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## **Climate policy at a local level in a multi-level governance system**

A study of EU and its effects on climate policy at a local level, using Reykjavík as a case study.

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## Abstract

The climate crisis is today one of the world's biggest challenges. The climate policy framework is often set by the national level but carried out at a local level. The local level's climate policies can though be affected by several governance levels in today's multi-level governance system. The intention with this thesis was to investigate how local level's ability to make effective climate policies adequate to meet the challenges climate change is serving us, are affected by the multi-level governance system.

Reykjavík is used as a case to illustrate the local level and the European Union is used to illustrate the European level in this research. Reykjavík is a unique case to study as Iceland is not a fully EU-member, but Reykjavík applied to be part of an EU driven initiative and got accepted as a participant after a comprehensive application process. It is hence interesting to investigate in which ways the EU climate policy affects climate policy at a local level, - where the local level is on the outside of a fully EU integration.

The main findings in this thesis was because of an EU initiative (referred to as the 100 cities in this thesis) Reykjavík has moved their climate neutrality ambitions with 10 years before the national goal of fulfilling the objective of climate neutrality. Beside this, EU policies under the umbrella of the European Green Deal is steering for Iceland's National climate Plan and sets the framework for dealing with climate change at the national and local level. Iceland not being a member-state is hence a paradox as the EU policies is strongly present for how climate policies and framework is formed in Iceland. Although the EU is a steering mechanism in the green transition in Iceland it has not been identified if the EU policies will internally lead to fulfil the objective of climate neutrality by 2030 and 2050. Regardless, the multileveled governance system is part of understanding how the EU is a steering mechanism in the green transition in a sovereign state, such as Iceland.

This study is the first one to highlight the complexity of MLG in a Nordic country outside the EU when forming climate policy at a local level by using Reykjavík as a case study.

## Foreword

I would like to give a big thank you to all my co-students during my time of study at UiT – Norway's Arctic University in Tromsø and at Auckland University. Thank you for all the fun moments and the forever lasting memories. A special thank you to Rebekka Arnesen and my dear friends Kristine Strøm and Hanna Arctander for support and friendships through these 5 years.

Thank you to ZERO for the internship which helped me get insightful and specific knowledge in environmental issues and solutions. Thank you to the Royal Norwegian Embassy for the opportunity to be close to environmental affairs in Iceland. And thank you to Reykjavík Municipality for meetings which gave insight in the current situation of Reykjavík and their history of climate policy. Thank you to Europa Bevegelsen for granting me the Arnulf Øverland's master's degree grant that made the participation at COP26 as part of my data collection financial possible, as well the HSL faculty at UiT- Norway's Arctic University.

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At last, thank you to my dear family for putting up with me during this time and for your support. My mother and father, especially.



# 1 Introduction

Iceland is a remote micro-state island in the middle of the Atlantic Sea (Bergmann, 2014). Iceland is a rather new state as they gained their independence from Denmark in 1944. The states post-colonial history consists of Norway and Denmark colonizing them and Iceland is today a proud independent state. The post-colonial memory is rather present in their culture and identity (Bergmann, 2014). After they gained their independence in 1944, they were sure to not be colonized again and trusted to take care of themselves. During President Grímsson's period in Office, Iceland was stubborn and did not get too much involved in international cooperations. Today the world dynamics and development in how to govern differs from 78 years ago. Globalization is one of the major changes in modern society (Friedman, 2005). Economic integration cross-border and societal changes like climate changes and terrorism which are global in their nature and has limited the capacities of nation-states.

Today the world is a cosmopolite world where states cannot operate alone but is part of an international network with allies and multileveled systems. As a small island state as Iceland is, it is in Iceland's interest to be part of a bigger system which has shown to be valuable for Iceland. For example, Iceland relies on their Nordic neighbors to gain information and be part of a bigger diplomatic society (Bergmann, 2014) and rely on cooperation with North-America and NATO for geopolitical security reasons (Bjarnason, B. 1972). Iceland has cooperated closely with the other Nordic countries with the climate crisis since the 1970's (Hoff, J. 2017) and the climate crisis is such a complex issue that it is better handled together. Climate change knows no land borders and is hence a complex issue that the UN and the EU has addressed as an issue where every country needs to do their part (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al., 2020; Sands, P. 1992; UNFCCC, 2016; Wouters, J. et al. 2012).

Iceland's position is similar to the position of Norway through the European Economic Area (EEA) which unites the EU Member States and the three EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) (Segura, M., et al. 2019) into an Internal Market governed by the same basic rules. This means that are outside the Brussels' negotiation room, where policies are forged, but also destined to exert a substantial impact on their respective domestic policymaking frameworks. Despite Iceland's ardent aspiration for sovereign autonomy, it remains inescapable that the sphere of influence stemming from the European Union's central regional authority significantly shapes Iceland's policymaking landscape, thereby underscoring the intricate dynamics of contemporary international relations. This confluence

of forces underscores the complex interplay between small, sovereign nations and larger regional powers in the context of contemporary international affairs. It is hence relevant to investigate how multileveled governance affects non-EU member countries and their path to battle climate change through climate neutrality. Climate change must be acted upon now and the EU has issued several missions with the intention to act adequately to the challenges that follows climate change. Reykjavík is part of one of these initiatives and this initiative will be used to research how multileveled governance affects climate action at the local level and to look deeper into how it will affect local government climate action by 2030 and national climate action by 2050.

This subject is relevant to research to investigate in which way a regional governance level, illustrated by the EU in this thesis, affects a local level without even being fully member of the EU. As Iceland is not a fully member, they will be used to illustrate the local level.

Iceland wants to be recognized as a modern welfare state and is thus interested in international cooperations but not to be willing to become a fully member due to how it could affect their independence in such as their fisheries (Bergmann, 2014). But Iceland still wants to be part of international cooperations, as for example through the EEA and EFTA (European Free Trade Agreement) and the Paris Agreement. It is hence relevant to investigate how the multilevel governance system affects local decisions and if the regional policies will initially help Iceland to deliver on their international commitments as for example local climate neutrality in Reykjavík by 2030 and national climate neutrality by 2040 or if a regional governance level will initially hinder sustainable change.

Iceland could increase their GDP of not being outside in the cold of the EU but for instance join the EU currency (Breedon, F.J., et al. 2004), to keep the option open it gains Iceland to be a stable partner in international cooperations, such as the Paris Agreement and the EEA agreement. Iceland has relied on green energy since the 1930's (Melsted, 2021). Iceland's wealth mostly heritage from fisheries and heavy industries but today tourism is the biggest contribution to their GDP. All these industries demand a lot of energy and Iceland is in the unique position of being rich in natural green resources such as geothermal power and hydro power (Melsted, 2021). All though Iceland is seen as the first country to be driven by green energy, Iceland is still on the top of greenhouse gas pollution per capita in Europe (European Environment Agency (EEA) 2023). To make adequate climate policies and climate action it is necessary from all levels to achieve the joint commitments in the Paris Agreement. Iceland also needs to do their part and it is relevant to look into this subject to see in which way EU

policy will be a driver or a break to accelerate the green transition at an adequate pace and with comprehensive enough tools.

## 1.1 The research question

To get a deeper understanding of how climate policy is made and carried out at a local level it is of interest to study how a multileveled governance system affects local climate policies. That is why this study will strive to get a deeper understanding of how other governance levels affects local climate policies. The study will use Reykjavík as a case and focus on how the European level affects Reykjavík in their climate policy making. Iceland is not an EU member but is closely associated to the EU through the EEA. Reykjavík is a good case to study, as Iceland is not part of the EU, - but Reykjavík is part of an EU driven initiative. Therefore, Reykjavík is an interesting case to test the theory of Multi-level Governance on climate policy. The study will look into which mechanisms will be set in motion by being part of the initiative and how Reykjavík is still part of the European integration regardless of an EU membership. To study how the European level affects a local level in a multileveled governance system it has been used qualitative methods, more specifically a literature review combined with observations. It is no doubt that the EU has substantial impact on the climate policies in their member states through the European Green Deal (Bongardt, A et al. 2022; Schoenefeld, J, 2021). But Iceland is outside of the EU system, and it is hence of interest to see how the EU climate policies can still impact a non-member state. The research question is as follows:

*In which ways has the European Union's climate policy affected local climate policy in Reykjavik?*

## 1.2 The relevance of the research question

The climate crisis is one of the biggest challenges the world is facing in our time. This issue has already had big impacts on biodiversity, human security, geopolitics and will continue to affect the ecological, - social, and economic dimensions in the future and has complex impacts (IPCC, 2023). To stagnate the harsh impact climate change has on the above-mentioned dimensions it is need for coherent action as climate change do not consider land borders. Today Europe is part of a multi leveled governance system where the European Union is categorized as the European level in this thesis. Europe was the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world in 2015, trailing only the United States and China, and in 2019 it was the fourth-largest emitter (Crippa, M., Oreggioni, G., Guizzardi, D., et al 2019). As Europe is a relatively big contributor of emissions at an international basis it is necessary that the European Union contributes to severe climate action to slow down climate change and stop more irreversible harms and effects that are predicted in the AR6 IPCC report (IPCC, 2023), as an European actor in the multilevel governance system.

Climate change is a complex issue which demands complex action. Climate action is carried out on a local level but regulated at a stately level. Climate policy is framed from an international or regional level as the national level is bound by international treaties and agreements, for example, the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal (EGD). Hence, the EU play an important role for their member states when the states are transitioning to a green future and a net zero society by 2050, which is the main objective of the EGD. Iceland is not an EU member state but an associated member state. Iceland is part of the European Economic Area (EEA) with Norway and Lichtenstein which is a trade agreement for these three countries to be part of the European trading system. Even though Iceland is not a fully member of the European Union the EU climate policy is still affecting Iceland as Iceland is part of a multilevel governance system. This study explores the relevance of the European Union at a local level and how its climate policy impacts a local level for its execution of climate action.

The research question is relevant to see how the far the EU climate policies arches over even within non-member states, such as Iceland. Also, it has not been done much previous research on EU climate policy and how it affects Iceland and Reykjavík specifically. To use Reykjavík as a case is relevant it explores to which level the EU climate policy has impacts and

contribute to sustainable change in the fight against climate change at a local level in a non-member state country.

## 1.3 Main findings

The findings in this thesis were several, but the main findings will now swiftly be presented. Because of an EU initiative (referred to as the 100 cities in this thesis) Reykjavík has moved their climate neutrality ambitions with 10 years before the national goal of fulfilling the objective of climate neutrality. Beside this, EU policies under the umbrella of the European Green Deal is steering for Iceland's National climate Plan and sets the framework for dealing with climate change at the national and local level. Iceland not being a member-state is hence a paradox as the EU policies is strongly present for how climate policies and framework is formed in Iceland. Although the EU is a steering mechanism in the green transition in Iceland it has not been identified if the EU policies will internally lead to fulfil the objective of climate neutrality by 2030 and 2050. Regardless, the multileveled governance system is part of understanding how the EU is a steering mechanism in the green transition in a sovereign state, such as Iceland.

## 1.4 Structure

**Chapter 2** will present the theoretical framework which persists of Multi-level Governance theory. It will also be presented a model to illustrate the multi-level governance system and how it is part of making policies.

**Chapter 3** will present empirical background to understand the different positions of the different levels that will be part of the analysis. Here it will also be presented a model to illustrate what are the different levels in the multi-levelled governance system when using Reykjavík as a case.

**Chapter 4** will present the methodology and research methods, - literature review and observations. The data collection will also be presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 5** will be an analysis based on the literature review and observations within the theoretical framework of Multi-level Governance, and then, the findings will be presented.

**Chapter 6** will discuss the findings within the theoretical and empirical framework.

**Chapter 7** will conclude the discussion and suggest further research.

## 2 Theory

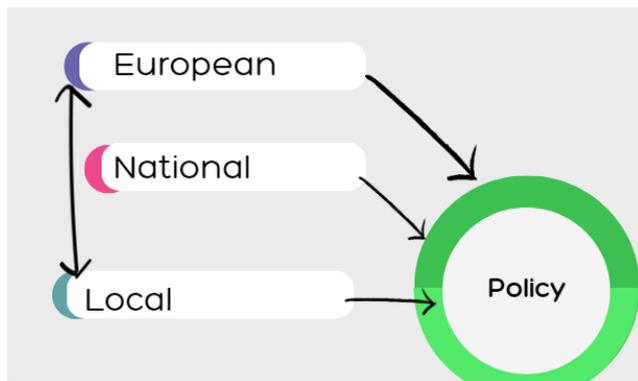
The purpose of this chapter is primarily to present the theoretical framework for this thesis, Multi-level Governance. It is mainly based on Hooghe and Marks article: A post-functionalist theory of multilevel governance (2020). It will also be presented additional literature to substantiate the validity of the theory and be able to have a critical perspective on the theory as well. Multi-level governance theory will have the role of give insight in how policies are made in a world build on transnational relations and have the purpose of help answering the research question.

### 2.1 Theoretical framework: Multi-level Governance

The European Union is a regional level in a multileveled governance system. Multileveled governance theory will have the role of give insight in how policies are made at a general global level. Based on the theoretical framework it will acknowledge that Iceland as a state governance, and Reykjavík as a local governance, must take into consideration that they as entities are part of a bigger governance system where it is likely that regional or supranational governances will affect how Iceland form their own policies and in which ways. The multi-level governance theory will be used as a framework to answer the research question. The theory is valuable to understand how EU affects local climate policy in Reykjavík.

The multi-level Governance system is illustrated in figure 1 on page 13.

Here it is illustrated how all the three levels represented in this figure is part of affecting policies. The levels that will be taken into account in this thesis is the European, national, and local level, a shown in the figure. It is also illustrated how all the three different levels represented here does not need to include all the levels to affect how a certain level is forming policy. The European level and local level are affecting each other in how policy is formed in this figure, without the national level.



(Figure 1)

Multilevel governance has many different definitions but what all these definitions has in common is that ideas from a state level has been "shared across global institutions, regional organizations such as the EU, national governments, and subnational governments" (Schakel et al., 2015). To simplify this definition it can be put in this way: to governing across borders (Daniell & Kay, 2017). In this theory it is important to distinguish between governance and government and Hooghe and Marks (2020) breaks down why it is more adequately to use governance over government when diving into MLG theory. Government heritage from the French in the etymology and referred to administration or control (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). Today government refers to the state and to the entity that use the state authority, such as people or institutions (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). When "government" is used in modern times it is a way to state if the politics goes on within the state territory or among the state (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). To describe the variety of different forms of ruling the word governance emerged (Hooghe & Marks, 2020).

Governance was used to describe not only governing in states but all the other forms of ruling, like by non-state, actors between states and also supranationalism and became useful to describe how the EU was ruling (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). The EU was steering with non-state actors, among states, but keeping states hegemony but could not be described as a government as the EU was no state (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). As governance embraces cooperation between states and common rules with the aim of a better public good, government underpins ideas of international relations and politics that is domestic and not necessarily cosmopolitanism in the way governance in different areas and levels do (Hooghe & Marks, 2020).

The world is rapidly changing and it is all connected in an international network where policies is shared across global institutions (Daniell & Kay, 2017). Multi-level governance

emerged in the 1990's as a new way to study the European integration process that sought to gather Europe with including different institutional levels (Enderlein et al., 2010). Multi-level governance developed alongside with global governance to a large extent and have benefited prominently from each other (Enderlein et al., 2010). The political world has changed, and it is today not that far apart between domestic and international politics (Enderlein et al., 2010; Hooghe, 1996; Piattoni, 2009). Today the local level of governance do not hold the power alone to adequately respond to public policies and govern purely by themselves (Daniell & Kay, 2017). To achieve their objects as a local government they hence have to seek out of their own sphere and to other governmental levels as the national, regional, supra-national one as well as non-governmental organisations and across a range of sectors (Daniell & Kay, 2017).

