

**Political Participation of Young People in
Europe – Development of Indicators for
Comparative Research in the European Union
(EUYOUPART)**

**Deliverable 8: «Collection of Working Papers
on Qualitative Research Findings»/ Finland**

**“A Colourful Spectrum of Political Views and a Sceptical
Landscape of Participation”**

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All working papers are based on the qualitative research that was undertaken by the consortium partners in all participating countries in January and February 2004. The qualitative research consisted of 2 parts: Interviews with politically active young people and focus groups with politically non-active young people.

Various approaches were taken to analyse the data.

The national working papers follow a common structure (themes) that was designed prior to the analyses. National results will form the basis for a comparative analysis of the qualitative results across countries.

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE FINNISH TRADITION IN READING YOUNG PEOPLE'S TEXTS

The art and realities of political participation

The terms politics and political participation are objects and arenas in the political game; they are part of politics (cf. Palonen 1993). To say what is politics is to take part in politics; the landscape and concept are in the eyes of the actor. To know what politics is for Finnish or European young people is not possible. It would be the same sort of craziness as a novelist trying to write final word on love and war, hate and sexuality. They are open-ended existential and context bound political questions. But like in the situation of novelist, the researcher has the chance to understand young people's roles (narrative minds), styles and metaphors concerning politics – their political participation rising up from within civil society, facing the older generation and collective-institutional policy and politics.

In this national report I'm trying to paint a bright picture of politics and political participation among young Finns at the beginning of the year 2004. This will be rather easy objective because of the extensive qualitative research which has been done in this field. Ten years ago, for example, I (Paakkunainen 1993) studied nearly 500 school essays full of 'political' words and participation landscapes which reveal the young Finns' analytically critical or emotionally negative distance from conventionally 'political' phenomena at large. The 'political sphere' was in most essays understood as 'something belonging to *them*' and '...we (the young generation) just observe this political activity, the dirty games of politicians'.

The use of 'political'-words proved quite tautological. We can speak of a collective tautology, of a common caricature of the young peoples' political dissatisfaction. They spoke about politics in an extremely shameless manner. Under the topic 'Why are young people not interested in politics?' the following metaphors and other expressions concerning established political institutions and collectives occurred repeatedly

- ? useless, uniformly colourless,
- ? dishonest and wrongful actions,
- ? monastic Latin which only specialists are versed in,
- ? empty promises and words, no results,
- ? a world of its own with rules of its own,
- ? a show acted out in the actors' own interest,
- ? stinking crap,
- ? a collective of middle-aged groups,
- ? an arena for old fogeys,
- ? a dirty game without any fascination.

The incommensurability between the worlds of 'us', the young people, and 'them', the politicians, was obvious. The pejorative, ironical and critical aspects of the young writers' expectation horizon were, however, quite ambivalent. They cannot be simply identified with the older forms of apolitical or anti-political thinking, e.g. with an artistic preference for contemplative life, or with technocratic demands for definite 'results'. Their Weltanschauung was not a naive populist one, neither did they try to explain politics away from their lives by judging it in purely idealistic or moral terms. Even if many of the writers felt politics is in essence a wretched phenomenon, they acknowledged the fact that in its own unique way it is a necessity which to also concerns them.

A political game

The writers recognised the aspects of game and struggle for power. Some of them regarded these cultures as activities which require specific abilities or skills. Some authors speculated the possibilities between the 'real' and the 'ideal', and, for many of them, politics seems to be the only arena where such battles can be fought.

Interestingly enough, it is often difficult to judge whether the critique of politics is an expression of total rejection or playful irony. For this purpose, a rhetorical and stylistic analysis is needed. It appears very difficult to express the necessities of 'Machiavellian' aspects of po-

litical activity without resorting to irony or sarcasm. The following quotation serves to illustrate this point:

"Politics is a rhetorical activity invented by human beings. Some persons who are not familiar with it consider politicians as useless. But it is not necessarily so, because it is in the political arenas that we have to make important conclusions concerning the major question of how this society functions. - A famous Finnish artist sings that "...the politician perfumes his shit the very moment he shoves it out of his mouth." [...] Those with exceptional oratorical gifts and a sufficient amount of arrogance enter political careers [...] But politics also provides an opportunity to consider social facts from a plurality of viewpoints. Yet we have to work hard if we want to strike a balance between all the arguments and views that are brought up. [...] The basic principles of society are striving forwards through politics." (21-year-old young man)

Especially considering the essays written on topics related to the significance of politics, we can draw an overall caricature from the most commonly given 'definitions':

Politics is:

- ? *the action of party politicians involving conflicts and enemies,*
- ? *an independent and cynical play which requires specific craftiness,*
- ? *promises without achievements, plenty of words but no actual deeds,*
- ? *interaction and sense of responsibility existing between citizens and state,*
- ? *ideological struggle,*
- ? *a potential break with traditions.*

This picture of politics is sometimes conventional and partly in accordance with the textbooks of political science, but it is often conceived from a rhetorical distance. The 'definitions' of political activity are often less important than the figures through which the activity is described. A characteristic point of these models of politics is the use of metonymies such as 'the activity of elderly people...or party politicians'. The manner in which these analogies are contextualised shows the opposition between the young generation and the established politics.

The slogan which has been used in the Finnish schools for decades is the quasi-Aristotelian formulation of politics as 'management of common affairs'. This formula is still some-

times found in the essays, but against it the writers' dominant linguistic horizon stresses the conflictive nature of politics. Even the established political arena has its potentialities, conflicts and interactions, talents and dimensions of play. The political arenas are capable of articulating the ideological struggles and debates on social values. Politics has a special place among the various human activities and even if the political games have their dirty sides, it seems feasible to make clever use of its diverse playing situations.

“Senile persons active in institutionalised politics.”

The contributions also contain irony, cynical variations and emotionally evaluated dichotomies. It is particularly tempting to turn the school genre of essays against all authorities, such as teachers, adults, policemen and other guardians of norms. Naturally, this genre is at its best in jokes involving situational sarcasm and humour. On the political horizon the young people see a distinct opponent, described in its most pointed form as '...our guiding light which reveals to us the evils lurking in the shadows of social establishments'. Politicians and other 'senile persons' are told in a straightforward language what the young people think of them. As part of the establishment and a potential part of the authoritative audience of these school essays, I (as a researcher studying these texts) am standing in the rhetorical front line, too:

“The potbellied men dressed in vests resolve all essential arrangements and solutions at the Golgotha in the centre of Helsinki. They are uninterested in the young generation's interests or any other matters of the various minorities among the taxpayers... And then those politicians, researchers in the media and other senile people ask us, 'Why aren't young people interested in politics?'.” (A 17-year-old girl)

Reading these essays against the background of the conceptual history of politics (cf. Palonen's Introduction 1993), one is surprised to discover historically opposed lines of thought in them, too. When stressing the exclusion of youth from the arena of middle aged men appearing on TV, or from the shut up class of politicians, a conventional view of politics as a definite sphere or system, as a polity, is still clearly visible. But, at the same time, the figures around this view indicate a critical distance: young people refuse to be inte-

grated into this sphere. Hardly anyone in my material looks forward to becoming a politician of the type appearing on TV today.

Only a few of the writers are able or willing to separate the 'political' as a special phenomenon. The common premises often remain dependent on other playing-fields of life (intermingling career, sport, courting and sexuality, work etc.). In this sense the aspectual view of politics, where it is conceived of as a set of operations and activities independent of the field where it takes place, is closer to the young people's conceptual horizon, and it is from this viewpoint that many of them are able to re-interpret the politicians' activities in a sarcastic manner and by parodying them.

Breaking with institutions and collectives

The old political dividing lines have lost their meaning in the minds of the young people. The politicians of opposite parties are 'all of the same sort'; 'the old-fogey's' collective'; 'they represent guardianship and lack of democracy'; etc. The great conflicts, utopias and narratives have been institutionalised and exhausted.

This corresponds in part with the generational changes in the political agenda of the eighties. The positive utopias (nationalism, socialism, peace) have been exhausted and the negative utopias have taken their place. Young writers reflect upon such themes as the eschatologies of ecology and nuclear war; the consumption ideology is also frequently criticised:

"You have to open your mind globally and take a glance into your own refrigerator. You can see the contradictions of production and consumption, the embryos of war."
(An 18-year-old girl)

In the face of this kind of rhetoric of necessities, young people no longer see political parties as decisive subjects in society. The imperative rhetoric of the politicians - 'something needs to be done—because of the international situation calls for immediate action' - is often parodied in the essays. Alternative forms of action are perceived rather in what Ulrich Beck (1986) calls 'sub-political' activities.

II. THE 'PHILOSOPHY' AND METHODS INVOLVED

How to conduct an interview and read the transcribed texts

Indeed, it is hard to say anything precise about the relations of present-day young people to politics without letting them voice their own views. Here we have the hermeneutical objective of the EUYOUNGPART-Project. But if they lack interest in politics, how would they even speak about it? Of course, it would be possible to critically analyse publications written and read by young people, trying to detect 'between the lines' what is said about politics, even when it is not explicitly discussed. The crucial point here is the fact that **we have to turn around the conventional research setting**: we are not analysing young people's political concepts and participation in conventional or institutional political terms. On the contrary, we are analysing 'political' participation and institutions through the terms and discourse of young people's own culture!

My approach to the text corpus here reporting on interviews with young people in the EUYOUNGPART-Project is hermeneutic in the broad sense of the word, involving a dialogue with the young people interviewed. I will try to avoid treating the answers as symptoms of some 'global societal changes', etc. Above all, I do not claim to 'know' what is meant by politics. On the contrary, I stress the plurality of the meanings attached to the concept both within academic discourse and in ordinary language. Readings of written interviews give us, as researchers, first-hand information and a better insight into the world of youth politics. We will learn something concrete about European civil society to be used in the key words and questionnaire in the EUYOUNGPART-Project.

In terms of the methodology of this analysis and the hermeneutical rules of thumb I am following, I am relying on traditional critical analyses of historical sources or references and classification of the texts or its fragments and rhetorical and argumentative analyses of these young people's meanings in their writings and documents. The central theme of this research – the writers' political identities and participation – procedurally leads to doing primarily a textual analysis of the research material; to analyse the meanings of the descriptions given in the texts in a way that is relevant to the political participation and

EUYOUPART-Projects main objective to produce and realise the survey research in eight countries.

Writing about political participation and participatory roles and landscapes here means the problematisation of experiences of specifically political situations. This is supplemented with (historical) source critique and with material in the form of various documents and interviews gathered to clarify factors about the groups of writers, their frames of reference and their horizons of expectation. I have gathered some information about interviewed persons and I have known beforehand about informant's experiences in education, work and social life.

In addition to the concept of political participation, the relevant aspects and argumentative structures of the text corpus are the thematic topics and their way of living in different meaning contexts; the thematisation and contextualisation of interviewed subject; the use of terms such as politics, politicking and politicisation, democracy, 'belonging'-family, political media, Europe as a political arena and identity; the legitimisation of arguments among interviewed persons and group; the (in)formal forums and audiences of speeches¹; "who's one of us" or "who's our enemy" repertoires; the construction of conflicts; relations between ecological and social spaces/spatialities/regions/boundaries; the size of the space; distances, centre-periphery relations, styles, metaphors, ethos, pathos and logos. (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971, Gadamer 1986, Palonen 1993, Burke 1969 and Hodge-Kress 1988). How are the young people writing themselves into the culture and its political language games and political participation?²

Metaphors and styles

The nature of the modalities and the choices of 'narrative I' in the dialog, preconceptions and "preliminary contracts" between the conversation partners (researcher and interviewed

¹ Even though the researcher is sitting there at the situation of interview, it is easy to see how some people are talking to their teachers, adults, political fellow-travelers, or even some the religious father figure. The authoritarian audience is a relevant part of interpretation to be aware of.

² This interpretation is presented particularly in the following basic texts: Hodge-Kress 1988, Fairclough 1992, Palonen 1993, and regarding hermeneutics Gadamer 1986 and Wachterhauser 1986; cf. Paakkunainen 1991.

persons and their interrelationship), factuality, ethos, pathos and logos (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971, 67-75 and 158-160) as well as the oppositions, definitions and bases for “other,” metaphors of participatory identities which the “speakers” in the interviews and trans-scripted texts insure the rightness and desirability of their goals arise at the centre.

Broadly understood word pictures (Burke 1988; Ricouer 1978, 47-55) and with them reflexive stylistic choices (Paakkunainen 1991, 50-) are included in the analysis and in pointing out the articles attached here I have tried to succinctly describe the way in which these young people carve out political landscapes for themselves (Paakkunainen 1995B, 70-105; cf. also Levinson 1983, Hodge-Kress 1988, 37-78, Grice 1981, 20-). In the description of metaphors (word pictures) I lean on the four “master tropes” outlined by Burke (1969, 503-07; for concrete example of interpretation see Palonen 1997, 14-16). The dialectical or ironic trope is polysemic and often sarcastically entertaining, where the writer himself also joins into the self-ironical and politically reflective game and questions his own role, she/he is not alone in the situation of political participation.

The perspective or metaphor generally signifies a point of view where the world lacks symmetry; thus the characterisations of “that being like this” or “this being like that” describe phenomena with the vocabulary of another field or territory. Reduction or metonymy returns the concept, relationship or thing to something simpler. It has as its strategy to “express some phenomenon or space which is immaterial, invisible and difficult to conceptualise by making it material, visible and conceptual” (Burke 1969, 505). Identification and synecdoche (representation) attaches some substance and part of something in a synonymous way. Aristotle too emphasised that to be sensitive to metaphors one must have “an eye for similarities.” Synecdoche displays – shallowly but affectively – a representative detail or example.

As to style, I rely on my theory of the four-part field of political speech (Paakkunainen 1991, 121-140; summarised in English in Paakkunainen 1993; for a point of comparison in artistic literature see Hernadi 1972).³ The “pejorative” involves an aggressively negative variation

³ This distinctly Finnish projection of political literary styles is based on two basic dimensions: (1) a proximal vs. a non-proximal relationship with the audience, and (2) an emotionally negative vs. a

on the political relationship, when the cursing and emotional aspects of language are at the surface, always relying on powerful words and the world of excrement to make an impression. The “cynical” heckling disappointment can turn to the negative humour of hating authority, always presenting a sarcastic circus, theatre and game through irony and taunting. Speech involving “critical” distance in values and concepts in many senses progresses beyond sarcasm reflexively, in terms of world view and investigating to the point of practical participation. The “constructive” genre refers to political “passionlessness” or satisfaction, which can lead to the realisation of pluralistic values and to analytical “on the one hand / on the other” commentary, or in a round about way to a position in journalism or even an outside position.

The concept of political space in this study is thus a rather more abstract conceptual unit than concrete spatial concepts. Such concrete concepts can be considered for example as dimensions⁴ of the political belonging and space in which political aspects can be problematised in the study: “space,” nation state, communalities, “locality”, belonging identity, level of participation, “place,” “site,” “area,” “surface,” “territory,” “locus,” “position,” “environment,” “milieu”. The primary focus of this study, however, will be on levels more relevant to politics and the use of power. Thus the young people’s texts and speech are to contextualised in explicated political divisions as well as through “we” based and conflict articulating identities, described in terms of international political allegiances and oppositions, new areas and more ideological power relations (global identities, European Union, a’la relations of location according to the classic centre vs. periphery dimension). Often this is not enough;⁵ we need more political types of space relations⁶.

argumentative analytical relationship with politics. The “pejorative style” is built on emotionally negative politics and a proximal relationship. “Cynical” also means a more negative emotional position, but with its audience nearly universal (approaching the non-proximal). The “critical” uses a non-proximal style to present factual argumentation concerning the issues. The “constructive” genre remains factual about things, but compared with the “critical” it stays in close proximity to the audience.

⁴ Strassoldo 1993, 5-8; and regarding the translation see esp. Eräsaari 1995, s.92-93.

⁵ cf. esp. Ulrich Beck’s idea of the *Entörtlichung* of politics: 1986, 314.

⁶ These are in particular the following: (1) Unified space means, e.g., objective and undisputed definitions of space where we can find, e.g., common and united external tasks. Young scouts, with their unquestioning way of relating to the rules and functions of their organization and fatherland, can be taken a paradigm here. (2) Supreme power space is the sort where the role of the supreme authority is better recognized than in the previous. The relationship with this power can be more relative and fragile than the structure of a conquered area. The shared identity of Polish Catholic young people is an example of this sort of political space. (3) Divided space is where the different sides have (according to the *cuius regio eius religio* paradigm) been

III. THE TEXT CORPUS AND PARTICIPANTS

The purpose and aims of qualitative work in the dialectics of the EUYOUPART-Project

This kind of diversified and balanced material will provide the most adequate data for the requirements of the EUYOUPART-project, where the cultural, analytical and concrete 'key-word'—specific learning between qualitative and quantitative data is central to this work package. The project needs maximum dialectics and reflection between young people's 'Lebenswelt' (civil society) and the institutional/standard political system (and its terminology) in Europe.

