

Civil Society Management Education in Finland

What's Management Got to Do With It?

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Abstract

The increasing professionalization of civil society is a global trend that stems largely from the growing role of third sector organizations in policy making and service delivery. Such a trend can also be identified in Finland, providing a timely moment to take stock of the current provision of tertiary level civil society management education in the Finnish higher education system. In this article, I identify two ways of conceptualizing the role of civil society whereby civil society organizations are seen as a function of either service delivery or democratization. In Finnish civil society education, the latter view tends to be emphasized, leaving a gap between the needs of professionalizing civil society organizations and the current provision of higher education courses on civil society management.

Keywords: *civil society management education; civil society; management; third sector*

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Increasing professionalization of civil society groups is a global trend that has gained much attention from scholars in a variety of contexts. The Nordic countries are no exception, and since the 1990s, discussions around the growth of a third sector have become increasingly prevalent in this regional setting (Alapuro & Stenius, 2010; Trägårdh, 2007). Although the marketization and professionalization of civil society activities in Finland remain relatively low key compared to the pioneers in this area, the United States or the United Kingdom, it is possible to identify similar emergent trends (Ohtonen, 2000; Siisiäinen, 2004). As civil society organizations take on responsibilities that were previously associated with “mainstream” private sector or public sector roles, the issue of appropriate management practices becomes an increasingly relevant concern.

The primary concern in this article is the relationship between the current provision of civil society management education in Finnish higher education institutions and the relevance of this provision in relation to managerial training among Finnish civil society groups. This framing presents two key issues for analysis: (a) the provision of management education and (b) the needs of civil society groups for improved management practices. As the main purpose of the article is to shed light on the characteristics of tertiary civil society education in Finland, the former is the focus of the empirical material presented in the article. The needs of civil society groups, on the other hand, are dealt with through a theoretical approach for conceptualizing the needs that arise. The research aims that emanate from this approach can be summarized in the following question: Given the growing professionalization of civil society activities, does the current provision of tertiary management education reflect the needs of Finnish civil society groups?

The first section of the article deals with important definitional issues, and I disaggregate between the terms *civil society* and *third sector* to clarify how the notion of civil society management education relates to these concepts. In the second section, I present an overview of the development of Finnish civil society to highlight two key features of the Finnish case. First, the historical development of civil society demonstrates a strong institutional link between civil society and the Finnish state, which continues to be firmly grounded in the Finnish civil society psyche (Alapuro, Liikanen, Smeds, & Stenius, 1989). Second, this long-standing relationship is changing as civil society organizations take on a greater variety of shapes and sizes and engage in more varied forms of activism (Siisiäinen, Kinnunen, & Hietanen, 2000). This diversification of organizational forms may make it more difficult to pinpoint particular management practices as being most relevant to civil society organizations.

In the third section, I present a twofold framework as to how the needs of civil society organizations can be conceptualized with regard to management education. I argue that because there are two perspectives of the societal role of civil society organizations, there are contrasting views as to what are the relevant management skills for civil society management. This, in turn, allows for two contrasting approaches to determining what makes for relevant content for civil society–related higher education courses. First, from an organizational perspective, the needs of civil society organizations require managerial skills comparable to private and public sector organizations (Hudson, 2002). This position is summarized as *civil society needs education*. Second, from an institutional perspective, civil society plays a much broader societal role that

is anchored in the ideas of participation, representation, and democracy. It is that it exists, rather than its precise content, that makes civil society such a valuable contribution to society, and the needs of civil society organizations should be understood in terms of being able to fulfill this role. This position is conveyed in the term *civil society as education*. The two, of course, are not mutually exclusive, for all civil society organizations benefit from certain managerial skills and practices.

In the fourth section, I take a closer look at the existing university-level programs in civil society education in Finland across five universities. Although these courses are different in their orientation, they retain a remote relationship with management education. The fifth section discussion indicates that the reasons for the relative absence of management education in Finland can be at least partly explained by the historically important institutional role of Finnish civil society groups and by the variety of organizational forms that inhabit the Finnish civil society space.

Differences Between Civil Society and Third Sector Management

The terms *civil society* and *third sector* require clarification. It is not uncommon to use them interchangeably, but the nuanced differences between the terms are important in the context of this article. Civil society can be understood to refer to the total arena of collective action in a society, the shape of which is influenced by the shared interests and values in that society. This arena, or space, is populated by a variety of organizational forms, both formal and informal, and includes registered associations and foundations, trade unions, human rights organizations and other advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, community organizations, social enterprises, and many more (Edwards, 2011). Moreover, it is not limited to organizations, but it can be understood to refer to a space where uncoerced associations between the individual and the state can form (Walzer, 1998).

The third sector, on the other hand, refers to a similar, but more limited space in society (Etzioni, 1973) that functions according to particular structural and operational parameters. These limits concern the expectations placed on the behavior of organizations that inhabit this space, which derive from the connections between government and civil society. Salamon's (1981, 1987) concept of "third party government" is an early example of this, in which the contributions that third sector organizations make to the development of government policy and provision of services are emphasized. Salamon argued that theories of the welfare state should look beyond explanations that are focused on either market failure or government failure. Organizations that fall into this category work with governmental actors on social policy issues such as the delivery of welfare services.