Multi-level governance (MLG) emerged out of an international relation field where a two-levelled game between domestic and international politics was analysed and this was the starting point for today's MLG when the levels between the domestic, national and international level was analysed (Enderlein et al., 2010). This new way of governance also followed with scepticism of how the public and voters would be accounted for when such a network was founded (Enderlein et al., 2010). A world state (supranationalism) and a mere interstate system (intergovernmentalism) was a false dichotomy that lead to research on different governmental levels and their interaction and hence the MLG was provided as a more adequate theory adapted to the new world picture (Enderlein et al., 2010).

The actors in MLG is both non-state actors and state actors (Daniell & Kay, 2017; Enderlein et al., 2010). To better understand European integration the research focus was brought to horizontal and vertical integration amongst the actors as well as how the power was shared on different governmental levels (Enderlein et al., 2010). Policy change is therefore formed by a negotiation with several levels of governance which means that pure intergovernmental dynamics no longer hold the power in changing the policies and is no longer a credible explanation when using MLG as a theoretical thinking (Enderlein et al., 2010). The multi-level governance is as mentioned both horizontal and vertical and does not include a hierarchically superior authority. And MLG is often relied on by different scholars to explain how joint decision processes does not allow every actor to win (Enderlein et al., 2010). Negotiations across levels and arenas is all part of shaping policy that is mutually accepted but multi-level governance (Daniell & Kay, 2017). MLG has a bigger focus on the actors and

is hence less state oriented than in federalism (Papadopoulos, 2007). Although it exists different kind of types of MLG, and the type I and type II will be further explained.

Enderlein et al (2010) describes two different types of multi-level governance which has been elaborated by Faludi (2012) in this theory chapter. MLG can be governed in type I or type II. Type I) is described as jurisdictions with general purposes where authority has been dispersed (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). This smirched out authority and general purposes jurisdictions will not overlap and over time it will be stable (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). This thesis will use the EU as an example of a regional level and the EU has a model based on type I of MLG. This type "The intellectual foundation for Type I governance is federalism, which is concerned with power sharing among general purpose governments operating at just a few levels." (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:18). Type I level of governance share basic characteristics as fiscal federalism. For example, "...power sharing among general purpose governments operating at just a few levels", "levels of government are limited in number", "the framework is system-wide", "membership is non-intersecting" (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:18). Type I of governance also have "general-purpose jurisdictions", meaning local governments have a wide spread of functions and several purpose authorities for their communities (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:18). For example, is this seen in the European Union where they encompass the national states that are EU members. In type I governance the memberships are usually non-intersecting. Meaning that the memberships are territorial or local governments and the memberships attires with the higher and lower levels (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:18). and by this it secures that the domestic areas have exclusivity (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:19).

Type II) refers to specified jurisdictions and it can potentially be many jurisdictions (Faludi, 2012). The jurisdictions which is identified in type II MLG is often flexible jurisdictions and tends to be task-specific and is rather crisscrossing over judicial boundaries (Faludi, 2012). Which means it is in contrast to type I as the jurisdictions can overlap and is typically characterized by fluidity (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). Type II of MLG can often be recognized in planning of projects, such as in transportation or in health care where the jurisdictions emphasizes on relevant agencies rather than the involvement of civic society (Faludi, 2012). The relations between the functional agencies is all though rather diffuse than the relations in type I MLG and hence leans towards a more scattered decision-making, which is a characteristic feature of governance (Faludi, 2012). Type II of MLG in its totality has strong similarities to a government from pre-modern time, specifically to the medieval time (Faludi, 2012). Theorists even categorize the EU as an empire with neo-medieval characteristics and

uses new medievalism, which resembles the EU, in interpretation of global governance (Faludi, 2012). Faludi (2012) argues as most theoretical thinkers with first eye sight would place how space is conceptualized in particular territories in type I of MLG, as the EU, but with a closer look through the literature it is more complex (Faludi, 2012). This is based on Faludi's (2012) argument that not only type I draws attention towards hierarchical arrangements which is cross-cutting, but that type II have the same effect (Faludi, 2012).

Hooghe and Marks (2020) lists three premises to "Assuring effective cross-jurisdictional problem solving, while avoiding the centralisation of competences, is thus a pressing challenge for lower-level governments in any multilevel system" (Bolleyer & Börzel, 2010):182), which derives from post functionalism. 1) The premise of functionalism: MLG is adapted to provide collective goods and do so by being functional and having adapted to diversity which will help provide these common goods. 2) The premise of community: that MLG must adapt to the social structures that is already integrated within the participants. 3) The premise of politicization: meaning that in political conflict both the sociality and functionality are constructed (Hooghe & Marks, 2020:822). Premise 2 and 3 will be elaborated on next.

Premise 2) The community premise builds on contract theory where the community has accepted a volunteering contract of a set of rules for the public good (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). Hooghe & Marks (2020) points out how this will be a test for MLG as the public now have to trust more entities and level of governance than just their local or national state governance. For the public to accept more levels of governance in their social contract norms and community plays in in how successful the outcome will be (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). It is hence important with same interpretations and perceptions as the public must be willing to not only commit to the existing contract but also adapt to changing conditions (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). If the cooperation across levels shares same hope for outcome and trust each other it will be easier to work for the common good. For example, the EU members share culture and have many of the same interests towards what is supposed to be a common good. This can make it easier to cooperate as the EU has created a community due to these interests and shared culture.

Premise 3) The politicization premise builds on premise 2 and the effect of community is two folded (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). It lays close to individuals to othering and hence divide into two groups, such as 'us' and 'them' (Hooghe & Marks, 2020:824). This can lead up to

communities or small nations feeling threatened and exclude themselves from cooperating in the common good by the MLG. For example, ethnical groups or communities that works against the big system, such as EU to protect such as their cultural heritage. The politicization puts a cleavage between winner and losers in the transnational system where the losers have an impression that the national identity is threatened (Hooghe & Marks, 2020). MLG institutionalize coordination with the aim of a common good and that gives a void where self-rule can be restricted. When that is said, self-rule of community groups does exist and the nations can grant this, such as the Basques where they collect their own taxes, or a Nordic example where Åland is part of the Finish republic but the official language is Swedish. So, when the nations/ communities feel threatened by the transnational it creates a door to conflict as for whom subnation or community should be granted self-rule, and this cannot be determined by major rule (Hooghe & Marks, 2020).

MLG allows for a distribution of power and decision-making authority across different levels of government (local, regional, national, and supranational)(Bache, 1998). The reason for why international governance emerged is issues in society that cannot be tackled just from the local government but it demands decision-making that is collectively acted on by the international community (Schakel et al., 2015). This leads to decentralization of power instead on centered power in national or local governments (Schakel et al., 2015). The decentralization has a preventative effect on power concentration in single entities and promotes self-governance and autonomy. This can still be seen as a paradox as why multi-level governance has emerged and how it is affecting local governments. Multi-level governance provides for opportunities for citizens to be involved at different levels of government and represented because of the power dispersion. For the local governments is this helpful to be understood by the higher levels of governance as local citizens knows better the needs of the local community and can better tailor policies and services to be acted upon accordingly. It allows for a more direct and responsive form of governance.

MLG can be part of providing a healthy economic market for regional governments as it promotes an efficient economic unit that has access to markets (Schakel et al., 2015) MLG gains flexibility for smaller nations as well as responsiveness with the MLG dynamic instead for a small nation to stagnate and don't have so many legs to stand on in an economic market situation (Schakel et al., 2015). Schakel et al., (2015) argues that EU and the MLG hence is an advantage for small nations where they are part of a bigger system where they can gain access and flexibility to the international market. MLG fosters coordination and cooperation among

different levels of government. It helps align policies, regulations, and initiatives across various jurisdictions, resulting in more coherent and integrated governance frameworks (Schakel et al., 2015). This can enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and the overall quality of decision-making. MLG can also provide learning and capacity-building opportunities for local governments. It allows them to engage and collaborate with higher levels of government, facilitating knowledge exchange, shared experiences, and best practices. This contributes to the development of local governance capacities and improved service delivery. This is also something the EU aims towards with the EU initiative, the 100 cities as a tool. This initiative which will be presented in chapter 3.

Many challenges and issues faced by local governments (e.g., climate change, urbanization, economic development) require multi-level solutions. By involving multiple levels of government, it becomes possible to address these complex issues comprehensively and holistically (Schakel et al., 2015). MLG hence enables collaboration, pooling of resources, and coordinated action to tackle shared problems. MLG systems can enhance democratic accountability. With multiple levels of government, citizens have more avenues to engage and participate in decision-making processes. Accountable governance becomes more attainable as citizens can hold different levels of government accountable for their actions, ensuring transparency and responsiveness.

These arguments demonstrate the potential benefits of multi-level governance for local governance, emphasizing its ability to promote decentralization, effective representation, policy coordination, capacity building, addressing complex issues, and democratic accountability.

MLG is not just golden, and it has been raised criticism towards how MLG has been described narrowly and normatively as a theory (Papadopoulos, 2007). The critique also follows by lack of preciseness of definition and that the concept consists of some emptiness as it has been portrayed more useful than it is (Papadopoulos, 2007). Critique has been raised towards MLG as the Governance is more implied than discussed and that the focus has been more on politics than governance when explaining MLG (Faludi, 2012:202). This critique is based on Mark's early papers from 1996 where the discussion moves towards EU and how it is going towards a Multi-level Polity system and the governance part has not been assigned focus (Faludi, 2012). This is part of the critique of the MLG where it is argued that the concept is to be confusing and produced as a concept that covers more than it actually does

when you use the theory to explain a phenomenon (Faludi, 2012). Some theoretical thinkers argues that MLG cannot be used as a fully theoretical concept as it lacks, partially, to be subjectable to empirical falsification (Piattoni, 2009). This critique is raised based on the fluctuation of the concept and how that affects the complications of using MLG as a tool to analyze real-life developments (Papadopoulos, 2007; Piattoni, 2009) Papadopoulos (2007:34) also address critique of how the MLG thinking dismisses the importance of the role national governments has as “gatekeepers”.

MLG is adequate to use as a framework for explaining how policies from other governance levels can affect for example, local levels. Although it should be considered the critique of how MLG moves towards polity rather than governance.

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework that will be used to lead the analysis to produce findings related to the scientific question: In which ways may EU climate policy affect Reykjavík’s climate policy.

### **3 Empirical background**

This chapter will provide a background on the case, Reykjavík in a Multi-levelled Governance system. The background will help the reader understand the historically and cultural lines of Iceland's position to the EU as well as background in Iceland and their climate policy's historical lines. It will also be presented how the EU institution works. The European Green Deal, as part of how the European level is part of shaping policies at a national and local level in this case will be shortly described. The 100 cities initiative will also be presented in this chapter and this initiative will be central throughout the rest of this thesis. The chapter will end by putting this specific case, Reykjavík, in a Multi-level Governance structure.

#### **3.1 Iceland and EU**

In a historical timeline, Iceland is a very new republic and got their independence in 1944 after a history of being colonized by Denmark from 1830-1944 (Bergmann, 2014). The state identity is strong and have been carved out of the struggle of become independent. Even though independency is a strong value for this Nordic welfare state, Iceland has rational interests in being part of the internal European market. This resulted in being part of the European Economic Agreement along with Norway and Lichtenstein (Bergmann, 2014). Iceland has thus remained outside the European Union (EU) but has gradually taken bigger part in a European cooperation. This through the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which Iceland joined in 1970 (Bergmann, 2014) and then later in 1994 entered the EEA (Bergmann, 2014; Segura, 2019).

Iceland had a financial collapse in 2008 which led the left-winged government to apply for a fully EU membership. But when the shock of the collapse had calmed down in the politics and the public it was yet again to find resistance against Iceland becoming an EU member (Bergmann, 2014). After the membership negotiations the majority, more than two-thirds was against an EU membership and would have voted no in a referendum (Bergmann, 2014). Even though Iceland is not a member-state of the EU organization it is still a rather active participant in the European system through the EEA and EFTA. Iceland and Norway is

estimated to adopt as much as three-quarters of EU's legal acts as this is part of the European Area Agreement (Bergmann, 2014). Thus is Iceland seen as deeply integrated in the European integration system.

The main explanation behind Iceland's refusal of becoming a EU member is the fishery sector which is still contributing the second largest to Iceland's GDP and how it is argued that EU interests in the fishing sector in Iceland goes against Iceland's economic interests (Bergmann, 2014; Ingebritsen, 2000). Losing fully autonomy of Iceland's fishing sector goes against Iceland's strong identity as independent and national identity. In several articles it is also argued that the skepticism of becoming an EU member and the fishing industry in Iceland comes from a strong connection between the political elite in Iceland and the fishing industry itself. Besides this Bergmann (2014) identifies other factors as security connected to geopolitics and less economic intensives that has come out of the EEA membership than maybe would be expected. It all can be embodied in an argument where Iceland looks out for new imperialistic powers which can hurt their independence and fisheries is maybe the biggest part of Icelandic identity and how Iceland have built their state.

Iceland has built their culture on the past, and identify with past events as the Viking era, but also, it is fresh in the state's memory how the imperialistic powers have ruled them and their desire to be independent from imperialistic powers (Bergmann, 2014). Hence it is still fresh in the state's memory and a strong sceptic to the EU as similarities with Iceland's previous rulers can be found, or at least remembered in a certain way from the past and creates fair in for example of losing full independency in how to rule the fisheries. But Iceland became part of the EFTA agreement and the discussions in parliament started in 1968-1969 (Bergmann, 2014).

The main argument for becoming part of EFTA was economy. The ones in parliament arguing against was of identity reasons and the fair of losing independency but the ones arguing for becoming part of EFTA turned the argument around and used Iceland's special out puts as a way to position themselves as a nation in the European integration that could not be tamed and had exactly needs to be treated differently (Bergmann, 2014). The negotiations in 1989-1994 that lead to the EEA agreement argued that Iceland should be part of the future and that this could open new economic prosperity to connect them to the rest of Europe. And with this strengthen their independency by being part of a negotiation table and not isolate

themselves from the rest of Europe but rather push them into modernity (Bergmann, 2014). The other side in parliament that was against the EEA agreement argued that this was the end of Icelandic independency and every decision would be taken in Brussels without Iceland having a real say in the discussions (Bergmann, 2014).

After the economic crisis in 2008 where the Icelandic economy collapsed the parliamentarians against the EU argued that the EU was the biggest enemy of Iceland driven by colonialism. Iceland had painted the picture of conspiracy from Holland, the UK and the Nordic countries to take them down because of economic envies of Iceland before the economy crashed (Bergmann, 2014). The take down was done through “Icesave” agreement Iceland was forced to accept by UK and Dutch banking and this was used as an argument in the EU debate here in Iceland as how the future of Iceland would turn into if they joined the EU (Bergmann, 2014). The EU was referred to a club for former colonizers powers which was opposite to Iceland (Bergmann, 2014). Iceland’s president at that time, Mr. Grímsson refused to sign the bill (the Icesave agreement) in the name of democracy and to not be overruled by imperialists and Iceland was in 2013 vindicated in the EFTA court for not following up in the Icesave case and led to more validation for Iceland to being the victim in this case, in Icelandic politics (Bergmann, 2014).

