

## **Converse long and well**

### **Deliberative democracy in three children care cooperatives and its effects on the participants**

Swedish text. English summary. Swedish title: Samtala både länge och väl.

Deliberativ demokrati i tre föräldrakooperativ och dess effekter på deltagarna

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248 pages. ISBN 91-628-5629-4

#### **Abstract**

In our society most people do not participate in politics in any other way than voting. Many scientists agree that extended citizen participation would be good both for the individual and for society. One way the individual can be active is to take part in politics on a local level. Such participation is assumed to have positive effects on the individual's self image and knowledge level - she will be more confident in her self and that in turn may make her more prone to participate on a higher level. The aim of this thesis is to study democratic participation and its effects. For that purpose a model of analysis was constructed. The empirical investigation brought an opportunity to test and refine the model according to the results.

In this model, for the positive effects to occur the conversations in which people participate must have certain qualities. Those qualities sum up to the ideal type energetic non-disturbed deliberative talks, that every one concerned has the opportunity to take part in. Every deviation from the ideal type leads to lesser positive effects (the effects can even be negative). Disturbances can occur in the right to participate on the different arenas where the conversations take place, in the right to bring issues to the arenas and in the conversations itself. Further, there can be an inability to make decisions and to implement them. The cases studied are the members in three children care cooperatives, and they were observed during their meetings and later on interviewed.

The main results are that access to the informal arenas is important since it determines the possibility both to participate on and to bring issues to the formal arenas. Furthermore, cooperatives with many informal arenas appear to have longer meetings and also more deliberative conversations. Another important result is that the different ways in which conversations can be disturbed is not of equal importance for the individual's self image. Finally, the ability or inability to make and implement decisions is of limited importance.

#### **Keywords**

Deliberative democracy, participation, children care cooperatives, arenas, non-disturbed conversation, decision making, implementation, self-image, knowledge level.