In the context of this article, civil society encompasses a rich variety of organizational forms, activities, and spaces and third sector refers to a subset focused on working with governmental actors through grants or subcontracting to develop or deliver services. Therefore, in the context of this article, the term *third sector organization* refers to a more formal role as a government contractor and *civil society organization* captures organizations from advocacy to arts, sports, and leisure activities, including third sector. A third sector organization may therefore be expected to benefit more from relevant management education designed, for example, to manage budgets, projects, people, deadlines, and deliverables. A civil society organization outside the realm

of third sector may benefit more from civic education that enables it to understand its social role in building bridges between citizens or its role in acting as society's moral compass by highlighting inequalities and injustices and how it can fulfill these roles effectively. This distinction between educational needs between third sector and the rest is, of course, not absolute, but rather one of emphasis. Many organizations assume characteristics from both sides of the debate, and indeed, all organizations are in need of mainstream management expertise as well as awareness of their role and responsibilities as civic educators.

In this article, I adopted Hvenmark and Segnestam Larsson's (2012) broad approach to civil society management education, which they defined as "issues related to organizing, managing, and leading" (p. 62) civil society organizations and then focusing on educational efforts around these issues. This yields a clear-cut approach to thinking about management within civil society organizations, but it does not give clues as to what civil society management is aiming toward. Lewis (2001) identified three such management challenges: (a) the delivery of new or improved services; (b) efforts to catalyze social, economic, and political change processes; and (c) creation of "synergies" among different agencies and initiatives through partnerships (p. 3). Following on from this, and with a focus on the first two challenges in particular given their prominence in the Finnish context and that partnerships can in many cases be understood as an extension of the first challenge (they emerge from within service-delivery initiatives), I argue that the expectations around civil society management education can be greatly different depending on whether one focuses on either (a) the service delivery role of civil society organizations or (b) the role as an advocate of social, economic, and political change. This leads one to think about the technical role of civil society organizations in delivering services and their social role as catalysts of social change and the different management challenges these roles present.

Earlier studies on civil society management education reflect on similar bifurcation of roles. Mirabella, Gemelli, Malcolm, and Berger (2007), for example, concluded their international comparative overview on the subject by differentiating between "the technical and tangible management skills needed for effective governance and management" and "the role of civil society organisations as agents of social change" (p. 130S). In similar fashion, Pospíšilová (2011), in a study on the case of Czech Republic, identified two approaches to civil society management education, the first in which the importance of technical skills and managerial know-how are highlighted and the second in which civil society is seen as "value-laden" and subscribing to a particular normative vision of society (p. 332).

However, despite technical and normative perspectives being present, the management challenge in relation to civil society organizations is often seen from a technical perspective. This is evident, for example, in the three perspectives to civil society management set out by Lewis (2003). According to the first perspective, the management of civil society organizations is no different from the management of private companies. As such, civil society organizations should look into well-established management principles that deal with issues such as cost effectiveness and efficiency. In the second perspective, the experiences of public sector management are drawn upon, with the argument that civil society organizations can draw lessons from the way public sector organizations manage accountability, for example. In the third perspective, civil soci-

ety organizations are set aside in a category of their own, with the argument that this management is unique given the challenges of multiple accountabilities, beneficiary engagement, and volunteer management. It is therefore necessary to see civil society management as separate from private and public sector management and to rethink generic management ideas around the unique challenges civil society organizations face.

From the above discussion, three components matter when assessing the content and nature of civil society management education. First is the distinction between the organizational role civil society organizations undertake in service delivery and the institutional role of civil society actors as advocates for political and social change. The second component relates to the managerial skills attached to the two roles, distinguishing between the technical skills of managing service delivery and the value-laden, normative responsibilities of civil society organizations as the vanguard of a particular vision of society. Third, this feeds directly to the type of education that is relevant and whether the focus should be on management education or the broader social role of civil society.

Civil Society in Finland

Finland is an interesting context for the study of civil society management for the following reasons. First, Finns are keen participants in civil society organizations, given that in the mid-1990s the average Finnish adult belonged to two organizations (Siisiäinen, 1999) and membership numbers have been rising since as well (Siisiäinen, 2004). This has also meant that Finnish civil society is home to an array of organizations, particularly in the fields of arts, sports, and other activities that do not involve the production of services. Juxtaposed with this breadth is a changing relationship between the Finnish state and civil society in which the benefits of civil society activism are increasingly articulated through a third sector perspective. This has meant a shifting focus toward a relatively small subset of organizations fitting under the label of third sector. It is therefore an appropriate case for thinking about the management needs of civil society organizations on both sides of this divide and how civil society management education can best serve society.