Other than the strong national identity connected to be a post-colony Iceland is also categorized as a microstate and relies on close cooperations with for example the EEA (Bergmann, 2014). As a microstate Iceland does not have too many human resources as they in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had approximately 60 000 inhabitants and today have 395 746 inhabitants according to the official register of the population (skra.is, 2023) The diplomatic mission from Iceland is in 27 countries and the diplomatic corps consists of around 100 diplomats which is very few compared to other countries in Europe (Diplomatic List, 2023). Which means that comparing with their counterparts in the EFTA and EU, Iceland has less people to participate at the decision table and thus has limited focus areas in European policy (Bergmann, 2014). Iceland relies on close cooperation with the Nordic countries and even Washington through for example outsourcing strategic security. Iceland has also outsourced part of Iceland’s legislation and this is done to Brussels with the EEA as an instance (Bergmann, 2014). Iceland also cooperates especially close with Denmark and Norway to gain access to information to save human resources.

Both Norway and Iceland have a formal status as EEA members through EFTA. The Icelandic perception is though that Norway operates differently than Iceland. Iceland stays true to their national identity as independent but that Norway is more willing to give in to EU demands rather than protect the principles of the EEA in favor of cultivating a closer friendship to Brussels (Bergmann, 2014). From a Brussels's point of view, Iceland has been rational but unable to acknowledge their limitations as a microstate (Bergmann, 2014). Thus, lost focus and tried to spread over more focus areas than Iceland had capacity too instead of keeping themselves to fewer policy areas. Iceland is seemed to be more willing to take advice from their Nordic friends than from the EU institution and that the reasoning for this is plausibly mainly Iceland's national identity as post-colonized. Iceland's performance at the European stage is hence showing signs of the colonial experience as a vivid memory in Icelandic politics and culture (Bergmann, 2014). Iceland is thus sceptic to the European Union which is rooted in the fear of losing control over their fisheries and economic interests, but the skepticism is rooted in an overarching bubble of the vividness of being colonized in the past as well as wanting to be seen as an equal European partner, as their Nordic friends, and not a microstate.

Today Iceland transfers decision-makings through the EEA that concerns economic fields to a European level. And after the economic crash in 2008 it was enough support in parliament to send in an EU application to become a fully member, but since then the polls shows that the majority of Icelanders would be voting against a fully EU membership in a referendum (Bergmann, 2014). But to be recognized as a modern state at the same line as their Nordic friends Iceland is accepting the EEA to be part of the European Single Market. Iceland wants to be seen as an equal part in the European world and as a modern welfare state despite their size (Bergmann, 2014).

Due to the Russian invasion and war in Ukraine that happened in 2022, it looks like the Nordic countries has shown to value being part of a bigger international cooperation, also outside the Nordic bubble, such as NATO. This has come to show through Finland and Sweden's application of become a NATO-member (Alberque et al. 2023). The challenging times can be a way to unite, also through European integration. The majority of the Nordic countries are members, also Iceland's latest colonizer - Denmark (Miles, 2010:190).

## 3.2 Iceland and climate policy

Iceland is a country that is geographically placed on two continental plates, the Eurasian one and the American one (Ragnarsson et al., 2020). For this reason, Iceland are one of the most active volcanic areas in the world and is also expanding their land area with approximately 2 cm pr year (Ragnarsson, 2005). Due to Iceland's geographical placement the state has a tremendous advantage in the green transition as they access close to unlimited geothermal heat. Approximately 90% of space heating was heated with geothermal power in 2019 (Gunnarsdottir et al., 2022; Ragnarsson et al. 2020). In the 1930's Iceland changed their infrastructure to take advantage of the geothermal heating instead of relying on coal and is a contributing factor of how Iceland was known to be the first country in the world to rely on green energy (Melsted, 2021). The idea back in the 1930's was not to become green but become energy independent which today have given Iceland a position as a state leading in the green shift. But does the world image correlate with Iceland's climate policies?

Iceland is lacking comprehensive energy policies (Gunnarsdottir et al., 2022). The island state has access to geothermal energy and hydropower and have the potential to be a country mostly driven by green energy. However, Iceland is the number one country in Europe to pollute the most per capita (European Environment Agency (EEA) 2023). Iceland has sustainability challenges that relates with their top three industries, which is as follows: heavy metal industry, fisheries, and tourism. In 2017, 77,72% of Iceland's green energy went to the heavy industries, such as production of aluminium (Shortall & Davidsdottir, 2017). And in 2019 the most of electric production produced within the country was consumed by heavy industries, as much as 78% (Gunnarsdottir et al., 2022) by the measurements made in 2021 the consumption went down to 77,2% by heavy industries (Gunnarsdottir et al. 2022). There is not identified in the National Plan if Iceland will have enough green energy to meeting the energy situation that is mirrored through the Paris agreement but also the European Union's agreement with Iceland and Norway as EEA countries to cut emissions with 55% compared to 1990-levels by 2030 ( Gunnarsdottir et al. 2022; Guðmundsson, T., et al. 2022: 29).

Iceland have adopted several targets to lower emissions with the framing of the Kyoto Protocol since 2008 (Government of Iceland, 2018). Iceland has other international commitments as the Paris Agreement and Nationally Determined Contributions where Iceland aimed to fulfill the objective of lower their emissions with a 40% reduction compared to 1990

levels, by 2030 (Government of Iceland, 2018) where now the objective has been enhanced to 55% reduction compared to 1990 levels by 2030 (Government of Iceland, 2020). This target is in jointness of European Union member states and Norway. Iceland and Norway are adopting relevant climate regulations formed by the EU for the time-period of 2020-2030 (Government of Iceland, 2018). The case is to see how a regional level in a multi-level governance system plays out at a local level when it comes to climate policy and climate action. But first it will be introduced how the EU works and then it will be given examples of EU policies that affects local climate policies in Reykjavík, - the European Green Deal and the 100 cities initiative.

### **3.3 EU and how it works**

The European Union can be used as an international tool to accelerate the green transition (Rayner, T., & Jordan, A. 2016) in their member states and to set the standard of how social just is considered when implementing new ideas and infrastructure in society.

The member states are independent, sovereign states decided to give up their sovereignty in some areas where it is fruitful to cooperate. The state's heads of government are represented in the EU Council, and the council hence represents the governments of the EU's member states. The European Commission represents the interests of the EU. It is in general this institution that suggests new bills and the parliament and council adopts them (Bomberg, E., 2012:51-52).

The European Union has a model based on representative democracy (Kenealy, 2015:48). Citizens are seen as directly represented at the EU level in the European Parliament (Kenealy, 2015:48). Everything the EU does is grounded in treaties, as volunteer, democratic consensus of member states. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary. EU countries have given final jurisdiction in matters of the EU law to the European Court of justice (ECJ), whose judgements have been respected by all. Human rights are being protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental rights. This cover how individuals has the rights to be free from discrimination based on their sex, race, ethnicity, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, and the right to protect personal data (Kenealy, 2015:63).

The EU is an institution established in 1958 after the second world war to work for economic independence and avoid conflict between European countries (Kenealy, 2015:31). It started with six countries, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands (Kenealy, 2015:28). Today the institution has expanded their policy areas from economic growth and non-conflict, to include areas such as health, security, migration and climate. The EU is a successful institution that has achieved better prosperity, stability for more than a half a century, and better living conditions for individuals living in the member countries. Today it has 27 members, where every citizen in the EU has the right and freedom to choose where they want to study, work and retire. EU citizens must be treated equally in heiring processes, social security and pay taxes as in their own country. The EU has taken part in the climate debate over three decades where the union has contributed with climate and energy policies (Rayner, 2016).

### **3.4 EU: a climate leader in the green transition**

The European Union has acted as a spearhead in the international climate debate that has taken place the last 30 years. They have formulated domestic climate policies that have been comprehensive and ambitious. The EU has since the early 1990s been a leading institution when it comes to implementing framework to limit global warming (Kulovesi & van Asselt, 2020; Rayner, 2016; Schreurs, et al. 2007). With being pro- renewable energy, and energy efficient, they aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The EU has for example formulated climate policies which puts a price on greenhouse gas emissions and put-up frameworks to cover previews which previously has not been covered. These policies are the Emission Trading system (henceforth ETS) which is a trading system for emissions, and the LULUCF which covers land use and change in land-use and forestry (Kulovesi & van Asselt, 2020). In 2014 they sat a new objective of reduce the emissions from the greenhouse gases by 40% by 2030. This objective was projected to fall short and was estimated in 2018 to be reduced to 30% within 2030, as can be find at the European Parliaments own site (European Parliament, 2018). But in 2022, the EU manage to cut the emissions by 32% compared to the 1990 levels of greenhouse gases (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al 2020:4), although LULUCF is not included in this measurement.

The EU base their policies on fairness with allocating burdens and goods between the member states and compensating for those member states that has less resources. But the EU is criticized for not having a comprehensive enough approach and that their approach is not aligned with the Paris Agreements goal of not exceed the 1,5-2°C (Kulovesi & van Asselt, 2020). The policy development that has been implemented in the EU member states has been driven by a range of different concerns: as amplifying Europe's legitimacy domestically, facilitate for economic growth and competitiveness as well as strengthening energy security for the citizens in Europe.

The member states have different starting points through history, geography and resources and EU's action is an example of how countries with different GDP income can cooperate and develop within a continent together. Even though the EU has managed to unifying countries in one continent there is still ample room for improvements. Several gaps have been identified in relation to slow implementation of policies and low level of comprehensiveness and impact of the policies and frameworks. It is no time to not be comprehensive enough if the world should manage to stay below 1,5-2°C. It is questioned if EU's ambitions will be able to meet the Paris Agreement from 2015 (Kulovesi & van Asselt, 2020).

### **3.5 Economic competitiveness and green growth**

The EU want to make the finance green and decouple resource use from economic growth. The EU appear to concern about the internal market alongside of tackle the climate crises in their policy briefs, which can be conflict of interests (Hildingsson et al., 2012). The EU do not mention equity, but rather green economic growth. This amplifies the criticisms against the EU as a steering mechanism in the green shift and the impression that their actions are not bold enough to have the impact that is needed to turn this around if the motivation is driven by a secondary factor and not to stop climate change. This shift can though not be done only by the EU alone and core values as competitiveness and economic growth is factors that not necessarily helps other states follow the green shift, but rather to veer away from it (Hildingsson et al., 2012). The EU have ambitious goals to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and if they do not choose to take bold enough decisions that will lead to success can it impair their role as an innovative steering mechanism in the green shift. Today a radical

transformation of institutions on local, national, regional, and international level is a must to tackle climate changes efficiently. If green finance can be decoupled from resource use is possible then the EU advocates that is part of the solution.

### **3.6 EU and climate policy adopted by the city of Reykjavík**

The EU climate framework affects climate policy in Reykjavík as Iceland is closely connected to the EU through the EEA. Some examples of EU policies that affects Iceland, and hence Reykjavík, will be swiftly presented here. Starting with the EGD which is a growth strategy that aims towards a climate neutral Europe by 2050 (European Commission, 2019). EU in the Arctic, which is EU's Arctic Policy affect Iceland as they are part of the Arctic (European Commission, 2021). EU's Emission Trading System (ETS), which is an international carbon market and affects Iceland out of their commitment to EFTA, it is also part of the EGD (European Commission, 2023). Lastly, 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 – by and for the citizens, is a climate policy formed by the EU that Reykjavík has actively applied to be part of (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020). The EGD and the 100 cities initiative will be introduced more in depth.

### **3.7 The European Green deal**

The Green Deal is: ... a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. - European Commission, 2019.

When it comes to mitigating methods and suggestions to reverse this, EU has been fairly progressive. The EU Parliament officially declared a "climate and environmental emergency in Europe and globally" on November 29, 2019 (Hoolohan et al., 2021:855). Additionally, the Union exerted pressure on the European Commission to guarantee that all upcoming measures were in complete accordance with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C

(Oberthür, 2019:19). To transition to a green future, the EU has passed a number of resolutions that address financial issues, socioeconomic issues, international agreements, and economic competitiveness. The European Commission introduced the Green Deal (henceforth EGD) in 2019 to encourage Europe to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

The EGD is a roadmap towards a climate neutral society by 2050. 24th of June 2021 was a Climate Law adopted that made it legally binding for the EU members to target reduction of emissions with 55% by 2030 and to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 (European Commission, 2021). It is expected to be followed with benefits when executing the EGD roadmap. Benefits as cleaner energy, cheaper electricity bills, healthier food, and water security, as well as new possibilities for generate jobs and new opportunities for businesses within renewable energy and innovation (European Commission, 2021).

This is how the Commission describes the EGD and to do as described the EGD includes several legislatives and initiatives to reach a climate neutral Europe within 2050. Greenhouse gas removal will be essential but that is not focused on in the EGD yet, only emissions (Kulovesi & van Asselt, 2020). But the EGD has other policies for Europe to make it to a net emission region by 2050, for example fit for 55. This policy aims to cut at least 55% greenhouse emissions compared to 1990 levels by 2030. Benefits expected to follow when performing the EGD is improved health for the citizens in the 27 member states, as well as new possibilities in innovation and new jobs following this shift and reduction of emissions as well as address energy poverty (EU commission, Fit for 55, 2021). The EGD address justice and aim to leave no one behind when doing the transition. For example, they want to do transport affordable and accessible for everyone, - not just in the urban areas but also in the peripheries. And for it to be accessible, infrastructure also needs to be implemented if it is not already.

Included in the EGD is a range of proposals to make this a successful initiative from the EU. The EGD also aim to lead a new technological shift that will create green jobs and implement green technology. As well as use energy smarter with use it more efficiently to lower the energy consumption. Renovation of homes to mitigate for extreme weather but also to make it easier for smart energy usage is one of the proposals in the EGD and a Social Climate Fund to meet the challenges of energy poverty and mobility poverty.

The Social Climate Fund aims to give incentives to citizens that is most prone to the challenges Europe will meet caused by climate changes, this will be through incentives to renovate properties to become more energy efficient, for these citizens to access mobility that is based on low emissions or even zero emissions (EU Commission, Fit for 55, 2021). The commission also proposes initiatives to work towards restoring nature and protect the biodiversity with the intention of let nature work itself and store carbon naturally. This include taking care of and restore forests, wetlands, and soils and is what is included in the LULUCF. And then the Commission emphasize the importance of cooperate with international partners and inspire for other parts of the world to aim towards a climate neutral society and to put a date on it. 100 climate-neutral and smart cities - by and for the citizens, is another initiative to accelerate the EGD and will be introduced next.

### **3.8 What is the 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities: for and by the Citizen?**

The 100 cities initiative is a Mission Proposal from the European Mission Board. It is one of five initiatives that has been developed through Horizon Europe science and innovation program for 2021-2027. The purpose of the initiatives has been to find new concrete solutions to some of the biggest challenges the world is facing today, and the 100 cities is an initiative to act on climate change. The Mission Board uses this initiative as a tool to accelerate the EGD. The proposal proposed that at least 100 cities should be elected throughout a comprehensive application process with the ending aim of climate neutrality in the chosen cities by 2030. Today 112 member-state cities, - or associated, or future associated member-state cities is elected to be part of the initiative. The project description was published in 2020 and it was then given 10 years for cities to transition into cities with net-zero emissions. The rest of Europe had 30 years to do the same. The 112 cities shall be pilot cities and innovation hubs for inspiration for the rest of the cities in Europe to find solutions that fits them to become climate neutral by 2050. The initiative emphasizes learning, innovation and experimentation as tools to achieve the objectives of the initiative (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al., 2020).

