

The flip side of trust

Typology of political distrust and theoretical framework

PAUL-ERIK KORVELA
ISAK VENTO

This article studies the concept of political trust through an analysis of its counter-concepts. Political distrust is understudied and under-theorized even though it has been a central idea in political theory for centuries. Previous studies have pointed out that political trust varies according to its target: it can be focused on the democratic ideal, political system, or political actors. Distrust or mistrust, on the contrary, has been treated only as a privation of trust without further analysis of its target. We argue that providing a typology of political distrust can deepen our understanding of democracy. The article provides a short history of distrust in political theory and defines distrust and its related concepts. We also provide a typology of distrust's democratic effects through an ideal type democratic citizen in liberal democracies. The result is a four-fold typology based on ideal types of distrusting democratic citizen. The article asserts that political distrust holds understudied potential for democracies.

Keywords: political distrust, political trust, critical citizen

Two-way street

Politicians' participation in a deliberative mini-public

MIKKO VÄRTTÖ
MAIJA JÄSKE
KAISA HERNE
KIMMO GRÖNLUND

Democracy scholars are currently trying to develop models for connecting deliberative mini-publics with the institutions of electoral democracy. One proposal is involving elected representatives in mini-public deliberations with citizens. It has been argued that the involvement of politicians may boost the impact of mini-publics but there is not yet much research on the matter.

We designed a deliberative mini-public engaging politicians in half of the small groups in a Finnish city, Turku/Åbo. The participants deliberated on three expert scenarios for the traffic arrangements in the city. The aim of this study is to examine how councillors' participation influenced deliberations. We also study councillors' experiences of deliberation and their attitudes toward citizens' public engagement in general. The study uses interviews of 11 councillors who participated in the mini-public as well as councillors' (N=17) and citizens' answers to a post deliberation survey (N=171).

The results indicate that the involvement of councillors did not have a negative impact on deliberations. The mini-public provided councillors with new ways to listen and understand the needs and concerns of citizens. Furthermore, it increased councillors' understanding and appreciation of citizens' knowledge and competence. The councillors felt positive about using mini-publics in the context of democratic decision-making.

Keywords: deliberative democracy, deliberative mini-public, democratic innovations, urban planning, scenarios

The changing role of science in corporatist policy advice

A longitudinal study of the inclusion of researchers in Finnish policy preparatory working groups in 1980–2018

ANNE MARIA HOLLI
SAARA TURKKA

The role of academic knowledge in policy-making has received increasing attention in scientific communities and among policymakers. This article analyses longitudinal changes in the inclusion of researchers in an important institution of policy advice, namely state committees and broad-based policy-preparatory working groups. In Finland, as in other Nordic countries, important laws and policies have traditionally been prepared in corporatist institutions such as these. Besides interest groups, they also appoint researchers as members.

Based on both primary and secondary data, the study maps the quantitative share of researchers in Finnish broad-based preparatory organs from 1980 to 2018. The results show that in the 2010s, the proportion of researchers in working groups more than halved compared with the previous decade, and their status as chairpersons in particular deteriorated. The results suggest that the role of researchers as corporatist partners has been eroding. Hence, unlike in some other Nordic countries, there is no trend of ‘scientisation’ apparent in this corporatist institution. The results indicate that the Finnish policy advisory system is becoming more hybrid, with a notable strengthening of neoliberal elements, as the ways in which the state generates and utilises knowledge for policy-making are changing.

Keywords: scientific expertise in policy-making, policy advisory system, public policy-making, Finland, corporatism, working groups, commissions of inquiry, researchers, hybridization, neoliberalism