

THE **FOURTH SECTOR** AND TRADE **UNIONS**

TRADE UNION ORGANIZING AND CHANGING
CIVIC ACTIVISM IN THE EARLY 2000S

UNION MOVEMENT GOES SOCIAL MOVEMENT (AGAIN)?

” In the 2020s we need to find a solution, if we want to exist in the future. That is why we have built preparedness in a bottom up-manner, not top down. The **trade union movement needs to re-build itself as a social movement from the workplaces upwards** and not as a bureau or insurance company that people no longer recognize as their own.”

– Risto Kalliorinne, PAM, *Kansan Uutiset* 17.2.2020

https://www.kansanuutiset.fi/artikkeli/4216453-pam-osallisti-jasenensa-maaratietoisesti-tes-neuvotteluihin?utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR1yaH7i1VG9QwQdTUQTk-SNZdmej4fvuE0UcW7XKICuY36xt908RlbGjY

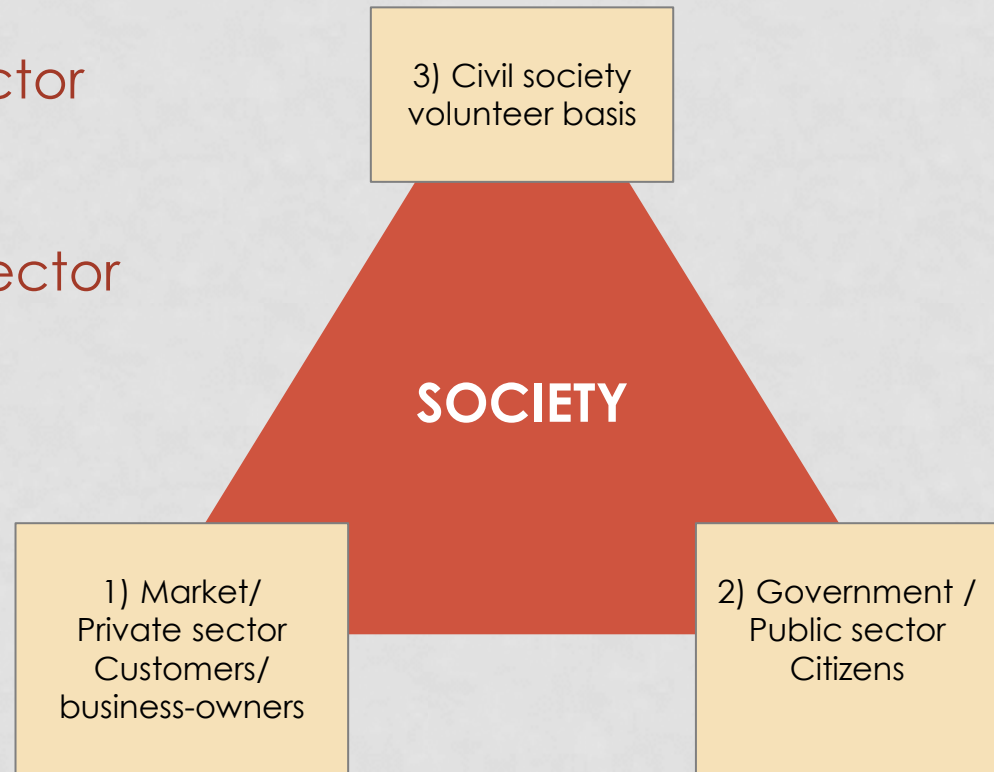
BASICS: THE THREE SECTORS (+1)

1) Private/business/market sector
people as customers

2) Public/state/government sector
people as citizens (subjects)

3) Civil society,
"third sector", "nonprofit"
people as volunteer actors
(often in organizations)

+ 1) *the idea of a fourth sector
- the household.*



MAJOR CHANGES > NEW POSSIBILITIES

- The Globalization effect
 - Especially the consequences of www and digital natives
 - The spread of information: examples & inspiration; movements & networks >> instantly from local to global
- An ongoing transformation:
 - the Internet and social media enable new forms of organization and action as well as new roles for activists.
 - A democratization process or risks for civil society? - both views exist



TRENDS IN VOLUNTEERISM

(After Leo Stranius 2019)

- **"popup - commitment"**: People attach themselves to meanings and phenomena rather than organizations. Actions are linked to individual life situations. Easy to join in, easy to leave (vs. long-term membership).
- **Self-organizing**: Individuals prefer to define the goals and forms of their own action. Social media and the networks it offers are of great importance. When more direct action is possible – what is the role of organizations?
- **Volunteer action is "personified"**: Attention to inspiring individual actors rather than organizations and their "talking heads" – case Greta Thunberg
- **Experimental attitude & moving fast**: In a fast-changing environment, moving away from set plans and strategies
- **Disappearing sectoral borders**: E.g. volunteer work on business time. A muddling of sectors, the disappearance of or new possibilities for civil society?