The EU Commission Board targets cities to accelerate the green transition in Europe with their initiative ‘100 climate-neutral and smart cities – by and for the citizens (henceforth, the 100 cities initiative). It targets cities because 3% of the land on earth is covered by cities. These cities produce about 72% of emissions categorized as greenhouse gas on a global level (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:5) Cities are growing fast, so it is needed to tackle climate change with restructuring how cities is used and how it is build, and by this the climate change also needs to be tackled by the ones living in the cities, - the citizens (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020 :5) The 100 cities initiative aims for at least 100 cities in Europe to become climate neutral by 2030, so 20 years before the main objective of the EGD. The application process was comprehensive and 377 cities in an EU member-state and 9 associated cities, or potentially associated cities showed interest for the initiative (EU Commission, Press Release, 2022). To this day 112 cities is elected and chosen to take part in the project (EU Commission, Press Release, 2022).

It was a comprehensive application process to take part in the initiative. The commission opened for cities to show interest for the initiative in the time-period of 25th of November 2021- 31st of January 2022. The cities got the opportunity to send in information about their situation, work in progress and other plans they might have for climate neutrality (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020). The election process started with independent experts evaluating each city that had shown interest for the initiative. After this the commission used additional criteria to secure a geographic balance between the cities and to keep a balance of different characteristics. As for example cities from arctic areas was chosen as well as from southern parts of Europe. They chose big cities that had the potential to influence to a climate neutral society, and cities with innovative ideas on how to deliver smart or digital in the dimension of the mission. To sum up: cities with different potential and with different starting points were elected to take part in the initiative towards climate neutrality by 2030.

In the application processes the cities was asked to map out and show their own initiatives and have a financial plan to back this up. They also needed to agree on to make a city contract that will be signed and implemented by the citizens and key actors. This contract is not judicial binding but shows a clear and strong political commitment to the EU, national and regional authorities and not least the citizens. The Mission emphasized new methods and democratic consultation. The unique factor with this initiative is the Climate City Contract (referred to as the citizens contract) that every city must implement and make together with the citizens. Alongside with this citizen contract an investment plan must follow. However,

this contract is not judicial binding but the signing of the different key actors in society is rather symbolic to show political commitment.

The EU Mission Board came together after consulting citizens from different cities in Europe. The initiative is described as challenging and ambitious project, but that it will lead to a better life for European citizens and a better quality of life. The project will also drive the cities to a new way of governing. The Mission Board addresses the issue of implementing the green technology and green solutions as the hardest part of making a green transition (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:5). They point out the silo thinking and how that is seen as an obstacle to being able to set the smart solutions out in society. The silo thinking is based on an old governance system and the Mission Board emphasizes more citizens involvement and that through the citizen's contract. The EU is shaping climate policy that can lead to action with this initiative and the call for proposals is radical. EU signalizes a just process in the readjustment to climate change. And that might start with a citizen's contract.

### **3.9 Reykjavík and climate action**

Since 2010, the Mayor of Reykjavík representing the Left Green (sister party to Norway's SV) has been rather visible and advocating for the green transition in Reykjavík. Iceland's national objective is to become climate neutral by 2040 (10 years before the EGD) but sets their aim to reach the objective of cutting 55% of the emissions by 2030 as the rest of the EEA countries (Government of Iceland, 2020). In 2015 the Paris Agreement was ratified, and all the United Nation (UN) member-states agreed to certain objectives to stagnate climate change with aiming for not increase global warming over 1,5°C. The Reykjavík Municipality managed to gather several key actors in Reykjavík to write a citizen contract after the Paris Agreement in 2015 to cooperate of reaching the Paris Agreement objectives (Reykjavík Municipality, 2023). This resembles a citizens contract such as described in the 100 cities initiative.

Plans that has been executed or are being executed is for example mobility challenges. Reykjavík has provided better infrastructure for citizens to use bicycles or walking instead of the car (Reykjavík Municipality, 2020). Micro-electricity solutions, urban compromising, waste management, as well as Carb Fix. Carbfix is a carbon, capture and storage technology (CCS) and Carb Fix has gotten EU funding to evolve their technology (Delegation of the EU

to Iceland, 2021). As mentioned, Reykjavík is part of an EU mission which is called the 100-climate neutral and smart cities – by and for the citizens.

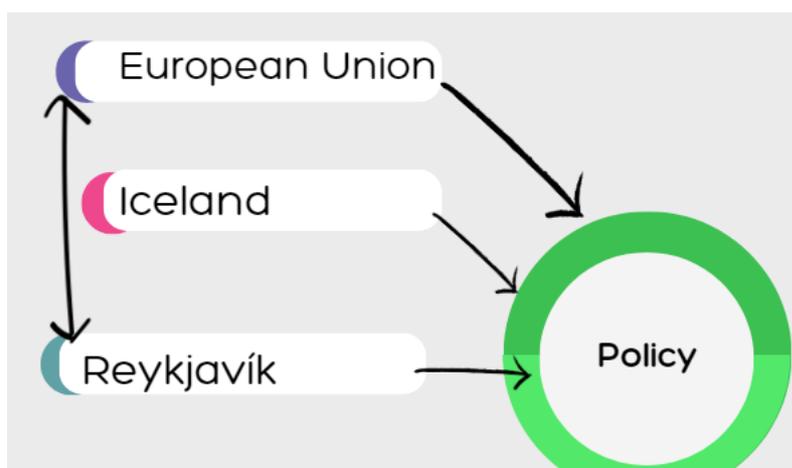
Reykjavík's climate action plan for 2021-2025 has 15 principal actions to achieve their reduction targets for 2030 (City of Reykjavík, 2021). The report was written before the 100 cities initiative and hence aims for Iceland's national objective to become carbon neutral by 2040. The main objectives in Reykjavík's climate action plan for 2021-2025 are as follows: walkable cities, energy exchange, health-promoting modes of travel, green structures, circular thinking, carbon sequestration (City of Reykjavik, 2021).

Iceland is a volcanic island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and has access to unique natural resources which has given Iceland a great starting point for climate neutrality. Even though that is not a given for Iceland to be climate neutral as it depends on how the state decide to stewardship the natural resources. In early 1900's Iceland relied on coal imported from England and Poland as the island did not have enough wood themselves due to the settler's over-harvest, as they did not consider the harsh climate Iceland had to deal with (Melsted, 2021). So, already in the 1930's Iceland started to construct infrastructure to utilize their own resource base and is one of the explanation factors of how Iceland has been known as the first country in the world to rely on green energy (Melsted, 2021). Iceland has a unique access to geothermal heat because of their geographical location (Ragnarsson, 2005), so geography matters in how efficient a green shift can be and the costs tied to it. Without this access, Iceland would not necessarily uphold the same status regarding green energy.

The infrastructure Iceland built to provide electricity to their citizens started in the 1930's. It was first a local farmer that engineered a system for his farm to utilize the hydro power. More farmers started to do the same and then the state developed this further and implemented the infrastructure first for Reykjavík and then out in the periphery (Logadottir, 2015; Ragnarsson, 2005). Iceland could then rely on geothermal heating and hydropower instead of imported oil for households, and this was accomplished in the 1970's (Logadottir, 2015; Melsted, 2021; Ragnarsson, 2005). In 2022 it was measured that geothermal energy is used to heat up at least 71% of households in Iceland but some remote places are runed by oil aggregates (Government of Iceland, 2006) It was not without challenges to build this infrastructure. The project needed broad societal support, - as it is also needed today to make technological changes and a green transition.

The societal support was crucial as the infrastructure needed big investments and the money was lent with foreign currency, more specifically Danish currency (Melsted, 2021). The citizens had to believe in the feasibility in using hot water and abandon coal for the benefit of geothermal utility as the citizens were the ones that would become costumers and pay for the new infrastructure (Melsted, 2021). The consumers of coal were path-dependent and did not think the flat-rate of the new geothermal system would give the citizens the benefit and they argued that to burn coal themselves was more reliable as the water supply was not as stable as burning their own coal. For example, during cold periods the utility could not provide enough water (Melsted, 2021). To win the citizens over it was a media campaign in the newspapers arguing how this city project would gain the public as the alternative was coal and that polluted the city and homes with smoke and soot (Melsted, 2021). The geothermal energy was also manually labor unlike coal that was physical and most often up to housewives. This point of view pulled the housewives over to geothermal energy and the argument of equal access to this energy that also was affordable pulled the poorer citizens over to wanting geothermal energy (Melsted, 2021). This is an example of how energy systems are social justice issues and how different interests in a multiactor process comes into play in innovation and societal transitions.

This multi-actor process resembles a multi-level governance system. Figure 2 illustrates how MLG plays out in this case study, where the European level is represented by the European Union, and the National by Iceland and the local level is represented by Reykjavík.



(Figure 2)

This chapter has given helpful background information to set the scene and understand what the different levels already have contributed with within climate policy and some plausible

challenges, such as possible interest conflicts in the origin of the EGD and the human x-factor in policies which includes societal transitions. This background chapter will be valuable to enrichen the analysis and discussion that will be presented in chapter 5. But first, the methodology and data collection will be presented next in chapter 4.

## 4 Methods and Data

This chapter will present the research design and the methods used to answer the research question in this thesis. In section 4.1, the research design for the study will be presented and the value of the chosen methods will be discussed. In section 4.2, case study as a concept will be explained. In 4.3, literature review will be presented and explained. And lastly, in section 4.4, observations made as part of the data collection will be presented.

### 4.1 Research design

The purpose of this thesis is to find out in which ways has the European Union's climate policy affected local climate policy in Reykjavik.

Reykjavik will hence be used as a case to uncover the European levels influence on local climate governance. A combination of two qualitative research methods is used to answer the research objective in this case study. A literature review has been carried out to use as the main base for this thesis. Specific selected policy documents hold the focus throughout the analysis in this thesis. The literature review helps placing the research in a wider context (Ridley, 2012). The literature review steers the thesis in the right direction of the research question, and can as well uncover research gaps (Ridley, 2012). Further, observations are used to strengthen the qualitative framework and put the case study in a wider context than what is created through the literature review. The observations are useful to uncover the role of the citizens and the people behind the MLG framework, and hence how the framing of climate policy comes to show in practice. Observations is part of seeing the research question through an open and natural environment. The observations have been valuable for “reading the room” and to back up findings that has been found through the literature review.

It is important to acknowledge that this thesis has been written with an epistemological “research skin”, which affects the research design and the methodology as well as what this research reveals (Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, 2017). The actual meaning behind the sequence of events can be multiple and can depend on the person that interprets the data's

experiences and perspectives of the world. The research design builds a framework to find a holistic approach to answer the research question which is: *In which ways is EU climate policy affecting Reykjavik's climate policy?*

In qualitative methods the researcher creates data through an interpreted process (Aase & Fossåskaret, 2014) Through the analysis of the documents the empiric has been formed to data (Aase, 2014). This method is constructed reality, meaning that the candidate has interpreted the data produced through the review of the policy documents and the observations. Qualitative methods have been preferred over quantitative as a research strategy to answer the research question because the research question will be strengthened by taken into consideration where the data has been gathered from, for example, culturally, historically, and seeks to see the phenomena in a holistic way rather than test theoretical hypothesis (Lowndes, et al. 2017:245). By using qualitative methods, it has allowed the candidate to follow new paths if they have emerged.

## **4.2 Case study**

Case studies were sparsely employed in the social sciences until the 1970s. George and Bennett (2005:28) also acknowledge that there are limitations associated with case studies. Firstly, in contrast to quantitative methods that allow for large datasets, case studies do not afford the same opportunity. This issue is often referred to as the "degrees of freedom problem," rendering it more challenging to generalize findings.

Selecting the appropriate cases poses a significant challenge. A researcher cannot simply choose a case because it is interesting; cases must be selected based on their relevance to theory development. For instance, the Holocaust in Nazi Germany is not a suitable case for the category of genocide, as its extremeness precludes the development of general theories about genocide. This presents another challenge for case studies, which is the derivation of general theories from a single case.

However, case studies also exhibit several strengths, which account for their increased usage in social science research since the 1970s. Case studies excel precisely where statistical methods and formal models falter (George and Bennett 2005:18). Lijphart (1971:691)

describes this as follows: "The great advantage of the case study is that by focusing on a single case, that case can be intensively examined even when the research resources at the investigator's disposal are relatively limited." One of the greatest advantages of case studies is their higher conceptual validity. Many phenomena of interest to social researchers are difficult to quantify. How can one measure democracy, power, political culture, state strength, and so on? Case studies allow for a qualitative description of these phenomena, which is not achievable through quantitative studies. Another advantage of case studies is the ability to identify causal mechanisms. By closely examining the sequence of events, one can deduce how specific variables at a given time contributed to changing or influencing the outcome. Statistical researchers often point out that correlation does not necessarily imply causality. Through process tracing in individual cases, it becomes plausible to assume that at a certain point, X occurred, and therefore, Y happened. While statistical methods can establish associations, some of which may be spurious, case studies can provide causal explanations, which are often more intriguing to investigate. Nevertheless, establishing entirely certain causal explanations remains a challenge in the social sciences, where human choices and intentions are always at play.

Another advantage of case studies is their greater capacity to elucidate complex causal relationships (George and Bennett 2005:22). In complex scenarios where multiple variables may seem to have influenced the outcome, case studies can uncover which variables actually did so. It becomes at least easier to formulate "intermediate hypotheses," which can later be confirmed or refuted. Finally, Eckstein (2015) argued that political science should be concerned about discovering broader generalization about the political system and broad strategies for making sense of them and that political scientists are much concerned with 'problem cases' - that is, cases that pose conspicuous policy problems- and rightly so. But why not a similar concern with what one might call 'solution cases'?

The majority of well-executed case studies have dealt with a subcategory of a general phenomenon, meaning that researchers have moved down the ladder of generality to conditioned generalizations and a more limited scope of validity. My case study can be defined as a disciplinary configurative case study within a delimited domain as a theory-testing case. In the context of a disciplinary configurative case study, researchers are interested in how a specific phenomenon is conceptualized, studied, and understood within a particular academic discipline. They may analyze existing theories, methods, and approaches

within the discipline to gain insights into how the phenomenon fits into the disciplinary context.

Reykjavík is an interesting case to study to get concrete, context dependent knowledge of how EU affects the local level in climate policy. Reykjavík as a case can be part of not only generate hypothesis but also be part of a theory foundation, which Flyvbjerg (2022:301) addresses as one of the qualities of the case study as methodology. The reason for why Reykjavík as a case also can be seen in a bigger theoretical framework in the future is because 112 other cities is part of the same EU initiative which has derived from a comprehensive application process where all the applicants was picked out based on the same standard criteria. The research of Reykjavík can plausible be used to generalise knowledge, to a certain extend. Reykjavík carries a complexity as the Reykjavík-area does not only house approximately 1/3 of Iceland citizens but it is also the capitol of Iceland (Gunnarsdóttir et al 2023). That means that even though this case study only investigates one city it counts for a larger amount of the population of a whole country. The findings can hence become valuable for also the national level. Reykjavík is also interesting to use as a case due to the paradox of a sovereign state not showing initiative to actively become part as a fully member of the EU but still seeks to take part at a local level, with the example of the 100 cities initiative. The 100 cities initiative will be used as data in this thesis.

