

This is an electronic reprint of the original article. This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Local state-society relations in Finland

Henriksson, Linnéa

Published in:
Close Ties in European Local Governance. Linking Local State and Society

DOI:
[10.1007/978-3-030-44794-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-44794-6)

Published: 01/01/2020

Document Version
Accepted author manuscript

[Link to publication](#)

Please cite the original version:
Henriksson, L. (2020). Local state-society relations in Finland. In F. Teles, A. Gendźwiłł, C. Stănuș, & H. Heinelt (Eds.), *Close Ties in European Local Governance. Linking Local State and Society* (pp. 117-131). (Palgrave Studies in Sub-National Governance). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-44794-6>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LOCAL STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN FINLAND

Linnéa Henriksson

Finland belongs to the countries with a nationalized infrastructure for local state-society relations, according to the typology developed by Sellers and Kwak (2011: 626; see also Sellers and Lidström 2014). Finland is a decentralized unitary state with a highly influential local government (Anttiroiko and Valkama 2017: 153) and a high score (over 75) on the Local Autonomy Index, along with the other Nordic countries (Ladner et al. 2015: 68-69).

Finland has a two-tier structure of government (Haveri 2015: 138-140¹), a central national government and local government at the municipal level. The municipalities, 311 in year 2019², have a strong self-government and a broad or even extensive mandate; they are responsible for providing basic public service such as social and health care, primary and secondary education as well as waste management, water and other public goods (Anttiroiko and Valkama 2017: 158, Haveri 2015: 138). These services are produced by the municipality itself, by a joint municipal body (on regional or sub-regional level) or contracted out. Half of the municipal expenditures are covered by local, flat rate taxes (set by the council) (Anttiroiko and Valkama 2017: 159), while $\frac{1}{4}$ is covered with state grants and the rest with municipal service charges. The regional government structure has historically been weak and has (as of yet) no democratic or welfare-related responsibilities (Anttiroiko and Valkama 2017: 153).³ Municipalities employ about 20 percent of the total workforce in Finland (Moisio and Uusitalo 2013: 151).

The civil society in Finland shows a corporate structure, where ‘voluntary and collective activities are supported by the state, because they are seen as the tools of social consensus’ (Cepel 2012: 331). As in the other Nordic states, citizens in Finland actively participate in voluntary organizations, since the first of them were founded in the 1830s (Cepel 2012: 333).

Finland has over 130,000 registered associations, of which maybe 70,000 are actively working and furthermore 20,000-30,000 unregistered voluntary organizations (Seppo 2013: 10).

Within this infrastructure the function of bodies in which local government and the civil society interact are (as will be shown below) mainly advisory. In this respect Finland differs from many European countries where institutionalized co-operation between the local state and the civil society is regarded as an important way of bringing the civil society closer to local government. The difference occurs in practice, the discourse is the same. The main reason is the lesser need for a service producing civil society in the Nordic countries, due to their extensive welfare state. Another possible explanation to this difference is the national political culture or the role of the parties in the Nordic society (see also Sellers and Kwak 2011: 640). In, for example, Poland only circa one third of the local councilors belong to a political party (see Egner et al. 2018: 335). In Finland the corresponding number is over 97 percent (Piipponen 2013: 74). The local decision-making system is thus practically an affair only for the political parties. However, the election system also offers an extended possible explanation. Finland has an open-list election system. To succeed in a person-oriented election system parties look for possible candidates, obviously, among persons who show an interest in (local) politics, but also among persons who are already active and preferably already known to the public. In practice parties look for candidates among representatives of various associations, especially among people acting as representatives for their peers in organizations for labor, business owners, farmers, forest owners, sports associations, school associations etc. There is significant overlapping between local representatives of parties and of various associations (Pikkala 2005: 31-32). The overlapping also follows some party-specific traits. Representatives of labor organizations are often Social Democrats, farmers and forest owners often belong to the Centre Party and, accordingly, representatives of business

owner's organizations are often members of the Moderate Party (Helander 2003: 43). The bottom line is that the need for communication between the local government and the civil society to a big extent is channeled through the party system in Finland. This is facilitated by the fact that, unlike other Nordic countries (for example Sweden), Finland has a clearer legislation concerning both the civil society⁴ (Cepel 2012: 333-334, Seppo 2013: 19) and the political parties⁵, which regulates the behavior for those involved in both parties and associations.