The textual data has to be stimulating, discursive and multi-faceted documentation addressing and challenging the quantitative data. We could speak about the triangulation of empirical materials strengthening the interpretation of objects of study and the reliability of analyses. The results of the qualitative analysis will therefore feed into the development of the quantitative survey. The advantage for the survey project and the European indicators is manifold: the understanding of different cultural contexts/youth terms in the construction of the survey questions, interpretation of each concrete question and the whole data set/indicators. It is a realistic goal to achieve 240 young informants (thirteen in every country) in this way (see EUYOUPART: Summary guidelines in qualitative work WP6, 2003).

In the Technical appendix of EUYOUPART we stress the same objectives for the research project: "Qualitative research should lead to a better understanding of cultural differences in the meaning of key concepts related to political participation, European Identity and EU enlargement. Based on qualitative research, the theoretical foundations and the experi-

given their own, sometimes unbalanced, areas of (supreme) influence. A practical example of this is way in which Estonia's Russian speaking and ethnic Estonian youth cultures function as a division of "areas of advantage." (4) Neutralized space means that the area and milieu is excluded from (the current stage of) the game, struggle or supreme control. This is the point of many young people's "diplomatic" concept of the protection of the Baltic Sea environment. (5) Disputed space develops immediately when one side chooses to politicize an area: for example when young people take part in a Greenpeace action against neutral rights to technically and economically use the Baltic Sea. (6) Diffused space can take concrete form, for example, as a "grey zone" or through an area non-actual in the enemy-relations. Alternative movements' ways of relating to the outcast, marginal, "spent" or "social" operate according to this paradigm.

ences of prior research, an international questionnaire is to be prepared and pre-tested. Surveys about political participation and related attitudes are conducted in all participating countries. This enables the analysis of cultural differences between regions in Europe.”

Figure 1: RESEARCH STRATEGY: REFLECTION AND LEARNING BETWEEN MAIN SURVEY AND TEXT CORPUS BASED ON INTERVIEWS

Interviews of individual persons (biographies) and focus groups	LEARNING VIA TRIANGULATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA	Survey data based on Gallup interviews (basic empirical material)
QUALITATIVE DATA	*****	QUANTITATIVE DATA
“Lebenswelt”: everyday life and discourse on politics among various youth groups”	TERMINOLOGICAL, CONCEPTUAL AND CULTURAL REFLECTION	“Conventional and scientific standards and measurable categories of participation in Europe”

At the same time focus groups could be pre-testing audiences and commentators with the project questionnaire developed in a preliminary form. It will be fascinating to get the basic feelings and arguments from young people – where they belong to, why or why not they are engaged in conventional political life, what their ‘narrative self’ and story of participation is? The personal data (individual biographies) and collective interviews (focus group) complement each other. The political group dynamics of focus groups produce a dialectic of themes and data.

The individual interviews could emerge as deeper personal ‘I’ and ‘her/his’ reflections/ narratives of political socialisation. The personal biography method emerges through the construction of ‘scarlet threads’, identity work and bridges of meaning for today’s youth. The focus group is a popular approach to get data from young people’s discursive roles, commu-

nality and collective roles, contradictions and rhetorical political conventions. Thematic interviews imply an idea that there is a 'clean slate' at the beginning of the interview and young people are filling up this slate with their 'own logic', meanings and arguments. This is the point where the learning process of researchers begins.

Thematic interview means for EUYOUNGPART the fact that researchers/moderators have beforehand some general themes or sub-themes and during the interview she/he makes sure they are all covered (see EUYOUNGPART: Summary guidelines in qualitative work WP6, 2003). But the breadth and running order of the themes may vary. The topic guide below represents a skeleton list of supportive issues/themes to be actualised in the dialogue, not a set of strict questions. First-hand, the interviews must be recorded on tape for which we need the permission of the interviewees. The whole dialogical act can only function on the principal of confidentiality.

A general definition of our strategy of analysis for thematic interviews is that a qualitative and soft way to collect empirical material (text corpus), perspectives of the analysed young people, qualitative-inductive analyses of collected data, action without clear hypotheses, the reporting of results as a learning process and a narrative structure with several meanings in the report. The research process and its stages are a uniform and consistent unit. The basic premises of the fieldwork lie in the aim to catch the perspectives of the objects of the research and their own realities ('fieldwork naturalism', vision of 'emic' in anthropology). The researcher has to try to recognise her/his presuppositions and "leave them aside". The correct and 'scientific' logic of research is based on this recognition of subjective/biographical presuppositions (cf. 'Vorurteile' in the Gadamerian tradition).

The role of the interviewer/moderator is active and in many ways participatory. In the dialogue process she/he tries to act in the open and free space of conversation, learn from the interviewed persons and find new hypothesis/answers to the research questions, deepening the focus of the thematic structures.

In the above mentioned Summary guidelines and their larger background paper (p. 7-13; Discussed in Milan Meeting, autumn 2003: BACKGROUND PAPER: EUYOUNGPART. Guidelines for Qualitative Research (WP6)) the fieldwork conditions and discursive and interpretative strategies for individual interviews and thematic groups interviews where

written in a well-reflected and correct way. Those guidelines were part of the disciplines' best practices.

Data Collection (A and B): the ideal sample (composition of focus groups and individual interviews) according to the guidelines of EUYOUNG PART

In Milan we (EUYOUNG PART) agreed on the following vision and 'norms' for sample collection, a national group of informants, concerning focus groups (A) and individual (B) interviews. At the end of the chapter (C) you will see the real situation in Finland and its arguments.

(A) Focus Groups:

Groups 1- 4; Age: 18-25 years for all groups

	Female	Male
Low level of education	1 (non-active)	1 (non-active)
High level of education	1 (non-active)	1 (non-active)

(extra/optional): Group 5: age 15-25, female and male, participants in "new politics" (e.g., anti-war protests)

- 1) 18-25 year old, males, high level of education
- 2) 18-25 year old, males, low level of education
- 3) 18-25 year old, females, high level of education
- 4) 18-25 year old, females, low level of education
- 5) 15-25 years old participants active in 'new politics'/unconventional forms of participation

A group should not be a collection of people working together in the same organisation/ for the same cause – we are trying to encourage diversity of discourse (no “real” groups – preferably participants who do not know each other). The first four focus groups should be comprised of “non-activists”: This means we do not want young people in these groups who are regularly or for a long period of time actively involved in politics (it does not matter whether is “conventional” or “unconventional” participation) e.g. not people who describe themselves as “politically active”. In sum, the first 4 groups may contain people who vote or even have participated in a demonstration, but not who regularly go to demonstrations/ meetings, write or are politically organised etc.2.

(B) In-depth Interviews (“biographies of participation”)

For the composition of the individual interviews, we could use the following suggestions (contributed by partner Ladislav). The purpose is to talk to a variety of active young people who perhaps represent several types of activists. These ideas for the individual interviews should provide a ‘guide’ (not strict sampling rules).

- 1) Young person active in conventional party politics
- 2) Young person active in unconventional (‘new’) politics
- 3) Young person active on school’s council
- 4) Young person active in community group
- 5) Free interview young participant for each country to observe particularities in a country (e.g. Roma interview in Slovakia)

IMPORTANT: Make sure that you balance interviews with women and men (e.g. 3 interviews with female activists, 2 with male activists).

Data Collection (C): the real sample of informants (composition of focus groups and individual interviews) in Finland

All of the Finnish interviews were realised by myself. I recruited persons into the groups by various and hard and extremely tailored means and contacts difficult to describe here. I took hundreds of email-contacts and calls to my colleagues and friends and, especially, to

the institutions, working places and schools. I motivated persons joining the interview situation or groups, e.g., by promising interesting and progressive discussions and courting them by saying that “You will get coffee and cake plus some youth research books”. They were tape-recorded and these tapes were then transcribed verbatim under my comments and guidance. The process took two and half month between 20 December 2003 and 10 March 2004. The duration of the interviews varied from 70 to 95 minutes. Most of the interviews were quite inspiring, and I needed ‘overtime’ for them.

The realised interviews are listed and briefly commented on in the following text, where I’m saying something about my personal learning process relevant in thematic interviews. After the presentation of persons and groups involved there will be comments and reflections on basic (un)successful experiences, dialogs (style, argumentation, openness, dynamics) and feelings in the groups, and a comparison of the groups. The interpretation of the discursive roles of the participants (how to discuss on political participation with a researcher?) is a key part of this report.

Personal and group tailored facts and comments...

- 1) *18-25-year-old males, high level of education (four members interviewed and recorded by myself at the Department of Political Science).*

The group is composed of students and working people around Helsinki District, some of whom had just moved from the Northern part of Finland, articulating messages from the “periphery”. *Antti* is a 23-year-old single student from Espoo, studying mainly theology and history; somewhat active in floor-ball, Scouting (as a younger boy) and village council activities (Espoo is an urban area with fragmented suburbs and villages). *Jani* is a 23-year-old single student originally from Tornio (in northern Finland, on the Swedish border). He has studied biochemistry for five years at the University of Helsinki and working as a researcher at the University Hospital in Helsinki. He has completed the civilian service alternative to military service, (not a very popular choice in Finland) and is active in the Academic Nation (or fraternity) of for students from his home region. *Tuukka* is a 23-year-old young man from Lapinlahti (100 km from Helsinki) having life-partner (not married), just now actively studying economics at the University of Helsinki. He has been an active member in the stu-

dent leisure and hobby organisation for his discipline in the University (KTTO) and he has been a “not-so-active” member of Amnesty International. *Joonas* is a young (19-old-year) single student of economics, active in the student leisure and hobby organisation in his discipline (KTTO). He has “visited” at the student organisation of the Finnish Social Democrats functioning at the University of Helsinki (OSY). The whole discussion was enthusiastic and even if the discussants didn’t take a hard or contradictory premises towards the others they learned to speak together on politics quite a sensitive way. There was also an element of critical, ironic and ambivalently humorous rhetorical ethos and pathos present. A study problem here is the fact that most of the participants are in a well-educated way aware of social and political problems: are they too smart for this interview?

2) *18-25-year-old males, low level of education (four members interviewed and recorded by myself at a jail, a chief social worker and teacher of these young men where present in a passive way during the interview).*

Far less-educated, somewhat marginalised young male prisoners, from fragmented home and living contexts (mixed regions), which have recently arrived at the new “high-tech” Prison of Vantaa – a jail for those still awaiting trial. These young men are not close or steady group even though they are classmates in trying to pass their Finnish grammar school (O-level) examinations (compulsory only for people under 16). They need to have a certain sort of self-discipline for this education, “*so they have hope!*” *Niko*, mainly from Lohja (100 km from Helsinki), is 17 years old, and has “hobby histories only relating to crime”. That means that he has no clear adult authorities, social community or safe peer group identities in his background. *Karri* is a 19-year-old young man from Helsinki with the history of “...no hustle and no hobbies”. *Karim* is 20 years old and he is from Brazil; and it is a “natural fact” for him to be interested in football. *Markus* (19 years) has been basketball player and without school education he was competent to repair the European cars. *Dimitri* (17 years), a jolly Roma boy, cannot mention any special interest or activity in his biographical view. For all participants the prison situation was not an accident; loneliness and fragmented life-stories are present in the context-bound, extremely masculine ‘situation-ironical’ but fragmented and hectic speaking culture. It is easy to say that their political participation acts (there where some) have these same attributes.

3) *18-25 year old, females, high level of education (four members interviewed and recorded by myself at the department of political science)*

The group is composed of sophisticated young women with nice academic careers. *Marita* (22 years) is living together with her partner in Helsinki and she is studying Finnish language at the University; and she has no special free time activities. *Pauliina* (26 years) is studying pedagogy, living together with her partner in Helsinki and interested in photography. *Nanna* (26 years) has a life partner and she is living in capital area. She is working in well-developed and traditional library; in her free-time she documents various kinds of sources representing everyday life and histories. *Hanna* (26 years) also has a life partner and lives in Helsinki. She had recently worked as a researcher in the faculty of social sciences (University of Helsinki) analysing questions of equality between genders and female cultures. This sophisticated group was full of surprising turns: hot debate and different and contradictory standpoints - but not dogmatic and collective tensions. *Young well-educated women* were speaking about the difficulties of how to be present in political arena, take or not take part in action! E.g. nice aspects in discussion on gender roles arose, even if all the participants were women.

4) *18-25 year old, females, low level of education (six members interviewed and recorded by myself at a Pizzeria in Kajaani - a "periphery" town 600 kilometres to the north from Helsinki)*

This active and articulate group of young women (19-25 years old) was composed of adult secondary school students or middle school educated persons. Almost all of them have had experiences of the unemployment, which is crucial fact of life in the Kainuu region. Three of them, *Annikki*, *Leena* and *Viola*, are not interested in any steady or clear organisation or hobby in their free-time, but their circle of friends is relevant part of their everyday life. *Maarit* (25 year) has a clear interest to political participation; she is aware of the present discussion on methods in youth policy and education; and she has visited in the forums of the Leftist Union (a party to the left of social democrats in Finland). *Eila* (22) has a background in youth pedagogy and she is interested in the disciplinary development of practical youth work. *Irmeli* (20) has an interest in many ways social and ideological problems but she has been a formal member only in Amnesty International. At the beginning

only one participant was really active, but during the discussion (over the pizza slices I bought for them) they “warmed up” or “became tired” and began “to sing for me”. Many realistic but not so often questioned modern feelings of individualism in the socially poor periphery arose.

Five In-depth Interviews (1-5) – “participatory biographies” bridging the personal meaning structures in the life stories of participation - I don’t use the basic standards for informants (presented by Ladislav in EUYOUPART-documents), because of the historical and political culture in Finland requires a somewhat different sort of selection.

- 1) *Sasa* (interview at his home by myself) is a married man with no children of his own, living in Uusimaa. He is a manual labourer and because of his modern anarchist orientation it is not possible to tell more facts concerning him. I learned several current political facts and orientations concerning the global anarchistic movement during this dialog; I have also used this interview for another project. But it is difficult to be neutral or a ‘back-stage’ outsider in illegal or ‘radical’ movements, as researchers in the field call them.
- 2) *Riitta* (interviewed at the department of political science, by myself) is an active ‘speaker’ of the new-right in Southern Finland; she is a 24-year-old single woman from Uusimaa. She is interested in social sciences but just now she is studying in a Polytechnic (Information technology) and is very active in the Coalition Party (the basic right party in Finland), e.g. she is a member of the town council in her home district. Her special interest is in sport. She is quite talented in dialog but at times she drifted into the very ‘*law-and-order*’ rhetoric that researchers are analysing among young people in Europe. She was willing to speak, I was willing to listen.
- 3) *Tutta* (interviewed at the department of political science, by myself) is 23-year-old single-living scouting activist. She lives in capital district and works as an export co-ordinator (in a famous Finnish export company) and at present studies in a business polytechnic are stimulating this fascinating career. Even though Finnish Scouting is the purpose of her life, she has time for cooking hobbies as well. A nice contact explicated scout-roles a little bit in same manner like the case next before, *Riitta*. Our common in-

terest was based on the fact that I wanted to know why Scouting is the most successful youth organisation in Finland – and I heard about it!

- 4) *Anton* (interviewed at the department of political science, by myself) is young (25-year-old) single-living sympathetic guy and student of theology from Northern Finland. He is a real organisational activist, having experiences in several directions: youth work in the Lutheran Church, modern networking and informal youth work, the Finnish Scouts, student organisations, theological and special-interest associations and trade unions. After a long discussion he mentioned being a member of the Greenpeace organisation; he is a member without party political commitments in the University of Helsinki Student Union governing council. Even if the discussion was somewhat long-winded, I learned in “a long-winded” way to understand present-day Christian-social orientation and ethically sensitive participation, where existential commitment runs deep. At the end, after I have told some of my own political preferences, my friend told about his concrete feelings towards party politics and membership in Greenpeace.

- 5) *Markku* (interviewed and recorded by myself at his home in Mikkeli (St. Michael), a mid-sized town in central Finland, 250 kilometres north of Helsinki) is in several ways a cultivated young politician (25-year-old). He is single and trained as a nurse (in a polytechnic unit specialised in health care). *Markku* is always finding an association or organisation for his life-situations; just now he is active in a public health oriented interest organisation and trade union. He has a strong story and engagement in different levels of social democratic movements in his home district and in the background there is his likewise socially active family and long-time Christian-social activities, common social values and engagement in the labour movement and the Lutheran Church. *Markku* is a member in the town council in his home district and his aim of life is some day to be a Finnish parliamentarian. This aim is highly believable because of his politically “fresh” and sophisticated rhetoric. *Markku* is a living example of politically talented tradition, which present itself in terms of some hints that he might be an editor or researcher.

...General comments!

