Translation Sample

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In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in the question of how it might be possible to politically account for groups of disabled persons who have been excluded from political participation (Schur, Kruse, and Blanck, 2013; Savery, 2015; Ryan, Henderson, and Bonython, 2016). Existing research has shed light on the fact that many of those with disabilities, while possessing the desire and ability to vote in elections, are unable do so as a result of a lack of the information or knowledge necessary to vote, or a lack in the necessary support to vote (Inoue, 1993; Schriner, Ochs, and Shields, 1997; Schriner and Ochs, 2000; Scotch, 1988, 2001; Kjellberg 2002; Argan and Hughes, 2013; Argan, MacLean, and Kitchen, 2016; Bell and Horsler, 2003; Femec, Kis-Glavas, and Masic, 2017). This paper, however, will focus on the right to vote, being the most fundamental issue in political participation.

The right to vote is an essential structural condition for democracy. However even within many democratic nations, the right to vote is restricted for those who present intellectual and mental disabilities, as well as those with diminished cognitive capacities. Restrictions on the right to vote typically take the form of a limitation on voting rights for those who whose legal capacities have been restricted by the courts, or those who require adult guardianship (Beckman, 2012, pp.167-171; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010, p.15). In more precise terms, according to the results of a investigation on voting rights in 62 nations judged to be adequately democratic, conducted during the 1990’s, there were a mere four nations that did not restrict the voting rights of those with intellectual or mental disabilities (Massicotte, Blais, and Yoshinaka, 2003, pp. 17-27). As a result, recent years have seen a continuous effort to reassess the restriction of voting rights due to diminished legal capacity resulting from such functional disabilities. As I will address in detail below, since the mid 2000’s, the number of nations who chose not to restrict voting rights for these reasons grew to 11, including Japan.