

## **INDEX**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Content and structure of the thesis</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter I</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chapter II</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Chapter III</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Chapter IV</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>General Discussion</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Future perspectives</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>141</b>