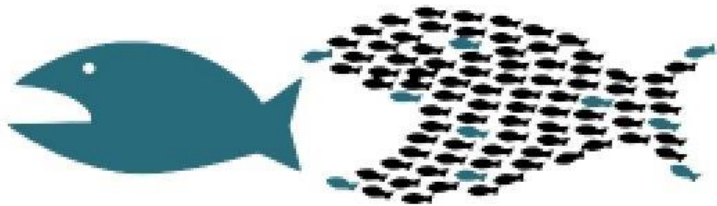
A CHALLENGE FOR UNIONS

- **Falling membership levels**
Finland: Less than 60% unionized,
top numbers in 1995.
Numbers falling internationally
– why are people not joining?
 - Coinciding with emergence of
new forms of action and activism
 - Also e.g. the changing world of work
- The **turn to organizing**
in a number of countries / unions
– current trend, long history

WHAT IS ORGANIZING?



Don't panic,



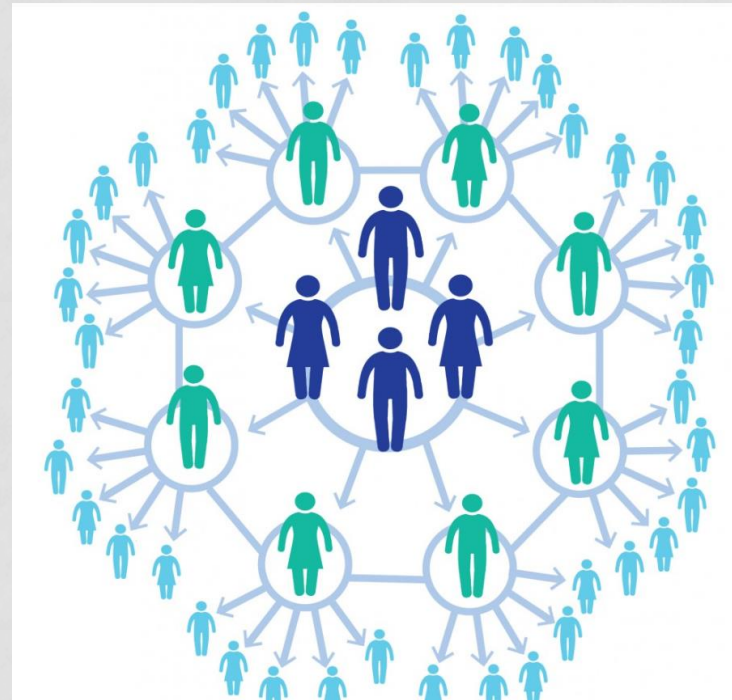
ORGANIZE !



Parvessa on voimaa...

WHAT IS ORGANIZING?

- An attempt at a **snowflake structure** of active union membership
- Involves **individual motivation** and discussion, sometimes a mentoring relationship
- Importance of **setting workplace-specific goals** and achieving them



<https://share.america.gov/changing-world-with-snowflakes/>

Is this the **answer for unions** in a time of emerging fourth sector activity?

WHAT IS ORGANIZING?

- *“People — and not just around election cycles — have been able to find power in building numbers by talking to people one person at a time(...) By working on changing one heart and mind, you build an exponential power base, and that’s how you change your environment and your world, ultimately.”*

- <https://share.america.gov/changing-world-with-snowflakes/>

FEATURES OF THE 4TH SECTOR

Mäenpää&Faehnle
(forthcoming):

The fourth sector as

- **communities** that function **outside of organizations**
- **self-organized** and **network-based**
- utilize the **Internet, social media**, and **open information**
- primarily aiming for **concrete cooperation** to achieve **goals** arising from the community.

