gender. Researchers study not only the behaviour, but also the norms held by election officials and the impact of these norms on their behaviours. For example, Kimball et al. (2006, 448) explore how partisanship affects discretionary decisions of election officials and Burden et al. (2011, 96,100) find that many polling station workers are ‘philosophically opposed’ to convenience voting.

Of the three approaches, historical institutionalism is the most interested in the inner workings of institutions and uses the broadest range of methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative. The historical institutionalist strand is less utilitarian in its orientation than rational choice institutionalism, but it does not hesitate to offer recommendations. These recommendations often reflect the view that institutions are to some degree inert and biased towards entrenched interests. Thus, recommendations from historical institutionalist works often consider the significance of layering - adding new layers to the institution to ameliorate the negative consequences of the old layers, rather than changing or removing the old layers (Schickler, 2001, 13). Yet, even with this broadening of scope, historical institutionalism is interested primarily in the state and its institutions rather than in the voter. It is the third strand of new institutionalism discussed in this chapter that shifts the focus towards the voter.

2.6. Sociological institutionalism

Sociological institutionalism broadens the focus beyond a traditional political definition of institutions to include the wider cultural and organisational context in which individuals are embedded and posits that institutional incentives can be mediated by culture (James, 2012a, 30, Koelble, 1995, 232). Sociological institutionalism does not deny that individual calculation takes place, but argues that the meaning of rationality is relative and seemingly irrational behaviours may be rational once a broader context is taken into account (Granovetter and Swedberg, 1992, 75). In election administration, the sociological institutionalist approach includes both the wider cultural context and the individual context of voters’ daily life and investigates the interaction
between these contexts and the act of voting. In stark contrast to research in the rational choice tradition, which aims at ‘scientific’ measurement, those espousing sociological institutionalism are reluctant to convert complex factors and circumstances into numerical proxies (Anderson and Beramendi, 2008, 281). The three themes we can identify in sociological institutionalist approaches to election administration are a focus on the daily lives of voters, often utilising ethnographic methods; interest in feelings (inspired by the growing literature on emotions in politics (Marcus, 2000)); and paying attention to cultural contexts, which include the symbolic and expressive aspects of electoral regulations.

Research on daily lives and experience of voters usually utilises semi-structured interviews or focus groups. Such research seems to be especially valuable in discovering information which does not fit into existing theories and therefore is unlikely to be unearthed in quantitative research or surveys designed on the basis of existing theories. For example, Sheerin (2007, 95-6) expresses surprise that some young people she interviewed gave explanations that did not reflect any of the theories the research was based on. Instead of confirming these theories, the interviewees explained their participation in alternative forms of political participation by better compatibility of these forms of participation with their lifestyle. In a similar finding, Edwards (2007, 550-1), speaking with marginalised youth in Australia, finds that Australian electoral registration provisions do not accommodate the situation of people who frequently move between different types of accommodation, staying for a varying length of time. As a result, many were not enrolled to vote despite an active interest in politics.

Apart from discovering new information, this focus on the interaction of election administration with the entirety of voters’ lives highlights the process of institutional drift, which is linked to many calls for reform and modernisation of election administration. Hacker (2004, 246, 45) defines institutional drift as ‘changes in the operation or effect of policies that occur without significant changes in those policies’ structure’, or ‘a shift in the context of policies that significantly alters their effects’. Hacker’s example of institutional drift is social welfare in the US, designed at a time when many contemporary sources of risk were absent (Hacker 2004, 249). Similarly, as most policy documents on modernisation of election administration point out, people’s lives have changed since many of the institutions of election administration were designed (James, 2012b, 23). To examine the impact of these changes on how electoral procedures work, it is necessary to study the experiences of voters rather than only the procedures.

The wave of research on emotions in voting, prompted by the work of Marcus (2000), focuses on the role of emotions in campaigning and the emotions towards candidates or policies, not voter
turnout and emotions in the act of voting (Marcus, 2010, Valentino et al., 2009, 311, Wang, 2013, 484). Nonetheless, we know that emotions can affect the turnout decision. Experiments exploring the effects on turnout of shaming people for non-voting (Gerber et al., 2010, 409), and thanking voters for participation (Panagopoulos, 2011, 707), have shown that both of these tactics can boost turnout. However, there has been limited exploration of how voters perceive these and other feelings related to the act of voting. Therefore, Coleman’s (2014, 8) study of how voters feel is a rare and important contribution to election administration studies. Coleman explores the contradiction between the physical reality of voting, such as the silence of the act, and the meanings assigned to it, such as ‘voice’. When Coleman asks voters to imagine and describe the ideal voting experience, many of these descriptions greatly differ from how voting is currently organised. Coleman also finds that some polling station workers make changes to accommodate voters’ preferences without even checking if these changes are allowed. This finding draws attention to the need to study actual implementation rather than just the regulations (Coleman, 2014, 174-6). A similar line of inquiry analyses the impact of perceptions and subjective impressions on voters’ decisions. For example, Gerber et al. (2013, 78) study the beliefs about ballot secrecy, pointing out that whether the intended benefits of the secret ballot materialise depends on whether people believe that it is secret.

Research on emotions in voting lends itself well to qualitative methods due to the subjectivity of emotions. Nonetheless, a few studies use quantitative methods. Waismel-Manor et al. (2011, 789) measure the cortisol levels of voters at the polling place and find ‘extremely high’ levels of cortisol in voters compared to the normal levels of the same people (obtained on a different day) and compared to a control group. They argue that this increase in cortisol demonstrates that voting is a stressful event. They propose that voting is stressful not only because the voter is making an important decision, but also because of the requirement to vote in a public location, exposed to strangers (Waismel-Manor et al., 2011, 794). In a subsequent study, Neiman et al. (2015, 1) confirm, again using cortisol measures, that voting at home is associated with lower cortisol compared to voting at the polls; that is, voting at home is less stressful.

The theme which explores cultural and symbolic aspects of voting can be traced to Mill’s discussion of voting procedures in which he emphasises the importance of ‘the spirit of an institution’ and ‘the impression it makes on the mind of the citizen’ (Mill, 1862, 205). In a similar vein, Orr (2014, 118) argues that the election and the act of voting is a political ritual as defined by Edelman (1985, 16), that is an ‘activity that involves its participants symbolically in a common enterprise, calling their attention to their relatedness and joint interests in a compelling way’.
Apart from being a political ritual, the act of voting can also be viewed as a ritual of the secular ‘civil religion of electoral democracy’ (Orr, 2014, 123). Hirschbein (1999, 5) hypothesises that the decline in voter turnout is linked to the decline of rituals (and thus of the expressive value of the vote) that once ‘bestowed a sense of significance upon the electorate’. Beside such practical hypotheses, some of the discussions around the ritual dimension of voting focus on normative considerations and are rooted in political or legal philosophy (Orr, 2015, Thompson, 2008, Watt, 2006). Research on cultural aspects of voting also explores how administrative practices can have different effects and uses, depending on the environment they are introduced into (Bertrand et al., 2007, 8). For example, Crowley (2007, 60) shows that the secret ballot, which was introduced to empower the disadvantaged, can in some contexts have the opposite effect. O’Gorman (2007, 37-8) discusses how The Ballot Act of 1872 made the traditional boisterous and rowdy electoral culture in Britain disappear virtually overnight, showing that election administration can change the external environment, not just be influenced by it.

Sociological institutionalism in election administration does not digress too deeply into structural determinism of which it has been accused in other fields (Hall and Taylor 1996, 954). Nonetheless, it is the least pragmatically oriented approach of the three new institutionalist variants. Researchers sometimes do not articulate recommendations even when the findings seem to suggest specific improvements. Compared to rational choice institutionalism and historical institutionalism, the emphasis in sociological institutionalist research is not so much on turnout and representativeness but on inclusion. Moreover, the discovery of voters’ feelings, opinions and perceptions is in many cases the end point of research, without interest in testing how easily these perceptions or feelings could be changed or whether they actually affect the turnout decision.

In summary, this vast body of research shows that costs of voting are diverse. They include such different categories as physical inconveniences, cognitive burdens, and emotional discomforts. Yet research is fragmented and many studies focus on one type of cost or one type of electoral procedure, using methods most suited to that specific investigation. As a result, there is limited inquiry into the relative importance of costs for the voters and interactions between different costs. I aim to use the contributions of all strands of election administration literature to arrive at a holistic view of the costs of voting, as experienced by voters. Sociological institutionalism informs my voter-centric approach with emphasis on inclusive participation. Accordingly, I examine subjective perceptions of voters to identify barriers they experience. Inspired by historical institutionalism, I analyse how institutions within and without election administration constrain election administrators and voters. Finally, based on this information, I select variables that reflect
relevant costs of voting and use them to construct a composite indicator of costs of voting, aiming at the parsimony and measurability valued by rational choice institutionalism. Table 1 compares the foci of the three new institutionalist variants and highlights what aspects I adopt from each of them.

Table 1. Comparing rational choice, historical and sociological institutionalist research

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<td><strong>Desirable outcome</strong></td>
<td>Higher turnout</td>
<td>More representative turnout</td>
<td>Inclusion (no-one is excluded from participating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research focus</strong></td>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>Institutions, interactions between procedures/norms</td>
<td>Voters</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Approach to factors affecting voter turnout</strong></td>
<td>Measurement and causal relationships</td>
<td>Interactions between factors</td>
<td>Discovery, identification</td>
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<td><strong>Policy recommendations</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Institutions</strong></td>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>Whole institution (set of procedures and norms)</td>
<td>Broad institutional context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs of voting</strong></td>
<td>Focus on tangible and measurable costs</td>
<td>Focus on tangible costs; sometimes includes psychological costs</td>
<td>Focus on intangible costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next chapter, I investigate the concept of the costs of voting more closely and identify its components. I draw on studies in election administration and political science, as well as behavioural economics and policy studies, to build my hypotheses.
Chapter 3: What are the costs of voting?

Prime Minister Bill English has announced late this afternoon that he will be following the lead of Labour leader Jacinda Ardern, and breaking tradition by casting an early vote.

English says he plans to vote tomorrow morning, before he changes his mind.

Bill English will early vote for himself tomorrow morning before he changes his mind, The Civilian, September 12, 2017

3.1. The costs of voting as seen by Downs and other academics

Downs introduced the concept of costs of voting to political science. To avoid misinterpretations, we need to examine Downs’s ideas about voting and abstention in the context of his whole theory and its limitations. In particular, there are two aspects of Downs’s theory that could be misinterpreted if taken out of context.

First, Downs’s list of the costs of voting as money, time and information can be easily interpreted as a dismissal of less tangible costs. However, Downs acknowledges that his model is not a correct reflection of the real world. Aiming at scientific purity, Downs chooses to leave out anything that cannot be deduced by logic or accurately measured. Downs (1957, 7) writes that psychological considerations ‘have a legitimate place in political science’ and that the rational voter in the model is an ‘abstraction from the real fullness of the human personality’. Yet factors beyond the scope of rational behaviour would require an actual (empirical) investigation rather than deductive logic alone (Downs, 1957, 10). Downs (1957, 11) does not consider such an investigation feasible at the time of writing The economic theory and expresses hope that there is enough political rationality in the system for his model to be useful despite its limitations. Therefore, including affective factors among the costs of voting is not contrary to Downs’s theory. Rather, it expands this theory in a direction Downs was aware of but chose not to explore. Yet, studies that focus on affective and psychological factors in voting (such as much of the sociological institutionalist literature cited

in the previous section), tend to avoid references to Downs, or even to the notion of costs of voting.

Second, Downs’s approach to the cost of information is more complex and nuanced than is reflected in some studies. Monetary expenditure (for example, a poll tax or transport costs) and time are relatively easy to measure. This measurability is the probable reason why most behaviourist and rational choice institutionalist studies of voting costs limit their investigation to these factors. Nonetheless, Downs devotes four chapters to information and splits the cost of information (which includes the opportunity cost) into the costs of procurement, analysis and evaluation of information (Downs, 1957, 79, 210). Further, Downs distinguishes between contextual knowledge (how the system works; such knowledge is usually obtained by education) and information (data about the current developments) which cannot be interpreted without contextual knowledge (Downs, 1957, 79, 235). Downs (1957, 236) also views the unequal cost of information as a major source of democratic inequality. Further, Downs (1957, 245) assumes that paying money for political information would be irrational for many citizens. Therefore, access to free information is very important for reducing the costs of voting. However, access to this free information is influenced by individuals’ work hours, informal networks, dealings with the government and the type of entertainment to which they are exposed (Downs, 1957, 224-5). This approach, which takes into account the context of the voters’ life, bears some similarity to the research agenda of the sociological institutionalist strand.

Having clarified Downs’s understanding of the costs of voting, let us now look at how different approaches to election administration studies utilise, expand on or abandon the Downsian framework of the costs of voting. Downs’s famous equation \( R = PB - C \) (in which \( R \) is the reward or return from voting, \( B \) is the perceived benefit from the preferred party or candidate winning, \( P \) is the probability that the vote will affect the election result and \( C \) is the cost of voting) has generated considerable debate due to the extremely low probability that an individual vote will affect the outcome of an election (\( P \)) (Aldrich, 1993, 258, Wang, 2013, 484). If \( P \) is close to zero, the \( PB \) component is in most cases so minuscule that voting is not rational because the costs exceed the benefits (\( R < 0 \)).

There were several attempts to solve this ‘paradox of voting’. Downs himself suggested that the desire to continue democracy, which would be destroyed if no-one voted, modifies the cost equation (Downs, 1957, 261-2). Riker and Ordeshook (1968, 25) add the term \( D \) (citizen duty) to the equation but Fiorina (1976, 393) criticises their reformulation for being a reversion to the psychological model, which makes the theoretical models and rational choice terms redundant.
Fiorina (1976, 396) then proposes his own solution by identifying different classes of voters (consistent and cross-pressured) who use different voting strategies. Nonetheless, Fiorina (1976, 410) concludes that in most elections, ‘expressive factors probably dominate instrumental factors as an explanation of turnout’ (see also Brannan and Lomasky, 1993). However, if PB is likely to be very small, after D is added the equation is reduced to R = D – C (Strom, 1975, 909), which implies that D is the most important term (Barry, 1978, Wang, 2013, 485). Matsusaka (1995, 93) aims to solve the paradox of voting by incorporating information into the model. Geys (2006b, 25) comments that this and other information models attempt to explain why turnout is higher in some elections than in others but cannot explain the existence of positive voter turnout.

Apart from the debate on how to explain positive voter turnout, there has also been no agreement among scholars using the rational choice framework on how to operationalise the cost of voting (C). Scholars approached this challenge in different ways but were aware of the inadequacy of these approaches (Frohlich et al., 1978, 185, Sigelman and Berry, 1982, 421-3).23 Kanazawa (1998, 977) states that a lack of a clear definition and measurement of costs of voting make it impossible to prove that in a given situation the benefits of voting exceed the costs or vice versa. An additional difficulty with the Downsian equation, pointed out by Sanders (1980, 855), is that the formula assumes that the costs and benefits of voting can be measured in the same units. Several authors describe what they understand by the costs of voting, but these descriptions differ from each other and are not precise enough to consider them as definitions. For example, Kanazawa (1998, 976) takes a broad view and includes energy and opportunity costs:

\[ C \text{ (Costs) is the sum of all the personal costs of voting, both direct costs, in terms of the time and energy it takes to make the trip to the polls on the day of the election as well as the time and energy one invests beforehand in learning about the issues and the candidates, and the opportunity costs, in terms of forgone wages, etc. (Kanazawa, 1998, 976)} \]

By contrast, Fauvelle-Aymar and François (2015, 185) propose collapsing all costs into a function of time:

\[ \text{Proposals and attempts included, among others, assigning arbitrary values to the cost of voting, assuming it is equal for all voters or randomly distributed; calculating it from other values in the model without empirical support; tying the cost of voting to mass media consumption, demographic characteristics or administrative practices; or using a dichotomous variable acquired from a survey (Frohlich et al., 1978, 185, Sigelman and Berry, 1982, 421-3).} \]
Participation costs include the cost of going to the polling station and the cost of information—to collect, process and assimilate the information needed to decide on his/her vote. Both costs mainly are opportunity costs, and they are a function of the time allocated to these activities. (Fauvelle-Aymar and François, 2015, 185)

Nonetheless, most behaviourist studies on election administration do not focus on these theoretical struggles with the definition of the cost of voting. Due to their applied nature, these studies are interested primarily in the impact of specific regulations on voter turnout. Thus, a common approach to the costs of voting in such studies has been to present a list of regulations, such as registration requirements or residency requirements, as costs (for example, Ashenfelter and Kelley (1975, 702-3), Norris (2002, 25), Rosenstone and Wolfinger (1978, 23-4)). The negative correlation of these regulations with voter turnout, or the fact that they make voting more time-consuming, is treated as enough of a proof that they increase the cost of voting. A typical behaviourist research design assumes that all voters are influenced by the same cost in the same way (although some voters have more resources to pay the cost). The limitations of datasets and methods used in these studies do not allow for a more nuanced view. Ashenfelter and Kelley (1975, 709) admit that the effects of different cost variables are difficult to disentangle, as many of them are correlated. Overall, the behaviourist approach to the costs of voting is procedure-centred rather than voter-centred and narrowly focused on time costs and on the costs of the acts of registration and voting. The costs of acquiring information prior to these acts, despite the aforementioned importance of information costs in Downs’s theory, receive less attention.

Rational choice institutionalist studies are relatively more voter-centred compared to behaviourist studies in that they view cost through the lens of effort. The rate at which the cost (such as time) converts to voter’s effort can be dependent on characteristics of individuals or on characteristics of the environment that affect the individual. For example, spending the same amount of time travelling the same distance to the polling place may require more or less effort depending on means of transport or the number of obstacles, such as roundabouts (Brady and McNulty, 2011, Gimpel et al., 2006, Gimpel and Schuknecht, 2003). But, similarly to the behaviourist approach, the focus is on actions related most directly to the act of voting and voter registration and on factors that can be measured.

The historical institutionalist approach to the cost of voting focuses on procedures and other institutions, but compared to the behaviourist approach it broadens the timeframe in which the cost of voting occurs. The timeframe is extended to include all relevant contacts with state institutions, such as obtaining identification documents or communicating with election officials.
by email. Some studies include or acknowledge emotional or psychological costs such as the ‘mental effort’ of dealing with bureaucracy and the emotional cost of experiencing discrimination or negative stereotyping (Atkeson et al., 2010, 70, Cobb et al., 2010, 2).

The sociological institutionalist strand of studies in election administration shifts the focus of the investigation of the costs of voting most strongly towards the individual voter and non-tangible costs. The immeasurability of these intangible costs is solved by focusing on voter’s subjective perception of cost, because this perception can affect the turnout decision (Gerber et al., 2013, 77). This lack of concern with formal measurement allows for the inclusion of a broad range of non-tangible costs, for example feeling alienated when the cultural expression of the voting ritual does not correspond to one’s beliefs and identity (Coleman, 2014). Measurement is also less important in studies that focus on access and inclusion rather than turnout.

The empirical gap in sociological institutionalist election administration studies with regard to the costs of voting is filled partially by the public policy literature on administrative burden. Administrative burden is defined as ‘learning, psychological, and compliance costs that citizens experience in their interactions with government’ (Moynihan et al., 2014, 43). Administrative burden literature highlights psychological costs of interactions with the government. Examples of such costs are the stigma of participating in negatively perceived programmes or ‘a sense of loss of power or autonomy in interactions with the state, stresses of dealing with administrative processes’ (Moynihan et al., 2014, 45). The impact of administrative burdens is subjective and contextual. Psychological factors, such as biases in perceiving risk and probability, can lead to a disproportionate reaction to a burden (Moynihan et al., 2014, 46). Research on administrative burden typically examines the take-up of social policy programmes. Empirical studies show that administrative burden can lead to non-take-up or dropping out of programmes in which participants receive clear, material and immediate benefits (for an overview, see Moynihan et al., 2014). Individual benefits of voting are arguably lower and less certain compared to benefits from participation in social programmes. This implies that voting could also be prone to non-take-up due to administrative burden, including psychological factors.

To summarise, Downs’s concept of the costs of voting is inclusive: apart from time and monetary costs, he emphasises the role of the cost of information (most of which is borne long before the act of voting). He acknowledges the role of psychological costs but excluded them from his theoretical discussion because examining them required different methods than the ones he was using. However, the practical application of the concept of costs of voting in studies of election administration and voter turnout has been less inclusive, especially in rational choice literature
and its institutionalist variant. Some of this limitation stems from leaving out factors which cannot be measured or defined in a way which would satisfy the scientific purity the authors are aiming for. In other cases, the paucity of empirical data or a focus on a specific aspect of voting are responsible. This thesis aims to bring these fragmented ideas on the costs of voting together and combine them into one framework which can then be used to analyse qualitative data. To this end, in the following section, I classify and discuss different costs of voting.

3.2. Building a list of costs of voting

I compiled the following list of categories of costs of voting which in turn guides the hypotheses and questions I ask in my focus groups and interviews.

1. **Monetary expenses**, which can be classified into *direct monetary expenses* and *indirect monetary expenses*.

   **Direct monetary expenses** include money spent on the act of voting, such as a poll tax or travel costs. These costs are unlikely to play an important role in established high-income democracies. In this group of countries, poll taxes are non-existent and polling places tend to be densely distributed. Provisions such as mobile polling booths or postal voting exist for voters living in remote areas or with mobility problems, so the cost of transport is unlikely to be a barrier to voting. Therefore, in my research I do not examine any hypotheses about direct monetary costs.

   **Indirect monetary expenses** are expenses of proving one’s eligibility to vote, such as the cost of documents needed to register to vote or to fulfil identification requirements. This type of cost of voting has been extensively discussed in research on voter identification regulations reviewed earlier. Schaffer and Wang (2009, 399) point out that this kind of cost is very context-dependent and to assess it, we need to ask questions such as how difficult it is to obtain the identification in a given country or what provisions, if any, exist for those who do not have identification. Some commentators such as Sobel (2014) highlight the monetary cost of obtaining identification for advocacy impact. Nonetheless, the majority of studies emphasise other burdens such as time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, need to plan ahead and potential for discrimination (Atkeson et al., 2010, Gaskins and Iyer, 2012). These burdens belong to other categories of costs.

2. **Time** was called by Downs (1957, 265) the principal cost of voting and is a cost acknowledged by all descriptions of the cost of voting. Yet its measurement beyond the act of voting presents
complex challenges. First, all other costs of voting also involve spending time. For example, earning money for paying a poll tax takes time and gathering information takes time. Second, the cost of time is an opportunity cost and differs depending on who is spending this time and when. **Time spent voting** is widely recognised as a potential barrier to voting, confirmed by voter surveys.\(^{24}\) Much of the research on time as a voting cost focuses on the time spent travelling to the voting place and waiting in a queue, as this time can be easily measured (Gimpel et al., 2006, Gimpel and Schuknecht, 2003, Stewart, 2013). The hypotheses linked to this time cost propose that higher density of voting places (per voter) reduces the cost of voting (H1)\(^{25}\) and that placing voting places in locations easy to access by different forms of transport reduces the costs of voting (H2).

**Time spent on bureaucratic procedures** related to voting, such as registration, has similarly been recognised as a cost (Hershey, 2009, 90, Rosenstone and Hansen, 1996, 135, Stewart, 2013). The hypothesis suggested by this literature is that the costs of voting are reduced by minimising the time needed for actions necessary to vote that precede casting the vote, such as voter registration or obtaining identification (H3). Of course, such time is reduced to zero if these actions are unnecessary, for example when there is no voter identification requirement.

**Time spent on acquiring political information** is accepted by Downs and others as a cost of voting, but it is very difficult to measure. Political information can be acquired from several types of sources (other people, media, campaigns), but exposure to any of these sources does not guarantee that political information is being acquired; also, the acquisition of political information is not a simple function of time of exposure. Therefore, literature on search for and acquisition of political information typically does not focus on the time spent but on other characteristics of the process of obtaining information, such as how often a source is used (Östman, 2012, 1009, Pasek et al., 2006, 122).

The problem with the above types of ‘time cost’ is that the quantity of time spent does not necessarily reflect the cost because the value of time is not equal for all voters (Norris, 2002, 96, Rosenstone and Hansen, 1996, 135). Yet there is no agreement on how to assess the opportunity cost of time. There are three major approaches with regard to the opportunity cost of time.


\(^{25}\) The hypotheses are numbered for further reference.
The first approach links the value of time of an individual to her or his economic productivity. Thus, the time of employed and high-income voters is considered more valuable. This approach suggests measuring the cost of time by multiplying the hourly rate the voter normally earns by the time spent on registration and voting, sometimes applying a discount (see, for example, Sobel (2014) and Stewart (2013, 443)). However, in practice, voting usually does not entail a loss of income for the number of hours spent on voting-related activities. If this approach to measuring the opportunity cost of time was correct, we could expect higher-income people to vote less than lower-income people, because the costs of voting would be higher for higher-income people. Yet, it is higher-income people who usually vote at higher rates (Tollison and Willett, 1973, 62). Despite these problems, the hourly income-rate measure remains popular in academic and think-tank literature due to its simplicity and availability of data.

The second, opposite approach posits that the time of low-income voters costs more (from the voters’ point of view) compared to the time of high-income voters. Rosenstone and Hansen (1996, 135) suggest that the poor get a valuable and immediate payoff from spending time on dealing with economic adversity. The results from a qualitative study in Australia by Edwards (2007, 552) seem to support this hypothesis. Research on time costs of environmental activities and healthcare also suggests that time spent on non-paid work activities is of high value for some groups of non-workers (Matsumoto, 2014, 120, Torgerson et al., 1994, 149-51). Frey (1971, 103) proposes that high-income people are more productive when voting, because unlike low-income people they can engage in work-related activities during travelling or waiting to vote. The proposal that lower-income voters have higher opportunity cost of time has some empirical support, but unlike the previous approach, it has not generated any generally accepted measure of this cost.

Finally, the third opinion on the opportunity costs of time is that the value of time is not a simple function of employment and income; some non-working groups vote at higher rates than others (Norris, 2002, 96). ‘Time pressure’, defined by Schmidt and Spreng (1996, 253) as a ‘perception of the availability of time’, may be more relevant to the cost of voting than measures based on the economic productivity of time. Time pressure is highly dependent on context, including electoral institutions such as the timing of voting, the events in voters’ lives such as moving and voters’ lifestyles (Dubois and Lakhdar, 2007, 145, Hansen, 2016, Squire et al., 1987). Regardless of this lack of agreement on how to measure the opportunity cost of time, providing more choice when

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26 Frey meant activities such as thinking or planning, but today the obvious examples would be making calls and answering emails.
to vote, such as offering an extended voting period by implementing early voting, makes it easier for voters to vote during a time that has a lower opportunity cost for them (Gronke et al., 2007, 639). The hypothesis is that an extended voting period (advance voting) reduces the costs of voting (H4).

3. **The cost of information**, similarly to the cost of time, is widely acknowledged as a cost of voting and has been extensively discussed by Downs. But the cost of information is even more complex than time cost, because information does not have a unit in which it can be measured and compared. This immeasurability is a hindrance for empirical, positivist research on the cost of information in the context of voting. Yet the discussion of the cost of information by Downs and others suggests a few aspects and components of the cost of information.

Downs and also Hansen (2016, 1) distinguish between different kinds of information needed or useful for voting: contextual information (how the system works, for example how laws are passed or how the government is elected), political information (information about current affairs and the policies of parties and candidates) and practical information (where, when and how to vote). Downs proposes to proxy contextual information by formal education. This seems especially appropriate when formal education includes civic education. The sense of competence in the political sphere is one component of political efficacy (the belief that one’s actions can make a difference), so-called internal efficacy, in contrast to external efficacy which is linked to the responsiveness of the government (Easton and Dennis, 1967, 29, Valentino et al., 2009, 308). The findings of Coupé and Noury (2004, 264-5) show a correlation between a self-perceived lack of information and the decision to abstain. This suggests a hypothesis that contextual information costs are ameliorated by civic education in the mandatory education system (H5) and civic education programmes for migrants (H6).

It is also reasonable to hypothesise that the costs of practical information – where, when and how to vote – are ameliorated by providing such information to voters directly and in a form they can understand. This leads to the following hypotheses: information costs are ameliorated by posting voting-related materials to voters (H7); information costs are ameliorated by visibility of voting places (H8); and information costs are ameliorated (for migrants) by use of minority languages in voting materials (H9). In the latter case, another way to approach improving migrants’ access to information is to provide free or mandatory classes of the official language to migrants (H10). Downs (1957, 226-7) proposes that the costs of information are lowered by publishers, interest groups, political parties, the government and other actors who select, evaluate and present information to voters (H11) and that other people are an important source of free information.
The latter observation leads to a hypothesis that information costs are increased (for groups that are isolated) by socioeconomic and ethnic residential segregation (H12). Such segregation decreases informal contacts with other people who are an important source of information.

Obtaining information obviously takes time, but it also requires cognitive effort. Gathering and processing of information and making decisions impose demands on scarce resources such as attention (March, 1988, 40, Rosenstone, 1982, 41, Wielhouwer, 2003, 637). Nonetheless, there has been little empirical research on cognitive cost in election administration, despite extensive research on cognitive cost conducted in other contexts and other fields, such as psychology, decision theory, economics and marketing (see Garbarino and Edell (1997, 148) for a literature review; also Berry et al. (2002, 2-3), Cooper-Martin (1994, 44-6), Schmidt and Spreng (1996, 253)). Some of this cognitive cost can be captured by the next category of the costs of voting, namely disruption.

4. Disruption, or an interruption to a routine, doing something else than one would otherwise be doing, is what voters often seem to mean when they report ‘effort’ or ‘inconvenience’ as a reason for non-voting (for example, Sheerin (2007, 90, 2, 5)). The term ‘disruption’ was used by Brady and McNulty (2004, 1 and 2011, 127-8) in studies showing that changes to polling place locations seem to impose a cost on voters (‘disruption effect’) even when the new polling places are not further away from voters’ addresses than previous voting places and when information about the new location is easy to find. Larocca and Klemanski (2011, 77) propose counting discrete ‘tasks and trips’ to reflect the costs of voting. This can be another way to describe disruption compared to a normal routine. The hypothesis that underlies this approach is that costs of voting are increased by the number and complexity of tasks and trips required to vote (H13). This hypothesis is different from H3 above, which looks only at the total time required for all these tasks and trips. Disruption costs go beyond the opportunity cost of time and may include the cognitive effort of making plans and navigating a new setting. One of the ways of reducing the number of required trips is by locating voting facilities in places the voter planned to be in regardless of the election, including voting from home, that is postal or Internet voting.

5. Emotional or psychological costs such as ‘a forfeit of self-esteem, pride, identity, self-assertion, privacy, control, and freedom from fear or risk’ have long been acknowledged in economics as costs that can hinder a purchase in a commercial context (Fine, 1981, 61-2, Kotler and Zaltman, 1971, 9, Shukla, 2010, 468). Due to the difficulty of measuring such non-tangible costs, the consumer’s ‘perception of sacrifice’ is often used as a measure, which is consistent with the approach I take with regard to the emotional costs of voting (Zeithaml, 1988, 10-1).
A number of studies on the impact of voter identification requirements and other reforms consider the possibility that perceived discrimination by election officials, such as hostile scrutiny when being asked for identification, can negatively affect participation (Atkeson et al., 2010, 68, Citrin et al., 2014, 230-1, Schaffer, 2008, 21). These studies do not ask voters about their experiences, but being in a situation perceived as unpleasant or hostile definitely fits into the above description of emotional costs from economic literature. This leads to a hypothesis that emotional costs can be linked to practices of election officials that are perceived as discriminatory by voters (H14). The studies cited above also suggest the hypothesis that the mere existence of electoral procedures that can be interpreted as targeting a specific group by putting an extra burden on them can increase the emotional costs of voting for this group (H15).²⁷

Another potential type of emotional costs, ‘expressive harm’, has been described by Pildes and Niemi (1993, 506-7) as involving feelings prompted by authorities’ disrespect for relevant values, even if there is no tangible harm. Pildes and Niemi (1993, 506-7) use the term in the context of redistricting rather than election administration. Nonetheless, it is possible to apply the idea of ‘expressive harm’ to situations such as placing voting facilities in schools or police buildings in communities where many people have a negative experience with these institutions or not training poll workers in how to correctly pronounce the names of the indigenous minority (Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, 2015, 110, New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2015).

Orr (2015) and Watt (2006) argue that the expressive, ritual dimension of voting is important. While they do not attempt to link this ritual dimension to turnout, it is possible that the symbolism embedded in the voting process, such as the place where voting is conducted, may attract or alienate some groups of voters (H16). Apart from expressive harm, another possible mechanism of such alienation is ‘identity cost’. Identity cost refers to the diminishment of a particular identity as a result of engaging in an activity; the identity may be diminished either in the eyes of others or in the eyes of the person doing the activity (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000, 728, 48, Hill, 2007, 393). There is a possibility that participating in the act of voting can have such an ‘identity-diminishing’ effect for some groups due to the meanings they assign to voting. For example, National Youth Advisory Group (2015) reports that many young people in New Zealand consider voting ‘uncool’, which may be interpreted as an identity cost.

6. **Risk** is another type of subjective cost of voting. Depending on legislation, there may be potential consequences of being registered to vote or voting, such as being summoned for jury

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²⁷ On the other hand, such procedures can prompt backlash and increased voter mobilisation in these groups (Neiheisel, 2016, Valentino and Neuner, 2017). However, this does not reduce the costs of voting but rather makes voters more willing to pay these costs.
duty (Preller, 2012, Teixeira, 1992, 117), having one’s tax avoidance or benefit fraud detected (James, 2012b, 14), being tracked by debt collectors or estranged family members (Salmond, 2015) or receiving unwanted information (National Youth Advisory Group, 2015). These types of risk depend on who has access to electoral roll data, so the hypothesis is that a broader access to electoral roll data is linked to increased perceptions of risk (H17). The perceived acceptability of such risk is linked to societal attitudes towards data and privacy (H20). Another type of perceived risk is when voters do not believe their vote is secret and fear negative consequences of vote choice in their relationship with, for example, state agencies (Gerber et al., 2013, 77).

Some of these consequences, if they occur, can be costly in terms of stress, time or money. At the same time, their occurrence is uncertain. Also, voters’ beliefs about the existence of risk or about the likelihood of such consequences may be incorrect; for example, the state may not be using the electoral roll to verify whether sole parents receiving a benefit live alone but some benefit recipients may believe otherwise. Even if voters’ beliefs about risk are incorrect, these beliefs may influence their actions such as enrolment or non-enrolment. Therefore, these subjective perceptions are worth studying, but there is little empirical research on risk as a cost of voting.

Having constructed this preliminary list of components of the costs of voting, I will now look at how policymakers attempt to ameliorate the costs of voting. Insights from practitioners may help refine the list of costs of voting and link these costs to specific electoral procedures.

### 3.3. The costs of voting as seen by practitioners: convenience voting

From the 1990s onwards, several established democracies have attempted to make voting easier and more convenient for voters; that is, to lower its cost by changes in electoral procedures (Biggers and Hanmer, 2015, 199, Giammo and Brox, 2010, Gronke, 2013). These changes were driven by concerns about the decline in voter turnout. Another driver was the recognition by electoral management bodies that there has been a shift in voter lifestyles and that election administration needs to adjust to the post-industrial, digital era environment (James, 2012b). In designing these convenience voting reforms, policymakers are often guided by information received from voters in the forms of surveys, complaints or suggestions.\(^\text{28}\) Use of such qualitative data in scholarly literature on the cost of voting has been limited. Therefore, insights from

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\(^\text{28}\) Many electoral management bodies issue post-election reports or strategic plans where such information is collated; see, for example, Australian Electoral Commission (2009), Electoral Commission UK (2003), New Zealand Electoral Commission (2015).
convenience voting reforms might add new and useful information to our exploration of the costs of voting.

The changes in the external environment that have given rise to the conclusion that election administration needs updating are linked to broader socioeconomic, demographic and technological changes which affected, to varying degrees, all high-income countries. Changes linked to increased time constraints have received the most attention in the context of voting (Freeman, 2003, 15). For example, easy access to privatised entertainment has arguably increased the opportunity cost of time and, by extension, the costs of voting (H18). Workers’ schedules have become less uniform and less predictable due to the growth of precarious employment and non-standard work, such as temporary work, part-time work or work outside of conventional work hours. Technological advances complicate the boundary between work and free time (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007, 2,10,25,35,72, Kalleberg, 2009, 2, Marcil-Gratton et al., 2006, 49, Sánchez and Andrews, 2011, Strazdins and Loughrey, 2007, 219-20).

There is empirical evidence that these new time constraints may decrease voter turnout. For example, in the US, the percentage of non-voters who said they were too busy to vote has risen significantly from 7.6% in 1980 to 20.9% in 2000 (Freeman, 2003, 15). This busyness might be related to the number of hours worked and to new work patterns which restrict the control of people over their time (Marcil-Gratton et al., 2006, 51, Wattenberg, 2002, 61). The finding of Achen and Blais (2010, 6), that older and better-educated respondents are more likely to follow-up on their self-reported intention to vote than younger and less-educated respondents, could indicate an unequal distribution of control over time. In Puerto Rico, a 13 per cent lower turnout rate on Sundays than on a dedicated holiday could reflect that the weekend is no longer time off work for some eligible voters (Freeman, 2003, 20). Despite this evidence that time constraints are important, measures such as extending the voting period (early voting), which will be discussed later, did not raise turnout as dramatically as the rate of ‘too busy to vote’ answers in surveys would lead us to expect. Nonetheless, the hypothesis that long and/or unpredictable work hours increase the costs of voting (H19) underpins some of the convenience voting reforms.

Scholars have also suggested that technological advances can affect the opportunity costs of time, voters’ expectations and dissemination of information to voters. Feedback from voters to election officials suggests that some voters’ expectations regarding the registration and voting process are shaped by their experiences with private sector services such as banking. For example, people expect not to have to provide their details more than one time (James, 2012b, 14). The shift to privatised information channels (‘narrowcasting’) can make it more difficult to disseminate
information effectively and makes it easier for the audience to avoid political content (Wattenberg, 2002, 90).

Increasing residential mobility is another change that arguably affects the costs of voting in jurisdictions where updating a voter’s address on the electoral roll is the duty of the voter. The magnitude of the increase in mobility varies widely across OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, but in many cases the numbers affected are significant. For example, in the UK, up to a tenth of people move house in any one year (James 2010, 190; Sánchez and Andrews 2011). Increased mobility seems to be concentrated in some populations, such as university students or casual and temporary workers, which overlap with populations less likely to vote (Cobb et al. 2010, 15, Edwards 2007, 550).

Attempts to lower the cost of voting in this new environment have been implemented through a varied range of electoral procedures, which give voters more options for when, where and how they can vote. Some of these attempts to lower costs also reduce the number of tasks involved in the voting process. Access to alternative times and places of voting includes, for example, early or advance voting, postal voting or increased choice of voting location (Gimpel et al., 2006, 37, Gronke et al., 2008, Stein and Vonnahme, 2010). Such alternative options were often already available on application for voters who could not vote on Election Day in their assigned voting place. In many cases, convenience voting reforms make these alternative voting options available to all voters by removing or lowering the requirements for justification from voters who wish to use these alternative methods. The arguably most popular type of convenience voting has been early in-person voting. Early voting is currently allowed, without need for justification or very accessible requirements for justification, in (among others) 35 US states, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Germany and Sweden (Gronke, 2013, National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).

Early voting does not necessarily reduce the time spent voting, but gives the voter more freedom to choose when they wish to spend this time, potentially reducing the opportunity cost of time.

Yet, contrary to policymakers’ expectations, convenience voting has failed to make a significant difference in the level of voter turnout (Fitzgerald, 2005, Gronke et al., 2007, Karp and Banducci, 2001, Kousser and Mullin, 2007, Neeley and Richardson Jr, 2001, Norris, 2003, Stein, 1998, White, 2008).29 Apart from not having an expected impact on voter turnout, early voting also did not significantly reduce the socioeconomic bias of the electorate and, in some cases, has shown a potential to deepen this bias (Berinsky, 2005, Berinsky et al., 2001, Gimpel et al., 2006, 37, Kropf.

29 See Gronke et al. (2008) for a detailed overview of findings of studies on the impact of convenience voting on voter turnout.
2012, Neeley and Richardson Jr, 2001), although there are also cases which challenge the hypothesis that convenience voting always benefits mainly the well-represented groups (Alvarez et al., 2012, Weaver, 2015).

Vote centres (voting facilities located in high-traffic areas that voters are likely to visit during their usual activities, such as shopping malls or libraries) have been shown to have a positive effect on turnout (Stein and Vonnahme, 2008, Stein and Vonnahme, 2011). The main rationale for vote centres is reducing the time costs for voters by limiting necessary travel. If a vote centre is placed in a location the voter was likely to visit anyway, vote centres can ameliorate disruption costs. Researchers have also hypothesised that vote centres can stimulate turnout by increasing the visibility of elections because this visibility may reduce the cost of information. Visibility is difficult to define and measure, but several factors related to visibility such as the number, density and familiarity of early voting sites have been shown to have a positive effect on turnout (Fullmer, 2015, Hood III and Bullock III, 2011, Stein and García-Monet, 1997). It is a reasonable assumption that the visibility and decreased disruption are amplified when vote centres are available for an extended period of time, in combination with early voting.