Three specific types of networks are here considered as relevant⁶ for local state-society relations in Finland – namely

- youth councils,
- councils on disability, and
- local action groups (LAGs).

The criteria for selecting these networks are that they stand for (a) repeated interaction, (b) mutual exchange and (c) recognized representative claims among the involved actors. Furthermore, these networks exist at the local level all over the country.

The Finnish Municipal Act⁷ requires municipalities to establish advisory committees for the youth, the elderly and the disabled. These advisory committees are very similar to each other. They are all an effect of the increasing emphasis on societal participation (e.g. Christensen et al. 2016: 9), which resulted in several new mandatory bodies in the local administration according to the new Municipal Act, fixed in 2015. Already in 2015, these networks were in use in more than 80 percent of the municipalities (Christensen et al. 2016: 22). According to the law they should be set up in all municipalities, except for those municipalities that have decided to have a joint body on this matter, and they can be considered as typical local state-society relations in Finland. The variation in their actual work (i.e. inter-local differences) are presumably larger than variations between the types of

networks (see Kimpimäki 2012; Latvalahti 2015). As councils on disability constitute the most clear-cut example of local state-society relations in a Finnish context, and youth councils differ from the other two concerning representation, they are discussed in this chapter more in detail and categorized according to the three dimensions outlined by Teles (in Chapter 2) and their operationalization (in Chapter 3 of this volume).⁸

Finally, Local Action Groups are considered relevant. Finland's accession to the EU in 1995 was the main springboard to the need to strengthen the regions and their development, to be able to handle structural funding. It caused both new and changed institutional structures in the Finnish administration, mostly on regional and sub-regional (inter-municipal) level (Anttiroiko and Valkama 2017: 161, Kettunen and Kungla 2005). This caused new institutional structures also in the civil society, namely Local Action Groups. Local Action Groups are voluntary, but necessary to get financial support from the EU (particularly from the LEADER program) for local development. Usually they are joint bodies including more than one municipality. Their composition and other features are different from the municipal advisory committees mentioned earlier, which will be discussed below.

YOUTH COUNCILS

According to the Finnish Municipal Act, municipalities must establish a youth council (*nuorisovaltuusto* in Finnish, *ungdomsfullmäktige* in Swedish),⁹ or a corresponding group for the youth, to guarantee the young population possibilities to participate, and provide the council prerequisites for action. Youth councils should, according to the Municipal Act, be given opportunities to influence planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities of various municipal agencies in matters of importance regarding young resident's welfare, health, studies, environment, living or mobility and any other matters considered important

for children and youth. Therefore, youth councils are primarily bodies for advocacy, but they also arrange events for the youth.

Youth councils have occurred in Finnish municipalities since the end of the 1990s (Christensen et al. 2016: 9, Nikkilä 2002: 66) but have been obligatory since 2017. In May 2017 in total 81 percent, i.e. 241 out of 295, of the municipalities (i.e. mainland Finland, excluding the Åland Islands) had constituted a youth council¹⁰. As the legal regulation is new, the number of councils should be rising, although it should be noted that several municipalities can have a joint youth council.

The autonomy of youth councils is rather high, although youth councils are statutory and thus both their existence, initiation and administration are matters of law. Youth councils are often assigned an adult mentor in the municipal administration, usually a civil servant or employee from the department where youth issues are handled, as support or as secretary general, who can arrange the elections, send out invitations, take notes, prepare minutes etc. (see Gretschel 2002: 55). The rules are up to be decided on by every municipality itself. The variation is in practice not that great. The Municipal Act set up some rules but allows municipalities itself to set up their organization according to the Administrative Regulations.¹¹ Thus the composition of the youth council¹² is often decided upon in the Administrative Regulations by the municipal council. According to the Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland (Nuva 2019) the youth councils mostly seem to consist of residents aged 13-18, although the age gap is not fixed (as people by law are considered young until 29 years old). The youth councils have between five and sixty members, mostly depending on the size of the municipality (Nuva 2019). Members are chosen either by free elections, on municipal level or in schools or youth centers, or designated at annual youth parliaments (Nuva 2019, see also Gretschel 2002: 48). Some rules of conduct are statutory, some decided upon by the municipal council and some given by the youth council itself. The rules most likely decide

how something is to be done rather than what. Youth councils tend to have a short mandate, they are often elected annually.

