tion, three things in particular become clear. First, the preference for the local level stresses geographical proximity as the base of general sociality. For participants, their immediate surroundings, their neighbourhood, their quarter is their frame of reference and of action. Second, the preference for the local level shows how inseparably interwoven the online and offline layers of everyday life are. Users are active in and for their immediate living surroundings by online and offline means: they are not either online or offline, nor are they either active in virtual life or real life – they are both. This evidence yet again refutes claims that political participation by online means is somehow, per definition, inferior to political participation in the *real world*, as terms like clicktivism or slacktivism have come to suggest. Third, the preference for the local level as the frame of direct, participatory, online modes of political participation is one explanation for the *varying* success of *Betri Reykjavík* and *LiquidFriesland*; that is, the registration of as many citizens as possible and the vivid usage of the tools, as well as the establishment of the tools both in political participation repertoires of citizens and in decision-making processes.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter started out by providing an overview of the most common modes of political participation amongst participants, contextualising these modes both within participants' participation repertoires and within their everyday lives. It became apparent that participants mix-and-match modes, based on a modes perceived political efficacy and their own political objectives.

I then outlined three perspectives that emerged from the data to explain (online) political participation. First, I looked at (online) participation tools as a continuum, ranging from enabling participation to simulating it. Whether (potential) users see an online tool as enabling them to have a real voice and influence in decision-making processes, or whether they see it as only simulating participation and the ideas they put forward have little relevance in the political process and the quality of life for citizens in a municipality has far-reaching consequences. For many (potential) users, *LiquidFriesland* appears to have simply been added onto the political process without any principal and permanent changes being made. Moreover, from my interviews and impressions, it seems as if it was primarily introduced in order to prove the innovativeness, modernity, and readiness for the future of the current administration, and particularly Landrat Sven Ambrosy, as the agent of change.

Second, the concept of times of crisis and affluence proves helpful in explaining multi-layered differences in political participation in Iceland and Germany. The financial crisis in Iceland appeared to be a fundamental disruption of the quo-

tidian, to "all the taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life; more specifically, […] daily practices and routines that comprise habitual social action, alongside the natural attitude of routinized expectations and the suspension of doubt about the organization of the social world and one's role within it" (Buechler 59). In contrast, Frisian participants were not in "immediate life-threatening situations of political or economic crisis, but rather, have their basic needs of life met, or even in abundance" (654). In the end, the extent of personal grievances appears to be a central to mobilising – or not mobilising – people for political action and participation. The crisis also appears to have led to increased and lasting participation in Iceland, through *Betri Reykjavík* and other modes. Indeed, *Betri Reykjavík* itself is one outcome of the innovative potential of crisis.

Third, this chapter looked at the relevance of geographical proximity to the modes of political participation. Participants prefer different modes depending on the political and geographical level they are participating at. Whereas representative modes like voting at the ballot have strong support on the nation state level, participants prefer more direct and participatory modes of engagement on a more local level. In this sense, it comes as no surprise that *LiquidFriesland*, which is directed at the district level, failed to become a lasting part of decision-making processes. This is especially the case since the use of the tool becomes unclear because of the uncertainty regarding the jurisdiction of the district: many ideas suggested by users fell to the jurisdiction of either the municipality or the federal state.

In summary, this chapter adopted three perspectives to make sense of participants' repertoires and patterns of political participation, showing the complexity of political participation today. In regard to the main research question of this thesis, namely "how are people's repertoires and patterns of political participation influenced by the opportunities the Internet generally and digital democracy in particular entail?", it becomes clear that citizens typically adopted a mix-and-match strategy. In a bricolage fashion, they combined modes of political participation across physical and virtual spheres according to their respective political objectives as well as different modes perceived internal efficacy. However, my findings suggest that in these fields, both the efficacy of ICTs and their potential to facilitate change toward more direct and participatory democratic structures are limited as was shown in the last sub-chapters.