Remote voting (such as postal or Internet voting) enables voting without the need to come to the polling place and aims to reduce both the opportunity cost of time and the effort and cost of travel. Remote voting also potentially reduces emotional costs if being in the voting place or the interaction with poll officials is stressful for the voter. However, casting the vote in a private and unsupervised setting presents new challenges of preventing voter intimidation, ensuring the anonymity, secrecy and integrity of the vote and ensuring that the vote will not be tampered with during transfer from the voter to the ballot box by post or via a computer network (Germann and Serdült, 2017, 3, Krimmer and Volkamer, 2005, 4). Internet voting in particular requires a legal and administrative structure (for example, a digital identification system) which addresses these challenges (Alvarez et al., 2009, 498-9). For the above reasons, remote voting has not been as widespread as early in-person voting.

Postal voting has shown a positive effect on turnout in several cases, but this effect tends to occur primarily in second-order elections which had low-turnout to begin with (Karp and Banducci, 2000, Norris, 2003, Magleby, 1987). One of such cases showing a positive effect of postal voting on turnout is the US state of Oregon which shifted in 1996 to all-mail voting in elections to federal office (Southwell and Burchett, 2000). This case is unusual because postal voting is a replacement of other modes of voting rather than an additional option. Bradbury offers an interesting hypothesis as to the mechanism of turnout increase in Oregon: when all eligible voters have a
postal ballot mailed to them, the presence of this ballot at home may serve as a reminder of the
election and may stimulate discussion on voting with family members and visitors, consequently
stimulating turnout (Bradbury 2005). If this is true, then we could expect a similar turnout-
stimulating effect from sending voter notifications such as voting cards to all voters, as it is done
for example in New Zealand.

Internet voting has been trialled in a number of countries such as Canada, Australia, France, Brazil,
and Switzerland, but many of these trials were subsequently abandoned or remained at a local
level, leaving Estonia to be the only place where Internet voting is universally available in national
parliamentary elections (Alvarez et al., 2009, 498, Germann and Serdült, 2017, 2). Where Internet
voting has been trialled or implemented, it did not boost turnout as much as expected (Vassil and
Weber, 2011, 1337). Germann and Serdült (2017) argue that where postal voting is available,
Internet voting does not offer any additional convenience. However, some supporters of Internet
voting hypothesise that it has potential to increase the turnout of young people due to their
‘digital affinity’ (Vassil and Weber, 2011, 1338). One of the ways to understand this is that the
familiarity with the setting in which voting takes place may offer some emotional benefit or
ameliorate some emotional cost, compared with voting in a less familiar setting.

Apart from offering a greater range of options how to cast the vote, another popular type of
convenience voting reform is aimed at reducing the time and attention costs of planning and
preparation before voting. Such reforms include, for example, automatic voter registration or the
possibility to register when casting a vote. The removal or relaxation of identification
requirements has a similar effect of reducing the planning required, especially in contexts where
many voters do not usually carry the required form of identification or do not have it. Such
reforms, alongside visible and easy to access voting sites, enable what Ashok et al. (2014, 5) call
‘impulse voting’.

Some researchers have pointed out that, in addition to reducing the immediate costs of voting (or
failing to do so), convenience voting reforms can also transform the broader campaign
environment and affect campaigning and mobilisation in a variety of ways. Such changes in the
campaign environment may modify the cost of information for the voter, and some of them can
arguably also alter the calculus of emotional costs and benefits of voting. For example, Busch
early voting increases campaign costs because it extends the period of campaign intensification,
arguably disadvantaging parties and candidates with smaller budgets. In addition to a potential increase in campaign costs, early voting can increase uncertainty by disrupting the established cycle of campaigning (Gronke, 2004, 11). Some scholars express concern that early voting may negatively affect voter mobilisation. Such demobilisation could happen due to the dispersion of voters in time and space and subsequent undermining of the mobilising effect of Election Day (Burden et al., 2014, 102, Thompson, 2008; see also Orr (2015, 65)). Several studies argue that the real potential of convenience voting reforms to increase voter turnout depends on how political parties and candidates utilise the mobilisation opportunities offered by the new environment (Gronke, 2004, Oliver, 1996, 25, Patterson and Caldeira, 1985, Stein et al., 2003, 2, Stein and García-Monet, 1997).

Often, access to such new opportunities for voter mobilisation depends on access to data held by electoral administrative bodies. For example, in an early voting setting, parties could use their mobilisation resources more efficiently if they could focus only on those who have not voted yet (Gronke, 2004, 11, Gronke et al., 2008, 431, Kropf et al., 2008). Such efficiency can be facilitated by providing campaigns during the early voting period with updated lists of the names of those who have already voted, as the state of Oregon is doing (Kousser and Mullin, 2007). Potential savings could be significant because research shows overlap between the groups likely to vote early and the groups likely to vote overall. These groups, such as older voters and strong party identifiers, are also the groups most targeted by the mobilisation efforts (Berinsky, 2005, Berinsky et al., 2001, Goldstein and Ridout, 2002, 22, Gronke and Toffey, 2008, Pirch, 2012, Smith and Sylvester, 2013, Stein, 1998). Apart from temporal patterns, some forms of convenience voting also seem to have spatial patterns. Gimpel et al. (2006) show that early and absentee voting is geographically concentrated in neighbourhoods with specific characteristics, which could play a role in choices of campaign event locations.

Voting reforms may also give an opportunity to increase the social pressure to vote (which could be interpreted as increasing the social, or emotional, costs of non-voting). Field experiments show that more people will vote if they think that others are watching and that the threat of being publicised as a non-voter can be an efficient mobilisation tool (Davenport et al., 2010, Gerber et al., 2008, Green and Gerber, 2008, Panagopoulos, 2010). However, the effects of social pressure

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30 However, empirical data does not show increases in campaign spending in an early voting environment (Dunaway and Stein, 2012, Zakahi, 2011), although campaigns may need time to learn how to navigate the new institutional environment. In Australia, a candidate of a minor party sued the Victorian Electoral Commission, arguing that independents and candidates from minor parties were disadvantaged by early voting because they did not get a chance to properly campaign in the electorate (Carlyon, 2015). The candidate lost the lawsuit.
seem to be strongest in small and close-knit communities where those who are watching are known to the voter (Funk, 2010, 1077). Outside of small communities, and especially in cities, relationships outside of the household are increasingly based not on geographical proximity but on unique networks of personal contacts (Baybeck and Huckfeldt, 2002, Guest and Wierzbicki, 1999, Wellman, 1979, Wellman, 2001). An early voting period combined with publicising the data on who has already voted (as implemented in Oregon) could facilitate social pressure by allowing enough time for contact in these geographically dispersed networks in which contact is less likely to occur daily.

Parties may also take advantage of the fact that certain intensive or invasive forms of campaigning which are prohibited on Election Day remain permitted in many jurisdictions during the early voting period. Although laws may be adjusted, it is unlikely that the stringent regulation of public activities on Election Day would be extended to cover the entire early voting period, especially when the early voting period is long. Therefore, early voting presents an opportunity to revive the exuberant festivities which were a part of the voting ritual before laws were introduced to curb them (O’Gorman, 2007, Orr, 2015). Addonizio et al. (2007) hypothesise that the 19th century legislation which removed the celebratory element from the voting places is linked to turnout decline; the experiments they conducted indicate that festivals and social gatherings can be an effective voter mobilisation tactic and can produce a turnout increase of 5.6 percentage points. This effect, as well as a desire for more human contact during voting shown by some voters interviewed by Coleman (2014), suggest that there may be emotional costs of voting that are ameliorated by making the occasion more social and more pleasant.

In general, the majority of convenience voting reforms intend to reduce opportunity costs of time by introducing more flexibility and more choice of timing and location of casting the vote. Due to this focus on introducing more options, convenience voting channels are usually added to the previously used mode of voting rather than replacing it. Possible reduction in costs of voting other than time (such as lowering information costs by increasing the visibility of elections) is often a side-effect rather than the primary aim of policymakers. This (implicit) approach to the cost of voting in policy reforms reflects the emphasis on time costs in academic literature. If the practitioners who design these reforms are well-informed about voters’ experience of costs of voting, then the opportunity cost of time and disruption costs are the most serious barriers to voting for voters. An alternative explanation of this focus on the costs of time is that policymakers are subject to financial, institutional, political and legal constraints which limit feasible reforms.
To explore what other means of ameliorating the costs of voting are possible, let us turn to the choice architecture literature. Choice architecture is a tactical re-structuring of available choices to lead people towards the choices the policymakers want to promote. Such interventions have been called a ‘soft’ variant of paternalism or nudging (McQuillin and Sugden, 2012, 559, Thaler and Sunstein, 2008). Sunstein (2014, 17) notes that institutions are ‘choice architects’ regardless of whether they have been deliberately designed to promote a specific choice. Convenience voting reforms are an overt case of choice architecture because they are deliberately designed to promote a specific choice (voting, rather than non-voting). Therefore, the findings of choice architecture scholarship may help identify the gaps in convenience voting reforms by suggesting what other ways of ameliorating the costs of voting are possible.

Choice architecture is rooted in behavioural economics. The behavioural model of rational choice was first proposed by Simon (1955). Simon criticises the assumptions of rational choice theory and argues that the rational choice model of the ‘economic man’ needs a revision that includes psychological factors to better reflect reality. According to Simon (1955, 101), without such revision the rational choice model of behaviour is an ‘extremely crude and simplified approximation’ of actual human behaviour which is not very useful. Simon bases his theory on common experience, aware that at the time of writing the article there were no empirical studies to support his theory (Simon, 1955, 100).

Because of this empirical gap, for some time economic theory dealt with cases of apparently irrational decisions by blaming the difference between the models and the empirical outcomes on immeasurable psychological factors (for example, Verhallen and van Raaij (1986, 19)). But from the early 1980s, there was enough accumulated empirical research to examine the deviations of the results from received theory (McQuillin and Sugden, 2012, 553). These anomalies were systematic enough to identify and classify the biases people are prone to when they make decisions or allocate resources (Münscher et al., 2016, 518). As a result, the behavioural approach in economics and its research on how to exploit these known biases by choice architecture gained prominence within the field.

Münscher et al. (2016, 514) provide a taxonomy of choice architecture techniques which have been shown in empirical studies to effectively ‘nudge’ the decision-maker in a specific direction. There are three categories of such techniques: information, decision structure and decision assistance. The choices available within the information category are: 1) making the desired choice simpler; 2) reframing what the desired choice means; 3) making the desired choice more visible to the decision-maker or to others, for example by monitoring behaviour; and 4) providing a social
reference point (such as referring to an opinion leader or a social norm). Changing the decision structure may happen by 1) changing choice defaults; 2) changing option-related effort; 3) changing range or composition of options; or 4) changing option consequences. Decision assistance can be implemented by 1) providing reminders; and/or 2) facilitating commitment (such as making commitment public). How, then, do the efforts of policymakers to make voting easier map onto the choice architecture framework? Identifying which choice architecture techniques are over- or under-used in convenience voting can point us to new convenience voting options and also clarify the limitations of convenience voting reforms.
### Table 2. Choice architecture techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice architecture category</th>
<th>Choice architecture technique</th>
<th>Example of application in convenience voting/get out the vote initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Making the desired choice simpler</td>
<td>Providing information on where and how to vote. Translation of materials into minority languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reframing what the desired choice means</td>
<td>Advertising campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making the desired choice more visible to the decision-maker</td>
<td>Vote centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making the desired choice more visible to others</td>
<td>Publishing turnout decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing a social reference point</td>
<td>Celebrities exhorting the audience to vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision structure</td>
<td>Changing choice defaults</td>
<td>Automatic voter enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changing option-related effort</td>
<td>Remote voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changing range or composition of options</td>
<td>Providing more voting channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changing option consequences</td>
<td>Underutilised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision assistance</td>
<td>Providing reminders</td>
<td>Posting voting cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitating commitment</td>
<td>Underutilised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Münscher et al. (2016, 514).

The information category of choice architecture techniques is well-represented in election administration initiatives; however, monitoring (making the desired choice more visible to others) is underutilised. Greenwald et al. (1987, 315) conducted an experiment in which those who were asked if they would vote, and said they would, voted with higher probability than the control group, who were not asked whether they would vote. Some jurisdictions like Sweden make individual turnout decisions public. This enables criticising individuals who did not vote. According to election officials I interviewed in Sweden, shaming of non-voters by the media almost always targets public figures who ought to vote because of their role, for example elected local government officials. This spotlight on turnout decisions of public figures may aid in creating a norm of voting, even if regular citizens are almost never subject to comments on their turnout choices.

Decision defaults are ‘pre-selected options that leave decision makers the freedom to actively select a different option’ (Münscher et al., 2016, 516). Research shows that people tend to accept defaults, even in such important decisions as retirement savings and organ donations (Münscher
et al., 2016, 516). Being automatically enrolled does not mean that the person will vote, but it removes one extra task, which for some voters may be a barrier. Changing defaults and changing option-related effort is what most of the convenience voting initiatives aim to do, by making the ‘voting’ option less costly in terms of effort. Nonetheless, in theory, such reduction of costs could be taken much further: Sunstein (2014, 33) describes a hypothetical electoral system in which a voter’s vote is automatically recorded for the same party or candidate from the same party they voted for last time unless they take an action and vote for someone else. Sunstein comments that such a system would offer ultimate convenience to voters (many of whom already vote always for the same party). Yet it is highly debatable whether such a system would support continuing learning and scrutiny by voters, which is an important democratic value. Another, somewhat similar, variant of this choice architecture technique would allow recording a vote multiple times at any time between elections, the most recent vote to be counted on Election Day. This would effectively constitute early voting taken to an extreme and would transform how political campaigns are run, incentivising a continuous, low-intensity campaign.

The decision assistance category seems most underutilised. Social media and mobile phones give new possibilities of reaching a broad audience. Some countries, for example New Zealand, have implemented mobile emergency systems which enable authorities to send a message to all mobile phones in an area. Phone owners do not have to subscribe to receive these messages. An emergency system could lose its relevance if used too often for non-emergency reasons, but elections typically take place only every few years. Facilitating commitment by making a public declaration is also rarely utilised. A field experiment by Nickerson and Rogers (2010, 194,8) shows that asking people specific questions about their voting plans (which can equal to voters making a public declaration that they will vote) increases the turnout among these voters by 4.1 percentage points. Perhaps there is untapped potential in this category of reforms. There are two possible reasons why such forms of choice architecture are underutilised. First, such reforms require creating new procedures from scratch. This makes them often more costly and challenging than just offering more of what is already available, such as more voting days or more voting places. Second, applying such personalised pressure to vote may be seen as appropriate for political campaigns rather than for government agencies.

3.4. The broader picture: outside influences on the costs of voting

There are policies and institutions outside of election administration which may reduce or increase the costs of voting. These state policies include policies that address education, housing and
welfare. Norms towards privacy and data collection may also play a role if such norms are reflected in legislation and state data architecture.

Education can lower the information costs in two ways. First, it has been proposed that the level of general education (not necessarily related to politics) equips people to find and evaluate political information more efficiently. Therefore, it can be said that ‘all education is civic education’ (Galston, 2001, 219). This hypothesis is supported by the well-documented link between education level and voter turnout at individual level. Second, education may deliver information relevant to political participation directly, for example in the form of civic education where students are taught how laws are made or how the electoral system works. A lack of such civic knowledge may result in difficulty understanding political events or integrating political information - Galston (2001, 223) compares this to trying to make sense of a sports game for which the spectator does not know the rules. Empirical research suggests that civic education may be an important mediating factor for the cost of information, especially among young people. For example, Torney-Purta et al. (2001, 155), in a study of 28 countries, found that there is a strong relationship between civic knowledge and civic education in schools and young people’s expectations of participating in elections in the future.

Housing policies may also be relevant for information costs. Segregation, especially in the form of concentrated disadvantage, is often assumed to result in reduced opportunities to participate in society, including politics (Musterd, 2005, 331). Residential segregation (socioeconomic or ethnic) can limit the social networks which, as Downs pointed out, are a major source of free political information for many people. Cho et al. (2006, 156) argue that neighbourhood composition can have a mobilising or demobilising effect on voters by exposing them to political engagement and by affecting the flow of political information. Such effects of neighbourhood context would be especially strong in the case of people who do not have employment or who work within their neighbourhood or work only with other members of their group (occupational segregation). If residential segregation is combined with school segregation and civic education is not delivered equally in all schools, the increase in information costs for those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can be even more pronounced and persistent.

The welfare system is a potential mediating institution for the cost of voting for low-socioeconomic voters. This mediation can take place in several ways other than the welfare recipient’s ability to pay direct monetary costs of voting, which are not relevant in most modern democracies. First, the level of material support received by a welfare recipient can affect the recipient’s ability to participate in social life, and social life is a potential source of information
that lowers the information costs of political participation. This ability to participate in social life can also be affected by the time required to fulfil the conditions of continued welfare receipt. Such conditions may, for example, include documented job search or participation in training. Second, the generosity of the welfare system and how supportive, invasive or punitive it is may affect its clients’ feelings of belonging to society, their perception of the state and trust and social capital (Rothstein and Stolle, 2003, 196). The invasiveness of the welfare system can play a role in perceptions of risk, such as having one’s data available on the electoral roll. It is only in a punitive and intrusive welfare system that, for example, a person receiving a benefit for sole parents may fear that being registered at the same address with someone else could be interpreted as living in a relationship and thus benefit fraud.

Furthermore, Soss (1999, 364) argues that experiences with welfare agencies can shape recipients’ broader beliefs about their role and effectiveness in relationships with the government. These beliefs may then get transferred to the sphere of political participation. Such feelings and beliefs can constitute emotional costs of voting; that is, negative experiences with government agencies can increase the emotional costs of voting (H21). This symbolic inclusion or exclusion of social benefit recipients has been linked to universal and targeted welfare policies, respectively. Targeting takes place when the access to transfers is dependent on income (or other conditions), whereas in universal policies the entitlement is based on citizenship (or permanent residency). Rothstein (2001, 22) argues that universal and targeted systems reflect a different moral logic: policies with universal coverage define recipients as part of the same group as everyone else and thus avoid stigmatisation (Horton and Gregory, 2010, 273, Rothstein and Stolle, 2003, 196). In contrast, targeted policies require delineating a group of ‘deviant’ or ‘other’ citizens and welfare is consequently viewed as solving the problems of this group rather than a problem of the whole society (Rothstein, 2001, 21). Also, Avey (1989, 29) proposes that civic obligation develops as a consequence of benefiting from public policy. These hypotheses about the link between the welfare state and political participation are supported by empirical studies comparing the political participation of those in different types of welfare programmes (Swartz et al., 2009, 635). Research also shows that democratic participation is more even across classes in more comprehensive welfare states (Rueschemeyer, 2001, 81) and that unemployment depresses political efficacy more in states with less generous welfare (Marx and Nguyen, 2016, 648). This literature suggests the hypotheses that the degree of generosity (or punitive nature) of the welfare system may decrease (or increase) the costs of voting (H21).
Informal norms regarding the balance between the private and the public sphere differ between societies and can affect the perceptions of risk linked to government data collection, such as voter enrolment (Westin, 2003, 432). These norms can also be reflected in technical and legal data infrastructure. This infrastructure determines who can have access to electoral roll data and may or may not enable automatic voter enrolment. Whereas some countries have comprehensive population registers and national identity cards, attempts to introduce such schemes have failed in countries such as the UK, India and the US (Whitley et al., 2014, 22). Sobel (2001, 321) argues that administrative arrangements regarding population registers and identification are a reflection of how the society views the status of an individual – as a person who belongs to himself or herself, or as a person who belongs to society as a whole. In cultures that put a high value on individual liberty and property rights, any use of personal information by the government without explicit consent can be perceived as a violation of liberty (Sobel, 2001, 322). Libertarian sentiments often underpin objections to state data collection because population registers have a long history of being linked to taxation, conscription or forced labour (Coleman, 2013, 334-6). This leads to the hypothesis that the costs of voting linked to voters’ perceptions of risk depend on societal norms regarding privacy of personal data (H20).

Finally, migration and integration policies may be relevant for the costs of voting of migrants. Some European countries, for example Finland, Denmark, Austria, Germany and France, have introduced mandatory civic integration policies, which can include language classes and civic courses for recent migrants (Joppke, 2007, 4-6). Ersanilli and Koopmans (2011) find, in a cross-country study, that such policies have limited effects on ethnic retention and host culture adoption, once other relevant variables are controlled for. Nonetheless, evidence that civic education at schools supports political participation suggests that courses for migrants may similarly ameliorate the information costs of voting for them. Also, when participation in such programmes is mandatory and non-compliance is penalised, this may affect attitudes towards the state and subsequently attitudes towards political participation by a similar mechanism as that proposed in the case of welfare policies. The policies regarding obtaining citizenship and rights to vote for migrants can similarly affect the attitudes towards the state. If the right to vote or citizenship is difficult to obtain, migrants may feel that their political participation is unwanted, which may increase their emotional costs of voting (H23). Furthermore, if the regulations of voter behaviour in the voting place (or during other stages in the voting process) prohibit behaviours that are culturally important for a group of voters, this may exacerbate the identity costs of voting for this group (H24). The latter hypothesis refers not only to migrants, but to other groups in
society that have their own culture different from the mainstream culture, for example youth or indigenous groups.

3.5. Costs of voting: a multidimensional model

I take a multidimensional approach to the costs of voting because the literature reveals that not only are there different categories of costs of voting, but also costs in each of these categories can be mediated by different types of factors. Such factors include specific electoral procedures, characteristics and experiences of individual voters and the influences of the broader institutional environment. These three categories of influence reflect the different foci of rational choice, sociological and historical strands of new institutionalism. Table 3 illustrates how drawing on all three new institutionalist approaches will facilitate an inclusive and holistic examination of relevant factors. In Table 3, these hypothetical factors are numbered with reference to hypotheses introduced above. This list of 24 factors extracted from literature guides my empirical investigation into the costs of voting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Factors that may be related to the cost of voting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of voting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each category of costs of voting, I will investigate how these three types of influence – electoral procedures, voters’ circumstances and institutional environment - combine or interact to result in the costs of voting. Such a broad view will allow this research project to test the traditional and more recent expectations put by scholars and to construct a composite indicator which takes into account all major influences and interactions. The overwhelming majority of studies that follow Downs focus on one type of cost of voting, or one type of influence – as represented by single rows, columns or cells in Table 3. It is as a result of these focused studies that I am able to construct this multidimensional framework, but the holism of my approach represents a novel contribution to election administration studies.
Chapter 4: Applying new institutionalism to the study of voting costs

Andy Moore’s Don’t Vote Labour website ... is now classified as an election advertisement and breaches the Electoral Finance Act, as it does not state on the site the name and residential address of the person responsible or promoter.

Labour and the Greens voted against an amendment which would have had all non-commercial speech on the Internet defined as not being an election advertisement. At present it is only such speech on blogs and media sites. This is of course very silly as the difference between a blog and the website Andy set up is what sort of technology it uses. But again this is not a drafting error – they voted down an amendment which would have solved this problem.

David Farrar, Website warned it breaches Electoral Finance Act, Kiwiblog, January 8, 2008

4.1. Linking theory and research design

Barnes (1997, 117) argues that the applied nature of study of electoral behaviour has resulted in limited concern with theoretical issues. Yet, methodological choices reflect epistemological assumptions. Here I briefly revisit the new institutionalist literature to highlight the preferred methodologies of rational choice, historical and sociological institutionalisms and the assumptions linked to them. The aim of this overview is to make explicit the theoretical positions and assumptions underpinning my own methodological choices.

Rational choice theory makes an assumption that all explanations can be reduced to claims about individuals, who can in turn be assumed to be rational, that is to act consistently in relation to their preferences (Levi, 1997, 24, Parsons, 2005, 7, 67). Studying aggregate-level patterns of behaviour is seen as sufficient to derive conclusions about the preferences and cost-benefit

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calculations of individuals, so the research is focused not on internal motivations, but on the aggregation of individual choices (Levi, 1997, 23, 5, Parsons, 2005, 7, 67). This focus is implemented by statistically analysing large datasets containing data on choices, characteristics and constraints of many individuals, as Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) have done. This methodological approach - quantitative methodologies and a positivist philosophy of science - is an expression of rational choice theorists’ aspiration to be ‘scientific’. Ferejohn (1993, 228), cited by Lichbach (2003, 38), wrote, ‘We want ... to provide causal explanations of events in the same sense that scientific explanations of physical or biological phenomena seem to do.’ Downs (1957, 34) stated in a similar spirit that theories should be judged on the accuracy of their predictions. This ambition to be ‘scientific’ may be responsible for the domination of rational choice theory in politics in the last five decades (Green and Shapiro, 1994, 2, Lichbach, 2003, xiii, Parsons, 2005, 7). Political science, as a discipline, has been frequently labelled ‘unscientific’ in a pejorative sense and therefore has been insecure about its respectability and status in the academic community and in wider society (Ake, 1972, Dunleavy, 2010, Lichbach, 2003, 40, Ordeshook, 1987, Steinmo, 2008, 121, Taagepera, 2007, Weisberg, 2007).

The strengths of the rational choice approach are its parsimony, testability and the potential for generalisation and rational models continue to inform most voting behaviour studies (Levi, 1997, 24, 7). Rational choice assumptions are often valid when considering vote choice. However, rational choice theory’s predictive record in the field of voter turnout is weak, as thoroughly discussed by Green and Shapiro (1994). A possible reason for this may be the complexity of citizens’ utility function in the context of voting. The assumption of individual rationality is straightforward when analysing market behaviour: each of the actors wants to maximise their wealth. However, what a citizen wants when choosing to vote (or to not vote) is more complex than maximising the value of one tangible and measurable unit (Levi, 1997, 24). Barnes (1997, 122) argues that the paradox of voting seems to require abandoning simple utilitarian assumptions and incorporating not just institutional and contextual but also affective and cultural factors.

To study such factors, research methods other than quantitative analysis of large datasets may be of help. Yet, in Lichbach’s view, from the mid-1970s the majority of rationalists ceased to engage with other approaches, trying to improve the models rather than to change the approach (Lichbach, 2003, 3). Some rational choice theorists also question the appropriateness of using predictive success as a criterion and consider the development of theory as the most valuable contribution (Lohmann, 1995, 127, Shepsle, 1995, 213). The latter is a valid point of view.
However, one of the contributions this study hopes to make is providing actionable policy recommendations and this aim does not fit well with a purely theoretical approach.

An experimental research design (including natural experiments, field experiments and quasi-experiments) is another positivist methodology, inspired by natural sciences, that has been used in several election administration studies (Addonizio et al., 2007, Brady and McNulty, 2004, Citrin et al., 2014, Gershstenson et al., 2013, Kousser and Mullin, 2007, Monroe and Sylvester, 2011 Nickerson, 2006, Nickerson and Rogers, 2010, Smith and Sylvester, 2013). The experimental method could be helpful in answering some of my research questions. However, the financial and logistical requirements of an experiment in election administration exceed the resources available to a doctoral candidate. Also, all experiments which go beyond providing information or using mobilisation tactics would require cooperation from the country’s electoral authorities and a change of legislation, which is not realistic.

New institutionalism pushes back against the positivist definition of science used by rational choice theory. Steinmo (2008, 129-34), writing from a historical institutionalist perspective, argues that the study of politics should not be compared to the study of physics because politics does not study inanimate objects. Steinmo (2008, 129-34) further argues that prediction in politics is impossible because of the multitude of interdependent variables interacting over time. Therefore, new institutionalists, especially historical institutionalists, are interested more in explanation than in prediction and in special cases rather than generalisable theories. A comprehensive understanding of one phenomenon is, according to this view, no less valuable than developing a theoretical principle.

Such understanding is possible only in context, because the new institutionalist approach posits that individuals are guided by the logic of what is appropriate within the given institutional context (Koelble, 1995, 234, March and Olsen, 1989, 23-24). Institutions include formal structures like government institutions, but March and Olsen (1989) also include values, norms and symbols. According to institutionalists, the impact of institutions is more complex than simply adding individual preferences of people who constitute them (Peters, 2008, 5-6). Thus, for institutionalists, there cannot be one universally applicable explanation of behaviour. Behaviour will depend on the context, which warrants a detailed study of that context. This research is interested in the impact of institutional context, such as election administration and other institutions, on the cost of voting. Therefore, a detailed study of the context, as proposed by historical institutionalists, is appropriate.
A comparative case study approach is the method of choice for examining in detail the impact of the institutional context on the behaviour of individuals. Diermeier and Krehbiel (2003, 124) and Peters et al. (2005, 1280) argue that comparing policies across countries or across time is well-suited for a study where the core question is which institutional features matter, as well as how and why. Case studies also provide good opportunities for investigating causal pathways, which is one of the aims of this research (Gerring, 2007, 48). Therefore, this research will involve a comparative case study of election administration and other institutions potentially relevant to the costs of voting in New Zealand and Sweden. The institutionalist assumptions of limited knowledge and ‘logic of appropriateness’ make qualitative methods such as interviews a useful tool, because norms, meanings and limits of knowledge are not always apparent to observers. In this research, interviewing election officials in addition to drawing on written sources is a logical component of the study of the institutional context.

Similarly, investigating cultural and affective factors and voters’ interpretation of the cost of voting requires talking to voters, because these factors may not be apparent from observation of behaviour. The sociological institutionalist approach favours qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are especially suitable for an investigation of the mechanisms by which election administration procedures may have unintended consequences. In particular, semi-structured focus groups and interviews with open-ended questions help identify variables and factors which might not be discovered using other methods (George and Bennett, 2005, 21). Thus, I conducted focus groups with voters from selected groups characterised by low voter turnout in both countries. Focus groups allow researchers to investigate how different electoral administrative procedures affect people’s experiences of voting and cost of voting in both practical (tangible) and affective ways. Questioning what shared understandings and identities are invoked or created by the electoral process (Ross, 1997, 58) may provide insights into who feels excluded and why.

Case studies, interviews and focus groups enable a deep and detailed investigation of the context and the mechanisms by which election administration affects voters’ experience, but these methods have limitations, such as a lack of generalisability. The rational choice approach, as discussed above, cannot account for the complexity of influences on the cost of voting and the turnout decision. However, once these influences have been researched using methods better suited to them, rational choice approach (in its new institutionalist incarnation which focuses on the mediating role of institutions) becomes useful again. The measurement of institutions and their characteristics has always been a challenge for institutionalist theories (Peters, 2008, 2). Yet election administration studies are a quantitative-friendly field because many important variables,
such as voter turnout or the existence of specific rules, can be objectively measured. Also, election administration in economically advanced democracies is similar enough to make theory building feasible (Massicotte et al., 2004).

Therefore, I use the qualitative part of my research – comparative case studies, interviews and focus groups – to identify relevant institutional variables which affect the cost of voting in the two cases. Then I use these variables to construct a composite indicator of the costs of voting for a number of developed democracies, with sub-indices for different categories of cost. A composite indicator facilitates comparison, both between countries and in time, by providing integration and parsimony of available data (Gramatikov and Laxminarayan, 2008). It can also highlight and help disseminate best practices (Gerken, 2009). Apart from this practical value, the composite indicator can be compared to voter turnout data. A correlation between the indicator and voter turnout does not prove that the selected institutional variables are those that affect the cost of voting. Nonetheless, such correlation may support such conclusion and encourage further research. The composite indicator and its sub-indices can also be used to identify and classify different types of election administration regimes, which, again, can be useful for further comparative research.

Thus, my project combines the three new institutionalist perspectives, applying them to different parts of my research question and using their strengths to complement each other. Such a mixed approach has not been trialled in election administration studies, but it is not new or controversial. There has been a trend toward the synthesis of new institutionalist approaches in recent years (Mackay et al., 2010, 576). Thelen (1999, 372) argues that the differences between new institutionalist approaches are sometimes exaggerated and points out that combinations which harness the strengths of each approach are encouraged by scholars within different institutionalist strands. One of the main differences between these approaches is in how hypotheses are formed, but I overcome this by drawing my hypotheses from existing literature (Thelen, 1999, 373-4). I also follow Thelen’s lead by crossing institutionalist borders to answer specific empirical questions (Thelen, 1999, 370-1).

In election administration studies, there are few examples of such border-crossing. A typical case is when research using one approach identifies an impact of an institutional factor on turnout but lacks the tools to research the mechanism of this impact. For example, Citrin et al. (2014, 230-1) measure how receiving different notifications correlates with voting. They suggest that notifications about voter identification requirements may, for some populations, activate anxiety

32 Thelen’s discussion focuses on the rational choice and historical institutionalism, but the arguments can be applied to include sociological institutionalism.
or communicate low expectations, resulting in withdrawal. However, to test this hypothesis would require using qualitative methods. Similarly, Michelson et al. (2012) use interviews which were initially not planned after their experiment, based on rational choice assumptions, produced an unexpected result which they could not explain. Nonetheless, a deliberate integration of various theoretical approaches in the initial research design is rare. My research combines the historical institutionalist comparative case study approach, the sociological institutionalist interest in the interaction of institutions with people’s lives and emotions and the rational choice institutionalist interest in parsimony and generalisability. By this combination, I aim to draw a more complete picture of the costs of voting and the role of election administration and other state institutions in creating or ameliorating such costs. Accordingly, I use qualitative and quantitative methods in a complementary way that recognises their relative advantages (Bennett and Elman, 2006, 474).

4.2. Comparing case studies and the choice of cases

The advantages of a case study are its depth, detail and potential to provide a nuanced understanding of variables (Lim, 2010, 54). For this project, within-case analysis facilitates locating the mechanisms linking the various electoral administrative procedures to turnout. Identifying these mechanisms complements the quantitative part of the project, because studying the mechanisms can provide support for causality which cannot be proven just on the basis of statistical correlation (Mahoney, 2007, 132).

A comparison of two cases aims to draw out regularities and potentially generalisable findings. Lijphart (1975, 164) defined the comparative method as

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\text{the method of testing hypothesized empirical relationships among variables on the basis of the same logic that guides the statistical method, but in which the cases are selected in such a way as to maximize the variance of the independent variables and to minimize the variance of the control variables.}
\]

I will follow this research design outlined above, called the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD). In MSSD the cases are similar, but there should be at least two differences between the cases – one in the dependent variable and one in a potential explanatory variable (Gerring, 2007, 131, Lim, 2010, 42). In quantitative research choosing on the dependent variable is considered a methodological error, yet in a qualitative MSSD comparison, choosing on the dependent variable is essential (Peters, 1998, 67).
Binary comparisons are frequent in comparative politics because they allow us to study the cases in more depth and detail than when there are more cases (Page, 1990, 447). The choice of cases for a comparative case study can be challenging, because the number of states is limited, especially when we focus only on industrialised democracies. On the other hand, the number of variables that describe different characteristics of states is immense (Peters, 1998, 65). Therefore, it is important to identify what characteristics are relevant to this project, because comparability is always classified (Sartori, 1991, 246). The dependent variable for this project is the inequality or bias in voter turnout as reflected in the voter turnout of young, low-socioeconomic and migrant voters compared to overall turnout. To explore an understudied territory in election administration studies, I choose cases with a proportional electoral system. As discussed earlier, cases from the US are over-represented in election administration studies and this raises the question of generalisability of findings from these studies to other electoral systems. A proportional electoral system is considered a positive influence on voter turnout and may change the cost-benefit calculation of voters.

To make the comparison feasible for my study, the cases need to have a population of low-turnout groups. Young people and people with a low-socioeconomic status can be found in all potential cases, but the level of migrant population varies. The cases for this study need to have sizeable populations of enfranchised migrants. Apart from these similarities, it is desirable that the cases have other similarities in variables that have been found to be correlated with voter turnout, such as population size and party system. Other properties and characteristics relevant for this project include election administration procedures and other institutions. Since these are potential explanatory variables, the Most Similar Systems Design requires some difference on these variables.

Taking into account all the above conditions, the cases selected for comparison are New Zealand and Sweden. New Zealand and Sweden have much in common: they are both established, high-income democracies. Both have a proportional representation electoral system and a history of high turnout, although New Zealand’s turnout has declined while Sweden’s has remained high. Both countries have a multi-party system offering voters considerable choice. In both countries, the population is relatively small with a concentration of people in highly urban areas, but with some degree of remoteness. Both countries have indigenous and migrant populations. Both

33 In 2017, the population was 4,705,818 in New Zealand and 9,910,701 in Sweden (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects, the 2017 Revision, June 2017). The percentage of urban population is 86.3 in New Zealand and 85.8 in Sweden (Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook Urbanization, July 2017).
countries consistently rank among the top ten least corrupt countries in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. Both countries were also late developers as far as industrialisation is concerned (Davidson, 1989, 76). These similarities matter because all of the above could potentially influence the costs of voting either directly or indirectly, by shaping institutions which play a role in the costs of voting. Also, there is a difference in voter turnout trends and the age and socioeconomic biases of the electorate.

Both countries experienced a decline in turnout. However, in the case of Sweden, this decline was then reversed. In New Zealand, there has been a consistent decline from the turnout rates in the 1950s which exceeded 90% to 2011 in which just 74.2% of voters cast a ballot.\(^\text{34}\) Despite generally higher turnout in countries with proportional electoral systems, this turnout decline has not been halted by the 1993 switch to a proportional electoral system (Vowles, 2010, 878) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The changes in voter turnout in New Zealand.

![Turnout in New Zealand General Elections](chart)


\(^{34}\) Though the turnout in the 2014 General Election (i.e., 77.9%) was higher than in the previous election, the Electoral Commission does not consider this slight increase in voter turnout to be satisfactory, especially in light of declining voter enrolment (New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2015, 46).

\(^{35}\) The 1978 turnout has been corrected because the electoral rolls in 1978 contained a large number of outdated and duplicate entries which were later removed.
In Sweden, turnout levels exceeding 90% in the 1970s were, similarly, followed by a consistent decline until 2002. This decline was less steep than in New Zealand and the turnout in national elections over that period was never below 80% (Persson et al., 2013a, 175). However, in contrast to New Zealand, from 2002 this decline in turnout has been reversed and each subsequent election registered a higher voter turnout than did the previous one (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Turnout in Swedish parliamentary elections.

Source: Kerstin Gids ä ter and Per Hedberg, Swedish Voting Behaviour, published by the Swedish National Program.

There are other pairs of cases the selection of which could be equally well justified. Accessibility admittedly played a role in case selection. Some of the research methods (interviews and focus groups) require a stay in the case study country and a common language with interviewees or access to interpreters. While Eckstein (2000, 162) warns against selecting cases for ‘theoretically trivial reasons’ such as access, selection based on accessibility does not automatically make the cases unsuitable (Bennett and Elman, 2006, 463, George and Bennett, 2005, 25). Case selection bias of any kind need not be a reason for concern if two conditions exist. First, the wider set of cases about which we want to draw inferences shares key characteristics (George and Bennett,
Second, inferences are drawn not on co-variation or intuitive regression, but are based on within-case observations and process-tracing; that is, identifying the causal chain and causal mechanism between the independent variable and the outcome (George and Bennett, 2005, 207). My approach fulfils both these conditions.

Within the cases of countries, I also selected specific groups of voters as cases: low-socioeconomic, young and enfranchised immigrant voters. These groups have been the object of attention of scholars and policymakers because of their low voter turnout compared to overall turnout or because of decline of voter turnout. The choice of low-turnout groups is informed by the ‘extreme sample’ design (Gerring, 2007, 104, Seawright and Gerring, 2008, 297) and its aim is to identify which regulations may hinder participation, by studying a group of voters where these hindrances are most likely to be present and visible. Among these groups, young people are the group whose low-turnout and turnout decline is attracting the most attention and is well-documented across several countries (Blais, 2007, 629, Blais and Rubenson, 2013, 96, Henn et al., 2002, Russell et al., 2002, Sheerin, 2007, Strama, 1998). Socioeconomic disadvantage, often defined by either low education or low income or the combination of both, is another characteristic correlated with low-turnout. The turnout gap between the most and least educated has been increasing both in Western Europe and the US (Armingeon and Schädel, 2015, 1), although the degree to which non-voting is concentrated in disadvantaged groups varies across countries (Anduiza Perea, 2002, 650-1).

