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Abstract

The civic engagement of young people can be considered problematic in Finland. Still, the issue might be that youth actually are interested in politics and societal issues. They merely are not interested in the existing methods of political and societal participation. As a path forward the youth jury is tested in the Vaasa experiment. The underlying thought is that it would be something other than "politics as usual" and thus be more interesting to youth. So far only a few youth juries have been implemented and analyzed worldwide (e.g. Carson et. al. 2004; Iredale et. al. 2006). As a result Vaasa youth jury gives strong validity to the theoretical presumptions of youth juries. Participation into the youth jury was seen as a positive experience by many jurors. As a path forward on increasing youth involvement jurors underlined the possibilities of youth juries. Jurors also showed signs of positive attitudinal changes towards societal and political participation. However attitudinal change didn't take place towards interest in positions of trusts. This can be seen as an indication that it is not that youth are passive and not interested, but that there are not possibilities to influence which would be stimulating enough for them.

Förbättrar ungdomsråd ungdomars politiska och samhällsliga deltagande?

Lärdomar från Vasa-experimentet

Medborgerligt engagemang hos unga personer kan betraktas som problematiskt i Finland. Trots detta kan det vara så att ungdomar faktiskt är intresserade av politik och samhällsfrågor, de är bara inte intresserade av de befintliga metoderna för politiskt och samhällsligt deltagande. Ett sätt att engagera är att genomföra ungdomsråd vilket testas i och med Vasa experimentet. Den underliggande tanken är att det är något annat än "vanlig politik" och skulle därmed vara mer intressant för ungdomar. I hela världen har det hittills bara genomförts och analyserats ett fåtal ungdomsråd (t.ex. Carson et al., 2004; Iredale et al., 2006). Som ett resultat visar ungdomsrådet i Vasa stark validitet vad gäller teoretiska antaganden om ungdomsråd. Deltagandet i ungdomsrådet betraktades som en positiv erfarenhet för många av deltagarna. Som ett sätt att öka ungdomars engagemang såg rådsmedlemmarna möjligheter med ungdomsråd. Ungdomsrådsmedlemmarna visade också tecken på positiva attitydförändringar gentemot samhällsligt och politiskt deltagande. Däremot ledde attitydförändring inte till ett ökat intresse för förtroendeuppdrag. Detta kan ses som en indikation på att det inte är så att unga är passiva och inte intresserade, men att det inte finns möjligheter att påverka som skulle vara stimulerande nog för dem.

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Introduction¹

The civic engagement of young people can be considered problematic in Finland. Statistics give a troubling picture of the situation. According to recent surveys, for example, interest in politics has been declining strongly over the last years (e.g. Myllyniemi, 2010). It similarly seems that voter turnout among young people continues to diminish (Koskimaa, Elo & Rapeli, 2010). Additionally, in an international comparative study of 38 countries on civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement (ICCS, 2010), Finnish youth – even though they are at the top of the class on civic knowledge – are positioned in the last places on issues of civic engagement and participation. However, Finland is not alone in this situation. *Similar tendencies are seen in other developed countries, as well* (see e.g. Forbrig, 2005).

Still, the issue might be that youth are actually interested in politics and societal issues. They merely are not interested in the existing methods of political and societal participation. So to be concrete, saying one does not like to participate in a traditional way, e.g. going to town meetings, running for political posts, or getting involved with any other positions of trust, does not directly mean that one would be passive and uninterested. For example, in a wide US study, it was noticed that those people who dislike “politics as usual” are attracted to alternative means of participation, in this case a more deliberative style of involvement (Neblo et. al., 2010). Might it not be that if this is true for the adult population, it might be even truer for our youth? After all, deliberation takes place in “a safe public space”, where the values of respect, equality and fairness are emphasized (e.g. Fishkin, 2009).

This prospect of deliberative participation was the underlying thought when the Vaasa youth jury, following the ideal of the citizens' jury format of deliberative governance, was implemented. It took place in the city of Vaasa in November 2010. During the three days of the jury 19 young jurors, forming a minicosmos of the population of the selected institutes of secondary education, deliberated on the issue of “involvement in the school community”. Extensive research material was gathered during the event.

In this article, as the main research objective, the usability of a specific format of deliberative governance, i.e. a youth jury, in the context of youth involvement is analyzed. More specifically, the research question is: *What is the youth jury as a format of deliberative governance and what are its prospects and challenges in enhancing youth political and societal participation?* The article begins with a brief description of deliberative governance after which the focus turns specifically to the youth jury format. The following section describes the design of the Vaasa experiment. After the design issues are discussed, the results of the research are presented, in section 4. First the methodology is outlined, after which the perceptions of the jurors are analyzed through different themes. In the conclusions the prospects and challenges of utilizing the youth jury format of deliberative governance in the topic of the civic engagement of young people are considered.