The realised interviews don't correspond to all of the guidelines agreed to in Milan. It was hard to get purely working class people into the interviews because so many young persons in Finland are at least half-way educated. Distinctively over half of persons interviewed were outside of the mainstream system of education – working, unemployed or in prison. The marginalised were well represented in the sample of informants. The regional and gender background in many ways corresponded to the common obligations of EUYOUNGPART. Although several interviews were organised in my department, this academic milieu was fascinating and neutral: the experience of visiting in the university building itself was interesting and/or fascinating for many. And many of the persons interviewed commented afterwards the facts that they “...*have rarely had this kind of fascinating opportunity for political discussion and self-identity projecting ...*” The individual interviews were also reflective dialogs even though our project ideal was to get the interviewed person tell her/his story openly and freely.

Here my concrete learning process in the dialog (cf. the Background paper of project's guidelines, where there is long and concrete list of basic themes and sub-themes constructing the picture of participatory landscape) was part of together learning *how to express and conceptualise the participation*. The thematic groups consisted of active and fascinating informants, even though our compromise agreement after EUYOUNGPART's Milan meeting was to construct thematic groups of people who were (somewhat) passive in politics. It was even possible to get the guys in Prison respond to the researcher's tailored and strongly contextualised questions, jokes and themes.

Some accidents in the informant selection process were also stimulating: during the discussion of so called politically passive groups some pleasantly articulate active persons rose surprisingly up, e.g. women's rights activists, social-ethics promoters, members of Greenpeace and Amnesty International and participants in peace demonstrations. I didn't need any special group to inform me about new social movements and “new politics” (e.g. the peace movement) because of these “accidents” and “new” individuals and situation bound themes reflected in each group and interview. Ambivalent and complex orientations towards the conventional culture of participation were seen almost everywhere other than in the clear social democratic, conservative and scouting orientations.

The rhetorical styles (see above the methodological notes) and narrative minds varied from person to person. E.g. a conventionally oriented person who believed in universal expression and common political communication, trusted me, but when I wasn't always 'so inspired or present' in the discussion, she asked me, "do You understand me?" But, maybe, it is okay to have some kind of asymmetry or breaking points in the discussion. The problems in understanding between young people and myself (a middle aged researcher) were not that noteworthy. Political discourse always has 'translation problems' or asymmetry at the level of language horizons and meaning practices. In the prison, when I used terms like 'class' and 'theory', I got some amazed and stupefied glances. These dialogs contained no tall tales or naive lies, as near as I can tell at least! Almost all participants were able to understand what 'the game' means in political language and even when they spoke of the need for honesty in politics they were aware of that interpersonal realities are not always so fair and symmetrical.

Language practices of young women – as supposed in theoretical discussion – were more sensitive, diverse and experimental. The boys' arguments were more rational, realistic and simple in their humour. But it was easy to hear the roles mixing. Some of the most talented and sophisticated speakers were young men; they were aware of the equality problems and ambivalent equality situations and they have read a lot of female texts. The groups of well-educated young people were those which most tried to identify with the researcher. Some of participants knew me as a lecturer in political science; and during the research process I have to notice this relation of acquaintance.

The active participants were skilful personalities in terms of persuasive and self-reflecting acts in conversation. They tried to establish more political game space and (rhetorical) common contacts between the discussants and the interviewer. All sorts of rhetorical repertoires were present: some used references to the political science texts; some used ironic means of intelligently contextualising (paradigmatic example here: "You find those sorts of dogmatic/ legalistic/anarchistic but marginal groups in the Finnish history.") Some of the participants' discourse was straight from their context (especially among the young women from Kajaani and the young men from the Prison of Vantaa; I had to declare many facts of their contexts before and after the interviews, and the whole time avoid using abstract and theoretical terms).

Some committed persons were competent to use physical and discursive tricks like laughing, continuing their own ideological and strong style (a scout and a social democrat), telling jokes or narrating serious and dramatic (previously unknown) experiences, talking over the top of each other, attacking and initiative-taking discursive strategies, imaginative and diverse narrative minds. Many of the persons interviewed told just at the end of the debate or story their most political engagement, they “warmed up”, “became tired” or encouraged themselves during the discussion.

IV. WHERE DO YOU BELONG? WHAT IS YOUR IDENTITY?

Antti and Tutta's participatory traditions

After several readings of the interview transcript texts, one comes to the conclusion that of all the 'individual story-tellers', the young activists have the most stable political identity, sense of political belonging and sense of direction for society. To be politically active by some collective way means also to have stable and reliable belonging relations. And here the tradition as a kind of cultural heritage and conversational capital which they pick up at home is distinctively important.

Although political values, party sympathies and even memberships are inherited in some cases, most often it is not possible to speak about a 'direct-line' of descent from one generation to another. The children who come from politically or ideologically active families often change the political culture or party which they were socialised into at home. Each of the activists present in text corpus indicates in several ways that the positive role of their family, and after that of their closest peers and bonds of friendship, are relevant channels and supportive structures for being politically active...but the main stimulus surprisingly often comes from home. The family no longer has an authoritarian or fatalistic element, but the constructive role of family is alive and well among the activists.

Antti has slowly developed his participatory mentality and become politically active starting with social ties in his Lutheran parish, supported by his own family, moving on to working with some safe adults and then up to the student politics and Greenpeace. Those who first took him into the social youth work in church where relevant links to later innovations when *Antti* was studying social research themes at the polytechnic. Social belonging here is the beginning and the end – the means and the aim – at the same time. *"Social motivation came before religious ones."* (*Antti*)

The church's social work gently insists on socially (read here: politically) reflecting on global and local inequalities. *Antti* agreed with the idea that this is the church's political way to be

alive. Many of his present activities are dealing with inspiring initiatives trying to change the older generation's conservative attitudes in the church. *Antti* emphasises the fact that social activities and competencies are essential resource in the modern fragmented and mutant-faced world. And the social character of church's role is subject to intense 'political' debate throughout the world.

Tutta, an active scout from traditional family which taught their children a responsive and individual life-style, praised her bonds of friendship: *"Some of my friends where in the scouts...and took me and my sister with them. But most of my chums have come into the Finnish Scouts through my alluring..."*. The roaming and camping interest in nature were inspired by her father, who has no male children. There has been a tradition-bound and social tie from her family's nature activities to their continuation in scouting activities. These same extreme nature experiences are an example of the pedagogical secret of the Scouts' success: they know how to enlighten and encourage independent but socially responsible personalities outside the school and family. This main pedagogical line of the Scouts may be the model for the whole society: *"whoever is not there may remain marginal..."* (*Tutta*).

Constructive Riitta and Markku – destructive Sasa

Conservative *Riitta*'s family background consisted of an army-officer father and a Christian-Democratic thinking mother (having previously lived in the country-side with heavy agrarian communality and traditional Centre-party values). In this traditional context, with manners and military bearing arising straight from the civil society, political activism in the modern Coalition party is not a self-evident natural outcome. As among scouts described above *"... life is a process of learning responsibility"*. *Riitta* stated the fact that without her friends and coming up through the ranks step by step in activities, organisations and councils, her *"mature and powerful role in the coalition party would not have been possible."*

Social Democrat *Markku* got his historical and social lectures at home; he is part of a multi-generational social-left tradition in Finland. The canonical text for this belief is the famous trilogy, *"Here under the North Star"* (written by Väinö Linna) telling of how the poor agrarian labourers worked hard, faced (civil) wars and life-crises, but mobilised themselves and after

their third or fourth generation achieved full rights of modern people at the sixties. The father brought together the church, the party and his own charismatic example for his son!

Markku's socially rich and collectivist thinking family model is a miniature of the family in Väinö Linna's book one hundred years ago. *Markku* was fifteen years old when he organised the youth club at his church for the first time. That same year he entered into the party and its youth organisation. The ethical obligation of family and historical experience has during the later years become hardened in rich social-organisational experiences, "...*the way I'm living, always finding a community or association for me and other people in our various life-situations*". Nowadays *Markku* is contending for the "*places of the number-one politicians*". Here the collective identity and belonging relations are developing through individual talent.

Sasa, an anarchist, recognises the basic context of his political awakening. His father and mother have been active in the Marxist-Leninist movement, which was exceptionally uniform and strong in Finland while the country was under the Soviet shadow. But *Sasa's* early participatory arousal (at 13 years old) came about when his parents were in a phase of political frustration. Here he got contradictory messages: on the one hand stimulus as political capital and on the other hand more cynical warnings like "*take it easy...don't in the name of wonder!*" But *Sasa* is not alone here. Many young green, 'red' and 'black' activists have parents who have been involved in the new or more orthodox old left. In the leaflets and magazines of these youth movements it is easy to recognise familiar surnames from the previous generation.

But the family context was not enough for *Sasa*, who has combined politically relevant factors and moments: "*accident*"; "*the inner power struggle between the pupils in the school where there was a conservative director, an easy enemy*"; "*a certain social and informative attitude among pretty extreme leftist and peace movements under the shadow of the atom bomb.*" And after that, just like in the classical books in political science, "*maybe, something...a feeling: our identity as young radicals.*" We have here family context, open space of politics (Fortuna, accident), contradiction, the 'social' giving hints from the 'political' and ready movements to live by.

Multi-faceted thematic groups – reflecting on and discussing politics

The thematic groups, not collectively engaged in politics, had no clearly describable relations of belonging and stories of growing up in collective identities in the ways typical among individual activists. To state it rather dogmatically, less-educated young people are seeking safer identities, and well-educated persons are reflecting, playing and mixing their unclear and hybrid identities. Political activists are not bound in their social contexts; they have chosen political identities which are somehow independent from social realities. The more passive people (thematic groups) have problems taking safe, clear or reflective distance from the social contexts, or sometimes those contexts are culturally and life-politically active subgroups trying to build a meaningful life for themselves. It is not a rule that conventionally active people are more powerful; not at all. Young people without stable identities have all the time built up their safe identities or reflected different world and identity bases. These latter young people are somehow, as Sartre existentially put it, “doomed to freedom.”

The *young women from Kajaani* are continuously seeking for safe and self-esteem building relationships, often stressed way. For some this is more important than family, and “*surprise, surprise,*” here again friends play a key role. “*It is extremely important point in life, that you have something to belong to...for which you have to do everything properly...and your best*”: *when I was young it was a riding stable, after that scouting, and just now it's field of work or some kind of ideology to do your best...*” Another girl added, “*You can have only one important interest at once.*” On the one hand there is the absoluteness and on the other there are the difficulties of latching onto something in the pluralistic world. But to be actively present in a politically influencing initiative or organisation is a totally different challenge.

“The intimate relations between friends are here; the membership in Amnesty International is there...It is more difficult.” “Political participation is distant from the everyday life of average young people,” ... “but if we have real big problems like war or someone is destroying our woods, we are ready for demonstrations.”

An essential part of this rhetoric is that it is coming from weak economic conditions, scanty social resources and limited opportunities for participation according to their own understanding. Most often these political place-seeking attitudes have a background in the young women's homes, where adults are not taking authoritarian roles and critically commenting on politics in the media... *"where those dirty players are."*

But among the girls in the group interviewed, there was an exception in *Maarit*, who came from a clearly leftist and "backwoods-communist" (a term from Finnish political history) home in Finnish Lapland. She had a message with a sense of belonging *"I have a big, big need to influence – to belong somewhere to, to represent this line... coming, I'm quite sure, from my leftist home and small village in Lapland. E.g. in my working place I always try to organise a united team or friendship group where we have this feeling of 'us' and the possibility to influence..."* This does not mean that Maarit is a member of a party or will endorse all the messages coming from the politicians on the left, but she does have a living identity representing a traditional line. The other young women don't eliminate or totally leave out political identities and activities for the common good; they have no clear scarlet thread in their participatory culture like Maarit has; they have to try it and reflect on it afresh every day. One part of their life is this post-modern contingency (freedom), and another part is speaking the insecure, scanty and cynical language rising up in the Finnish periphery. Hope is alive.

The boys in Vantaa Prison, on the other hand, have very little hope: they have no parents or secure contexts waiting in civil life. Freedom for them means an anarchy, an end of reflection. As an interviewer I tried for five or ten minutes to find some clear (safe) identities or meaningful relationships among young prisoners or their bridges to civil life. Some kind of *"positive murmuring"* I heard at the moments when I tried to speak about friendship, some television cultures or identity between people speaking same language. Then I asked about religion and its meaning – I got a quick answer: *"the civil registry [for the minority in Finland not officially registered as members of the Lutheran Church (10 -15%), KP] is rolling here."*

Traditional meanings are not at hand in these boys' hectic lives. There was just one young man, *Markus*, who told several times about his interest in cars: *"I'm quite sure that all my buddies are busy fixing up cars. I need more time around cars and fixing them up because"*

I'm trying to study this field. My friends have set up and installed sound systems for the other guys and strangers even...and those cars, they are...not just any machines; they have visited the fairs and shows." This nice long story builds a meaningful vision over the wall of the prison and leaves room for some relevant political comments.

Multiple identities of well-educated young people

Young well-educated women are living in radically different world. They have rich and reflective, even political, milieus and identities depending on variable discursive foci. They have a lot of feelings, experiences, "*maybe love*"... so much that they have resources to view and belong to different directions and levels in the world. Ideological, gender, regional and cultural identities are not absolute value-bases: they are part of 'identity politics'⁷. What's your field to be identified with? How are you reading/studying yourself? How are you representing You? What's your political space? Your activities, even your hobbies, are "facts" or relationships of values and valuing. Identifying activities are crucial but you cannot identify yourself only with a non-reflective tradition or in a too exclusive, serious and stabile way.

⁷ Though strong local and new regional identities can be an expression of the fragmentation of life and its significations, at the same time they are a precondition for "dialogical democracy," from the control of feelings and regional self-discipline to global dimensions. Also time-space practices liberated from traditional *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* contain their own cultural and regional identity. The building of self-awareness and self-expression are in fact struggles for identity, of which the use of power is a routine feature. Young people's cultural and regional identities, through which young people become the potential subjects of politics, can be seen as the possibility for *identity politics*, the relevant moments of which are attached to life politics (cf. Beck's 'sub'-politics, Beck-Giddens-Lash 1995). *The cultural and regional self-understanding and reflection of young people, their political citizenship, may be taken as the permeating theme and object of the research project trying to say something about political participation.*

According to Pekonen's (1991, 18-19; Jukarainen 1996, 23-) politico-logical interpretation, culture and identity, our way of perceiving and understanding the world, are also built in two ways. It becomes apparent that the symbolic structures of culture chosen by the society, in which meanings, values and preferences are imbedded, affect people's ways of experiencing and thinking about the world. Thus we can speak of people's ways of approving knowledge as legitimate. In a way Pekonen (1993, 52-54), in the spirit of Bourdieu (1977, 170), asserts that a binding rhetorical definition successfully put forward by some event or (un)official community represents authoritative language; thus the speech is directly legitimised. On the other hand tradition and symbolic structures must continuously be the objects of currently functioning renewing, repeating signification. The representations of relations between things and people which happen through language not only imitate or reflect reality; they also form practices by which things are given changeable (counter)meanings. Linguistic representation is a creative event, where the attempt to influence surrounds the factual reality. The speaker's project is to re-create an already existing community or thing so that it becomes compatible with internal personal experience. Ricoeur also speaks of the same Freudian aspect of language, when "presenting" or "making present" is an expression of sublimation, where the regressive (archaeological past) and the progressive (teleological future) meet in a semi-dialectical way (Pekonen 1994; from primary sources of Ricoeur 1970, 456-58 and Häggglund 1991, 54-). The dynamic of changing significations can be labelled as identity politics.

For example some women in the group felt a bit averse towards active feminist, but they began in a pleasant and highly theoretical way, saying how “...*first I identified myself as a feminist and as part of the Finnish women’s movement. But this was only the first association. When I was visiting foreign countries, I identified myself as a Finn, and when I’m living here [in Helsinki, KP] I identify myself as a northerner [having been born in northern Finland, KP] (Hanna). Janna agreed to the point that living in London, for example, would mean the Finnish aspect of her personality would be “total.”* She continues, “*here the identity is sharper, it has something to do with my home town in North or being from Bothnia [a province in western-central Finland]...but my first association is dealing with politics: I have a feeling of belonging to the Greens or to the green movement”.*”

But it is possible for young women to report loose identities. Some say the fact that they are young or part of student life reduces strong formal memberships. Not all the young women agreed on the regional dimension either. Their relatives were present in the discussion, but by modern way. One had “*an interest in genealogical research which is a way ‘a granny’s hobby’. I have visited the National Archive and somehow I tried to declare how great a distance there is behind me and my home town. Maybe, this is a part of my identity as a Bothnian? But this business has only concrete meaning for me: in some mental and symbolic way emphasising the belonging to a place.*” (Janna) To reflect on family histories, e.g. the effects of strong religious movements, is a way for these young to understand where they come from, not a direct means of identification.

The *educated young men* also contemplated regional identity and they added some remarkable arguments to the debate: “*common solidarity is missing, and many boys think that overall it is a good tendency, giving people more room.*” They understand the role of student organisations more professionally, and they emphasise their role in social identification. They are building forums of co-existence and free-time agendas. Some student organisations even have the function of articulating and propagating the socio-economical interests of their members, though their main role is dealing with social and cultural interest. For these young men youth organisations active within their field of study or target profession are also central means of identification.