Finally, several studies report lower turnout among foreign-born enfranchised voters, especially voters born in non-democratic countries, compared to native-born voters (Leighley and Vedlitz, 1999, Rooij, 2012, Voicu and Comșa, 2014, 1574, Wass et al., 2015, 421). The low rate of participation and representation of migrants has been a cause of concern for governments, especially in Europe, because migrant participation and representation is seen as one of the indicators of migrant integration (Bloemraad and Schönwälder, 2013, 545). Also, puzzlingly, migrants’ turnout seems in some cases to be less determined by socioeconomic variables such as education and income compared to the native population (Barreto, 2005, Hillygus, 2005, 36, Xu, 2005. Nonetheless, the experience of migrants who arrive from countries that are not highly developed democracies and have limited knowledge about the host country’s voting process can

36 Lancee and Van de Werfhorst (2012, 1166) hypothesise that income inequality may be the mediating factor.
37 The main hypotheses aiming to explain this difference are assimilation, resilience, exposure and transferability (Voicu and Comșa, 2014, 1574-7). Discussion of these hypotheses is outside of the scope of this thesis.
be a litmus test of accessibility of election administration. Also, there has been very little research on migrants’ experiences with election administration and including migrants as one of the target groups will contribute to filling in a gap in both election administration studies and migrant participation studies.

Similar to other countries, in Sweden and in New Zealand, political participation is correlated with age, income and higher educational level and non-migrant status (Barker and McMillan, 2017, Bevelander, 2015, 68, Curtin, 2014, McMillan and Barker, 2014, New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2015, 14, Öhrvall, 2016, Persson et al., 2013b, 264, Townrow et al., 2014, Vowles, 2012, 16-7, Vowles, 2014). However, there are some important differences. Youth turnout in Sweden has been consistently above 70% (Sloam, 2016, 526), whereas in New Zealand in the 2014 General Election youth turnout was slightly over 60%\(^{38}\) and even lower among youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Curtin, 2014, Vowles, 2014). Also, in Sweden, non-voting is concentrated among the groups with the lowest income. Voter turnout in the ‘very low’ income group (fifth quintile) is 69% compared to 81% and higher in the four other income groups (rather low, neither high nor low, rather high and very high) (Oscarsson and Holmberg, 2016, 48). In contrast, in New Zealand, voting is concentrated among those on higher incomes. Lower voter turnout can be observed not just among those with the lowest incomes, but also among those with incomes not far removed from the median income. People with personal incomes of $30,000 or less and incomes between $30,001 and $70,000 were likely not to vote at 22.8% and 20.3%, respectively (Ministry of Social Development, 2016, 154). Groups with low-turnout in New Zealand include youth, especially from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Curtin, 2014, Vowles, 2014), Pacific people (Iusitini, 2014, McMillan and Barker, 2014), Māori (Godfrey, 2014, Vowles, 2014) and Asians, especially North Asians and South East Asians (McMillan and Barker, 2014, Vowles, 2014). There is a socioeconomic bias in who is more likely to enrol and vote (Townrow et al., 2014, Vowles, 2014).

Data on migrant voter turnout are more difficult to compare than in the case of younger and low-socioeconomic voters. Migrants are not a homogenous group and there are differences in voter turnout between ethnic groups or between migrants who lived in the host country for a longer or shorter period of time (Bevelander, 2015, 61, Bevelander and Pendakur, 2011, 67, McMillan and Barker, 2014, Öhrvall, 2016, 241, Vowles, 2014). The ethnic composition of migrant populations in both countries differs, as previously discussed. Nonetheless, in both countries, scholars and

government agencies have identified lower voter turnout rates among those with specific foreign backgrounds (McMillan and Barker, OSCE/ODIHR, 28 July 2010, 4, 2014, Vowles, 2014).

Despite some macro-level similarities between New Zealand and Sweden, these two countries are dissimilar when we look at meso-level institutions which are potential explanatory variables for this research. These differences are helpful, because the MSSD research design requires the cases to have at least one difference in potential explanatory variables. Such institutional differences relevant to this study include state policies in the area of welfare, education, migration, housing and some electoral administrative procedures, like voter enrolment. This combination of similarities and differences is well suited to highlighting the role of different voting procedures and the broader institutional environment in the cost of voting. In particular, this combination facilitates investigating questions such as: do specific electoral procedures create or exacerbate the cost of voting, or do other, non-electoral institutions play a decisive role in the cost? Which procedures, or which barriers to voting, have a similar impact in both cases despite the differences in institutions, and which similar voting procedures work differently in the two countries and why? Analysing those similarities and differences in connection with the data from focus groups and interviews will allow us to address some of the research questions. The comparison also helps to identify what variables should be included into the composite indicator of the cost of voting – electoral procedures or perhaps other institutional variables. An overview of the institutional settings in both countries, which follows, also allows for the data from focus groups and interviews to be interpreted in context.

The comparison of the two cases in this project includes a documentary review of the institutional environment to gain a good understanding of similarities and differences between potential explanatory variables for the cost of voting. This documentary review, based on academic literature and policy documents discussing relevant institutions, is supplemented by interviews with election officials in both countries. The role of these interviews is to explore not only formal rules but also informal norms and practices (Haas et al., 1993, 4-5). Interviews also serve to confirm that my understanding of electoral regulations and their implementation based on documentary review reflects the practice of election administration. Election officials have detailed knowledge about the implementation of regulations identified in focus groups as problematic and are in a position to comment on why these regulations exist and, in some cases, why it would be challenging to change them. There has also been a growing recognition from scholars that election officials’ opinions and attitudes towards regulations and reforms matter and can affect implementation. This recognition prompted increasing inclusion of election officials in
qualitative studies of election administration (Burden et al., 2011, Coleman, 2014, James, 2013).
To explore the understanding and experience of the cost of voting from voters’ point of view, case studies also include focus groups with voters from the groups described above. The next section discusses this fieldwork in more detail.

The limitation of using only two cases is that their comparison does not give a basis for making claims to generalisability (Lim, 2010, 42). Therefore, I do not make such claims. Rather, I use the comparative case study to identify some of the mechanisms underlying the costs of voting. Showing the existence of a causal process, where specific policies and regulations contribute to costs of voting, contributes to a field in which such underlying processes are understudied. Such processes that I identify can then be further researched or tested using other methods. I do this by using these qualitative findings to select variables for a composite indicator.

Another potential limitation of this comparative case study design relates to intersecting disadvantage. For example, young people and low-socioeconomic people are two separate groups in my research design. However, groups characterised by both young age and low educational achievements have particularly high abstention levels (Hill, 2006, 213). I address this by aiming to recruit participants who are most likely to experience costs of voting; in many cases, such participants belong to more than one of the low-turnout groups listed above. Open-ended interviews enable such participants to comment on the disadvantages they experience, how they contribute to costs of voting and whether these disadvantages have a cumulative effect.

4.3. Qualitative fieldwork: focus groups and interviews

The primary role of focus groups and interviews in this project is to discover how voters and election officials experience and perceive the cost of voting and the role of various regulations and institutions in imposing this cost. The majority of data was collected through focus groups, so my discussion of qualitative data collection will concentrate on them. However, much of what is said about focus groups is also relevant to interviews, with the exception of aspects stemming from the multiple-participant nature of focus groups.

Focus groups and interviews can provide rich, descriptive data which can suggest variables and hypotheses for further study and are well suited to identify left-out variables (George and Bennett, 2005, 21, Jacobsen and Landau, 2003, 190). In particular, the group conversation in a focus group allows participants to comment on, expand upon or disagree with other participants, providing
potentially more detailed contributions than a one-on-one interview (Kitzinger, 1995, 299, Powell and Single, 1996, 504). These advantages are of special interest to this project, because I aim for a maximally complete and holistic picture of voters’ perceptions of costs of voting and the factors that influence them. Further, a focus group facilitates examining the research question from participants’ own perspectives and therefore is particularly suited to research which seeks to explore people's understandings, experiences, opinions and views (Wilkinson, 1998, 185-7).

Another relevant advantage of focus groups is that a focus group, which does not have the formality and isolation of a one-on-one interview, places more control over the interaction in the hands of the participants than an interview (Kitzinger, 1995, 300, Morgan, 1988, 18). This makes it an appropriate method to conduct research with people with little power in society, and many members of low-turnout groups are those with little power in society. Kitzinger (1995) even comments that focus groups can empower participants who can develop new perspectives as a result of discussing a specific topic with people similar to them. Such empowerment was not a part of my research design, but several participants shared with me that they decided to enrol or to vote in the next election as a result of the discussion in the focus group. In two focus groups, the exchange between participants led individuals to correct their beliefs which could inhibit them from enrolling or voting (for example, one participant initially believed that all information from the enrolment form becomes public).

As a methodology, focus groups can be seen as having several shortcomings, such as limited reliability and validity, lack of representativeness and moderator and respondent bias (Wilkinson, 1998, 187). It is worth noting, however, that the criteria to evaluate qualitative research are sometimes constructed so as to reflect the criteria for evaluating quantitative research, such as representativeness of the sample or generalisability. Instead, another approach states that qualitative research should be evaluated within the interpretive research paradigm, which has a different philosophical stance and aims (Fossey et al., 2002, 726). In this interpretive framework, the conditions for the quality of qualitative research are:

> whether participants’ perspectives have been authentically represented in the research process and the interpretations made from information gathered (authenticity); whether the findings are coherent in the sense that they ‘fit’ the data and social context from which they were derived… and whether it fulfils ethical standards for qualitative research (Fossey et al., 2002, 723).
Focus group research, especially when conducted within the time and resource constraints of doctoral study which limit the number of participants, does not give grounds for representative claims about the population the participants come from (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003, 190). Qualitative research cannot and does not make claims to generalisability of findings in a probabilistic sense. However, the processes and characteristics that are identified can be logically generalised to a theoretical understanding of a similar class of cases (Popay et al., 1998, 348). Such generalisations can even be derived from atypical cases, if they provide features against which potential solutions can be tested (Popay et al., 1998, 348).

Another concern often expressed in relation to focus groups is that the interviewer has a lot of discretion in how they facilitate the focus group and may, even inadvertently, direct the answers (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003, 191). Popay et al. (1998, 348) comment that in qualitative research the extent of researcher’s involvement in the research process is such that

*the question is not whether the data [are] biased, but to what extent has the researcher rendered transparent the processes by which data have been collected, analysed and presented* (Popay et al., 1998, 348).

Thus, I endeavour to provide such transparency about the process of the qualitative research component in this project. To this aim, I will now discuss the selection and recruitment of participants, how the focus groups and interviews were conducted and how the data were analysed.

The recruitment of participants for the focus groups follows from the ‘extreme sample’ design used to select the categories of voters where hindrances to voting are most likely to be present and visible (Gerring, 2007, 104, Seawright and Gerring, 2008, 297). Among each group of participants – young, low-socioeconomic and migrant - I aimed to recruit several participants who were likely to experience intersecting or exceptional barriers to voting, for example homeless people among low-socioeconomic participants. Such purposive sampling (Fossey et al., 2002, 726) is consistent with the sociological institutionalist approach, which is interested in access and exclusion. Another goal when recruiting participants was to achieve information-richness, that is to recruit participants who can best inform the study and present the broadest range of perspectives (Fossey et al., 2002, 726, Powell and Single, 1996, 500). To provide richness of perspectives, I did not use snowball sampling (a method in which participants are asked to identify potential participants or to promote the research in their networks). Apart from two focus groups recruited through the Auckland City Mission, each focus group was recruited by contacting a
different organisation. I also aimed, whenever possible, to use pre-existing groups because friends
and colleagues are more likely to relate to each other’s comments by knowing the context of their
lives and to challenge each other on incorrect information (Kitzinger, 1995, 300).

Regarding formal requirements, participants of focus groups had to be eligible to vote in the
country they live in (New Zealand or Sweden) and they needed to be young or low-socioeconomic
or migrant. To be classified as young, participants needed to be aged between 18 and 35 years.
The criterion for low-socioeconomic participants was low income (below 60% of median income)
or reliance on welfare benefits as the main source of income. The criteria for migrant participants
required that the participant was born in a country that is not a high-income democracy, and that
he or she had lived in the host country (New Zealand or Sweden) for at least 5 years. This last
requirement is linked both to citizenship and voting eligibility requirements. Also, the length of
stay in the host country is hypothesised to affect the likelihood of political participation (Voicu and
Comșa, 2014, 1574-7).

In recruiting participants and conducting focus groups, I followed to the best of my ability
(1993), Morgan (1997) and Stewart (2015). The participants were recruited by making contact
with organisations that provide services to my selected groups. These organisations granted
permission to advertise on their premises or in their newsletters. Sometimes these organisations
also passed on the information about my research and my contact details to potential participants
through other channels, such as announcements at gatherings. The initiative to contact me about
participating in the research was left to prospective participants and I did not approach
individuals. The decision to recruit through organisations was motivated by both methodological
and practical considerations. Methodologically, such recruitment made familiarity between
participants and homogeneity in relation to status characteristics easier to achieve (Carey and
organising focus groups before or after meetings, classes or other group activities that were taking
place in organisations. Such ‘piggybacking’ meant that participants who signed up to participate
in a focus group did not have to shoulder additional travel costs and were more likely to show up.
Piggybacking also helped ensure that focus groups took place in a setting that was familiar and
safe for participants.

The organisations that facilitated participant recruitment included not-for-profit, non-
governmental organisations (NGOs), such as social services and ethnic organisations, and
educational institutions. In both countries, the educational organisations I contacted were willing
to assist. Conversely, there was a difference between NGOs in New Zealand and Sweden in how willing and how able they were to assist with my research. In New Zealand, NGOs are very dependent on government funding (Tennant et al., 2008, 4). Since the neoliberal economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, much of this funding has been provided in the form of short-term contracts. NGOs compete with each other for these contracts and then need to show efficiency and rigidly specified measurable outputs to continue to receive funding (Mills, 2015, 122, 4). Therefore, some NGOs are careful to not engage in advocacy or criticising the government for fear of losing funding (Mills, 2015, 124). Indeed, some organisations interpreted my research as political and were not willing to participate for this reason. Another major reason for refusal to assist with this research project was the limited capacity of many of the NGOs I contacted in New Zealand. Limited funding and the aforementioned efficiency requirements result in financial and staffing constraints for many organisations. One large migrant organisation shared that they typically receive several similar requests for assistance with research every week and they do not have the capacity to even process these requests. Another organisation I contacted had a similar problem, but solved it by charging a processing fee for passing on information about research to their members. Using this option was not feasible for me, because paying for NGOs’ assistance was not in the research design submitted to the Ethics Committee and my research budget did not have funds for such payments. In the end, in New Zealand I contacted over 50 not-for-profit organisations to find enough organisations willing and able to provide the assistance I asked for.

In contrast, in Sweden, contacting only two not-for-profit organisations was enough to receive the necessary assistance; these organisations linked me to further NGOs. Whereas Sweden also started contracting out some state services in the 1990s, the majority of the not-for-profit sector is member-based (as opposed to service-based or volunteer-based models) and characterised by widespread participation of members in the activities of the organisation (Lundström and Svedberg, 2003, 221). As a result, the organisations I contacted had enough spare labour power to provide extensive assistance.

Focus groups participants received a Participant Information Sheet and filled out a Consent Form. Most participants were also asked to fill out a basic demographic questionnaire which was used to confirm that they fit the participant requirements. This questionnaire was however abandoned in focus groups where participants did not feel comfortable with written documents. In such cases, the relevant information about age, income or immigration history was confirmed orally. To facilitate focus groups, I used a semi-structured interview guide - a guide which contains the topics and the wording of questions but the researcher can ask additional questions during the interview.
and interviewees can express opinions and ideas in their own words (Esterberg, 2002, 8, 94). Such an open-ended format provided an opportunity to gain information about the affective factors or informal norms and practices which may not be as easily identified by other methods. I always first asked if participants had any general thoughts and ideas related to the difficulties of voting they would like to share before moving on to introducing specific questions from the interview guide. Focus groups were conducted in English, including those in Sweden, where the level of proficiency in English is very high across all societal groups. Written materials such as the Consent Form and Participant Information Sheets were also available in Swedish (as required by university regulations) but no-one ever requested the Swedish version.

Election officials were recruited by contacting national and local electoral management bodies. These interviews took place after I finished focus groups in the respective countries. Such timing enabled me to ask questions informed by what I learned from focus group participants and to give election officials the opportunity to comment on focus groups’ findings in addition to the hypothesis-based questions. The interview guides for focus groups and interviews, and the factual information on facilitating organisations, locations and demographics of focus groups are in Appendix A.

I transcribed the interviews and focus groups myself. It was a time-consuming process, but Esterberg (2002, 108) recommends transcription by researcher because it facilitates further reflection and familiarisation with the material. Then I transferred the transcripts to NVivo, a computer program for coding and analysis of qualitative data. In coding the interviews, I used thematic analysis, following the procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 77). This procedure differs from quantitative content analysis in which, typically, a pre-existing codebook is applied to the data. In qualitative thematic analysis, the researcher derives codes from the data in the course of analysis and pre-existing coding schemes are almost always modified (Sandelowski, 2000, 338). In this project, the pre-existing coding scheme consisted of the categories of costs of voting identified based on literature. The scheme was refined during the coding process, as described in a later chapter which presents the results of this analysis.

The research was granted ethics approval for data collection in New Zealand and Sweden by the Human Participants Ethics Committee at the University of Auckland. The approval process included submitting the interview guides, all written documents such as the Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet, as well as recruitment methods and the wording of all the written advertisements used in recruitment. The ethics approval process also required identifying and addressing all ethical issues that could arise. For example, in focus groups, full confidentiality
cannot be guaranteed. Participants share information not just with the researcher but also with each other and the researcher has no control over participants after the focus group concludes (Smith, 1995, 482). I addressed this issue by openly acknowledging it to participants by including this information in the Participant Information Sheet and sometimes also repeating this information at the start of the focus group.

I would like to briefly reflect on two ethical aspects of my focus group research. Jacobsen and Landau (2003, 192) point out that vulnerable participants, such as refugees, may be reluctant to tell researchers their true views because they might be afraid that this would be disadvantageous to them. At first, I considered this not relevant to my research. All focus group participants, including those with a former refugee background, were permanent residents or citizens of either New Zealand or Sweden, countries with strong human rights records. None of the participants were ‘vulnerable’ in the sense used by the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee and the topic was also not classified as a sensitive topic. In the course of my research, it was however revealed that, for some migrants and former refugees, voting was a sensitive topic. Some participants described fears that their chances and position in the host country may be affected if they vote or vote the ‘wrong’ way. Yet, the fact that they discussed these fears in the focus group indicates that they felt safe expressing their views in the research setting.

Another ethical issue is linked to situations where the researcher is deeply involved in the participants’ communities. This may lead to reactivity, whereby participants try to provide the researcher with what the participants think the researcher wants, to reciprocate for what they have received from the researcher (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003, 192). I was aware of this in relation to former refugee participants in New Zealand. Before commencing my doctoral research, I was extensively involved in volunteering in the UNHCR refugee resettlement programme in New Zealand and I received an award from the Red Cross for Extended Services to Refugee Resettlement. My involvement was not an issue from the point of view of formal, ethical requirements of my university because I terminated my volunteer role to focus on my doctoral study. Therefore, in theory, I was no longer in a position of power in relation to potential participants from the communities I had formerly assisted. Nonetheless, to avoid ethical and methodological problems that could arise from reactivity, I set higher standards for my research than those required by my university. I did not use my existing contacts in refugee communities when recruiting participants and I did not recruit any participants from those ethnic communities I was formerly involved with in my volunteer role. Instead, I targeted communities with whom I

39 An example of a sensitive topic would be research on experiences of violence.
had had no previous contact, by reaching out to organisations other than resettlement NGOs, and I did not mention my volunteering to potential participants, even if this made recruitment of participants from these communities more time-consuming and challenging.

4.4. Quantitative deskwork: cluster analysis and composite indicator construction

The results of the qualitative analysis were a starting point for the quantitative part of the study. Based on qualitative data, I identified several variables descriptive of different aspects of the costs of voting and then collected data on these variables for a group of countries. Then I conducted a cluster analysis on this dataset, followed by a construction of a composite indicator of the costs of voting. In this section, I will discuss the methodological aspects of each of these steps, namely: 1) the selection of countries included into the dataset; 2) data collection, transformation and coding; 3) cluster analysis; and 4) composite indicator construction. The execution of these steps and the analysis of results are presented in Chapter 8, which follows the presentation of qualitative findings.

Before discussing the quantitative tools I use in my study, I will briefly review the critiques of how quantitative methodology has been used in political science in general and in election administration research in particular. This will allow me to address how I aim to avoid these pitfalls. King (1986, 666) points out that frequent errors in quantitative analysis in political science include omitted variable bias, combining or comparing variables which do not have meaningfully common units of measurement and misuse of dichotomous variables. Schrodt (2014, 287), repeating some of the points made earlier by Achen (2002), lists the following common errors: ‘garbage can’ models⁴⁰ that ignore the effects of co-linearity and a linear statistical monoculture. Methodological critiques within the field of quantitative election administration studies echo these common errors listed above (Ansolabehere and Konisky, 2006, 84, Kim et al., 1975, 109 & 19, Rigby and Springer, 2011, 420-2).

To ensure that countries in the dataset are comparable, I constructed a dataset for a small group of countries (16) which share a number of relevant characteristics of the political system, living standards and cultural and political norms. These characteristics include:

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⁴⁰ ‘Garbage can model’ describes a situation when a large number of variables are included into the model without theoretical justification, with the hope that some of them might turn out to be significant.
1) being an industrialised democracy, as measured by a Freedom House rating 1 or 2 for both civil liberties (CL) and political rights (PR) components and inclusion in the International Monetary Fund Advanced Economies List\textsuperscript{41}

2) using any form of a proportional electoral system to elect the parliament\textsuperscript{42}

3) not having, or not enforcing, compulsory voting

4) population over one million\textsuperscript{43}

5) good availability of data on selected factors (discussed below).

This list of requirements has resulted in a dataset composed of the following countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. This selection provides enough similarity in terms of socioeconomic characteristics to facilitate isolating the impact of political institutions.

The availability and accuracy of data have been major obstacles in international and within-state comparisons of election administration (Blais, 2007, 627). Availability and accuracy have been especially challenging when collecting data about administrative electoral processes, which are usually governed by a wide range of legal regulations, administrative arrangements, rules and procedures which can be embedded within multiple laws, and not always within electoral law. Comparison is further complicated by the fact that jurisdictions may define basic terms differently. Also, the details of implementation are sometimes governed by informal norms or not included in publicly available documentation (Gerken, 2009, Massicotte et al., 2004). To address these issues, I aimed to collect data for each variable from the same organisation to ensure the consistency of definitions and measurements. I also adopted a strict approach to missing data by avoiding imputation of missing data and removing countries from the dataset if full data were not available for them, with one exception where only one variable was missing.

The next step was cluster analysis. Cluster analysis is commonly used in social and commercial research to identify subgroups within which there is considerable homogeneity and between which there are clear boundaries (Gough, 2001, 165). Examples of uses include identifying


\textsuperscript{42} In bicameral systems, the electoral system used for electing the lower house is taken into account.

\textsuperscript{43} Such exclusion is common due to higher turnout in small countries; see, for example, Blais and Dobrzynska (1998).
subgroups of patients with different symptoms (Miaskowski et al., 2006, 79) or subgroups of people with different attitudes (Pérez and Nadal, 2005, 925). Castles and Obinger (2008) and Gough (2001, 165), among others, use cluster analysis to classify policy regimes in the areas of social assistance and broader public policy, respectively. I use hierarchical cluster analysis, which is the simplest cluster analysis technique, based on the ‘nearest neighbour’ measurement. In this technique, pairs of most similar cases are joined to form clusters and, in subsequent steps, remaining cases are assigned to the cluster to which they are most similar. Another option is k-means cluster analysis, in which the researcher specifies a priori the number of clusters. This method is useful in testing already existing typologies (Gough, 2001, 165), but I did not have such a pre-existing typology.

In this research, cluster analysis serves two purposes. First, it allows exploration of the diversity of cases in the dataset. This diversity is important because a composite indicator is meaningful only when there is enough diversity among the cases. Second, cluster analysis enables identification of groups of countries with similar sets of electoral administrative institutions and other factors relevant to the cost of voting. This grouping is useful for two reasons. First, the similarity of these groups to other policy, regional or historical groupings would support the hypothesis that the costs of voting are embedded in a broader institutional setting. This broader institutional setting is typically influenced by historical and regional developments. This embeddedness would mean that changing the institutions that affect the costs of voting may be difficult because of their links to larger structures. Second, identifying groupings of countries can be helpful for further comparative research by aiding case selection.

Following cluster analysis, I used the dataset to construct a composite indicator of the costs of voting (CoVI). Indicators are variables which are proxies for a factor. An index (also called a composite indicator) is typically built as \( I = \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i x_i \) where \( x_i \) are components of the index (indicators reflecting different influencing factors or dimensions of the phenomenon under study), \( w_i \) are weights assigned to these components (0 ≤ \( w_i \) ≤ 1) and \( i = 1...N \) (Munda and Nardo, 2003, 2-3). The goal of an index is to facilitate comparison, both between countries and over time, by providing integration and parsimony of available data (Gramatikov and Laxminarayan, 2008). The popularity of social policy and development indicators reflects their relevance for policymakers (Munda and Nardo, 2003, 2). The idea of an index of the costs of voting has been inspired by the work of Gerken (2009) who calls for constructing such indicators for states within the US. My implementation of this idea has, however, a different geographical scope and a different range of factors were taken into account.
In constructing the indicator, I followed closely the process outlined in handbooks on indicator construction by Nardo et al. (2005) and Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (2008). This process includes: the choice of variables, exploration of the characteristics of the dataset, making choices about normalisation, weighting and aggregation, constructing the indicator, uncertainty analysis and analysis of the performance of the composite indicator. These steps are presented later in the chapter on composite indicator construction. The OECD Handbook on Constructing Composite Indicators also lists several considerations when constructing an index ((Nardo et al., 2005, 9-25); see also Booysen (2002) for a more detailed discussion). The construction needs to start with a well-developed theoretical framework. This theoretical framework was built based on prior case studies, which also provided a basis for choosing variables and assessing their relevance and analytical soundness. The methodology of normalisation, weighting and aggregation of data must fit the nature of the data. I had good understanding of the nature of the data because the qualitative stage of this research ensured my familiarity with the meanings of the data (Munda and Nardo, 2003, 4, Nardo et al., 2005, 17-9).

How, then, does this research design address the quantitative critiques outlined earlier? By using cluster analysis and composite indicator construction, I depart from the ‘linear monoculture’ which limits tools to generalised linear models. The stages of indicator construction necessitate testing for co-linearity of variables. The careful selection of variables based on prior research and the standards applied to the collection of data avoid the ‘garbage can’ model, as well as ameliorating the risk of omitted variables. Of course, the coding of qualitative data, such as some regulations, is never without the risk of loss of meaning or assuming false dichotomies. The only way to address these risks is to be transparent about all the choices made during the composite indicator construction and I aim for such transparency when discussing how I construct the composite indicator. Any comparative study, especially when using a larger number of cases, requires a choice of what to compare on and to what degree to simplify and standardise the point of comparison. These choices, with the associated loss of information, and simplifications are a major limitation of composite indicators. My research does not overcome these limitations, but aims to address them by making the process transparent and informed by rich qualitative data.

My research design combines several methods that are well suited to answering different parts of my research questions. Focus groups can highlight what particular costs of voting affect youth, low-socioeconomic status voters and some migrant groups. Focus groups and interviews are also
an appropriate method to investigate voters’ perceptions of these costs. Interviews with election officials and a comparative case study aid in examining the electoral regulations and other institutions and their role in these costs. These findings also test the theoretical categories of the costs of voting and provide support for inclusion or exclusion of different categories of costs to this framework. The composite indicator translates the findings into a tool for evaluating best practices in designing the procedures of election administration, useful for policymakers. The composite indicator also provides additional support for the relevance of the costs of voting I identified if the rankings it produces are consistent with voter turnout differences and existing policy regime groupings. In the following chapter, I begin to present my findings, starting with a portrayal of the institutional context in the two cases under comparison.
Chapter 5: Introducing cases: relevant institutions in New Zealand and Sweden

Festival and bonfires; outrageous wagers; toasting and fasting and even fighting. Elections used to be fun.


Understanding the institutional context (and its historical roots) is essential, in the historical institutionalist approach, for the ability to compare cases and to interpret the current situation. This chapter highlights the diverse institutional developments in New Zealand and in Sweden, which often led to differences in the form and implementations of many institutions that are relevant to this research.

5.1. History, voter registration and privacy of data

Although the process of voting is similar in both countries, there are differences in the process of voter enrolment, which is automatic in Sweden and voter-initiated in New Zealand. This difference stems from historical institutional developments. In Sweden, the development of administrative structures and political institutions started much earlier than in New Zealand and was driven by state-led reform in response to changing needs (Davidson, 1989, 53). The force that drove administrative growth was Sweden’s military history as a great power involved in several wars. Involvement in these wars necessitated an effective system of tax collection and conscription, which in turn required a strong and penetrating state bureaucracy. The strict integration of the Swedish state with the Lutheran Church, which lasted from 1593 into the 19th century, facilitated such penetrating bureaucracy because the church kept its own population records (Gustafsson, 2003, 54).

In contrast, New Zealand’s history as a modern state is relatively brief. New Zealand had been settled by Polynesians since around 1300AD but it was colonised by the British only in the 19th century (Smith, 2012, 7). The Treaty of Waitangi, signed between the indigenous Māori chiefs and representatives of Great Britain in 1840, is traditionally considered the founding document of New

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Zealand, even if formally New Zealand remained a colony and then a dominion of Great Britain long after the Treaty had been signed. Some Māori resisted the European conquest, but were eventually overwhelmed by the number of settlers arriving (Smith, 2012, 72). The settlers disregarded indigenous institutions and attempted to build a replica of British institutions from scratch in a resource-poor environment (King, 2013, Smith, 2012, 49). Smith (2012, 65) writes that the New Zealand government was ‘established on the cheap and connoted more ideal than reality’. State bureaucracy was initially minimal due to scattered population, labour shortage and settlers’ focus on survival (Atkinson, 2003, 23). Even after the number of settlers increased, New Zealand remained a ‘minimally organised society’ with high rates of interpersonal violence and drunkenness and low social cohesion. As a result, many institutions developed in a bottom-up manner, out of community organising in response to problems rather than as a result of government planning (Smith, 2012, 87). Among institutions of interest for this research, this historical difference is reflected in voter enrolment and attitudes towards data collection by the state.

Sweden transformed from a feudal or particularistic state to a bureaucratic or universal state only in the second part of the late 19th century, at approximately the same time as New Zealand was creating its settler state (Rothstein, 1998, 303, Smith, 2012, 88). Yet, Sweden, unlike New Zealand, could draw on existing institutional structures to create its bureaucratic state. In the case of voter enrolment, such an existing institutional structure was the Lutheran Church and its local parish registers which were kept from 1686. In Sweden, the church records were not limited to registering births, deaths and marriages but also included a catechetical examination record, introduced to record parishioners’ literacy and knowledge of the catechism. This catechetical examination register was updated more often and captured more information than typical church registers of births, deaths and marriages in other countries (Kälvemark, 1977, 216). Sweden consolidated catechetical registers into population statistics in 1749, initially for the purposes of conscripting soldiers for the army (Kukutai et al., 2015, 8). This 18th century conscription system later became the basis for the contemporary population register, which today plays a crucial role in automatic voter enrolment (Knudsen and Rothstein, 1994, 208).

The significance of existing church infrastructure for the development of the population register is evidenced by the fact that only in 1991 was the responsibility for the registers fully moved from the church to the National Tax Board (Ludvigsson et al., 2009, 659). Today, the population register includes all persons who reside in Sweden. All such persons have a 10-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN), introduced in 1947, stored in the population register (Ludvigsson et al., 2009, 659).
The PIN is necessary when accessing most state services such as education, social welfare or healthcare and it is next to impossible to normally function without it, which is a strong incentive to keep one’s information in the database up to date (Coleman, 2013, 344, Ludvigsson et al., 2009, 661). The electoral roll is created automatically, based on this daily updated, population register (Öhrvall, 2016, 231). As a result, there is no cost of voter enrolment for the voter, whether in the form of time, attention or disruption.

In contrast, in New Zealand, there is no unique identifier for residents or citizens of the country and there is unease among the public towards sharing data across government agencies. This unease is reflected in the Privacy Act 1993, which explicitly prohibits a unique cross-agency identifier for individuals (in addition to limitations on data sharing between agencies). As a result of this legislation, introducing a unique cross-agency identifier would require a legislative change and this, in turn, would require public support (Bycroft, 2010, 4, 11). Bycroft (2010, 11) seems to suggest that such support is unlikely, in the light of concerns about the potential for the misuse of individuals’ data. Indeed, data-matching proposals are met with suspicion, especially from some left-of-centre organisations and commentators. This suspicion stems from a belief that the primary goal of such projects is to find reasons to penalise individuals, for example by cutting individuals’ welfare benefits.45 Such privacy concerns and anxieties linked to technological developments which enable the construction of large electronic databases from the electoral roll are not unique to New Zealand (Bennett, 2015, 372, Kukutai et al., 2015, 7, Onselen and Errington, 2004, 349). But Coleman (2013, 346) comments that the Anglosphere has a particular mistrust of state data-gathering and government intrusions, rooted in libertarian Right and liberal Left traditions with their values of independence, freedom and individualism. English-speaking countries have no tradition of keeping population registers or issuing official identity documents (Coleman, 2013, 347).

Nonetheless, this lack of a population register is a major barrier to introducing automatic voter enrolment in New Zealand. There is no database in New Zealand that would store all the information necessary for enrolment, especially the address where the voter currently resides, in the meaning of the Electoral Act (NZ Electoral Commission, 2016). Recording voters’ current address is important because in the Multi-Member Proportional electoral system in New Zealand, voters cast one vote for a specific candidate in the electorate in which they are enrolled and one

vote for a party. Party votes are aggregated at national level, but electorate votes determine who wins the electorate seat.

Another major barrier to automatic voter enrolment in New Zealand is the existence of the Māori roll. Voters of Māori descent can choose to enrol on the general roll or the Māori roll. Electors from the Māori roll elect representatives for Māori seats in separate electorates which are territorially superimposed on general electorates. The number of Māori seats depends on the number of people enrolled on the Māori roll. The role of these seats was initially to secure representation for the indigenous minority (Geddis, 2006, 347). The retention of Māori seats after the change to a proportional electoral system (which should provide representation for groups of the size of Māori population) imbued these seats with a symbolic meaning, namely the recognition of the unique place of Māori in New Zealand (Geddis, 2006, 348). Automatic voter enrolment would require making a decision which roll to enrol the elector on – the general roll or the Māori roll. Because Māori voters can enrol either on the Māori roll or on the general roll, such a decision could not be made based on a voter’s declared descent. A separate enrolment process for non-Māori (who could be enrolled automatically) and for Māori would be, according to the Electoral Commission, politically unacceptable (NZ Electoral Commission, 2016). Such a separate process could be viewed as making voter enrolment more difficult for Māori, who already have lower voter enrolment rates and a history of political marginalisation. However, Vowles et al. (2017, 258) note that the Māori roll issue would not prevent automatic registration at least for the party vote portion of the vote.

Currently, enrolling and re-enrolling at every subsequent change of address is the duty of the New Zealand voter. This voter-initiated voter enrolment has been described as a barrier for some voters, for several reasons. There is no Election Day registration (Geddis, 2014, 254). The availability of names and addresses of enrolled electors for public inspection and for sale has been reported as a barrier for those afraid to enrol because they could be traced by abusive ex-partners or debt collectors (Barnett, 2015, Bradbury, 2012, New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2015, 57). There seems to be limited understanding of the enrolment process among some groups, especially in electorates with a high percentage of ethnic minority and low-income voters (Geddis, 2015, National Youth Advisory Group, 2015). This limited understanding is reflected in the high

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46 An unpublished roll exists, but it is available only to those who can prove that being on the public roll would jeopardise their personal safety or that of their family, which is a requirement many electors with privacy concerns do not meet (Bradbury, 2012).
proportion of special votes which are disallowed because the voter was not on any roll (New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2015, 55).  

Enrolment is mandatory, but not enforced.  

One of the election officials I interviewed in New Zealand confirmed that non-enforcement of fines for not enrolling is deliberate; according to this official, enforcement would harm the public image of the Electoral Commission and its relationship with electors. Furthermore, enforcement would be disrespectful towards people’s freedom. The primary role of the mandatory enrolment law is to signal a social norm. One of the reasons forcing people to enrol that would be controversial in New Zealand is the aforementioned access to electoral roll data by third parties. The electoral rolls (a separate roll is held for each electorate) are available for sale to the general public at the accessible price of NZ$30.20 per roll (Dec 2017). These rolls contain the names, addresses and occupations of enrolled electors who are listed alphabetically by surname. A habitation roll, where electors are listed alphabetically by residential address, is also available for purchase. The rolls are printed on paper and it is an offence under Section 117 of the Electoral Act 1993 to convert them into electronic format, which should limit their utility for searching for specific people. However, electronic scanning technologies make such a conversion inexpensive and easy to execute in the privacy of one’s home or office. There is no way to know if someone has converted the roll to electronic format as long as they keep the electronic version for their private use.

Anecdotally, as reported in the Labour Party’s submission to the inquiry into the 2014 General Election, this electoral roll data has been used by debt collectors to track down debtors or by ex-partners or estranged family members to contact a person who did not wish to be contacted (Barnett, 2015). Such uses of electoral roll data have arguably inhibited some people from enrolling. Therefore, some commentators from the political left have unsuccessfully campaigned to restrict access to the electoral roll data. However, there is no systematic research on such fear preventing people from enrolling. The purpose of the public electoral roll is, of course, to ensure that incorrect or fraudulent enrolments will be identified by the public. In 1861, when the largest

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47 Twenty-one percent of candidate special votes were disallowed in 2014.
electorate had 574 electors and the smallest 51, an assumption that people within each electorate would know each other was reasonable (Atkinson, 2003, 41). Currently, electorates in New Zealand have approximately 55,000 electors each. There were instances of people enrolling their pets as a prank, which were discovered only after the pranksters themselves made them public. Such events call into question the relevance of publishing names and addresses as an integrity mechanism. Nonetheless, according to one of the election officials who I interviewed, the electoral roll in New Zealand needs to stay public because of the principle behind it and its symbolism, even if the practical value for detecting enrolment fraud has diminished.

In Sweden, the electoral roll is also public and the freedom of information concerning third parties overall is considerable (Steele, 2002, 22). Sweden’s openness principle (offentlighetsprincip), which guarantees public access to official documents since 1766, is an exception compared to other countries and caused a clash with the legislation of the European Community due to the implementation of the 1995 European Data Protection Act (Steele, 2002, 19). Personal data protection law exists in Sweden; in fact, Sweden was one of the first countries to introduce a comprehensive national data privacy law, the Data Act of 1973, which was later replaced by the 1998 Personal Data Act (Greenleaf, 2014, 4). However, the provisions of the Act are not applicable when they would contravene or limit the principle of access to public information, and the Act focuses on protecting sensitive information which goes beyond name and address (for example, health information or trade union membership). People’s addresses and birthdays are available in searchable online databases and, according to election officials who I interviewed, this has never caused any controversy like that regarding the public electoral roll in New Zealand.

This difference in voter enrolment is one of the potential explanatory variables when comparing the two cases. It is important to note that enrolment procedures in both countries and their associated data infrastructures reflect historical legacies. Due to these historical developments, in both cases voter enrolment is interlinked with other institutions, so that an arbitrary change would be difficult. This institutional stickiness is evident especially in New Zealand, where the enrolment arrangements are suboptimal from the point of view of voters’ convenience. Yet, the fragmented data infrastructure, combined with the existence of the Māori roll, make transition to automatic voter enrolment challenging. Conversely, in Sweden, these administrative legacies forged a

53 For example, eniro.se, birthday.se.
system of automatic voter enrolment apparently seamlessly integrated into the rest of state data infrastructure. This system appears to be widely accepted by the population, in contrast to New Zealand where there is an ongoing discussion about possible reform. There is also a marked difference in norms and attitudes towards the privacy of personal data between the two countries. This difference may stem from differential historical experiences but may also be influenced by contemporary institutions, such as the welfare state.

5.2. Welfare state and the relationship between the citizens and the state

Welfare systems in New Zealand and Sweden are highly dissimilar despite having some historical developments in common. Both New Zealand and Sweden experienced a period of post-war prosperity when their economies were highly regulated and levels of economic freedom were low, with high levels of social rights (Bergh and Erlingsson, 2009, 71, Carpenter, 2012, 4, Smith, 2012, 210). Then both countries participated in the wave of neoliberal economic and welfare reforms which occurred in many states in the 1980s and 1990s (Swank, 2005, 183). These reforms were prompted by pressures of globalisation and demographic and economic changes such as, for example, population ageing, changes in family structure, shift to a service economy and migration (Bergh and Erlingsson, 2009, 73). The reforms resulted in a significant increase in economic freedom and openness of the economies of both countries, accompanied by welfare retrenchment (Bergh and Erlingsson, 2009, 71, Smith, 2012, 220).