Finnish associational life has far-reaching historical roots that support close relations between the state and civil society. The burgeoning nationalist movement of the late 19th century helped bourgeoisie and working class organizations to collaborate in driving forward the collective goal of greater independence as well as to develop a strong basis for future associational life in Finland (Alapuro et al., 1989). This early nationalist sentiment as a motivation for associational life has continued to influence the size and shape of the Finnish civil society, leading to a body of civil society organizations that share similar structural characteristics. First, the dominance of registered associations has led to the emergence of a “Finnish model of collective action” in which activist roles in education, publicness, peacefulness, and respect for authorities are preferred over anarchic activism. Second, Finnish civil society groups have largely followed hierarchical systems of governance in which grassroots activism is organized through the local associational branches that are then represented by regional and national level organizations. Third, civil society organizations have adopted relatively strong traditions of state-centrism in the approach, in that much of their

activism is geared toward collaborating with the state. Indeed, a salient feature of the work of Finnish associations, across the board, is their interest in making demands and offering suggestions aimed at the state or municipal government (Siisiäinen, 2000, pp. 14–15). The emphasis on consensus-based, hierarchical modes of associational life that are closely connected with national and municipal policy-making processes continues to inform the development of Finnish civil society.

However, these relatively homogeneous structural characteristics reveal only one part of the story, for significant changes have also been taking place in the structure and role of civil society in Finland. The last decade of the 20th century witnessed an unprecedented growth in the number of registered associations. At the start of the new millennium, 105,000 associations were registered in Finland, up from ca. 80,000 in the late 1960s. For one, the political and protest roles of civil society organizations in the spirit of the trade union movement and new social movements have weakened because of a decline in the societal activism of political parties. At the same time, the traditional hierarchical forms of organization have given way to new “flatter” organizational structures in the post-1990 era in which members are more actively engaged in organizational activities and decision making than they were in the older organizations. Similarly, these new organizations are less concerned with representing the interests of their members, and in ideological activism and demonstrations, and instead are taking a greater interest in producing goods and services. Finally, associational activism has become increasingly individualized, moving away from the tradition of mass membership-based political and professional organizations of the past. Siisiäinen (2000) observed regarding this trend, “It seems that it is easier, more rewarding – and even more rational – to shape one’s own life and environment through associations that advocate for small, concrete issues” (p. 26).

Traditional forms of political activism in civil society have been in decline, but this has been countered by the recent growth in rights-based activism. For Lappalainen (2010), this represents an entirely new type of activism that has little in common with the institutionalized activism of membership-based political organizations. In the case of the animal rights movement, the motives for action stem from a deep mistrust of formal politics and channels of communication. Not all rights-based activism subscribes to such radical measures, but the general trend here is toward more individualized engagement with social change through issue-specific initiatives. These changes further underline the increasing diversity of organizational forms and modes of activity that can be found today.

These trends indicate important shifts within Finnish civil society, but it would be unwise to package this as a neat and tidy shift away from “old” membership-based civil society organizations and toward “new” individualized service-based third sector organizations. It may be more appropriate to speak of a new division of labor between the large central organizations and the smaller regional associations, each fulfilling a different role. Moreover, the strong historical relationship between state and civil society has not been interrupted by these changes. These developments are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

A Summary of the Similarities and Differences Between the “Old” and “New” Finnish Civil Society Organizations

	OLD	NEW
Differences		
Types of organizations	Civil society groups as extensions of political parties (e.g., youth groups, women’s groups)	Third sector organizations focused on delivering particular services (e.g., social care)
	Hierarchical organizations with local, regional, and national levels	Rights-based organizations focused on particular issues (e.g., human rights)
Organizational characteristics	Membership-based organizations with passive members	Flat organizational structures with fewer, but active members
	Institutionalized activism; bureaucratic and general approach to bringing about social change	Individualized activism; targeting specific issues of social change
Similarities		
Types of organizations	Registered associations	
Organizational characteristics	Collaboration with the state remains the norm (radical rights activism the rare exception)	
	Consensus-driven approach to delivering social change	

The Government Programme, an action plan in which the key objectives are set out for the current government, reflects an interest in the changing role of civil society organizations, particularly in the area of welfare services. In the current program (Prime Minister’s Office, 2011), there is a keen interest in harnessing the energy of civil society in Finland, crystallizing around three issues. First is the government’s interest in greater citizen engagement in civil society activities. The program’s emphasis is government support for civil society organizations to showcase their activities in schools, education institutions, and libraries with a view on encouraging others to participate (Prime Minister’s Office, 2011, p. 37). Second, civil society organizations are valued as a source of employment for “those furthest away from the open labour market” (Prime Minister’s Office, 2011, p. 80) and for creating an “intermediate labour market...to employ persons with partial working ability” (Prime Minister’s Office, 2011, p. 81). Finally, third sector is valued for its contribution to services that are “provided in a client-oriented, high-quality and cost-effective manner” in a welfare mix in which “municipal services are complemented by the private and third sector” (Prime Minister’s

Office, 2011, p. 99). These comments do not point to specific, concrete policies, but they reveal strong support for the idea of greater civil society engagement in areas of social policy and demonstrate the prevalence of third sector rhetoric in governmental policy making.