The coherence of the networks is low. Elections to youth councils are usually arranged as free elections in schools or youth centers. Thus, the members of the youth councils, although representing the youth and thereby having a common goal in speaking for the youth, can act on their own behalf, while not representing any organization. In the 1990s there were some examples of very politicized youth councils (see Nikkilä 2002: 67) but nowadays youth councils are mostly kept free from party politics, to ensure equal possibilities to participate. Still, members of youth councils are often active persons in many respects (Nikkilä 2002: 69). Youth councils usually meet regularly. In some municipalities, youth councils can appoint representatives or observers in other municipal bodies (see Kallio and Bäcklund 2012: 252) but the operations of the youth council are not necessarily tied to any municipal schedule.

The relevance of the networks is also considered as low. Youth councils share information and might contribute by consultation but cannot otherwise exercise power (which is discussed almost every time youth participation is mentioned, e.g. Christensen et al. 2016). In comparison to different potential channels of participation (voting, giving feedback, take part of meetings, influencing via buying behavior, violence etc.) active work in youth councils or youth organizations are considered the second most influential instrument. They are pinpointed as influential by about 60 percent of the respondents in the Youth Barometer Survey but used as a channel of influence by less than 25 percent (Myllyniemi and Kiilakoski 2013: 109, 111). The policy relevance for the local community is low or medium. The mandate of the youth councils is not broad and does not consist of large policy areas, but youth councils own the right to be heard in matters concerning the youth and may thus get issues on the agenda in the local society.¹³

MUNICIPAL COUNCILS ON DISABILITY

As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Finnish Municipal Act prescribes municipalities to establish a council on disability (*vammaisneuvosto* in Finnish, *råd för personer med funktionsnedsättning* in Swedish) and provide the committee prerequisites for action and to guarantee possibilities to participate.¹⁴ About five percent of the Finnish population experience some kind of slight disability, while one percent of the cases have a more severe variant (Hästbacka and Nygård 2013: 129). These councils on disability are clear-cut examples of institutionalized relations between the local state and the civil society; ‘A Municipal Council on Disability is a collaboration forum for disabled associations, the authorities and decision makers.’¹⁵

The first municipal councils on disability were found in the 1970s, some years after the first corresponding municipal councils on disability were founded in Sweden in 1971 (Valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto 2006). The councils on disability have appeared in the legislation since the Act on Services for the Disabled was approved in 1987, but back then as a form of voluntary co-operation. In 2009, before the new Municipal Act (in 2015) made them mandatory, two thirds of the municipalities in Finland had a council on disability (Piipponen 2013: 74).

The autonomy of the councils on disability is rather high, although they are statutory according to the Municipal Act and are initiated and coordinated by the municipal administration. The council can be arranged as a joint committee for more than one municipality or as a joint committee for both disabled and elderly, although both alternatives are quite unusual (Kimpimäki 2012).

The rules of advisory committees are decided upon by every municipality itself. In practice the rules follow, as is the case with youth councils (see above), the Municipal Act and the Administrative Regulations. Some rules of conduct are statutory, some decided upon by the

municipal council or board and some given by the council itself. The rules most likely decide how something is to be done rather than what, as the question of substance is decided by law.

The council members are usually named by the municipal board, for a period of two or four years. The composition of the council on disability contains persons representing different organizations in the field, relatives (families) of the disabled and the municipality. In 2011 two thirds of the council members were representing organizations (Kimpimäki 2012). The amount of organizations working in the municipal area varies between different municipalities and consequently so does the composition of representatives. In some municipalities every existing organization is represented, in other municipalities organizations are represented each in its turn and in cases where there are no relevant working organizations the disabled are represented by well-known, active disabled persons or relatives to them (Kimpimäki 2012: 5). The most common organizations are representing people with heart-diseases, cancer and diabetes, as well as neurological and rheumatic diseases (Kimpimäki 2012: 5).

The last third of the council members are officials or politicians representing different municipal branches. Almost all councils have representatives from social services, but also persons representing municipal infrastructure (>50 percent), education (<20 percent) and culture/leisure (<20 percent). More than 50 percent of the councils have included representatives also from the national authorities and the Church (Kimpimäki 2012).

All in all, the relevant organizations are considered to be well represented in the councils, while the sometimes thin connection to the municipal administration is more worrying. Large organizations have activities all over the country and are well represented, but many representatives have been longstanding and are aging rapidly. Long distances and small municipal administrations affect the work of the councils negatively (Kimpimäki 2012).