Nonetheless, these similar pressures experienced in both countries did not lead to similar reforms. Sweden, despite some worsening of social rights, remained a relatively generous and universal welfare state with redistribution based on the idea of social citizenship (Bergh and Erlingsson, 2009, 74, Fleckenstein and Lee, 2017, 151,8). In contrast, in New Zealand, the cuts to welfare were so drastic that the country was called an extreme case of welfare retrenchment, characterised by welfare targeting with sanctions and work-testing requirements meant to incentivise paid work (Boston and St John, 1999, 112, O’Brien, 2013, 736-9, Starke, 2007, 65). Castles (1996, 89) provides an insight into the extremity of the New Zealand welfare cuts by expanding on Esping-Andersen’s (1990) typology of welfare states (social democratic, corporatist and liberal, with New Zealand in the latter category). Castles proposes a fourth category for the Australian and New Zealand welfare systems: ‘radical’ welfare states. These states initially operated as wage earners’ welfare states, protecting income levels of the employed population by wage bargaining structures and
industrial policies. When these labour market protections were dismantled, there was no corresponding increase in welfare provisions for those outside of the labour market.

In New Zealand, all welfare benefits (with the exception of universal superannuation) are means- and asset-tested, regardless of the applicant’s previous work history. Does the New Zealand welfare system, then, stigmatise and exclude beneficiaries in ways that, as discussed earlier, have been hypothesised to affect political participation? Government policy emphasises getting beneficiaries out of the welfare system and into paid work, especially since the 2012 reforms. These reforms merged former unemployment, sickness and sole parent benefits into one Jobseeker Support benefit, the recipients of which are subject to a wide range of compulsory work tests and sanctions. Some categories of beneficiaries must undergo compulsory income management or drug testing (Bradford, 2016, 5). The stigmatising and disempowering effects of this welfare system were discussed in several qualitative studies (Edmiston, 2017, Edmiston and Humpage, 2016, Hodgetts et al., 2014, 6-12). As reported by a beneficiary advocacy organisation, recipients’ negative experiences in interactions with the government social welfare agency result in some people giving up on trying to access their entitlements (Bradford, 2016, 5). Beddoe (2014, 51) argues that media representations of beneficiaries are stigmatising and unsympathetic, with a discourse of ‘feral underclass’ applied especially towards Māori beneficiaries. Welfare policies around relationships are especially symptomatic of the hierarchical, paternalistic orientation of welfare policies, argued to depress participation (Bruch et al., 2010, 221). In such policies, recipients are positioned as objects of surveillance and punishment. Because of the assumption that a couple can live more cheaply than two singles, the benefit rate for couples is significantly lower than double the benefit rate for singles (St John et al., 2014, 6). A beneficiary who is in a relationship without informing welfare officials can be accused of ‘relationship fraud’. The judgment on whether a beneficiary is in a relationship is at the discretion of the officers of the Ministry of Social Development and is subjective. Investigations into relationship status can be very invasive and based on the assumption that the beneficiary is guilty unless proven otherwise (St John et al., 2014, 11). This surveillance may contribute to beneficiaries’ reluctance to make personal information available to the state.

In Sweden many transfers, such as unemployment and sickness payments, are not means-tested. The individual qualifies for them and other benefits such as parental entitlements by being in paid work, without needing to prove that they have no money to support themselves (Gustafsson, 2013, 127, Halleröd, 2009, 6). These payments are linked to government insurance schemes financed by employer levies and government subsidies; the amount of transfers is often based on
recipient’s previous income (Köhler et al., 2008, 263). Yet, this universal and non-means-tested system is available only to those with a stable connection to the labour market (Köhler et al., 2008, 265). For those with no history of paid work, there is a separate safety net of means- and asset-tested social assistance. Social assistance is one of the few exceptions to the rule of universalism and individualism in the system of transfers and benefits, so that Sweden has effectively a two-track welfare system (Halleröd, 2009, 3, Köhler et al., 2008, 265). Social assistance is, similarly to welfare benefits in New Zealand, available only to those who have used up their own savings or assets and involves a thorough investigation of applicants’ financial and social situation (Köhler et al., 2008, 269). This assistance comes with many conditions attached, such as in some cases a prohibition of owning a car or the need to get permission for travelling abroad (Bergnehr, 2016, 19, 23). The proportion of population in this means-tested part of the welfare system is much lower than in New Zealand: the rate of individual social assistance receipt in Sweden fluctuates around 2% to 2.5% (Königs, 2015, 13). In contrast, in New Zealand, in 2016, 10.3% of the working-age population were receiving a means-tested social benefit, and Māori and Pacific people are consistently over-represented among benefit recipients. In Sweden, most adult native-born Swedes have a paid work history and social assistance receipt is very concentrated among immigrants coming from poorer countries, often with a refugee background (Gustafsson, 2013, 129, 35).

Yet, unlike in New Zealand, where benefits have been cut to minimal levels, recipients of social assistance in Sweden have the right (sanctioned by the Social Service Act 1982) to a reasonable, rather than minimal, standard of living which includes participation in social life (Köhler et al., 2008, 269). Also, social assistance is often administered by social workers who, thanks to their education, have a good understanding of disadvantage (Köhler et al., 2008, 269). For related targeted programmes, like active labour market policies, implementation happens in consultation with unions and other stakeholder groups to reduce stigmatisation (Rothstein, 2001, 24). Social assistance is managed at municipal level, so details in how it is administered may differ. Still, despite the above efforts to reduce stigmatisation, there is a considerable level of intrusion into and control of lives of beneficiaries who are in this welfare track.

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54 Gustafsson (2013, 128) uses ‘persons living in a household that at least once during a year has received social assistance’ as a measure of benefit receipt; this fluctuates between 4.1% and 8.2%. However, as New Zealand benefit receipt statistics count individuals, König’s data is more appropriate for comparison.

The differences in the generosity of the welfare state in both countries and how the welfare policies position the citizen is one of the potential explanatory variables in our comparative research design. Because both migrants and low-socioeconomic people are groups of interest in this project, the Swedish case of a two-track system gives an opportunity to compare the feelings of belonging (or alienation) and (dis-)empowerment experienced by people who receive universal and targeted welfare both between countries and within one country. It is also an opportunity to explore Soss’s (1999, 364) hypothesis that people transfer their positive and negative experiences with the welfare system to other interactions with the state, such as political participation. This difference will also help to examine the argument that a generous welfare state can promote ‘passive client citizenship’ (Swartz et al., 2009, 637). Because in Sweden it is immigrants, rather than benefit recipients, who are stigmatised, it is time to review the migration and integration policies in both countries. Apart from providing context for qualitative data, such policies can also inform us about how the state constructs the meaning of citizenship.

5.3. Migration and integration

In both New Zealand and Sweden, over 20% of the population is foreign-born. Yet the composition of this foreign-born population, its history and issues faced are very different. Again, similarly to what happened to the welfare state, the trajectories of New Zealand and Sweden converged at one point but then diverged sharply. The period of convergence was the post-war period of low-skilled labour migration, which lasted until the 1970s. The predominant sources of this labour migration were, for Sweden, Finland and the Mediterranean (Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey), and for New Zealand, the Pacific Islands. Then, as the demand for low-skilled labour subsided, the migration policies of the two countries diverged. Sweden shifted to refugee immigration and family reunification and New Zealand shifted to high-skilled and business migration selected on human capital, qualifications in demand in the labour market or capital to invest. This divergence resulted in very dissimilar migrant populations in the two countries, in terms of ethnic origin and labour market success (Bevelander, 2015, 63).

In Sweden, the predominant countries of origin of refugees changed over time and included Chile, Poland and Turkey in the 1970s, Chile, Ethiopia and the Middle East in the 1980s, Iraq and Eastern European countries in the 1990s and Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia in the 2000s (Bevelander, 2015, 63, Dancygier et al., 2015, 706). As a result of the predominantly humanitarian character of this migration, new refugees usually enter the host country as clients of the welfare system and are socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to the native population even many years after
arrival, with high unemployment rates (Eastmond, 2011, 280). The threshold of entry into the
protected primary tier of the labour market is high. The exclusion of significant groups of migrants
from the labour market and from unemployment insurance pushes them into the informal sector
(Schierup and Ålund, 2011, 50-2). As a result of this exclusion, being an immigrant is stigmatised.
Whereas in New Zealand ‘migrant’ is a neutral classification, in Sweden ‘immigrant’ has come to
signify social problems, so that it is possible to have immigrated without ‘being an immigrant’
(Trondman, 2006, 433). The isolation of immigrants in Sweden has prompted calls for punitive
surveillance focused not only on moral values, but also on the threats of fundamentalism and
Islamic radicalisation (Schierup and Ålund, 2011, 55). In the media discourse, the situation
immigrants are in is often blamed on deviant and dysfunctional values and lifestyles which are
linked to ‘culture’, which is similar to the New Zealand media discourse on beneficiaries (Schierup
and Ålund, 2011, 55).

In New Zealand, the main sources of skilled and business migration have been China, India, the UK
and the Philippines (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2016, 47). As a result of the
selectivity of migration and limitations on migrants’ access to welfare in the first two years of
residence, the welfare benefit rates for migrants in New Zealand are lower than for native-born.
Only 1.5% of those who arrived within the Skilled/Business stream and 5.1% of migrants overall
are in receipt of welfare, compared to around 10% of the overall population (Merwood, 2013, 27).
Labour market outcomes for humanitarian immigrants to New Zealand are worse than for the
overall population, but humanitarian immigration to New Zealand is relatively small in numbers.
It constitutes only 8% of all residence approvals, less than half of which are refugees and asylum
seekers (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2016, 43). Overall, migrants who are
in the labour force achieve higher average earnings compared to the New Zealand population.57

Some groups of migrants to New Zealand, in particular Asian ethnic groups, have lower labour
market participation rates and earnings than other migrant populations with comparable
education and experience (Winkelmann and Winkelmann, 2002, 34). Discrimination may be the
reason for this difference in outcomes; Asians report the highest levels of discrimination out of all
ethnic groups and much of this discrimination is reported in the context of employment (Statistics

56 To denote permanently resident foreign-born population, I use the terms ‘immigrant’ (used in Swedish
policy documents) and ‘migrant’ (used in New Zealand policy documents) interchangeably. In New Zealand
government publications, ‘migrant’ is sometimes used to describe a permanent migrant and ‘immigrant’ to
describe someone with a temporary status.
57 Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2013, Labour Market Outcomes for Recent Migrants
to New Zealand, available from: http://www.mbie.govt.nz/publications-research/research/migrants---
New Zealand, 2012, 4). Winkelmann and Winkelmann (2002, 34) propose that coming from a non-English-speaking country imposes a market penalty on migrants. Despite these difficulties experienced by some migrants, economic migrants in New Zealand are not considered a group linked to poverty, social exclusion or social problems. Unlike in the case of humanitarian immigration which predominates in Sweden, economic migrants who are unsuccessful have the option of returning to the country of prior residence. According to government statistics, around 20% of migrants leave within the first 3 years.\(^{58}\)

The two countries also have very different migrant integration policies. New Zealand’s approach can be described as hands-off. Except for a 6-week residential introductory programme for refugees, there are no state-funded or mandatory courses for immigrants. The requirements for immigrating aim to select migrants who will not require extensive support in New Zealand. Using the support that is available is a decision left to the migrant. For example, candidates for skill-based migration are required to have a minimal level of English language proficiency on arrival or to prepay English language tuition. Nevertheless, attending these prepaid classes is not enforced and according to the Ministry of Education (2002, 16), the actual uptake among those who paid for English tuition is only about one-third. State funding for English language training providers for migrants and refugees is scarce (Roach and Roskvist, 2007, 49, Tertiary Education Commission, 2012, 24).

This hands-off approach to migrant integration can be read as a part of the discursive construction of migrants in New Zealand immigration policy as ‘skilled’. In this policy discourse, the migrant is an independent, capable person rich in human and/or financial capital, competent to make his or her own decisions. Thus, despite support for multiculturalism and diversity and the appreciation of the economic contribution of migrants in official rhetoric, practical post-settlement support has been limited (Simon-Kumar, 2014, 140). The government has recently signalled a more active approach to migrant integration with the 2016 launch of the ‘New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy’, which includes specific indicators such as increased uptake of prepaid

English language tuition or increased proportion of recent migrants who vote. However, the tools used so far to implement this strategy again rely on voluntary uptake.

In contrast, in Sweden migrants are offered extensive help from the state to integrate. Integration policies in Sweden have a relatively long history, for example Sweden has been offering state-funded language courses for immigrants since the 1970s (Jacobs and Rea, 2007, 271). However, the multicultural policy established in the 1970s, which emphasised the retention of ethnic and cultural identity, was gradually replaced with integration policies with more emphasis on assimilation, in part as a response to high migrant unemployment rates in the 1990s (Joppke and Morawska, 2014, 13). The lack of language skills and the lack of familiarity with Swedish norms among immigrants were used as an explanation of labour market marginalisation of immigrants (Rosén and Bagga-Gupta, 2013, 77). Subsequently, new integration policies emphasise acquiring skills which enable the migrant to be self-sufficient in Swedish society (Joppke and Morawska, 2014, 14). The current integration programme, which offers language classes and courses on Swedish society, is compulsory for migrants who receive social assistance; non-participation can result in benefit cuts (Jacobs and Rea, 2007, 271).

Carlson (2007, 129-30) comments that in the curriculum of courses on Swedish society for immigrants, immigrants are often described in terms of deficiencies and some of the textbooks that are used may contribute to the stigmatisation and marginalisation of those who are not in paid employment. The content on Swedish society in these courses is very rudimentary (e.g., ‘How does it work when one buys something?’ (Carlson, 2007, 131)) and based on the assumption that immigrants are uneducated or under-educated, even though empirical evidence shows otherwise (Hill, 1990, 300). This deficit discourse became less prominent after 2000, when the emphasis in the curriculum shifted to skills rather than to understanding of society. However, along with this increased focus on employment, the topics of democracy, equality and empowerment have been marginalised (Rosén and Bagga-Gupta, 2013, 81). This policy shift to measuring integration by paid employment also changed how the adult language programme for immigrants is delivered (Hill, 1990, 295). The delivery of many courses shifted to Employment Services agencies, to which immigrants are referred for training five times as often as native Swedes (Hill, 1990, 295). Adult education at such employment training centres is structured to function like a workplace, where the payment for attendance can be docked if the student is late (Hill, 1990, 306). Rosén and Bagga-

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Gupta (2013, 82) argue that ‘the establishment ... of a tailored education for a specific target group [immigrants] raises issues regarding language and also identity (national and political), inclusion and exclusion.’

This politics of inclusion and exclusion of migrants is also reflected in voting rights. In New Zealand, migrants gain the right to vote in national and local elections after one year of residency, and do not have to be New Zealand citizens to vote as long as they have a permanent residence visa. In Sweden, voting in national elections requires citizenship. The time it takes to obtain citizenship depends on a migrant’s country of origin: 5 years for citizens of non-Nordic countries and 3 years for citizens of Nordic countries (Bevelander, 2015, 64). However, the waiting time can be as long as 8 years for those who arrived as refugees from countries which do not issue identity documents that are accepted by the Swedish authorities (for example, Somalia). Also, dual citizenship (which is allowed for New Zealand citizens) was prohibited in Sweden until 2001 (Bevelander, 2015, 64). In Sweden, the rules are different for local elections: non-citizen residents have the right to vote and run in local elections after three years of residence (Dancygier et al., 2015, 708-9). Although this right was progressive at the time it was introduced in 1975, today the ability to vote in local, but not national elections is perceived as some as ‘almost an insult’, according to an election official interviewed by Seidle (2015, 33). This comment points to the potential role of franchise requirements in how ‘wanted’ at the voting booth migrants feel; feeling not wanted could be an emotional cost.60

The migration and integration policies in both countries are so different that we could expect very different outcomes in terms of the barriers to voting that migrants experience in both countries, if these barriers are linked to migrant characteristics. On the other hand, if both the electoral administrative procedures and the barriers experienced by migrants are similar, this would support an argument that election administration institutions play a decisive role in these barriers. Because one of the aspects of marginalisation and stigmatisation of migrants in Sweden is residential segregation, let us compare policies related to such segregation in both countries. These policies are also linked to access to education, because both New Zealand and Sweden use a school zoning system where the place of residence is the decisive factor in school choice.

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60 Right to vote in elections to the European Parliament is outside of the scope of this thesis because migrants from within the EU (that is, from other high-income democracies) are not a group of interest in this research.
5.4. Residential patterns and education

The marginalisation of migrants in Sweden is linked to their residential segregation. ‘Migrant areas’, often located in suburban satellite towns, are stigmatised territories with a reputation for social problems; such neighbourhoods have a much higher rate of income support than found elsewhere, up to 21% compared to the 1.5% average (Schierup and Ålund, 2011, 51-2). Native Swedes tend to move out of such neighbourhoods and in some schools there are no Swedish students at all (Bunar, 2011, 150). Research shows that migrants living within such communities feel enclosed, to the extent that leaving the neighbourhood is sometimes called ‘going to Sweden’ (Bunar, 2011, 150). These areas are also stigmatised in the media which tend to focus on social problems and welfare dependency when reporting on migrant neighbourhoods (Schierup and Ålund, 2011, 53).

This ethnic segregation in Sweden has a complex policy history. Until the 1970s, relatively small differences in disposable income of households in Sweden (thanks to the comprehensive welfare state) led to limited socioeconomic residential segregation (Andersson et al., 2010, 231). Yet, the segregation of disadvantaged groups was becoming pronounced in the 1970s, especially in metropolitan areas (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 478). To remedy this, Sweden introduced ‘social mix’ policies aimed at reducing the spatial concentration of poor households (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 480). Social mix policies did not have an ethnic focus because, at that time (1960s and 1970s), the majority of migrants to Sweden were labourers who were employed and thus not perceived as a problematic group (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 482). Rather than targeting specific households or areas, the policies aimed at the equalisation of the socioeconomic composition of population in all neighbourhoods (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 480). This was implemented at municipality level by means of planning activities, mainly combining different forms of housing and tenure in existing neighbourhoods (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 482). However, the authorities generally did not demolish existing housing because it was of high-quality, there was a shortage of housing and forcing people to move would impinge on their rights to choose where they want to live. This limited the impact of the policy (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 484). Also, the social policy was built on an assumption that people want to live in diverse areas, which in retrospect was naïve (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 488).

In the 1960s, one million new dwellings were built as part of the One Million Homes Programme. In most cases, these were large housing estates in the urban periphery, with homogenous forms of building and tenure within each neighbourhood, built to house factory workers (Andersson et
al., 2010, 237). When the migration flows to Sweden increased in the 1980s and the character of migration shifted to mostly humanitarian arrivals, finding adequate housing for these migrants was a challenge, exacerbated by the 1990s recession and high unemployment rate among new migrants. A lot of the available housing was in the One Million Homes housing areas (Andersson et al., 2010, 246). The municipalities that had a lot of available housing usually were those that did not have many available jobs (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009, 486). Furthermore, the dismantling of the active housing policy in the 1990s in Sweden made it more difficult to counteract segregation (Andersson et al., 2010, 245). As a result, almost all poor neighbourhoods are immigrant dense and these neighbourhoods have experienced a gradual out-migration of people with non-refugee backgrounds (Andersson et al., 2010, 242).

The isolation of people living in these neighbourhoods, many of which are on the urban periphery, is exacerbated by the fact that many of these neighbourhoods were built according to so-called SCAF guidelines. These guidelines were meant to increase traffic safety by the separation of motorised traffic from pedestrians and cyclists by building a ring road around the neighbourhood area (Read, 2012, 22, SCAF Group, 1968). This results in a neighbourhood with no through traffic and with a definite border demarcated by the ring road (Karlgren, 1999, Read, 2012). The lack of through traffic limits the opportunities of businesses inside the neighbourhood to attract customers from other neighbourhoods. Musterd (2005, 339) comments that the Swedish case deviates from the dominant pattern of spatial segregation in Western Europe, in which it is the wealthiest groups that are isolated the most, whereas the middle classes and the poor are mixed.

The residential segregation of migrants in Sweden is interesting because it is an inadvertent consequence of several well-meaning policies. These policies were introduced within the constraints and legacies of previous policies. The state was reluctant to reject these constraints (for example, to demolish existing homes) for financial and political reasons. The resulting ethnic segregation, apart from stigmatisation of migrant neighbourhoods, may limit the contacts of the inhabitants of migrant neighbourhoods with people from outside their communities. This in turn can affect inhabitants’ access to political information that such contacts can facilitate. On the other hand, the spatial concentration of migrant population may facilitate the delivery of targeted information or mobilisation by political parties or electoral management bodies.

In New Zealand, immigration did not lead to high levels of ethnic residential segregation compared to other countries (Grbic et al., 2010, 25, Manley et al., 2015, 962). Pacific people are the most residentially segregated compared to other groups, but still have a lower level of residential segregation compared to the segregation of ethnic groups in the US (Grbic et al., 2010, 32). Some
Asian ethnic groups are spatially concentrated, but their small population size results in high probability of interaction with Europeans (Grbic et al., 2010, 32). Residential segregation in New Zealand, to the extent it occurs, is socioeconomic rather than ethnic. There is, however, another characteristic of residential patterns in New Zealand that may be relevant for this research. New Zealand has the highest rate of moving house in the Western world – an annual mobility of 19.6% compared to 9.5% in Sweden (Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit, 2015, 1). Low-income households, those living with non-kin (flatting), sole parents, Māori and those who rent (as opposed to homeowners) are more likely to move house compared to others. Systematic research on the causes of these moves is limited, but common reasons include job loss or new job, relationship separation and rent rise (Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit, 2015, 1).

In the context of this concentration of residential mobility among lower-income households, the requirement to re-enrol at each change of address may have a disparate impact on lower-income people compared to higher-income people. Because many of these moves are likely forced by stressful circumstances which require people’s attention, re-enrolling may not be a priority. Housing shortage and decreasing housing affordability has been especially acute in the fast-growing city of Auckland, where the New Zealand part of data collection took place (Egbelakin et al., 2016, 198). Data on disallowed special votes support the argument that the need to re-enrol may be a barrier to participation even for those who vote. In the 2017 General Election, 26,588 special votes were disallowed, the overwhelming majority of them (24,767) because the voter was not enrolled.61 These people were not on the electoral roll in the electorate where they cast their vote. The fact that they cast a vote suggests that they believed that they were enrolled in another electorate. That this belief was incorrect may indicate that they lost track of their enrolment or that they did not understand the enrolment requirements and processes.

The forced residential mobility in New Zealand is exacerbated by insufficient supply of social housing. New Zealand had high-quality state housing from the 1930s, however this state housing initially played a marginal role because of policies supporting home ownership, such as mortgage finance for low-income households. These policies contributed to a relatively high home ownership rate of 74% in the mid-1980s, with state housing at that time constituting 5% of dwellings (Murphy, 2004, 119). The state houses built over 50 years were dispersed across different types of neighbourhood and as a result some of them ended up in higher-socioeconomic areas. In 1991, a set of reforms shifted the government’s involvement in the housing market from

supply side interventions (providing state houses) to income support such as an accommodation supplement. This change was accompanied by introducing market rents in the state housing sector and the privatisation of the state’s residential mortgage portfolio (Murphy, 2004, 119). Some of these reforms were overturned by the Labour government in the 2000s, but at that point some of the changes were difficult to reverse, for example the stock of state housing declined by 16% between 1992 and 1999 (Murphy, 2004, 119). The shift to market rents made many state houses located in more affluent neighbourhoods unaffordable to their tenants and the sale of these houses offered attractive returns to the government-owned housing agency (Murphy, 2004, 119). This sales programme resulted in more concentration of state housing in less attractive areas and a housing shortage for those on lower incomes (Murphy, 2004, 119). In Auckland, this housing shortage has contributed to an increase in the number of homeless people.62

Residential patterns are also linked to access to schools, if there are attendance zone policies. Schools can counteract the lack of political knowledge and information among students (and potentially also their families) and lower the informational costs of voting, either by teaching a formal civics curriculum or by the general improvement in students’ verbal and cognitive skills which are important for the ability to understand political events (Nie et al., 1996, 194). Therefore, for the purpose of discussing the costs of voting, the relevant questions are: Is there a civics curriculum? Is it implemented equally in all schools? Do all students, regardless of place of residence, have access to high-quality education?

Sweden has a comprehensive syllabus of civic education for compulsory education and also for pre-schools and after-school care. The syllabus encompasses a broad range of topics such as globalisation, sustainable development, human rights and democratic processes (Lindström, 2013, 30). There is a strong emphasis on developing skills needed to participate in society, such as searching for information and assessing its credibility, giving students opportunities to participate and on developing values and attitudes such as generosity, tolerance and responsibility (Lindström, 2013, 30). Lindström (2013, 30), however, expresses doubts whether the implementation of the curriculum is of equal quality within all Swedish schools. In New Zealand, a civics curriculum exists, but its focus is on a wider range of ways to engage in one’s community and society. The content is described in general and non-committal terms, such as advising teachers to keep in mind political factors and conditions in the teaching of other subjects (Murray,

As a result, the curriculum does not require teaching specific information (such as voting) and its interpretation and implementation happens at school and classroom level (Mutch, 2002, 171). The International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS), which compares the levels of civic knowledge among students across countries, shows that in New Zealand, civic knowledge is strongly correlated with the educational and socioeconomic status of parents (Mutch, 2013, 63, Schulz et al., 2009, 43). This correlation would suggest that not all schools implement the civics curriculum equally.

Both New Zealand and Sweden have school zoning policies. For many years, Swedish attendance zone policies were rigid and this resulted in socioeconomic and ethnic segregation in schools which reflected the residential segregation (Bunar, 2010, 9). The attempt to remedy this was by deregulation of attendance policies through introducing a voucher system which gives parents a choice of school. This was combined with the introduction of so-called independent schools which can have their own pedagogical profile (Bunar, 2010, 7, 12). Yet, in many cases, the school choice reform, aimed at increasing choices for pupils from low-socioeconomic areas, in practice facilitated the flight of middle-class students who live near poor neighbourhoods to more distant schools (Andersson et al., 2010, 244).

In New Zealand, admission zones were first abolished by the National government in 1992 and then reinstated by a Labour government in 2000, with balloting for out-of-zone places (Thrupp, 2007, 1397). There are divided opinions on whether the free school market of the 1990s produced more segregation (Thrupp, 2007, 1397). Paradoxically, the return to zoning intensified the socioeconomic residential and school segregation. Because living in the zone was now the only way to guarantee admission to a popular school, prices of properties in attractive school zones increased, pushing out those who could not afford to live in the zone (Thrupp, 2007, 1400). Some high-socioeconomic schools in Auckland even employed people to knock on students’ doors in the early morning to verify that they indeed live in the zone (Thrupp, 2007, 1401). These two examples show that neither zoning nor school choice could effectively prevent school segregation. This suggests that to counteract the information costs of voting among low-income groups through the mandatory education system, there either needs to be a policy to ensure a balance in school composition or there needs to be a mandatory civics curriculum implemented consistently across all schools.

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63 This applies to the 2007 curriculum. There have been new developments in the curriculum recently, but it will take time before these changes take effect and the participants of this research were not taught the new curriculum.
The policy areas I have discussed – population data infrastructure, welfare, housing and education – are potential mediating factors for costs of voting. They also constitute the broader institutional environment in which election administration operates. These policy areas are influenced by historical and administrative legacies and also reflect the norms and values of their respective states. There is enough difference in these potential explanatory variables representing the broader institutional context to apply the MSSD comparative design. Familiarity with this context will aid in interpreting data from focus groups and understanding the effects of electoral administrative procedures. Before proceeding, the final component of the institutional structure that needs to be discussed is election administration.

5.5. Electoral management and voting

Similarly to voter registration procedures, the shape of other aspects of election administration in both countries has been influenced by history. A brief sketch of these historical influences will aid in understanding the differences between the two systems.

The relative newness and settler character of the New Zealand state turned out to be an advantage when it comes to democratisation. The lack of a traditional upper class and the settler ethos of egalitarianism contributed to early achievement of universal franchise. Property requirements were abolished in 1879 and in 1893 the right to vote was extended to women (Davidson, 1989, 36). In contrast, in Sweden, democratisation was a long struggle due to resistance from the elite and the monarch (Davidson, 1989, 76, 54, Knudsen and Rothstein, 1994, 211). Even if this struggle was peaceful compared to countries like Germany, which experienced a revolution, universal franchise was obtained only in 1921 after a series of gradual reforms (Davidson, 1989, 76, 54, Knudsen and Rothstein, 1994, 211, Tilton, 1974, 567, Zelleke, 2016, 77).

As previously discussed, in New Zealand, voting rights are granted to migrants on very liberal terms compared to most other countries, whereas in Sweden they are granted gradually and require a longer waiting time. There is, nonetheless, an aspect of franchise where New Zealand is more restrictive than Sweden, namely prisoner voting rights. Sweden does not disenfranchise prisoners whereas New Zealand disenfranchises prisoners serving sentences longer than 3 years. The disqualification takes place by removal of the name of the prisoner from the electoral roll,

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64 Exceptions are migrants from the European Union and Nordic countries, but these countries are high-income democracies whereas this research focuses on migrants who come from countries other than high-income democracies.
which means that the prisoner must re-enrol upon leaving prison (Geddis, 2011, 448). Prisoner disenfranchisement constructs voting as a privilege that individuals must deserve by respecting societal norms (Geddis, 2011, 447). This may, similarly to the case of migrant voting rights, make some enfranchised voters feel that the group they identify with is not welcome at the polling booth.

The process of voting in both countries is similar in its mechanics but regulated to a much greater extent in New Zealand. There are fines for not informing the election administration of a change of residency within 2 months ($50 and $100 for any subsequent conviction). Election officials are not permitted to communicate with voters in the polling place except for what is explicitly allowed, such as questions necessary to identify the voter. These regulations are not enforced, but they express a strict approach to election regulation in New Zealand. This approach is rooted in a history of widespread fraud in early New Zealand elections (before universal franchise) which was often also accompanied by disorder and excessive alcohol consumption (Atkinson, 2003, 29). Such fraud was widespread in Sweden too, but the two countries approached the eradication of electoral fraud in different ways. Teorell (2011, 3,24) argues that, in Sweden, fraud was eradicated by the introduction of a professional and non-politicised bureaucracy, rather than by changes in electoral procedures. Changes in electoral procedures were however the focus of New Zealand attempts to curb fraud and disorder (Atkinson, 2003, 40-2). These attempts resulted in the Regulation of Elections Act 1870. Many provisions from this Act are still in effect, carried over through subsequent versions of electoral legislation to the current Electoral Act 1993.

These provisions include, among others, anti-electioneering prohibitions and restrictions on photography in polling places. Swedish regulations are less strict and Sweden has no ban on taking photos, audio-recording or filming in polling stations, as long as voting secrecy is preserved (Valmyndigheten, 2015, 23). The anti-fraud measures in New Zealand election legislation could be considered an example of institutional drift, because some of these provisions, designed before the advent of the Internet and social media, resulted in controversies when they were applied to contemporary contexts. For example, during the advance voting period in the 2014 election in New Zealand, sharing so-called voting booth selfies on social media became popular among younger voters. The Electoral Commission promptly prohibited taking voting booth selfies by

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65 In New Zealand, campaigning on Election Day is a criminal offence. The definition of campaigning is broad and includes, among others, wearing T-shirts and flags featuring party or candidate names, emblems, slogans or logos.

66 Voting booth selfies are photos of the voter taken by him- or herself with a mobile phone inside the voting booth.
applying a broad interpretation to the prohibition on making a copy or imitation of voting papers. This decision, as we will see in qualitative data, was met with disappointment by some young people who saw this as limiting their freedom to celebrate elections in their own way. Another case of a clash between electoral regulations and public opinion was prompted by a parody song ‘Planet Key’. The song was placed under a gag order by the Electoral Commission during the 2014 election campaign, because the commission classified it as an election programme and it did not have the required authorised promoter statement. The ruling in a subsequent court case (in favour of the authors of the song), 76 pages long, illustrates the complexity of New Zealand anti-electioneering laws and the challenges of applying them in the modern context.

A peculiarity of the Swedish voting process is the envelope system. Ballot papers are printed separately for each party, so to preserve secrecy of the vote, voters are issued envelopes. The voter is expected to take ballots of multiple parties from the public area and put their ballots into the official vote envelope behind the screen, but not all voters find this comfortable or sufficient for privacy (Sveriges Radio, 2015, Valmyndigheten, 2015, 20). Because many elections combine more than one election (for example, national and local), there may be different envelopes issued to the same voter so that she or he can vote in different types of elections. Also, not only does each party have its separate ballot paper, but ballot papers for one party come in different versions, such as a version with the full candidate list or party vote only. The amount of paper can be confusing and makes the system prone to mistakes, despite colour-coding the ballots for different levels of elections. The front-line election officials interviewed in Sweden said that many ballot papers are thin and as a result some voters put more than one ballot paper into an envelope by mistake. As per the Swedish Elections Act 2005, such a vote remains valid as long as the multiple ballot papers are for the same party or candidate (Valmyndigheten, 2015, 30). Nonetheless, election officials I interviewed reported situations in which people would come to them with a ballot paper and an open envelope, asking for help. The legislation states that such votes which do not satisfy the requirements may not be received, but in practice poll workers help voters with envelope stuffing when the voter’s intention is clear.

The history of this system lies in the slow and gradual transition from public voting in elections to the Diet of Estates during the 18th century to a secret vote. While New Zealand adopted the secret ballot early, in 1870, it was not until 1911 in Sweden that law mandated privacy screens in voting

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67 ‘Planet Key’ was authored by singer-songwriter Darren Watson and video producer Jeremy Jones.

booths (Teorell et al., 2017, 538). For a long time after this change, parties printed their own ballot papers in whatever colour and shape they chose and were not able to come to an agreement on standardising them. It was only in 1970 that the state started printing standardised ballot papers and envelopes (Teorell et al., 2017, 538). The state prints and distributes ballots for free for parties which have received at least 1% of vote in the last election. Nonetheless, in Sweden, parties are still allowed to distribute their ballot papers outside polling stations. Teorell et al. (2017, 539) argues that Sweden still does not have a fully secret ballot. The Swedish voting system allows voters to prove how they voted to someone they want to know, by taking only a ballot paper or papers for one party from the public area.

In contrast, in New Zealand voting places, based on the interviews, rules are followed more strictly (but the process of voting is not prone to problems such as in Sweden). The printing of separate ballot papers for different parties in Sweden was assessed by some Swedish election officials as wasteful, environmentally unfriendly and creating a mess. However, this multitude of ballot papers arguably increases the visibility of the election, as unused ballot papers can be taken out of the polling booth and discarded outside. The stand with many ballot papers inside the voting place is also a better symbolic representation of choice than a uniform ballot.

Against the background of these differences, much of the process of voting is, as noted above, very similar. Enrolled voters are sent a voting card before the election, which they can but do not have to bring to the voting place. New Zealand does not require identification from voters, other than stating their name and address. In Sweden, the voting card can act as identification; if the voter does not have it, election officials may but do not have to request another form of identification (Valmyndigheten, 2015, 12). In New Zealand, voting in any place in the country is available by the means of a special vote. In Sweden, voting in any place in the country is possible through the early voting system which remains available on Election Day (traditionally, voters needed to vote at a designated voting place; these designated places are still available on Election Day). In both countries, Election Day is on a non-working day, Sunday in Sweden, Saturday in New Zealand (Öhrvall, 2016, 231). There is no mandatory voting and no major parties propose introducing it (Öhrvall, 2016, 232). Both countries have experienced growth in advance voting, which became more accessible in Sweden from 2006 and in New Zealand from 2010.\footnote{In New Zealand, The Electoral (Finance Reform and Advance Voting) Amendment Act 2010 extended access to advance voting by removing the requirement for written justification. In Sweden, the responsibility for advance voting was transferred to municipalities which enabled voting places to be located in high-traffic public buildings.} There is a similar advance voting period (18 days in Sweden, 15 days in New Zealand), during which voters
can vote at any of the early voting places in the country. These early voting places are mostly located in high-traffic, visible locations such as libraries. Both countries have a relatively high early voting rate of over 29% of the total vote in New Zealand and over 40% in Sweden in the respective 2014 General Elections.\(^{70}\) In New Zealand, the popularity of early voting led to questioning the relevance of anti-electioneering laws and the lack of Election Day enrolment, because it became possible to enrol and vote on the same day, or to campaign on a day when voting takes place, with the exception of Election Day (Barnett, 2015, Geddis, 2015, New Zealand Electoral Commission, 2015, 52, New Zealand National Party, 2015).

Although the administrative structure of election administration in both countries differs, these differences are not reflected in voters’ experience of voting, which is my focus. In New Zealand, election administration is centralised and the Electoral Commission has oversight over the implementation of elections in all electorates. In Sweden, election administration is decentralised, but unlike in the US, the legal framework (such as how voter enrolment is implemented) is unified across the country and decentralisation applies to practical aspects of elections, such as procurement of polling places. The three levels of election administration in Sweden – national, county and municipal - are not arranged into a hierarchy and each of them has its own responsibilities (López-Pintor, 2000, 57, OSCE/ODIHR, 28 July 2010, 5). Such a structure is not unusual in Sweden, which is sometimes called a ‘decentralised unitary state’ (Lindström, 2016, 365).\(^{71}\)

The two countries have different rules for funding political parties. This difference may be important for parties’ capacity to ameliorate some of the costs of voting. Such amelioration can take place by providing information to voters or by a range of voter mobilisation activities which research shows have an effect on voters’ likelihood of voting (Green and Gerber, 2015). In Sweden, financing from the state is a major source of party income for parties that are in parliament (most assistance is paid in proportion to the number of seats won by a party, some funds are paid on a per party basis). These funds can be used at a party's discretion. There is no restriction on the source or amount of private funding such as, for example, membership fees, donations, publications or income from property and there is no mandatory reporting of this income (but

\(^{70}\) In Sweden, many early voting places remain open on Election Day. Therefore, the early voting rate in Sweden is inflated when compared to early voting defined as 'before Election Day' (as it is defined in New Zealand), because the Swedish early vote rate includes votes cast on Election Day in these 'early voting' locations.

\(^{71}\) Central ministries in Sweden are relatively small and often do just policy formulation and planning (Peters, 2001, 147). Municipalities have independent taxation rights and provide key services such as education and social assistance (Dancygier et al., 2015, 709).
many parties publish their accounts anyway). Regulation of campaign spending is minimal and there is no campaign spending limit (OSCE/ODIHR, 28 July 2010, 8-9). In New Zealand, financing from the state is limited and much of it is in-kind (such as broadcasting allocations for election campaigns), so private donations and membership fees are a major source of parties’ income (Geddis, 2001, 595). There is no limit on the amount of donations, but New Zealand has several restrictions on electoral spending which aim to prevent corruption and increase political equality. These restrictions apply to candidates, parties and third parties; many of these restrictions have been carried over from the Corrupt Practices Prevention Act 1881 and reflect the strict approach to curbing 19th-century corrupt practices (Geddis, 2001, 578). Geddis (2001, 576) comments that these restrictions, combined with the cap on campaign spending, may limit parties’ demand for money. The legislation is unclear on the status of activities such as issue advocacy which may also have an effect of encouraging voting for a candidate or party (Geddis, 2001, 583). This lack of clarity may result in parties limiting such activities because they try to avoid a court case. Overall, political parties in Sweden have greater capacity, financially and legally, to campaign and conduct other activities aimed at increasing their vote rate compared to New Zealand.

In the interviews with election officials in both countries, the greatest difference was the frequency and content of citing norms, principles and culture in support of or as an explanation of the existing arrangements. In New Zealand, employees of the Electoral Commission talked about freedom, personal responsibility and symbolic value as justifications for some of the procedures. For example, the strict anti-electioneering restrictions on Election Day have been framed by one interviewee as ‘part of the Kiwi psyche’ and linked, paradoxically, to freedom:

It’s got to do with notions of freedom, in a way. It has to do with the notions ‘I’ve got the freedom to make my choice, I’m not going to be harangued, at least today, and I’ve got the ability to wait until today’. (New Zealand, Official 1)

Automatically enrolling people, or fining them for non-enrolment, would too ‘not fit in very well with that culture’ of personal motivation and freedom. In Sweden, values that were mentioned included honesty, integrity and trust that people’s actions will make the system work, even if the system is imperfect. Poll workers were willing to go against the formal rules if this helped the voters cast a valid vote.

In conclusion, although the process of casting a vote is similar in both countries, there are several differences in the institutional legacies and contemporary arrangements of New Zealand and Sweden. This variation will aid in my analysis because it can highlight how institutional constraints shape the choices of election administrators and voters, and whether similar electoral
administrative procedures produce similar costs of voting when embedded in different institutional and cultural contexts.