Civil society management education can also have an active role in shaping these developments. This can take one of two directions. The first strategy is to support the changes in government policy and to rethink the role of civil society through a third sector lens. The second option is to resist the new trends and continue to support the full range of organizational forms and continue to recognize the democratic and political role of civil society as the representative voice of societal interests as well as that organizational forms are diversifying, meaning that any one type of management education is unlikely to serve the interests of all. In the next section, I lead on from these observations, presenting a twofold conceptual map for thinking about the needs for management education among civil society organizations along the lines presented here.

Organizational and Institutional Perspectives on Civil Society and Education

An Organizational Perspective: Civil Society Needs Education

When reviewing the literature on the topic, I identified at least two relationships between education and civil society. The first of these is focused on third sector organizations that play an active part in the delivery of services, such as health and education, or participate in the policy-making process. The perceived role of civil society is drawn from a logic in which third sector involvement in government policy and service delivery is seen as a means to improve government effectiveness. In addition to the public and private sector solutions, third sector offers an alternative means to provide services, capturing “the best of both worlds – efficiency and expertise from the business world with public interest, accountability and broader planning from government” (Etzioni, 1973, p. 315). In similar spirit, Salamon (1981, 1987) suggested that successful welfare service providers should look beyond explanations that look beyond either the market or the state and embrace the advantages of third sector organizations. These observations on the subject have been followed by a burgeoning growth in the number of third sector organizations taking on the types of roles that Etzioni and Salamon described in their early contributions. If third sector organizations are to work more closely with governments and to live up to these expectations, this will require a diverse set of management skills with attention to efficiency, expertise, accountability, and planning.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, ideas along the lines of Salamon’s third party government were becoming increasingly commonplace in public sector reform under the label *new public management* (NPM). This was a key driver behind the growth in third sector organizations’ involvement, and it was derived from a set of ideas around disaggregation, competition, and incentivization (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006). The changes in public management refer to a purchaser–provider split in the provision of public services through a culture of contracting out, accompanied by a rich array of indicators, targets, incentives, and accountability measures. In other words, NPM represents a decentralized system in which the government “steers” more and “rows” less (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2007), creating new opportunities for third

sector organizations to take up roles as service providers, with government as the purchaser of such services. Such a process emphasizes strategies of control and verification that enable the government to inspect and, when necessary, correct the activities of the providers. The rise of the NPM agenda highlights a particular set of administrative and management skills as the key to successful operationalization of third sector activities. Project management in the context of government contracts and the ability to adhere to particular standards of transparency and accountability seem to rank high in the list of key skills in third sector organization management.

Does this mean particular management skills are relevant to third sector organizations? There is a strong argument that third sector organizations require particular management and operational skills specific to the unique challenges of the sector (Lewis, 2001; Werther & Berman, 2001). The nonprofit motives of third sector organizations mean they are different from businesses in that they are not trying to maximize profits. Activities are prioritized on the basis of how well they fit the mission of the organization, rather than on their potential for making profit. This highlights the importance of values that inform the organizational mission and goals, which play an important part in guiding the work of third sector organizations. The organizational values play an important role in motivating employees who are often paid less than private sector employees, not to mention the important role volunteers play in many third sector organizations. In this context, third sector organizations are likely to require a particular set of management skills to manage the challenging working environment in which third sector organization managers find themselves. In other words, third sector managers require particular technical management skills to negotiate this complex environment.

At the same time, it is important to ask whether the third sector organizations have enough common characteristics to be described as a coherent “sector.” These organizations display a mind-boggling diversity of organizational forms, activities, values, and motivations, which, in the context of the United Kingdom, led Kendall and Knapp (1995) to describe the sector as “a loose and baggy monster” (p. 66). The terminological quagmire surrounding the third sector organizations is evidence for this lack of commonality. Third sector organizations are also referred to as voluntary organizations, nonprofit organizations, nongovernmental organizations, community organizations, and charities, without any clear-cut logic to delineate the differences between them. Often, such groupings and categorizations reflect history and traditions, demonstrating how in different country contexts civil society organizations have different roles and responsibilities. There may be a strong case for seeing third sector management as separate from mainstream management and requiring its own form of management education. However, at the same time, the breadth of organizational forms and activities represented in civil society organizations presents a challenge for thinking about specific concepts within civil society management education as comprehensive.