The coherence of the networks is high, though the members of councils on disability, although representing organizations, are not very constrained by these organizations. As the task of the body is merely consultative it allows representatives to act on their own behalf. Goals may be both common and conflicting among representatives for different types of disabilities. Advisory committees meet regularly, generally 5-6 times a year.

The relevance of the networks is low. Advisory committees are engaged in consultation, in some cases maybe even placation. The theoretical policy relevance for the local community is huge, considering the cost associated with services granted for a lifetime, but in practice very low, considering that the number of disabled persons is small and their needs extremely varying. As the advisory committees do not exercise power the relevance of the networks is considered as very limited.

LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

The logic of the LAGs can be defined as threefold, which describe what LAGs are doing and what they are aiming at. They are distributing funding and are trying to develop innovations and collaboration of actors (Nousiainen 2011: 93-94; Viinamäki et al. 2013: 14). LAGs act according to their development strategy, which is decided upon by the LAG in the region (Hyyryläinen 2007: 5). Forming the strategy is considered the most important task of the LAGs.

The Local Action Groups are usually organized in two levels; the general secretary, coordinators and other personnel on one hand and the board of the LAG on the other. As LAGs are, following the relevant legislation,¹⁶ formed by small enterprises and associations as well as other communities, municipalities, educational institutions or foundations, their boards are organized along a tripartite principle: members are representing municipalities or other authorities in the area, residents, local associations and business organizations in equal

shares (Viinamäki et al. 2013: 14). LAGs are formally organized as associations (following the rules of the Finnish Associations Act) or similar, which stipulates the tasks of the board (i.e. to realize the three tasks mentioned above, but most importantly decide on funding). The composition and election of board members is to be done according to the Finnish Associations Act and to the registered and approved rules of the LAG. The articles on LAGs emphasize the representatives of the local population.

The funding stems from municipalities (38 percent), the state (20 percent) and the rest (42 percent) from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Hitherto the funding has been mainly built on funding from the EAFRD and accordingly most of the projects have been realized in rural areas¹⁷.

The first Finnish LAGs groups started in 1996 and Finland was soon to be one of the forerunners within LEADER. The LEADER-method is used along all Finnish rural areas and is now been introduced also in cities and urban domains (when suitable funding is found). There are currently 65 local action groups in Finland¹⁸. They show considerable differences; some of them are clearly active in broader areas than others.

The autonomy of the networks is high. Local action groups are first and foremost incentive-driven, initiated by the local civil society and coordinated by the civil society (by the groups themselves). Initially, in the end of the 1990s, both governmental and municipal authorities took part in engaging the civil society in initiating local action groups, but as the concept got known, the civil society has taken over. The composition of the network is set with incentives. According to Viinamäki (et al. 2013: 26) the composition follows the tripartite principle very carefully (which is prescribed and monitored by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland), but the LAGs still have a considerable influence over the composition, as the Ministry does not question the choice of persons, as long as the tripartite principle is followed. Network rules are precisely set, by majority. Rules concerning the procedures of the

network are not considered as a big constraint, but substantially it is sometimes considered hard to combine the priorities of the national development programme and the local needs (Viinamäki et al. 2013: 31).

The coherence of the networks is high. The composition is set with incentives by law. Two thirds of the members of the boards are representatives of their organizations but are in their actions bound by the development strategy, not by their original organizations and they own some discretion in their decision-making mandate. The networks are stable and meet regularly. The actors involved are mostly corporate actors with specifically defined shared beliefs on local development, which are a premise for interaction. The distribution of responsibilities between the LAGs and the (municipal, national) authorities involved is considered less clear in Finland than in some other countries, but on the other hand very clear inside the own LAG (Viinamäki et al. 2013: 30, 34, 59).

The relevance of the networks is rather high. The LAGs decide on and channel funding and actors are involved as partners. In respect to Arnsteins ladder of participation LAGs are considered to have ‘delegated power’, as the LAGs, within the rules, do own responsibilities and do have considerable power to decide on matters (see Viinamäki et al. 2013: 39). The biggest constraint to this power (in Finland, as well as in Sweden, Austria and Estonia) is the procedure through which project applications are approved by regional or national authorities (Viinamäki et al. 2013: 40). The relevance for the local community is potentially big, but in practice constrained by the above-mentioned mismatch between local needs and national priorities. The number of people affected by the activities of LAGs is moderate. Finland is the most sparsely populated member state in the EU, with a population density of 13,7/km² in total, 8,2/km² in rural areas (Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland 2014-2020, 2014: 39). The scope of impact is wide, as the LAGs show a broad range of activities.