Table 4. The institutional context of election administration in New Zealand and Sweden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voter enrolment</strong></td>
<td>(-) Bottom-top institutional development, administrative fragmentation and privacy attitudes hinder the implementation of automatic voter enrolment</td>
<td>(+) Top-bottom institutional development, long-established administrative structures and public acceptance of data sharing enable automatic voter enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare state</strong></td>
<td>(-) Invasive and stigmatising policies</td>
<td>(+) Universalist policies for those connected to the labour market (-) Invasive and stigmatising policies targeted toward those not connected to the labour market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migration</strong></td>
<td>(+) Skilled migration framed in policy as a benefit for the country (-) Limited, opt-in integration programmes (+) Low migrant unemployment</td>
<td>(-) Humanitarian migration framed as a burden for the country (+) Well developed integration programmes, but (-) critiqued as stigmatising (-) High migrant unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential patterns</strong></td>
<td>(+) Almost no ethnic segregation (-) Socioeconomic segregation (-) Limited protection of tenure for renters contributes to high residential mobility</td>
<td>(-) Ethnic segregation (+) Access to stable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic education</strong></td>
<td>(-) No mandatory curriculum</td>
<td>(+) Curriculum implemented across all stages of compulsory education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Election administration</strong></td>
<td>(-) Restrictive regulations of self-expression and campaigning (-) Limits on party spending</td>
<td>(-) Complexity of ballot papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 above summarises the main features of the institutional environment in both countries, which could be expected to facilitate (+) or inhibit (-) voter turnout. In the next chapter, these expectations will be tested against qualitative data.

**Chapter 6: Voters’ voices (1): the practical costs: time, information and disruption**

*The survey ... found that 46 per cent [of New Zealanders] skip breakfast at least once a week and almost a third of breakfast skippers do it up to three*
How, then, do voters in both countries experience the cost of voting and barriers to voting? In analysing focus group material, I looked at two distinct groups of themes. The first group of themes contains the costs of voting. Here, I am asking if the costs of voting as understood and experienced by voters fit into the framework suggested by literature, which includes time, information, disruption, risks and emotional costs. Are any of these costs more important or more prominent in participants’ narratives? The second group of themes discusses institutions. This includes the procedures of election administration like voter enrolment, but also the broader institutional environment, for example the welfare state, housing and migration policies. The interview guide (Appendix A) included direct questions about the costs of voting and the procedures of election administration, but no questions about these overarching institutions which constitute the context in which election administration is implemented. Therefore, what participants said about institutions other than electoral administrative procedures was unprompted; sometimes it was indirect. The questions I am asking in this category of themes are: what institutions exacerbate or ameliorate costs of voting, which costs of voting and by what mechanism? In presenting focus group data, I aim for authenticity, which is one of the criteria Fossey et al. (2002, 723) suggest to indicate the quality of qualitative research. To this end, I present a lot of direct quotes from participants to bring out their perspectives, side by side with my commentary and interpretation.

Before I proceed, I will briefly comment on the participants recruited as a result of the process laid out in Chapter 4. My aim was to provide richness of perspectives and at the same time to purposively sample several participants who are likely to experience intersecting or exceptional barriers to voting. I have achieved this aim. Only some of the diversity of participants’ backgrounds

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is captured in demographic information on participants listed in Appendix A. The description that follows aims to paint a more complete picture of participants.

In New Zealand, a significant proportion of participants belonged to the two Auckland City Mission groups. These participants, recruited from people coming to the free meal offered by the Mission, had diverse backgrounds and a variety of reasons for using the Mission’s services. Not all of them were homeless in the sense of sleeping rough on the streets, but very high levels of residential mobility were common in these two focus groups, as well as (mentioned in focus groups) debts, contact with the welfare system and, in some cases, temporary or casual employment. As such, these two groups provide the best approximation of ‘extreme sample’ where intersecting barriers to voting are likely to be present. These groups were a rich source of information on relative importance of different costs. I feel compelled to mention that it was confronting and depressing to see people who cared about the direction the country is going, and who were able to articulate complex opinions, experiencing such material need.

The Unitec focus group, recruited from students of Social Practice, included young people as well as people who were mature students with experience and knowledge of the context of low-socioeconomic communities. These participants could contribute not just their own perspectives but also observations about prevailing attitudes in communities they were familiar with from their own life or from their community work. Young people were scattered across all focus groups and the University of Auckland group was the only group composed exclusively of young people. However, groups with diversity in age generated more interesting material on costs of voting faced by young people because, in these groups, young people frequently commented on or challenged what older participants said.

I achieved considerable diversity among migrant focus groups in New Zealand. The group composed of former refugees from one community asked to not be identified by ethnicity, because there are very few people of this ethnicity in New Zealand and participants were afraid that their anonymity would be compromised. Of course I agreed to add this extra layer of confidentiality. This former refugee group included people of high status within their community who were able to inform on prevailing attitudes in their community. In contrast, the other ethnically homogenous migrant group in New Zealand, the Mexican group recruited via a Mexican community event, was very diverse with regard to participants’ time in New Zealand, employment and networks they had access to. Thanks to differences in experiences and attitudes, animated discussion ensued about some aspects of voting. The group I call Asian Professionals was not typical because it included participants with high-socioeconomic status, such as an accountant, a
successful business owner and a corporate lawyer. This group of participants was very valuable in identifying what barriers to voting experienced by migrants may not be ameliorated by high-socioeconomic status. Finally, the two migrant groups recruited through language schools represented the diversity of migrants in New Zealand, with participants from a broad range of countries. Participants in the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) group had a high level of English ability and welcomed the focus group as an opportunity to practise the language in a real situation. The other language school group had an average level of English ability and participants generally did not elaborate on their statements as much, often limiting their input to agreeing (or not) with something one of them said. For this reason, this group is not cited as frequently as other migrant groups.

In Sweden, focus groups were on average smaller than those in New Zealand (Appendix A). This resulted in part from participant preferences for smaller groups. Another factor contributing to the smaller size of Swedish groups was my limited time in Sweden. However, these smaller numbers were balanced out by longer and, in some cases, more in-depth discussions, resulting in a similar amount of material in terms of volume of text. Reflecting the difference in social welfare between the two countries, there was no focus group in Sweden that would mirror the Auckland City Mission groups in terms of economic disadvantage. When I inquired about recruiting participants who received help from a similar charity, I was dissuaded by a volunteer who explained that charity recipients would be ‘very difficult to talk to’ due to the mental health issues and drug additions they struggle with. In other words, only people who could be described as low-functioning were homeless.

The non-migrant focus groups in Sweden included a high proportion of young people. This was a result of purposive recruitment and a decision to focus on the ‘young’ characteristic to a greater degree than the ‘low-socioeconomic’ characteristic which in Sweden did not reflect a level of material deprivation similar to that in New Zealand. Many of the young participants were in study, or volunteering while looking for a job. Several participants, but not all, lived in neighbourhoods described by them as lower socioeconomic status. However, the themes of economic deprivation or economic exclusion were almost entirely absent from their narratives. This absence was valuable because it facilitated highlighting factors related to voting among young people who were not influenced by access to material resources. The four non-migrant focus groups are named after the locations where they took place: Linkoping University (Li.U), Linkoping, Municipality and Red Cross. In the latter group, composed of Red Cross volunteers who worked with immigrants, participants discussed at length their perceptions of barriers to voting among
migrant communities. These perceptions mirrored much of what was said in migrant focus groups, but I decided to rather quote migrants who spoke about their own experience.

Participants from migrant focus groups in Sweden were representative of economic disadvantage in relative rather than absolute terms. Almost all migrant participants had an experience of prolonged unemployment, except for those who were still in study and those who have been in Sweden the longest (in excess of 20 years). In focus groups, they spoke at length about their exclusion from the labour market. Yet, several migrant participants commented that the welfare state provides for their basic material needs well. The focus group labelled ‘ABF’, from the abbreviation of the community organisation where the focus group took place, was composed of migrants from different countries representative of the major sources of humanitarian immigration – Syria, Somalia and Iraq. Many of the participants were leaders within the communities and were engaged in assisting their communities in a variety of ways. For example, one participant who had been in Sweden for many years and was fluent in Swedish told me that he received a large number of requests from his community to help with translating documents or explaining processes. The resulting awareness of the lack of integration among those who arrived a few years after him was a motivation to engage in organisations like ABF and also in politics to try to help his community. The group labelled ‘Café’ (also descriptive of location) was similarly diverse. Some participants preferred to be interviewed one on one, sometimes in addition to talking in a group. These individual interviews, which were initially not planned, provided rich descriptions of personal stories and feelings, which balances out the lack of in-group interaction for this part of data collection. Finally, the Norrkoping focus group was composed of Syrian former refugees who were also university students. Their university education and the critical perspective acquired during their studies contributed to their awareness of the exclusion and discrimination experienced by their communities.

Overall, the composition of migrant focus groups in Sweden reflects that migration to Sweden (excluding EU citizens) in the last three decades has been predominantly humanitarian: only two migrant participants were economic migrants, both of them women in a relationship with Swedes. Refugee participants were predominantly male, also reflecting the demographics of communities they were recruited from.

The groups of participants in both countries were diverse and informed enough to provide the richness of information and opinion I was looking for. Focus groups in New Zealand and in Sweden are not symmetrical in terms of numbers of focus groups and participants’ personal and socioeconomic backgrounds, but symmetry was never my goal. In the light of the different
institutional and demographic context in both countries, laid out in the previous chapter, it is natural and methodologically appropriate for participants in each country to reflect the different situations of the young, low-socioeconomic and migrant people in New Zealand and Sweden.

6.1. Too busy to vote?

Time, as we have seen, is one of the most researched costs of voting and also a target of many convenience voting solutions, such as early voting. Participants’ narratives reflect to a degree the importance literature puts on time as a cost of voting. However, the understanding of time costs that emerges from focus group data differs from what is typically emphasised in academic literature. Most of the research on time as a cost of voting focuses on the time spent travelling to the voting place and waiting in queue or time spent on bureaucratic procedures related to voting, such as registration (Gimpel et al., 2006, Gimpel and Schuknecht, 2003, Hershey, 2009, 90, Rosenstone and Hansen, 1996, 135, Stewart, 2013). Yet, the availability of physical voting facilities, the distance to them and the time spent in them (hypotheses H2, H3 and H4) were not raised as a problem at all by participants. In fact, some participants, especially in New Zealand, praised the density and accessibility of voting places and the efficiency of the voting process once they entered the polling place. Some participants even expressed surprise at the question about problems with physical voting facilities. Advance voting (hypothesis H1) received a lukewarm reception among participants, who acknowledged that it may help other people (for example who travel overseas), but did not feel that it helps them. More surprisingly, some participants offered arguments for why voting on one day is better than a long early voting period. These arguments followed the reasoning of Burden et al. (2014) that a protracted early voting period detracts from the visibility and mobilisation of Election Day.

So that everybody does it on one day so it doesn’t get dragged along... Yeah, it needs to be done straight away, cause the only way things get done is straight away [New Zealand, City Mission 2, Pacific young male (1)].

The lack of time that participants felt interferes with their political participation was not an absolute lack of time to go to the polling place on Election Day. It was a general lack of time in

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73 The codes for quoted focus group participants include country, name of focus group (as listed in Appendix A), information whether participant is young, Māori or Pacific or immigrant, participant’s sex and a number in brackets to differentiate between participants from the same focus group who share the same other characteristics. For example, [New Zealand, City Mission 1, young Māori male (1)] and [New Zealand, City Mission 1, young Māori male (2)] are two different young Māori males from the same focus group.
their life due to economic pressures, such as working long hours, working multiple part-time jobs, spending a lot of time searching for the next temporary job or, in the case of some refugees, the fate of the family left behind. This focus on survival or dealing with the unpredictability of life can be so all-consuming that thinking about something else, like politics, is difficult. The first years after immigration were described as especially taxing on immigrants’ time and attention:

*When I came to Sweden, the first years I was not into politics at all, I was just fighting for my life, I was really having a lot of things to think about, which were not politics* [Sweden, Linkoping, young immigrant female (1)].

*We Asians are very hard-working, we have our job, our friends, our family... we just sort of put other things ahead of that, you know, there’s always something better to do rather than voting ... for example the dad is a taxi driver, he would leave at 5.30 in the morning and sometimes would come back at seven o’clock, he’s busy* [New Zealand, Asian Professionals, young immigrant female (1)].

*It’s difficult for immigrants to pay attention without the focus. Because at many times you are thinking about your family in Syria, are they alive, what’s happening, will I ever see them again... so migrants have a different focus* [Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (1)].

Non-immigrant participants from low-socioeconomic backgrounds in New Zealand did not frame their lack of time in terms of survival. Rather, it was the chaos and unpredictability of their lives that sucked up attention and made planning difficult. Some of the participants’ comments reflected how new work patterns restrict the control of people over their time and make planning more difficult (Marcil-Gratton et al., 2006, 61, Pyper and Dar, 2015, 23, Wattenberg, 2002, 61). This made it difficult to redirect attention not just to voting, but also filling out the enrolment form:

*You have work, then you don’t have work and then, er, yeah, family, kids in the way... on the day of the voting sometimes it is just not a priority* [New Zealand, City Mission 1, Māori male (1)].

*Busy with trying to make money, trying to go to work. That’s what they [inaudible] these days. No-one wants to sit down and fill in forms for a few minutes* [New Zealand, City Mission 2, Māori male (2)].

*The older generation, they obviously have that time and they actually put aside a certain amount of time for voting, but we don’t do that. We actually mostly, most of us, we just go along with life, if it comes across we make it, if not, that’s it. We forget about it.* [City Mission 2, young Pacific male (1)].

This participant was not the only one who mentioned forgetting about voting:

*But that’s happened to me, that’s why I say. Because I say ‘oh, next day’. ‘Oh, next day’. Next day. And then I forgot about it* [New Zealand, MIT, Pacific female (1)].
In another New Zealand focus group, a participant [Unitec, Pacific female (1)] reflected that thinking about voting requires stepping back and ‘looking at the bigger picture of things’. This is difficult among preoccupation with ‘living week to week’. It is not surprising that early voting does little for voters who face this problem of their attention being consumed by the necessities of life and it is hard to think of any procedural changes that would solve this issue. It is factors external to election administration, such as the average numbers of hours worked weekly or the poverty rate, that would need to be changed (non-immigrants’ reports of lack of time were concentrated among the most disadvantaged). Conspicuous was the silence about a lack of time among non-immigrant Swedish participants, who clearly did not feel under time pressure. One of them commented that the attention of some young people can be taken over by video games and social media, leaving limited time and attention for the ‘real world’ [Linkoping, young male (2)]. Nevertheless, being able to spend too much time online implies control over one’s time, in contrast to the lack of control reported by migrant participants in both countries and low-socioeconomic participants in New Zealand.

There was one instance where the waiting time mattered: the time it takes to get voting rights for migrants in Sweden. This time was not an issue in New Zealand, where permanent residents receive voting rights in all levels of elections after one year of residence. In Sweden, for refugees from countries where the government has broken down, such as Somalia, the process of gaining citizenship can take up to 8 years due to the inability of many refugees to provide required documents. Some participants complained that this is too long and, by the time such people can vote, some of them will have lost the initial interest and will have forgotten what they have learned about voting in introductory classes:

[Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (2)]: You have to have Swedish citizenship to vote to Riksdag, the national ones [elections]. And that of course is a factor that interrupts the process. Because sometimes that can take a long time.

[Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (3)]: it takes a long time. For someone of Somali nationality to get Swedish citizenship it will take a long time. Somali community takes about 8 years. So I will wait 8 years and I will forget everything [Sweden, ABF].

A lot of participants’ comments about the cost of time overlapped with or could be also interpreted as disruption costs. Disruption is here understood as an interruption to a routine (Brady and McNulty 2004, 1, Brady and McNulty, 2011, 127-8). For example, many participants, especially younger participants in New Zealand, expressed support for online voting. But the main utility of online voting, as seen by these participants, was not that it would save time but that it
would minimise the interruption to their daily life. Online voting, according to participants, could be easily bundled with other common online tasks like banking and easy for people with small kids to look after because it would not require packing up to leave the house.

[New Zealand, Mexicans, immigrant male (1)]: Have you done anything online, like er paying your taxes or doing the rego [car registration] online, it would be like that. Then you just click and you say it to confirm. You click it and your vote is ... it’s in the system. I think it would be just like that.

[New Zealand, Mexicans, immigrant young female (2)]: Yes. We do everything online now. Our taxes, phone transfers, why voting should be different.

Apart from online voting, two participants in New Zealand also mentioned supermarkets as a place where voting would be easy and accessible.

At the supermarket. Because everybody goes to the supermarket, right? Like a place where everybody goes. [New Zealand, City Mission 2, female (3)].

So maybe somewhere like a supermarket, somewhere easier, accessible would be more ideal. Like just who doesn’t go to a supermarket? [New Zealand, Unitec, young Pacific female (2)].

The above comments fit well with the approach adopted by Larocca and Klemanski (2011, 77) who measure disruption by tasks and trips required of voters. Many participants were annoyed by tasks or trips that were above what they expected or beyond what they thought was the possible minimum. Voter enrolment in New Zealand was pointed to by many New Zealand participants as especially problematic in this light. There were no complaints that enrolling takes too much time, but nonetheless it was for some a perplexing barrier on their way to ‘getting to the point’, that is voting:

cause the younger the people are the less they are interested in looking at forms, so they usually want to get down to the point so as long as they know the politician they know straight away yeah I would vote for him. But when they see the form they’ll be like oh, what is this all about? [New Zealand, City Mission 2, young male (4)].

One participant who has ‘not received my voting forms for so many years, because I move from place to place’ wondered why the government does not keep an electronic database and use email addresses to keep in touch with people:

But I’m just thinking if for example you have someone on your list, it was a valid email address, it does not matter how often this person moves around. They will always receive the actual voting form, but if you send everything by paper form, that means chances are like, for example, in my case, I just lost touch because .... So I think it’s gonna be easier if the government, you know, can make everything online [New Zealand, Asian Professionals, immigrant female (2)].
In the two Auckland City Mission groups, many participants did not have a stable housing situation and this made it difficult to keep up with staying enrolled:

*So I shifted around, too many times... wasn’t able to keep the mail* [New Zealand, City Mission 1, Māori male (2)].

Swedish participants reported too that they or people they know may give up on voting if it requires too many extra tasks. For example, according to one participant, the voting card and information about the location of voting places is sent out too early and many people throw it away or lose it before Election Day. When Election Day comes, looking for this information is more than some voters are willing to do:

*It’s a couple of schools so people don’t know is it there or there or there, which school should I… it’s not obvious. And therefore if people think oh no, it’s complicated, it’s better to not do anything…* [Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (3)].

Overall, time in participants’ comments was more often discussed in a global perspective of their entire lives rather than in the local perspective of a trip to the polling place. Participants pointed to the busyness of their day-to-day lives and the long wait for the right to vote, not the queues in the voting place, as barriers to voting. This emphasis is consistent with the sociological institutionalist approach which advocates for investigating contact with government agencies in the context of citizens’ entire lives. My data suggest that such a global perspective indeed reflects how voters experience barriers to voting. Therefore, when constructing the composite indicator of the costs of voting, I will aim to include variables that capture the lack of time in voters’ lives rather than time spent on the act of voting.

These data also suggest that disruption should not be treated as a standalone cost of voting but rather as an amplifier of other costs to which it is linked. For example, voting takes time, but this time may be felt as more of a burden if it is combined with disruption. An example of such disruption is having to go to an unfamiliar place, as opposed to going to a familiar place or not leaving home. Participants’ remarks about disruption costs support the hypothesis that the costs of voting are reduced by reducing the number of steps one needs to take in order to vote, such as voter enrolment or obtaining identification. Each such step increases the total disruption to voters’ lives. Data also support the hypothesis that the costs of voting are reduced by voting facilities located in places the voter planned to be in regardless of the election. Disruption acts as an amplifier not only of time costs. The cost that seems to be especially sensitive to this disruption amplifier is the cost of information.
6.2. Information, lack of information and misinformation

The lack of knowledge about politics was the most mentioned barrier to voting across all groups of participants. However, the distribution of gaps in knowledge differed. Among young New Zealand participants, the most discussed informational cost was learning ‘how the system works’ and how politics translates into everyday experience (as predicted by Berinsky (2005)). One young New Zealander summed it up in the following way:

*I don’t really know how big politics ... like how big a role it played in my life, until I came to uni I think. ... at uni, and was like, oh my gosh, that affected that, that affected that, that affected that, that affected me. Like you know, and I think that knowledge is just not out there* [New Zealand, Unitec, young Pacific female (3)].

Such lack of information was also reported by some migrant participants:

*And the information I mean, maybe I did misunderstand... I did not mean the information about who [is] good ... I mean the information about the system, how the system works* [New Zealand, MIT, immigrant female (2)].

However, among immigrant participants in both countries, self-reported lack of knowledge was not limited to how the system works. The lack of information extended to voting procedures and party policies. This lack of knowledge was reported even by migrants who have been in the host country for several years and could be otherwise described as well-integrated:

*I understand the culture, social culture and stuff... but politics and what government’s purpose is, we’re still not fully aware of. So without fully understanding each party and what they’re standing for, it makes it very difficult for us to vote* [New Zealand, Asian Professionals, female (2)].

*I have been New Zealand around ... six or seven years and ... I don’t know anything about it. Vote... the [enrolment] form...* [New Zealand, Language School, immigrant female (1)].

*it’s not obvious, it’s not easy to do it. You have to do it in some way, some special way and when you come to the voting local [place], you have to behave in some special way too and that’s also, if you have not the language, is not easy. That’s why people think ‘I don’t know what to do when I’m there, I’m not so good in Swedish, so better to not do anything’* [Sweden, Café, immigrant male (1)].

Participants who reported a lack of knowledge knew that all information can be found online, but studying it on their own was difficult and unattractive to them.

*I know that it is possible to find the party declarations with the party programmes of the parties and I could study what they all actually want. But I don’t do this* [Sweden, Linkoping, young male (2)].
Because it’s such a... actually complex subject, like it’s not easy to just know or research about it. Like I still find it kind of hard to like kind of difficult to understand even though I’ve gone to the information evening and even I tried to read up [New Zealand, Unitec, young Pacific female (3)].

Participants’ preferred ways of learning about politics were non-disruptive: integrated with what they already had to do or wanted to do. Such non-disruptive channels of information include the mandatory education system, everyday interactions with people in one’s social and professional circle and the ‘media flow’. Apart from channels of delivery, participants also spoke about the content of information and the way it is framed (for example, what language is used). For several participants, there was a mismatch between their needs and the flows of political information offered by their environment. However, some participants also offered positive examples of how political information has been delivered to them, lowering the costs of information for them. The majority of such positive examples are linked to the mandatory education system. Among Swedish participants, none of the young participants born and educated in Sweden reported any problems with understanding politics. The majority of these participants pointed to school as the primary source of their political education (for the rest, it was family). Almost every one of these young Swedish-born participants could offer specific stories about how they learned about politics at school. These stories confirm that the civics curriculum is implemented and that civic education starts early.

... when I was like 7 or 6 years old ... We learned how to vote, and democracy. What game should we play today? And that depends, they are voting in the elections today, but today, we will vote for a game, which game we will play today, something like that [Sweden, Municipality, young male (1)].

I remember that in like 9th grade we were given the task in class to divide into groups and each group would look at a political party in Riksdag, in parliament, and summarise their views. So we did this as an assignment and then we told each other, so that we would learn about the views of different parties. And at home my parents didn’t talk about politics [Sweden, Linkoping, young male (2)].

During my research in Sweden, I had an opportunity to observe civic education in action when I was invited to join a school trip from Linkoping to Stockholm with a class of 12-year-old schoolchildren. The children visited Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament), met members of parliament and discussed policy issues. On the way back to Linkoping, the bus was buzzing with political debate among these students on topics such as whether wearing a hijab should be banned or not. However, the implementation of the curriculum is not equal across all schools: in the focus group quoted above [Sweden, Linkoping], participants discovered differences in what was offered to them:
[Young male (2)] we actually met the representatives, a local representative for each party. And they actually got to tell us and we got to ask them questions...

[Young male (3)] Well, yeah, we actually didn’t meet any politicians, but our education when it came to politics in Sweden, we mostly got told about what parties were and that they were left wing and right wing, something like that, but we didn’t get any in-depth explanation or anything like that, of what it really meant, what it really stood for. I guess that was up to us.

Despite these differences, all participants had some form of encounter with civic education at school. This was in stark contrast to several young New Zealand participants who reported that they did not learn anything about politics at school.

...because if we don’t learn it in school, because I know they learn it in school like overseas, like some countries have like a compulsory subject. But we don’t have that here [Unitec, young Pacific female (2)].

Overall, perceptions of participants from both countries support the hypothesis that civic education at school decreases the information costs of voting. This finding is consistent with literature and supports the inclusion of civic education into the composite indicator of costs of voting.

Several migrant participants in New Zealand supported the inclusion of civic education into English classes for migrants. However, these classes are not mandatory. Sweden, as described in the previous chapter, has extensive language and social studies courses for migrants and some of these are mandatory for certain groups of migrants. Nonetheless, many migrant participants were critical of the delivery of civic education for migrants. According to one participant, originally from Somalia, who has lived in Sweden for over 20 years, the way civics is taught to migrants shows a lack of understanding of their starting knowledge levels:

Second, we should accept that people have never before voted. And we cannot treat them as people who voted. You have to behave [in] other ways. You have to explain things [in] other ways. For those people it’s not about is this party good for me or is this party good for me? You have to begin [with] why it is important to be a part of democracy [Sweden, Café, immigrant male (1)].

Another participant similarly commented that migrants from non-democratic countries are not familiar with the idea of peacefully ‘fighting it out among equals’ by the means of a vote or a debate and that this is where education should start. A migrant participant in Sweden from a non-refugee background who attended social studies classes for migrants commented that politics is not covered in depth in these introductory classes:
I think it's more like how society works... otherwise, apart from politics, I think. I mean I'm sure they mention something about politics, but they don’t go deeply into it [Sweden, Café, young immigrant female (2)].

Data suggest that, in Sweden, schools implement civic education effectively but this success has not been replicated in the delivery of civic education to migrants. It is easy to see why this is a challenging task: migrants come from diverse backgrounds and have different levels of knowledge about and experience of democracy. An effective civic education needs to take these experiences (or the lack of experience) into account and address pre-existing ideas. To do this, more research is needed into what information migrants possess on arrival. This research will make a small contribution towards such knowledge but much more research is needed to develop effective civics programmes for migrants.

Language could be expected to be an important factor in lowering the cost of information for migrants who have not yet mastered the language of the host country. Migrant participants in both countries differed in their opinions on the role of migrants’ native languages. In New Zealand, migrant participants (especially from Asian backgrounds) wanted information about voting and enrolment forms and political education to be available in their own languages and in their ethnic media. This desire was, however, in many cases motivated by a desire for symbolic inclusion (which will be discussed in the following chapter) rather than by a lack of English proficiency. Migrant participants in Sweden mostly agreed that a migrant ought to learn the language of the host country before voting. However, there was a strong preference for voting instructions in a language that is not ‘bureaucratic and academic’.

For many participants, one of the advantages of learning about politics in a formal education setting was that it came with an opportunity to ask questions and to clarify on the spot whatever was not well understood by the learner. This interactive component was lacking in individual study from written materials. Apart from education in a classroom, talking to people in one’s environment is another source of information that is interactive. Many participants mentioned contacts with other people as an important source of current political information, such as information on issues, policies and candidates. Yet such contacts were not described as a good source of information on ‘how the system works’. This suggests that informal social contact cannot fully replace structured education as a source of information.

Nonetheless, for some participants who did not experience civic education in school, other people were the main source of political information. Some participants felt they are not getting enough of such politically informing interaction. In New Zealand, some of the migrant participants
reported that they do not have enough contact with New Zealanders due to occupational segregation. As discussed in the previous chapter, residential ethnic segregation is at a very low level in New Zealand, but participants commented that some migrant populations are concentrated in specific jobs and industries where they interact mostly with other migrants who are similarly uninformed.

You have to ask other people and it’s yeah, yes... it’s harder. And because many [ethnicity-redacted] people are self-employed as well, so they do not work in the big organisations where you can ask questions and get access to information. Many are self-employed so yeah... [New Zealand, Refugees, immigrant male (1)].

Yet this perception that more contact with New Zealanders would result in more political information might have been incorrect. New Zealand migrant participants who worked with New Zealanders observed that Kiwis do not talk about politics.

The Kiwis are really reserved. You have to ask them directly what do they think about it, otherwise they will not like openly tell you ‘I think I will go for this or that candidate’. I see that in [company name redacted] ... is very difficult to hear anything about politics [Mexicans, immigrant male (3)].

In contrast, among Swedish migrant participants, those who had a lot of contact with Swedish-born people commented that Swedish people talk quite a lot about politics. For participants who had access to regular interaction with Swedish people, participating in these discussions was an efficient channel of political education and mobilisation.

They were like talking a lot about politics, because politics is quite... it seems to be quite open theme to talk about in Sweden. People are talking quite a lot. In my age, I mean. So I think meeting people, through them I started to get more engaged in politics and understand how the system in Sweden works and the blue, the red, the green, the yellow, all these colours [political parties], how they... interact and what kind of values they have. So this probably was my... and now I’m quite interested in politics. [Linkoping, young immigrant female (1)].

However, residential segregation limits migrants’ access to Swedish people.

In areas that live a lot of immigrants [where a lot of immigrants live], the voting percent is very low. For first, the community is isolated, so they are not aware of what for majority population is now very important. [Sweden, Café, immigrant male (1)].

Among migrant participants in both countries, the best access to political information was reported by those migrants who had native-born people in their immediate family (cf. Wass et al. (2015, 409)). Such migrant participants reported how their native-born spouses or adoptive parents ‘pushed them to vote’ and accompanied them to the polling place. These participants highly appreciated this kind of help. The lack of information on how to act in the polling place was a serious deterrent for some migrants, especially in Sweden. A get out the vote party volunteer
was frustrated that even after walking with migrant voters to the polling place and explaining to them in detail what they need to do inside, there were migrants who would not walk in unaccompanied:

*People whom we told come, we will follow you to the voting local [place], when we stay outside, we say the process will be this, this and this when you are in the local, they were still afraid. What if I do it wrong?* [Sweden, Café, male (1)].

Some migrants clearly need assistance when voting, but in Sweden party volunteers are prohibited from accompanying voters into the voting place and they need to wait outside to ensure electoral integrity. The tension between electoral integrity and some groups’ need for assistance is not new. Schaffer (2002, 70) discusses how the secret ballot worked to disenfranchise poor voters in late 19th century Southern US, because many illiterate voters abstained to avoid exposing their inability to vote without assistance. In another focus group, one participant offered an original idea how to offer such assistance to migrant voters. This idea reinforces the need for more ‘hand-holding’ for migrants:

*so ... maybe there needs to be like ... when you fly an airplane, you have hostesses who instruct you what to do. Maybe they should do this in voting also, before you go into the ... they could let in 30 people to vote, give them the instructions and then they get to vote* [Sweden, Linköping, young male (2)].

In New Zealand, residential segregation as a barrier to information was mentioned by low-socioeconomic participants rather than migrants:

*And because you all live together and are never able to use ... to interact with people who do vote because they live in richer communities, like how ... you can’t really learn anywhere. You can’t learn at school, you can’t learn at society, so how are you meant to learn about this stuff? yeah* [Unitec, young Pacific female (3)].

However, in the light of the norm, identified by other participants, of not talking openly about politics in New Zealand, it is uncertain whether contact with richer communities would indeed result in the transfer of political information. For non-immigrant New Zealand participants, instances where they have been informed about politics or mobilised to act by interacting with other people were linked to organisations rather than individuals:

*But then the Māori party, I remember they’ve been working on the street, and they would say, ‘Are you’... you know, there was a real push for it, and a lot of people joined up when they had that push for, you know, they walk along the street and they say, ‘Hey, are you enrolled?’* [Unitec, Pacific female (1)].
No-one is going to take five minutes out of their day to sit down and go through the paper and fill it out. You know, unless, like, cause I remember union they had people that were there and they come up to you and ask, ‘Are you guys enrolled?’, like you know, like they had workers to come up to you and ask you... [City Mission 2, Māori male (2)].

Political parties could be expected to reduce the information costs of voting, because it is in their interest. Parties can reduce the information and disruption costs by providing information in campaigns, or by offering convenient opportunities to enrol to vote. Surprisingly, apart from the Māori party example above, political parties did not feature prominently in participants’ descriptions of sources of information. Instead, several participants, especially migrant participants, commented that politicians are not reaching out:

you look at overseas or things like that it’s more vocal, it’s a bit more people out there and you know looking for votes sort of thing, but in New Zealand you have to actually go to them [politicians] rather than the other way around [New Zealand, Refugees, male (1)].

Participants wanted personal contact targeted at them individually and an opportunity for discussion rather than a one-sided flow of information from the media or leaflets. Among Swedish participants, there were cases of migrants trying to engage in such discussion unsuccessfully:

I was a member with the Green Party first, but they were not so much welcoming, they didn’t give me so much information, I felt myself excluded [when] I went to the meetings [Sweden, Norrkoping, young immigrant male (1)].

When I first apply to get member in the party, I was at one meeting. It was after the party has lost the vote. 2006... I think it was 2007, something like that. And that meeting was not [a] good meeting. I have a lot of questions, I have a lot of ideas, I was very critical and those who were in that meeting, didn’t answer, I felt, what I picked up. And when they answered, they answered something else, not what I was critical about. [Sweden, Café, immigrant male (1)].

The latter participant later successfully integrated into a political party and currently works as a party volunteer to educate and mobilise his ethnic community. He commented that political parties need to change how they operate if they want to get immigrant votes. In Sweden, such change is happening in some parties. During my research, I could observe the activities of Social Democrats in the immigrant neighbourhood of Skaggetorp. An affiliate organisation of the party has spacious premises on an upper floor of the neighbourhood shopping centre. The organisation offered assistance, in the form of space and volunteers, for schoolchildren doing their homework. While children were working on their homework, their parents could have a cup of tea and chat with other volunteers. The organisation has built a positive reputation among the local population. In fact, my meeting with one of the volunteers was delayed because there was a conflict between migrant traders operating in the shopping centre and these traders brought this conflict to the
organisation’s volunteers for arbitration. This long-term strategy of building relationships through practical assistance and continuous engagement in the community (it was not an election year) seemed to work. Nonetheless, one volunteer commented that it is not easy to transform these relationships into voter turnout.

In New Zealand, the most common outreach from political parties to ethnic communities that participants reported (and I observed) was in the form of visits from members of parliament or other officials to community events. The nature of the interaction between politicians and the community at such occasions was typically relatively formal. The visiting politician would give a prepared speech and the opportunity for informal conversation with the politician would be available to community leaders rather than ordinary members of the community. This difference between the two countries may be a result of the differences in the financial and organisational capacity of political parties in both countries, discussed in the introduction to cases. It was obvious that the spacious office of the party-affiliated organisation in Skaggetorp required considerable resources to operate. This comparison between how political parties reach out to migrant communities in New Zealand and in Sweden suggests that providing political parties with state funding they are free to spend as they wish would reduce information costs. At least some of these funds would be likely used by political parties to expand the scope of campaigning to include communities that are currently neglected in parties’ outreach efforts.

Media outlets could be expected to be a major source of information about politics but for many participants they played a limited role. Participants’ comments reflected the hypothesis that getting political information from the media has a high opportunity cost due to diversification of the media, which makes it easy to avoid political information in favour of less demanding material (Strömbäck, 2015, 245). One Swedish participant commented that information on politics ‘is not music and fighting’ and therefore it cannot compete for people’s attention with more entertaining material. In New Zealand, an immigrant participant drew attention to how access to global media makes it easy to ‘tune out of’ the place one physically lives in. Internet and satellite TV make it possible to follow only events in one’s home country or global entertainment:

*Now everything is so easy at your fingertips and ... you can still kind of be a part of that culture that you came from, but just physically be here, if that makes sense* [New Zealand, Asian Professionals, female (2)].

Several participants distrusted the quality of information from the media. For them, this uncertainty exacerbated the cost of information from the media due to the need to verify the information in other sources. Among New Zealand participants, the predominant distrust was
directed towards ‘mainstream’ media, such as major TV stations and newspapers. Internet was considered a potentially credible source, but it was described as time-consuming and disruptive in terms of the need to do one’s own research. Swedish participants extended their distrust towards the Internet, while the state-owned TV station was considered credible. Overall, media was a good source of political information for those participants who were already well-informed and interested in politics, but for those not well-informed it did little to ameliorate the cost of information.
6.3. The role of election administration in reducing the costs of time and information

In participants’ narratives, the main role election administration could play in reducing the information costs was to increase the visibility of elections so that people are reminded of them. This can be achieved by highly visible voting places and signage or decorations.

Well, even just for one day, everywhere, like anything that is open, any business, like everybody, the whole day has to be dedicated to voting on that day so to make sure that everyone gets done on one day. So like at the supermarket... supermarket I think would be a good choice... and it’s just like... everywhere [emphasis] [City Mission 2, Pacific young male (1)].

And then sure enough, that day was just bombarded with orange! [New Zealand, Unitec, Pacific young female (2)].

Advance voting did not ameliorate participants’ time costs because the distractions that kept participants away from the voting booth were continuous and not limited to Election Day. Yet, advance voting was helpful due to the increased availability and visibility of voting locations, as predicted by Stein and Vonnahme (2011). In both countries, advance voting places tend to be located in visible, high-traffic places. Posted materials like voting cards could also act as such reminders, but were at risk of being thrown away for various reasons:

[The voting card] it’s a reminder. It’s on your table. Where you pass, you are like: oh, I forgot [MIT, immigrant female (3)].

I wanted to add about mail ... like one said, some people forgot about it ... When I don’t feel like... when I’m angry at this MP and this leader and you know, those Prime Minister those... so if I’m angry I just grab the paper and throw it into rubbish [MIT, immigrant Pacific female (2)].

Yet, according to participants’ comments, election administration could also make the process of voting much more difficult due to confusing procedures. In Sweden, most of the reported confusion happened inside the voting place. Multiple ballots with many names on them and different envelopes for different levels of elections make it easy to make a mistake. This complexity could play a role in the unwillingness of some migrants to go to a voting place unaccompanied, as reported by one participant cited above. However, if a procedure is confusing, it is best if this procedure takes place in the voting booth where poll workers are present and can help. Confusing procedures which need to be performed by the voter when there is no-one to answer the questions are more likely to prevent people from voting. One Swedish poll worker who I interviewed described how some voters require extensive assistance in the voting place, but such
assistance is always provided, even if it is above and beyond poll workers’ prescribed roles. In New Zealand, most of the misunderstanding and disorientation was related to enrolment procedures. Some participants held incorrect beliefs about what information from the electoral roll is available to whom or misunderstood the enrolment form. In some cases, the focus group was an opportunity to correct these beliefs.

[Pacific young female (2)]: I remember hearing that discussion even before I was legal to vote. Like that people wouldn’t vote because ... cause I didn’t know, I thought it was like private, and I did not know your details would be down at the library. So anyone can... they would say: no, you should go look up who’d you voted for! That’s how this discussion happened. And so I think that the negative thing in that discussion and those discussions were that your family... especially being Samoan, like it’s a big deal who you vote for. That your... your family could go down [to the library] and see who you voted for.

[Pacific female (1)]: they can’t...

[Pacific young female (2)]: that’s what they were saying!

[Pacific female (1)]: No, it’s just your address.

[Pacific young female (2)]: oh... so they actually can’t see who you’re voting for... oh, okay. [laughter] When they were having that discussion, how could you do that? [New Zealand, Unitec].

In one of the migrant focus groups [New Zealand, Mexicans], a participant thought, based on the Māori roll option included on the enrolment form, that Māori get two votes:

[Immigrant male (4)]: [looking at the enrolment form] What it means, that Māori electorate?

[Immigrant young female (2)]: Why do they have to have these? If you want to treat everyone equally why do you have something different?

[Immigrant female (5)]: If you are Māori you can vote as well in this electorate, not just in the general electorate but also in the Māori electorate.

[Immigrant young female (2)]: I don’t know, I am not Māori, I don’t know how it works.

[Immigrant male (3)]: So it’s like two people?

[Interviewer]: Two different rolls...

[Immigrant young female (2)]: The capacity of voting for two!

[Immigrant male (1)]: Oh.

[Interviewer]: No, you are only on one roll so it’s like a separate electorate.

[Immigrant young female (2)]: Yeah, but you can vote twice, right? For Māori and for the Prime Minister?
Election officials interviewed in New Zealand agreed that it would be good to simplify the enrolment form or create different versions that could be distributed in different communities. At the time of the interview, the form was prescribed in law and the Electoral Commission had no power to change anything in the enrolment form (later, a bill allowing more flexibility was proposed). There were more instances of participants misunderstanding the procedures than the two examples cited above. One migrant participant who filled out the enrolment form and sent it back thought that this was the vote and that she had voted. The materials for (postal) city council elections were described as especially confusing because of the large volume of text and the lack of meaningful information on candidates. Some migrant participants thought these were the national elections. As pointed out by one previously cited participant, some people tend to give up on voting when the task becomes too complex or when they are uncertain about expected behaviour or the correct interpretation.