Youth jury as a mechanism of deliberative governance

Deliberative governance can be considered as a derivative of deliberative democracy (Hendriks, 2009). In deliberative democratic theory, the main element is that of deliberation. This 'deliberation' signifies "debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants" (Chambers, 2003). Ideally, deliberation would take place in an "ideal speech situation", defined by Jürgen Habermas (e.g. 1999), where everyone would have an equal possibility to participate in public discussion; where every participant could present their own views and arguments; and where it would not be the power or the status of the participant that would count, but instead the merits of the argument (Edwards, 2007; Fishkin, 2009).

Deliberative democracy can be thus defined as "a conception of democratic government that secures a central place for reasoned discussion in political life" (Cooke, 2000: 948). Deliberative *democracy* then occurs in the political domain. Respectively, as Scott, Adams and Weschler (2004) write, the domain of deliberative *governance* takes place in the public arena and includes those public policy and public administration issues which are needed to be engaged by the citizens, in an inclusive and deliberative manner (Hendriks, 2009). In deliberative governance the word 'deliberative' adds an imperative of deliberation to it, resulting in "the application of deliberation and deliberative processes to the activities of governance" (Scott, Adams & Weschler, 2004).

Justifications for deliberative governance can be divided into instrumental and intrinsic ones. Instrumentally public deliberation is seen as a tool for decision makers to achieve good and justifiable decisions (e.g. Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Fung, 2006; Leighninger, 2010). Such instrumental purposes can be more specifically understood as informing and legitimizing policy, and freeing a paralyzed policy process. (Friedman, 2006: 17-20).

Deliberative governance, however, also answers to more intrinsic, idealistic and expressive goals, such as revitalizing democracy, with special value in the moral significance of deliberation (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Leighninger, 2010). In this case, public deliberation can help citizens move toward public judgment on specific issues; to promote a healthier democratic culture and more capable citizenry; to build community; and to catalyze civic action (Friedman, 2006).

Deliberative governance also includes notable challenges. These are, among others, ensuring representativeness (e.g. Clifford, 2012), deciding on the language of deliberation (e.g. Addis, 2007), minimizing the use of power and polarization of preferences in deliberation (e.g. Sanders, 1997; Sunstein, 2003), achieving effectiveness (e.g. Raisio & Vartiainen, 2011) and scaling up the applications of deliberative democracy (e.g. Friedman, 2006). As deliberative democratic theory is one of the most quickly developing trends in the field of

democracy development (see Nabatchi, 2010), both as a theory and practice, these challenges need to be dealt with carefully.

Wilson (2009: 22), among others, would like to see deliberation as a 'way of governance'. The question is how to make deliberative governance a continuing practice. As part of the answer, public administration faces an important task in creating an environment favorable for deliberation to take place and blossom. (Scott, Adams & Weschler, 2004). So-called 'citizen deliberative councils' (Atlee, 2008) can be seen to form such a deliberation-friendly environment. They come in many shapes and sizes, e.g. citizens' juries, deliberative polls and consensus conferences (see Fung, 2003). They differ, for example, in the length of the events (generally from 3 to 8 days) and in the number of participants (from a dozen to even hundreds of deliberators), but what connects these approaches are the created conditions for high quality deliberative processes (see Fishkin, 2009). The youth jury, as a mechanism to include young people in the activities of governance, is one of these approaches.

Youth jury: A citizens' jury for young people

A citizens' jury is a good example of citizen deliberative councils. It can be considered as one of the most commonly used methods to gather a representative sample of citizens for an authentic deliberation on major societal issues. Briefly described, in a citizens' jury, a microcosm of the community, created by random-selection, comes together. The size of the jury is not too large. Twenty-four people are considered a maximum, which still enables good deliberation. The information given in the process of the jury is of high quality. Also, the deliberation is of high quality. The facilitator has a major role in ensuring this. Staff biases and outside manipulation are avoided. Similarly, a fair agenda and hearings are ensured, for example, by having an outside advisory committee. Finally, there needs to be sufficient time to study the issues, therefore making the typical citizens' juries last for five days. (Crosby & Nethercut, 2005: 112-114.)

