



Peer reviewed article

Democratic innovations from a language minority perspective: Strengthening or weakening of democracy?

Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen, Paul-Erik Korvela and Isak Vento

This research article examines how new channels for participation affect the possibilities of Finland-Swedes for political participation. Our hypothesis is that since the new forms of participation in Finland are largely designed on Finnish-speakers' terms, the Swedish-speakers have less opportunity to influence than the Finnish-speakers and thus relatively weakens the Swedish-speakers' political influence. In the article, we focus on the citizens' initiative in Finland. We present the case as part of the broader debate about pluralist power in modern liberal democracy, that is, an issue that touches on the dilemma of diversity and the conditions for different groups to influence. The starting point is that the research on democratic innovations has not sufficiently paid attention to the specifics of linguistic minorities, even though it has long focused on minorities. The article summarizes the findings on theoretical dependencies between the democracy innovation citizen initiative and the political participation of a linguistic group in an analytical frame of reference. The intention is that the frame of reference can theoretically function as an addition to pluralist political theory and practically as an analytical starting point about the effects of new forms of participation on the position of language minorities in a modern democracy.

Keywords: Citizen initiative, Finland-Swedes, political inclusion, language minority



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