



Social cohesion and level of urbanisation

The Case of Finland

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14th Conference "Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe"
Villa Vigoni 14-16/10/2019

Background and hypothesis

- There are many changes in European societies that have been claimed to challenge social cohesion
 - these include intergenerational conflicts, spatial movement of the population and increasing inequalities, tensions between social and ethnic groups
 - Less evidence on how social cohesion varies in space within countries
 - Traditionally rural areas have been seen as relatively cohesive, especially on trust
 - Rodríguez-Posé (2018) assumes: due to economic decay, these areas have become a source of discontent that resonates with political populism:
 - *'In recent years the places that "don't matter" have increasingly used the ballot box [...] to rebel against the feeling of being left behind'* (i.e. lack of opportunities, of future prospects)
 - *'...the revenge of the "places that don't matter"': people-based policies have been pursued at the expense of place-based-policies*
- Is this cleavage between (the growing) urban population and those that reside in the outskirts of these areas or in rural periphery evident in social cohesion?
- What about other dimensions of *social quality*?

SOLA model: Social cohesion as part of social quality

- Focus on socially *sustainable* quality
- Extension to the v.d.Maesen & Walker (2012) social quality model
- Key elements (in the social realm): social levels and dimensions/pillars
- The (three) social levels:
 - assets (i.e. structures), quality processes (collective actions, interventions) and the individual level (subjective well-being) (cf. EUSI 2018, Noll 2002)
- The four dimensions of social quality processes required to “translating” societal assets to individual QoL (and vice versa):
 - Security, empowerment, inclusion, cohesion
- The two functions of SOLA:
 - 1) an approach or a conceptual framework
 - 2) a model to order (social sust.) indicators
- Not a “Grand Theory”!