An Institutional Perspective: Civil Society as Education

In the preceding explanation of the need for management education among third sector organizations, the role of civil society is approached from a narrow perspective. It is possible to see the role of civil society organizations linking with the idea of teaching citizens to behave in a particular way that corresponds with the democratic norms of modern societies. In Putnam’s (1993) words, “Participation in civic organizations

inculcates skills of cooperation as well as a sense of shared responsibility for collective endeavours” (p. 90). The democratic habits that people learn as active participants of civil society organizations are important to their citizenship education. In her book *Diminished Democracy*, Skocpol (2003) takes a closer look at the democratizing role of civil society organizations. In particular, Skocpol distinguished between membership organizations that have deeply ingrained democratic practices and professional third sector organizations with hierarchical management structures and thin accountability mechanisms. In the context of present-day America, Skocpol observed that a gradual transition is happening from the former to the latter, with negative implications to citizens’ democratic education and the quality of democratic institutions at large. In both approaches, the quality of civic participation in civil society organizations is intricately linked with the quality of civic education (Ravitch & Viteritti, 2001). Therefore, from an institutional perspective, the role of civil society organizations is to teach their members how to engage in the democratic process and participate as active citizens. Civil society management education is therefore linked to ensuring that civil society organizations fulfill this role as the democratic engine of society to the best of their ability.

What does this democratizing role look like in practice? This can relate to the type of behavior identified by Putnam—cooperating and collaborating—with an aim to create harmonious and consensus-based relationships within society. In a work on civil society organizations as “policy entrepreneurs,” Najam (1999) gives a threefold framework for exploring methods for cooperative engagement within a democratic process. First, civil society organizations can aim to influence the setting up of the policy agenda and what issues will be taken up in policy discussions. Second, civil society organizations can influence the development of policies by having an effect on the choices governments have to make among possible policy approaches. Finally, once a policy approach has been selected, civil society organizations can influence the methods that are applied in realization of that policy. As policy entrepreneurs, then, civil society organizations have the role of nudging or prodding the policy onto an alternative course, but less to derail it.

On the other hand, the democratic role of civil society can also be seen in antagonistic terms, based on questioning and problematizing the status quo (Mouffe, 2000). By prodding the government to “do the right thing” (Najam, 1999), civil society fulfills its democratizing function. This is a decisively different way of seeing the societal contribution of civil society organizations as advocates of social and political issues, taking on a role that is entirely independent of government. In other words, if the political role of civil society is to be taken seriously, civil society organizations should be seen as a source of alternative ideas and practices that challenge the current state of affairs (Bebbington, Hickey, & Mitlin, 2008). Rather than contributing to the existing delivery of services, civil society organizations can be a thorn in the side of government, which can be seen as an important activity if civil society is to provide a politically meaningful alternative.

What activities would this kind of activism entail? Broadly defined, advocacy refers to civil society groups that spend their efforts in arguing for a particular position, often seeking to influence government policy while doing so (Clark, 2010). The activities of organizations engaged in advocacy can aim at generating support either among

the general public or among the relevant political decision makers and policy makers (Lewis, 2001). Moreover, these activities can move in one of two broad directions: information-oriented activities or demand-oriented activities. For example, groups can organize publicity campaigns that raise awareness of a given issue or they can organize demonstrations and strikes and make explicit demands for change. Therefore, the idea of civil society as education refers to the role played by actors such as mass membership organizations and social movements in these social processes that are less concerned with particular government policies and more with the institutional legitimacy of the given worldview that leads to those policies. It is premised on civil society organizations functioning as a voice for the social groups they represent.

This distinction between *civil society needs education* and *civil society as education* is a helpful way to approach the Finnish case. The concept of the third sector has anchored itself firmly in the Finnish civil society lexicon, and third sector organizations have begun to carve themselves new roles that align with the increasing relevance of third sector-related activities (Siisiäinen et al., 2000). These organizations, as the current government program notes, need specific support that enables them to fulfill this role. They need management education (among other things). At the same time, the underlying character of the Finnish civil society has been heavily influenced by long-standing tradition of large membership organizations that have a minimal role in the delivery of public services (Alapuro, 2010; Stenius, 2010). In the next section, I attempt to map the existing higher education courses on top of the twofold conceptual frame that has been developed above.

Finnish Civil Society Management Education

The analysis in this section is focused on the existing university-level courses in the area of civil society management education. I acknowledge the importance of noncredit-based education through other providers (Hvenmark & Segnestam Larsson, 2012), and the courses analyzed cover the majority of civil society-related higher education courses offered in Finland. The section is primarily focused on the master's program in Civil Society Expertise found at the University of Jyväskylä, the only full master's course of its kind available through Finnish universities, and on the courses offered at the HUMAK University of Applied Sciences, the other main source of civil society-related tertiary education in Finland. In addition, courses on offer at the University of Tampere, University of Helsinki, and University of Joensuu are reviewed.¹

Another reason for the focus on the courses at Jyväskylä and HUMAK is that these institutions offer the best overview of the types of civil society education that are found in Finnish universities. At Jyväskylä, the focus is on theoretical study of civil society, and the approach at HUMAK is more practice oriented and based on students' work experience in civil society organizations. This comparison is useful in the context of this article as it reflects the organizational and institutional approaches to civil society education presented and allows the reader to see how these play out in the Finnish context.

¹The empirical material in this section is largely based on interviews and e-mail discussion with professor Esa Konttinen and Dr. Pertti Lappalainen from Jyväskylä; Esa Ylikoski and Pia Lundbom from HUMAK; Dr. Päivi Harinen from Joensuu; Dr. Jarmo Rinne from Helsinki; and Dr. Tiina Rättälä from Tampere.