A youth jury is a specific form of a citizens' jury. Compared to traditional citizens' juries, they are still few in number. Additionally, only a few of these are documented at length (see Carson, Sargent & Blackadder 2004; Iredale et. al. 2006). Carson, Sargent & Blackadder (2004: 7) define youth jury in the following way: "A youth jury runs along the same lines as a citizens' jury, but the jury is made up only of young people, typically aged between 12-25."

Youth juries give a voice to young people. This results in better equity in decision making processes and a wider diversity in the political arena (ibid). Importantly, youth juries, like traditional citizens' juries, form safe public spaces for young people to really discuss and listen to each other (Fishkin, 2009). Also, not only is it so that in a youth jury a diverse group of young people – that likely do not interact much in daily life – comes together, but also it is so that these young people will work in the event with experts, decision makers etc., people they normally would not meet (Carson, Sargent & Blackadder, 2004). This cre-

ates an authentic learning opportunity for both groups. In a Millian way, a youth jury can be understood as a 'school of public spirit' where young people can develop their civic abilities (Fishkin, 2009); it forms an opportunity for personal development. In the process of the jury young jurors "... learn new things and express new feelings and ideas in new ways. Confidence, trust and friendships develop" (Carson, Sargent & Blackadder, 2004: 37).

As a specific prospect, when compared to conventional youth consultation methods, youth juries can encourage non-active youths to think more strongly about participating. This is due to the random-selection aspect of youth juries (ibid.). If this is true – especially as it is very difficult to gather the informed opinions of ordinary young people – then youth juries indeed form a real opportunity to include youth in governance practices more genuinely (Iredale et. al., 2006).

However, there are also specific issues that need to be taken into account when working with young people. From their experiences Carson, Sargent and Blackadder (2004: 11) list, for example, that in youth juries there is a need: for flexibility as young participants' physical needs and attention spans can differ from those of adults; for introductory sessions so that bonding between jurors, and between jurors and facilitators can take place; and for a firm chairperson who can manage the young jurors. There is also a need: to build jurors' skills necessary for deliberation; to regularly encourage, praise and create incentives; and to be aware of group dynamics, i.e. 'ganging up' and similarly of individual vulnerability, i.e. to be seen as 'uncool'.

The design of the Vaasa experiment

The planning of the Vaasa youth jury began in early 2010. As the first step, an extensive advisory committee was organized to ensure the fairness of the process. It included, in varying compositions, altogether 19 outside members. These were delegates from the Vaasa city administration, local government, youth work, secondary education, the youth council of Vaasa and the national institute for health and welfare, among others. The advisory committee decided most importantly on the charge, the composition and the days of the jury. These three themes will be introduced next in more detail.

Charge of the youth jury

Defining the focused charge, i.e. "the 'assignment' that the jury receives—the question they have to answer" (Huitema, 2003)—is of major importance. The outcome has a major significance for the whole jury process. Thus it needs careful consideration, especially in its wording and scope (The Jefferson Center, 2004). In the advisory committee of the Vaasa youth jury, the framework came to be "involvement in the school community". It was seen as a highly important topic; such that is suitable for the composition of the jury, and also one to which local decision makers can commit themselves. However, it was decided in the

advisory committee that a more specific charge should not be defined by them. Instead a focus group approach of defining the specific charge was decided on (e.g. Huitema, 2003; Iredale et. al., 2006). What followed was that members of the Vaasa Youth Council² were asked to participate in the focus group. The charge came then to be defined by the youth themselves. Ideally, such an approach would increase the commitment of the jury members, as they would then 'own' the charge. Six members of the youth council discussed on the wider theme for two hours and concluded with the following charge:

How to create a school community where; studying isn't just about performing (i.e. about ever increasing performance goals); where everybody can do nicely just as themselves (you don't have to be 'special' to be appreciated); where everybody cares about each other (teachers for students among others); where everyone has a 'face' (not just one mass of people); where there is a feeling that you are studying for living (not just to get by).

Considering the composition of the advisory committee, the mandate of the jury could be acknowledged as rather strong. Relevant decision makers – for example, the rectors of the two schools and the representatives of the city of Vaasa – were part of the jury process from the beginning. They regarded the youth jury positively, and also guaranteed that the declaration of the jury would be noted, and that actions would be taken.

The composition of the youth jury

To be credible to the wider society, the composition of the youth jury should match the demographic profile. In the case of the Vaasa youth jury, the wider population of which it should be representative consists of two schools, i.e. Vaasa technical school and Vaasa upper secondary school. These are the Finnish language upper secondary schools in Vaasa, with a student population of 2708 students³. To gather a representative sample of the target population is always a challenge. To achieve this, many methods of recruitment have to be used. (The Jefferson Center, 2004.)