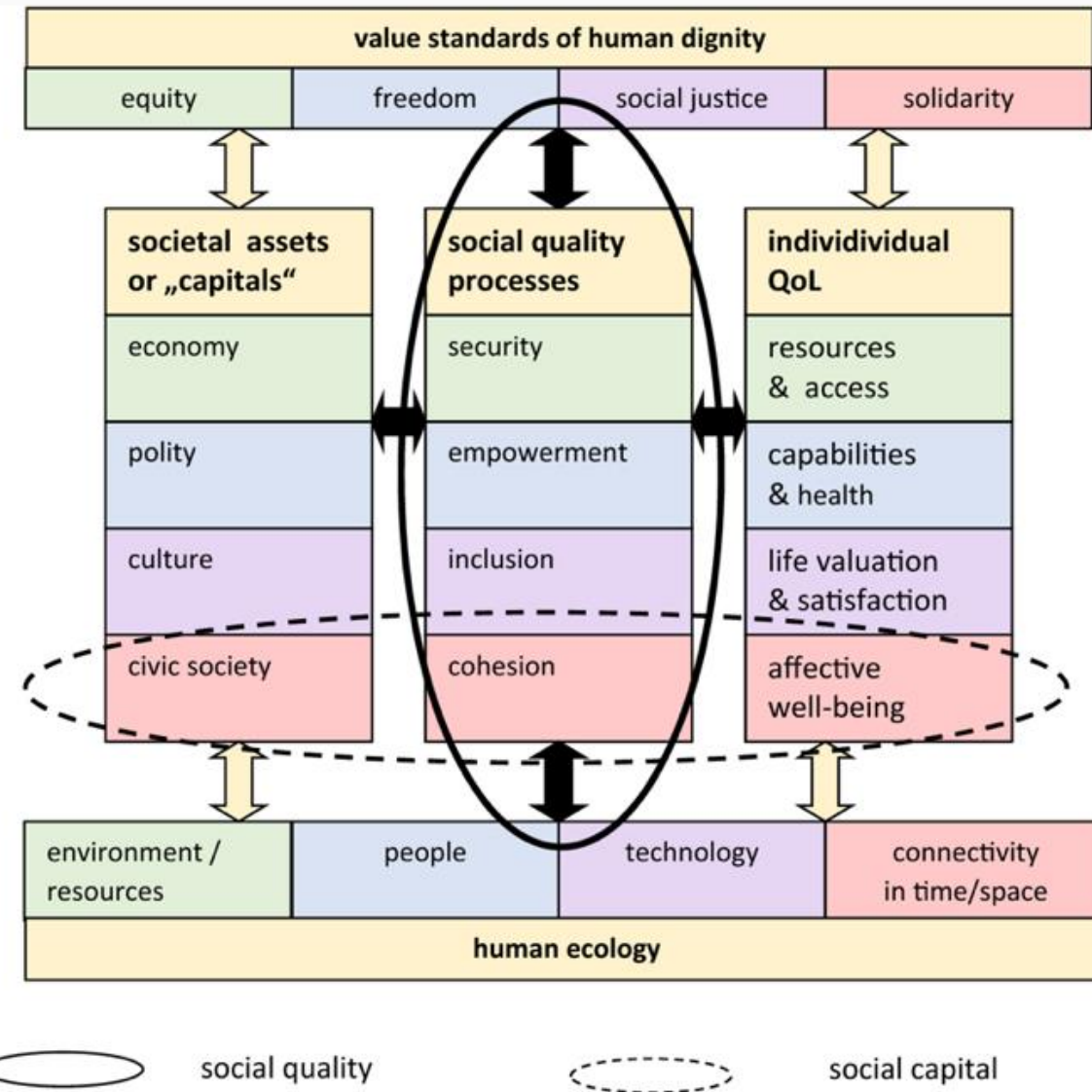


Fig. 1
The general SOLA model

Key drivers (structural level) of SOLA in Finland

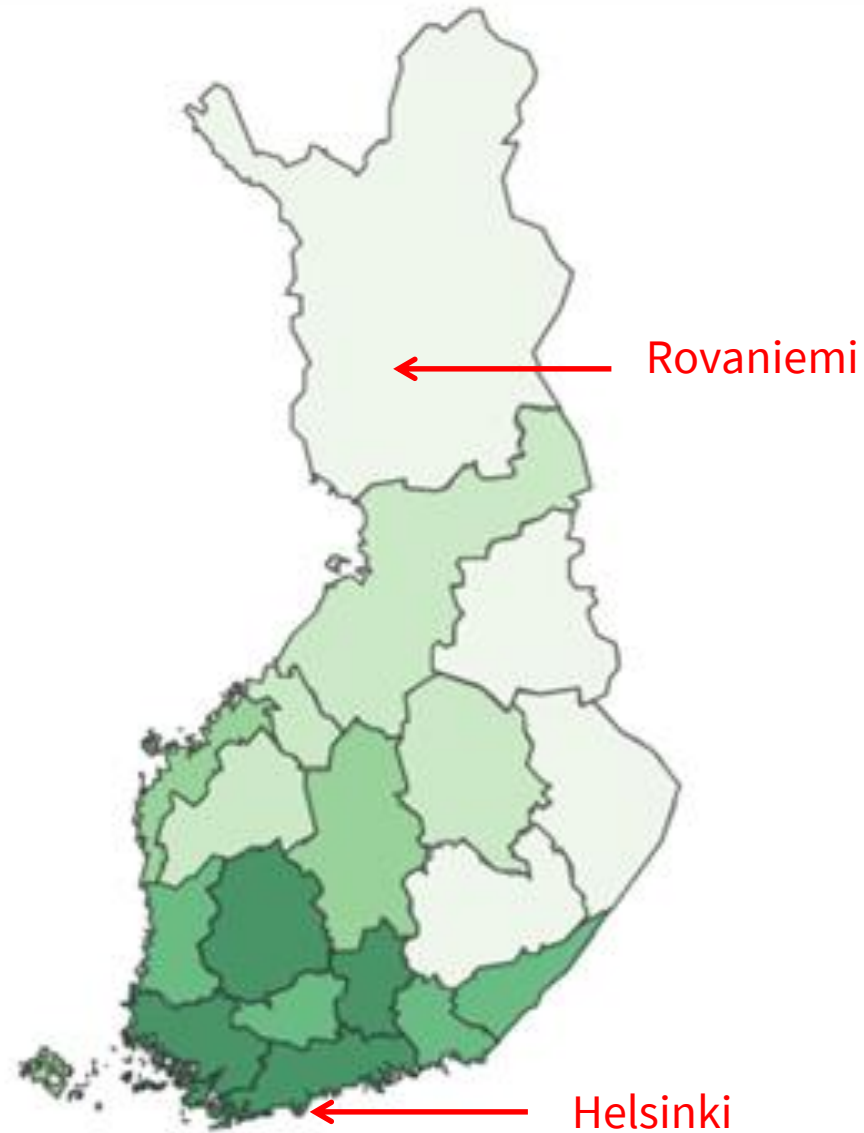
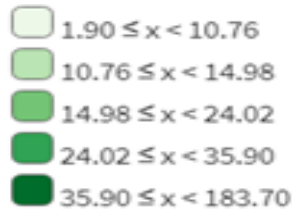
- Rapid aging of the population, rapid decrease in fertility
 - resulting into poor dependency ratio
- Rapid increase of the foreign born population (currently 7%)
 - accounts for the population increase
- Urbanisation resulting into depopulation of the rural areas (& loss of value of housing property)
- Severe regional (geographic) differences between South-West and North-East, increasing area-based urban segregation
- Challenges in the provision of services (esp. social & health)
 - dictates a need for service reform
- Wide (and widening?) health inequalities
- Low level of poverty but increasing (relative) child poverty
- High level of trust, low on social and economic tensions, average on racial & ethnic tensions