University of Jyväskylä: Master's in Civil Society Expertise

The master's program in Civil Society Expertise at the University of Jyväskylä is by far the most developed civil society education program in Finland. With roots in the social sciences, it takes a multidisciplinary approach that offers an education in civil society theory, the organizations of civil society, and the practical aspects of civil society activism (University of Jyväskylä, 2013a). The 2-year program provides students with a specialization in civil society studies, but remains grounded in the particular subject in which the student is majoring, which include philosophy, political science, sociology, social work, sports sociology, pedagogy, ethnology, and history (University of Jyväskylä, 2013b). The course has its origins in a governmental initiative to boost activism in Finland. A master's-level program in civil society studies was expected, among other things, to lead to a greater citizen engagement in activism.

Who partakes in the program? It is possible to identify three groups of students in the course. One group already has work experience from civil society organizations and comes to university to reflect on these experiences. Presented with an opportunity to step outside associational life, students from this background tend to be more interested in the conceptual and theoretical insights civil society studies offer. The second group is interested in the scientific research of civil society, and a master's degree in this field appears to be a potential springboard to a research career. A third group consists of students who see civil society organizations as presenting a future job opportunity and for whom the master's degree is a means to access such opportunities. Interest in civil society management features rarely in the motives for participating in the program.

This is also reflected in the electives offered as well as in the core structure of the course. Given that this is an academic and scholarly program located in the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, it is unsurprising that it is anchored in the perspectives of social theory and civil society theory. There are several such courses on offer that cater to the first two groups of students more interested in a theoretical approach to the study of civil society. On the other hand, this theoretical focus is balanced by an emphasis on praxis that includes a course on organizational practice (focusing on financial management) and on voluntarism (focusing on volunteering). Overall, the content of the program reflects the increasing diversity of organizational shapes and sizes, dividing between studies that are focused on practical work experience and theoretically oriented study of civil society, volunteering, and activism. Management studies feature as an optional focus, but this is not by any means at the center of the course ethos.

Given that studies within this program are grounded in a particular disciplinary perspective, it is likely to have a further effect on the extent to which management features as part of course content. In other words, a certain degree of self-selection may be taking place among students. The three main elements to the course are general civil society studies, theoretical and methodological studies required for the selected major, and elective modules in civil society specialization. Within the last element, the students have opportunities to study the "different traditions of civil society and citizenship research, practices of associational work as well as the fields of culture, sports or social services and organisations in these fields" (University of Jyväskylä, 2013b, para. 9). Students applying for the program are expected to hold a bachelor's degree or

an equivalent in the subject in which they are going to major. Students applying for a degree in social work can also apply from an applied background where their previous studies have been more vocationally oriented (University of Jyväskylä, 2013c).

To what degree is there a focus on management education? Given the broad parameters within which civil society education takes place at Jyväskylä, scope for management approaches to be included within the curriculum is limited. Students are able to gain basic skills in financial management and to complement their core studies with courses in mainstream management, but these courses are in no way tailored to accommodate a civil society perspective. Moreover, this would be up to the preferences of individual students, rather than a central focus of the program. The program is best described as being anchored in the study of civil society as an interdisciplinary concept within the social sciences with minimal focus on civil society management education.

HUMAK University of Applied Sciences

HUMAK, as a university of applied sciences, offers tertiary education with a primary aim to provide professional training. This has meant that its courses foster active operational links with business, industry, and local government, which means they also have some say in course content. However, this has also meant that the underlying teaching ethos on courses offered is strongly grounded in practice in which students' work experiences form a substantial part of the learning experience. This is also true in the case of civil society-related courses at HUMAK.

One of HUMAK's key strengths lies in the education offered in the area of civic and youth work that culminates in a degree program in Community Education with a specialization in either civic or youth work. The participants in the program come from two age cohorts. On the one hand, the courses are designed for students who arrive on the course directly from high school or are returning to education after a short break. Some have past experience of participating in youth and civic activities such as scouting or engagement in youth activities organized by 4-H.² A majority of students arrive on the course with a view to specialize in youth work, but significant numbers also discover civil society organizations during the program and choose to specialize in civic work. The second cohort consists of students enrolled in the adult education program in which the prerequisites are 3 years of relevant work experience, suitable educational background, and relevant hobbies. Many of the students participating in this model of teaching have work experience from civil society organizations and see the course as an opportunity to complete their first higher degree while continuing to work.