On the other hand one participant distanced himself from all local or institution centred organisations and belonging relations: *“Very often I feel as though I am a universal student, together with all those studying in foreign countries”* (Tuukka). But Jani speculates here about the role of academic nations: *“maybe they articulate some kind of lifestyle or identification with some region,”* but he concludes that, *“the social function is the primary one.”* Joonas adds the observation here that party political youth organisations [such as the Social Democratic OSY which he has taken part in, KP] are not socially open and places for free identification. They have no real power in their activities, but rather an instrumental role with some other forces above them really striving for power.

Even if most of the boys agreed with the idea that student identity is more important to them than regional identity, the regional or family relationship aspects are still real to them. E.g. Karelian identity – Finland lost most of the old province of Karelia to the Soviet Union after the Second World War – touches the world of well-educated boys even if memories of Karelia are now two generations removed from those who actually experienced the forced emigration from there. Like the educated young women, these young men are trying to understand old generations and some way it touches them. But even though the feelings of Karelian nostalgia and Northern belonging are alive, *“they aren’t militant or strict; we have many and different levels of identities or disciplines, corresponding to different phases of life.”*

Part of this multi-faceted identity problem is the perspective of the modernisation process and centre/periphery discussion: these boys do not agree with the development objective of consolidating the population into the centres; after they finish their studies they are ready to return to the countryside! On the other hand, researchers in Scandinavia have observed that when young people speak of their return to the rural it tends to be just a romantic and therapeutic discourse for them. Young men are here really flexible and speak directly of the hybrid identities of post-modern times. Part of this changing idea of identity basis and openness to nostalgia is global “green” back-to-nature thinking!

If we are interested in identity politics and their regional contexts, Antti has a nice story from the city of Espoo: *“I have written local history and actively played floor-ball in a small club and this put a process in motion by which I’m now member of the city council. I think that such institutions have a nice social function in the fragmented world – sort of like the family*

has in the society. Naturally, we are talking about small-scale business and we don't need too large political programs, but we have to keep our schools functioning, streetlights on and our own doctor working at the community service centre." It is possible to have a feeling of belonging to Europe, to Finland and to the local community, and these regional identities mean most of all freedom to change them: local identity is no longer a life-long strait jacket!

V. GOOD CITIZENSHIP: 'OLD' AND 'NEW' PRACTICES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Who is the "good citizen"? What sort of picture of civil society and its mobilisation is involved (in social, economic or cultural terms)?

Social and political identifications are part of the discussion of young people's self-understanding in terms of citizenship, but they also tell us several things about young people's concepts of civil society in general, and "good citizenship". Only few of the participants were ready to give ad hoc answers to the question of normative good citizenship. People are aware of pluralism in the world and the multi-faceted nature of the post-modern world. The active Social Democrat, *Markku*, disapproved of non-voting young people expressing the idea that they have no rights to criticise political decisions because of their constitutional passivity. Some traditionalists, stressing the spirit of enterprise and individual responsibilities, presented the visions in which, *"no passive marginal person or illegal civil activist could be a roadblock on our highway to responsible development!"* *"Politicians and the welfare state have no reason to try to further support and understand them."*

According to human rights and welfare state norms it is not a hopeful situation that the concepts on ideal citizenship and civil society are polarised among young people. Even if young people have traditional values like *"I like my friends"* and *"family is important to me"* they have many tensions between their Weltanschauung concerning facts of how the society is constructed and what are the manners or culture of a good or active citizen. The hegemonic 'social' element or "we together"-rhetoric in the nearest community of all young people may confuse the listeners. The society may be divided into seriously fragmented

communities, which have light, but also strong, gaps and contradictions. We are aware of those theoretical thesis, e.g. in Germany, where the polarisation (escalation) tendency between youth cultures is the main phenomenon in society (Heitmeier).

The anarchist, *Sasa*, wants to see an independent, syndicalist and innovatively 'norm-destroying'⁸ citizen: The Christian-ethical youth worker, *Antti*, holds the ideal of someone ready even to suffer for the good of others. The traditional Social Democratic idealist, *Markku*, believes one should be active in voting and social organisations. Textual fragments from the thematic groups speak of polite citizen uprisings reflecting local councils, peace movements and green/leftist/feminist ideals. All of these are all part of the modern story. As a part of that narrative, citizens are taking their interests and values from civil society or widening the moral communities in the civil society: these activities mean mobilising the civil society and ideological, social and organisational resources of people to defend themselves against and via the state.

But, as we have seen among the young people expressing their political messages in our text corpus, there are also other orientations. *Some guys in prison, scouts and new-right oriented conservatives* and young men with fragmented anti-utopian views of the world claim that civil society is an arena for new struggle. Maybe it will revert to being an arena for organic or individual competition, the law of the jungle or the hegemony of market forces. If we observe this polarisation closely in the context of market oriented globalisation, it is all the more dramatic. Well-educated persons and, e.g. the girls from Kajaani, where clearly aware of these international structures.

The new contradictions and the limits or fragmentation of solidarity movements and communities in global civil society are more distinctive and cool tendencies than national features. Young people have no easy moralities, movements and alternatives to the dumb force, international power of capital and the ecological crises which are inevitable without political self-control. We have here a serious problem. Are the fragmentation of welfare state ideals of good citizenship and the political distance which young people take from the political forces in power symptoms of the disintegration of the modern political project of nation

⁸ In his classic of anarchism from 1842, Michael Bakunin put it this way: "The need to destroy is a innovative need."

states and the enlightenment? We must bring this question back to the young people speaking in our text corpus!

Real alternative means of participation: “Old” and “new” politics

The paradigm of ‘old’ politics refers here to institutional, formal and collectivistic⁹ participatory cultures in politics. Here elections, basic tensions between left and right and their compromises and the legitimisation of nations, states, parties and interest groups are alive. But in the late-modern era we need a broader vision of the landscape of young people’s political participation. Some pages ago I presented the concept of *identity politics*. Most political theorists in the Western world today are speaking about ‘new’ politics. E.g. Hellsten and Martikainen, studying young people’s political engagement by conventional data-based methods, have stressed the paradigm of new politics.

They claim that representative mechanisms are not the only means of political activity and the purpose of political activity may not even be to influence national decision-making. Individualistic and profession-centred acts (Beck), “do-it-yourself”-cultures (Bauman), consumeristic every-day strategies, illegal animal rights movements, civil resistance, anarchistic every-day acts, global movements and especially “fundamental” (non-parliamentarian) green movement are actual phenomena here.

⁹ *Breaks with political parties, decreasing interest in any political involvement through parties, and the rise of new politics with its new agenda and modes of operation - do these signify the weakening and possible extinction of the traditional model of party-oriented democracy, upon which all Western democracy is based? As information can be disseminated more widely, more rapidly and at lower costs, developments in the 1990s have turned out to provide a particularly favorable breeding ground for various extremist movements and radical alternative movements that literally network not only nationally but also globally. New means of political bonding for young people are found in various types of e-mailing lists and newsgroups whose "organisational structure" in its flexibility is wholly unlike that of traditional organisations with fixed membership rolls. They remain a latent mobilisation potential that materializes into a "movement" only when mass gatherings are organized through such lists, as is increasingly often happening in Finland as well. The rise of Finnish animal activism in the 1990s, for instance, may be considered to be linked to this type of transnational networking. (Hellsten-Martikainen 2001)*

*“Identification with various global communities – such as environmental movements – may signify an extension of the reach of political and especially extra-parliamentary activity well beyond national borders. Environmental organisations, for instance, often use e-mail to mobilize supporters from neighbouring countries to join demonstrations. When the demonstrators or participants in illegal activities are also often young people who have yet to reach the age of suffrage, the paradigm of new politics may be considered to call into question not only the means by which the views of citizens should be communicated into the decision-making process but also the issue of who can be considered a politically competent citizen. As the field of politics is to an increasing degree governed by the agendas and operating rules of new politics, in addition to old politics, contemplation might be in order as to the best means whereby the extra-parliamentary messages being sent by young people could be taken into consideration in the representative system of decision-making.”*¹⁰ (Hellsten-Martikainen 2001)

¹⁰ *“E-mailing lists may indeed be considered the global political forums to which politics can to an increasing degree be said to have moved, and where post-national political identities are constructed and networked since the significance of purely national political forums and communications mechanisms has decreased in the modern, global information society. New political identities are thus not necessarily based on national identification, nor are they communicated through national, representative democracy and its mechanisms. Political identities may rather be based on membership in various global communities (see Beck 1999).[...] Consumerist politics would seem to be closely linked to the rise of the post-industrial information society and its rapid tempo. In a quickly changing information milieu, where actions taken now are expected to show immediate results, voting may seem an inefficient means of influence whose effects only reach far into the future. The rapid tempo and short attention span particularly typical to the activities of the young do not, however, signify inability on the part of the young to comprehend long-term political goals, or to act on behalf of such goals. Environmental issues, for instance, in which the young are often interested, are truly long-term social issues. Any activities on behalf of the environment through the electoral process, however, are probably perceived as frustrating, taking into account e.g. the acute nature of many environmental problems. In other words, environmental issues are perceived to be of a nature that justifies resorting to unconventional and extra-parliamentary - even illegal - activities in order to attract public attention and thus attempt to influence popular opinion and finally to change popular consumer habits by casting a spotlight on perceived evils. [...] Consumerist politics may be considered a type of post-modern ‘Do-It-Yourself’ politicking (cf. Bauman 1992) wherein nearly every individual choice becomes a moral consideration as universal guidelines have lost their meaning due to increased pluralism and relativism. The central nature of choice resulting from pluralism emphasises the importance of self-evaluation, and as the significance of the collective thus weakens, politics can be said to have become individualised. In such a case the market has become yet another political arena where the messages of individualised politics are communicated through daily choice. Consumerist politics may be comparable to politicking in a risk society (cf. Beck 1992). In a complex risk society, the human body and the control exerted over it represent stability and predictability, in a manner of speaking, from the threat of uncontrollability presented by technical and economic developments and the resultant risks. The politicalization of the recent food scandals can be seen to reflect the significance of this type of body control in managing overall change in the environment. Vegetarianism may also be seen as a similar means of postmodern politics in a post-industrial society - consumer choices leading to body control are an attempt to eliminate not only*

Political practices via participatory biographies: Anton and Tutta

We are aware of *Anton's* social orientation, many-sided participatory acts and membership in Greenpeace. He has time and motivation to “dive into” almost all kind of participatory culture. He has a lot of social energy and social-ethical value-capital to throw himself into the social-political games of networks near by him: participatory youth policy with modern pedagogical virtue and the participatory ethos are near of his heart. He is a consumerist, who is not making noise about himself: *“It is self-evident that I don't drink Coke!”* He is an active discussant inside and outside of the church; he likes charismatic participants with constructive rhetoric without absolutely negative opinions and selfishness (*discussants always using “I”*).

He is using professional repertoires for participation in the faculty of theology, tutor-activities and engagement in the struggle of the generational gap between theological “old men” and more socially oriented modernists. He is open to student organisations and councils, he has been a member without party-affiliation in the governing council of the University of Helsinki Student Union. He is open to the idea of running for national office, but here he has late-modern feelings – he is confused by the commercial image competition between the existing parties. The Coalition party and Social Democratic Party are ‘brothers’ – it is hard to distinguish between them. Parties are desperately trying to identify themselves using imaginary colours and messages constructed by advertising agencies. But that is crazy: they are blending and developing into a ‘political centre’. He is not able to find his own colour on the political palette. But, *“okay, I'm voting.”*

He is aware of and has solidarity for many global and illegal movements, peaceful “social forums” propagating a world of equal human rights, but he is strongly against violence as a part of these movements. This is spoiling a lot of idealistic activities. Peaceful civil disobedience is not in principal a closed possibility as a means of political participation. Sometimes even the Greenpeace makes mistakes. They are flashing too trivial of questions in front of the international media. *“Virgin forests in the Amazon or in the Finnish Lapland are relevant*

unpredictability and insecurity, but also to communicate an ethical stand. Simultaneously, the privacy of the body has become public, and thus political.”

media-objects here, and we need more political publicity. Reflections and visions to reform policies on the real questions like the manipulation of the genes and bio-ethics...”He is speaking politely in the spirit of risk society (Beck) but he doesn’t need the Big Names; often, he isn’t claiming that his opinions or social activities are politics at all! What can be said to this Jesus-minded young man full of activities and social-ethical capital – a man with paradigmatic time and a rich background in the participatory landscape of ‘late-modern politics’ combining religion and socially oriented politics!

We are aware of *Tutta’s* deeply Scout-oriented Weltanschauung. She has done her homework well and, at the first, she is ready to tell me her basic interpretations of universal facts among Scouts: there is no special need of party-political activities if we have organised the pedagogical system in a society well and in a tailored way. The symbolic and traditional order is in the focus and you can see it in the heraldic values of Baden-Powell (The founder of the Scouting movement), Scout parades and so on. The Scouts’ culture *“is one of the oldest forms of education for leaders and managers!”* But in the real world, according to Tutta’s story, the Scouts are, based on my ten different kinds of questions, a real-historical movement open to Zeitgeist. Tutta phrases it carefully, but in a patriarchal and classical way: *“I’m voting Coalition Party – I’m a traditional person living in a certain age and coming from a certain social background [i.e. family, KP].”*

But in the background there is a bigger party – Scouting itself. A lot of people active in the Scouts seriously claim that the normative society and network of Scouts forms the ‘real’ functioning party in a society. This is not a joke. The Scouts have a normative network in Finnish society – functioning quite openly, not like a secret club. Using careful rhetoric it is possible to open the *“the Scouts’ channels of social influence”* (Tutta), even if the organisation is officially neutral concerning religion and (party) politics. It is possible to speak of effective action in ecology, discussion of ‘too materialistic’ or ‘too techno-dependant’ life-styles (to live five days without a mobile phone in camp!), co-operative projects in the developing countries, multicultural Scout-troops, and so on... All the while the main principle here is to act in a non-political way and the focus of influencing is on individuals and via individuals.

Tutta is well-aware of these principles and when she is telling her voting experiences and reactions after Iraq-War (2003-) she identifies herself as a “not-only-Scout” personality. She

became confused after the Iraq-Attack, *“It is hard to read all the information and various facts around the chaos; and after a long time of reflection...I have to say, I’m not the right person to judge others according to my knowledge.”* Tutta is a skilful and careful person in her patriarchal tradition, but realistic enough for personal political engagement and ‘social’ aspect of Scouts’ action culture. But we could understand her as a traditional participant in the political world, honouring voting and other institutional opportunities for influence – a person who opposes radical and illegal movements. For her the Scouts are somehow enough of a consumerist or life-reflective organisation; she doesn’t need extra conventional or ‘new’ modes of political participation.

Riitta and Sasa – the modern skilful militants?

We have read the basic story of conservative *Riitta’s* development from school pupil to institutionally active and powerful young women in the new-right. She has quickly learned and concentrated on municipal board politics and she is the chairman of her town council. Even young people have their paradigm for relating to politics, in which politics means *‘deceitful empty promises’* or *‘a dirty game of self-indulgent politicians’*, Riitta is ready to respond: *“Someone has to take the responsibility.”* And for Riitta the responsibility doesn’t only mean *“sorting out different kinds bio-necessities at home”* [an ironic expression, KP].

The politics is a serious and difficult game. Riitta has met with bitter attitudes and dirty tricks in her own party and in her town board among her party colleagues: *“Ladies from my own party are starting their comments saying ‘Honoured lady president...’*” According to *Riitta*, in politics you have to overlook these kinds of difficulties and be aware of collective rules, the way to manage common matters. Even when you are a young person you must work *“...work and work for your party... its intimate and secret preparations and propaganda for outsiders are relevant orientations here”*. The term ‘work’ is reducing the nature of politics near the status of hard work, so it is natural for her sometimes to speak of political honesty. The group (discipline) in the party means more power than an action of a single person. The president of the group is not leading in a solitary way by himself/herself – there are different competitive views. *“You must open your mouth.”*

Riitta considers the action of new social movements like animal rights and anti-nuclear movement as naive reactions to hard and responsible political power. Like the older politicians, she is able to turn around the meaning of civil (citizen) activist: she is claiming that she herself is the best civil activist in her own context and she is using legal channels. Riitta is an active member in "*Nuclear-Power-Youth*," she "*answers 'Yes' to nuclear power*" and criticises active leftist-green movements on this issue. Nuclear power to her means a responsible ecological solution. She is trying to respond to the tolerant line of the Green's, where "*all the alternatives and all the people are OK.*" The leading group in her Coalition Party is too liberal and too 'soft': though Riitta is not an America-Liberal and she is aware of Scandinavian social rights, she is courageous enough to say "NO" to the Greens and all politicians who are not aware of the fact that "*everything has to be paid for.*" "*Immigrants are in too many ways lead about by the hand like a child, even if we have our own unemployed people...*"

This hard and responsible rhetoric is near the 'locus' in economics and "*economic politics is close to my heart. I may present myself as a rational and fanatic non-red individual. And I'm entirely supporting the ways enterprising spirit – not only so-called ideas of the personal entrepreneur...*" She is enlarging the popular and liberal ideas of New Public Management in people's everyday life: "*Each person has to educate herself/himself, work hardly and take the responsibility for her/his life.*" This kind of coherent new-right program hasn't been popular in Finnish youth politics during recent decades, and just now there are many comparable rhetoricians active. Riitta is one of the most courageous of them, speaking extremely consistently and coolly rationally.