The advertising of the Vaasa youth jury started half a year before the actual date of the jury. Advertisement posters were put up in both schools and local youth centers. The aim of these was to raise interest in the project. At the time when the signing up for the jury began, the advertising became more extensive. Advertising was done through informative posters and flyers, by going to speak at the schools, by sending e-mails and by using traditional and social media. Students could sign up by using an electronic or a paper form.

To increase the interest to participate in the youth jury, some incentives were thought up. It is common to give jurors a stipend, e.g. 50-100€ per day. The reason for this is to compensate for some costs incurred from participation and to encourage getting involved (The Jefferson Center, 2004). In the Vaasa youth

jury one special incentive was that it took place during school days, and jurors got credit units for participating. Similarly, they got a certificate for participating and also other small memorandums on behalf of the university and other sponsors.

In the advisory committee it was decided that the youth jury should be composed of 24 students between the ages 16-20, so that it would match the wider population as well as possible. As altogether 195 students signed up for the jury, this became achievable. As a sampling method, a stratified random sampling was chosen, as compared to pure random sampling, it would more likely produce a diverse jury. In stratified random sampling, a criterion consisting of demographic and attitudinal factors is formulated (Carson, Sargant & Blackadder, 2004). The advisory committee decided the demographic factors to be age, gender, institute of education, geographic location and cultural background. The attitudinal factor was to be activity in participation, e.g. in a student union, volunteer organizations and sport clubs. Specifically, it was decided that, for the reason of appropriateness, the jury was to be composed equally of students from the two schools. Also, factors of geographic location and activity in participation were decided to be included in the stratified random sampling only if the sample would start to distort significantly. The reasons were that a large majority of the students were from Vaasa and that activity in participation couldn't be known of the wider population.

After the sampling process the composition of the jury came to be as presented in Appendix 1. As such it matched the ideal composition of the jury. For example there came to be a statistically representative sample of female and male students as well as students of different cultural backgrounds. However, of the chosen 24 students 19 eventually participated, causing a slight distortion in the sample. Finally, the self-selection aspect of the jury needs to be discussed. According to Ryfe (2005) self-selection can be problematic for deliberative democracy as it can lead to the forming of homogenous groups. In the worst case only those who are already active and who are rather well-off will be willing to participate in deliberation. In the Vaasa youth jury the risk for self-selection was strived to be reduced with a wide marketing strategy and with incentives for participation. Firstly, the large amount of students who signed up for the youth jury made it possible to form a heterogeneous jury. Secondly, as can be seen from Appendix 1, the number of non-active jurors exceeded the number of active jurors⁴. Thirdly, the youth jury included jurors with multicultural backgrounds. The Vaasa youth jury was then not a homogenous group of jurors.

Days of the jury

The Vaasa youth jury lasted for three days. The days were chosen in such a way that they did not overlap with school holidays or exam periods. An additional factor was that there should be some special day relating to youth issues near the event. The dates for the jury were then chosen to be Wednesday, November 17 -

Friday, November 19. Saturday, November 20 was Universal Children's Day, which was a valuable aspect when considering media attention.

During the jury days, the jurors deliberated both in small groups and within the whole group. The objective of the project team was to create an authentic safe place for deliberations. Project leaders facilitated the deliberations when the whole group was gathered together. In the small group deliberation jurors were divided randomly into four groups. Each group had two students of social and health management as trained facilitators. The composition of the groups changed each day to avoid ganging-up.

In youth juries, as in any other formats of deliberative governance, it is important that the information given to the jurors is of high quality and comes from many different sources (e.g. Fishkin, 2009). In the Vaasa youth jury, this quality and diversity of given information was strived to be achieved by organizing a witness panel to be questioned by the jurors. The advisory committee decided on the composition of the panel, and it came to be consisted of five persons representing different views to the charge of the jury⁵. Additionally, there was an external moderator, a local radio personality. On the second day of the jury, for one hour, each panelist first presented their views briefly after which jurors had one hour to ask questions, which they had formed the day before.