The overall program contains two tracks: youth work and civic work. The studies either lead toward a degree in community education or take the form of credited courses in continuing education. Coursework as well as the dissertation are practice-based and address the needs of a given civil society organization. Students discuss with their host organization how the work can contribute to organizational development. In this sense, the coursework and research element of the program can be seen as "commissioned" work in which real-life challenges that civil society organizations face are investigated and addressed. In many cases, this work occurs at the organization where the student is already employed. In this sense, the work is not purely research-based as it has a clear development focus. Beyond the practical coursework and disserta-

²This is a youth development organization that runs activities for young people aged 6 to 28. For more information on the Finnish 4-H Organisation, see <http://www.4h.fi/en/>

tion elements, a usual portfolio of courses includes jurisprudence, economics, project design, role of civil society organizations, volunteer management, and leadership. Management education in the form of financial management, project management, and leadership features among courses offered, but such courses are largely optional. In other words, management education has a clear place in the curriculum, but overall the focus can be considered “light touch.” Part of the issue here is the lack of appropriate academic literature that is applicable to the specific case of Finland and Finnish civil society organizations. Without the relevant reading material, it is difficult to design courses with a substantive management focus.

University-Level Civil Society Education Courses Offered Elsewhere

University of Tampere. The University of Tampere offers two courses with a focus on civil society education. The first of these is Civil Society and Political Participation (University of Tampere, 2013a) and the second module is Social Movements in 21st Century Politics (University of Tampere, 2013b). In both courses, a strong theoretical approach is applied to the study of civil society, the subject is approached from a political science perspective, and conceptual frameworks are applied, with a view to explore the political implications of civil society.

From the students’ point of view, future employability is part of the motivation to undertake courses in the study of civil society. At Tampere, Political Science is part of the School of Management, which on paper offers an opportunity to study civil society activism and organizations from a management perspective, but at the moment, it is not possible to study management from a civil society perspective.

University of Joensuu. The University of Joensuu offers two modules on civil society education: Civil Society and Social Movement, and Multiculturalism in Civil Society. Located in the Department of Social Sciences, each course is offered as an optional module in further study in sociology (University of Joensuu, 2013). In addition, as part of their Youth Studies program, the university offers a course entitled Learning Environment of Youth, in which civil society is the main context in which young people grow to become citizens.

Across all of the courses, the focus is mainly on theoretical perspectives, with an exploration of issues such as the conceptual distinctions between third sector and civil society, the role of civil society in relation to other sectors of society, civil society as a source of civic education, and how equal access to civic education (cultural education in particular) through civil society helps to sustain a multicultural environment. There are opportunities to study on civil society–related courses, and the university is working on a “package” to inform students interested in pursuing a career in civil society organizations about the opportunities to seek further management education on issues such as project management, budgeting, and procurement. This is a response to the need for the university to demonstrate the employability of graduating students, and here civil society organizations, particularly in the third sector context, are recognized as important potential future employers.

University of Helsinki. The University of Helsinki also offers courses in which civil society is investigated from different perspectives. The module Modern Nation-State and Civil Society is focused on the historical development of civil society in Finland and Europe and on the processes of democratization and the role of civil society therein. On the other hand, in the module Civil Society, NGOs, and Development,

civil society studies are approached from an international development perspective in which the concept of civil society and its appropriateness to developing country contexts is addressed (University of Helsinki, 2014). On the whole, the courses offered are theory laden and abstract in nature, but this is counterbalanced by a more specific analysis of organizational case studies that students are required to complete as part of their seminar work.

The students undertaking civil society-related studies come from three study streams: World Politics, Politics, and Management and Organizations. The courses related to civil society education at the University of Helsinki are not focused on management; however, students interested in a management perspective are able to pursue management studies elsewhere within the university, particularly through the Management and Organisations study stream.

Discussion

I set out to investigate the current provision of civil society management education in Finland to understand whether the current need for management education among civil society organizations is being met. An analysis of the programs offering civil society education in Finland led me to two overall conclusions. First, the provision varies in terms of making either civil society (civil society as education) or third sector (civil society needs education) the primary focus of study. Second, across all the provision courses focused directly on civil society, management is almost entirely absent from the curriculum.

The historical development of Finnish civil society is one explanation as to why this is so. The institutional link between civil society organizations and the state has always been strong, according to which the state is responsible for the delivery of public services and civil society has taken on roles in other areas of society, such as sports and arts. This has led to professionalization of different order, in which the management needs of civil society organizations have not been seen in parallel terms with the management needs of the public or private sectors. This is reflected in the absence of higher education management courses with a focus solely on the management needs of civil society organizations. Civil society is seen as a source of civic education for citizens, not as a set of formal organizations providing services. Finland has a large number of active civil society organizations that span a variety of roles, and this may also account for the lack of focus on management. It would be difficult if not impossible to identify a common set of management practices appropriate for this “loose and baggy monster” (Kendall & Knapp, 1995). This may also explain why management is not central to civil society education in Finland.

Starting with the case of Jyväskylä, the focus on civil society as a broad theoretical concept can be associated with the civil society as education approach to teaching. Supporting a more sociological perspective to the study of civil society, the courses are more focused on concepts such as democracy, participation, and protest in understanding civil society. In the program, civil society is seen as valuable in and of itself. The lenses of policy and practice are not necessary to understand the societal contribution of civil society. Rather, participation in civil society makes people better citizens as they are taught the habits of democracy, participation, and protest.