AND:

- more generally, hybrid network actors characterized by **principles of openness, co-creation and sharing**
- Also **forms of action** based on the use of internet and open information as well as co-creation and networks

FEATURES OF THE 4TH SECTOR

Rask, Puustinen, Raisio:

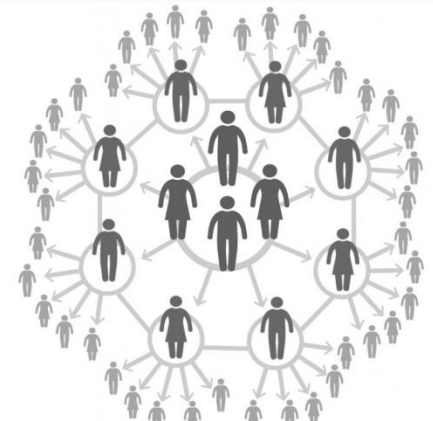
- the fourth sector should be seen as a **special type of activity** that is characterized by **non-representational** participation, use of **open co-creation approaches** that are combined with a **prosocial, non-profit orientation** and **adaptive, context-sensitive strategies**.

If trade union organizing brings about

- **communities** of active workers/union members
- that together **formulate meaningful goals** and
- **cooperate** locally to achieve them

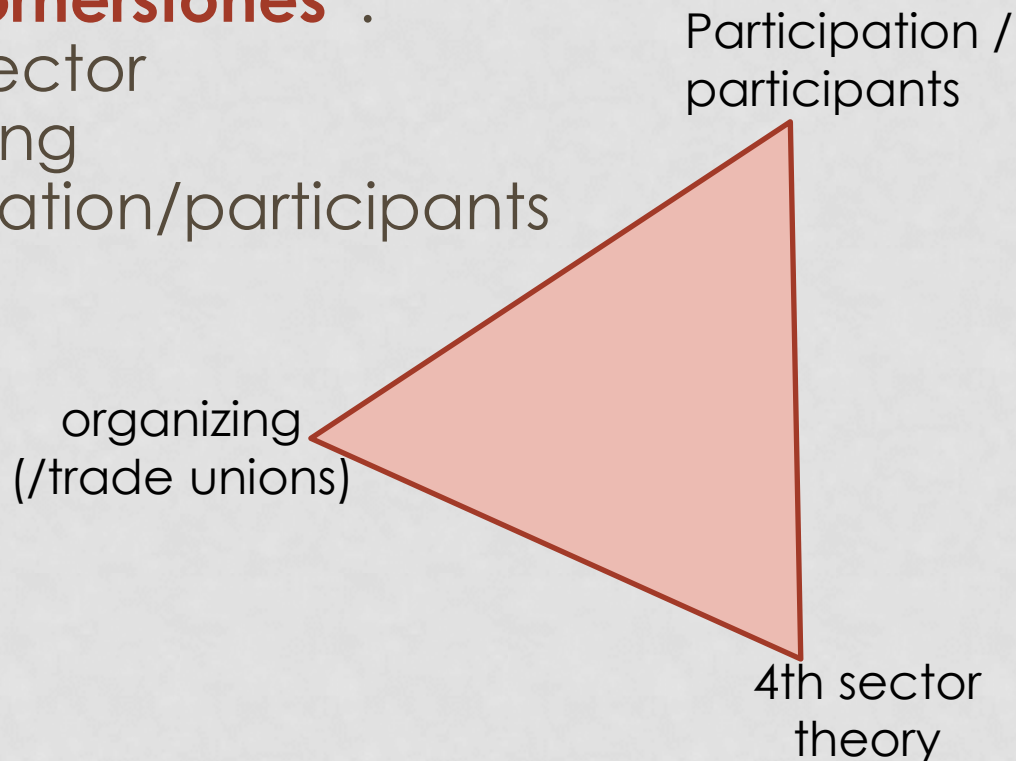
and if this activity is framed within a trade union context

– is this an efficient “institutional” approach to new fourth sector realities and possibilities?



THE RESEARCH

- Three "**cornerstones**":
 - * fourth sector
 - * organizing
 - * participation/participants



- Are organizing efforts and 4th sector activities "geared towards" **similar types of participant/participation?**

THE RESEARCH

- **History approach/themes:**
 - Trade union / Industrial relations research & history (esp. Finland)
 - Social movement research
 - The development towards New Public Governance/Co-creation
- **Main inquiry: *experienced change***
 - what is attempted through organizing activities?
 - What has changed in the process?
- **Focus areas:**
 - 1) theoretical comparison
 - 2) trade union organizers and decision makers
 - 3) trade union members

THE RESEARCH

Focus areas (= articles or not?):

1) theoretical comparison

- fourth sector/organizing
- no organizing manual or set theory
- looking at teaching&practices

2) trade union organizers and decision makers

- What is the goal of organizing?
- What are the experienced changes?
- What is the ideal model of membership/participation?

3) trade union members

- What are the experienced changes?
- How do members wish to participate?
- What is the role of trade unions?

→ Examined through a 4th sector lens