It is, however, important to note that a number of participants in both countries perceived no difficulty whatsoever in electoral procedures and even expressed surprise at the suggestion that these procedures may present a challenge to some people. These participants, through school, family or their social circle, were successfully integrated into the culture of voting. This suggests that the problem of complex procedures can be approached by simplifying the procedures, but also by educating people better. The subjective difficulty of a procedure is not always directly linked to its objective complexity.

*Well, I read the instructions, so I never made a mistake. And there's like a line on the ballot and a line on the envelope, I believe, a number of lines, and they are supposed to match [Sweden, Linkoping, young male (3)].*

A young Swedish female participant commented that there are two worlds: a ‘political world’ where information about politics and voting is abundant and easy to absorb and the other world where such information is difficult to access:

*I mean it’s hard to say, because if you’re a part of the political world, you usually have a sense of the information that is out there, but if you are not a part of it, it’s probably harder to ... but it’s kind of hard to look at it from that perspective, cause if you’re not a part of it, or you don’t have that information, I don’t know how you would get the information...[Sweden, Café, young female (3)].*

The separation between the political and non-political worlds is based on more than residential segregation or access to education, even if these factors may play a role. Part of this split has to do with emotions, identities and meanings. I will discuss these less tangible, less measurable costs
of voting in the following chapter, after a brief discussion of policy recommendations informed by the data presented in this chapter.

6.4. Analysis and recommendations

How, then, do these focus group data about information as a cost of voting compare to literature and literature-derived hypotheses?

There is little support for most of the hypotheses related to the time cost of voting. The availability of physical voting facilities, the distance to them and the time spent in them (hypotheses H1, H2, H3) were dismissed by the overwhelming majority of participants as factors that affect their turnout decision. Rather, it was the general lack of time in voters’ lives (H19) that was a major barrier to getting educated about politics, which in turn was a major barrier to voting. Participants praised advance voting for increasing the visibility of elections rather than for reducing the opportunity cost of time, so there is support for the hypothesis that advance voting reduces the cost of voting (H4) but for reasons other than those expected, namely reducing disruption. This is captured by (H8) the visibility of voting places and (H13) voting facilities located in places the voter planned to be in regardless of the election ameliorate disruption costs. The prominent role of disruption as a barrier to voting among participants supports the hypothesis that costs of voting are reduced by reducing the number of steps one needs to take in order to vote (H13), such as voter enrolment or obtaining identification.

With regard to the cost of information, there is support for a cost-ameliorating effect of civic education programmes in schools (H5), posting voting-related materials to voters (H7) and visibility of voting places (H8). There is less support for the use of minority languages in voting materials to ameliorate information costs (H9). Those participants who supported the use of minority languages did so predominantly for reasons other than access to information (symbolic inclusion), which I discuss in the following chapter. Also, programmes for migrants, such as language instruction (H9) and education programmes for migrants (H6), did not receive much support from participants in the one case where they were present (Sweden). Rather, the data warn that such programmes can contribute to alienation of learners depending on how they are structured. The cost-increasing effects of (H12) socioeconomic and ethnic residential segregation

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74 This visibility might counteract the negative effect of diluting the focus on elections, mentioned previously.
for groups that are isolated is also not well supported. Even if isolation hinders contacts, these contacts would not necessarily always result in exchange of political information.

Table 5 summarises how much the different factors were discussed among different participant demographics. This table does not attempt to quantify the number of times a specific issue was mentioned (which would reflect a different paradigm to that used here). Nonetheless, because of the complexity of the data and the number of factors, a visual representation of the intensity of discussion about each factor can aid in grasping the big picture of what, according to participants, matters most among the costs of time, information and disruption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Visual summary of focus group data on factors relevant to time and information costs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Factor hypothesised to increase the cost of voting</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1 Time spent at the voting place</td>
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<td>H2 Time spent travelling to voting place</td>
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<td>H3 Time spent on other voting-related tasks (such as registration)</td>
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<td>H4 Shorter voting period/Lack of early voting</td>
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<tr>
<td>H5 (Absence of) civic education programmes in schools</td>
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<td>H6 (Absence of) civic/social studies education programmes for migrants</td>
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<td>H7 (Not posting) voting-related information to voters</td>
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<tr>
<td>H8 Low visibility of voting places</td>
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<td>H9 Use of minority languages in voting materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>H12 Socioeconomic and ethnic residential segregation</td>
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<tr>
<td>H13 (a) Voting facilities located in places the voter did not plan to be in</td>
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<tr>
<td>H13 (b) Voter-initiated voter enrolment</td>
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<tr>
<td>H18 Availability of entertainment</td>
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<td>H19 Unpredictable work schedule; time pressure</td>
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</table>
There are several recommendations for election administration that arise from this part of the research on the costs of time, disruption and information. Perhaps the most straightforward recommendation is to make elections more visible to counteract the forgetting about voting by voters who have a lot of other problems or opportunities competing for their time and attention. One way of increasing visibility of elections is by placing voting places in visible, high-traffic locations with ample signage and decorations. For such a visible voting place, an advance voting period further increases the exposure of potential voters to this reminder. Apart from such visibility of elections in the public, physical space, visibility can be increased in voters’ private space by individually addressed reminders, for example in the form of a voting card sent by post or a text message. Such private reminders seem especially important for voters who limit their media consumption to media from another country or to music TV channels. New Zealand and Sweden post voting cards to voters and have been increasing the number of voting places in visible locations. Nonetheless, there are underutilised possibilities such as reminders by text messages to young people.

A second recommendation is to minimise the disruption component of the cost of voting by minimising the number of tasks and trips beyond voters’ regular routine. One way to achieve this is placing voting places in locations the voter is likely to visit anyway during the voting period. Another and perhaps more important consideration is to reduce the number of discrete tasks necessary for voting, ideally to only one task (casting the vote). Sweden has achieved this by implementing automatic voter enrolment. In New Zealand, voter-initiated enrolment is a time and disruption barrier for some voters, especially those who are highly mobile, and an information and disruption barrier for some migrants. The infrastructure for automatic voter enrolment does not exist at this moment, but it could be developed. Alternatively, voter enrolment could be merged into interaction with other government agencies similarly to how the ‘Motor Voter’ legislation in the US enabled voter registration while registering a motor vehicle. In New Zealand, one potential candidate for such a merger would be the health system. This system already has
unique identifiers for people in its database and collects information about citizenship/visa status for the purpose of assessing the eligibility for state-funded health services. Medical clinics ask all new patients to fill out a form and periodically ask existing patients to update or confirm their details. A few questions could be added to these forms such as whether the address supplied is the address where the patient makes his or her home in the meaning of the Electoral Act.

Another approach to making voter enrolment in New Zealand easier would be to remove the role of voter’s physical address in the electoral system. Currently, 64 seats in Parliament get assigned on the basis of electorate votes – votes of people living in a specific area which could be as small as 20 km². A shift to one national list or creating ‘virtual’ electorate(s) not tied to a territory (to which people who are mobile could sign up by choice) would remove the need for voters to update physical address each time they move. Such voters could receive official correspondence electronically. However, changing the electoral system could change the distribution of political power. Therefore, such change would be much harder to achieve than using one or more of existing government agencies’ databases for automatic voter enrolment. In any case, the aforementioned high residential mobility of New Zealanders is a reason to question whether an electoral system that puts so much importance on the place of residence promotes equal access to voting.

To effectively educate voters about how the political system works, election administration and other responsible government agencies should preferably use channels that the recipients cannot avoid and/or channels that are interactive. Traditional media and social media are too fragmented to ensure that a message is reaching everyone or almost everyone. The compulsory education system (including compulsory programmes for migrants) is an example of such a hard-to-avoid channel. One-directional channels such as text messages are suitable for sending brief, practical information such as reminders about voting or location of the nearest voting place. However, to deliver more complex information such as how the political system works, it is important to use channels that are interactive, such as classes or community events where participants can ask questions. The content of this more complex information provided to voters should be in accordance with recipients’ prior knowledge or lack thereof. In particular, more research is needed about myths and misunderstandings people have about electoral procedures so that these misunderstandings can be addressed (or the procedures re-designed).

Election officials whom I interviewed in both countries pointed to cost and limited capacity of electoral management bodies as main barriers to implementation of these recommendations. Electoral management bodies in New Zealand and Sweden have limited funding for educational
activities and for promotion of elections. The requirement that they remain politically neutral makes provision of political education risky for them and, in both countries, some participating officials were of the opinion that educating voters about politics is something best left to other organisations such as schools or political parties. In Sweden, the bulk of civic education takes place in the mandatory education system so there is less need to supplement it by other channels. In New Zealand, the teaching of citizenship and civics at school has been a controversial topic due to the perceived possibility of political bias, as shown by the tensions around the 1997 social studies curriculum discussed in detail in theses of Aitken (2005) and Mutch (2004). Therefore, the authorities should consider exploring alternative venues of delivery of this education, such as community events or providing dedicated funding for political parties and other organisations to deliver such education.
Chapter 7: Voters' voices (2): the intangible costs: risks, meanings and identities

‘Many migrants believe it is better to stay in the shadow of public processes in the uninformed belief that interacting with governmental officials may jeopardise their official papers towards citizenship,’ she [Professor Edwina Pio] said. ‘Asians may also not vote as they may not be comfortable with the voting papers and loss of face may prevent them from seeking help in this regard.’

Lincoln Tan, Migrant vote an untapped poll winner, NZ Herald 19 Apr 2014

In the electorate where immigrants and Asians outnumber New Zealand-born voters, confusion reigns. ... Some voters in Botany are scared to vote against the ruling party for fear of reprisal. A voter who didn’t want to be identified, originally from China, said she would vote Labour because she didn’t think her vote was secret. ‘I am sponsoring my mother for residency and I am worried that if Labour gets re-elected, the Immigration Department will reject my application,’ she said in Mandarin.

Manying Ip, an associate professor of Asian studies at Auckland University, says many Chinese immigrants struggle to understand democracy. ‘They don’t believe it when they are told they can vote for whoever they like, and even the more intelligent people from the mainland really fear the Government,’ she said.

Lincoln Tan, Immigrant voters find democracy hard to understand, NZ Herald 7 Oct 2008

7.1. Is enrolment and voting dangerous?

One of the hallmarks of a well-functioning democracy is that political participation is safe. The vote is secret, so there are no repercussions for voting for whichever party or candidate, and there is no voter intimidation. New Zealand and Sweden are such well-functioning democracies. In the 21st century, there have been no concerns whatsoever about electoral integrity in these countries from election observers. Therefore, it was surprising to hear from some participants that they consider voting (or enrolment) to be a risky activity. The two types of perceived risk were the fears

of immigrants and refugees who had limited knowledge of the political system, and, in New Zealand, fears about the misuse of the electoral roll data.

Fears about personal consequences of voting were expressed by some immigrant participants who were born and raised in non-democratic countries. For example, in New Zealand, the majority of Chinese participants talked about their own or their communities’ anxieties related to voting, but none of the Indian participants expressed similar fears.

I guess it's just increase awareness among the Chinese community, you know. Voting in New Zealand is not threatening or... as you might imagine in China. So just let them know the difference between the New Zealand political system and the Chinese political system [New Zealand, Asian Professionals, young immigrant female (1)].

China is a very different country compared to New Zealand. So I guess in China a lot of people actually prefer to keep everything and just get on ... just stay away from the government, really, cause, you know, one party government, so they don't really want to upset the government or anything. But I guess in New Zealand, after you've been here for long enough, you gradually would change your attitude towards voting, so you don't perceive it as a sort of threatening exercise, 'things might go wrong' in that sense [New Zealand, Asian Professionals, immigrant female (2)].

One Chinese participant said that online voting would make voting easier for some of those who are afraid.

[Asian Professionals, immigrant male (3)]: This new technology... computer... you don't have to be scared to go in person to vote, you can always vote by yourself... so... other people may not know who are you voting for. ... Until that happen[s], I think a lot of people will not be able to vote, you see, especially for the older generation, you see maybe they are too afraid to vote, you know.

[Interviewer]: What would they be afraid of?

[Immigrant male (3)]: They are afraid that some other party may not be happy, you know.

In Sweden, similarly, some focus group participants who came from authoritarian or war-torn countries said that fear of the consequences of voting is common in their communities:

I think they are afraid of participating in the political way, because they maybe think that if they participate in one way or another, this might affect their future plans and their future life in Sweden, in a way... I don't know, possibilities for studies or possibilities... I don't know [Sweden, Norrkoping, young immigrant male (2)].

They think that people register their votes and that you have to take responsibility to vote. Sometimes maybe when you say a critique of the government maybe you get punished for it [Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (4)].

In both countries, some participants discussed the perception of voting as something that is done to protest against the government:
So if they believe that the government did a good job, so maybe it’s wrong to go vote against it, you see. Yeah. Unless the government performing very badly [Asian Professionals, immigrant male (3)].

I would vote if the country was in serious issues. And if you see it’s going to the wrong... like, you know, Donald Trump... [laughter] I’d go vote against that! [New Zealand, Mexicans, immigrant male (4)].

Some Swedish migrant participants with refugee backgrounds felt indebted to the Swedish state for being allowed to settle in Sweden and receiving state help. Such participants felt that it would be inappropriate and ungrateful of them to demand change or criticise the government.

[Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (1)]: I get help, they said it is okay for me to stay in this country. So that’s... that should be enough for me. I should be happy.

[Interviewer]: [asking other participants] Do you agree with this?

[Immigrant male (3)]: Yeah, absolutely [others agree].

However, several participants commented that these attitudes could be remedied with education. Such education would need to recognise and address common beliefs based on experiences in the country of origin. This need to address group-specific beliefs may be one of the reasons why effective civic education for a diverse population of migrants is challenging.

The above findings that some migrants perceive voting as risky were unexpected because this barrier to voting in the New Zealand context has not been a prominent topic in the media, election reports or academic literature. In contrast, perceived risk related to having one’s name and address on the public electoral roll in New Zealand has been extensively discussed in media and raised by the Labour Party in its submission to the inquiry into the 2014 General Election (Barnett, 2015). The results from focus groups confirmed that the potential use of the electoral roll by debt collectors to track down debtors is a barrier for some voters.

My brothers [are] all crims [laughter]. The main reason that they don’t, and even I don’t like doing it [enrolling] is that having your details at the library that anyone can look it up. Especially if you have fines and stuff that I have recently. But it’s a real deterrent, you know, having it open there for anyone to find you. I think it deters a lot of people... Especially car fines, you know, things. They don’t want to be found. [New Zealand, Unitec, Pacific female (1)].

[New Zealand, City Mission 1, Māori male (3)]: Or they got a big bill with Baycorp! [debt collection company] [laughter].

[Māori male (2)]: Yeah, cause they can get into the... eh.
[Māori male (1)]: *They can get into...*  

[Māori male (3)]: *Into the bloody computer, eh? the government computer?*  

[Māori male (2)]: *I bet they do.*  

[Māori male (1)]: *Yeah. They have to collect.*  

[Māori male (4)]: *They have to collect! My brother, eh, he works at Air New Zealand and he has them at the back. And he's got gambling debts. Some guy come up, into the back! You can't go into the back! And he goes P.O. Smith? He say yeah, he say yeah. Hey, we come for coin [laughter.] How did you get in? Never mind bro, I'm going now [laughter].*  

[Māori male (3)]: *Baycorp they know what they do. They know how to work the system.*  

Some participants were afraid not of third parties but of other government agencies accessing electoral roll data. One participant expressed disbelief that different government agencies would not share their data:

*I mean it's on the government data. It's in their computer. They won't say oh, that's the electoral one, we're not gonna go in there* [City Mission 1, Māori male (5)].

Private debts like gambling debts were mentioned, as above, as the reason for hiding from collectors. However, debts to the state, especially ‘car fines’, were also mentioned. These car fines are linked to widespread non-compliance, especially among younger drivers, with the requirement to get a Warrant of Fitness (a certificate of a mechanical check-up) for one’s car. Between 2009 and 2013, 63,032 youth Warrant of Fitness traffic fines were referred to Court unpaid.\(^{77}\) The majority of these infringements are referred for collection. More research is needed on the role of these fines in non-enrolment. If many people who do not enrol because of debt are in this debt because of a specific government policy, then this could be a case of structural disenfranchisement.

Sometimes, the perception of risk was caused by false beliefs about what information is available on the electoral roll. An example of such an incorrect belief is that all of the information entered into the form, or who one voted for, is made available (as reported by one participant cited in the previous chapter). Among migrant participants in New Zealand, the main perceived risk of having their name and address published was related to being targeted not by the state, but by criminals. The extent of information requested on the enrolment form made some migrant participants feel unsafe. The Mexican focus group even started developing a kidnapping scenario. As far as I can

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tell from observing this exchange, the kidnapping scenario was developed in jest, but reflected real discomfort with the perceived intrusiveness of the enrolment form and with the fact that some of this information is public and available for sale.

[New Zealand, Mexicans, immigrant male (1)]: What I would change... there is a lot of questions, lots of information they’re asking. So I prefer to just have a specific number for voting, like the one we have in Mexico. Like everyone has a specific number, an ID, of citizenship and this is going to be my number and this is my vote.

[Immigrant female (5)]: Yeah, I don’t know why you have to fill in the whole information again. It’s already in the system.

[Immigrant male (1)]: My birthday... my occupation.

[Immigrant female (5)]: [Joking] Hobby... what did you have last night ...

[Immigrant male (1)]: Yeah... [laughing].

[Immigrant male (3)]: Do you know why you have this part of the form? To sketch map showing where you res...

[Immigrant young female (2)]: ... reside.

[Immigrant male (3)]: And somebody knows where you live, what is your phone number...

[Immigrant female (5)]: Who’s your neighbour, who’s your landlord. What the fuck?

[Immigrant male (1)]: Why?

[Immigrant female (5)]: Really? I don’t like that.

[Immigrant young female (2)]: No, me too. You can be kidnapped.

[Immigrant male (1)]: Why would they publish private information? Or why is that a matter of anybody else?

[Immigrant male (3)]: I think they would say like okay, who’s that guy? Where does he live? Who are his family? How much he owns? And then, then they would start to plan who to kidnap. Okay he’s there, that’s the neighbours, you come there, oh I’m looking for this. Yes, I’m just this guy [inaudible] and they they [sic] come and get to your house.

[Immigrant male (4)]: ... because they will call you like: I am Robert. I am looking for Abelardo. Ah, okay, Abelardo, my brother. Or my brother-in-law is your neighbour, and then you know the name of the guy. And the person in the house will be like, ‘Oh yes, he’s my neighbour’. Yes, yes, how are you, and then they will use that information to...

Some perceptions of risk in the above conversation were influenced by incorrect understanding of the enrolment form. For example, the part where the elector is asked to sketch a map of where they reside applies only to rare cases in which the house has no street address. However, this
information, typed in smaller print, was missed and the large empty space with adjacent instructions in plain English to sketch a map attracted immediate attention of some participants.

Interestingly, among Swedish participants, not a single person expressed any concerns about privacy and misuse of data. This was despite a larger amount of personal information being available in public than in New Zealand. Swedish participants generally found it challenging to explain why this is not a problem or to even understand why this would be a problem. The electoral roll is not the only point of public access to personal data of other people, and openness pervades the whole system:

[Interviewer]: People’s names and addresses?

[Sweden, Municipality, young male (1)]: Yes, everything. Even you can search on Internet how old is this person...

[Interviewer]: Really? You can find age...

[Young male (1)]: Yes ... also exactly where you live, and all the names, and your birthday data, and everything you can find.

[Interviewer]: And you can find it about any person...?

[Young male (1)]: Everything is public information.

[Interviewer]: How come no-one is protesting against it? I mean...

[Young male (1)]: There are ... it’s good in some kind of way, but sometimes it has a bad side as well. Because... the privacy issue of course ... and you are... you always have your personal data...

[Interviewer]: Your number...

[Young male (1)]: Yes, your personal number... so it’s all fine, so you never have that kind of privacy. Even if you... maybe you will buy something in a store, and will have insurance, and there’ll be ‘Okay, that’s your name’ - they can find you in the system, in a second. So there is no privacy at all.

[Interviewer]: So people are used to it, people accept it?

[Young male (1)]: Yes, people accept it, so it’s just normal. That ... and it’s good in some ways, because you can find everything, you can’t hide anything ... maybe it’s ... harder to be corrupt, when you’re working in the government.

When asked directly to comment on possible privacy issues and risks, the participants pointed to convenience, habit and the Swedish culture of transparency (Hall, 2016, 305) to explain their lack of concern about privacy of their data. Also, in contrast to New Zealand participants, Swedish non-immigrant participants expressed a positive, trusting attitude towards the state and a high degree of acceptance of state intervention into people’s private lives, which has been commented on by Olwig (2011, 180). One participant linked this trust to the generous welfare state:
[Sweden, Li.U, young female 1]: But it’s also just the way it is. I don’t think if I ever really reflected upon ... that it could be a problem.

[Female (2)]: Yeah, I think because we ... we get so much from our government, so that means that we also trust it a lot.

Migrant participants in Sweden also did not report any fears related to privacy and, similarly to Swedish-born participants, did not see any problem with government data collection. This attitude could be linked to the context in which their data were collected. When they provided their details to the state, the benefit to them was obvious (access to health, welfare, education and other services). Unlike in New Zealand, being enrolled did not entail separate data collection with additional questions. (The above is my interpretation, as none of the migrant participants in Sweden elaborated on this issue.)

7.2. Voting and feeling (dis-)respected

Participants in both countries and in all three types of participants spoke about voting as an emotive experience, more than just potentially contributing to the victory of a specific party or politician. A number of participants thought that the emotional or cultural dimension of voting is more important than other themes discussed above.

Because yeah, you can say information, you can say blah blah blah, but sometimes I think it’s about the feeling. That you feel that you’re a part of something. You can’t educate that feeling [Sweden, ABF, young male (4)].

...like yes, you can introduce it in school and stuff and.. But if you don’t create a culture where voting is, you know, what’s good, then I don’t think it will have much of an impact. [New Zealand, Unitec, young female (3)].

This emotional dimension had several aspects in participants’ narratives. For some, voting was an important act of the state’s recognition or misrecognition of their culture and their status. This (mis)recognition in turn could foster feelings of inclusion or exclusion. Many participants viewed voting as engaging with the state or giving something to the state. Therefore, they were less willing to vote if they held negative emotions towards the state, perceived the state as unfair to them or hostile. Finally, especially for migrants, voting was linked to feelings of belonging to society. All these feelings affected to various degrees participants’ willingness to vote.

Perceived lack of acknowledgement and respect by the state in the context of voting could take several forms. In New Zealand, one example of such lack of respect was not having one’s vote
counted. The two City Mission focus groups had a large proportion of voters who cast special votes (votes cast in a different electorate than the one the voter is enrolled in). This was due to high mobility of this group, which also had a high proportion of Māori participants, some of them enrolled in Māori electorates. One Māori participant expressed a belief that many special votes are not counted because they do not arrive in the destination electorate on time:

*When you cast a special vote it doesn’t really get to the voting booth. Because it comes after the voting has already been done. And with a special vote, they get sent to go there and when they don’t make it to that district then they’re just cast away. … The bills that get sent by mail get there but the vote they go and … don’t you know what I mean?* [City Mission 2, Māori male (2)].

In fact, the number of special votes which do not get counted because they arrive at the destination too late is minuscule, 177 out of 331,005 special votes cast in the 2014 General Election.78 However, a large number of special votes are disallowed and these are more likely to be Māori electorate votes: in 2014, only 67.02% of total candidate special votes cast for Māori electorates were allowed compared to 80.05% in general electorates.79 This participant believed that votes like his are not given the same priority as other mail. Having one’s vote not counted can also result from misrecognition by poll workers. Another Māori participant told the following story in which the poll worker misunderstood the name of the Māori electorate and issued the wrong voting papers, something this voter noticed only when already filling out the ballot paper. He knew his vote would be wasted but did not complain.

*We go in there and I says ‘Oh, I want a special vote’, this is the Bay of Islands cause I live in Tamaki Makaurau, I said I’m Māori, special vote, Tamaki Makaurau, she gives me, she gives me the papers for Tamaki! Cause she thinks I’m a Pakeha [white New Zealander]! And I’m gonna vote on the Pakeha roll. I say no no no, I’m on the Māori roll, so eh, I did not twig on to that until I actually voted my vote, so there was a waste of vote, because hey, I’m walking in, she just gave me the voting papers for Tamaki, not Tamaki Makaurau. So yeah, I don’t get to vote… My brother go on: we gonna go home, go home, we have been here for how long? and I was like: hey... is it because I look like a Pakeha... I mean, you know, that’s bad... special votes, special votes... when I say I’m a Māori and I’m voting on the special votes on the Tamaki Makaurau, that’s pretty basic! You can’t get that wrong but she did!* [City Mission 1, Māori male (6)]

The case above appears not to be an isolated case. Following the 2017 General Election, Māori Television collected and reported on complaints from Māori voters about (among others) polling staff being unaware of the Māori roll and the wrong forms being provided to Māori enrolled in

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Māori electorates. These complaints were not sent to the electoral authorities but to a Māori university lecturer, Veronica Tāwhai from Massey University, who publicised them and passed them on to the Electoral Commission. The voter cited above also did not lodge a complaint to electoral authorities but welcomed the opportunity to raise the issue in the focus group. He told his story during the introduction round, before I asked any questions from the interview guide. It appears that some Māori do not have confidence in the complaint process and the institutions that manage it. The voters cited above expressed emotions such as sadness and anger when talking about their uncounted votes and felt that the electoral system disrespects them and their votes because they are Māori. Such experiences of discrimination make voting an emotionally unpleasant situation and may deter voters from voting next time.

Apart from such direct and personal experiences, some participants in both countries viewed specific procedures and policies as deliberate attempts to exclude the groups they belong to from voting. These perceptions of one’s vote being unwanted triggered similar emotions of sadness and anger by those who held those perceptions. In New Zealand, the public electoral roll was one of the procedures interpreted as vote suppression:

*But it’s a real deterrent, you know, having it open there for anyone to find you. I think it deters a lot of people. I think that’s why they have it, to deter people from actually voting* [Unitec, Pacific female (3)].

Similar opinions were expressed with regard to the lack of online voting:

*And so I think voting against it, I’d second [name redacted]’s notion, are you making it harder for us to vote. Because how many more Pacific Islanders, Māori and other people would you have voting had it been passed. So yeah, I was really upset about that... And if you are in government and you are there because they didn’t vote [all express agreement], you wouldn’t want them to vote because they wouldn’t vote for you. [Yeah. Sure.] [Strategic, yes.] So you keep them out [Unitec, Pacific female (1)].*

Also, the non-enforcement of fines for non-enrolment was interpreted by some participants as the government not caring if people vote or not. This interpretation was somewhat surprising, because one of the New Zealand election officials I interviewed explained that non-enforcement is motivated by respect for people’s freedom and not wanting to antagonise voters. Yet, in the experience of these low-socioeconomic participants, if the government wants people to do something, the government enforces it and fines for non-compliance, like in the case of car fines.

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[City Mission 2, Māori male (2)]: If the government care that we vote they would fine us all right.

[Young Pacific male (1)]: Yeah, yeah. That’s why they don’t care because they gonna stay in there.

In Sweden, participants in one focus group were of an opinion that the quality of education is deteriorating due to recent educational reforms and that the changes in the school system are a deliberate strategy to produce people who will not vote.

[Sweden, Linkoping, young male (3)]: Yes, and it’s bad for society at large. Because we are producing people who have no skills.

[Young male (2)]: And there are economic incentives to do this.

[Young male (3)]: Yeah, exactly. So yeah, that’s a problem. And I mean, stupid people also don’t really want to vote.

Migrant participants in Sweden pointed out the symbolic message carried by the long period of time it takes to get voting rights at national level and the inequality in how people of different nationalities are treated. Some people are ‘outsiders’.

For Somali people and some other countries, they don’t have passport from home countries which Sweden say is legitimate. So they have to wait 8 years before they can get citizenship ... But if you have your passport from your old country, after 5 years you get Swedish citizenship [Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (3)].

8 years without involvement in something, 8 years being outsider and you decide that this is nothing for me. Why care. So when they say, ‘Now it’s time’, you have already given up. It’s large numbers, hundreds and millions who feel that way [Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (2)].

In New Zealand, some migrant participants expressed disappointment that politicians did not seek out their votes. Surprisingly, one migrant participant spoke with nostalgia about the voter intimidation she experienced in her country of origin. This intimidation meant for her that her vote was important, that other people were interested in it and it made the election more exciting than in New Zealand.

[MIT, immigrant female (3)]: All the voters need to vote for our leader. You know, if you break this rule then you will get punishment. And there’s heaps of things happened there. What happened, some people they burned other people's house if they find out they vote for a different leader. So it’s very, very common in our country, when they get ready for vote, they make sure everybody has to... is a must, everybody needs to ... but before the vote, the whole village knows who they gonna vote for. So it’s a very ... very ... so it’s a very ... is a must. So everybody ... and it’s like an exciting thing about that.

[Interviewer]: You said it was exciting in your country, the elections, because of...

[Immigrant female (3)]: Yes, the people are very excited.
[Interviewer]: And here not?

[Immigrant Pacific female (3)]: But in here, I don’t think so [laughs].

Apart from these perceptions of the electoral institutions and the wider system not acknowledging the importance of one’s vote or not wanting one’s vote, rejection of the voter could also happen at a cultural level. In the view of some young participants in New Zealand, voting booth selfies were an expression of social media or youth culture and a spontaneous celebration of voting. Banning them was perceived as insensitive and disrespectful towards that culture.

[Unitec, young Pacific female (1)]: The last election, over half of the people they voted and publicly announced they voted. ‘I voted, I voted!’ didn’t vote before. And this was because they were taking selfies! Like in the booths, or before they were going into the booth. So now we’re not allowed to take selfies at the booth anymore.

[Young Pacific female (2)]: That was just dumb!

[Young Pacific female (1)]: Yeah. I just saw all these ... it becomes just like a culture thing, you know ... they did it to take selfies because it was cool because everyone else was taking selfies! While they’re voting. I think that was such a massive like... not cool, that was not good for us.

In another focus group, a participant commented that voting in current form is ‘extremely antisocial’:

...like everyone walks into [makes a performance of hiding] don’t look at me! don’t look at me! don’t look at my vote! [all laugh] ... yeah, I mean, it is antisocial, like, extremely [City Mission 2, young Pacific male (1)].

According to this participant and some others in that group, introducing online voting would actually make voting more social rather than take it out of the public sphere. Young low-socioeconomic participants were similar to some migrant participants in that they wanted more active celebration and individual expression in voting. Sometimes, this individual expression would ideally include an opportunity to individually express one’s political views. One young male participant from one of the City Mission focus groups wanted to be able to vote on his phone by talking to the person at the other end. In Sweden, according to election officials who I interviewed, some people use the envelope system to include a letter together with the ballot. The election official who saw these messages during the vote count was puzzled as to why people would do this if they are already expressing their views by the means of the vote they cast. However, people’s desire to express their views individually during or after casting a vote was also found in Coleman’s research on what voters feel (as discussed earlier). Regulations prohibit such conversations in the voting place, but the Swedish system in which an envelope, rather than a
single ballot paper, is dropped into the ballot box opens a possibility of such individual expression and this opportunity is taken up by some voters.

Some of them put in like a letter to an unknown recipient, together with the voting slip ... which I found interesting that people have some kind of need to communicate, but not to someone in particular, just like out in random space. ... This is like their chance, the voter's chance, the individuals chance to make their voice heard, but just putting a name or a slip with the party name in an envelope, that wasn't enough for these people, so they had to ... they felt a need to write a note as well, telling the counter what was wrong. Maybe they were hoping that it would reach politicians somehow, I don't know [Sweden, Election Official 1].

For many migrant participants, it was important to receive recognition in the form of using migrant’s native language in official materials. Such use of language fostered feelings of inclusion and being invited, as explained in detail by one participant:

[New Zealand, MIT, immigrant female (3)]: Yeah, I like to add, what [redacted] said, when they see their language, they feel closer. For example, I saw the advertisement in Thai news one day, New Zealand Blood. The whole page about New Zealand Blood, oh, why you should give blood. But in Thai language! I think: Oh my God, it's in Thai language! I feel closer!

[Interviewer]: So you know that they are talking to you?

[Immigrant female (3)]: [with emotion] Yeah, they are talking to me! Even me, I can understand English, I can read English, but it is different when I read English about New Zealand Blood and read New Zealand Blood in my language. Is different feeling.

[Interviewer]: You feel included?

[Immigrant female (3)]: Yeah. yeah. I feel like I'm included, yes. But sometime [laughs] in contrast, sometime, when I remember they give me the brochure when I went to the market, they give Hindi language, Chinese language, English and Korean, Japanese, but no Thai language! I ask them, ‘What about Thai language?’ I don't want them, even when I can read English, but no Thai language! No, I'm not included! [laughs].

This sentiment of disappointment at being left out was supported by participants in another focus group who were dissatisfied that their language is not one of those used on the Electoral Commission website when the languages of neighbouring nations are included:

We’re just basically saying that you know there's Cambodia, Vietnam for example, Thai, all from South East Asia you know they have their language on there so what do we need to do to have our language in there, you know, because if you look at ... I mean to be honest they're part of South East Asia [New Zealand, Refugees, immigrant male (2)].

This emotive approach to language provides support for translation of voting-related materials into community languages for reasons that go beyond reducing information costs. Some immigrant participants in New Zealand reported how, in their first years in New Zealand, they were not sure if they ought to vote; that is, if they had a moral right to vote after being in the
country for such a short time. Using immigrant languages in official materials addresses these emotions and sends a clear message that the state wants them to vote.

In another theme linked to emotional costs, election administration and voting were seen by many participants as a part of a larger entity, the state, the government, ‘them’. For some participants, feelings arising from experiences with other parts of this state apparatus were transferred to voting. This was especially pronounced in the words of an ex-prisoner participant in New Zealand who argued that a negative experience with the criminal justice system (including disenfranchisement while in prison) leaves a lasting impact on the relationship to the state:

If they're in jail, they're not allowed to vote.... And then yeah, you exclude them and then they're in a place where they're thinking 'Fuck the system' why should I even give fuck. Why should I even care? So they come back out and they still don't care. So then you're getting a whole bunch of people who are really important, each vote is really important, but then yeah, just the way they've been treated, they're not gonna come and help the government [New Zealand, Unitec, Pacific male (4)].

One Swedish migrant participant similarly explained that the interaction with the Swedish welfare system causes feelings of disempowerment in some welfare recipients. The state helps people, but is not asking them to give anything back or to engage in any way.

And when you come as an immigrant to Sweden, you have to be a person in need to get asylum. And when you get that, Sweden... the system are there to help you to find your place in Sweden. So very long time you are a person in need of help, okay? The difference what I see with the political is ... the political, you have to take the initiative, you cannot wait that somebody else will do it for you. That's one. So I think people are stuck in that ... ‘How should I be?’ ... I am in the hand of them. So that way of thinking is there too. And maybe it is right. Because we [the state] are not helping people to say ‘Now we need your help’. That way we are not approaching people. [Sweden, Café, immigrant male (1)].

In contrast, Swedish participants linked feelings of civic duty to being taken care of by the state. Voting was an act of reciprocity, returning the care and responsibility.

[Sweden, Linkoping, young male (3)]: But yeah, this number [voter turnout] has actually been dropping in the last years.

[Interviewer]: Why do you think that is?

[Young male (3)]: Well, I mean, I think it's because, in my opinion, is because we have been running lately a string of... we had the right wing politicians in power and what they have been doing is they've been systematically deconstructing the state and the ... what's it called ... the security, the social security system, everything like this.

[Young male (2)]: The public sector.
[Young male (3)]: The public sector.

[Young female (1)]: Welfare system.

[Young male (3)]: Welfare system has been shutting down ... and that means also that because now the state takes a lesser responsibility for its citizens, which means the trust in the state is decreasing...

[Young male (2)]: The citizens take less responsibility for the state.

The welfare state experienced by most immigrants and most Swedes is a different one – the first means-tested, the latter, regardless of the retrenchment mentioned by the participant above, relatively generous and universalist. Other than the welfare system, some immigrant participants in Sweden also pointed to the asylum process as disempowering due to its long time and uncertainty of outcome. Immigrant participants in New Zealand, who were not former asylum seekers and were not welfare recipients, did not report feelings of disempowerment. On the other hand, among many of the young and low-socioeconomic participants in New Zealand, the feelings towards the state could be described as dislike sometimes bordering on hostility. This can be seen in the quote from the former prisoner above as well as the quotes presented when discussing the perceived risks of enrolment, which included fears of state agencies accessing one’s data.

The four groups of participants – Swedish-born, immigrants in Sweden, New Zealand-born and immigrants in New Zealand – had different feelings towards the state. These differences affected their approach to voting in a way that supports Soss’s hypothesis, discussed earlier, about the impact of the quality of contact with welfare and other state agencies upon attitudes towards political participation. They also support the idea that for those who view themselves as opposed to the state or wronged by it, voting can bear an identity cost - the diminishment of a particular identity in the eyes of oneself or others (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000, 728, 48, Hill, 2007, 393). This perception of cost was linked to understanding voting as something people do for the state or give to the state, rather than a tool of power and change.

This part of the research revealed that there are many factors in election administration which voters can interpret as (dis-)respect for their group or for them as individuals. These include the behaviour of election officials, regulations of voter behaviour in the voting place, use of languages in election materials, some electoral procedures and voters’ experiences with other state agencies. Most of these factors, except for experiences with other state agencies and some procedures, are under the control of the election administration. In the next theme of emotional costs, feelings of belonging, the sources of costs are more dispersed across different institutions.
7.3. Voting and feelings of (non-)belonging

The link between voting and feelings of belonging was a major theme in focus groups with immigrant participants in both countries. It was also one of the themes where there was a stark difference between New Zealand and Sweden. Among New Zealand migrant participants, feelings towards the host society were warm or, at the very least, neutral. Some migrant participants in New Zealand voted as an act of integration, in an effort to become more ‘Kiwi’ or more ‘like other people’. One participant even admitted to voting ‘randomly’, not knowing anything about the parties, just to be a part of society by joining the ritual of voting.

*Sometimes they vote like me, and is ... randomly. ... And if you got chance to vote, you go yeah, I've got a chance to vote okay I voted. Yeah [New Zealand, MIT, immigrant female (4)].*

*You have the emotion of Kiwiness... [when you vote] [New Zealand, Mexicans, immigrant female (5)].*

*Yeah. I vote for the flag, flag of New Zealand. Yeah. This was the first time voting. For this thing. It was beautiful to ... to participate in the community and use that for voting. Yeah. To choose something, because this is your country. Becomes your country. So when you vote, you feeling like other people, no different [New Zealand, MIT, immigrant male (5)].*

Some migrant participants who did not feel part of New Zealand society doubted if they have a moral right to vote for ‘someone else’s’ government or flag (in the New Zealand flag referendum). However, these feelings of not belonging were not linked to feeling excluded by the host society. Rather, they were based on participants’ short stay in New Zealand or a personal choice to identify with their home country rather than New Zealand. For example, several participants - professionals from North-East Asian background - framed their stay in New Zealand as ‘*just living here because it’s more convenient*’ while keeping strong emotional, familial and financial ties with their home country.

*We didn't know if we should be voting for the flag, then we received all the papers ... It's not my flag [laughter] [New Zealand, Mexicans, immigrant male (3)].*

*... being a resident, we think that we just live here... but still part of our thinking is we are very Chinese. We care about the Chinese news more than about, you know, the Kiwi news [Asian Professionals, female (2)].*

This spectrum of lukewarm, positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards belonging in New Zealand and, by extension, voting was not what I encountered among Swedish migrant participants. These participants expressed resentment, anger and frustration at the discrimination they encountered and state policies that they felt inhibited their integration. According to these participants, for
many immigrants these feelings lead to withdrawal from any form of political participation. However, for some participants, these feelings were a catalyst for engaging in politics. This engagement includes not just voting but also actively trying to mobilise communities to vote and becoming members of political parties. The form of discrimination mentioned the most was discrimination in access to economic opportunities in the labour market and in business. Having an independent source of income was for many participants crucial for belonging.

If you don’t have job here, you will not be integrated whatsoever [others agree]. ... for political participation, it may feel like if you don’t have work, there isn’t anything for you to go and participate in, you are already excluded, so what’s the point [Sweden, Norrkoping, immigrant young female (3)].

When you compare to America, or maybe in Australia, a lot of immigrants they have a lot of business. But in Sweden, you will not find [this]. So what happened? The people are the same. The people go to America, or Australia, or New Zealand, they’re the same people. But why they do not open business in Sweden? It is some rules. That’s why [Sweden, ABF, immigrant male (1)].

The feelings of exclusion were exacerbated by long and complicated pathways to middle-class jobs and higher education. Participants who were educated in their country of origin found that their education is devalued:

I thought it would be easy to find work here, because I speak English and I already experienced tertiary education, but no. I had a very difficult time... and I had I would say racist experiences, actually... but this was... yeah... they kind of acted like blocks or hindrances for me to feel like I belong or to feel like I contribute to society [Sweden, Café, young immigrant female (2)].

