Solving complex problems together - Activism as challenge and opportunity for collaborative governance

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Finnish Environment Institute SYKE

Science and Activism, Joensuu 20 January 2019
Activism for influencing policy on unemployment

Photo: Martti Kainulainen www.ess.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/art2434590
Activism for tackling social problems
Activism for tackling biodiversity loss

Villi vyöhyke Wild Zone

GUERRILLA NATURE – SISSINITYT

Kaupunkisissit ja omatoiminen luonnonhoito

Suomen nykyisten kaupunkien ympäristö ei ylläpidä luonnon monimuotoisuutta kaikkien mahdollisuuksien mukaan. Rakennettujen alueiden lomaan jää vyöhykkeitä, joiden ympäristöä voisi kehitellä monimuotoisemmaksi. Myös rakennettujen viheralueiden kuten puistojen luonto voisi olla nykyistä monipuolisempa.

http://villivyohyke.net/ver2/toiminta/guerrillanature/
Activism for tackling climate change

Implementing Low Carbon Development

Providing sustainable development for all and fighting climate change – these are two major challenges the world faces today.

National action on climate change and the international negotiations are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The international negotiations in the past five years have stimulated national action especially on ‘Low Carbon Development’ meaning development with minimal output of greenhouse gas emissions.

If the full social costs and benefits are taken into account, in most cases low carbon development trumps carbon-

http://climatenetwork.org/campaign/implementing-low-carbon-development
Making change by concrete DIY action

Informal activism

Influencing through political opinion forming and decision-making

Established NGO network aiming to influence international negotiations

Institutionalised civic action

Peer support groups for people with difficult life situations

Informal short-term protest

Guerrilla meadows by a dedicated NGO
Activism

- Self-organised action driven by willingness to make the common living environment, services, community or society better, or protect them from harmful change
- Voluntary or funded action, for the common good, not for profit
Continuum of activism

Driving – Contributing – Supporting – Not active – Disliking – Contributing to counteraction – Driving counteraction

Diversity of terms: some regard themselves as activists, others rather as change makers, developers…
The civil society has changed

- **Digitalization** has brought people multiple opportunities to start developing their societies directly by themselves
  - Internet + social media ➔ actor networks
- Collaborative consumption, sharing
- Disappointment with traditional channels for influencing
Sharing economy

Community
- Improving public services
- Ecological movements
- Social support
- Open events
- Local movements
- Squatting, opening, shaping spaces
- Urban planning groups
- Communication encouraging activism

Self-organized city/community

Support
- Hacktivism
- Developing tools for activism
- Developing Information society
- Alternative currencies movements
- Alternative food networks etc.
- P2P commerce etc.

Technology
- Artivism
- Green: activism types that especially can make sense for enhancing ecological sustainability

Mäenpää et al. 2017
Fourth sector on the rise

• NGOs (the third sector) still important, but nowadays much of all civic action organized in other ways
• Fourth sector:
  – non-NGO-based civic actors
  – networks of which such actors form a considerable part
  – type of action that can be adopted also on other sectors: action based on internet, openness of knowledge, co-creation, network governance

Mäenpää & Faehnle, forthcoming
Fourth sector civic activism

- Self-organized, proactive and constructive co-action, typically outside of formal NGOs
- Primarily DIY-action instead of orienting towards decision making system or political engagement
  - 'Let’s just do it!' attitude (Pulkkinen 2014)
- Based on networking in social media and internet solutions

Mäenpää & Faehnle, forthcoming
Mäenpää & Faehnle 2017
Mäenpää & Faehnle 2017
Concepts used in discussing civic action outside of traditional organisations

peer to peer networks, pop up action, self-organisation, DIY action, commons based peer-production, social innovation, grassroots action, urban movements, community action, social entrepreneurship, sharing economy, collaborative economy, maker movement, place-making, tactical urbanism, do-democracy, prosumerism, impact movement
Making change by concrete DIY action

Informal activism

Fourth sector type of action

Influencing through political opinion forming and decision-making

Traditional third sector type of action

Institutionalised civic action
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fourth sector type of action</th>
<th>Traditional NGO action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation: for example a social media group only</td>
<td>Organisation: NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social media essential</td>
<td>Social media as extra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influencing: hacker attitude</td>
<td>Influencing through official planning and decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events, action, DIY</td>
<td>Meetings, statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>Power to influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking, enterprises etc.</td>
<td>Partnership with municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Openness, sharing</td>
<td>Representativeness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momentariness</td>
<td>Controlled development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding hierarchies</td>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive to act, creation of new</td>
<td>Doing because that’s what’s done in the past</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proactivity, YIMBY</td>
<td>Also counter-action, NIMBY</td>
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Mäenpää & Faehnle, forthcoming
To contribute effectively to resolution of complex societal problems, public governments need a repertory of approaches to problem solving. Competence and capacities to collaborate are crucial – as is the ability choose an approach that is appropriate in the particular situation.
The necessity of collaboration

Complex societal problems can only be solved by collaboration of diverse actors because the actors are interdependent
- Nobody has all the necessary knowledge
- Nobody can make the change alone

In true collaboration, the parties acknowledge that the solution can only be created together

Turner & Odell, Collaborative Public Manager Training 2018-2019
Collaboration

- Two or more entities **working together for mutual benefit**
- Two types of collaboration
  - Agreement seeking /decision-making (aligning interests)
  - Collective action (aligning actions and resources)
- Collaboration involves exchange among the parties
  - Exchange of data, information, coordinated actions and timing, commitments to take a specific action or not, resources, political support

Turner & Odell, Collaborative Public Manager Training 2018-2019
Collaborative governance

“the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished”

Emerson et al. 2012
Collaborative governance enables

• interest articulation, learning, reflection
• value co-creation
• innovative and efficient solutions
• minimizing of destructive conflicts

Examples of collaborative practices

Citizens’ jury

in regional planning in South Ostrobothnia
Examples of collaborative practices

Joint fact finding, consensus building

in Jyväskylä Forest Programme
Examples of collaborative practices

Transition arena

Energy transition arena by Smart Energy Transition project
To contribute effectively to resolution of complex societal problems, public governments need a repertoire of approaches to problem solving. Competence and capacities to collaborate are crucial – as is the ability choose an approach that is appropriate in the particular situation.
### Spectrum of Processes for Collaboration and Consensus-Building in Public Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPLOR/EINFORM</th>
<th>CONSULT</th>
<th>ADVISE</th>
<th>DECIDE</th>
<th>IMPLEMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improved understanding of issues, process, etc.</td>
<td>• Comments on draft policies</td>
<td>• Consensus or majority recommendations, on options, proposals or actions, often directed to public entities</td>
<td>• Consensus-based agreements among agencies and constituent groups on policies, lawsuits or rules</td>
<td>• Multi-party agreements to implement collaborative action and strategic plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lists of concerns</td>
<td>• Suggestions for approaches</td>
<td>• Priority concerns/issues</td>
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<td>• Information needs identified</td>
<td>• Discussion of options</td>
<td>• Call for action</td>
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<td>• Explore differing perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Build relationships</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sample Processes</strong></th>
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<td>• Focus Groups</td>
<td>• Public meetings</td>
<td>• Advisory Committees</td>
<td>• Collaborative Planning processes</td>
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<td>• Conferences</td>
<td>• Workshops</td>
<td>• Task Forces</td>
<td>• Partnerships for Action</td>
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<td>• Open houses</td>
<td>• Charettes</td>
<td>• Citizen Advisory Boards</td>
<td>• Strategic Planning Committees</td>
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<td>• Dialogues</td>
<td>• Town Hall Meetings (w/o deliberative polls)</td>
<td>• Work Groups</td>
<td>• Implementation Committees</td>
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<td>• Roundtable</td>
<td>• Community Visioning</td>
<td>• Policy Dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Scoping meetings</td>
<td>• Visioning Processes</td>
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<td>• Forums</td>
<td>• Public Hearings</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Summits</td>
<td>• Dialogues</td>
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Source: USIECR

**CORE project: Facilitating the collaboratie turn in Finland, beyond participation-as-consultation**
Fourth sector activism as opportunity

Resources for and practical advances towards more sustainable societies – often in line with strategic goals of local governments

- Collaborative capacity of the involved actors
- Expertise, spirit, (rapid) action potential
- Creation, use and improvement of data
- Public discussion, learning
- New creative solutions on services, environment, economy
- Local identity and attractiveness
Fourth sector challenges the government

• To continue involving citizens in governmental activities but also adopt ways to participate in actions of civic networks
• Seek ways to empower the less active and support the distribution of benefits from activisms also to them – while supporting and not restricting the active

Mäenpää & Faehnle, forthcoming
Fourth sector challenges the government

Fourth sector actors may not
• Seek decision-making power, but apply their own power based on inhabiting their area
• Seek partnerships or even form a legal entity
• Act in the rhythms of the government, but immediately

Mäenpää & Faehnle, forthcoming
Hybrid governing

• Earlier research
  – Hybrid organisation (Billis 2010)
  – Hybrid government (Heinonen & Ruotsalainen 2017)

• In hybrid governing, attention
  – from the system, decision-making power and contracts also to interaction processes
  – to aligning and bringing together actors, ways of action and processes that are different and operate by different action logics

Mäenpää & Faehnle, forthcoming
Collaborative governing enacted as part of the wider frame of hybrid governing
Hybrid governing

The government
- identifies fourth sector as specific group of actors
- seeks ways to align and match governmental activities with actions of the fourth sector, by experimenting and learning

Mäenpää & Faehnle 2018
Stairs of hybrid governing

From isolated, uncoordinated activities (step 1) up to deep integration (step 8)

What’s the best step? Depends on the issue and case!
Problem: Planning for urbanisation

Fourth sector solution: dedicated social media groups, alternative planning

1. No preparation for alternative plans
2. Monitoring of city planning activists’ social media groups
3. Communication about the source materials used by planners
4. Officeholders take part in the discussion in activists’ social media groups
5. Support services for alternative planning
6. Co-production of planning materials
7. Alternative plans presented to the city planning committee
8. Open co-planning projects are organised
Problem: access to healthy local food

Fourth sector solution: food networks such as REKO
Grounds for hybrid governing: Case Helsinki’s participation model

Principles of participation in binding administrative regulations:

- Utilisation of know-how and expertise of individuals and communities
- Enabling spontaneous activities
- Creation of equal opportunities for participation

https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/channels/participation-model/
Helsinki participation model - Local participation

- Local city coaches + 3 business coaches
- Local forums
- Participatory budgeting
- Shared spaces

Public governments can contribute to resolution of complex societal problems best when they are prepared to:

- Act in a truly collaborative relationship with diverse actors, when conditions for collaboration exist.
- Develop a repertory of approaches and apply them depending on the case – as partner, participant or enabler.

Action research, activist researchers as resource!
CORE — Collaborative remedies for fragmented societies — Facilitating the collaborative turn in environmental decision-making

- Collaborative governance – Rauno Sairinen, UEF
- Knowledge practices – Heli Saarikoski, SYKE
- Civil society – Tapio Litmanen, JyU
- Regulation – Ismo Pölönen, UEF
- Value co-creation – Nina Helander, TTY & Pia Polsa, Hanken
- Case studies – Taru Peltola, SYKE
 CORE in a nutshell

• The CORE consortium will address the ability of Finnish political and legal institutions and management practices to cope with complex environmental planning and policy-making problems.

• **Key question**: How to engage a broad range of societal actors in the collaborative co-production of fair, efficient, legitimate and wise solutions for contested environmental and natural resource policy problems?

• Funding: Strategic Research Council 2017-2021
Welcome onboard!

collaboration.fi

@core_STN

@collaborationfi

Project: CORE - Collaborative remedies for fragmented societies - Facilitating the collaborative turn in environmental decision-making

#corestn
#yhteishallinta
#strateginentutkimus
#cogovernance
Project: Civic activism as resource for the metropolis

University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research
2015–2017

• How does civic activism contribute to the development of cities? How could cities and state organizations utilise and support it?
• Focus on ecological sustainability, local innovations, local communities and civic engagement
• Advocative action research: working together with activists and authorities by identifying and solving their problems

Partners: Cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, and Lahti; Ministries of Environment, Finance, and Justice; The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland, Finnish Environment Institute

Welcome onboard!

Civicactivism.fi

Facebook group: Kaupunkiaaktivismi
#kaupunkiaaktivismi

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Publications on activism


Thank you!