The public awareness must be considered low, though it usually is greater locally in areas where activities of the LAGs are clearly visible.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on what have been said in the previous sections the considered forms of local state-society relations in Finland can be labelled as follows:

- Youth councils are *communicative networks*;
- Municipal councils on disability are *collaborative networks*;
- Local action groups are *consociational networks*.

Youth councils and councils on disability are not fully mutual or equal, because in both cases the municipality is the part with the initiative and the resources. The networks might be focused on important policy areas, but as practically all service production is statutory in Finland, the actual impact of the networks on policies is limited to small adjustments within the scope of municipal self-government. In the case of service delivery that scope is very narrow. The relevance of the advisory networks therefore is essentially about legitimacy and about creating fora for exchange of experiences.

REFERENCES

- Anttiroiko, A.-V. & Valkama, P. (2017) The Role of Localism in the Development of Regional Structures in Finland, *Public Policy and Administration* 32 (2), 152-172.
- Cepel, Z. U. (2012) An Analysis of State-Civil Society Relations in Finland: A Case of Joensuu, *Voluntas*, 28, 328-349
- Christensen, H. S., Jäske, M., Setälä M. & Lahtinen P. (2016) Demokraattiset innovaatiot Suomessa – Käyttö ja vaikutukset paikallisella ja valtakunnallisella tasolla, *Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja 56/2016* [Democratic Innovations in Finland – Use and Effects on Local and National Level, *Publications of the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities 56/2016*]
- Egner, B., Gendźwiłł, A., Swianiewicz, P. & Pleschberger, P. (2018) Mayors and Political Parties. In H. Heinelt, A. Magnier, M. Cabria & H. Reynaert (Eds.), *Political Leaders and Changing Local Democracy. The European Mayor* (pp. 327-358). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Gretschel, A. (2002) Kunnallisen nuorten osallisuusympäristön perustaminen. In Gretschel, A. *Lapset, nuoret ja aikuiset toimijoina. Artikkeleita osallisuudesta* (48-62). Helsinki: Suomen Kuntaliitto [The Creation of a Participational Environment for the Youth, *Kids, youngsters and adults. Articles on Participation*. Helsinki: The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities]
- Haveri, A. (2015) Nordic Local Government: A Success Story, but Will It Last? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 28 (2), 136-149
- Helander, V. (2003) Luottamushenkilöt ja järjestöt. In V. Helander, S. Pikkala, S. Sandberg & S. Grönholm, *Päättäjien areenat ja yhteydet* (pp.37-52), KuntaSuomi 2004-tutkimuksia nro 42, Helsinki: Suomen Kuntaliitto [Elected Representatives and Organisations; *Forums and Contact for Decision-Makers*, Finnish Local Government 2004 Research Programme Studies No. 42, Acta Publications, No 161, Helsinki: The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities]
- Hyyryläinen, T. (2007) Toimintaryhmätyö paikallisen kehittämisen metodina. Helsingin yliopisto, Working Papers 8.5.2007 [Action Group Work as a Method of Local Development, University of Helsinki, Working Papers 8.5.2007]
- Hästbacka, E. & Nygård, M. (2013) Disability and Citizenship. Politicians' views on disabled persons' citizenship in Finland. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 15 (2), 125-142, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2012.676566>
- Kallio, K. P. & Bäcklund, P. (2012) Oletettu alueellisuus, kuviteltu osallisuus – tilalliset sidokset julkishallinnon lapsi- ja nuorisopoliittisessa retoriikassa. *Terra* 123 (4), 245-258 [Expected locality, imagined commitment – spatial situatedness in public administration child and youth policy rhetoric.]
- Kimpimäki, A. (2012) *Kunnalliset vammaisneuvostot vuonna 2011. Vammaisneuvostojen rakenne, toiminta, odotukset ja tulevaisuudennäkymät*, Helsinki: Valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto [Municipal Councils on Disability in year 2011. Structure, activities, expectations and prospects, Helsinki: The (National) Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities]
- Kettunen, P. & Kungla, T. (2005) Europeanization of Sub-National Governance in Unitary States: Estonia and Finland. *Regional and Federal Studies*, 15 (3), 353-378
- Ladner, A., Keuffer, N. & Baldersheim, H. (2015) *Local Autonomy Index for European Countries (1990-2014)*. Release 1.0. Brussels: European Commission
- Latvalahti, J. (2015) *Vanhusneuvosto-opas*. Helsinki: KL-kustannus [Guide for Advisory Committees for Elderly, Helsinki: KL-Publishing]
- Moisio, A. & Uusitalo R. (2013) The Impact of Municipal Mergers on Local Public Expenditures in Finland. *Public Finance and Management*, 13 (3), 148-166
- Myllyniemi, S. & Kiilakoski, T. (2013) Nuorten yhteiskunnalliset osallistumistavat ja asenteet. In Borg, S. (Ed.) *Demokratiaindikaattorit 2013* (97-122). Selvityksiä ja ohjeita 52/2013, Helsinki: Oikeusministeriö [Means of Societal Participation and Attitudes among Youngsters, *Indicators of Democracy 2013*. Reports and Guidelines 52/2013, Helsinki: Ministry of Justice]
- Nikkilä, J. (2002) Nuorisovaltuustot yhteiskunnallisina osallistumismuotoina – pikkupoliitikkoja vai vapaita vaikuttajia? In Gretschel, A. *Lapset, nuoret ja aikuiset toimijoina. Artikkeleita osallisuudesta* (63-75). Helsinki: Suomen Kuntaliitto [Youth Councils as Societal Means of Participation – Tiny Politicians or Free Key Players?, *Kids, youngsters and adults. Articles on Participation*. Helsinki: The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities]
- Nousiainen, M. (2011) *Hallinta, osallistuminen ja toimijuus: Tulkintoja suomalaisen LEADER-toiminnan poliittisuuksista*. Helsingin yliopisto, Ruralia-instituutti, Julkaisuja