Jurors wrote up a declaration of the youth jury that consisted of sixteen proposals for action. These varied from local school issues, such as drawing attention to the school environment, to regional issues, such as increasing the availability of student welfare services, and even to national youth issues, such as making it possible for students to get normal study grants. Jurors presented the declaration of the jury in the concluding media event. Rectors from both schools as well as a council member, the vice-mayor, and the chairman of the Youth council of the city of Vaasa gave their official responses in the event. Even though journalists had written rather widely about the youth jury before the jury days, they also came to the media event. The results of the youth jury were then covered in four newspapers, on a local radio channel and in the regional TV-news.

Results

Research methodology

As the youth jury experiment was the first of its nature in Finland, a strong focus was put on its scientific nature. Extensive research material was gathered. This includes pre- and post-jury questionnaires, interviews done with jurors and facilitators and recordings of the small group deliberations. In this research article as the objective was to analyze the experiences of jurors, the questionnaires they filled in and interviews made with them are used as material.

The questionnaires had two functions; firstly to provide evaluative information on the process of the jury, and secondly to make it possible to measure the attitudinal changes of the jurors. Jurors filled in the pre-jury questionnaire

right after the introductions on the first day of the jury and the post-jury questionnaire before the ending media event on the third day of the jury. Asking the same questions in the beginning and at the end of the youth jury makes it possible to see if there have been attitudinal changes within the jurors. In this research article the questionnaires are analyzed through descriptive analysis.

In the following two weeks after the jury, 16 jurors were interviewed. Three of the jurors declined for the reason of not feeling comfortable in interview situations. The function of the interviews was to approach the process of the youth jury qualitatively, i.e. to gain a deeper understanding about the process of the youth jury than would have been possible to gain merely through the quantitative data. The interview questions were about the experience of getting involved in the jury and being a juror, about the expected effectiveness of the given declaration, and generally about youth involvement. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. In the analysis thematic content analysis was applied.

Jurors' preconceptions of the youth jury

When new models of political and societal participation are introduced, it is important to invest in making these models familiar. Preconceptions can be strong, which can significantly reduce the number of volunteers participating. This could also be seen in the Vaasa experiment. A wide marketing strategy was implemented, and some preconceptions were able to be lifted: "At first I didn't even know what it is. Then I thought it is just something where all the most active go and then they are there like future politicians. But then I asked if we should have some big ideas, and then they said no. So then I went with a friend to try it out." Regardless of the marketing, also negative preconceptions remained:

I first thought that it would be, you know, quite boring, like politics. I think even as a word (i.e. politics) it sounds boring. But then when I came there, it wasn't like that. So I guess quite many thought that they wouldn't want to participate in such a boring ...

In the end, compared to the two other well documented youth juries, in Australia and Wales (see Carson, Sargant & Blackadder, 2004; Iredale et. al., 2006), the Vaasa youth jury got significantly more volunteers to participate, i.e. 195 compared to 73 and 37. Jurors especially appreciated the face-to-face aspect of marketing. Altogether three students of social and health management spent one day in both target schools. They told about the youth jury in the corridors and during lessons. They answered possible questions and clarified the meaning of the jury. Signing up was made easy, as marketers carried registration forms with them that could be filled in on the spot:

It was quite easy. They came directly to the lesson to talk about this issue and then they gave us forms that could be filled in right away

and then handed back. So it was really easy. You didn't need to make a big effort to get involved.

Even though some enrollments were received via internet registration, face-to-face marketing proved to be the most efficient. As the formats of deliberative governance are still very uncommon in Finland (see Raisio 2010), it is important that there is a person who tells you about the issue directly and answers the possible questions which arise. From the interviews and from the pre-jury questionnaire it became clear that even more focus should be put on clarifying the format of the youth jury. In the survey eight of nineteen jurors considered they did not have enough pre-information about the jury.

Jurors' positive insights on the youth jury

One of the main prospects of public deliberation is that, ideally, it takes place in an "ideal speech situation" (e.g. Fishkin, 2009). So when jurors were asked what they liked most about the youth jury and why, and what was the most rewarding issue during the jury days, they raised one issue above others, i.e. small group deliberations. In the small group deliberations jurors especially appreciated the possibility to say their own opinions out loud. Facilitators made sure that also the quiet ones got a chance to speak and that everybody took part in the discussions:

It was a nice experience that for once we got to present our own opinions. In school we only answer the questions of the teachers, and do not have the opportunity to say our opinions. But here we did. We got to say our own opinions, so that was a nice change.

In the post-jury questionnaire all of the jurors stated that the discussions were rich, that they all got a chance to say their opinions out loud and that they were all heard. Similarly all of the jurors felt that they did not get humiliated and that no one was left outside the group. Also all of the jurors were satisfied with the performance of the facilitators and the project leaders. All but one of the jurors were satisfied with the youth jury generally.

