



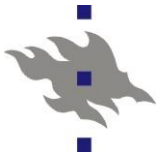
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Finnish Rural Policy Governance in the Project Society

Torsti Hyyryläinen, Marko Nousiainen & Päivi
Pylkkänen

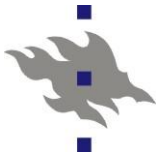
University of Helsinki
Ruralia Institute



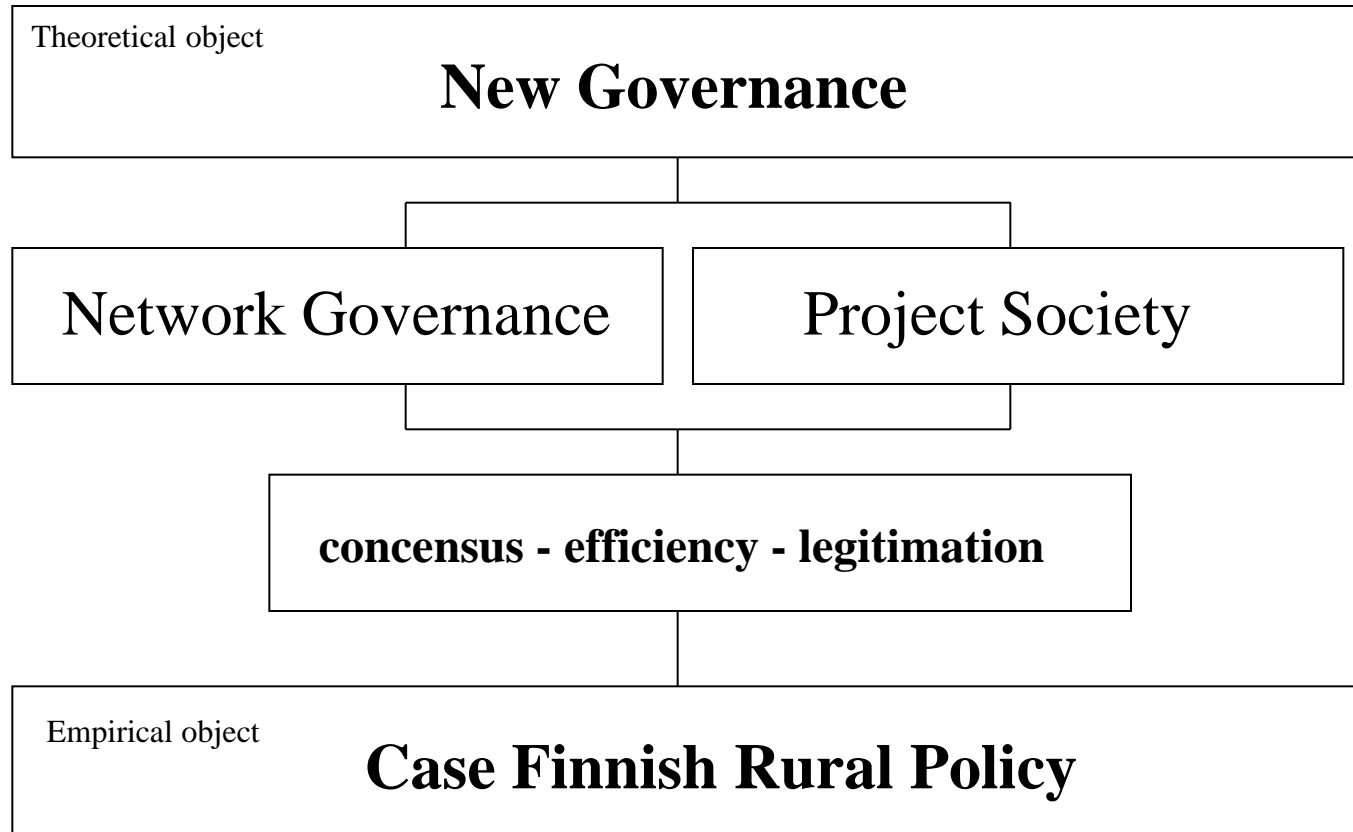


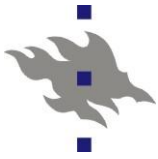
Finnish Rural Policy Governance in the Project Society