This participant described in detail how she went to the Swedish Public Employment Service to get help finding a job and after showing her CV, which included a Master’s degree, she was advised to ‘try cleaning’. It was only when she talked to a consultant with an immigrant background that she was informed that a local qualification is necessary to gain access to better jobs and what she needs to do to get a local qualification. Getting a Swedish tertiary degree required many years of studying, starting with a social studies course which was an introduction to Swedish society at a very basic level. The participant resented having to attend this course to qualify for university entrance despite already having a university degree. Olwig (2011, 186) points out that the Swedish integration system frames newcomers as deficient rather than as people who can offer something to the host society. According to the integration programmes, newcomers need to spend a lot of time learning the Swedish language and social norms before they can even start looking for work. Unemployment among immigrants in Sweden is high compared to the Swedish-born (Bergnehr, 2016, 24). This situation contrasts with New Zealand, where migrants, selected on their human capital, typically find employment quickly, even if for many of them it is employment below their
qualifications. Aside from discrimination in access to paid work and other opportunities, some migrant participants in Sweden were aware that some locals are afraid of them and negatively stereotype them.

[Sweden, Norrkoping, immigrant male (1)]: For some people, whenever they hear Arabic, their subconscious connects all the established ideas of the Middle East being savage and connect directly to any Arab speaking people. This is the first impression they get upon them.

[Immigrant male (2)]: And I myself, I would agree with his comment.

Encountering these attitudes and barriers can lead to alienation and the migrant may give up on trying to integrate:

I heard that some of them think that it's no point, because, they are still gonna be considered immigrants and therefore like the lowest of the low [Sweden, Café, young immigrant female (2)].

You are not interested. Because you are not a part of this society. You don't feel like a part of it, or you don't want to be a part of it. ... Because yeah, you can say information, you can say blah blah blah, but sometimes I think it's about the feeling. That you feel that you're a part of something. You can't educate that feeling. If I tell Mohammed 1000 times if you vote it's good for you, it doesn't matter. [Mohammed: It doesn't matter.] He wouldn't care shit, as long as he doesn't think that it actually means something. If I tell him it's good, oh yeah yeah, it's good. Yeah, voting is good. But do you vote or not? No. Why not? Because I'm not the part of it. [ABF, male (5)].

In New Zealand, this was echoed by a participant who was from one of the most excluded groups in society, a young homeless brown male:

Yeah! I mean, we have to make it social. Because I think that’s the way it’s gonna change and it gonna get people like people are gonna be alive you know, people are gonna feel that they’re a part of something. Like part of something good, something great, you know [City Mission 2, young Pacific male (1)].

Immigrant participants’ narratives frame voting as a reflection of their feeling of belonging to society. This framing supports the use of migrant voter turnout as one of the measures of migrant integration. Migrant participants pointed to many factors that influence this feeling of belonging, for example the quality of interactions with the host-country population or the assumptions about migrants reflected in policies (such as educational pathways available to them). Such factors are very difficult to measure. However, access to the labour market and to business opportunities was a prominent factor in participants’ feelings of being wanted and appreciated (or not) by the host society. Such access, which can be measured by migrant labour market outcomes, can be used as an (imperfect) proxy of belonging when constructing the composite indicator.
7.4. Analysis and recommendations

Data from focus groups support the hypotheses that emotional costs of voting can arise from discriminatory practices of election officials (H14); the symbolism of the voting place and voting act (H16), such as what is allowed or disallowed when voting (H24); and how this clashes or not with one’s culture and self-expression and the quality of interaction with other state institutions, especially welfare (H21). This is linked to the framing of citizens by these agencies (H15); for migrants, the policy discourse within migration and citizenship policy has a similar effect (H23).

Similarly to Table 5 in the previous chapter, Table 6 aims to visually represent the intensity of discussion on different factors across focus groups, without an attempt to quantify the findings.

| Table 6. Visual summary of focus group data on factors relevant to risk, emotional and identity costs |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                 | Young (NZ SE)                                   | Low-socioeconomic (NZ SE)                         | Migrant (NZ SE)                                   |
| H14 Practices of election officials perceived as discriminatory                               | x / /                                          | x x /                                          | / / /                                           |
| H15 Exclusive framing of citizenship in policy discourse                                     | / / X                                          | / / /                                          | x x x                                           |
| H16 Symbolism of the voting place and voting act                                               | x x /                                          | / / /                                          | / / /                                           |
| H17 Public access to electoral roll data                                                       | x / x x                                        | / / /                                          | x / /                                           |
| H20 Restrictive attitudes and norms related to data privacy                                     | x / x x                                        | / / /                                          | x / /                                           |
| H21 Negative experiences with other state institutions, especially welfare                   | x x /                                          | x x /                                          | / / x x                                         |
| H22 Distrust towards the state (which may be reflected in data infrastructure)                | x x /                                          | x x /                                          | x / /                                           |
| H23 Limited access to citizenship/voting rights                                                | n/a n/a                                        | n/a n/a                                        | / x x x                                         |
| H24 Limitations of self-expression when voting                                                 | x x x                                          | / / /                                          | x / /                                           |

Legend: / – Not mentioned
n/a – Not applicable
x – Few participants mentioned this
xx – A lot of participant mentioned this
xxx – Overwhelming majority of participants talked about this
NZ – New Zealand; SE - Sweden
The prominence of the role of emotions in voting in focus group data was a surprise because the relative scarcity of research on such costs could suggest that they are not important. The interview guide did not include direct questions about belonging or structural discrimination, yet many participants chose to talk about these themes in more detail than about practical costs of voting such as being too busy. For many participants, voting or non-voting was how they expressed their identity and their belonging or non-belonging to society, state or their social group. Acting against this identity would be uncomfortable. The voting place emerges from participants’ narratives as a site where the voter’s place in society can be constructed or confirmed. This finding supports the need for more research on the emotional costs of voting and their inclusion into the framework of costs of voting.

Focus group data also support all the hypotheses about risk perceptions being influenced by access to electoral roll data (H17); beliefs and attitudes arising from interactions with other state institutions (H21); societal attitudes towards data and privacy (H20); and the institutionalised data infrastructure which reflects these attitudes (H22). The difference in participants’ attitudes towards the public electoral roll in New Zealand and Sweden illuminates the contribution of the comparative method to understanding barriers to voting. If we were looking at the New Zealand case in isolation, it would be easy to conclude that the public electoral roll is to blame for the non-enrolment of a segment of the population. However, comparing data from New Zealand and Sweden forces us to question these conclusions and to look at contextual factors. Such factors include trust towards the state, privacy norms and having debts that are with collection agencies (something that appeared uncommon among Swedish participants).

The recommendations informed by focus group material on emotional costs and risk as barriers to voting are as follows. First, poll workers need to be trained so that they are respectful and sensitive towards minority groups and competent in procedures specific to these groups, such as the Māori roll. This recommendation is obvious and has full support of all election officials I talked to. However, the short-term, periodic character of public-facing election jobs and high turnover of poll workers from election to election are a disincentive to investing more in their training. Apart from investing more in poll worker training, an alternative solution would be to automate parts of the process of voting and thus minimise the potential for human error or prejudice. For example, voters could answer questions about their electorate and type of electoral roll by choosing options on a touchscreen of a computer which would then print the correct ballot paper for them. A poll worker would oversee the process and confirm voters’ identity, but this poll
worker’s possible lack of knowledge about the Māori roll or Māori electorate names would have limited impact on the voter’s experience.

Second, electoral management bodies should increase their consultation with and research about low-turnout groups. Such research should include an assessment of potential for disparate impact of new procedures or policies on different groups of voters. Such research could also identify voters’ beliefs that specific procedures were designed to keep specific groups of voters from voting and enable a discussion to address these beliefs. Communities could be consulted more to explore how to broaden opportunities for celebration and self-expression in voting while ensuring integrity and secrecy of the vote. Consultation with affected communities should take place especially in cases when a breach of electoral regulation is linked to mobilisation and potentially increased turnout. In such cases (like the selfie ban), finding a solution in consultation with the affected communities could prevent feelings of being disrespected among members of these communities. The main barrier to implementing these recommendations is cost, although norms can also play a role. The employees of the New Zealand Electoral Commission whom I interviewed expressed strong support for the restrained, dignified atmosphere of voting backed by the current regulations. They linked this restraint to New Zealand culture and values and noted that it has a lot of support among the general public, as evidenced by complaints from voters who objected to young people taking photos in the voting place.

Third, more research is needed on how voting is framed and understood by different groups of voters. If some of these meanings do not facilitate voter turnout (for example, voting framed as conformism and support for the state apparatus), advertising and education could challenge these interpretations and replace them with something more conducive to voting. Election administration has no control over the institutions that incite negative feelings towards the state in some voters. Nonetheless, if election administration has funding for campaigns promoting the vote, it can attempt to change the meanings some voters assign to the act of voting. These meanings matter and the framing used in campaigns should be carefully considered. In New Zealand, the voting campaign before the 2017 General Election compared voting to everyday choices such as whether to snooze or to get up, or whether to wear dirty or clean underwear. The tagline read that we ‘vote every day’. This campaign framed voting as a private choice made primarily for one’s own individual benefit.81 It did little to appeal to the need for ‘more social’ and ‘being a part of something greater’ reported by participants. The 2014 television and poster

campaign showed faces of diverse people morphing into each other and saying that each vote is equal and equally powerful.\textsuperscript{82} The visual layer could be interpreted as voting leaving no space for uniqueness and individual self-expression (which, for some participants cited above, was important).

Fourth, to remedy the privacy fears, which for some voters constitute a barrier to voter enrolment in New Zealand, there are two possible approaches: addressing the procedure or addressing the contextual factors. The first solution, to change the procedure, would require limiting public access to the electoral roll and reducing the amount of information requested when enrolling to vote. Such changes would be relatively easy to implement because they do not require adding new infrastructure. However, such reforms may not be enough to assuage the fears of some eligible voters. Several participants in New Zealand expressed a lack of trust towards the state. These participants believed that other state agencies can access the electoral roll, including the unpublished roll, even if officially this is against the law. People who do not believe that the state is obeying its own laws would likely meet a restriction of access to the electoral roll with similar cynicism.

\textit{They won't say oh, that's the electoral one, we're not gonna go in there}. Because you see it all the time on the TV, these fellows that are breaking the law all the time and Judith Collins is a classic example [City Mission 1, Māori male (4)].

The second solution to tackle the electoral roll privacy fears is by addressing contextual factors, namely removing the reasons why some voters do not want to have their details published. There are two ways to approach this. The first approach is to remove electors’ reasons to hide. For example, policies could aim to reduce the number of people with debts in collection or to make the welfare system less intrusive and de-link welfare entitlements from relationship status. This would be, however, a radical and politically difficult systemic change which is not likely to happen in the short term. The second option aimed at contextual factors would be to restructure the system so that hiding by non-enrolment does not work. This could be implemented by introducing automatic voter enrolment which effectively enforces mandatory enrolment. If the decision to enrol is no longer the voter’s decision, then it cannot be influenced by voter’s fears and beliefs. Non-enrolment as hiding could also be rendered ineffective by greater access to personal data by agencies or third parties across the whole administrative system, similarly to the Swedish model. This solution would however go against New Zealand norms of privacy and personal data

protection and would likely be met with protests. Overall, the fears about the misuse of electoral roll data appear to be a serious barrier to enrolment and, by extension, voting for a subgroup of population that is usually also disadvantaged in socioeconomic terms. Therefore, my recommendation is to further explore one or more of the options outlined above and implement changes which would reduce non-enrolment due to data misuse fears.

Finally, the perceptions of risk among migrants could be addressed by education. The concentration of voting-related fears among participants from Chinese backgrounds among the diverse New Zealand migrant participants suggests that this education should be tailored to address different ethnic groups’ preconceptions about political participation.

Many of the feelings participants talked about were sparked by institutions that are beyond the control of election administration. This suggests that policies to increase voter turnout should not be limited to voting procedures, like in the case of convenience voting. Such policies should take into account the impacts of the broader institutional environment like, for example, the welfare state. I will aim to reflect this in the choice of indices for the composite indicator.

Focus group data discussed here and in the preceding chapter illustrate the utility of a holistic approach to costs of voting which examines not only electoral procedures, but also the context of voters’ lives and the interdependence between institutions. Inspired by sociological institutionalism, this research shows the utility of open-ended qualitative methods in identifying causal mechanisms linked to voters’ lived experience. For example, events in voters’ lives seemingly unrelated to voting, such as having a debt in collection, can affect some voters’ enrolment decisions. Showing the existence of such causal mechanisms does not inform us about their prevalence or impact on aggregate-level enrolment and turnout. However, these findings contribute to the field by providing a starting point for further research that uses methods able to quantify these impacts, such as surveys.83 Inspired by historical institutionalism, the comparative case study combined with focus group data helps to explain why the same procedure (public electoral roll) may have a different effect in different institutional contexts. Case studies trace the historical origins of these different contexts, such as the existence of a population register. This tracing, in turn, illustrates how institutional inertia constrains what is possible in terms of electoral reform. The interdependence between institutions can result in both positive and negative synergies. An example of the latter is the ignorance of some poll officials in New Zealand with

83 The questions of who is not enrolled and how does the non-enrolled population differ from the enrolled population are important for the representativeness of samples drawn from the electoral roll, which are used by many researchers.
regard to Māori electorates. This harm caused by ignorance is magnified in the context of a highly mobile population and a territory-based electoral system with two electoral rolls.

Overall, the above findings support the case for holistic study of election administration in addition to studies focused on a single procedure or set of procedures, which currently dominate the field. Studies which take a broader view and combine more than one theoretical approach can provide new insights. A major insight in this case is the extent to which factors that are under control of election administration interact with factors generated by the broader institutional environment and voters’ lives to generate the costs of voting. At the same time, qualitative data show that many of the hypotheses discussed in US-based literature hold in the proportional electoral systems of New Zealand and Sweden. These commonalities in costs of voting across different countries suggest that cross-national comparisons are possible, even if they come at a cost of losing sight of the policy context. In the following chapter, in which I construct a composite indicator of the cost of voting, I attempt to integrate these ‘local’ cost factors that are under the control of election administration and the ‘global’ cost factors generated by the broader institutional environment. I also attempt to disaggregate the different categories of costs of voting which were supported by focus group data.
Chapter 8: Towards the Cost of Voting Indicator (CoVI)

On election day before 7pm you cannot conduct an opinion poll, deliver election material by post or hand, take part in any election-related demonstration or procession. All election signs and billboards must be removed by midnight on 22 September (the day before election day) at the latest. Sign-written vehicles that include a candidate or party name, emblem, slogan or logo should not be displayed on election day before 7pm. Vehicles with bumper stickers promoting a candidate or party should also be kept out of public view. Flags with a party emblem, slogan or logo should not be displayed on vehicles. Clothing with slogans or logos that promote a party or candidate must not be displayed on election day. Contacting potential voters on election day to remind them it is election day and to offer assistance to get to the voting place is allowed. However, canvassers are not allowed to say or do anything which encourages potential voters to vote, or not to vote, for a candidate or party. Candidates should not canvass voters on election day. Any election-related polling is prohibited on election day before 7pm. The election day rules apply to content published online that may influence how voters should or should not vote, including content on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. The election day rules make no exemption for the expression of personal political views online.

'I don’t think you want to do that', Stuff, 23 September 2017

8.1. Using qualitative data to inform a composite indicator

Qualitative data from the preceding chapters speak to the importance of time and place when investigating the costs of voting. However, not all audiences are able or willing to engage with qualitative research. This chapter aims to illustrate and model a translation of qualitative findings into the quantitative language of composite indicators. Composite indicators reduce rich information to one number, like the complexities of a student’s performance in a university course are reduced to the final grade. This inevitable loss of information is a trade-off: such reduction enables expanding the scope of analysis to include more countries and to investigate their similarity and difference at a different level of abstraction, which may uncover new regularities. Thus, this chapter uses a different lens to investigate the question of best practices in election administration.

The qualitative part of this research identified a number of factors that exacerbate or ameliorate barriers to voting and the cost of voting for young, low-socioeconomic and migrant voters. These include the extent of civic education in schools and in migrant introduction programmes; residential and occupational segregation of migrant and low-socioeconomic populations; access to learning the language of the host country for migrants and use of community languages; spatial availability of voting places and convenience of access; automatic voter registration; norms and regulations regarding privacy of personal data; trust in the state; indebtedness; receipt of means-tested benefits; cultural sensitivity in the voting process; time to establish voting rights; framing of migrants in public policy; and perceived limits on political expression. The complexity of these themes presents a challenge for investigations into the perceived costs of voting across countries. In this chapter, I will construct a composite CoVI which attempts to capture at least some of the factors above.

The utility of the qualitative part of this thesis goes beyond identifying these influences. The comparative case study and focus group data help to address some of the methodological issues of composite indicator construction. Composite indicators are often criticised for being an ‘exercise in measurement without a theoretical underpinning’ (Freudenberg, 2003, 29). However, in this case, the theoretical underpinning is provided by the literature and qualitative results discussed above. Further, the availability and accuracy of data have been major obstacles to comparisons of election administration (Blais, 2007, 627). The main sources of difficulties are the scattering of regulations across multiple legal acts, a lack of information on implementation and differences in definitions of procedures and processes (Gerken 2009, Massicotte et al. 2004). Also, the same laws or requirements, such as voter identification requirements, can represent a different level of burden depending on the local context, such as how costly it is to obtain identification (Schaffer and Wang, 2009). Here, the qualitative part of the study suggests which characteristics of the context and which characteristics of the procedures matter more than others. This, in turn, facilitates a careful selection of a limited number of variables rather than the inclusion of all available variables.

In some cases, participants’ narratives suggest that details of implementation are not very important for the perceived costs of voting. For example, the availability of advance voting matters rather the period when it is available, because the cost-reducing influence of advance voting comes mostly from reminding potential voters about elections and making them more visible. Thus, advance voting can be treated as a dichotomous variable (i.e., advance voting is, or is not, available). In other cases, such as the choice of voting places, details of implementation
seem to be important, such as, for example, whether there is an assigned voting place for each voter and whether a procedure is required to vote elsewhere than the assigned place. This knowledge will aid in coding the selected variables.

Focus group data also support the inclusion of both procedure variables and policy context variables into the composite indicator. Qualitative research identified the role of some features of the broader institutional context in exacerbating the cost of voting. These characteristics of the broader institutional context could be treated as exogenous variables. However, Appleby and Mulligan (2000, 15) make a case for including such variables and not treating them as confounding if they can be influenced by parts of the government other than the part that is being assessed (in this case, election administration). Such variables, which I will call policy context variables, are the economic, demographic and social characteristics of the country—variables that are affected by state policies in the long term, such as the unemployment rate. However, such characteristics cannot be directly and instantly controlled by the state due to their complexity and multiple causes. This lack of direct and immediate control distinguishes policy context variables from procedure variables. Procedure variables are specific policies legislated and implemented by the state, which are limited in scope and can be changed relatively easily if there is political will to do so. Examples include advance voting procedures or the conditions attached to gaining citizenship.

Here, I review the categories of cost of voting identified in the qualitative part of this research (time, information, identity and risk) and explore how they can be measured.

8.2. Selecting variables (indicators)

Results from the focus groups suggest that the reason time is a barrier to voting is more due to the overall busyness of the voter rather than to an absolute lack of time on Election Day. This busyness hinders educating oneself about voting and politics and may lead to forgetting about voting. Thus, time and information costs are related and will be merged in the same category (Time is represented as ‘T’ and Information as ‘IN’).

Based on participants’ opinions, voting procedures that reduce voters’ burden of spending time, planning and remembering include (T1) automatic voter registration and (T2) a lack of identification requirements. The burden is also reduced when (T3) advance voting is available to

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85 In both countries used as case studies, there is no mandatory voter identification requirement, so participants commented little on it directly. However, having identification when voting requires additional
all with no need for justification, (T4) there is ability to vote in any place in the country without a prior procedure and (IN1) individually addressed voting cards or notifications are delivered to voters before elections. Reliable data on these indicators for all countries from the dataset can be obtained from Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Electoral Knowledge Network and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and respective countries’ electoral management bodies. The measurement of these procedures is relatively straightforward. They can be coded as presence or absence, and where implementation matters, it is clear which implementation results in lower burden for the voter.

Focus group data also suggest (reflecting what we know from literature) that the cost of information is greatly ameliorated by (IN2) civic education in schools. However, measuring civic education is not straightforward because the content of curricula and the implementation of these curricula are complex. Nonetheless, this factor is too important to be left out from the current discussion. Therefore, I will use the expert assessment of the priority of civic education in education policy from the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (Schulz et al., 2009). The ICCS assessment takes into account not just the official curriculum, but also contextual data such as teacher qualifications and support from the school environment. Because the latest available ICCS data is 8 years old, this is a lower quality indicator compared to other procedural variables. As such, the quality of this indicator will be taken into account when assigning weights to variables.

Data from focus groups also suggest that the cost of time and information in voting are more of a burden when people are preoccupied with economic survival, have untypical work patterns, need to look for a new job frequently or work long hours. Although these could be called structural factors, they are influenced by government policies and are a reflection of these policies (Appleby and Mulligan, 2000, 15). Therefore, these indicators will be included in the policy context variable category. Their inclusion will act as a control – if the broader institutional context generates higher costs of voting, electoral procedures should take these existing costs into account and the final cost of voting can be assessed only by looking at how well these procedures perform in a given context. To represent these consequences of the broader institutional and policy environment, the following indicators will be used: (TC1) poverty rate, (TC2) unemployment rate, (TC3) mean planning which has been shown to be a hindrance in the case of other procedures (such as voter registration). Based on this extrapolation and studies from countries that have mandatory identification requirements, identification requirements are included among indicators.

86 A procedure that can be completed at the same time and place where the vote is cast does not require additional planning or additional trips. As such, it does not count as ‘prior procedure’.
hours worked per week and (TC4)% of temporary employment. Recent data on these items are drawn from the OECD and the International Labour Organization (ILO) databases (International Labour Organization, 2017, OECD, 2017).

There are several other indicators linked to time and information costs, the inclusion of which is supported by data. However, their inclusion is not feasible due to the lack of data or the difficulty in measuring these constructs. Such indicators include the visibility of voting places, which is hard to measure, or the use of migrant languages in the enrolment and voting process. The latter would be difficult to code into a meaningful variable given the diversity in the number and size of immigrant minorities in different countries, the number of languages used and the different stages of the voting process where these languages are used or not. The same applies to introductory programmes for migrants.

Another indicator relevant to the migrant experience of the information cost of voting could include the degree of contact with locals or with other migrants who have been in the host country for a long time. Unfortunately, this type of contact is difficult to measure. Census data may capture ethnic clustering or the percentage of migrants who have lived in the host country for more than 10 years. However, these numbers do not tell us who these migrants associate with. Data from focus groups in New Zealand show that, even in a country with low ethnic residential segregation, some migrants may feel isolated due to occupational segregation or not being included in conversations about politics. As such, the link between residential segregation and lack of access to information is not straightforward. Another problem with data on ethnic segregation or clustering is that the reasons for this clustering are unclear: there are affluent migrant neighbourhoods where migrants voluntarily choose to live and such clusters do not necessarily reflect isolation. A cross-national study of migrants’ social networks could address the gap left by the exclusion of the residential segregation factor, but such a study covering all countries in the dataset is currently unavailable.

Apart from the practical costs of time and information, the analysis of qualitative data identified several emotional or identity costs. Participants’ narratives suggest that the exclusion from voting of groups of people, such as prisoners or migrants, may discursively construct the meaning of voting as something exclusive, only for ‘real’ or ‘respectable’ citizens. This constructed meaning of voting may be a deterrent, linked to an identity cost, for some electors who are eligible to vote, yet nonetheless identify with groups that are ineligible to vote. Thus, (ID1) whether there are provisions in law to exclude people convicted for criminal acts from voting and (ID2) how easy it is for migrants to obtain citizenship will be used as indicators in this category. In the case of
prisoner/criminal disenfranchisement, because it is the presence or absence of exclusion that counts in constructing the meaning of voting, the indicator will be binary and will reflect the absence or presence of any exclusion from voting on grounds of criminal conviction (Dothan, 2017). Measuring how easy it is to obtain citizenship is more complex. Typically, obtaining citizenship is linked to a number of requirements that can be configured in different ways. Therefore, similar to the case of civic education in the previous section, an expert assessment will be used; namely, the Access to Nationality indicator from the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). All countries in the dataset except for New Zealand require citizenship to vote in national elections, but New Zealand’s score of Access to Nationality in MIPEX is very high, so the use of this score as a proxy for the degree of inclusiveness of political participation is appropriate.

Low-socioeconomic participants’ experiences with the welfare system affected how they saw their relationship with the state and how willing they were to engage in voluntary contact with the state, such as voting. The quality of experience with the welfare system is difficult to measure, but the generosity of the welfare system can be used as a proxy for favourable treatment of beneficiaries. Such generosity also indirectly reflects the public attitudes towards claimants, which may be a factor in the claimants feeling excluded or not. Thus, the indicator that will be used is (ID3) social spending as percentage of GDP (OECD, 2017). For migrant participants, integration into the job market was an important factor, which made them feel part of the host society and thus entitled to use their right to vote; differences between foreign-born and native-born unemployment rates (IC1) reflect the difficulty in migrants’ access to this market. For those who are native-born, a similar measure of integration for young people used here is the rate of NEETs (IC2), people between the ages of 15 and 24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) (ILOStat 2016).

Again, there are indicators in the category of emotional and identity costs which are difficult to include or may not be justified. The limitations on campaigning and behaviour during voting were a source of feelings of exclusion for some young New Zealand participants. Yet, similar to the diversity of migrant introduction programmes, the diversity of these limitations is so complex that coding them in a way that enables meaningful comparison would require a separate study. Also, privacy concerns related to being enrolled—concerns that have been identified in New Zealand—are not relevant to the majority of the countries in the dataset which have automatic voter enrolment. In such countries, the choice to enrol is not the voters’ and thus will not be influenced

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by the voters’ perception of the risk related to being enrolled. The finding that the public electoral roll is a deterrent for some New Zealand voters remains a useful finding in the context of New Zealand politics, with consequences for recommendations for New Zealand policymakers. However, this finding does not transfer well to other countries in the dataset. Therefore, including a variable related to voter list privacy into the indicator is not justified.

The above classification of indicators into the categories of Time/Information and Identity/Emotion, and Procedures and Policy Context allows us to investigate specific subcomponents of the composite indicator, such as time and information costs only, when it is more appropriate than looking at the whole composite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. The subcategories of indicators.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time/Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T1) automatic voter registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T2) a lack of identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T3) advance voting available to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with no need for justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T4) the ability to vote in any place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the country without a prior procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IN1) delivering individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addressed voting cards or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notifications to voters before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IN2) civic education in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy context</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC1) poverty rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC2) unemployment rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC3) mean hours worked per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC4) percent of temporary employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 above lists the variables assigned to different subcategories. Table 8 lists all the variables, their names in the dataset and their transformation and coding, if any. To be able to aggregate these indicators into a composite indicator, variables need to be unidirectional: a higher (or lower) value of each variable must consistently mean a higher (or lower) cost of voting. Because the aim
of CoVI is to reflect the cost of voting, it is appropriate for higher values to reflect a higher cost of voting. The coding of procedures and the names of the variables in the dataset follow from this choice. Also, two variables where a higher value means a lower cost of voting (IC1 – rate of social spending and ID2 - how easy it is to obtain citizenship) were transformed to reverse their direction while preserving the distances between cases.

In the whole dataset (see Appendix B), there was only one instance of a missing variable: Germany did not take part in the ICCS 2009 survey. Assessing the priority of civic education in Germany’s education policy was complicated by the fact that Germany is a federal country and how civic education is implemented varies across Länder. However, taking into account that civic education is a separate subject in German schools (although it can have different names) and the existence of the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung), I decided to insert the value ‘high’ into the dataset (Händle, 2003, 5).
Table 8. The list of variables proposed to include in the composite indicator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator description and code as in the text above</th>
<th>Name in dataset</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(T1) voter registration</td>
<td>TM_Reg_Voter_Initiated</td>
<td>ACE Electoral Knowledge Database, 2017; OSCE country reports&lt;sup&gt;88&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0 – passive (automatic) voter registration&lt;br&gt;1 – voter-initiated voter registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T2) identification requirements when voting</td>
<td>TM_ID_Required</td>
<td>OSCE country reports</td>
<td>0 – no identification requirements&lt;br&gt;1 – identification may be requested&lt;br&gt;2 – identification necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T3) advance voting</td>
<td>TM_No_Advance_Vote</td>
<td>ACE Electoral Knowledge Database, 2017</td>
<td>0 – advance voting available with no justification&lt;br&gt;1 – limited access to advance voting (requires justification, special conditions)&lt;br&gt;2 – not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T4) the ability to vote in any place in the country without a prior procedure</td>
<td>TM_Voting_Place_Limited</td>
<td>OSCE country reports</td>
<td>0 – possible to vote in any place in the country without a prior procedure&lt;br&gt;1 – vote in any place in the country without a prior procedure during advance voting only&lt;br&gt;2 – cannot vote in any place in the country without a prior procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IN1) delivering individually addressed voting cards or notifications to voters before elections</td>
<td>IN_No_Notification</td>
<td>OSCE country reports</td>
<td>0 – notification is sent out&lt;br&gt;1 – no notification sent out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(IN2) civic education in schools</td>
<td>IN_Low_Civic</td>
<td>Schulz et al., 2009</td>
<td>0 – high priority 1 – medium priority 2 – low priority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC1) poverty rate</td>
<td>TM_Poverty</td>
<td>OECD (2017) POVERTY variable; 2013 data except for Finland (2014), New Zealand (2012)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC2) unemployment rate</td>
<td>TM_Unemployment</td>
<td>OECD (2017) UNEMP variable (2016 Q4)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC3) mean hours worked per week</td>
<td>TM_Mean_Hrs_Work</td>
<td>International Labour Organization (2017); 2016 data except for New Zealand (2015)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TC4) percent of temporary employment</td>
<td>TM_Temp_Employment</td>
<td>OECD (2017), TEMPEMP variable; 2015 data; Statistics New Zealand (December 2012 quarter)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ID1) whether there are provisions in law to exclude people convicted for criminal acts from voting</td>
<td>ID_Prisoner_Disenfranchisement</td>
<td>Dothan (2017)</td>
<td>0 – no restrictions 1 - there are restrictions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ID2) how easy it is for migrants to obtain citizenship</td>
<td>ID_Limit_Nationality_Access</td>
<td>‘Access to Nationality’ indicator from MIPEX (Migration Policy Group and Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, 2015); (deducted from 100 to reverse direction)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IC1) social spending as percentage of GDP</td>
<td>ID_Low_Social_Spending</td>
<td>OECD (2017) 2016 data, SOCEXP variable (deducted from 100 to reverse direction)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IC2) difference between foreign-born and native-born unemployment</td>
<td>ID_Unemployment_Difference</td>
<td>OECD/EU (2015) Figure 5.7; 2012-13 data</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IC3) NEET rate</td>
<td>ID_NEET</td>
<td>ILOSTAT (International Labour Organization, 2017), 2016 data</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3. Exploring the dataset and constructing the composite indicator

The next step after the choice of variables is to explore the dataset and familiarise oneself with its structure, to be able to make informed choices in further stages of composite indicator construction. Following methodological considerations discussed in an earlier chapter, I endeavour to be maximally transparent in the process of indicator construction and all the choices made during this process.

First, the variables in the dataset were tested for correlation, to avoid problems with co-linearity (Nardo et al., 2005, 32). Pearson’s and Spearman’s correlations identified the same 13 pairs of significantly correlated variables, with slight differences in the strength of correlation depending on the method used; Pearson detected 3 additional correlated pairs. These correlations are presented in Table 9.
Table 9. Correlations between variables in the CoVI dataset (significant correlations only).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1</th>
<th>Variable 2</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient (Spearman’s rho)</th>
<th>Pearson</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID_Neet_Rate</td>
<td>TM_Poverty</td>
<td>.609*</td>
<td>.622*</td>
<td>2 context variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID_Neet_Rate</td>
<td>TM_Unemployment</td>
<td>.706**</td>
<td>.686**</td>
<td>2 context variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Mean_Hrs_Work</td>
<td>TM_No_Advance_Vote</td>
<td>-.505*</td>
<td>-.564*</td>
<td>Procedure-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Mean_Hrs_Work</td>
<td>TM_Voting_Place_Limited</td>
<td>.628**</td>
<td>.650**</td>
<td>Procedure-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Mean_Hrs_Work</td>
<td>IN_No_Notification</td>
<td>.734**</td>
<td>.756**</td>
<td>Procedure-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Mean_Hrs_Work</td>
<td>TM_ID_Required</td>
<td>.691**</td>
<td>.692**</td>
<td>Procedure-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_No_Advance_Vote</td>
<td>TM_Voting_Place_Limited</td>
<td>-.645**</td>
<td>-.588*</td>
<td>2 procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_No_Advance_Vote</td>
<td>IN_No_Notification</td>
<td>-.774**</td>
<td>-.801**</td>
<td>2 procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID_Unemployment_Difference</td>
<td>TM_Reg_Voter_Initiated</td>
<td>-.573*</td>
<td>-.546*</td>
<td>Procedure-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID_Unemployment_Difference</td>
<td>ID_Low_Social_Spending</td>
<td>-.744**</td>
<td>-.762**</td>
<td>Procedure-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Reg_Voter_Initiated</td>
<td>ID_Low_Social_Spending</td>
<td>.538*</td>
<td>.573*</td>
<td>Procedure-context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Voting_Place_Limited</td>
<td>TM_ID_Required</td>
<td>.672**</td>
<td>.737**</td>
<td>2 procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_ID_Required</td>
<td>ID_Limit_Nationality_Access</td>
<td>.578*</td>
<td>.542*</td>
<td>2 procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Poverty</td>
<td>TM_Unemployment</td>
<td>.574*</td>
<td>.666**</td>
<td>2 context variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_Reg_Voter_Initiated</td>
<td>TM_ID_Required</td>
<td>.573*</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM_ID_Required</td>
<td>IN_Low_Civic</td>
<td>-.514*</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
There are three types of correlations evident here: between two procedure variables, between two policy context variables and between a procedure variable and a policy context variable. Procedure variables provide unambiguous information about the existence (and sometimes type of implementation) of a specific procedure. Therefore, correlations between such variables do not mean an overlap of information, but rather, suggest clustering of countries around specific sets of electoral procedures. This clustering does not warrant removing any variables from the dataset. The second type of correlation is between a policy variable and a context variable. Such correlation implies that a specific procedure occurs more often in countries with specific economic, demographic or social characteristics. In this case, a causal relationship between the variables is possible. Some procedures might be introduced by countries in response to specific circumstances. For example, countries with high mean hours worked per week may introduce advance voting as a response to voters’ perceived lack of time or high opportunity cost of time. Yet, even if such a causal relationship exists (which cannot be proven), it is advantageous to include both variables into the composite indicator to reflect whether the contextual cost of voting is ameliorated by a specific policy. There is no overlapping information because, as discussed earlier, procedure variables and policy context variables provide information from different spheres.

Finally, the correlations where both variables are policy context variables are the most likely to provide overlapping information, because context variables are proxies for complex and possibly interrelated phenomena. For example, the youth NEET rate is strongly correlated with both poverty and unemployment, and there is also a correlation between unemployment and poverty. This multicollinearity effect warrants reducing the weights of the two variables TM_Unemployment and TM_Poverty, but not the removal of either one from the dataset, because each of the items include unique information: the poverty rate includes the working poor, whereas the unemployment rate includes unemployed people who are not poor. However, the NEET rate (which is correlated with both the poverty rate and the unemployment rate) seems superfluous and has been dropped from the analysis. Instead, poverty and unemployment will be context variables not just for the time and information costs, but also for the identity costs. Based on this analysis, the revised variables, and what they represent, are presented in Table 10.
The next step in analysing the structure of the dataset involved an exploration of the similarities between cases in order to cross-check the diversity of cases in the dataset and to identify outliers and clusters of similar cases. This diversity is important for the composite indicator to be meaningful. Further, exploring such clusters may aid in the interpretation of final composite indicator scores and provide insights useful for further comparative work. To these ends, I used cluster analysis using the Single Linkage (SLINK, Nearest Neighbour) clustering method, which is the most commonly used approach and is not affected by the way variables are ordered (Nardo et al., 2005).\(^{89}\) To remove the

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\(^{89}\) Factor analysis is another explorative method often used at this stage (Nardo et al., 2005). However, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test shows that, in this dataset, there is too much diffusion in the pattern of correlations for factor analysis to be acceptable (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.344 whereas Kaiser (1974, 35) recommends values greater than 0.5 as acceptable).
effect of different scales, the variables for cluster analysis have been z-score standardised, that is described by the number of standard deviations from the mean of this variable in the dataset.

Figure 3. Dendrogram of cluster analysis of all variables.

Figure 3 shows the cluster dendrogram when all variables are included in the analysis. A Nordic cluster is visible (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) and a more diffuse cluster of neighbouring countries in continental Europe (Germany, Italy, Austria and Slovenia). Apart from these two clusters, there are no clearly defined groups, and Estonia and New Zealand are outliers. The distances between cases are large enough for the dataset to be assessed and diverse enough to rank countries on the values of the composite indicator.
When clustering on procedure variables only (Figure 4), more distinct groupings emerge, confirming that there are sets of procedures that are often implemented simultaneously. The concept of clusters of countries with similar policies is well-established in comparative enquiry. The policy affinities within such clusters tend to be explained either by aspects of territoriality such as shared language, history or culture (families of nations) or by structural, mainly socioeconomic, characteristics (regimes) (Castles and Obinger, 2008, 321). Castles and Obinger (2008, 335) use cluster analysis to identify policy clusters of a broad range of policy settings (none of these settings are related to election administration). Their cluster analysis produces the following policy clusters 1) continental, which

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See Castles and Obinger (2008, 324) for a review and discussion of comparative literature that uses clustering.
includes, among others, Austria, Germany and Italy; 2) Nordic (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway); 3) Southern Europe (Spain, Greece); 4) New Worlds (English-speaking settler countries); and 5) post-communist (Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Czech Republic). The clusters in Figure 4, based on selected administrative procedures, show a lot of similarity with the Castles and Obinger clusters, and the Nordic and Continental clusters are replicated. This similarity supports the argument that election administration is embedded in broader institutional arrangements and historical legacies of a country, as illustrated earlier in the discussion of the two case studies, New Zealand and Sweden. This, in turn, suggests that election administration should be studied in the context of these settings rather than just as a set of procedures. The clusters in Figure 4 also contain cases clustered in ways that do not reflect the traditional regime or territorial groupings (highlighted in Table 11). These exceptions would be interesting to study further in order to examine the trajectories that led to the current set of policies. Although such study is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is one of the many possible directions for future research in comparative election administration studies. The clusters can also be helpful in the choice of cases for future comparative case studies in election administration.

Table 11. Clusters with highlighted exceptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nordic</th>
<th>Continental European</th>
<th>Post-communist New Worlds</th>
<th>English-speaking New Worlds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Czech Rep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having completed relevant adjustments and having explored the dataset, the next step of constructing the composite indicator can begin (namely, making choices on how to standardise, weight and aggregate data). Because the dataset contains non-comparable data measured on different scales, the data need to be standardised, that is translated into the same scale. The most common methods used are min-max and z-score standardisation. For this dataset, z-score seems more suitable because the final scaling is less dependent on extreme values than min-max (but at the same time, such extreme values have enough of an impact to highlight top and bottom performers). Nonetheless, I construct

---

91 I am listing only the countries which are also present in my dataset.
92 The variables are not spread out enough to use a logarithmic transformation.
variants of the composite indicator using both methods of standardisation to later investigate the impact of the choice of standardisation method on the final output in uncertainty analysis.