Nowadays Sasa's anarchistic activities have risen to the international level, he has been active in the movement called the "*White overalls*". Just some months ago the activists discontinued the informal organisation behind it, but this doesn't mean the end of the anarchistic global movement and its political imagination. This specific group tried to act in global demonstration spaces using a so-called 'shuffling along' strategy, where they are not openly violent but they are trying to provoke e.g. policemen into dramatic confrontations and escalations. During the last Finnish Independence Day (6 December 2003) the demonstration organised mainly by anarchists got into the national media when various black-green and radical groups tried to "besiege" the Presidential Castle full of elite guests. The demonstra-

tion was not entirely successful, and just now many of the groups are reflecting on their future action cultures.

Sasa's extensive and fragmentary local history is an interesting one – as the political stories of would-be 'Trotskies' and anarchists in the Finnish Left always are. There are only a few anarchists in Finland because of the state oriented workers' movement and Soviet shadow where the Finnish response was a long-time consensus. Sasa's tradition is coming from the proletarian sub-tradition and he is a worker himself. Even today he is an activist in the trade union movement, propagating syndicalist themes and horizontal non-bureaucratic co-operation among workers.

In this in particular he is a talented, virtuoso young politician; he is able to use informal, illegal and state-provoking action means; he knows Finnish politics and its history at the grass-root level well, and he has a sensitive understanding real opportunities. Global and well articulated and publicised challenges and movements are bringing him to a relevant place to change the political agenda and take the essential radical initiative among the left-green youth movements. E.g. the Finnish organisation *Atac* has been a little bit confused since the active intervention of the young anarchists. Even if the group of young and differentiated anarcho-militants is small (maybe three hundred activists, with a rapid turnover) and they are acting really in the marginal of political culture and legitimacy, their impact among youth movements is significant.

As an exceptional anarchist, Sasa has his participatory means in organisations, networks and media too, and maybe that's why his activities are worthy of consideration. During his interview he told me gradually of his conceptual framework and how he is constructing his action means and spaces in political situations. He is well aware of the integration drama of the whole traditional working organisation and most of their youth traditions, and this process is a part of the Scandinavian model. He evaluates e.g. the youth policy system as an arena for children! But these critical remarks don't mean that Sasa is closing his doors to visiting trade unions or the more parliamentary leftist youth movement. The practical issues of young workers and global thinking youth are at his hands. Even with the fragmentation of the radical movement, e.g. this December 6 movement, into the ecological, global, proletarian and grass-root movements programming themselves to "occupy buildings to reclaim

your existence,” Sasa’s operative chances for political action have increase – at least according to the anarchistic cannon.

When organisations are going down, the anarchistic innovative-destruction learning process sees an opening! And if those large and well-developed Internet-pages behind different anarchist groups are relevant and groups are reading them seriously, Sasa and his friends have for the first time, in Finland, a theoretically mature group to be active in different grass-root movements and the self-regulative and syndicalist learning processes and traditions of “reclaim-your-existence-buildings” will have an essential role in Helsinki (as in Kreuzberg in Berlin). If Antti is a virtuoso in his Christian-ethical rich acts, it is easy to claim, without political judgment, that Sasa is more pluralistic in his political repertoire and spaces – he is able to combine legal and illegal, situation bound and theoretical, and last but not least, local and global spaces.

Markku – a lonely collectivist

I have discussed the Social Democrat *Markku* and his collectivism a lot – his political skills and relativist sight (political eye) playing nicely in social contexts; with his rhetoric changing from context to context, which is not always the case when we are dealing with Social Democrats acting at a high level in the political system through power coalitions and institutional deals. One crucial point here is that Markku keep social and political spheres in his world separate at the level of intimate issues. That’s why he has diverse social networks and friends. We have noticed his home background (combined values of religion and social democracy), but Markku has undergone the New Leftist awakening as well.

Some years ago he read a lot of *Marx’s* books and it took the time to get a realistic distance from this Marxist orthodoxy, which clarified many things for him. Nowadays it is clear to him that the market economy is not disappearing and Stalinism was not accident. On the other hand he is ready to consider the historical and positive side-effects of real existing socialism on the development of the Finnish welfare state. The bourgeoisie powers in Finland have always to take the Soviet Model and difficulties into consideration.

Because the main arena and primary arsenal for Markku's political participation are from conventional cultures, he has thought a lot about party and collective means and limitations. He is not willing to see any new and radical reform or politicising in terms of global issues; organisations and support to the developing countries are functioning, that is enough for this Social Democrat. He has a *"flexible opinion regarding group norms and orders; individuals need their freedom on some level."* But there is a special danger of over-politicisation in his career: Markku is using pejorative terms when he is describing 'irrational' people who are not voting at the elections: *"They have no line of thought!"* In some ways he understands young people's passivity in voting – between parties there is a tendency for convergence; it is not easy to see the differences. *"Maybe the American party and voting system is better because the elections have the clear effect in terms of political combinations, lines and leaders. We have problems of too much ideological consensus here."*

Especially in local politics there is also the problem of generation – almost all other Social Democratic members in city council are close to sixty years old! The Greens have been more successful here. There are really 'stupid' examples how the older generation is thinking, e.g. on the issues concerning an initiative for an Internet Cafe in Mikkeli. This includes a big political problem; it is hard to get enough money to mobilise a realistic election campaign for parliamentary post, and the party *"can't see past its own nose on this question."*

Perhaps Markku's most surprising views have to do with gender relations. He is ready to defend men of the younger generation, because in many levels young women are better educated and more talented. They are clear way taking the posts of men and Markku is not sure how to face and evaluate this process just coming into the organisations of politics, too. *"Young men are clearly a more marginalised group."* Maybe, the secret of women is their more light and nuanced interest in the political aspects of the world. This female sympathy, most of his best friends are women, even in politics, doesn't mean that he is life-politically super-active; not at all. *"How to eat, how to travel – they are not such political issues,"* says this experienced young Social Democrat.

"We have to be mobile without chances for real political influence!"

– Young women from Kainuu

The six young women from Kainuu as a group reflect political participation. They have a common frame of reference and 'narrative I'. Rarely are they using the first person personal pronoun, and when they will do they take it carefully, as a way of testing and projecting. The circle of friends is their means of protection, even the leftist orientated Lappish woman told of *"how the whole business of leftist youth organisation was a way to keep on loosening..."* But his manner of common speculation as a group is a means to discuss on the ambivalence of politics. In politics many things are 'unknown', 'ambivalent' and 'many-minded'. For the listener, e.g. me in the Kajaani interview, this kind of ambivalent style and *"on the other hand..."* speculation is a difficult form of rhetoric to adjust to, because you can never know how the people are really behaved or how they will act in a real situation. At the era of television democracy this contradiction between speculation and action is crucial one, maybe the modern destiny? Often the girls were testing their collective limitations on such things as the Iraq-demonstrations – *"because we had to do something about Bush... in international discussions of bad and good policies."* Most of the discussants were also ready to take part in environmental demonstrations, voting – *"even it is a stressful and embarrassing choosing situation, full of hazards"* – or joining the support group for a candidate in national elections.

Every decision of engagement is unique one, the 'ladies' have no principal 'yes' or 'no' to the political participation in general. But the party political engagement in a formal way is out of the question. They experience politics as a hazardous phenomenon. Two of the interviewed women had been to polling stations together with their mothers, who in turn had made their voting selection based on entirely random factors! Sometimes their cynicism and/or tradition is coming from their families, and sometimes young people themselves have new and sensitive ideas on political discussion and engagements. Only two of the discussants had never voted, and even they *"have tried to do it..."* Especially for those individuals, politics is 'an obscure activity somewhere, far away'; it is hard to have real contact with political influence because all of the means are in Helsinki. Young women from Kainuu are using almost populist or pejorative connotations when they comment the centre-oriented cultural investment, e.g. so called big music house affair in Helsinki. *"Everything is Helsinki-centred, especially high-culture activities,"* and this coming even from girls who themselves have significant cultural interests in Kajaani.

Young people in the periphery have no changes in their everyday life; the power, in general, is in the South, in the shadows of the European Union. This may be is a crucial point among young people in the Finnish countryside: the distinction between the politicians is hard to recognise, because all of them are speaking with the same voice when it comes to the interests of our peripheral community or village. For the researcher it is easy to observe a kind of modern circle behind the young speakers: we have to be mobile and move into the developing centres even if we have no motivation or courage to do so! Young people see the attitude of politicians in the context of modern economic change as one of transparent powerlessness. The politicians' basic ethos and pathos (in Perelmanian terms, presented above) are playing with naive 'we' when they are speaking of common spirit and interests articulated in periphery against Helsinki, and on the other hand, in the national interests articulated in Finland against the awful and somehow 'godless' power centres of Europe. Political arenas can be covered by these kinds of regional dogmas.

But the political game of the south is not a perfect one. For two of the interviewed persons it was possible to find political actors in *"a fair and decent game where well-known persons are stimulating affairs close to us."* In this debate urban populists like Toni Halme, an extremely popular right-wing media-charismatic figure in Helsinki, are not political alternatives. Sometimes the innovations of youth policy, e.g. 'Youth's Parliaments' with their own resources and publicity stimulate political participation and build meaningful relations and understanding between young people and old. The gender question isn't a crucial mobilisation factor among young female students and workers from Kajaani. *"If there are only two candidates, a woman and a man, we are taking the female,"* but the competition between sexes within young generation is, according to the girls interviewed, fair and open – *"Everyone is the blacksmith of her/his own life!"*

***"Free Cannabis!"* – and other political messages from prison**

The five young men from the Prison of Vantaa during their interview debated politics in contextually masculine but diverse ways. Surprisingly often these guys used evaluating and comparative rhetoric, not only pejorative and cynical pictures, jokes or stereotypes. Two or three of these men were able to employ social ethical pictures and comparative contexts in their stories. Even their basic reasons for being in the prison were according to the fellows

interviewed, their own responsibility. They had sad stories of social realities and living without a family on the street and in children's or boy's homes, where they learned their criminal and "wrestling" culture.

One boy even told me about overly lenient sanctions in his biography – sometimes "*the prosecutors are too late putting us into the prison.*" This was a clear reference to the actual Probation Association programme known as "*Early intervention*". They saw a big gap between politicians articulating the interests of average people and "*their schools of engineers*" (a classical example of a contextual speech) and "*some of the politicians should live in the streets and get to know our big problems in everyday life.*" One of the biggest "*crucial problems for prisoners is the norm for minimal subsistence.*" Some of the interviewed young prisoners counted the exact sums for welfare support and assured me of some of the social-political facts presented.

When I asked about the chances of a young prisoner to act as an articulator of their unique and less-known social problems, as a potential parliamentarian – the fragmented and rarely considered response was moving: "*In principal all this here is common for us, the self-esteem is important in this business. If someone says that I want to get into the parliament, it depends on me, and my interest is to have an influence on the affairs of poor people...I have to start somewhere to try to get into the house of parliament... You have to study and read and by these activities to get in. My motivation to be a politician just now is near zero [laughing, KP]...but I'm interested in... if someone visits me and asks me to join in making some decisions with those persons working at that House and its restaurant...with coffee cups [laughing, KP]... I may be there... I have a need to say some heavy words and social messages.*"

Populist Toni Halme, in his first term as a parliamentarian, who according to the interviewed prisoners was sometimes influencing extremely local and "*subjective affairs of people living near him,*" is a model for testing political arenas here: "*He also had problems with crime in his everyday life and he 'tried the ice with a stick.'* Now we know that it isn't so easy to influence... even you are fair and honest..." The Leftist politics and the activities of our "*quite fair president*" Halonen are not enough; they have no influence on real structures important in young prisoners' lives.

Sometimes it was hard for the boys to express an idea in accordance with correct Finnish sentence structure, but it was especially hard in the context of the political system and institutions. It is, however, possible to understand their feelings – as Halme, also an ‘associationist’, put it after his successful national election campaign: *“I’m only telling you the stories I’ve heard in the Finnish restaurants for average working and unemployed people.”*

The young men in the prison for those awaiting trial are better at wording and recognising the politics in media and their concrete jail context. They are competent to articulate everyday claims concerning freedom to move or the timetables by which the doors between the prisoners are closed. The young discussants were not all the time speaking tautologically about their closed realities. International and relative comparative contexts were present in their metaphors: *“We have toilets, showers and television sets in our single rooms. In Russian jails there are six guys to a room!”* The interviewed boys have correct information and interpretations which they have learned from the media. The difficult challenges in employment policy after the so called China-Phenomenon, politics concerning alcohol prices and tariffs and welfare policies and standards were lightly reflected on in this debate.

The surprising heavy theme in the prison debate, touched on in a variety of ways, was the campaign to *“Free Cannabis”*. Most of the guys are aware of this political issue and they nicely reflected their sources, from Internet to the Journal of Science, and their personal experiences in Finland and/or on the Canary Islands, in their chances to speak out. The discussants were also aware of the potential social and criminal-political consequences of liberalisation; it will mean smaller number of crimes because of the new freedoms and lower prices on basic products.

It is a basic thesis of criminologists that this *“Free cannabis!”* rhetoric is a convention to legitimate a criminal way of life and survive back in society. There were some other unconventional aspects in the political debate in this prison too. The differences between Finnish regions are ‘naturally’ an essential part of politics; it isn’t easy to recognise the right of Helsinki always to be at the ‘top of society’. They also see many natural differences in the division of the labour between the sexes: *“Just now the differences are mixing [laughing, KP], but there are distinctive problems of equality, too.”*

The life-political dimension faced by the boys in the jail primarily meant a savings in the use of energy in traffic. A special judging tradition was also present when the guys criticised George Bush's illegal and dramatised intervention in Iraq, defended the rights of civil servants working outside of army and made critical-pluralistic comments on racism. *Karim*, a boy from Brazil who presented only two or three comments (in English) during the debate, has a special discussion point here, *"the civil servants from Finland aren't trying to organise jobs for foreigners... Yes, we have some enemies in the Finnish politics: The Finnish policemen... they are racists!"* The world of boys in the Finnish jail is not closed for politics. Even they take a context-bound and ambivalent distance from actual affairs in political culture. They have faced political issues and major problems in a surprisingly pluralistic way; they don't have just 'black-and-white' distinctions and pejorative jokes on politics.

Tractably polemical women active in politics

What does it mean to be a woman in modern Finland? This was an enduring theme in the discussion among *well-educated young women* at the department of political science. All of the discussants were interested in gender equality and its different aspects – *"I get furious if I read in the news that men are earning more than women by a sum equal to the value of a new car per year"* - but they didn't agree with the feminist (ironical) presupposition that *"all the time we have only understood... and understood men."* Nowadays the main level at which gender contradictions appear is culture. In the paparazzi media (e.g. ex-sportsman Matti Nykänen) and literature (e.g. by author Kari Hotakainen) many men are presented in a role caricature of *"knocking their women about."* Acknowledged feminist *Hanna* doesn't read those texts in a light or ironical way. Some other discussants read the references to men's violent behaviour in more dialectic ways, and as a symptom of self-irony or self-criticism of men and society. For them to be a woman is not always the primary issue in their politics. As one political scientist in Finland has put it, *"several aspects and problems of the social and cultural world could be political ones."*

This is a valid principle for the political relations between friend and opponent too. It was fascinating to hear from well-educated women how many aspects, values and tendencies of our culture can be potential spaces for adversities and opposition in everyday life. The risk-societal reflection is alive. Not only macho men are political enemies – most of these young ladies described their enemies on the horizon of right wing politics, a military-orientation and patriarchal movements and ideologies. The simple linear narratives of development and economic growth were also criticised. The activities of ‘law and order’ were subject to critique and perhaps this was the only ironical object held in common among their critical overviews.

The structures of the society and the world are so contingent that it is not possible to have a common programme. Social realities faced in the everyday life are potential arenas for politics. This view doesn’t mean that all of the affairs around people are political all the time. Even the consumerist view of life-politics was being critically analysed by these well-educated women. Life-political speculation on consumerist alternatives is exaggerated! The individual, life-political project is not enough for these young ladies.