### **4.3 Literature review**

This thesis consists of literature reviews as a base to try to understand how policies are made in a multileveled governance system with the aim to uncover how EU policies affects climate policy in Reykjavík. It is reviewed different policy documents in different governmental levels to illustrate the multileveled governance system. It is beneficial to use literature review to gain a better understanding of how the multileveled governance system is part of shaping policies also at a local level. The literature review is also used to gain a broader understanding of how Reykjavík has planned for a new green future for their citizens. What will be uncovered is in which ways Reykjavík steps towards a greener future has been affected by the EU. The focus during the literature review have been to identify EU policies not only on the European level, but mainly in the policy documents that is not from a European level, as well

as to identify the MLG. These two main pillars in this thesis, EU policy at a local level and MLG will therefore be the two focal points. By doing this, the candidate aims to explore the concept of MLG and conceptualize it in this case study. Based on this argumentation, it will come to show that MLG is an adequate framework to analyse the data selection for this thesis. And further, show that MLG is adequate to help answer in which ways the EU climate policies affects climate policy in Reykjavík.

The context of the policy documents matters when reviewing the documents. The intention of whom has written the documents and for whom matters to maintain a critical analytical perspective when reviewing the literature. The EU framework must be interpreted from the perspective of the present situation of climate change but also the EU's appearance as a leader in the green transition. As well as Iceland's socio-cultural context should be taken into consideration because it will explain the historical position to multi-level governance and why they have taken the position to not applying to become part of the EU as a fully member. Time and place matters for the context and it is important to interpret the documents in the light of history and culture. For the documents to make sense the reader most often must know the context and contextual knowledge matters for how the texts is interpreted (Aase, 2014). That is why the empirical background was provided in chapter 3.

The method will draw from a classical literature review, where a literature review is references to related research and theories to the topic of the thesis where the candidate, position him/herself with the existing literature (Ridley, 2012). The policy document review is based on primary sources that is produced by a political institution, the European Union, Iceland's Government and Reykjavík Municipality. The policy documents reviewed have in common that they are making agencies and are produced without an analysis in them and reflect the actor's position in the literature (Lowndens et al. 2017: 249).

The literature that has been reviewed was located in 3 ways:

- 1) The candidate contacted relevant departments and persons, such as the EU Delegation in Iceland. The EU Delegation helped in the process of finding adequate documents to answering the research question. An expert on EU policies in Iceland which is a Political Science Professor was contacted which referred to the EU Delegation in Iceland. The candidate also found relevant documents and background information through meetings with

the municipality, and more specifically the Department of Environment and Planning in Reykjavík Municipality.

2) By searching within the different level's own websites, such as The European Commission's own website to cover the European level, as well as Iceland's Government Webpage to cover the national level and Reykjavík's Municipality website to cover the local level. This has been used actively to find relevant policy documents.

3) By using specific search words in google scholar such as: Iceland and the green transition, Iceland and energy history, European Union and the green transition, Greening of the State, as well names of researchers in the field such as Eirikur Bergmann. These search words showed to be relevant as it found related articles to the theme of the thesis. The candidate also found relevant articles through my supervisor and the recommended readings.

Google was used in an extension to Google Scholar where specific search words such as: ETS Directive 2023, the EDG, 100 climate neutral cities: for and by the citizens, Iceland and the 100 cities was used.

“The snowball effect” has been used actively in all three listed points. Where one reference leads to a new one and recommended readings has had other recommended readings that has helped build the background for this thesis as well as lead to relevant policy documents. Other reports that have been part of building a background for the thesis caught the candidate's attention through meetings with key actors, and news articles produced by RÚV, Stundinn, Visír and Morgunblaðið. The four latter are Icelandic newspapers.

The stem of the literature review is policy documents that the analysis will use to identify EU policies in Reykjavík's climate policies. Reykjavík's Climate Action Plan 2021-2025, The Green Plan of Reykjavík and Iceland's National Plan. The Mission Board report on “100 climate neutral and smart cities by 2030: for and by the citizens” is an initiative which Reykjavík actively has applied to be part of and will hence be used actively to see how this initiative has affected climate policy in Reykjavík or potentially will. The European Green Deal is also included in the overview as the European Green Deal is an overarching climate policy where other identified policies that affect climate policy in Reykjavík derives from. It

is therefore important to understand the timeline to analyze to which extent, along with in which ways, it has affected climate policy in Reykjavík.

To keep a critical perspective while analysing it is useful to understand for whom the policy documents are written and for what purpose:

Two documents are issued by the European Union and from an European level in MLG. The documents are called the European Green Deal and 100 climate-neutral cities – by and for the citizens (the 100 cities initiative). They are both written with the purpose of fulfil the main objective in the European Green Deal, - which is a climate neutral Europe by 2050. The EGD was issued 11th of December 2019. The 100 cities initiative was issued the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2021. It is important to recognize that the EU wants to be a leader in the green transition and make sure that Europe as a region is economic competitive against other international powers in the world governments. Climate neutrality is one of the main objectives of the EU but an opportunity to be a leader in Europe to keep their validity as an overarching governance in the region is also plausible as a main objective for the EU.

The next document is issued by the Government of Iceland and is called Iceland's National Plan. It was issued the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2019. This is written on behalf of the Government and with the purpose of fulfil national politics while take into consideration present and future international cooperation. The document is written because of Iceland's national and international interests.

The next two document is written on behalf of Reykjavík Municipality. The Reykjavik Green Plan is written by the City Council in Reykjavík with the purpose of building an infrastructure for implementing climate action that will fulfil the climate objectives of Reykjavík Municipality. But also plausible with the intention of fulfilling the politics that is conducted and keep election promises to secure a successful next election. It is written on the decision that a climate neutral city is for the common good and it was issued in June 2020. It is important to recognize that this document is bound by national and international commitments. The same accounts for the next document, Reykjavík's Climate Action plan for 2021-2025. It is written on behalf of Reykjavík in the Committee of Environmental and Public Health. And the purpose is to fulfil the political objectives of the City Council. And it is written on the convincement that climate neutrality is for the common good. It is also

written on the purpose of fulfil national commitments. The document was issued in February 2021.

### **4.3 Observations**

In addition to the literature review it has been made observations as part of the data collection. It has been conducted in total 4 observations as part of the data collection. Observations helps the researcher get in the field and pick up on ongoing discussions. The policy documents are written *by* a sender and *for* a receiver with ulterior motives. But by participating in sessions and meetings as an observer it gives the public the ability to deliver critiques or suggest new paths for the aim of the meetings for the ones arranging them. In this way it has been relevant for helping to answer the research objectives. Four different observations were conducted. Two of the observations was at Conference of the Parties 26 (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland in 2021. Here the candidate participated as an observer in two different sessions. 1) Nordic Perspectives on the green transition and Iceland's responsibility 2) Reykjavík Green Deal-Sustainability, Innovation and the Healthy City. The next observations were done in Reykjavík, Iceland in fall 2022. 3) Climathon 2022 a Horizon Europe project where Reykjavík has taken part, and 4) Open meeting organized by Festa and Reykjavík municipality. By participating in these events as an observer it gave the opportunity to explore people's conception of the climate policy objectives sat by the EU, Iceland, and Reykjavík and how the local level understands the road to fulfil these objectives.

#### **4.3.1 The Conference of the Parties 26 (COP26)**

During my data collection, COP26 found place from the 31st of October-13 of November 2021 in Glasgow. The main reason for the conference was to bring together world leaders to discuss and negotiate global action to address the climate crisis. I did not participate in the negotiations itself but had the opportunity to observe the negotiations as well as several side-events that I participated in. The observations were done at a side-event at the Nordic Pavillion where Nordic perspectives in the green transition was enhanced. The side-event was open to anyone that wanted to observe or participate in panel discussions with questions. To observe as much as possible, I wrote notes of anything of interest regarding the 100 cities initiative, climate justice and how Iceland was doing in the green transition while I

participated as audience. At this point, it was not known that Reykjavík would be one of the 100 cities as the selection process was yet to be closed.

One of the most relevant side-events for data collection for this thesis was a briefing from Icelandic Youth Environmentalist Association where Iceland's responsibility was discussed as well as their status regarding climate neutrality by Tinna Hallgrímsdóttir, chairperson of the Icelandic Youth Environmentalist Association and UN Youth Delegate for Sustainable Development and Finnur Ricart Andrason, climate representative Youth Environmentalist Association and UN Youth Delegate for Climate Change held the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. The main objects of observation were these two youth representatives which represented youth voices, a stately independent organization, the UN Iceland, and a citizen's perspective from Iceland. This observation was valuable because of the critical perspective Hallgrímsdóttir gave on how Iceland presents themselves to the international community on how Iceland is doing on the international commitments versus the status quo on what they have achieved and what they plan for.

The other side-event I found relevant for this data collection for this thesis was called "Reykjavík Green Deal- Sustainability, Innovation and the Healthy City" by Reykjavík Municipality held the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. Reykjavík Municipality was represented by the mayor, which presented the climate actions Reykjavík has done as well as future plans to meet the objectives of the Green Deal, on behalf of the city.

The main object of observation was the mayor. The data were collected by participating as audience. I observed the mayor while he talked about how Reykjavík has implemented plans to reach the objective of the Green Deal and future plans. The observations were done with a critical approach. I observed people in the audience as well to detect any reactions to what was said. One observation included that it was quite an interest for this event as all the seats were taken. Being an observer at this event gave me insight into Reykjavík's past in climate action and an idea of what the drive behind this climate action is. It was valuable to get historical lines before the 100 cities initiative had started and this observation will be used in the analysis to contest identified ideas at a local governance level together with the literature review.

### **4.3.2. Climathon 2022**

During my data collection, Climathon took place the 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> of October 2022. This event was initiated by European Horizon, a working group to carry out the EGD and this specific event was carried out by Reykjavík Municipality. Here, all citizens were invited to participate in finding better solutions to the mobility system in Reykjavík. The event was formed out as a competition for contestants to have the opportunity to be supervised by relevant key actors for their pitch and then present their idea at the end of the event. The winners got the opportunity to implement their idea in Reykjavík Municipality. The data was collected by observing the contestants. They had mixed backgrounds where some of them were students in the field of social anthropology, data engineering, some were working at cafés, others as dancers so a diversity of citizens was represented. There were eleven contestants at the most. The data was also collected through experts that counseled the contestants. The experts came from the municipality, fields of innovation, city planning and mobility systems. The data was collected by participating in groups while the contestants were discussing and guided by experts over two days. This observation will be used in the analysis to argue for how EU policy affects climate policy in Reykjavík alongside with the literature review.

### **4.3.3. Open meeting organized by Festa and Reykjavík municipality**

During my data collection, a meeting hosted by the municipality of Reykjavík in cooperation with FESTA sustainability center, called Climate neutrality by 2030: How? Took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2022. The meeting occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 in Reykjavík. Here, actors from different institutional levels, as for example the national and local, as well as private businesses and businesses with stately connections came together to speak about how Reykjavík can meet the objective of climate neutrality by 2030.

The data was collected by participating as audience. The room was filled with an estimate of 200 people of citizens of Iceland. Planned speakers from different fields spoke about what their governance level, organization or business were doing to lower emissions and what they think was essential to succeed with becoming climate neutral by 2030. It was open for questions from the audience but nothing relevant to answer the research question occurred. This observation will be used in the analysis to argue for how the MLG is present at a local level in Reykjavík and why it matters when Reykjavík creates their climate policies.

To conjoin the two research methods, literature review and observations, has given the opportunity of gathering background information from several angles and different situations.

The chosen data has been selected out of accessibility and what the candidate finds most appropriate according to the timeframe for this thesis. This chapter has described how the data has been conducted and what value it brings to the thesis by using a literature review and observations as data selection. The next chapter will include the analysis where the findings will be discussed.

## 5 Analysis and findings

This chapter will connect the empirical findings with the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2. First, in 5.1 it will be identified what influence the 100 cities initiative has on Reykjavík's climate policies and then presented. The identified influence will be explained with the framework of MLG. Next, in 5.2, the influence from the European level in the Green Plan of Reykjavík will be identified and explained through MLG. In 5.3, the influence of the European level in City of Reykjavík's Climate Action Plan for 2021-2025 will be identified and then explained through MLG. Thereafter, in 5.4 the influence from the European at a National level through Iceland's National Plan will be identified and explained with MLG. Lastly, in 5.5 a summary of the findings. The findings will be discussed in chapter 6.

Abbreviations: The European Green Deal (EDG), the Mission Board report “100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 - by and for the citizens” (the 100 cities initiative), Iceland's National Plan (National Plan), the City of Reykjavik Climate Action Plan for 2021-2025 (RCAP) and The Green Plan of Reykjavík (GPR) (the latter local policy document is also officially called the Green Deal in English, but to avoid confusion it will in this thesis be called the Green Plan of Reykjavik, GPR).

### 5.1 How the 100 cities initiative affects Reykjavík's climate policy

When Reykjavík decided to take part of the comprehensive application process of become one of the participants of the (then) 100 climate neutral and smart cities (which is now 112 cities, but the initiative will still be referred to as the 100 cities initiative), Reykjavík committed to the initiative's terms. These terms are part of shaping the present and future climate policies of Reykjavík. One of the key terms was the citizen's contract and next, the citizens contract and its value for how it has affected climate policy in Reykjavík, - and potentially will in the future will be analysed.

### 5.1.1 The citizens contract

The Citizen’s Contract is a strategy to become climate neutral and it is a “Multilevel-co-creative process” to ensure equity and fairness in this transition through use of a ‘Citizens Contract’. The cities elected to take part in the initiative was obligated to make a contract that would thrive to be a multilevel-co-creative process. The contract is to ensure the transition to be “by and for the citizens” (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al., 2020). With this contract it allows the citizens to take part in the transition. The contract will also try to include adjustments and flexibility to local initiatives and in this way initiate for the citizens to take part in forming climate policies for their cities (Gronkiewicz-Waltz 2020).

One of the main purposes with the contract and one of the important issues that this initiative should be able to tackle is: “...to connect local/regional strategy for carbon neutrality by 2050, and the cross-border issue. This issue is to make sure that the measures taken “will not be physically unconnected or stop working at the borders of the selected site” - Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020. The EU recognizes that climate change knows no borders, and climate quotas are not included in this initiative as a solution. The mission prioritizes five main drivers as addressed in the report: “new forms of participative governance, a new economic and funding model, integrated urban planning, digital technologies and innovation management” (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:10).



(Figure 3. Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:10)

Figure 3. illustrates a blueprint of what the contract should emphasize and how and where the different multi-sectors should be included. It aims to let the cities determine their own activities, scope and timeline. And the participating cities are encouraged to implement this kind of multi-governance model as illustrated. This will also include relevant regional or national stakeholders as for example national energy producers, transport firms, research institutions etc. (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al 2020:11).

The contract is a political binding document, but it is not jurisdictional binding. The contract will be signed by the European Commission, the local government and respective regional or national governments because of the indispensable ingredient of the multi-leveled governance that is illustrated in figure 3 (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020 :11). The purpose of signing a contract regardless of jurisdiction commitment is to have a visible political commitment to the EU but also national and local governance and citizens. The contract is made together with local partners and citizens with help from the Mission Platform which is orchestrated by the NetZero Cities EU project. The Mission Board will provide necessary technical support, financial assistance, and regulation support for the elected cities that takes part in the initiative. As well as giving expert advice, by such as citizens involvement experts. The contract should be done by 2024.