The choice of weights and the aggregation method is the final step in constructing the indicator. Although it is common to choose equal weights for all components, such an approach risks creating an unbalanced indicator, especially if (like in this case) some sub-themes in the dataset have more variables than do other themes (Freudenberg, 2003, 29). A common way to deal with such lack of balance is to assign equal weights to sub-themes and to distribute weights equally within these sub-themes (Freudenberg, 2003, 29). Finally, weights can be assigned based on the researcher’s understanding of their relative importance, which is the approach that I have taken here. Nonetheless, variants of the composite indicator using the two other methods of weights distribution mentioned earlier were constructed to demonstrate the robustness of these analyses to alternative specifications (Table 12).
Table 12. Weighting variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (sub-theme)</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Equal weights</th>
<th>Equal weights - categories</th>
<th>Researcher-assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedure/time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_No_Advance_Vote</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_Reg_Voter_Initiated</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_VotingPlace_Limited</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_ID_Required</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total weights</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 (25%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 (20%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>8 (22.22%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure/information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IN_No_Notification</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>6 (16.66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IN_Low_Civic</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total weights</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 (12.5%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 (20%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>8 (22.22%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy context/time and information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_Mean_Hrs_Work</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>2.75 (7.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_Temp_Employment</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>2.75 (7.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_Poverty</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_Unemployment</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total weights</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 (25%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 (20%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 (16.66%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure/identity and emotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID_Prisoner_Disenfranchisement</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>4 (6.66%)</td>
<td>3 (8.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID_Limit_Nationality_Access</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>4 (6.66%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID_Low_Social_Spending</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>4 (6.66%)</td>
<td>3 (8.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total weights</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 (18.75%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 (20%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>8 (22.22%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy context/identity and emotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID_Unemployment_Difference</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>4 (6.66%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_Poverty</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>4 (6.66%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TM_Unemployment</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>4 (6.66%)</td>
<td>2 (5.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total weights</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 (18.75%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 (20%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 (16.66%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>16 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>60 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>36 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because the focus of CoVI is to show how well the state performs in making voting low-cost, the weighting variant I assigned for categories that include procedure indicators (which are easier to control by the state) will be given more weight than context categories. Each of the policy context categories will receive a budget of 6 points and each of the procedure categories 8 points. These points will be distributed equally within these categories unless there is a reason for an unequal distribution.

One reason for unequal distribution is the quality of data. Most procedure variables in the dataset have reliable and up to date information, but there are exceptions. The last available data on the priority of civic education from the ICCS study at the time of writing this chapter are from 2009 and it is possible that some of these data are out of date. Also, the IN_Low_Civic variable was the only variable in the dataset that had missing data. When imputing the missing data as described in an earlier section, it was impossible to conduct research as thorough as that conducted for other countries in the ICCS report. Therefore, despite civic education being an important factor, the quality of data warrants reducing the weight of this variable by half of the initial value assigned by equal distribution within the category. The weight of the other variable in the category increases accordingly to preserve the overall weight of the Procedure/information category. This reduction brings the weight of IN_Low_Civic to the same value as each of the four procedural variables in the Procedure/time category, preserving the importance of civic education even after the reduction of its weight.

The second case of a variable where a reduction in weight is warranted is access to citizenship (ID_Limit_Nationality_Access). This variable is a composite indicator rather than a description of a single procedure and, regardless of the high-quality of the data and methodology used in its construction, its theme is broader than what is relevant to CoVI. Therefore, the weight of ID_Limit_Nationality_Access will be reduced by one third from the initial value assigned by equal distribution within the category. Because there are three variables in the Procedure/identity and emotion category, a reduction of the weight of ID_Limit_Nationality_Access by one third leads to the same final weight as the IN_Low_Civic variable reduced above. The weight of the other variable in the category increases accordingly to preserve the overall weight of the Procedure/identity category.

Finally, the rates of poverty and unemployment are present in two context subcategories. This enables them to be included each time when calculating sub-indicators for time/information and identity/emotion costs. However, unless they are adjusted, they will be double-counted when calculating the composite indicator. Furthermore, it was established earlier that these two variables

93 For example, ‘access to nationality’ includes indicators such as protection against withdrawal of citizenship.
are correlated with each other and the information they provide partially overlaps. Participants’ narratives also suggest that these variables are important predominantly for feeling included in society (the identity category). These variables have some influence on the time and information costs, but the aspects of long work hours and the necessity to search for the next job often (related to temporary employment) were much more pronounced when participants were discussing time and information costs. Therefore, the weights of poverty and unemployment will be significantly reduced in the Context/time and information category and the weight of the other variable in the category will increase accordingly to preserve the overall weight of the category.

The aggregation methods in composite indicators are usually either additive (sum) or multiplicative (geometric mean). Because of limited overlap between variables (which was established earlier by examining the correlations), an additive method would be more adequate. Nonetheless, I again constructed variants of the composite indicator using both methods to investigate the impact of the aggregation method on the final output.

Considering different methods of standardisation, weighting and aggregation, we have arrived at the following set of 12 indicator variants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Normalisation</th>
<th>Weights</th>
<th>Aggregation</th>
<th>Name in SPSS file</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Equal weights</td>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>ZWeights0A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Equal categories</td>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>ZWeights1A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>ZWeights2A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Equal weights</td>
<td>Multiplicative</td>
<td>ZWeights0Geo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Equal categories</td>
<td>Multiplicative</td>
<td>ZWeights1Geo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Multiplicative</td>
<td>ZWeights2Geo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Min-max</td>
<td>Equal weights</td>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>MMWeights0A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Min-max</td>
<td>Equal categories</td>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>MMWeights1A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Min-max</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>MMWeights2A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Min-max</td>
<td>Equal weights</td>
<td>Multiplicative</td>
<td>MMWeights0Geo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Min-max</td>
<td>Equal categories</td>
<td>Multiplicative</td>
<td>MMWeights1Geo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Min-max</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Multiplicative</td>
<td>MMWeights2Geo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These variants have been constructed for the purpose of uncertainty analysis. Uncertainty analysis investigates the extent to which the different normalisation and weighting approaches affect countries’ ranks (Saisana et al., 2005, 308). Saisana et al. (2005, 321) argue that a careful analysis of uncertainties makes the comparison more robust, because the index ‘is no longer a magic number ... but reflects uncertainty and ambiguity in a more transparent and defensible fashion’.

In variants (4-6), a constant has been added to the standardised values to remove non-positive values.
Table 14 and Figure 5 show the effects of these different methods on ranking of the countries in the dataset.95

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant/Rank</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
<th>(9)</th>
<th>(10)</th>
<th>(11)</th>
<th>(12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are countries with a consistent rank across all variants, like Denmark at the top and Slovakia near the bottom of the ranking. Yet, for several countries, comparing the rankings across all methods shows a wide spread of ranks with a lot of rank overlap, as illustrated by the box plots in Figure 5. It can be seen from Table 14 that much of this inconsistency in ranks stems from the variants with min-max normalisation (6)-(12), especially the multiplicative variants (11) and (12). In min-max, normalised values are heavily dependent on minimum and maximum values and if these values are extreme or outliers, they affect the final output. Indeed, there are a number of variables with outliers in the dataset, such as a very high unemployment rate in Greece or high difficulty of achieving citizenship in Estonia.

Figure 5. Box plots of countries’ ranks (ordered by mean rank).

95 A low rank (1, 2…) means a lower cost of voting.
In contrast, the z-score method does not give such weight to minimum and maximum values. When using only z-score variants of the composite indicator, the ranking of countries is much more consistent (Figure 6). Table 14 also shows that, among the z-score variants, when the same weight is used, different aggregation methods result in minimal differences in ranks. It is the different weight choices that are responsible for the largest differences within z-score variants. Assigning equal weights to categories (variants 2, 5, 8, 11) produces the most outliers. This is unsurprising, given the unbalanced structure of this weighting method, which gives very high weights to two variables in the Procedure/information sub-category. Because the final choice of weights is informed by the findings from the prior stage of this research, it is appropriate that the choice of weights is the choice that matters the most for the final output. For the final version of the composite indicator, variant 3 will be used (z-score normalisation, weights assigned by the researcher, additive). Conducting the uncertainty analysis in this section has made the effects of this choice on the final composite indicator more transparent.

Figure 6. Box plots of countries’ ranks using z-score normalisation.
8.4. The CoVI rankings

Having selected the methods of aggregating the variables into a composite indicator, it is now possible to calculate the values of CoVI for countries in the dataset and examine the resulting ranking. This ranking is presented in Table 15. Lower values of CoVI reflect lower costs of voting, so countries are ranked by CoVI value in increasing order. The ranking reflects the clusters we have seen earlier, with Nordic and Continental countries assembled at the top part of the ranking and South-European and post-communist countries at the bottom. A higher CoVI value (which is meant to reflect a higher cost of voting) is strongly negatively correlated with voter turnout (Pearson’s $r = -.798, p < .001$; Spearman’s rho = -.792, $p < .001$) and this correlation is stronger than any of the individual component indicators except for one (mean hours of work). This correlation does not imply causation and CoVI’s aim is to reflect the cost of voting encountered by voters from specific groups rather than of the whole electorate. Nonetheless, a lack of correlation could lead one to question whether the information captured by CoVI is relevant to voting and non-voting.
Table 15. The values of CoVI and countries’ ranks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>-23.80061957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>-11.54675132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>-11.45011478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>-11.17238037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>-10.72629196</td>
</tr>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Austria</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>-3.02229295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>-1.273265244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9.991382174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>20.36181691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>21.83730704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>24.54735642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Zealand and Sweden have very similar values of the main composite indicator (which supports their choice as similar cases); however, the qualitative exploration of these cases indicates that these values have been arrived at as a result of different combinations of CoVI’s sub-components. It is possible to construct sub-indices for the sub-themes of (1) procedural cost of voting (procedure variables only, CoVI-Procedures), (2) time and information cost of voting (procedure and policy context variables from the time and information category, CoVI-TimeInfo) and (3) identity/emotion cost of voting (procedural and policy context variables from the identity category, CoVI-Identity). This has been done in Table 16 and the lack of a significant correlation between the time/information and the identity sub-indicators confirms that these are separate and independent dimensions of CoVI.

Figure 7 presents countries’ CoVI-TimeInfo and CoVI-Identity values on a scatterplot, with countries that have a high ranking (top five) on the procedure index highlighted. Examining how countries rank according to these sub-indices will facilitate an informed interpretation of CoVI and perhaps suggest the most promising topics for qualitative research within cases. For example, if Italy is ranked 5th (out of 16) in two of the sub-indices but 11th in CoVI-Identity, this indicates that the most pronounced costs of voting in this case are in the emotion/identity category. Based on this, a researcher may choose to focus her or his qualitative research on this type of costs of voting.

Table 16. CoVI sub-indices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>CoVI Procedures</th>
<th>CoVI TimeInfo</th>
<th>CoVI Identity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

96 The fourth possible option, policy context variables only, is not of interest because it does not include an election administration component.
Denmark is a clear leader in the main CoVI, as well as all its sub-indices, and other Nordic countries are in the top 10 of all rankings. Detailed case studies of countries other than New Zealand and Sweden are outside the scope of this project, but the position of Denmark in the ranking warrants a cursory look at election administration in that country beyond the data in the CoVI dataset. Similar to Sweden, there are three levels of election administration with a lot of administration devolved to lower levels. It is possible that such decentralisation facilitates responding to voters’ needs because decisions are made by those who have direct contact with voters. An election observation report from OSCE comments that decentralisation to the level of municipality makes it easier to recruit poll workers by cooperating with local party organisations (OSCE/ODIHR, 19 September 2011, 2). Voter registration is automatic from the civil register (which is not public) and voting cards are sent out before elections. Homeless people are included on the basis of a fictitious address and can collect their voting cards from designated places (ibid. 6). This provision shows the administration’s proactive approach to making voting easy.

With the exception of Slovenia and Czech Republic, post-communist countries are consistently at the bottom. The case of Czech Republic shows a limitation of CoVI: the indicator does not capture very well the situation of groups that experience discrimination but are non-immigrant groups, or are a small part of the population, or are not well captured in available statistics. The Roma in Czech Republic are such a group (OSCE/ODIHR, 16 April 2010). The low (on average) ranking of post-communist countries may be in part due to election administration inherited from former communist
regimes. In these one-party states, elections did not serve to elect representatives, but rather, to test the mobilisation powers of the ruling party or to provide a ritualised demonstration of support for the ruling party (Sakwa and Crouch, 1978, 403). This was reflected in very high turnout rates, often close to 100% (Sakwa and Crouch, 1978, 417). In such circumstances, there was no incentive to design the voting process with voters’ convenience in mind.

Figure 7. A scatter plot of time/information and identity sub-indices (countries with high procedure ranking highlighted).

Spain is also an unusual case, because it ranks high on the procedure component, but the policies are not enough to ameliorate the influence of policy context indicators. Spain has very high values of temporary employment, difference between native- and foreign-born employment and poverty, and the standardisation method highlights these values which are far from each indicator’s average. The case of Spain shows that, for the composite CoVI, a good set of voting procedures is not enough when the broader context is very unfavourable. Because CoVI aims to measure the cost of voting for the voter, this effect is intended. However, to assess the aspects of the cost of voting over which the state
has the most direct and immediate control, inspection of the procedure sub-indicator is more appropriate.

Like all composite indicators, CoVI has limitations related to the availability and quality of data, loss of information when coding some administrative variables and the weighting and aggregation choices. CoVI can be used as one of the range of available tools available to analyse election administration. However, as a composite indicator, its primary utility lies in condensing to one number (index value or rank) the complex information on the country’s performance in making political participation easy to voters. As new data become available (such as the upcoming ICCS 2017 study on civic education), CoVI can be updated and further developed to ameliorate some of the limitations of this version. More research on voters’ perceptions of the costs of voting from cases other than the two used in this study would also be useful to refine the composite indicator.

As touched upon above, the construction and analysis of CoVI suggests potential new directions of research. A number of outliers were identified – countries whose profile of CoVI and its sub-indices are dissimilar to what is typical for other countries from the same region or with a similar political system. Investigating these exceptions as case studies could provide new insights into how election administrations develop. The identification of groupings of countries first by cluster analysis and then by inspection of the CoVI sub-indices can also be useful in the selection of cases in other comparative studies of election administration and the cost of voting.

Beyond these practical uses, CoVI illustrates how findings informed by sociological and historical institutionalist perspectives and qualitative research can be operationalised with parsimony and testability valued by rationalist institutionalist approaches. For example, thanks to findings from qualitative data, the initially nebulous emotional costs could be linked to specific procedures and policies and displayed as the Emotion/identity sub-index of CoVI. The quantitative analysis in this chapter also uncovered clustering of countries around sets of electoral procedures, which corresponds with clustering around other, unrelated sets of policies. This clustering provides additional support for the argument put forward in the comparative case study in Chapter 5: electoral administrative procedures are influenced by historical and institutional legacies, rather than chosen for practical or arbitrary reasons. This institutional stickiness may be an important barrier to electoral administrative reform. In the following, final chapter, I revisit the findings from this and previous chapters and discuss what they mean for scholarship and practice in election administration.
Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusions

The legitimacy of our democratic institutions is rarely challenged. We don't seem set to vote in a Trump-like figure, or dramatically restructure our country with a Brexit-like vote. We don't even want a new flag.

But new research reveals our faith in democracy is faltering in a similar pattern to one seen overseas. The unreleased Journal of Democracy study shows that 29.3 per cent of Kiwis born in the 1980s say it is "essential" to live in a democracy. This is a dramatic drop off from those in older cohorts - almost half of those born in the 1970s believe it is essential, while almost two thirds of those born in the 1930s say as much.

Henry Cooke, Young westerners across the world losing faith in democracy - even in New Zealand, Stuff, 30 November 201697

9.1. Key findings and contribution to scholarship

This thesis began with questions about what the costs of voting are and how well convenience voting initiatives address these costs, especially for young, low-socioeconomic and migrant voters. The proliferation of convenience voting initiatives across developed democracies reflects policymakers’ perceptions of a need to make voting easier for voters. Governments are also concerned about low or decreasing turnout among specific groups such as young people and migrants. Yet, this thesis argues that popular convenience voting initiatives tend to focus on factors that may not be the most important for making voting easier for these groups.

Listening to the voices of voters from low-turnout groups across two countries revealed that the costs associated with voting are subjective and generated outside of the act of voting. Subsequently, this thesis suggests that addressing the costs of voting requires broader initiatives than simply extending the voting period or providing more places to vote. This thesis also demonstrates that election administration is embedded in the overarching institutional structures of the state which shape and constrain the scope of reform and mediate the effects of electoral procedures. Following from this, election administration studies and convenience voting reforms should be extended in scope to take these influences into account. The concept of the cost of voting warrants amendment, in a way foreshadowed by Downs, by adding a range of psychological factors I identified as risk, disruption and emotional/identity costs. Methodologically, I demonstrated how to combine different new

institutionalist frameworks and different methods to draw on their strengths in answering different parts of the research question. I will now discuss each of these four main conclusions in detail.

1) Much of the cost of voting, as perceived by voters, is driven by subjective factors and generated outside of the actual act of voting.

Scholarly literature and convenience voting reforms tend to focus on time spent voting or preparing for voting (such as voter registration or obtaining identification) or the timing of voting, linked to the opportunity cost of time. Therefore, it was surprising to hear from almost all participants that time spent voting was not an issue for them. What was more important was how voting fits into their lives across multiple dimensions, for example extra tasks or planning that voting requires, calculations of risk, access to information or meanings assigned to voting. This thesis suggests that an important part of costs of voting is subjective. In most established, high-income democracies, electoral management bodies have enough capacity to provide voting opportunities where distance to the polling place, waiting time or monetary costs are minimal and are not meaningful barriers, even for low-socioeconomic voters. These practical costs of voting have been an important burden in the past and are well-researched. However, I argue that in the context of established democracies, the focus of research needs to shift towards the factor of disruption, the costs of information and emotional costs to provide a solid basis for designing effective convenience voting initiatives.

Further, while the focus of policymakers and scholars has often been on the act of voting, this thesis suggests that many of the costs of voting accumulate long before the act of voting, especially with regard to perceptions of risk, insufficient information or emotional/symbolic meanings of voting. What this means is that the academic and policy discussion about the costs of voting and electoral reform needs to be broadened to better include the context of voters’ lives. Whereas initiatives such as early voting are an attempt to take this context into account, they are not sufficient in the absence of initiatives that would effectively address lack of information, the framing of voting and, in some cases, perceptions of risk related to voting. Election administration has limited control over many of the factors that contribute to the above costs, but it may at least try to address some of the incorrect beliefs or negative emotional associations held by voters that have been identified in this study.

Another related finding is that these subjective emotions and beliefs can vary widely between different groups that have had different prior experiences. For example, some migrants, but not all, may hold beliefs about voting being risky due to their experience in their countries of origin. Among participants interviewed for this thesis in New Zealand, the opinion that voting is dangerous was discussed exclusively by Chinese participants and none, for example, of the Mexican or Indian
participants. Studies aim to disaggregate migrant groups by country of birth and other characteristics where feasible, for example the New Zealand Election Study asks respondents about their country of birth and year of arrival in New Zealand. However, cost may be a barrier to such fine-grained studies. This thesis provides additional support for such disaggregation by showing that there are meaningful differences in how migrants from different backgrounds approach voting.

Convenience voting reforms in both countries have been focused on reducing the time costs of voting by improving access in terms of time and space – universally accessible early voting with many of the early voting places located in high-traffic, visible areas. My study suggests that such reforms address some of the costs of voting that were important for participants, perhaps in unintended ways, such as lowering the disruption factor and lowering informational costs by increasing the visibility of elections. However, overall, they do little to address a whole range of costs other than time costs.

2) **Election administration is embedded in the broader institutional structures of the state which shape and constrain the scope of reform and mediate the effects of electoral procedures.**

Much of research on election administration and the costs of voting focuses on specific procedures, sometimes with an assumption that these procedures could be easily changed. Yet this thesis draws attention to the embeddedness of election administration in the overarching state apparatus, both in technical terms (dependence of data infrastructure) and ideological terms (aiming to reflect specific values). The impact of partisan interests on election reform has received much interest from scholars and commentators, but there has been less attention directed towards the reasons of institutional inertia and ‘stickiness’ of procedures. There is another reason to further study this interconnectedness between election administration and the environment in which it functions. Changes in election administration, more frequent with the advent of convenience voting, have the potential to influence the environment outside of election administration. For example, several scholars make an argument that some changes in procedure can transform the campaign environment in ways that are not always conducive to increased turnout.

I argue that more study and discussion of the histories and norms behind the current shape of election administration would facilitate better mapping of the barriers to and possibilities for electoral reform. Currently, reforms are often focused on a narrow set of improvements that aim to address the opportunity cost of time which, as we have seen, was not the major issue for participants. Exploring other directions for electoral administrative reform, pointed at in the overview of choice architecture options, would require questioning the underlying definitions and values inherent in current institutional arrangements. For example, the expectation of political neutrality from the electoral
management body and/or the school system limits what information they can provide to voters. However, there are different understandings of what information is politically neutral, as evident in the comparison between the implementation of civic education in the New Zealand and Swedish school systems. Explicitly discussing and questioning these understandings would, I believe, open more possibilities for reform.

After embeddedness, the second institutional theme is the mediating role of institutions external to election administration on the impact of electoral administrative procedures. In the two countries, New Zealand and Sweden, many participants from similar backgrounds reported dissimilar experiences of the same costs of voting or similar electoral procedures. Information costs were a barrier to voting for many young participants from New Zealand but not for young participants from Sweden where civic education in schools has higher priority. Feelings of exclusion and disrespect, which may convert to unwillingness to engage with the state, were linked to the character of the welfare state that participants were dependent on. These findings support the interpretation of the socioeconomic bias in voter turnout as influenced by institutions rather than being a result of individual deficiencies of voters (Avey, 1989, 7).

3) The concept of the cost of voting should also be broadened, in a way foreshadowed by Downs, by adding a range of psychological factors which I identified as risk, disruption and emotional/identity costs.

This study supports adding the categories of risk and identity or emotional costs to the costs of voting. Identity or emotional costs appeared prominently in participants’ narratives. Another proposed category of costs of voting, disruption, appears to amplify other costs rather than be a cost on its own. Nonetheless, disruption was an important factor for many participants who expressed a preference for voting (and also acquisition of information) to be seamlessly integrated into their life rather than to require special action or special attention. These preferences support Downs’s (1957) hypothesis that even small costs of voting may affect the turnout decision.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, some studies avoid using the term ‘cost(s) of voting’. This may be because some link this term to the rational choice tradition which includes only what can be quantitatively measured. The term ‘costs of voting’ has been also linked to a view in which paying the costs or not is a free and rational decision of the voter, suggesting it is the voter’s responsibility if he or she decides to not turn out (Fishkin 2011, 1337). Yet, participants’ narratives suggest a rational calculation, only with a much broader range of factors taken into account, including emotive factors and prior
experiences. The calculations uncovered in qualitative data collection reflect ‘bounded rationality’, in which preferences depend on the cultural, socioeconomic and political context.

‘Barriers’, another word used to describe factors making voting difficult, suggest something insurmountable. There are situations where this is an appropriate description, for example when the definition of ‘residence’ does not allow for some existing mobility patterns (Edwards, 2007) but this is not the case for most of the factors discussed by participants. On the other hand, the term ‘inconvenience’ as a reason for non-voting (suggested by the term ‘convenience voting’ widely used in academic and policy literature), in my opinion, trivialises some of the costs of voting faced by voters, such as negative experiences with the welfare system which result in reluctance to engage with the state. The term ‘inconvenience’ captures well the importance of the disruption factor discussed above. However, reform should go beyond addressing this one factor.

I have identified a gap, or rather a rift in literature where, on one side, studies that explore less tangible costs of voting avoid using the term ‘costs’ and rarely offer practical recommendations, whereas applied studies that take up Downs’s framework typically avoid including costs that cannot be measured in ways that satisfy the aspiration for ‘scientific’ purity. Overall, I argue that Downs’s concept of ‘costs of voting’ is useful and should neither be abandoned nor confined to the narrow range of quantitatively measurable factors. Rather, it could be broadened to include the diverse costs of information discussed by Downs as well as the psychological costs that Downs acknowledged but chose not to discuss. This broadening should be accompanied by exploring methods of identifying and operationalising these less tangible costs. By ‘operationalising’, I mean linking these costs to specific electoral procedures in ways that can lead to actionable policy recommendations, which I have done in this thesis, demonstrating how the strengths of different approaches can be combined to produce a multidimensional picture of costs of voting which has both theoretical and practical utility. By doing this, I advanced our understandings about the application of theory. This leads into my final reflection, which addresses methodology.

4) I demonstrated how to combine different new institutionalist frameworks and different methods to draw on their strengths in answering different parts of the research question.

Narrow studies of a single procedure, or a single aspect of election administration, or a specific cost of voting, which dominate the field, are useful and indeed indispensable as ‘building blocks’ when attempting to shift to a more global perspective. Yet I argue that there should be more balance between narrow, applied studies and theory building. This study contributes to theory building by proposing an extended framework of costs of voting and a tool (the composite indicator) to compare
costs of voting across jurisdictions and to support the generalisation of findings of this study to a group of similar countries. This contribution was possible thanks to using a mix of methods with different strengths and limitations.

The comparative method was particularly useful to assess the interpretation of findings suggested by qualitative data. Focus groups conducted in New Zealand strongly suggested that the public electoral roll is a procedure that exacerbates the cost of voting due to privacy fears of those who have debts. Yet this hypothesis was disproved by the Swedish case where a similarly public electoral roll did not result in privacy fears. This dissimilarity prompted an investigation into the role of potential mediating factors, such as privacy norms, data infrastructure and the welfare state. The main limitation of a binary comparative case study is that many potential cases (and the unique insights they could offer) are necessarily left out. This was partially remedied by quantitative methods which allowed examining (albeit not as in depth as in a case study) election administration across a wider set of countries and mapping out potential further pairs or groups of countries to compare. However, time limitations of doctoral study require choices between breadth and depth. The rich description of institutions in the two cases provided a useful framework for interpretation of focus group and interview data and I am satisfied that a binary comparison was the best compromise between access to the benefits of the comparative method and depth of description.

The main contribution from using qualitative methods – focus groups and interviews - was that these methods allowed access to subjective beliefs of participants. The use of qualitative methods facilitated identifying the mechanisms behind some of the costs of voting and thus linking these costs to specific electoral procedures and other institutions. The narratives which supported such linking were especially useful in the case of emotional costs, where it would be difficult to deduce these links from observation, survey or quantitative data. Thanks to the diversity of participants who were recruited, these subjective beliefs could be assessed by other participants as to their correctness or relevance to costs of voting. For example, some migrant participants in New Zealand attributed their lack of political information to their limited contact with native-born New Zealanders. However, those migrant participants who had frequent contact with New Zealanders said that this contact rarely results in exchange of political information. More time to collect more qualitative data could result in additional insights that might have not been captured by this research and this is one of the limitations of this research. Whereas a high level of agreement between participants from similar backgrounds in different focus groups suggests that the most important information has been captured, in qualitative research it is neither necessary nor desirable to ‘prove’ that there is nothing that has been missed.
I also used two quantitative methods: cluster analysis and composite indicator construction. Cluster analysis would likely give similar results if all available variables were used to describe cases, rather than just the variables selected based on qualitative data (yet in such a case, data collection would be much more time-consuming). However, the composite indicator would be much less useful without the theoretical grounding in qualitative data. Conversely, qualitative data would have limited practical use for policymakers without being ‘translated’ into a form easy to use for comparison and evaluation. Inevitably, some information gets lost in this type of transformation of data and one may question the extent to which complex policy ecosystems can be compared. Nonetheless, such metrics are a way of engaging and attracting the attention of an important audience.

9.2. Implications for practice

Overall recommendations for election administration reform that emerge from this research are as follows:

1. **Reduce the number of steps required to vote.** Any additional task, such as voter registration or having to look up which of the two nearby schools is the voting place, may dis-incentivise voters who are sensitive to disruption costs. Registration should be automatic or merged with other administrative tasks. The location of the voting place should be obvious even for those who lost information mailed before the election and should not require an online search or a phone call. The voting process itself should be designed so as to minimise the potential for mistakes and confusion. Any convenience voting reforms which aim to address other issues should be evaluated for their potential to make voting and the voting environment more complicated.

2. **Frame voting so that it is less likely to be identified with ‘the state’,** especially those facets of the state with which some voters are likely to have had negative experiences. The purpose of such framing is to minimise the identity costs of voting for those voters who have built identities oppositional to the state. Such symbolic framing of voting can be achieved by the choice of voting locations. For example, courthouses and even schools may not be friendly spaces for those who experienced them or perceive them as oppressive institutions of authoritarian power. The advertising of voting and the decoration of voting locations (such as, for example, including traditional indigenous patterns or elements of design that appeal to youth) also can play a role in how voting is framed in relation to the state. Of course, reforming the institutions responsible for negative attitudes towards the state would be the real solution, but the focus of these recommendations is what election administration can do to ameliorate such costs of voting generated outside of its domain.
3. **Show respect to the cultural needs of voters.** Explore how voters, especially those from disadvantaged groups, understand ‘respect’ in the context of the voting place. For example, for some migrants, respect may mean providing guidance which prevents ‘loss of face’ in an unfamiliar environment. For indigenous and ethnic minorities, an important way to express respect may be the correct pronunciation of names in their languages, and for young people, an accommodation of their preferred ways of celebrating the act of voting. Conduct more research on people’s perceptions of voting places and the behaviours of poll officials and adjust your policies accordingly.

4. **Implement civic education that is integrated into mandatory schooling** or, if voluntary, is provided in a face-to-face, interactive and attractive setting. This recommendation may not always be in the domain of election administration, which in some countries is in charge of voter education and in others not. However, this study supports the hypothesis that civic education reduces the information costs of voting. Information costs appear to be sensitive to the disruption factor, especially for young voters. This means that some voters are not willing to go out of their way to educate themselves, for example by accessing materials available on the Internet, but want the education delivered to them in a setting where they can ask questions.

### 9.3. Further research

There are a number of limitations that accompany doctoral study: time, funding and ethics approval mean that this exploration of the vast topic of the costs of voting and election administration is far from complete. Therefore, it is appropriate to point out directions for further research. An obvious avenue of further research would be a further investigation of emotional and identity costs, the disruption factor and perceptions of risks. Further comparative case studies of election administration and the costs of voting, using cases different to the two cases used in this research, would be another way to further understand the costs of voting. Comparative studies of election administration between countries are rare. The rankings of countries on the composite index of the cost of voting (CoVI) and its sub-indices, as well as the cluster analysis conducted in Chapter 8, suggest pairs of groups of cases which would be likely to contribute new insights into the costs of voting and the role of election administration in these costs.

This study also highlighted the embeddedness of election administration in the overarching bureaucratic structures of the state. This embeddedness is responsible for some of the limitations as to which procedures can be changed and how. Such limitations are illustrated, for example, by the
difficulties New Zealand would face if it decided to shift to automatic voter enrolment. Such a shift would require both legal and infrastructural changes (in data collection and sharing), which are outside of the scope of power of the electoral management body in New Zealand. Of course, electoral management bodies (EMBs) and their employees, including poll workers, can try to influence other relevant institutions or even make unauthorised or tacit changes in implementation. Such changes have been discovered by Coleman (2014) and were also discussed by some of the election officials I interviewed. The ways EMBs are situated in state structures, the channels of influence they subsequently have and how they utilise these channels to lower the costs of voting (or to pursue other goals) is a topic which would benefit from more research. Currently, a lot of research on electoral management bodies focuses on their internal structure and characteristics such as independence, especially in the context of new democracies where these characteristics may facilitate or hinder electoral integrity (López-Pintor, 2000). However, in the context of developed democracies, research into the interactions of EMBs with other institutional actors could provide new insights into the costs of voting.

I touched upon the role of political parties in reducing the information costs of voting, but a deeper investigation of this role was outside of the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, the ways in which mobilisation and educational activities of political parties can mediate the costs of voting warrants more investigation. For example, apart from party financing, what factors affect parties’ willingness and capacity to engage in such activities? What is the content of the information that is disseminated? What are the proportions of information about how the system works, about specific issues and policies and about the voting process? What considerations guide these choices? As discussed in Chapter 3, electoral reforms can change the campaign environment. For example, early voting has implications for timing of election campaigns. These effects should be researched in more depth to discover how to prevent an inadvertent demobilising effect of reforms which aim to make voting easier. The above questions about the content of information which is disseminated could also be applied to civic education in schools where it exists. In civic education which is a part of mandatory education, both at school levels and for migrants, a topic that deserves more critical examination is the message about who the model citizen is; who belongs and who is excluded. Such messages may be one of the factors in some people assuming identities as ‘non-voters’ and therefore contributing to an identity cost of voting.

Finally, there are normative aspects of election administration which currently receive limited attention due to the applied nature of the field. Electoral procedures reflect and support values, such as negative freedom which was emphasised by New Zealand election officials who were interviewed,
or accessibility which was emphasised by Swedish interviewees. It was clear from the interviews with election officials that these values were important for them. Nonetheless, values that election administration expresses or seeks to express need to be questioned. Whose values are they, who do they represent, who do they include or exclude? Why are they expressed in a particular way? What values ought electoral procedures to express? Another potential direction of research is how does the broad social and welfare policy approach of the state influences both the lived lives of participants and the construction of election administration.

9.4. Final thoughts

This thesis focused on identifying factors that may influence the costs of voting and ways of reducing or ameliorating these factors. There is, however, another question that could be asked, namely, how do we address voters' low tolerance for costs of voting? Such low tolerance was perhaps best illustrated by one of the participants explaining that many people he knows give up on voting if they are not sure in which of the two possible locations (two schools in the neighbourhood) voting takes place; looking up this information is too large a cost.

This low tolerance is not a surprise from a theoretical point of view. After all, one of Downs’s premises is that a ‘tiny variation in costs’ can affect election outcomes (by affecting who turns out and who does not). Yet it seems that some, especially young, participants’ sensitivity to costs reached unprecedented levels, informed by voters’ experiences as customers in the online environment, as proposed elsewhere by James (2010). It is doubtful that election administration can keep up with the convenience offered by commercial services that are not held to the same standards of privacy, secrecy and integrity and typically accept a degree of risk. Fraga and Hersh (2010, 353) show that there are factors that increase voters’ resilience to some costs. The factor they identified (competitiveness) is not under control of election administration but perhaps further research and qualitative methods could identify ways to increase voters’ resilience to costs.

The intensity and complexity of emotions surrounding the act of voting, unearthed in qualitative data collection, testify to the importance of voting as a symbolic act. In participants’ narratives, there was a tension between support for voting that is casual, integrated into daily routines, ‘on the go’ and a desire for voting to be special, something to be celebrated, a ritual of belonging. Which of the two sets of preferences should guide reform? Or, perhaps these two sets of preferences can be reconciled?
How? The importance of emotive factors revealed in this research suggests that reducing the costs of voting does not always equal simply making voting more convenient in the sense reflected by contemporary convenience voting reforms. Perhaps, rather than simplifying voting, we should accentuate its ritual dimension and ‘the impression it makes on the mind of the citizen’ (Mill 1862, 205) to ‘bestow more sense of significance upon the electorate’ (Hirschbein, 1999, 5). Yet, judging from the tensions around selfies among New Zealand participants and participants’ preferences for more social contact and more outreach, this path would require challenging norms of respectability and order deeply embedded in law and practice of election administration in New Zealand.
Appendix A Qualitative data

Ethics approval

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ethics and Compliance

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

20-Jan-2016

MEMORANDUM TO:
Assoc Prof Jennifer Curtin
Politics & International Relns

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 016293): Approved

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled Election administration, the cost of voting and voter turnout among young, low socio-economic status and migrant voters in New Zealand and Sweden.

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval is granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 20-Jan-2019.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Research Office, at ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Please quote reference number: 016293 on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)
UAHPEC Administrators  
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee  
c.c. Head of Department / School, Politics & International Relns

Additional information:  
1. Do not forget to fill in the ‘approval wording’ on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.

2. Should you need to make any changes to the project, please complete the online proposed changes and include any revised documentation.

3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, please advise UAHPEC of its completion.

4. Should you require an extension, please complete the online Amendment Request form associated with this approval number giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which a new application must be submitted.

5. Please note that UAHPEC may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.
**Interview guide**

**Focus Group questions**

- Tell me about voting in your country (New Zealand/Sweden). What do you need to do to vote? How do you vote?
- (In New Zealand) [show enrolment form] do you remember when you enrolled? If not enrolled, do you remember when you last saw this form?
- Think of the last time you voted. What was best about that experience? What was most difficult about that experience?
- If you ever planned or wanted to vote but did not, what was the reason?
- Do you think for some people voting is easier than for others? Why?
- Has getting to the voting place ever been a problem for you or someone you know?
- Has the amount of time voting takes ever been a problem for you or someone you know?
- Has getting information about when and how to vote ever been a problem for you or someone you know?
- What is the largest cost or effort when voting?
- Has assembling the necessary documents or filling out forms you need to vote ever been a problem for you or someone you know?
- Do you know what the electoral roll is used for? Have you ever had privacy concerns about the electoral roll?
- Have you ever experienced unequal treatment/discrimination when voting?
- Do you think early voting, internet voting or voting in any location would make voting easier for you and/or people you know?
- What would make voting easier or more convenient for you or people you know? What would you change if you could change anything?
- Do you have any other thoughts/comments on the voting process that you’d like to share?

**NOTE:** These key questions are tentative and broad based and may be influenced by the results of the questionnaire and focus groups.

**Interview questions**

In the process of registration and voting, what do you think requires the most effort from voters? Is there anything you can think of that could be a barrier for some groups of voters?

{Country} has introduced reforms such as [easier accessibility of early voting/out of electorate voting]. What has been the most challenging part of implementing these changes? Is there anything you would have done differently if doing it again?

Let’s assume for a moment that there are no financial, organisational, technological or political constraints on what your organisation can do. What would you do to make voting easier and more accessible to people, especially young, low-income and migrant groups?
Do you think the system serves people well who are very mobile (moving more than eight times a year)? What changes could be made to better serve such populations? What difficulties would that cause? What in the current system is helping such people to vote/making voting difficult for them?

Do you think the system serves people well who are very busy or work in untypical/unpredictable hours? What in the current system is helping such people to vote/making voting difficult for them? What changes could be made to better serve such populations? What difficulties would that cause?

Do you think the system serves people well who do not speak English? What in the current system is helping such people to vote/making voting difficult for them? What changes could be made to better serve such populations? What difficulties would that cause?

Do you think the system serves people well who come from another country and have never voted before? What in the current system is helping such people to vote/making voting difficult for them? What changes could be made to better serve such populations? What difficulties would that cause?

Do you think the system serves well people who have problems filling out forms? What in the current system is helping such people to vote/making voting difficult for them? What changes could be made to better serve such populations? What difficulties would that cause?

What do you think of the usage of the electoral roll for other purposes such as summoning for jury duty or possibility of being found by other people?

NOTE: These key questions are tentative and broad based and may be influenced by the results of the questionnaire and focus groups.

List of focus groups

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(1) Ethnicity self-identified during focus group introductions; some participants did not state ethnicity or identified as Kiwi/Swedish, in which case they are not included in any of the Māori/Pasifika/Migrant categories.

(2) Under 35 years old, as above.

(3) 14/03/2016, Auckland City Mission.

(4) 21/03/2016, Auckland City Mission.

(5) 7/4/2016, English Language Partners West

(6) 25/4/2016, [place redacted to preserve anonymity of the community], South Auckland.

(7) 21/04/2016, Auckland University campus.

(8) 8/5/2016, Community function, Mission Bay.

(9) 12/05/2016, Unitec Henderson campus.

(10) 20/05/2016, Manukau Institute of Technology, North campus, Otara.

(11) 21/05/2016, Central Auckland café.

(12) Ethnicities represented among migrant participants in New Zealand: Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Iraqi, Samoan, Tongan, Indian, Mexican, Thai, Malaysian; Ethnicities represented among migrant participants in Sweden: Somali, Syrian, Iraqi, Iranian, Malaysian, Lithuanian.

(13) 24/10/2016, Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund offices, Skaggetorp.

(14) 26/10/2016, Red Cross Skaggetorp.

(15) 8/10/16, Central Linkoping Café.

(16) 16/10/2016, Norrkoping University campus, Norrkoping.

(17) 1/11/2016, Linkoping University.

(18) 29/10/2016, Housing complex.

Appendix B Quantitative data

Final dataset and sources
Variable coding and transformations are explained in Chapter 7.

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Sources (names of variables in the source database are included where relevant):

- **TM_Mean_Hrs_Work** – Mean hours worked per week, ILOstat, 2016 data (New Zealand 2015 data)
- **TM_Advance_Vote** – ACE Electoral Knowledge Network Database
- **ID_Unemployment_Difference** – OECD 2015 data on foreign born and native born unemployment, FBORNUNEMP-NBORNUNEMP
- **TM_Temp_Employment** – OECD database, 2015, TEMPEM; for New Zealand, Survey of Working Life: December 2012 quarter Statistics New Zealand
- **TM_Poverty** – OECD database, POVERTY, latest data available (2012–2014 depending on country)
- **TM_Unemployment** - 2016 Q4 OECD data, UNEMP
- **TM_Passive_Registration, TM_Vote_Anywhere, ID_Prisoner_Limitation, IN_No_Notification, TM_ID** – ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and OSCE election reports
- **IN_Civic** - ICSS 2009; civic education priority in education policy; Germany: own assessment
- **ID_Limit_Nationality_Access** - MIPEX 2015, 100-Access to Nationality
- **ID_Social_Spending_Rev** - OECD 2016 data, 100-SOCEXP; New Zealand 2015.
Voter turnout in last election

Source: International IDEA Voter Turnout Database

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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
### Spearman’s rho – CoVI, voter turnout and indices

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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
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