Local democracy in the process of transformation: Has the call for citizen participation reached city councilors? The case study of Turku in Finland.

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Problem
Solution
Present State
Research Question
Data
Research Frame
Attitudes
Attitude changes
Research Frame
Values
Value changes
Conception of Democracy
Conclusion
Questions?

Local elections in Finland in 1980—2012

Voter turnout in Finland
Voter turnout in Turku

[Graph showing voter turnout trends from 1980 to 2012]
1 Objectives of the Citizen Participation Policy Programme

The Finnish Government Programme 2003–2007 specified the Citizen Participation Policy Programme as a national democracy project. It was intended to strengthen citizens’ inclusion and participation and improve the functioning of democracy. The Government Programme emphasised several areas in need of development, particularly schools, civil society, equality of influence and the administration of democracy-related matters.

In its annual Strategy Documents, the Government further specified the Programme’s objectives. The Government Programme was summarised into objectives related to (1) civic education, (2) civic activity and civil society, (3) interaction between citizens and government and (4) the functioning of representative democracy. These objectives form the basic framework for this report.

In addition to the Government Programme, the content of the Policy Programme was influenced by democracy research and development projects implemented in other Nordic countries, on which a review was commissioned. (Mutanen, 2004) Democracy and active citizenship were also issues activated at the turn of the Millennium within the European Union, the Council of Europe and many member states. Important work was also carried out by the OECD and its Citizens as Partners programme.
In 10% of municipalities the power of decision is delegated to some areal organs.

About 10% of initiatives for referendums has reached the referendum process.

(Sandberg 2012)
Research Question

What does democracy mean to city councilors and to what extent they are willing to promote citizen participation in Turku?
Research Data

A Case Study on the Turku City Council

2 surveys to city councilors in 2005 and 2013, interviews 2014-2015

Total data (response rates + 80%)

Population (12/31/2013) 182,072

Local Elections 2012 Voting % 55.6
Conception of Democracy

Attitudes

Minimalist democracy -- Participatory democracy

Values

Procedural values

Outcome-oriented values

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Continuum of attitudes

Joseph Schumpeter

Benjamin Barber Carole Pateman

Minimalist democracy

Participatory democracy

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Attitudes 2013

General attitude, mean 3.5 (Likert scale 1—5)
Gender differences 3.8 – 3.2
Agegroup differences

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Green League
Left Alliance
mean
Center Party
Social Democratic Party
The Finns
Swedish People’s Party
National Coalition Party
Attitude Clusters in 2013

Participatory democracy

Minimalist democracy

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Polarization of attitudes?
Conception of Democracy

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The value of democracy is conceived as an intrinsic property of decision making procedures.

Procedures have only instrumental significance and the justification of democracy is based on the results of procedures.

Changes in value categories

2005

PROCEDURAL VALUES

OUTCOME-ORIENTED VALUES

2013

PROCEDURAL VALUES

OUTCOME-ORIENTED VALUES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE CLUSTERS/VALUE CATEGORIES</th>
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<th>Outcome-oriented values</th>
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<td>Representative democracy</td>
<td>Consulting democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approvers of participatory democracy</td>
<td>Open systems´democracy</td>
<td>Co-planning democracy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Delegated democracy</td>
<td>Direct democracy</td>
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## Conception of Democracy

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<td>Representative democracy (7%)</td>
<td>Consulting democracy (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approvers of participatory democracy</td>
<td>Open systems´democracy (33%)</td>
<td>Co-planning democracy (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Delegated democracy (33%)</td>
<td>Direct democracy (10%)</td>
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<td>Representative democracy (7%) (14%)</td>
<td>Consulting democracy (5%) (4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approvers of participatory democracy</td>
<td>Open systems´democracy (33%) (19%)</td>
<td>Co-planning democracy (12%) (26%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participatory democracy supporters</td>
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<td>Direct democracy (10%) (23%)</td>
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**Conclusion Questions?**

**Research Frame**

**Values Value changes**

**Attitude changes**

**Research Frame**

**Data**

**Attitudes**

**Present State**

**Solution**

**Problem**

**Questions?**

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(7%) (14%) (5%) (4%) (33%) (19%) (12%) (26%) (33%) (14%) (10%) (23%)
What does democracy mean to city councilors?

1. Two aspects: Attitudes and Values
2. Polarization: A tension between representation and participation
Questions? Comments?

Further information:
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Thank you for your attention!