The jurors also stated that it was good to hear and learn from other persons' opinions. It was similarly appreciated that the discussion took place in an uncealed manner, i.e. nobody "guarded" the discussions, that as groups were small, there was not so much noise, and that facilitators made sure that everybody's voice was important:

... everybody's opinion was asked and when we settled on some issue, then they (i.e. facilitators) really asked if we agreed and if we approved. That was best, that everybody's voice was important, that everybody had to approve.

As other “pros” of the jury, jurors appreciated issues such as getting new friends, getting the possibility to influence and having a chance to try out something new. Most of the jurors had not previously participated in settings where any kind of decisions are made, so the opportunity to participate in a youth jury formed a new experience for them: “... I got a feeling that I could influence a little bit more to these youth issues. And as I haven't before participated in any other like this, it was nice to get involved”. Also, one juror appreciated the possibility to get information from the witness panel.

Jurors' negative insights on the youth jury

The quality of the information given to the jurors during the jury days is of high importance (see Fishkin 2009). This came to be the main target of critique in the Vaasa youth jury. From the statements of the jurors it can be clearly seen that the witness panel, which was supposed to give high-quality information to the jurors, did not achieve its goal. Almost all the jurors criticized it. It was stated in the interviews that there was not enough time to ask questions, that the wrong persons acted as witnesses, that witnesses did not give straight answers, and that some of them acted arrogantly:

What I didn't like? Well I didn't like it, or I had a bad feeling at that event where we questioned the experts. There was so short time for it and it felt that many issues were left in a way open. That we didn't get real answers even to those questions that we asked.

The critique cannot, however, be put fully on the witness panel. It might be that there was a lack of guidance given to the panel members by the organizers of the youth jury. Also, it is a general defect of this kind of jury, where the days are successive, that witnesses have to be invited before the questions are made by the jurors. So the format could be changed so that there would first be the pre-meeting of the jurors where they themselves decide who they want to question, and only after this the actual jury days would take place. This would make it more likely that the experienced benefit gained from the witnesses would increase. Also the time for the questioning should be long enough.

Aside from the preceding, jurors did not have much to criticize. One of the jurors considered that the days were too long and because of that it was hard to stay concentrated. Two jurors on the other hand pondered that maybe the jury could have lasted for a longer time, even for a whole week. So it can be considered if the future youth juries could consist of more days, but be slightly shorter.

Jurors' views on the prospects of youth jury as a way of enhancing youth political and societal participation

Above it was seen that jurors' positive insights on the youth jury outweighed the negative ones, especially as the negative ones were such that could be tackled

with slight design modifications. It can then be hypothesized that jurors would perceive youth jury as one way of enhancing youth political and societal participation. Results from the questionnaires and interviews give validity to the hypothesis.

When asked how young people's interest in decision making could be increased, jurors highlighted the prospects of youth juries: "I think that the youth jury is a really good idea for that, as in it we were the ones who made the decisions. Not teachers, parents or others." This can also be seen from the questionnaires. In the question where jurors were asked to put their experiences of the youth jury in order of priority, the choice "implementation of youth jury succeeds and it is started to be used also elsewhere" went in the post-jury questionnaire from the second place to the first place and rose in importance more than any other choice. Also, when asked if jurors would participate again in a similar event, sixteen of the nineteen jurors answered yes.

Jurors wished that youth juries could also be implemented in other cities and on different topics. It was also hoped that maybe a similar jury could be organized for even younger people. As other ways to increase youth involvement jurors proposed that young people should be told more of how to influence, e.g. where to go if one wants to influence and what are the different possibilities of influencing, and that it should be made possible to influence in the school environment itself, for example by voting and by answering polls. Also the significance of incentives for involvement was mentioned.

One theorized prospect of deliberative practices is that they catalyze civic action (e.g. Friedman, 2006). This can be partly seen also in the Vaasa experiment. One indication is the way in which jurors' motives for participating in the jury changed during the jury days. In the surveys⁶, when asked to put motives for participation in order of importance, considered importance and even order changed. When the mean values of considered motives were calculated, "having a chance to influence decision making" remained in first place. "I am interested in issues related to my school community" increased in importance the most and changed places (from 3rd place to 2nd place) with "I will have / I got new experiences". As the importance of these more ideal motives increased during the jury days, the importance of slightly more material motives lessens. "I will have / I got new friends" (however moved from 5th to 4th place), "I will get / I got credit units for participation" (moved from 4th to 5th place), "I will get / I got benefits from the university and sponsors" (stayed at 6th place), and "I will have / I got release from school work" (stayed at 7th place) all lost value in their importance.