Iceland had a climate policy, as the first municipality in Iceland, already in 2009 (Reykjavík Climate Action Plan 2021-2025, hereafter RCAP). This climate policy was revised after the Paris agreement in 2015 to direct it towards carbon neutrality and to write a plan to how achieve this objective. The definition of climate neutrality that will be used is the same as in RCAP which is derived from Iceland's Climate Council:

*Carbon neutrality means a condition where a balance has been achieved between the speed of emissions and capture cause by humans and the net release is therefore zero... The Paris Agreement is driven by the goal to maintain global warming well within 2 centigrade and as little above 1,5 degree Celsius as possible. This calls for global emissions to reach maximum without further delay and will then decrease rapidly until carbon neutrality has been reached.*

– City of Reykjavík Climate Action Plan for 2021-2025, 2021:9

By Reykjavík already having a climate policy by 2009 indicate willingness and awareness of the climate situation in the world and that Icelandic citizens has shown interest for the issue. The climate policy from 2009 was revised in 2015, explicitly due to the Paris Agreement.

Previous climate policy is therefore affected by multilevel governance, in this case an international level. The EGD, where the 100 cities have sprawled out of, is a corner stone in the environmental policy in Iceland, which is identified in the National Plan when it is referred to the EEA agreement (Government of Iceland, 2020). Policies deriving from the EGD is not identified in the RCAP. But the RCAP do focus on citizens involvement, and it is therefore likely that when it will be revised, that they will adapt to the citizens contract suggested by the 100 cities initiative. By adapting to the initiative it widens the prospects of getting financial support from the initiative, for Reykjavík to fulfilling their green transition projects.

The RCAP focused on citizens involvement and consultations with the citizens and that is identified as an intention to in the best way make sure that the transition to a climate neutral society will be done in a humble and reasonable way. The RCAP have six main objectives which can also be found in the EGD which is: carbon sequestration, health promoting modes of traveling, energy exchange, a walkable city, circular thinking, and green structures (City of Reykjavik, 2021:8). This also includes a “citizens contract” which Reykjavík Municipality and FESTA (Sustainability Centre of Iceland) issued and signed in 2015 where the body of this contract included reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, reduction of waste and to measure results and publish progress regarding the above-mentioned issues regularly for inspiration and to hold everyone involved accountable (City of Reykjavik, 2021:13). The citizens contract drafted from the 100 cities initiative, which can be found in figure 3, goes in a detailed version of expectations of what should be included in the contract. This is an opportunity for Reykjavík to develop their current citizens contract within a framework from the European level in a MLG system.

A citizens contract is also one of the premises that Hooghe & Marks (2020) presents as part of assuring effective cross-jurisdictional problem solving and avoiding centralisation of competence, which is seen as a pressing challenge for lower-level governments in a multilevel system (Bolleyer & Börzel, 2010:182). Hooghe & Marks (2020) addresses the contract between the citizens and the government to achieve the common good as a premise for the citizens to trust the entities and governance. Both the European level and the local level has forged such a contract which has been addressed as an important part to keep trust between the citizens and the governance in a MLG system. The framework for the citizens contract issued from the European level also creates space for a new way of thinking governance.

A social contract is one of the premises Bollyer et al. (2010) lists to assure competence not to be centralized and thus be a pressing challenge for the lower levels in a MLG system. The citizens contract is an agreement between the public and the jurisdictions to secure the common good (Hooghe & Marks 2020).

The 100 cities initiative's citizens contract has sparked a process and will likely be the new blueprint for the citizens contract already made by Fresta and Reykjavík Municipality and enhance it. The influence of the 100 cities initiative in the RCAP is limited. RCAP was written before Reykjavík became part of the initiative and is therefore more likely to have an influence when the RCAP will be renewed. The European level has not influenced RCAP but MLG has on an international level with the Paris Agreement.

### **5.1.2 A new way of thinking governance**

The signing of the citizens contract in the 100 cities initiative stresses several different governing levels to take part. It is argued that this approach will allow for adaptations to make sure the climate policies will fit with local strengths. The contracts do not only have the purpose of hold cities accountable but also to inspire not-contracted cities to adopt their ways of solving challenges where they have same conditions (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020 :11). The citizens contract includes a new way of governance for the cities and the bottom-up approach is emphasized. The initiative wants to achieve a bottom-up approach in the way of govern the cities (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020 :11). This way of governing differs from a well-known top-down approach and aims to be more holistic and horizontal coordinated for the cities and their partners to create synergies that will lead to less climate impact and begin accelerating the journey to a climate-neutral society in their cities (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020 :11) This is an example of how MLG can lead to more democratization at a local level, when avoiding centralization in a MLG system (Bolleyer & Börzel, 2010:182). This is also something that will lead Reykjavík into a new way of governance at a local level.

The EU commission emphasized the different involvement from different sectors in societies and the citizens for this to be a successful mission. The Mission Board report on the 100 cities is referring to small consultations in European cities with citizens where they have prioritized behavioral change, mobility, energy, circular economy and urban infrastructure and buildings.

The new way of governing gives an active role to the citizens and stakeholders for them to take part in the forming of a new structure to live more sustainable and have less climate gas consumption. The contract points towards the necessity of social inclusion and a necessity of a road map for governing in this citizens contract that will be formed of the elected cities. To help ensure inclusion of citizens the Mission Board has proposed that at least 1% of the funding should be devoted to supporting platforms helping citizens to engage in implementing climate actions. The Mission Board also calls out the silo-thinking and fragmented thinking as something that needs to be changed to a more strategic way of thinking, cross-cutting and a cross-section (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020)

The new way of thinking governance will affect Reykjavík and how they are thinking governance of their municipality as it is demanded from the initiative for Reykjavík to be able to qualify to the grants that is allocated regarding green objectives found in the 100 cities initiative, which has the overall objective of helping Europe to be reach the objective of climate neutrality by 2050 by sparking knowledge hubs through the chosen cities. This European framework for a citizens contract and a new way of thinking governance is an example of how Reykjavík is affected by EU policy. Reykjavík have sought to be part of a bigger framework for them to use this framework as a tool to reach their own green objectives for 2030 and 2040. Issues related to climate change is complex and touch upon complex synergies and governing systems. The climate changes also know no borders, and one state's consumption or natural resource utilization can affect a neighbor state, and hence is it applicable to use a cross - scalar governance to cooperate to hinder climate change further - in this case the EU.

Horizon Europe will invest 360 million euros in the Mission Platform as well as in science and innovative actions connected to the mission. This could include within mobility, urban planning or energy and the investment is accounted for in the period of 2022-2023. The commission are mobilizing other sources from the official and from the private to mobilize more investments (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020). To get the grants these money is representing it will bring the cities to modify to the obligations in the initiative and hence the EU policy will affect how the cities is thinking of governance. Reykjavík has already started this project by inviting to an open meeting for all the citizens in Reykjavík where key actors also was invited to speak of their thoughts and status on the green transition until now and towards 2030.

The 100 cities initiative process has affected Reykjavík and its climate policy already. If not the climate policy itself, then it has been sparked a process and a drive in the city of Reykjavík. For example, this is seen from the observation of the open meeting organized by Festa and Reykjavík Municipality. It is nowhere to be found in Iceland National climate objectives that Iceland will aim to fulfill climate neutrality by 2030. The national objective is climate neutrality by 2040. The open meeting with Festa and Reykjavík Municipality was called “Climate neutrality by 2030: How?”. This meeting was held after the announcement of which cities was chosen to take part in the initiative, where Reykjavík was one of them. Out of this, Reykjavík has started a process of figure out how the city will fulfill the objectives of climate neutrality by 2030. This has also come to show at COP26 in Glasgow 2021.

At COP26 two different events were observed and is part of the data collection for this thesis. One event was called “Reykjavík Green Deal- Sustainability, Innovation and the Health City” Here the Green Deal is what is referred to as the Green Plan in this thesis, meaning it is Reykjavík’s own Green Plan of green transition objectives, - not the EGD. The session that was observed found place in one of the pavilions. What the drivers for Reykjavík city to be arranging this session is not been officially presented, but this is a good way for Iceland as a small nation to show the international community and the European level their solutions within CCS, where Iceland call their CCS project and technology for CarbFix, and other green plans Reykjavík has for its city. This was also before the cities for the 100 cities initiative was chosen and the application process was still going on. In this way it is plausible to believe that this would be positive for Iceland and Reykjavík to be able to show their green plans and solutions for the European level and the international community. Reykjavík Municipality participating at COP26 shows the MLG in praxis.

In a background paper of why Reykjavík decided to apply to be part of the 100 cities initiative this sentence is written: “Hlutverk hópsins var að undirbúa umsókn um að Reykjavík verði ein af kolefnishlutlausum snjallborgum innan EES svæðisins 2030, og eftir atvikum þátttakandi í öðrum umsóknum eða alþjóðlegum verkefnum sem fjármagni og styðji við stefnumörkun og verkefni Græna plansins» (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2021). Which translate to “The mission of the working group was to prepare an application for Reykjavík to be part of the climate neutral and smart cities within the EEA area 2030, and if decided to be a participant in other applications or international projects where grants can be given and financial support to support RKV’s own objective called the Green Plan” (own translation) (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2021), where the Green Plan is a strategy plan to sum up the main

objectives at one place for projects that is central and green investments for the city for a time period of 10 years (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2021). By Reykjavík writing this in their background paper it is clear that Reykjavík was prepared for what is included in the citizens contract template drawn by the Mission Board Report on the 100 cities. Through the latter sentence referred to it is also identified a strong wish of being part of international cooperation and projects which can help Reykjavík on their way to reach their objectives towards a green future. The plan was published in 2020 and will have this green focus by 2030. Further, Leiðangurinn sem hér er fjallað um hvílir síðan á grunni Græna sáttmála Evrópusambandsins (European Green Deal) sem miðar að því að ná kolefnishlutleysi í Evrópu fyrir árið 2050 (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2021). Which translates to “the mission discussed rests on the European Green deal, which aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 (own translation).” This says explicit that Reykjavík is affected of the EGD and the European cooperation.

It is also specified in the background paper that the objective by applying for be part of the 100 cities initiative is the possibilities that opens for financial grants and support from the EEA and to analyse international and European projects that and help Reykjavík with their local and national objective of climate neutrality (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:2). The Green Plans report also addresses the motivation of being part of an international community to implement their own green plans. In this report the European cooperation and their EGD as a main focus in such international cooperations and a base to implement Reykjavík own green plans (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:18). Climate neutrality and green development in Europe is emphasised as why the EGD is one of the main focuses for Reykjavík to achieve their own green objectives. In Reykjavík’s Green Plan it is also pointed out how EU’s newest program for research, Horizon Europe which has the time frame of 2021-2027 will be important as it will grant 100 billion euros to innovation in the years to come with the main focus of environmental issues (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:18). The 100 cities initiative is part of this research program.

The 100 cities initiative has given Reykjavík a wider framework to work with citizens involvement and a bottom-up governance system. A driver to modify into this new way of governance is the grant opportunities which follows. For example, this is identified through the open meeting for citizens of Iceland held by Festa and Reykjavík Municipality. Although, Reykjavík was already not in lock-in to a top-bottom governance system and has invited the public to be part of shaping the climate policy structure with the Festa and Reykjavík Municipality initiative of a citizens contract for businesses in Iceland which started in 2015, -

but the meeting in 2021 enhanced it to also include every citizens with interest, not only businesses.

## 5.2 The Green Plan of Reykjavík

Reykjavík's Green Plan is a policy document which was made with intention to attain green investments for the city of Reykjavík with the idea of sustainability to build a clear future with a climate neutral society. The decision of such prospect was made the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June in 2020 (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020). This decade, Reykjavík has decided through the Green Plan to integrate climate habits and transitions that will lead to the achievement of climate neutrality, but it is not explicit said that the main aim with this is climate neutrality by 2030, but the focus is rather on green investments (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:2). The green investments are supposed to lead the way towards 2030 (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:2). It is also specified in the policy document that it aims for green growth when describing that it is desirable to create economic growth without going of the expense of nature (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:2). The Green Plan has three main objectives which is to create a climate neutral city, green growth and that no one should be left behind, - the citizens should be included now and, in the future (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:3).

To achieve the objective of climate neutrality for Reykjavík City, the policy document addresses some focus areas which will be important to achieve adequate change. This is for example carbon capture and storage (CCS), with restoration of forest and more fauna, restoration of wetlands and maintained of ecological diversity (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020:11). These examples are also found in the EGD and in the 100 cities initiative (European Commission, 2019). That Reykjavík and the European level hold the same focus areas in the green transition planning is due to MLG and it is agreed upon that this will lead to the common good. CCS is also emphasized as necessary to be able to achieve the objectives of climate neutrality by 2030 and 2050 (European Commission, 2019).

During field work at COP26, Reykjavík City presented their technology for CCS which is called Carbfix. The Mayor of Reykjavík brought a piece of basalt rock which was a result of greenhouse gases being direct captured from the air, (differs from regular CCS as it is not connected to for example a factory with greenhouse gas emissions and filtrated directly from

the factory) and storage after two years in soft rocks (basaltic rocks) which is naturally in the ground in Iceland (Matter et al. 2009). This was a showcase for Iceland and their specific technology for CCS. This status of Iceland's innovative technology and where this innovation can lead them in the short timeframe. The COP26 pavilions and side sessions is a marketing tool where for example states, such as Iceland can show their technology and solutions to mark how far they have come/not come in the green transition for other governance levels or to sell products.

The EU policy has been leading in the Green Plan as it is embedded in the National climate policy framework and that is Reykjavík as well. In the Green Plan the same focus areas as in EGD is identified such as CCS and LULECF. The 100 cities initiative shares the same focus areas as the EGD and has sparked a process in the Green Plan of Reykjavík to modify their climate policy to become part of the initiative.

### **5.3 City of Reykjavik Climate Action Plan for 2021-2025**

At first eyesight, it is blurred which level the planned climate action derives from, the European level, national or local level. The two levelled game between the domestic and international level is not clearly divided in RCAP, nor the dichotomy between the international and domestic level (Enderlein et al. 2010). MLG is therefore an adequate way to analyse this subject as it fits better with the new world picture (Enderlein et al, 2010) and it fits very well to describe how climate policy is created at a local level. In climate policy it comes to show how policy change is formed by negotiation with several levels of governance (Enderlein et al, 2010). For example, the ideas in the RCAP is derived from international agreement which can be found in the EGD and the Paris Agreement too. It still derives from the cooperation of the EEA agreement where the EU level derives from a type I governance in MLG where the memberships are territorial or local governments attires with the higher and lower levels and by this secure the domestic areas having exclusivity (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:18). Because Iceland is not a fully EU-member, they do not share the same responsibilities as a fully member but that does not mean that it will be in Iceland's interest to not participate in European integration.

The RCAP was formed before the 100 cities initiative was issued so the (RCAP) is not affected by the 100 cities initiative. In the RCAP it is found several references to the Paris Agreement and the body of the RACP derives from international cooperation through the international objectives for climate action as well as an international framework as it comes to show when reviewing the paper (City of Reykjavik, 2021:6,9,14,15 and more). Although the RCAP is not directly affected by the 100 cities initiative because of the timeline, it is to some extent indirect affected by the EU through applying to become part of another EU initiative (City of Reykjavik, 2021:22) but it is not affected by the 100 cities initiative itself.