- 24 [*Governance, Participation and Actorship. Interpretations of the Politics of the Finnish LEADER Action*. University of Helsinki, Ruralia-Institute, Publications 24]
- Nuva (2019): Suomen Nuorisovaltuustojen Liitto ry [the Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland] www.nuva.fi [14.06.2019]
- Piipponen, S.-L. (2013) Kunnalliset toimielimet ja luottamushenkilöt. In S.-L. Piipponen & M. Pekola-Sjöblom (Eds.), *Kuntademokratian ja –johtamisen tila valtuustokaudella 2009-2012*. Acta nro 252. Helsinki: Suomen Kuntaliitto [*State of Local Democracy and Management in Council Term 2009-2012*, Acta Publications No. 252. Helsinki: The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities]
- Pikkala, S. (2005) *Kunta päättäjän perspektiivistä. Tutkimus kuntien luottamushenkilöistä ja viranhaltijoista 1995–2003*. KuntaSuomi 2004-tutkimuksia nro 54, Acta nro 176, Helsinki: Suomen Kuntaliitto [*Local Government from a Decision-Maker's Perspective. A Study on Local Government Elected Representatives and office Holders 1995-2003*. Acta Publications No. 176. Helsinki: The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities]
- Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland 2014-2020 (2014), Helsinki: The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland
- Sellers, J. M. & Kwak, S.-Y. (2011) State and Society in Local Governance: Lessons from a Multilevel Comparison. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35 (3), 620–643.
- Sellers, J. M. & Lidström, A. (2014) *Multilevel Democracy, Societal Organization and the Development of the Modern State*. Paper prepared for presentation at the 23 Nordic Local Government Conference, Odense, 27-29 November 2014.
- Seppo, M. (2013) Finnish Civil Society Now. Its Operating Environment, State and Status. *Kepa's Working Papers*, N:o 39
- Valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto (2006) *Vammaispolitiikan ytimessä. Valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto 20 vuotta*. Helsinki: VANE-julkaisuja 6 [*Disability in Focus. 20 Years of the National Council on Disability*. Helsinki: VANE-Publications 6]
- Viinämäki, O.-P., Hyyryläinen, E, Vainio, A. & Metsälä, R (2013) Euroopan unionin LEADER-toimintatavan hallinnoinnin haasteet ja kehittämisen vaihtoehdot. Vertailevia havaintoja seitsemästä EU-maasta. Vaasan yliopiston julkaisuja, selvityksiä ja raportteja 185 [Challenges and Alternatives for Development for the LEADER-method of the European Union. Comparative Observations from seven EU-countries. University of Vaasa. Publications, Investigations and Reports 185]

Linnéa Henriksson is a University Teacher at the Department of Public Administration at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. She is interested in local politics and local politicians, roles and representation, municipal service production and privatization thereof and implementing bilingual administration. She is the chair of NORKOM (Nordiska Kommunforskningsföreningen, the Nordic Municipal Research Association).