- Finnish Rural Policy has been portrayed as a success since it's begin in the end of the 1980's
- It has been able to secure some resources to development work, established an institutional framework and a certain temporal continuity.
- It is attached on new forms of governing, projects and networks, emerging at the same period.
- However, this has inflicted some difficulties: feeling of uncertainty, avoidance of controversies and lack of political commitment



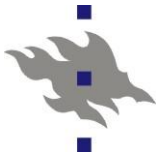
Study framework





Network governance

- In academic discussion the search for “new” modes of governance has been going on for decades. (eg. Pierre 2000; Hirst 2000; Rhodes 1996).
- Many of the new modes abandons hierarchies and builds on informal authority.
- It is typical to “blur” the boundaries between state and civil society.
- Prime motivation is search for effectiveness of policy.
- An inventive attempt is **theory of democratic network governance** by Eva Sørensen & Jacob Torfing (2005, 2007).
- Network-collaboration of state, private and 3rd sector actors for public purposes.
- Efficiency and legitimation may be different things: attention should be paid to democracy, transparency, accountability (questions of input legitimacy).
- Balance needed between consensus and admission of tension and disputes (e.g.Koppenjan 2007).

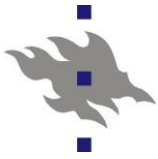


Project Society (by Sulkunen 2006)

- The notion of project society (Sulkunen & Rantala 2006) represents on going change in the mode governing in Finland. Project can be seen as a form of organization, a tool for governance and also a mechanism for exercise of power.

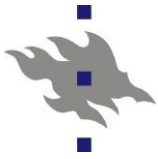
- Logic of a project as a mode of government. Project is:
 - temporary
 - based on contractual relations and seen as voluntary
 - the goals of the contracts are set in a (policy)programme
 - resources are secured by a temporary allowance (e.g. fund).
 - relation between different participants is considered partnership (based on mutual consent)
 - to safeguard the contract's realization and the effectiveness of governance evaluation is used as a control mechanism.

- > Project as a mode of action has a tendency to hide positions of power and prevent disputes and conflicts.