## **5.4 How the EU has affected Iceland's National Plan**

In Iceland's National Plan is a plan to describe how the island state will deliver on their commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In the executive summary of the National Plan, it is referenced to that the objectives of less greenhouse gas emissions are done jointly with the European Union and Norway, which is part of the EEA alongside with Iceland (Government of Iceland, 2020:7). The National Plan also refers to the Paris agreement and where the goals of not increasing the global average temperature over 2 °C and to pursue not exceed over 1,5 °C preindustrial levels. (Government of Iceland, 2020:7). Iceland refers to their commitment of reducing their greenhouse gas emissions with 40% for 2030 and how this commitment is jointly with the European Union and the Member states associated to the EU (Government of Iceland, 2020:7). In this commitment is included the maintaining of land and forests, as well as the reduction of greenhouse gasses. This is adopted targets after the EEA Joint Committee adopted a decision of an extended cooperation on climate action. Iceland has committed to the EGD which includes the ETS, LULUCF, which is referred to in the National Plan (Government of Iceland, 2020:7-8).

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme (henceforth, EU ETS) is under the EGD umbrella and affects Iceland's National Plan. Under the ETS it aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with 43% by 2030 (Government of Iceland, 2020:14). This is compared to 2005. The main sectors in Iceland which is covered by the EU ETS is heavy industries and aviation (Government of Iceland, 2020:14). The main emission in Iceland comes from the fishery and transport sector. More specifically, the emissions come from cars, ships, industrial processes,

and agriculture (Cook, D., et al. 2021). Road transport accounts for approximately 20%, fishery 11%, heavy industrial processes and chemicals 42%, and agriculture 13%, while waste management accounts for approximately 6% (LULUCF emissions is not accounted for) (Government of Iceland, 2020). In the National Plan, Iceland points out that the fishery sector and transport sector should be decarbonized as the main fossil fuel used sectors (Government of Iceland, 2020:9). The EU ETS is what covers these sectors in a greenhouse gas emission reduction framework from EU initiatives and out of this EU policy which affects the National Plan. Iceland is committed to the EU ETS out of the EEA Agreement and the EU ETS is designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with 435 by 2030 compared to 2005 levels (Government of Iceland, 2020).

The land use, land use change and forestry (henceforth, LULUCF) are also under the EDG umbrella and affects Iceland's National Plan. The National Plan is described as the main instrument to reach their commitments towards 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2040 where the increased efforts will be on the LULUCF sector (Government of Iceland, 2020:13). The agricultural sector, as well as forestry and wetlands are addressed to play a central role in Iceland's plan to reach the objective of climate neutrality (Government of Iceland, 2020:10). Iceland describes the LULECF as a potential that should be utilized to mitigate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Government of Iceland, 2020:13). Iceland has great potential in revegetation, reforestation, and reclamation of wetlands and out of this the LULUCF is a policy which is embraced in the National Plan. It is also referred to the EU Effort Sharing Regulation (Henceforth, ESR) where it is stated in the National Plan published in 2020 that by following this plan Iceland will decrease emissions with over one million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents in sectors that falls under the ESR (Government of Iceland, 2020:13). Sectors that fall under the ESR is for example transport, fisheries, agriculture and waste managements, and more. This is based on analysis that is not further referenced in the National Plan. It is also a willingness to surpass the current demands through Iceland's international commitments by more than 40% in ESR sectors (Government of Iceland, 2020:13) although it is not written how this will be achieved.

Here the other COP26 observation is valuable, where Iceland's responsibility was discussed as well as Iceland's status regarding climate neutrality. The observation gave insight in how Iceland wants to present themselves to the international community versus how Iceland's status regarding climate neutrality is perceived by Iceland's own citizens and that it is not cohesion in those two paradigms, - Iceland's, and the citizens. MLG is acknowledged in the

National Plan when it comes to implementing climate policies (Government of Iceland, 2020:15). It is addressed how the climate policies should be considered to work cross scalar and it is acknowledged how the ETS under the EGD umbrella will assist the Icelandic Government with its framework to fulfil climate action through Iceland's international climate commitments (Government of Iceland, 2020:16). This shows that international obligations are important for Iceland, and more explicitly the European level and the commitments through the EEA Agreement.

The EU level is identified as a level that has influenced the National framework for climate policy in Iceland to a large extent. Iceland is through the review of the National Plan identified as passive when it come to making climate policies and climate action plans and is leaning on the EU framework. Hence, the EU level is identified as a steering mechanism for the national climate policy framework in Iceland through the EEA agreement.

## **5.5 Summary of analysis**

This chapter has analyzed in which ways the European Union's climate policy has affected local climate policy in Reykjavik through reviewing the 100 cities initiative, Iceland's National Action Plan, Reykjavik's Green Plan and Reykjavik's Climate Action Plan for 2021-2025 in light of the EGD and tried to identify different EU initiative which has affected the climate policy in Reykjavík. Now the findings will be presented.

The 100 cities initiative has not affected previous climate policy in Reykjavík due to the timeline but has enhanced Reykjavík's ambitions for a climate neutral society and moved the objective with 10 years. The initiative has also been identified as affecting the process of citizens involvement and way of thinking local governance. RCAP is not affected by the 100 cities initiative. Nor is it explicitly affected by the EGD, rather the Paris agreement. But because of MLG the Paris Agreement and the EGD shares same climate objectives and hence the focus areas in RCAP can also be found in the EGD.

The EGD and hence the European level is identified in Reykjavík's Green Plan as a framework for the green plan. It is also identified plans of applying to become part of the 100 cities initiative. The National Plan has embedded the EGD climate policy framework in their own climate policy framework. The influence from the EGD is therefore identified to have a significantly effect on Iceland's climate policy which again Reykjavík's climate policy framework relies on. Iceland's climate policy making and facilitation for climate action is identified as passive.

It is also identified as a paradox that the EU climate policy is affecting Reykjavík's climate policy to such degree when Iceland have not shown sign it actively applying to be part of a fully EU integration through an EU-membership.

This section has identified in which ways EU climate policy is affecting Reykjavík's climate policy with a literature review of policy documents and observations. The findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 6 Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings from the analysis. The discussion consists of two parts. First, in 6.1 the results will be discussed according to previous literature and research as well as with the data collection for this thesis. And lastly in 6.2, it will be a summary of the discussion.

### 6.1 Discussion of the findings

Reykjavík's climate policy is taking more radical climate actions with influence by the EU than without influence from the EU. Reykjavík's empiric of climate policy with reference back to 2010 shows that Reykjavík municipality has made autonomy choices on behalf of their citizens, regardless of the 100 cities initiative. This also came to show when analyzed the local level of policy making through Reykjavík's Climate Action Plan 2021-2025 (City of Reykjavík, 2021) where the 100 cities initiative have had no influence as the Climate Action Plan was written before an application for the initiative was in the process. In the RCAP it is addressed how citizens in Reykjavík is willing to change their ways to help changing the current climate crisis the world is in. As much as 63% of Icelanders had changed their ways to meet a greener lifestyle in 2018 (City of Reykjavík, 2021). This is identified as autonomy will from the citizens to be part of change and do their civic duty. While the 100 cities initiative cannot be identified as a factor that influenced the RCAP it has been identified influence through international framework by the Paris Agreement. The EU climate policy framework largely derives from the Paris Agreement objectives and can hence also be found in the RCAP. This is an example of MLG and how the different levels of governance are part of shaping each other's climate policies.

The policies are made at a national level, but climate action is carried out at a local level. In this case study, the climate action is carried out at a local level by help from the European level. Reykjavík Municipality has jumped a level to fulfill more radical climate obligations than what is outlined by the national level in Iceland. By being part of the 100 cities initiative Reykjavík has by cooperating with the European level set more ambitious climate goals than Iceland has at a national level. Reykjavík aims towards climate neutrality by 2030 because of the 100 cities initiative, not 2040 which is set by the national level. EU is hence identified as a steering mechanism that open perspectives and moves "self-drawn" boundaries by facilitating

for a framework for cities in Europe to structure themselves to find the best solutions towards a climate neutral 2030,- not solely for EU members but also for associated EU member cities through such as the EEA Agreement. This is progressive goals and what is projected is rather ambitious for its timeframe as well.

To fulfill the objective of climate neutrality, jumping the national level is a smart move by Reykjavik as Iceland's National Plan does not contain any specific plan of how to reach the objectives. For example, in the table that summarizes measures in Iceland for June 2020 it is referred to the EU ESR reduction of emissions where in section A.2 in the National Plan it says "Tax intensives will be adopted to encourage active mobility, such as cycling and walking" – Iceland's National Plan, 2020:24. The tax intensive is not specified how much is needed to fulfill this objective nor it is specified where it should come from other than that Iceland will allocate ISK 46 billion to climate mitigation measures from 2020-2024 (Government of Iceland, 2020:21). Another example of this is in section E.2 in the National Plan regarding agriculture where it says "Emissions arising from beef productions will be reduced and carbon sequestration enhanced to aim for carbon neutral beef production in 2040" - Government of Iceland, 2020:25. It is not specified when the carbon sequestration will be at a big enough scale to cover this area nor how much the beef industry accounts for in Iceland and nor how much resources that will be used on this measure. Iceland's National Plan is at best a facade for the international community to still count Iceland, as a small nation state, as still on track for their climate obligations.

The Icelandic Youth Environmentalists saw through Iceland's passiveness at COP26 and critically called them out on it. Iceland has a good position in the world regarding green energy sources, such as hydrogen and geothermal heat access. For example, approximately 71% of heating of households comes from geothermal energy. This exemplifies a good starting point for green energy use in Iceland and out of the green energy access Iceland has through the Icelandic Youth Environmentalists been criticized out of that Iceland do not deliver at a higher level and with higher climate ambitions. The Icelandic Youth Environmentalists then addresses room for enhanced climate objectives at a national level. It is also in Iceland's interest to take part in the green transition. Youth Delegates from Iceland was at COP26 to talk about their road towards climate neutrality from a Nordic perspective. Here it was raised the complexity of the problem as it is not just an environmental problem but rather a problem for society. Numbers and percentages are what is

communicated, and that perspective forgets the people behind the numbers and their lives. The Youth Delegates emphasized the urgency of the situation and that Iceland itself should take more responsibility instead of leaning back. It was also addressed how people wants a change, but that was contested by the one leading the debate referring to the Norwegian Governmental election in 2021 where the Green Party did not get enough votes to be part of the government. It is hence a complexity in tackling the climate crisis with not only economic considerations but also, environmental, and socioeconomic considerations that should be taken into account. The 100 cities initiative highlights this when for example referring to inclusive growth (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:17) and that the backbone of the initiative is that this should be built by and for the citizens (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:12). The European level is a positive contribution in citizens inclusiveness in shaping the new green future for Reykjavík city.

This is also positive for the national level as it is in Iceland's interests to be connected to the European level. But if being part of a European framework which emphasises competitiveness and economic growth can lead to forgetting the socioeconomic factors and the people behind the numbers as addressed from the Youth Delegates from Iceland at COP26.

Iceland as a small nation state that wants to be recognized on the same level as their Nordic neighbors (Bergmann, 2014). Iceland has all to win for the European level to look at Iceland's green solutions, such as their CCS technology, Carbfix. Iceland cannot be an isolated island surviving on their own fishing industry as back in the days before the Danes colonized them around 1830 (Bergmann, 2014) in this modernized world. It is identified as a paradox that Iceland chooses to go to the EU while they have this post-colonial cultural heritage which is used as an argument to not "surrender" to the EU which is painted as modern colonialism and lose control over their national resources, such as fisheries. But at the same time, Iceland's climate policy framework is built on the EU's climate policy framework. One reason behind Iceland adopting most of the EU climate policy framework even though no sign to actively become a fully EU-member has come to show is Iceland's passiveness in the fight against climate change which has been identified in the National Plan.

Although, Iceland's embedded dread of become a victim of modern colonialism, Iceland still seeks to be part of the big table which is gathering Europe and the rest of the international community. To be included in a MLG system and be integrated in international organizations,

such as the EU, with the aim of unite and make a strong union can also have the opposite effect then unite. Local and ethnic groups can see it as a threat to their culture and a threat to be assimilated with the rest of Europe and over the last decade the response to European integration has been with rising nationalism (Goldstein and Pevehouse 2017:246). MLG can also create tension between identity of nationalities and local groups and between functionality (Schakel et al., 2015). The fishing industry in Iceland is highly valued and the fishing industry could potentially become such a local group latter described. This can also explain why Iceland is hesitating to join fully as a member and where the fishing culture and the resources that built the country is in big regards to the fishing industry and the fishing culture. This fear of colonialism does not come all out of the blue, due to Iceland's history but also if the MLG framework is taken into consideration. In MLG systems, local governments often must add policies decisions made at higher levels of government, limiting their autonomy. For example, the EU has adopted innovative environmental policies to meet the targets of not increasing the warming more than 2°C in the atmosphere which is more ambitious than several local authorities (Jordan et al., 2012). This can restrict their ability to address specific local needs and preferences, as they must align their actions with broader regional or national objectives. In this case study it would though be the other way around based on this analysis. The national level now should align their actions to help Reykjavík fulfill their obligations to the 100 cities initiative (as approximately 1/3 habitants of Iceland live in Reykjavík) (Gunnarsdóttir et al 2023).

Reykjavík Municipality has opposite to the national level not been passive. Based on their previous climate policies documented back to 2010 the Municipality has been a strong voice to clear the path towards a framework towards a green transition. The national level, with its passiveness, has not been a driver and here the cons for MLG comes to show and has helped Reykjavík in reaching towards the potential they have outlined for themselves. Hence, Reykjavík Municipality has found a leap hole in holding the National level accountable, through MLG and the European level. The 100 cities initiative presupposes a citizen's contract that is signed by every key actor in society to be able to fulfill citizens involvement in reaching the objective of climate neutrality by 2030, also the national level, the state of Iceland. This is an example of how it is a causal link between efficiency in governance and decentralization (Enderlein et al., 2010). And it shows a positive effect on democracy on a national level when international institutions are negotiating, - as the local level gets supported by the European level. It can likewise have an positive effect on international

institutions and a new way of democratising these institutions (Enderlein et al., 2010). By showing the citizens in Reykjavík, where approximately 1/3 of the citizens of Iceland lives (Gunnarsdóttir et al. 2023), this can at its best open for a new discourse in society for an EU membership. This because the EU facilitates to climate action in practice, in contrary to the passiveness from the national level. This is an example of how MLG can have a positive effect on democracy.

The question of how MLG affect democracy has raised awareness of fairness and justice in international relations in political theory (Enderlein et al., 2010). To use MLG to understand policy making is suiting when looking into how a European level will affect climate policy at a local level as policy research habitually is seen through lenses that heritages of multi-levelled character of how global governance is done (Enderlein et al., 2010). It comes to show how national policy is embedded in more severe structures of governance when studying issue-area governance in for example social policy or taxation (Enderlein et al., 2010) or in environmental policies (Young, 1994). The environmental policy is often bound by international agreements but carried out in local governments, such as the cities and regions (Schakel et al., 2015) which this case study has become an example of.