The courses available at the universities of Tampere, Joensuu, and Helsinki can also fall under the civil society as education label. These courses can be broadly described as students being taught about the civic and democratic roles of civil society, of its importance as a counterbalance to the state and a source of civic education. The specific technical roles of third sector organizations, although touched upon, take a secondary role in these largely theoretical courses. There is little motivation to expand on the current provision in these universities, as Jyväskylä already offers a master's degree on the subject, and this is sufficient. Those interested in the subject are expected to pursue their studies at Jyväskylä. Another reason for the limited coverage is the nature of academic appointments, which are locked up in other areas of teaching and research, leaving civil society studies with little representation among higher education courses.

The focus at HUMAK on third sector as a narrower practice-oriented concept is more closely associated with the civil society needs education approach. The focus of studies is more squarely on the practical needs of civil society organizations. For example, the aim of the courses in civic and youth work and community education are to provide the practical skills required for work in this area. Furthermore, in the adult education courses, many of the students have direct civil society-related work experience and use their studies to better understand the challenges of civil society as a workplace. For these reasons, it seems most appropriate to describe the courses at HUMAK as recognizing the need for practical skills among civil society practitioners, thus subscribing to the civil society needs education approach.

However, these distinctions are a crude simplification of varied and diverse course content in each case. For example, in the case of HUMAK, it is possible to argue that the practice-oriented study that occurs inside civil society organizations can also be understood in the spirit of civil society as education; improved practical skills contribute to better organizational practices, which in turn lead to civil society organizations being a more viable force in the democratic process. The distinctions highlighted should therefore be understood to refer to different centers of gravity within the programs.

A comparison of civil society management education between Finland and other parts of the world can also be instructive. In the case of the United States, as early as 1997, 76 universities offered graduate programs in civil society organization management, 43% of which were located within MPA programs (Wish & Mirabella, 1998). Overall, education in the United States in this area is dominated by managerial education in which a generic course in civil society organization management is usually included (Wish & Mirabella, 1998). This is a strikingly different emphasis from the Finnish case. Similarly, compared with provision across the rest of Europe, where 42% of courses are found within the schools of management and economics and where the predominance of management as the disciplinary field for civil society studies can be linked with the "rapid professionalization of the sector" (Mirabella et al., 2007, p. 123S), Finnish academia remains wedded to a more theoretical and critical approach to teaching civil society-related courses.

Conclusion

Is the provision of civil society management education in Finland sufficient, and does it meet the needs of Finnish civil society organizations? Given the increasing professionalization of Finnish civil society and the vocal interest among policy makers to

engage a greater number of third sector organizations in service delivery roles, there seems to be a strong case for making sure that the expertise, skills, and know-how in these organizations are at a high level. At the same time, it needs to be recognized that these organizations represent only one group among an increasingly diverse range of civil society actors. Social movements, mass membership organizations, and rights-based activism are equally important civil society actors that have different perceptions of their social role and therefore different needs in terms of management education.

To capture this variance, I have put forward two alternative conceptual frames for articulating this relationship between civil society and education. The first, more closely associated with third sector and service delivery, has been summarized as civil society needs education. The second, the aim of which are to capture the role of civil society as a training ground for democratic citizens who participate in society and to represent others who are less able to do so, has been referred to as civil society as education. This framing yields parameters under which to consider the role civil society management education does—and should—play in the Finnish case.

In the review of existing higher education programs in civil society studies, I identified a similar dualism of approaches. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the more working life-oriented tertiary education program offered at HUMAK University of Applied Sciences was firmly practice based and anchored in students' work experiences, whereas in the program at University of Jyväskylä, a conceptual approach was adopted that is more theory based and grounded in students' disciplinary studies in a field broader than civil society studies alone. The courses offered at the universities of Tampere, Joensuu, and Helsinki subscribe to a broadly similar approach to civil society education as Jyväskylä. Put in another way, the program at HUMAK is more geared toward the narrower goal of providing skills for individuals to function effectively as members of civil society and third sector organizations, whereas at Jyväskylä and elsewhere, teaching is more focused on engaging reflectively with the concept of civil society.

The discussion here is based on a supply-side analysis, that is, looking at the educational provision from the point of view of the provider. It seems equally important to approach the question from a demand-side perspective and look at the question from a student perspective. The two main programs reviewed here are popular with students and employers alike, but this does not explain students' motivations for enrolling in a civil society studies program and expectations they may have from such a program. This, it seems, is particularly relevant for gauging the extent to which specific management education is lacking or not.

The role and experience of the students are indeed at the center of understanding the relevance of more specific management education in relation to civil society studies. What is common to all civil society-related higher education in Finland is the absence of an explicit focus on civil society management education. As Lewis (2003) suggested in a review of approaches to civil society management, the jury is still out as to how best to incorporate civil society management in higher education. Could it be that the two existing approaches—one with an emphasis on practical skills, another in which the conceptual context is priority—already offer students the wherewithal to build their own portfolio of relevant management skills when the time comes? The programs can be seen as the foundation that enables students, as reflexive agents, to decipher the managerial skills that reflect their vision of what the function of civil society is—one of representations or service delivery.

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