NOTES

-
- 1 See also a simplified diagram over governmental structures in Finland in Anttiroiko and Valkama 2017: 158.
 - 2 Municipalities in Finland have on average 17,700 inhabitants, although the median is as low as 6.000 (Statistics Finland, Population Structure [03.04.2019], www.stat.fi).
 - 3 Attempts to reform the regional structure have been made in recent times but the latest proposal of 18 regional self-governing areas (see Anttiroiko and Valkama 2017: 164) fell when the Government resigned in March 2019. See also the Government's press release 591/2015, dated 9.11.2015: 'Government decision on next steps in reform package on healthcare, social welfare and autonomous regions'.
 - 4 Yhdistyslaki 503/89 [Finnish Associations Act, an (not legally binding) English translation]: <https://www.prh.fi/en/yhdistysrekisteri/act.html>
 - 5 Puoluelaki 10/1969 [Act on Political Parties, an (not legally binding) English translation]: https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1969/en19690010_19920653.pdf
 - 6 Relevant here are networks allocated in the first or second tier jurisdiction, who include actors from the local government, involves repeated interaction, mutual exchange and recognized representative claims (see chapter 1). There are some more cases of local networks in Finland that might fill some of the criteria of institutionalized relations between the local state and civil society. Here are examples of networks that have been left out, as they are followed by some question marks:
 - National parks have Advisory Committees but they are a part of the national government.
 - Statutory local cooperation between the municipality as employer and the labor organizations as representatives of the employees, but these labor organizations are not considered civil society here, because the cooperation concern only employees, not citizens in general.
 - Regular meetings between the municipal and different actors (see Christensen et al. 2016: 21) does not consider recognized representative claims.
 - Patient Advisory Committees at regional hospitals are not a part of the municipal organization.
 - School Boards consist of parents, not organized representation.
 - 7 Kuntalaki 410/2015 [Finnish Municipal Act, an (not legally binding) English translation]: <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2015/en20150410.pdf>
 - 8 Furthermore, advisory committees can be set up also for immigrant issues or ethnic groups which occurs in 1/3 of the municipalities (Christensen et al. 2016: 22). They follow the logic and the main features of the other advisory committee, but they are not mandatory and usually established only in municipalities with a larger share of foreign residents. The foreign population in Finland is about seven percent of the population and fairly unevenly distributed between municipalities (data from Statistics Finland [www.stat.fi] and from the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities [localfinland.fi]).
 - 9 Kuntalaki 410/2015 [the Finnish Municipal Act], §26, see also Nuorisolaki 1285/2016 [Youth Act], §24.
 - 10 Amount according to Nuva, Suomen Nuorisovaltuustojen Liitto ry. [Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland], <http://www.nuva.fi/nuorisovaltuustot-suomessa> [25.02.2019]
 - 11 The Finnish Municipal Act (410/2015, §90) prescribes every municipality to specify and stipulate how a long list of matters in the Act are implemented in the municipality. This instrument is called the Administrative Regulations [Finnish: *hallintosääntö*, Swedish:

förvaltningsstadga]. In the case of youth councils, municipalities are by law obliged to set up a youth council or a similar group, but they are allowed to decide upon how that is made by them.

- 12 See <http://www.nuva.fi/mika-nuorisovaltuusto/> [28.03.2019] [Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland: What is a youth council?]
- 13 The literature where youth councils are mentioned are concentrated on participation and effects of participation, not on how this channel of participation is organized.
- 14 Finnish Municipal Act 410/2015, § 28.
- 15 On Municipal Councils on Disability by VANE, the (national) Advisory Board for the Right of Persons with Disabilities; <https://vane.to/en/municipal-councils> [28.03.2019]
- 16 Laki maaseudun kehittämisohjelmien hallinnoinnista 27/2014, § 16. [Act on the Administration of Rural Development Programmes].
- 17 See <https://www.leadersuomi.fi/fi/mita-on-leader/> [14.06.2019] [Leader Finland: What is Leader?]
- 18 The LAG Database counts for 55 LAGs with funding from EAFRD (of which one from the Åland Islands) and 10 with funding from EMFF (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund).