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Is there need for deliberative mini-publics in Finnish politics?

Maija Setälä
Participation in Long-Term Decision-Making (PALO)
University of Turku
maiseta@utu.fi

paloresearch.fi

Mini-publics in Finland: looking back

- University researchers have been active in promoting mini-publics in Finland
 - Purely experimental mini-publics (Åbo Akademi, University of Turku, since 2006)
 - Pilot projects at the local level and in organizations (e.g. Turku, Mustasaari, Satakunta)
- And more targeted juries organized by local governments and civil society associations that have **not** been based on random selection

Mini-publics in Finland: signs of increased interest?

- Municipal Law mentions Citizens' Juries
 - Similar regulation in newly established regional government
 - Yet this is vaguely put; Citizens' Juries not necessarily based on random selection
- Policy-relevant Citizens' Juries at the national level:
 - democracy (Ministry of Justice, 2013)
 - freedom of speech (OECD Civic Space 2021)
 - climate policies (Ministry of Environment, 2021)
- Recently increased interest in randomly selected mini-publics
 - Mentioned in governmental program
 - Increased interest among parties and civil society movements (eg. Extinction Rebellion)
 - E.g. forthcoming Citizen panel in Tampere region

Do we need mini-publics in an already inclusive system?

- Deliberative mini-publics have been relatively rare in Finnish politics *so far*
- **Why?**
 - Other arrangements for inclusion in policymaking; e.g. coalition governments, corporatist representation, hearings of civil society, Citizens' Initiatives (since 2012)
 - The idea of mini-publics based on random sampling is not familiar in the Finnish context; no organizations to implement
 - Policy-makers attitudes towards mini-publics are rather negative; 'trust gap' (Koskimaa and Rapeli 2020)

From experiments to changing the rules of the game in politics?

- ***Mini-publics could help enhance the quality of democracy also in Finland***
 - Studies show their capacity of enhancing argument-based politics, future-regarding policy-making, trust, and bringing in new insights etc.
 - e.g. in polarizing issues, issues of institutional design, future-regarding policymaking (e.g climate issues), referendum campaigns and so on

From experiments to changing the rules of the game in politics?

- Two key aspects of ensuring the impact of mini-publics:

1. Interaction

- In focus in two recent experiments: Korsholm Citizens' Jury on Referendum Options; Turku Deliberates
 - Studies on the Korsholm Jury show that reading the statement by the jury increased knowledge, perspective-taking, and trust in public institutions

2. Institutionalization

- Pre-defining the situations for the use of mini-publics
- In the Finnish context, this *could* mean, for example:
 - CIR type Citizens' Juries used in conjunction with referendums
 - Mini-publics on reforms of political institutions
 - Mini-publics in climate policy-making