The hesitation of the national level is overweighed by the European level in this case study. Back to model 2. which illustrates how the EU affects the local level in this case study, Reykjavík has been affected not only by the 100 citizens' initiative, but it also the ETS, ESR and LULECF under the EGD umbrella was identified as policies affecting climate policy in Reykjavík in this analysis. The 100 cities initiative has sparked a process in Reykjavík Municipality or maybe rather given them the legitimacy to fulfil their potential and their urge to make climate action. Traces of the 100 cities initiative was found in Reykjavík's own Green Plan where they planned to apply to be part of the initiative back in June 2020 (Reykjavíkurborgar, 2020). The application process was comprehensive and to be able to be part of the top group of over 300 cities that applied the application had to be well written and include future of Reykjavík's plan towards a green transition and climate neutrality in their city. This can have, if not pushed the city, then pushed the national politicians to consider what the different parties wants to prioritize for their voters. It has also sparked an open meeting for how to fulfil the objective of climate neutrality by 2030 where the outcome of the meeting was mostly that no one knows. However, on the other side it was consensus about

how the importance of measure and reporting on the measure was essential. As the changes cannot be made if it is not measured, which shows where the National Plan falls to short.

MLG involves multiple layers of government, each with its own set of responsibility and decision-making processes (Hooghe, 1996). This complexity can lead to delays and inefficiencies in decision-making, as coordination and consensus-building become more challenging and will strike many as a hinder of progressing (Young, 1994). Local governments may face difficulties in implementing timely and effective policies due to bureaucratic hurdles and intergovernmental negotiations (Hooghe, 1996). Inequality among local governments: in some multi-level governance systems, there may be disparities in resources, capacities, and political influence among different local governments. Hooghe (1996:295) refers to an example where nations use their resources to influence the outcome of the policies in the making. This can result in unequal power dynamics, with larger or wealthier municipalities gaining a disproportionate advantage over smaller or less affluent ones. Such disparities can undermine local governance efforts and exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities within a region. This can be a realistic issue for Reykjavík, as approximately 1/3 lives in the city, 2/3 lives other places in Iceland, such as rural places, and can be neglected.

The 2/3 that does not live in the Reykjavík area but other places in Iceland probably did not have a chance in the 100 cities initiative if they would apply. This because of the application process required the applicants to mapping previous green effort for their cities and future green plans and solutions. Reykjavík is the biggest city in Iceland as well as the capitol and the citizens might have different demands and needs than in a rural, agriculture municipality for example, and it is hence natural for Reykjavík to be more tangled to international cooperation than other more rural municipalities. Although, the rural municipalities are still tangled to EU policies as it is national obligations to for example the EGD and the associated initiatives as the EU ETS's. It is though important to bear in mind that the 100 cities initiative by the EU can be root for division in the local communities in Iceland. The access to grants Reykjavík will have through the 100 cities initiative can help Reykjavík get more developed than the rural places in Iceland and creates a void for a typical center-periphery conflict line. This can potentially increase political dissatisfaction to the political system in Iceland and the root for this is blurred lines in whom taking the decisions and who is responsible for the financial allocations.

MLG gives states the possibility of reallocation of decision making (Hooghe, 1996). The decisional reallocation can blur lines of accountability making it difficult for citizens to hold their local governments responsible for decisions that affect their daily lives. For example, state leaders will be positive to reallocate decisions to avoid responsibility in certain policies (Hooghe, 1996) which will blur the lines for whom is responsible for the voters. With power dispersed across various levels, it becomes harder to pinpoint who is accountable for specific outcomes. This lack of accountability can erode trust in local governance and diminish citizens' sense of agency in shaping their own community. In MLG, different levels of government may pursue divergent policy objectives or adopt conflicting regulations. This can create confusion and inefficiencies for local governments trying to navigate and reconcile competing priorities. Inconsistencies and conflicts in policies can hinder local governments' ability to plan and implement coherent strategies for local development and service provision.

The Mission Board Report (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020) highlights several times in the report how circular economy would help addressing the sustainability challenges that the 100 cities initiative is aiming to tackle. This is identified as a driver to fulfill the objective of climate neutrality. It also focusses on economic and inclusive growth. The Mission Board Report addresses the risk for a rebound-effect, meaning that other sectors will also increase production and that will lead to more consumption (Eckersley, 2022:248) out of such as systemic changes, for example behavioral change. The Mission Board Report also refers back to economic growth and then new economic models that should lead to a circular economy quite frequently. Economic growth as a perspective is hence identified as a ground pillar when leading Europa in the green transition. It is also one of the main objectives with the 100 cities initiative, and at the same time state the need for new economic models which should lead to circular economy (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:17). Circular economy is an economic system which makes sure that the process of the way to produce and consume changes to long lasting ways of products so the products live as long as possible, and minimize waste, so when the product is finished, the material will be used to something new (Suárez-Eiroa, B., et al. 2019). The 100 cities initiative encourage the chosen cities to build this green transition on innovation. A challenge with MLG system can be whether it allows for innovation outside the already existing framework. Take for example an economic model: Europe (and the rest of the world) base themselves on the same economic model. If a city in the 100 cities initiative would be innovative enough and try a different kind of economic model than would not gain the current ruling one, it could weaken the grant opportunities for

the city applying. This can be a challenge of local governance in a MLG system as the resources is more limited than with help from the national and European level, so they are forced into the existing system and innovation outside this system does then not stand a chance.

It is worth noting that while MLG can pose challenges for local governance it also offers opportunities for cooperation, policy coordination, and collective problem-solving as mentioned in the arguments for why MLG has positive effects on local governance. The 100 cities initiative aims for the 112 selected cities to become innovation and learning hubs for other cities to follow, Reykjavík can inspire and be a motivation for local solutions in other municipalities in Iceland. This is also a potential outcome even though other municipalities have different transition challenges than Reykjavík, for example not the same access to geothermal heating for households. Some places in Iceland, such as in the Westfjord do rely on oil aggregates to secure electricity as it is challenging and underdeveloped infrastructure to reach these parts in the rural areas. This is though something that needs to be done from a national level and without an initiative from a higher level in the MLG system, such as the European level, then the rural places do not have the same pressure point to hold the national level accountable, as Reykjavík has as being part of the 100 cities initiative. Balancing the benefits and drawbacks of MLG is crucial for ensuring effective and accountable local governance within a broader governance framework.

The EU has emphasized in both the 100 cities initiative and the “mother-document” the EDG that the green transition will be done with economic competitiveness and growth. To access the grants opportunities in context with the 100 cities initiative the cities have to meet the requirements of what is outlined in the initiative. The critique to this is how Reykjavík then can confine itself to follow the European framework regardless of own beliefs. The 100 cities initiative outlines a need for an economic transition to change the world’s way of producing and consuming (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:16). According to Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. (2020)’s report, then it has been a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions with 23% and 61% increase in economic gain between 1990 to 2018 Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al. 2020:16). If green growth and climate neutrality is compatible can be further discussed in a bigger thesis.

Finally, the observation part of the data collection which was Climathon 2022 has affected Reykjavík and their process of climate neutrality. Even though this specific event cannot be

connected to any of the reviewed documents in this analysis, specifically, it is clear that this European initiative called Climathon has an effect. Climathon is a way where everyone in the city is invited to participating in a competition to find or improve a solution that will lead the city further in the green transition. This project led to the winners of the competition to have meeting with key actors in the municipality and could get support to implement their ideas in Reykjavík city. And this is a direct citizens involvement which is sparked from an EU project, Horizon Europe.

## 6.2 Summary

The 100 cities initiative has shown to not been essential for the making of the reviewed climate policies produced by Reykjavík municipality as the 100 cities initiative participation was allocated later in the timeline than most of this policies was written. Although, Reykjavík Municipality has included the initiative in the Green Plan policy document and outlined a strong wish for being part of the initiative and has enhanced highlighted Reykjavík's own climate action objectives which matches with the 100 cities objective. It also has affected the process of climate policy in Reykjavík by Reykjavík have to adapt to the obligations in the initiative, as for example a new way of thinking governance and citizens involvement. It has also pushed new goals and more radical climate goals by joining the 100 cities initiative. It was nowhere to be found that Reykjavík or Iceland had such defined goals with a coherent plan for it as fulfill the objective of climate neutrality by 2030 before this initiative. That means, that due to the participation in the initiative Reykjavík has moved the timeline progressively 10 years before the original objective which was decided by the Icelandic government.

Regardless of the 100 cities initiative, the European framework is very much precented in all the reviewed documents. The European Green Deal has been identified in almost all the policy documents reviewed for this research. The EGD is the “mother document” which is the origin of why the 100 cities initiative was created in the EU system. The EGD was written and published first in the timeline of the documents reviewed in this analysis. The Green Plan of Reykjavík used the EGD as a cornerstone and has empirically been the backbone of Reykjavík's climate policy along with the Paris Agreement since 2015. After 2015 the EGD

has been used to modify and modernize as well as help prioritize which climate actions that is necessary to implement to achieve Iceland's and Reykjavík's national and local objective of climate neutrality before 2040. And in the light of MLG where governance is embraces cooperation between states and common rules with the aim of public good (Hooghe & Marks, 2020), Iceland conforms to the European framework to reach objectives the different levels have in common, - such as a climate neutral society. This is an example of how the MLG, and the European level is affecting climate policy in Reykjavík.

After reviewing the National Plan, it comes to show how the EU cooperation and policies is strongly embedded in the National Plan and is a steady framework taken into use by Iceland when planning for the green transition and climate neutrality. All though Iceland has outlined their climate policy targets through the National Plan it is yet to be find how they will execute this and a plan for how the objectives will be fulfilled. Through the review of the National Plan, Iceland is well integrated in the MLG system.

Based on this analysis, it is argued that Reykjavík's climate policy is affected by EU policy in a rather big scale. Reykjavík uses the EU policy framework as a tool based on the Icelandic commitment through the Paris Agreement and the EGD but also to access allocated grants for reaching Reykjavík's own climate action objectives. The main finding through this analyze is that even though the 100 cities initiative came rather late in the game, it has already affected Reykjavík's climate policy by the progressiveness of aiming towards climate neutrality 10 years before the original objective sat by the Icelandic government. It has also started a process of citizens involvement through the open meeting for citizens with Festa and Reykjavík Municipality. Other than that Reykjavík will be affected in the future of this initiative if they will fulfill the obligations that comes with the initiative.

It has also been identified several EU initiatives and Policies under the EGD umbrella which has affected the climate policy in Reykjavík or will in the future. Such as the EU ESR, EU ETS and LULICF.

The last finding in this analysis that has been discussed is the paradox that Iceland is not even a fully EU member but inherently uses EU climate policy framework to achieve own climate action objectives. The EU acts like a spearhead in the green policy making at both local, national, and European level. Maybe these acts of the EU as a climate leader can be a factor the new generations in Iceland to get rid of the colonial complex and spark a new discourse in

society about become a fully member of the EU. Regardless is it no doubt that the EU policy heavily impacts local climate policy in Reykjavík due to MLG.

This chapter has discussed the key findings from the analysis. It has been reflected on and interpreted with the empirical and theoretical framework where MLG has shown to be an adequate framework to explain how and why the EU as the European level affects climate policy at a local level in Reykjavík also even without being a fully EU member. The next chapter will give recommendations for further research as well as conclude this thesis.

## 7 Conclusion

This case has illustrated how climate policy at a local level is affected by the European level in a multi-level governance system. The European level aims to be a climate leader in the green transitions and their goal is to be the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The 100 cities initiative is a tool to help the process of reaching the objective of climate neutrality by letting 112 cities on their own premisses find local solutions to become climate neutral already by 2030. This within a framework provided from a European level. Reykjavík climate policy has been affected by this EU driven initiative by enhancing their own climate neutrality objectives by fast forward it with 10 years. The national objective for Iceland is to be climate neutral by 2040 and policy documents reviewed for this thesis issued before Reykjavík's participation in the EU driven initiative has had 2040 as the objective of climate neutrality as well. Now Reykjavík has the objective of become climate neutral by 2030 and the 100 cities initiative has been a strong factor for this renewed objective. The EU level has facilitated for the local level to reach for bigger goals and provided a policy framework on how the EU believe they can succeed to climate neutrality within a given timeframe. The EU is hence identified as a steering mechanism in the policy making of green transition also at a local level, - outside the EU-integration.

Reykjavík has been self-driven since their first climate policy in 2009 and through their citizens own initiative to adapt their habits to mitigate climate change. But Reykjavík as a local level have actively sought to be part of a European framework which gives them facilitation, counselling, and grant opportunities to succeed with their green transition objectives. The national level of this case study, which is Iceland, has been identified as passive in climate policymaking as well as not having a plan that can be executed. The local level is given a leap hole to gain support in fulfilling their climate objectives through the European framework when the national level is passive. One of the main factors the EU has been identified as through the data collection of literature review and observations is hence that the European level is part of helping the local level hold the national level accountable for achieving climate neutrality. This is through one of the criteria of being integrated in the 100 cities initiatives which is a binding citizens contract that stretches over three governance levels, - the European, the National and local. Multi-level governance is identified as a cornerstone in the EU policy framework to implement climate policy at a local level.

In Iceland's National Plan it is referred to the EEA obligations quite frequent which shows that European cooperation is important for Iceland. Beyond the EEA obligations Iceland has not shown any official sign to take bigger part in the EU-integration with applying to become a fully-member of the EU. The most obvious factors to explain this is Iceland's post-colony cultural heritage and a strongly integrated fishing industry, where the fishing industry is guarding their control over the national fishing resources. It is a paradox how Reykjavík and Iceland seek towards the European integration, if it is through the 100 cities initiative or the EEA, but still not showing formal interest of become a fully member of the European Union.

The most prominent factors in the data collection through literature review and observations identified multi-level governance for this paradox to be possible as well as Iceland's passiveness of leadership in the green transition which has led Reykjavík to seek out of their national level and towards the European level. The European Union is a spearhead in the green transition, and it is an essential part in the multileveled governance system which has been shown to be a strength when making climate policies. However, EU's economic growth and competitiveness as an essential part of the green transition can potentially be a conflict of interest to achieve sustainable climate neutrality and look after the citizens in the process at the same time.

The EU climate policy has been identified in all of the reviewed policy documents in this thesis except for in City of Reykjavík's Climate Action Plan for 2021-2025. Through observations it has also come to show how EU climate policy and its framework is affecting the local level in Reykjavík in not only push forward more ambitious climate objectives but also spark a process of deeper citizens involvement and a new way of thinking governance. EU-driven initiatives have led to direct citizens involvement in Reykjavík and an open sphere of citizens to be included in contribute to solutions towards climate neutrality. The EU as a steering mechanism in the green transition then is passing to not only affect the policies but stretches over to also be a mechanism for democracy, new ways of thinking governance and the socioeconomic aspect. However, if these mechanisms will have positive or negative outcomes on the above-mentioned aspects in the future is yet to tell. As well of to what degree these mechanisms will contribute to fulfil the overarching objective of a climate neutral Europe by 2050.

A comprehensive assessment of previous climate policy documents in Reykjavík and from the European Union would strengthen the understanding of the scope of EU climate policy is affecting Reykjavík and give deeper insight in the challenges and positive outcomes of letting the EU climate policy be the framework for climate policy at a local level. Due to the timeframe of this thesis that was not applicable. Qualitative methodology has although given possibilities to interpret and go new paths when they have occurred.

For further research, this thesis suggests doing a comparative analysis with for example Norway which is also outside a fully EU-integration, to gain a better understanding of how strong the EU affects non-member countries and their local climate policy. This thesis also suggests for further research to look into if green growth is possible and what consequences it has for sustainable climate neutrality and citizens socioeconomic future. Further, the 100 cities initiative is still in an early phase and have a potential for further research when the 100 cities initiative is more established. This thesis hence suggests looking into in which ways the ‘100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030: for and by the citizens’ initiative has made impacts on climate policy in Reykjavík after 2030. And not at least; if this initiative was adequate to result in fulfilling the objective of climate neutrality – that also will stay sustainable.

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