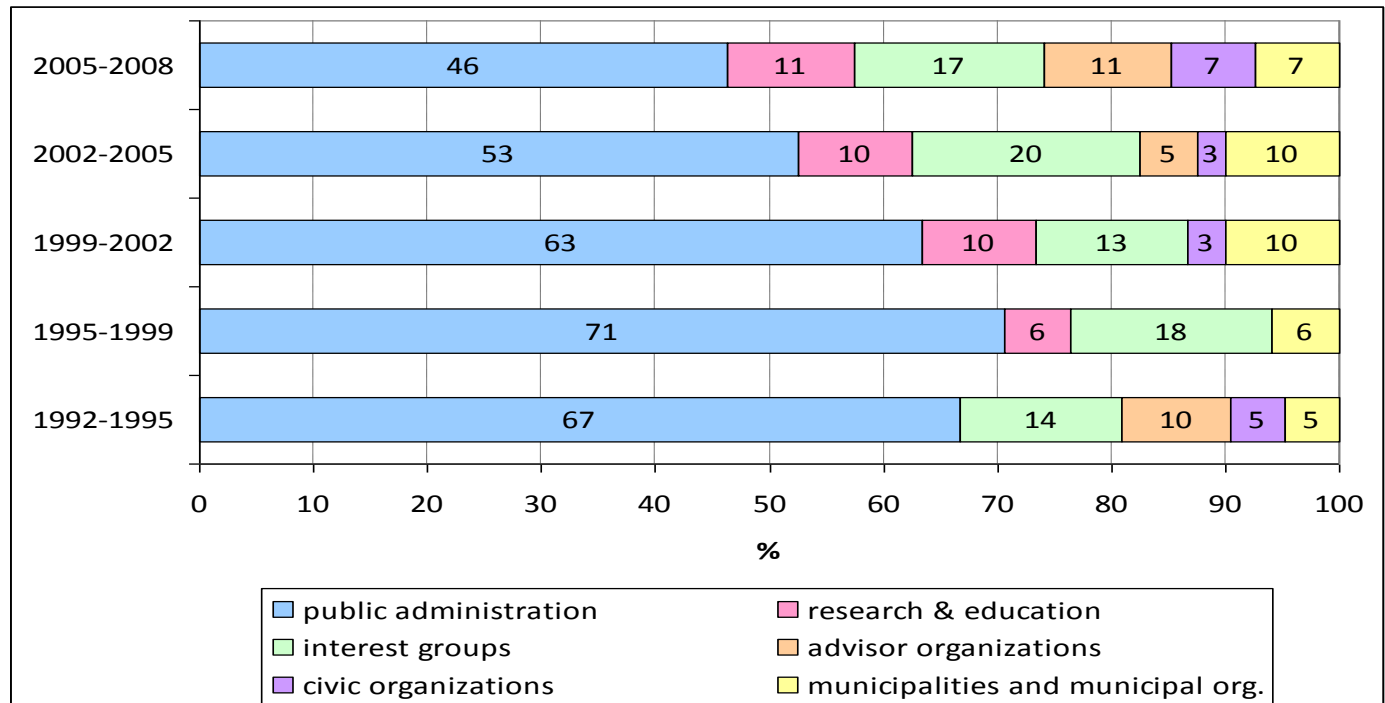
Case Finnish Rural Policy

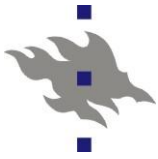
- Network-like structure has been said to be one defining feature of Finnish Rural Policy architecture. (OECD 2008)
- The Rural Policy Committee (RPC) is the core forum and appointed by the Council of State. 128 members have taken part in it (1988-2008).
- Theme groups are set up around particular themes or tasks concerning rural policy. Altogether 594 people (48% men) has taken part in them (1995-2008).
- Rural Policy network also links to local development context through Leader action groups and village action (Village Action Association of Finland, SYTY)
- Especially Leader-type rural development is its central tool for funding and thousands of local development projects.



Rural Policy network

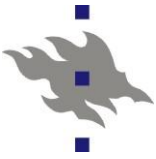
- Members of the Rural Policy Committee 1992-2008
- High percentage of administration. Academia, interest groups and some NGO's are also represented, but no politicians





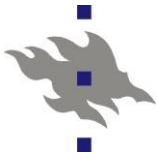
Rural policy projects

- Finnish Rural Policy is attached to the project-logic. Most of the action is carried out as projects.
- Indeed, the Rural Policy Committee's first predecessor, in 1988-1991, was quite literally a rural development project, The outcome of this was the first rural development programme in 1991,
- Rural Policy timely tapped the emerging project boom, especially multiplied by the EU programme based development project funding.
- There has been 1334 “network's own” funded research and development projects over past the 14 years and around 10 000 LAG-funded projects in 2000-2006 alone.



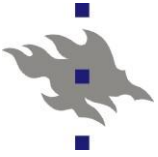
Efficiency and legitimation

- The power of the rural policy network lies in the fact that it can act in different domains and at different levels under the banner of participatory bottom-up development.
- The rural policy network is directed towards practical action, a project-intensive culture emphasizing goal-rational efficiency and voluntary participation.
- It is more difficult to recognise its political aspects and deal with disputes.
- Such mode of governance is dependent on people's readiness to commit themselves to its broad objectives.
- Also the resources available to the network are thus apt to increase the consensus that surrounds it



Conclusions

- Rural policy in the form of the national network project has proved successful in gathering capital for rural development through projects.
- Fragmentation and loss of predictability in the new modes of governance creates a sense of structural uncertainty, which many actors find very wearing psychologically.
- Projects and their tens of thousands of separate administrative acts bring bureaucracy very close to the people voluntary development action.
- This network is efficiency-seeking and it has not attracted the participation of politicians may indicate weak political commitment and could realise in concrete problem in the future.



Discussion

Are new modes of governing bound to narrow the ways and means of addressing the rural problems by cutting controversial/political issues and not-so-committed actors out of rural policy sphere?

How can inherently temporary rural policy project be sustained?