Also, when compared to the views of the jurors in the pre-jury and in post-jury questionnaires, the interest in societal issues and in the actions of the students' union increased and the view that young people should be more involved in their schools' decision making got stronger. However, interest in positions of trust stayed rather the same (see table 1). It seems that jurors preferred other means of influencing: "Well, I wouldn't want to be any decision maker. I would-

n't want so much responsibility, but ...". This issue will be discussed further in the conclusions.

Table 1. Jurors' views before and after the jury; net results in percentages

| | Disagree fully | | Disagree somewhat | | Not agree nor disagree | | Agree somewhat | | Agree fully | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------|----|------------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|----|
| | Before / After (B/A) in percent (%) | | | | | | | | | |
| | B | A | B | A | B | A | B | A | B | A |
| I am interested in societal issues | 5 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 32 | 21 | 42 | 42 | 11 | 37 |
| Youth should be involved more in their schools' decision making | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 63 | 89 |
| I want to take part in the actions of the students' union | 16 | 11 | 16 | 5 | 32 | 21 | 26 | 37 | 11 | 26 |
| I would want to be involved in Vaasa youth council | 5 | 5 | 11 | 11 | 47 | 42 | 16 | 26 | 21 | 16 |
| I would be interested in school's positions of trust if I would be asked | 5 | 5 | 21 | 16 | 26 | 16 | 21 | 47 | 26 | 16 |
| I would be interested in city's / municipality's positions of trust, if I would be asked | 5 | 0 | 37 | 32 | 16 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 16 | 16 |

Additionally, jurors stated strongly that this particular youth jury's influence should be proven before making further conclusions on the model's prospects in increasing youth involvement. This issue has also been raised elsewhere. For example Segall (2005) states that "when forms of participation do not have a 'point' to them, they may actually do more harm than good, as they end up causing frustration and a sense of futility when it is realized that participation was 'about nothing'."

The jurors explicitly stated that the declaration of the jury, or at least parts of it, should have an influence. Otherwise the event would have been futile: "so that it would have some benefit, as we spent three days and achieved this". So the influence of the declaration is an important issue, as if nothing happens, cynicism increases towards future involvement. Thus the objective of the jury was from the beginning that this would not just be a scientific experiment, but that it would also have a societal impact⁷.

There is also a certain realism seen in the comments of the jurors. It is not hoped that things will happen immediately, but the time span is related to the scale of the issue. Similarly it is seen that large issues are not that easy to be

achieved as it is largely a matter of budget. Also, one juror stated that the proposals for action should at least be noticed in decision making: "But if at least those would be applied in some way, so that thinking could be done based on them. Those don't have to be directly put into action, but if those would at least be included in the decision making."

Conclusions

When the Vaasa youth jury, as a format of deliberative governance, was implemented, the underlying thought was that it would offer something new to young people. In a similar fashion than in a traditional citizens' jury, a voice would be given to young people and a safe public space would be created for a diverse group of jurors to really discuss and listen to each other. Young jurors' civic abilities would develop and decision makers would get important information to be used in their decision making. Most importantly, youth jury would catalyze the civic actions of young people. Considering the problems related to the declining levels of civic engagement of young people, the theorized prospects associated with the youth jury can be seen as significant.

There is, however, a lack of empirical research to give validity to the preceding theoretical presumptions. The Vaasa experiment, then, adds important information to the existing scarce literature on youth juries (e.g. Carson, Sargent & Blackadder, 2004; Iredale et. al., 2006)⁸. The objective of this research was especially to analyze the prospects and challenges of youth juries in enhancing youth political and societal participation. Based on the analysis of the Vaasa experiment, the following can be said.

As a prospect especially one specific feature of the youth jury was highlighted, i.e. small group deliberations in an "ideal speech situation". The opportunity to express their opinions as equals in an environment where everybody listens to each other and where facilitators make sure that everybody can speak and that everybody's voice is important was something different than what the jurors had been used to. It was a new positive experience for many. It was then no surprise that as a path forward on increasing youth involvement jurors underlined the possibilities of youth juries.

It wasn't only that jurors enjoyed participating in the youth jury and also wanted others to have a chance to participate in a similar event; they also showed signs of attitudinal changes towards societal and political participation. Especially the interest in societal issues and in the actions of the students' union increased and the view that young people should be more involved in their schools' decision making got stronger during the jury days. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that a similar attitudinal change didn't take place towards interest in positions of trust. Taking part in the youth jury didn't then, for example, increase jurors' interest towards city's / municipality's positions of trust. This might not, however, be understood as a flaw of youth jury, but more as a sign of a wider societal phenomenon; a clear indication that it is not so that youth are passive and not interested, but that there are not many possibilities to influence

which would be stimulating enough for them. The key to enhancing youth political and societal participation might then not be more of the same, but instead something novel, such as youth juries.

As a challenge related to the implementation of youth juries, three issues need to be stressed. The first is about the actual influence of the youth juries. The question is if these will become practices with proven effectiveness, or just illusions of influencing. If the declarations of these deliberative juries are not taken seriously, this could only increase the cynicism towards future civic engagement. Second, the importance of marketing and giving enough information on this particular format of involvement must be taken heed of. Preconceptions towards traditional formats of societal and political participation can be strong, and a risk is that these preconceptions will spread also to the new deliberative models of participation. Third, the high quality of the interaction between young jurors and adults needs to be ascertained. For example in the Vaasa experiment the participants of the witness panel behaved in a way that jurors considered condescending. Equality shouldn't then be only between jurors, but also between jurors and the adults taking part in the youth jury in different roles.

It is, however, clear that the youth jury isn't a solution to everything. Implementing deliberative practices is, among other things, highly expensive (see e.g. Carson, Sargant & Blackadder 2004), so it must be carefully considered when to implement one. The Vaasa youth jury was done with a very small budget, but this is not usually the case. In this Finnish case, the small budget is explainable by the significant role of the students of social and health management and by the contributions of sponsors⁹. Also, if the wider population, which the youth jury should be representative of, is widened, for example, to a whole region or even a nation, the expenses rise significantly. In the end, it can be said that implementing a youth jury is especially justified and important when the voice of youth is lacking from the decision making – whether on the school, municipal, regional or national level – and when the issue decided upon has a direct influence on youth themselves.

Appendix 1. Composition of the Vaasa youth jury.

| <i>Demographic and attitudinal factors</i> | <i>Categories</i> | <i>Sampled composition</i> | <i>Realized composition</i> |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Educational institute</i> | Technical school | 12 | 8 |
| | Upper secondary school | 11 | 10 |
| | "Dual degree" | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Gender</i> | Female | 12 | 10 |
| | Male | 12 | 9 |
| <i>Age</i> | 16 years old | 6 | 5 |
| | 17 years old | 7 | 7 |
| | 18 years old | 7 | 4 |
| | 19 years old | 2 | 2 |
| | 20 years old | 2 | 1 |
| <i>Cultural background</i> | Finnish | 19 | 14 |
| | Finnish-Swedish | 3 | 3 |
| | Multicultural | 2 | 2 |
| <i>Activity in participation</i> | Active | 10 | 8 |
| | Not yet active | 14 | 11 |

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Notes

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²Members of the Vaasa Youth Council didn't participate in the youth jury as jurors. Vaasa Youth Council merely had an advisory role.

³Vaasa is a bilingual city. Swedish-language schools were left outside of this research for three main reasons: 1. This was the first experiment on deliberative democracy in the Vaasa area, so it was wanted to be kept easily manageable, 2. Students of social and health management participated in the project, and bilingualism couldn't be demanded from them, 3. There weren't resources available for interpretation services. However, after this youth jury, two bilingual citizens' juries have been implemented in the region.

⁴Of the active jurors only three mentioned having worked in a student union. The other five jurors had some experience in sport clubs and in volunteer organizations.

⁵ These views were a pedagogical one presented by a professor emeritus of pedagogy, a political one presented by a local council member, one related to youth welfare presented by a nurse from the local youth centre, one related to immigrant youth presented by a local official and one related to a sense of belonging presented by a school curator.

⁶On this question in the pre-jury questionnaire n=19 and in the post-jury questionnaire n=18

⁷ An evaluation was made on the influence of the youth jury (Muurimäki, 2011), according to which nine of the jury's sixteen suggestions were being realized either partly or fully. Additionally the declaration of the youth jury was discussed extensively in the Vaasa city council.

⁸ Research also adds to the existing Scandinavian research on similar formats of deliberative democracy (e.g. Andersen & Hansen 2007; Grönlund, Setälä & Herne, 2010).

⁹ The funding covered by the project organization can be estimated to have been ca. 1500€. Everything else was covered by sponsors and done along with project organization's own work.