Applying the SOLA-model, we aim to...

1. Explore the association between population density of the region (NUTS3) with the indicators of social quality processes (socio-economic security, empowerment, inclusion, cohesion)
2. Construct indexes for the dimensions of social quality processes and a composite SOLA-index and test their pair-wise correlations
3. Analyse how population density is associated with the indexes, and
4. Study whether the association between population density and the SOLA-index results from regional variation in social capital (Hyypä & Mäki 2001)

18 Regions of Finland (NUTS level 3)

Population density by region,
population / km²



Possible phenomena of SOLA-processes

(SOCIO-ECONOMIC) SECURITY

unemployment, unmet need of services,
satisfaction with housing expenses

perceived poverty

EMPOWERMENT

knowledge on access to health-care

education, morbidity

health-related behaviour

INCLUSION

communication with others

active participation

loneliness, NEETs

COHESION

trust in policy making, trust in services

voting rate

trust in other people

Indicators of SOLA-processes	Range	Mean
Population density	1.9-183.7	30,3
Socio-economic security		
Unemployment (%)	6,4-14	10,3
Afraid of running out of food (%)	9,4-31,2	11,4
Unmet need of health services (%)	13,2-19	16,2
Unmet need of social services (social work) (%)	30,2-55,6	45,6
Unmet need of social assistance (%)	51,1-72,9	62,6
Dissatisfied with housing expenses (%)	12,2-20,7	16,2
Empowerment		
Tertiary education (%)	24,3-37,9	27,7
Morbidity index (age-adjusted)	82,6-130	106,0
Daily smoking (%)	11,7-18,1	14,6
Share of people knowing how to choose health care center (%)	52,9-65,6	58,5
Inclusion		
NEETs (%)	12,1-23,9	18,1
Loneliness (%)	5,8-9,9	8,1
Active participation (%)	22,1-31,4	27,1
Communication with other people (%)	76-83,1	79,3
Cohesion		
Voting rate in parliament election (%)	62,4-71,3	67,3
Trust in local policy-making (1-5)	2,5-3,0	2,8
Trust in health services (%)	71,5-84,6	79,4
Do not trust other people (%)	9,0-11,3	10,1

Indicators of SOLA-processes Pair-wise correlations with population density	r	Complies with the hypothesis
Socio-economic security		
Unemployment (%)	-0.23	+
Afraid of running out of food (%)	-0.33	+
Unmet need of health services (%)	-0.22	+
Unmet need of social services, social work (%)	-0.29	+
Unmet need of social assistance (%)	-0.69	+
Dissatisfied with housing expenses (%)	0.62	+
Empowerment		
Tertiary education (%)	0.81	+
Morbidity index (age-adjusted)	-0.64	+
Daily smoking (%)	-0.10	
Share of people knowing how to choose health care center (%)	-0.01	
Inclusion		
NEETs (%)	-0.35	+
Loneliness (%)	0.20	+
Active participation (%)	0.25	+
Communication with other people (%)	0.43	+
Cohesion		
Voting rate in parliament election (%)	0.55	+
Trust in local policy-making (1-5)	0.25	+
Trust in health services (%)	0.05	
Do not trust other people (%)	-0.09	

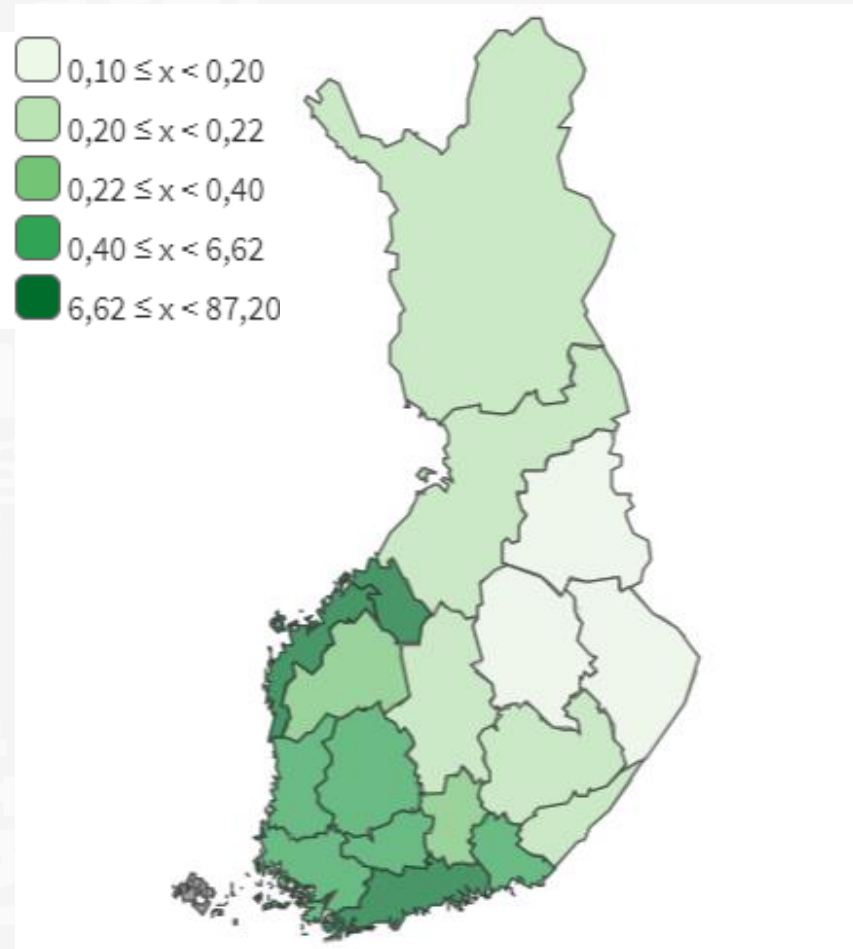
Pair-wise correlations of the indexes (Pearson r)

	Security	Empowerment	Inclusion	Cohesion
Security	1			
Empowerment	0.59	1		
Inclusion	0.65	0.68	1	
Cohesion	0.33	0.75	0.37	1
SOLA-index	0.78	0.92	0.82	0.75

Pair-wise correlations of population density and the indexes (Pearson r)

	Population density	Complies with the hypothesis
Security	0.49	+
Empowerment	0.54	+
Inclusion	0.34	+
Cohesion	0.40	+
SOLA-index	0.54	+

Modelling SOLA-index: hypothesis on Swedish-speaking population (social capital)



Swedish-speaking population as % of total population at year end

	Model I		Model II	
SOLA-index	Coef.	p	Coef.	p
Population density	0.596	0.021	0.545	0.022
Swedish-speaking population (%)			1.449	0.067
R2	0.290		0.436	

Conclusions

- Almost all indicators and all dimensions of the SOLA-model vary by the population density. Those regions with the lowest density had lower levels of socio-economic security, empowerment, inclusion and cohesion.
- The share of the Swedish-speaking population did not explain the association between SOLA-index and population density. However, it did have some independent effect.
- The results of our explorative study suggest that the ideas of Rodríguez-Posé on lagged-behind areas may be visible also in social quality processes.
- Broadly, our hypothesis was verified, suggesting that places *”that don´t matter”* are lagging behind not only in terms of social cohesion but the other social quality dimensions as well.
- The constructed indexes turned out to be viable in measuring dimensions of the SOLA
- However, limitations of the study include the shortage of adequate measures
- In future, an analysis with more precise indicators, especially on social cohesion, is needed

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Thank you! Kiitos!

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