A good example of a highly political issue in the Finland is the recent tax break on spirits potentially causing a greater degree of alcoholism. The politicisation of a ‘social’ question doesn’t always mean the defending of new female social rights; often it means more selective and reflective responsibility. *Hanna* has extraordinary ideas about life-political acts: e.g. *“If I will some day have children, I will ask a homosexual couple to act as the children’s godfathers. [...] even nowadays it is hard to present big reforms in Finland; all the ideas seem to be too radical.”* Hanna is recognising the political Zeitgeist sensitively, because the results of value research agree with her feelings: if you have many radical ideas and you are collectively participating in them, many people may consider you to be a dogmatic person, *“Your pointed cap is on your head too tightly and you are becoming narrow-minded”* (A typical comment directed towards activists). *“My friends repeat their opinion to me: ‘You are always living in a mission’”* (Hanna).

Part of the political ambivalence among young people may come from just this aspect of ‘political correctness’: You can state a fascinating and radical opinion just once, or else you are a ‘black-and-white’ thinker. The space for political opinions and reflections is not as

large a field as that for political imagination – there is a consensual tendency. But in general the political debate among young Finns, especially among well-educated and critical youngsters, has opened up. This ambivalent and diverse tendency means a risk-societal consciousness. The tension between extremes and clear alternatives (or enemies) is not a believable axis in the political debate. In the era of the risk society and mutant political identities and spaces among young people, we could speak of the ‘pacification of the conflict’: only black-and-white thinkers of have clear categories for the enemy. A thoroughly doubtful society, beset by productive self-doubt and therefore incapable of truth, cannot produce pictures of enemies: *“...pacifism and doubt are elective affinities. Truth and military originate from one and the same conceptual box. [...] It allows a pacification of the conflict that reconciles both sides, conflict and peace, so much that the two extremes, paradise and war, are ruled out, or at least become very improbable. Anyone who doubts is also struggling against false certainty, against the dictatorships of non-ambiguity and of the either-or. He cannot go to barricades and will not do so either, since doubt produces self-doubt and cares for it like a father for his son. [...] Doubting, something that appeared as weakness and decay to cultures of faith and certainty, now becomes a virtue, the launching point for productivity, for self-limited development, to which everything larger than life and generally accepted is alien because it negates the ultimate standards of humankind: reservations, uncertainty and ‘yes-but’”* (Beck 1997, 169-171; cf. Ojakangas 1999).

Although ‘the personal is political’, the roles have not been divided beforehand. Sometimes the researcher is radical when she is writing Big Words about the debate over equality legislation, but sometimes a student is highly political in writing a presentation on the life of ants instead of the history of Big Ideas. You have to change horizons in the risk-society and be sensitive to its contingency. You have to reflect all the time. But engagement or especially membership in political organisations is a hard, almost always impossible, project.

The Beckian ideology of ‘yes-but’ is extremely relevant here: many of the *well-educated girls* feel averse towards interest organisations because of their way of articulating merely their own collective interests – at the same time these discussants are the members of conventional trade unions! The fascination of global organisations like WWF and Amnesty International is concealing just here, in the attempt to articulate the universal interests and ecological status quo. To separate oneself from the Lutheran Church is an essential potential for

identity politics among well-educated women. For a single and independent woman it is an easy conclusion, but many of young ladies have to reflect on their “existential” alternatives in terms of the expectations of family traditions and mothers.

It is possible to discuss global inequalities and colonial structures, and young people have a need to attend demonstrations against the Iraq War business, but it is not possible to be member of a heavily ideological (peace) organisation. *Young women from Helsinki and Uusimaa* are speculating in a sophisticated manner about the pluralistic and ‘not-so-bad’ United States of America, but in the era of Mr. Bush the American cultural and military hegemony is too intense and crazy... and it has become a late-modern enemy-picture: *“I was compelled to go along with the peace demonstration. It was not a question of ‘black-and-white’; it was for my self-determination!”* At the same time surprisingly many of young Finns are aware of Michael Moore’s *“Bowling for Columbine,”* his academy award speech and the rest, and they are sure that Bush has an opposition of his own in country.

Voting is one of repertoires of political participation, but it is not a dramatic act for young well-educated women. According to them, the non-voting culture shows an indifference towards other people; *“all the people, even living in marginal contexts, have ideas and utopias. I’m not considering the non-voting as a protest action.”* The discussants are not sure of the reason for young people’s passivity in elections; they take an ironical distance: *“Maybe, we have to wait for the new ironical series that the next generation will watch on television!”* [laughing, KP] Young women are well-aware of the sarcastic and ironical aspects of politics. Without these asymmetries politics isn’t politics anymore! Most of the discussants are willing to choose the party before the candidate, but it is often a difficult act, full of mixed feelings. Two of the discussants would be, under the right circumstances, prepared to become members in a political party (Greens or the Leftist Union).

It is interesting to hear the paradigmatic speculation concerning recruiting into party organisations – is there a specific moment of collectivistic movement at all? *“A while ago I visited the Greens’ ‘Potential New-Comers’ Evening’. Everything was cosy and comfortable and I might endorse almost all the opinions and initiatives of the Green Union in Finland. But In the meeting I was continuing my prolonged reflection on commitment. All of the people there were in a way such ‘clear’ individuals, like me, and that’s a hard point for me as I am con-*

sidering the changes involved in taking on party membership. I'm aware that members select the leaders of the party, but I'm not sure this will be my motivation; all the bosses in the Greens seem OK... Does this mean that I'm not so aware of political affairs anymore?"

Their understanding of the parliament is open. One well-educated young lady even compared it with an enterprise. The representatives in politics are not, they said, simply playing the dirty game of politicians; they are trying to do something for their support groups. It would be fair to say that these young ladies are even defending the political arenas (polity). As the theory of risk-society is conceptualised, it is possible to return politics to its conventional arenas and institutions. The present place of parliamentary democracy isn't at the centre of power. Big reforms and revolutions are not arising from civil society. Politics and debates with tensions over values may simply return. The chance that a populist like Halme is working in the Parliament is acceptable; it is a symbol of pluralistic discussion and its richness. For Hanna Mr. Halme also signifies a rich political counterinfluence: *"He changed my grandmother's opinions towards feminism because of his violent and stupid behaviour."* The personification of politics isn't only an object of moral critique; some politicians are genuinely charismatic intellectuals, and one might sarcastically say that *"other representatives in political institutions and public life are quiet enough to work in the shadow of those charismatic leaders."*

Flexible masculinity: well-educated men and modern realism – from cynicism to highly reflective action

Many attributes which are describing the participation culture of the young ladies are also relevant qualities in the world of well-educated young men. The masculine way to handle the ambivalences in the politics of the risk-society is a little bit more sarcastic and realistic. They aren't overrating representative democracy and voting; they are realistically debating the flexible representative system and basic problems: *"Should I vote for a person or a party?"* Two of the guys expressed the conventional idea that if you are not voting you cannot dramatically criticise the political process. But one of them is considering the whole voting thing as an illusionary and marginal act: *"The big civil servants are making the real decisions [...] Though there are subjects of debate in Finnish media politics and you can influ-*

ence the names on the candidate list, the conclusions after the election process, e.g. on tax cuts, are going to be the same regardless.”

These critical comments agree with the research thesis according to which the rhetoric of necessity in the Western World (of economical affairs and rationality) is dominant and the operation space of politics is diminishing. Another guy ironically observes how the voting choice has a same kind of status and influence as consumer choice in the utopias of life-politically oriented persons: *“The big river is made up of many small streams!”* However the discussants have a relatively pleasant picture of the Finnish welfare idyll and services: *“At Stanford I read a poster advertising chance to study for just 35,000 dollars per year. In our country this part of our common cake [of income distribution, KP] is in better hands, in our case President Tarja Halonen is defending our old-fashioned and effective social welfare state!”*

One young man told of the continuous changing of candidates: *“There are parties and persons I can’t vote for, but in every recent election I have voted for a new candidate.”* Another guy confessed that computerised candidate profiles¹¹ play an important role in his choice. They are not, however, naive believers in the wonders of technology; the problems of democracy cannot be solved by information technology or clever gadgets. Chatting and Internet discussion aren’t serious political alternatives for well-educated young men. Discussions on the Internet are still loose, pubescent and superficial. There are no clear arguments, persons aren’t really present and the debate is not leading to any real conclusions or synthesis. The arguments are like those in critical researchers’ books about the digital democracy debate. But the freedom of the Internet is a basic value for the discussants, and, *“if you are skilful, you can select your sources and partners on the Net.”*

Realistic problematisations were constantly present in the thematic interview. Almost all of the discussants have completed basic military service, but they are ready to participate in peace demonstrations. The role of the peace movement has changed since the Cold War, when it was dominated by the Eastern Block and thus was politically stigmatised. These young men have a typical male vision concerning international organisations like United Na-

¹¹ In Finland computers and web pages which match candidates with voters, are very popular. Almost half of the young people of voting age explore these before elections. Here you can input your views on various issues and the programme tells you which candidates’ public positions best match your views.

tions (UN) and the European Union (EU); they have hopeful ideas for the future of those organisations in the global risk-society, but at the same time they see clear conditions for fruitful development of these organisations: *“All the relevant organisations must be reorganised as functional networks from the grass-roots level up to the top. We have seen e.g. in the Baltic States that ecological and sustainable development has been made possible only through the work of civic groups and local mobilisation.”*

In spite of these political and organisational reflections, these fellows are not excluding life-politics and consumerism from their world. *“We are not becoming disheartened in the middle of dark and sad news of global media.”* Another guy presented a paradox regarding the consumerist life-strategy: *“It is easy to see the illusion in the alternative that one guy is not buying sport shoes made by child-labourers in order to thus influence the global rights of children; it is an illusion to think that something will happen without any personal action to influence consumer choices [of others]. If all of us Finns are reacting, then it has meaning.”*

These men are speaking without any idealistic ethos and pathos, but they are often acting idealistically – and significantly so. They have concrete experiences e.g. of the godparent action in St. Petersburg and research student exchanges comparing the bio-systems on the beaches of the Black Sea and Baltic Sea. The visit by South-Russian natural scientists may have been one of their most learning experiences in the global risk-society. Global ethics networks are a valuable source of hope. In another discussion these young men critiqued the power of professionals. The dubious politically utilisation of know-how is a cautionary example for these discussants, and Einstein’s moral regrets over his fate are another example of the schizophrenic situations of intellectuals.

VI. INSTITUTIONS OF 'ZOMBIE' DEMOCRACY AND THE DEBATE OVER THE 'UNINVITED GUESTS'

Voting and collective institutions – Zombie institutions of our time: living for some, dead to others

As we have heard from the young people interviewed, 'black and white' thinking isn't a very popular orientation any more: global ideals, readiness to fling oneself into institutional and playful activities and facing the solutions of political contradictions are present rhetorical attitudes. At the same time they mean the expansion of reflective playing and action spaces ('Spielraum') – even the Beckian 'ironical pacifism' has new supporters. The scepticism concerning one's own truths leaves room for political dialog and a new kind of understanding. On the other hand, the unreflective groups of young people disputed the chances of political spaces, solutions and pluralistic situations. We might consider the polemical groups and contradictions of young people's own rhetorical landscapes. The stabile and counter-political attitudes sketch in front of us a picture of politics as "*unfair and dirty game of old fogies based on Monastic Latin*" and in global terms "*the unfair power game*". But this moral attitude to bring moral discipline into the political cultures, and meanwhile to stay out of the dirty arenas of politics and simply leave them to the dirty players, is not watertight and straight-faced as in the early 90s (cf. Paakkunainen 1991 and 1995).

According to these recent interviews, youth groups who have pejorative and cynical concepts in their political discourse are nowadays more open to political participation; even though they are not confident in voting as a political instrument. *The boys from prison and the girls from Kajaani*, for example, had pejorative and moral stands on politics, but in their discussions of some themes they are participating in concrete ways and they were in principle open to the idea of voting! These groups are able to make fun of politics in their language games and media formats. Their cultures are developing from the strict and 'totalising' aesthetics (moral fundamentals) towards ironical fun and distinctions. In Finland the basic 'new right' movement and its charismatic front man, Tony Halme, give hope to young populists. Now they could hear their own voice in political arenas and the parliament. This indicates a new kind of belief in political responsiveness. The bitter voices have been heard

from insiders of the old political game, but well-educated young people are greeting this new-populist alternative with delight.

Young people have their own elastic and reflective spaces, concepts and styles of (life)politics. All of the interviewed persons were aware of or open to life-political action, from consumerism to professional global networks. They are no longer distancing themselves from the political arenas through easily anticipated rhetoric and naive morality. The black-and-white cynics have left. The space, spectrum and agenda of politics are more open. Individually minded interventions, reflections in the spirit of the risk society and courageous neo-populist movements reveal a situational and dramatic culture of politics, which are more uncontrolled (contingent) and playing.

Young people's political glance, which means irony or even ironical pacifism in the spirit of Beck (1993) towards adult's and survey researchers' cultures, is ready for the game. The researcher must be careful in the situation, where he/she is still seen as representing a 'zombie' (a somehow living but dead institution) when he/she tries to examine young people using the stable and commensurable standards of elections and Gallup-research (Beck, U. & Beck-Gernsheim, U. 2002). Elections and surveys are political institutions by which young people are playing and hectically identifying themselves (Bourdieu 1984). But young people aren't reading them as a common moral code or rejecting them as moral dogmas.

Twenty-five percent of young people answering to the survey referred to above (2003) lied about their voting behaviour at the last election – they were not as active as they claimed to be! We have to keep this fact in mind when we are reading the corpus of transcript texts; young people are projecting and self-reflecting by our thematic questions and peer groups active in thematic debates. The political and surveying institutions must also be more flexible and reflective, giving room for individualism on the other side of collectives and institutions. Empirical researchers need a bit of irony and distance from these serious-minded institutions, or else they will be desperately trying to restore the power of past institutions – *“riders without horses”*. Researchers must be ready for young people's open, unstable, reflective and watchful political eyes. In these meetings and interviews the game of the politics could again, successfully for a change, warm up.

The concept and participatory landscapes of democracy: ironical distances¹², but approaching the Finnish idyll

I'm trying to concentrate and analyse the concept of democracy among young discussants. Concerning my four focus groups, I see something common in each group: the way in which each group is taking the democratic space via their discursive practices. What does the democracy mean to young people? I am trying to understand groups rising up from civil society and approaching the realities of political democracy; the basic norms, conventions and institutional rules of the democratic game to live together. In the following illustrations (pictures, I - III) political democracy is at the centre of the picture. I have two dimensions. It is possible to have individualistic route to be a democratic partner or criticise the democratic institutions and their policies and functions. On the other hand some partners in the interview process have more collective or common means to participate in the democracy. The other dimension is illustrating the attitude to the openness of the democracy: is the Finnish political democracy open or closed to me or people who think as I do?

The locations of the interviewed persons and groups within this illustration are difficult to graph because of the political and theme-bound character of the concept of democracy. The main evaluative dimension here is the discussant's relationship to existing political democracy. Even in this, young people have theme-bound variations. In several ways the concept

¹² The speculative, asymmetrical and ironical character of political affairs is not only a post-modern situation but the view of the modern classics; e.g. Hannah Arendt (1958, 57) defined the meaningful life and action in a way that people are acting together but, what's remarkable here, as different kinds of subjects. *Mutuality and the opening of the new possibilities together was the condition of the 'political' in Arendt's world.* Everyone is hearing and seeing from different kinds of positions and this is the meaning of public life. The 'political' is always the field or 'woven fabric' of meanings full of underlying distinctions, contradictions and ironies.

Those very "dangers" seeming to threaten mutual co-operation, uniformity and coherence, political contradictions and confusion, are the conditions for observing the political situation and producing the reinterpretations of political fractions and communalities. We need sensitivity in front of value and genre based contradictions, their ironic expressions and specific unclear and 'artistic' solutions. (Ankersmit 1996). We have no scientific truth concerning the basis of politics. *The debate over absolute foundations and origins of politics has never been anything more than rhetorical moves in a political discourse.* The 'normal', 'truth' and political questions are always open to political definitions and struggles for meaning (Rorty 1989 and Foucault 1998). Many political theorists analysing the importance of style, art and aesthetics have arguments against (foundationalist) ethics, philosophy and conceptualisations of political affairs, Rorty (1991, 187) distinctively declares, "the priority of Democracy to Philosophy". The crucial idea is that political justice need not and "even should not pronounce on the philosophical and metaphysical foundations of our moral and political convictions, but be content to accept them for what they are and then organize them into a conception of justice more or less acceptable to all of us" (Ankersmit 2002, 173).

of democracy is ambivalent and situation-bound. We have moved from the strict, modern divisions of the Cold War into a contingent and open world. Maps of democracies are not seen as objective truths or absolute borders; people are able to spatialise and develop their own cartographies and meaningful, flexible styles in political discussions. And here cynical/ sceptical repertoires and irony have their own roles; in the mixed and hybrid world, we need stylistic imagination to solve the contingent, living cultural problems which go beyond the differentiations of 'black-and-white'. The ideal of democracy isn't excluded from this relativism.

Some researchers are even ready to replace the modern post-industrial society's bases for mobilisation, conflict and democratic partnership with post-modern membership or partnership, which in a sense problematises and politicises the existing status quo, the collective role of central political actors and democracy as a whole, the horizon of welfare and neutralising (universal) language games. Some Post-Foucauldian thinkers are claiming that it is not possible to speak of a united political system or democracy anymore; maybe there are many meanings and power centres acting at the same time. Many of young people want to openly bring in as (social and life) political attributes and starting points for particularism, multiple forms and group empowerment in place of the former principles of universalism, equality and uniformity (Thompson-Hoggett 1996; for a reply see Laclau 1998, 66-).

It is clear that as the socialist and bourgeois outlines that structure our pictures of society and democracy collapse and as the uncertainties of the risk society growing among our basic parameters break down and challenge our bases of understanding, we must be self-reflective – always posing the question of our own position and 'democratic' mobilisation (including factors of space, identity and area) over again. The heterogeneity of the material from the EUYOUNG (preliminary conceptual analyses; Paakkunainen-Pohjantammi 2003) is inspiring this interpretation. Groups and individuals in a late- or post-modern frame of reference cannot submit to a singular reading. Spatial changes and components reflect changeable and uncontrolled (contingent) representations in the individual subjects (Keith & Pile 1993; and Palonen's outline which inspired this work, 1993 and 1993B). Democratically open identity becomes the site and arena for a struggle for determination. In this regard this analysis of the text corpus too can be taken as post-modern, if you so desire.

This late-modern attitude of *“almost-anything-goes-somehow”* is actualising itself in the variations of the themes and sub-themes of the interview discussions. But it is not possible to speak of a pure and clear post-modern paradigm of *“anything-goes”*, because of the question horizon of the relative value of Finnish democracy. The well-educated young people and even the prisoners are ready to acknowledge the relative positive situation in Finnish democracy and the welfare state in comparison with totalitarian, American or Russian versions of political and social systems. In open democracy we have more than just on/off opinions concerning democracy. We are living in an idyll, but perhaps this is the very place to say that our democracy has problems. Most often the democracy just means the “conversational democracy”, where having room to discuss and influence some affairs of the society is the main point of the discussion in question, whether or not this system is, strictly speaking, a democracy.

People don't need universal or national audiences or effects for their democratic performances. People require meaningfully and socially mutual positions in cultures of political discourse; sometimes this implies a position on the other side of the democracy, e.g. illegal initiatives, cross-national positions or the informal power resources of certain professions.

Variations on democratic participation

Anarchist, Sasa (see pictures I and II), is several ways acting in the collective bodies of the democratic system (sometimes in parties, the media and trade unions), but his main idea is working *“against the Power of political system (or ‘Empire,’ as stated by the famous historical anarchists Negri and Hardt) by syndicalist and self-made political spaces”*. For the anarchistic learning processes democratic institutions and publicity are necessary contexts. By his anarchistic acts Sasa is trying to propagate the emptiness and structural repression hidden in the economical and political institutions. Sasa provokes the ‘violent structure’ of state (e.g. police) into the media-dramatised game of political polarisation. The group of young women from Kainuu have a collective feeling that they are in several ways outsiders. It is possible to refer to their rhetoric as a program: *“small community and symbolic action against the big economic game of so called democracy in the power centre.”* The democracy doesn't take shape among girls trying to have political influence through some political test and demonstrations.

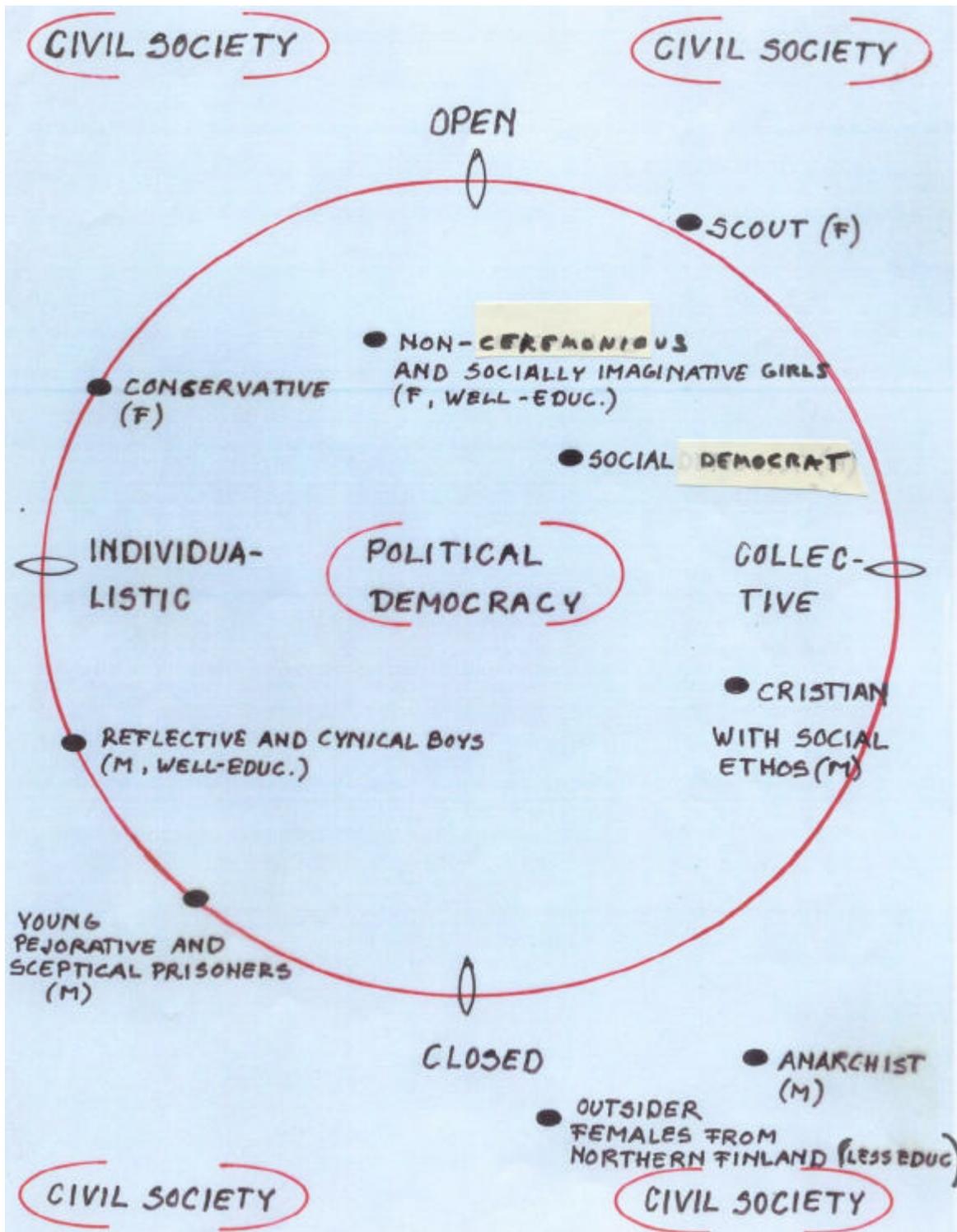
The young, pejorative and sceptical *prisoners* have contextual and fragmented speeches on democracy; it is too abstract a word for their every-day use – as a term of class too. They even asked me, “*what does class mean?*” They discuss possibilities to have political influence, which resembles our own democracy reflection. When they build up their life-meanings they use social-ethical metaphors and symbolic terms aiming at human rights and their own subjectivity, and this reflects the basis of democracy. These reflective and cynical lads have realistic and diverse repertoires in their participatory worlds. Their cynicism implies sceptical distance from seriously interpreted formal democracy and its expansion: many kinds of acts and speeches may be part of a conversational democracy. Scepticism means game space for these boys and powerful contributions to democratic publicity.

Conservative *Riitta* thinks that the democracy is an open system in Finland, but she doesn't take it as a contradictory public space. Her view of democracy is dominated by “*the fight for rational and economic interests arising from organic civil society in the spirit of Scandinavian welfare and American pluralism.*” The main subject here is the rational liberal individual relevant to the whole growth-society and its development. This positive utopia is not possible in the situation where we have overly large social and political asymmetries and contradictions. The rationality of economics limits these polarisations. *Tutta*, the scout, underlines the same aspects in a democracy: the democracy assumes the will of the people, “*self-disciplined learning towards responsible and effective life-management and productive citizenship*”. She sees a dialectic between an individual and a social being, but she puts individual responsibility before social values like freedom.

The non-ceremonious and socially imaginative *educated young women from Uusimaa* (Pictures I-II) think that the democracy is “a common ‘crack’ of social and gender interest and political imagination.” A continuous discussion on the nature of social problems among well-educated ladies seeks the political moment of decision in different kinds of questions and situations. The discussants do not naively believe in the democratic model but democracy is a way of life while trying to develop the Finnish democracy as a whole towards its constitutional ideal. In a sense they are playing with democracy. *Markku*, the Social Democrat, claims that “all the people have a chance to live and manage common matters, conscious of their expressed rights not to take part.” For *Markku* democracy is a serious business; a kind

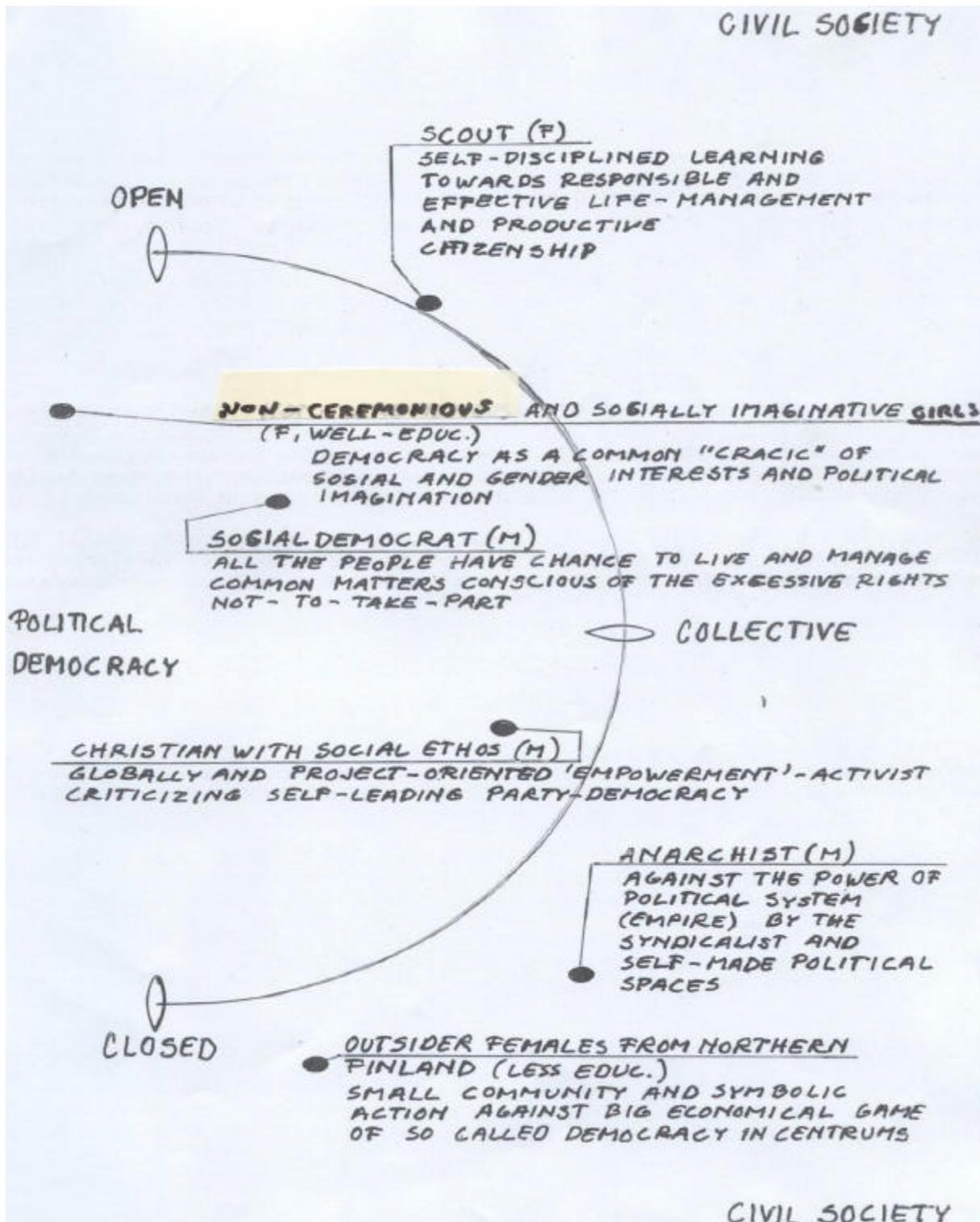
of social-collective objectivity for development. The human being is a political animal: 'Zoon Politikon' (by which Aristotle meant a person living in a 'Polis'). I suppose that *Markku* thinks that in order to live, you have to be social and recognise the necessity of political solutions.

**PICTURE I:
INTERVIEWED YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY**



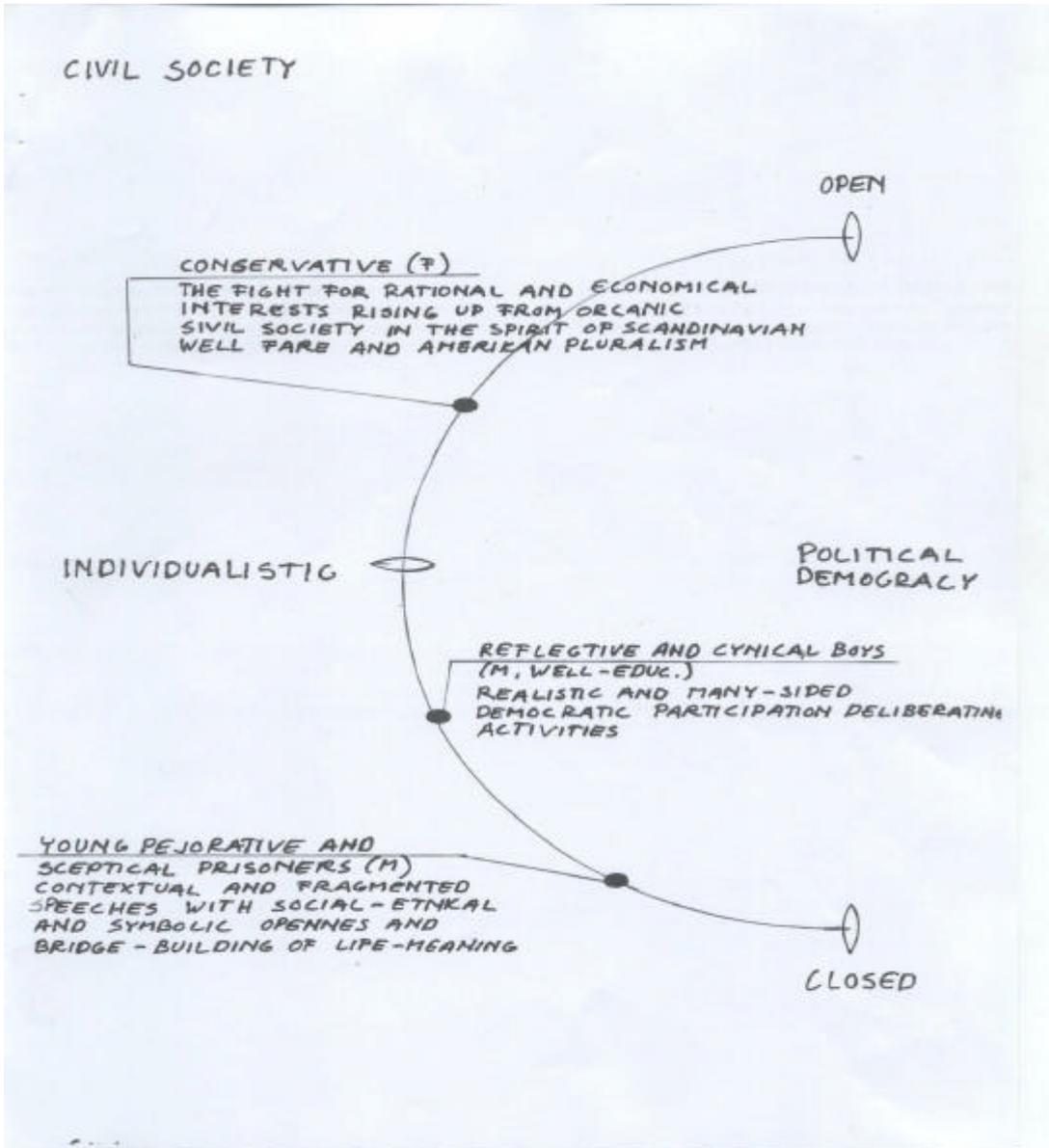
PICTURE II:

ADJUSTED PICTURE OF ILLUSTRATION BEFORE



PICTURE III:

ADJUSTED PICTURE OF ILLUSTRATION BEFORE



A Finnish speciality: The 'Uninvited Guests' movement and the warm feedback it received

As a part of Sasa's story above I mentioned some facts and features of a recent anarchistic demonstration called 'Uninvited Guests'. During recent years fragments of radical and black-green movements have successfully mobilised a semi-legal demonstration around the Presidential Palace each year on Finnish Independence Day. These events are part of the repertoires of global movements and social demonstrations of poor and marginal young people in Finland. In the midst of a grey media landscape, the media has taken a certain shine to these 'Uninvited Guests'. Different individuals and groups interviewed have an interesting spectrum of views on this media-drama.

The connection between young people interviewed and this radical movement is somewhat contrary to their attitude towards democracy (see picture IV below). *Riitta*, the conservative, regards such radical activists as "*stupid and jealous culturally marginal persons with command-model pointed caps.*" She attributes their 'rebellion' to the dissatisfied attitudes and 'bad luck' in competition and organic life in civil society. *Tutta* completes the pejorative picture of the black-green activists: "*an ineffective and amusing circus.*" According to *Tutta*, the anarchistic drama presented on television loosens the intercourse with the serious reality. For her politics haven't the ironic contradictions which were an essential part of Machiavelli's classical theory on the subject. The serious way of contextualising the game or performative act of politics almost always involves a one-dimensional or rational world-view.

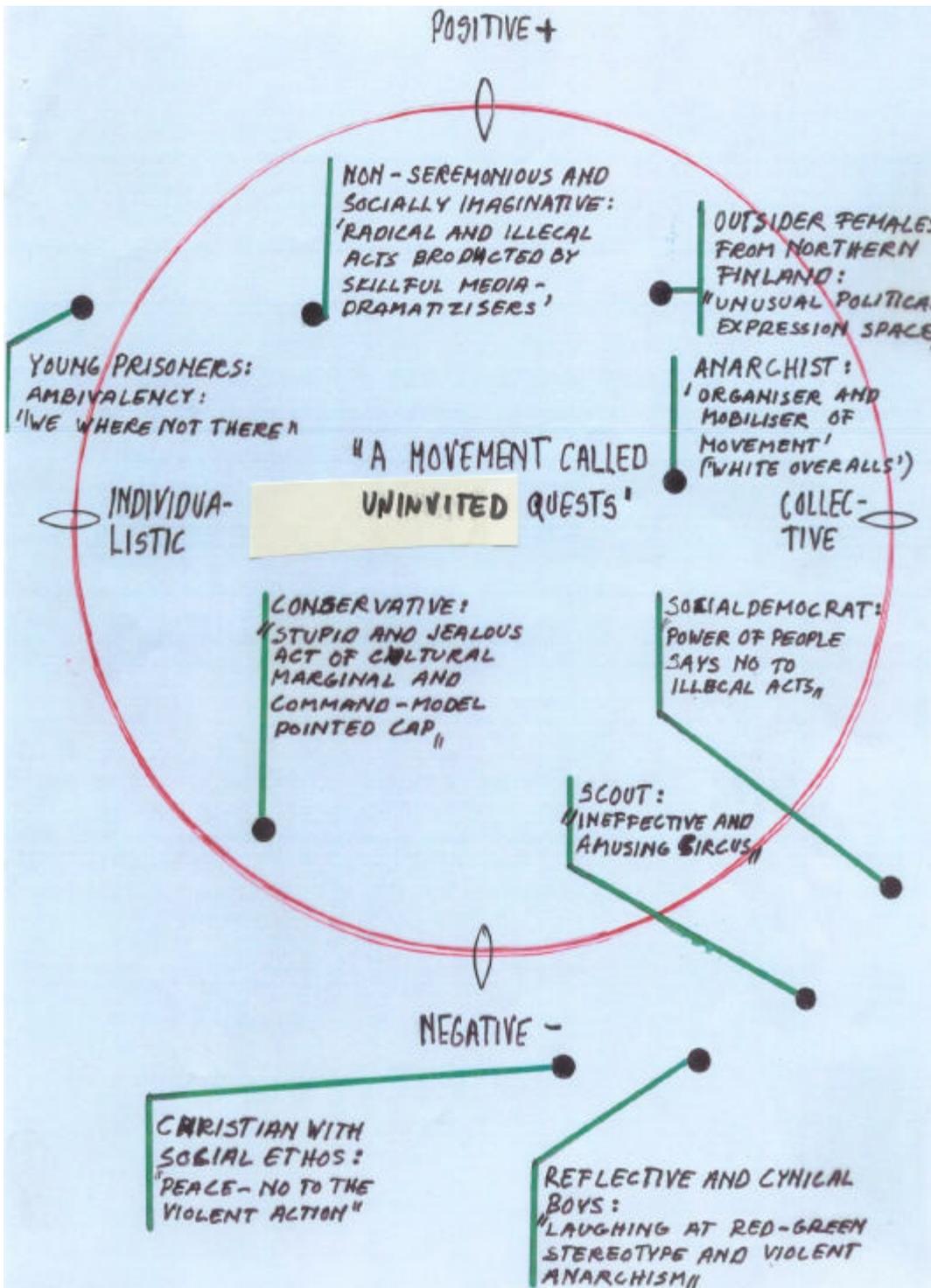
Anton, the active Christian with the social ethos, has a distinctively negative regard for the "Uninvited Guests": "*Peace – no to violent acts.*" He links the dramaturges on Independence Day to violent fractions of global movements and that's always a big ethical hindrance for him. The aim of the action doesn't justify the means! The conventional leftist, *Markku*, is likewise critical of these anarchists, but his basic value isn't peace or non-violent ethics; he is hanging onto 'democracy' in the specific Finnish tradition: "*The power of the people says no to illegal acts.*" The reflective and cynical educated boys from Uusimaa mix negative styles and arguments against anarchism: they "*laugh at red-green and black-green stereotypes and violent anarchism!*" Their scepticism means a critical distance from, and a stand against, both formal democracy and its clear counter-forces. Somehow they are feeding off of each other.

The *young prisoners* have heard of the happenings around the Presidential Palace and somehow it is fascinating but it isn't easy for them to understand the aim and the logic of this vulgar movement. They have ambivalent feelings: "*We were not there,*" but, "*we saw the guys on television.*" The less educated women from Kainuu intensively follow the radical happenings in Helsinki. The black-green 'vanguards' break up the relevant channel into the politics: "*Unusual political expression space.*" For the girls living in the North, such young radicals succeed in producing a politically polarised configuration: rich political elite versus the young and somewhat marginalised reformers of the world! *Non-ceremonious and socially imaginative girls* from South-Finland have the similar valuation: they talk about "*radical and illegal acts produced by skilful media-dramatisers.*"

They aren't members of anarchist movements or their "*fun-clubs*" but to them these movements mean the actions of a necessary and colourful minority in Finland. The basic values of movements are relevant for these academic females. The warmest feelings for the black-green movement come from the representative anarchist here, Sasa. He is one of that small number of Finnish young people achieving a significant media position for himself by means of unconventional and semi-legal participation. Some people are politically dramatising matters – with the whole nation watching and fervently taking a point of view! Is this how political mobilisation works in the era of media democracy?

Picture IV:

Young people and "Uninvited Guests"



VII THE MEANING OF THE 'POLITICS' FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN A GLOBAL MEDIA SOCIETY

The concepts of 'politics'

A fresh survey (organised by Gallup of Finland and the National Committee for Youth Affairs), illustrates the motivational basis and political concepts behind the political participation of young people (15-30 years old, 1000 interviews, results given in %).

TABLE I:

What does the term 'politics' mean to young people? (% agreeing with metaphors)

Getting information, debating and participating in the political system	81
Trying to solve international and global problems	81
The inevitable means by which to manage common concerns	70
A struggle between social classes and groups	55
Building a the better and more ecologically sustainable world	51
The inevitable means by which to solve problems and conflicts	50
Dishonesty and empty promises	35
'Monastic Latin'	31
My public actions and those of my group or network	25
'An arena for old fogies'	20
The repulsive, dirty game that politicians play	17
'Personal and life solutions are political'	12

These considerations tell us much about the approaching/waiting horizon to (real)political affairs and the landscape of potential political participation. Young people in Finland have many, in some ways Janus-faced (post-modern, situational and elastic) orientations to the political life and building up the better world. Constructive and idealistic, realistic and struggling, pejorative and distanced metaphors are living together depending on situation, theme and problem being discussed. The concepts are contradictory and inconsistent with each other. Often they have an ironical relation to each other.

Crystallised concepts

The analysis, typology and classification of concepts and metaphors could mutilate and hack the hermeneutical interpretation and sensitive reflection to shreds. The factor analyses of basic concepts and meanings of politics could disrupt the existential fundamentals of hermeneutical interpretation (cf., Gadamer 1977 and Beck 1999). Nevertheless it is fascinating to see the dimensions of variables by the rotated factor analysis with twelve variables of political concepts (Table II).

Table II: The Factor Analyses: The political concepts accepted by young people.
(Rotated factor matrix)

Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
The openness and morality in political ways of action	The chance and playing space/area of global politics	Politics as the resolution of contradictions and social affairs

Getting information, debating and participating in the political system	.49	
		.38
Inevitable way to manage common matters	.32	
Action of my own, my group or my network	(.20)	
'Personal and life solutions are political'	.35	
Struggle between social classes and groups		
Building a better and more ecologically sustainable world	.40	(.28)
		.65
Inevitable way to solve problems and conflicts	.56	
Trying to solve international and global problems	.49	
'Monastic Latin'	.63	
Dishonesty and empty promises	.49	
'Arena for old fogies'	.60	
Repulsive, dirty game of politicians		

This analysis was produced using the programme SPSS 10 (Extraction method: Maximum Likelihood, Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization). The cumulative share of the total variance was explained by reflecting before hand on the solution of three factors. The test of Cattells' Scree Plot indicates that the factors are functioning, but the interpretation is speculative and it needs qualitative reflection and comparing: factors correlate with each other somewhat and the coding classification of the Finnish Gallup was not clearly formed by the norms of ranking scale needed in correct factor analysis.

The television paradigm

Reading the transcribed texts against the background of the conceptual history of politics (cf. Paaakkunainen-Pohjantammi 2003), one is surprised to discover historically opposed lines of thought in them too. When stressing the exclusion of the youth from the arena of middle aged men appearing on TV, or from the shut up class of politicians, a conventional view of politics as a definite sphere or system, as a polity, is still clearly visible. But, at the same time the figures around this view indicate a critical distance: young people refuse to be integrated into this sphere. Hardly anyone in my material looks forward to becoming a politician of the 'collectivistic' type appearing on TV today.

Only a fraction of the writers are capable or willing to separate the 'political' as a special phenomenon. Unclear metaphors and expectations of 'fair play' live on. The common premises often remain dependent on other playing-fields of life (intermingling work, career, sport, courting and sexuality, etc.). In this sense the aspectual view of politics, where it is conceived of as a set of operations and activities independent of the field where it takes place, is closer to the young people's conceptual horizon, and it is from this viewpoint that many of them are able to re-interpret the politicians' activities in a sarcastic manner and by parodying or laughing at them.

Surprisingly many young Finns tend to associate the 'political' with television. Most of the essays studied ten years ago and the present text material support the claims of popular media critics: *"TV is a State religion of a new kind... and switching off the TV-set doesn't spare you the distress. The next day you will learn the same disasters in the conversations with your friends and other people."* (Gerbner 1977, 145-146). But young people do not understand the interpretative power of the cynically populist media and their ways of entertaining people; many of them look up to the investigating journalists as their real heroes and their professional idols. Riitta, the conservative among those interviewed, said that the prized chief editor of the local newspaper in her town, *"is one of us, maybe the best political interpreter."*

"The political situations in my everyday life consist of TV-News and other reports in the media... to me the 'political' doesn't mean any kinds of serious and ideological confrontations between political groups, as my father and mother tell me. I can't see any sense in their ideological phrases and educational stories about their political activities. And the doors are slamming between us." (A 20-year-old boy)

"I see the political arena as a playground for the adults, directed by a journalist acting as a nurse." (A 19-year-old girl)

In this world any steadfast collective ideological position or mass mobilisation appears as naive, dangerous or ludicrous. Herein lies one reason for the hardly successful rhetoric of the Finnish politicians: they are speaking to the elder generation which in dramatic circum-

stances built up the Finnish Welfare State and its institutions. The Finnish teachers also tend to be afraid of social and political changes: they usually cover the obligatory curriculum of 'politics and social affairs' in a neutralising and apolitical tone, which is highly unlikely to evoke political interest or encourage anybody to engage in politics.

The world of the media, the centre of modern political interpretation, is remarkably cynical today. Political journalists of the late 1980s identified themselves as unselfish observers, as social filters serving the common people. They wanted to unmask the politicians' "hustle and scheming, maximising their own interests" (Aula 1990, 119 and 142-144). Under these circumstances the electronic media are more than 'a new State religion'. This metaphor exceeds its functional limits (Postman 1984, 18-25). The TV binds together the elements of the young people's outlook on the world. You only have to 'electrify the political situations' by using various dramatic devices (cf. Pekonen 1987, 123-124) and 'shock effects', 'one after another'. The traditional political time, responsive roles and stories are breaking down.

Here the political media are not conceived of as an indoctrinating institution, they are rather understood as a cynical filter or horizon used by modern journalists. The activity and publicity of modern media guarantees a constant flow of information, but its stagnant, cynical horizon only reinforces active reactions of a certain kind among spectators. These active possibilities with the spectators are founded on these cynically structured stagnant features or attributes attached to the players (or politicians) by the media, whereas politicians and journalists are given opportunities to interpret and master their views according to the current situational factors (Street 1985). From this perspective the political collectivism and conventional engagement in party politics appear dogmatic. One can only take an ironic or a cynical distance from them. Especially well-educated young people and women from Kainuu in the transcript text corpus constantly reflect this basic post-modern feeling of "*carefully-staying-on-our-toes*". You cannot 'nail yourself fast in one Line or Party' because after making this kind of commitment you become a dogmatic person.

A cynical journalist may want to illustrate the work of Finnish parliamentarians by showing, week after week, the almost empty assembly room of the Finnish parliament during its sessions, and the *young men in prison* take the documented picture of the parliamentary

room seriously! This approach takes the textbook story of the plenary sessions of parliaments at its face value as the centre of political life.

The political performances of Riitta and careful Tutta

Riitta, an active member in the Coalition party, has her rigorous opinions towards fundamental and illegal movements. This stand isn't a dogmatic one. Her self-understanding and concept of politics is, surprisingly again, flexible and aware of the television paradigm. It is clear to me, after an 80 minute interview, that an essential part of her speech is image-building; her performance is a fascinating demonstration of the 'New Public Management'. She names the institutional traditions and compromise-centred traditions of Finnish political culture as the main problems in the era of media. That's why she tries to build up polarised dramas in the political arenas and "*clear alternatives to the overly tolerant Greens.*"

Distinctive arguments to engage civil movements ("Yes to the nuclear power") are a case in point; you have to break up the dirty and stabile picture of established politicians. In the middle of this media-reflection, she suddenly makes reference to the textbook of political science and its formulations on the ABCs of politics. Maybe she lives so deep in the hectic political rhetoric and image game that someday she will have to become familiar with something more long-lived and durable. The classics and studying social science is a real alternative here: the Beckian visions of the politics of professionals, grass-root democracy and life-political '*round tables*' are actual again.

Tutta, the scout, is an independent and active individual. She has no contacts with politicians or social media; she doesn't need them. Her life-project is a process of enlightenment and maturation where politics, "*especially hard contradictions and fundamental world-views,*" are some kind of momentary disturbances. This classical and careful attitude of conservatism is conceptualising politics in the context of a need for order and natural development. The term "*social influence*" is a more correct way for *Tutta* to describe the political dimension in Finnish Scouting and its functions: "*The Scouts are a powerful social actor without links to group politics.*" It is much easier to use the attribute 'social' rather than 'political'.

The first association concerning politics in her mind is *“having a social and global influence.”* This nice metaphor tells us of the strong legitimacy of global issues in the present political scene. *“I’m delicately aware of the use of political terminology, the world is full of various political issues and problems.”* But according to *Tutta*, the contradictions or distinctions between people don’t necessarily lead to warm political cultures. E.g., *Tutta* brings the social problem of marginality back to problems of personality and self-development projects. *“There is no need for every person to be present in the social discussions and roles.”* The main aim is the self-discipline and personal growth. *Tutta* is on her road and has no need for political dramas and contacts with the media and its editors to influence her in the modern world context.

The limits of media in politics, as stated by Markku and Anton

Anton has, as we have observed in the text quotations, distinctively sensitive and sophisticated view of (life)political aspects of social structures and values. Indeed *Anton’s* first association in dealing with politics is *“the parliament house”* but after this reference he laughs, and his next comment is more serious. *“I have a rather negative attitude here. Politics today seems to be an individualistic, even egoistic, activity around the politician’s own interests.”* *Anton* has a dualistic comprehension on political landscapes. On the one hand there is this party-centred real politics which isn’t transparent and open. On the other hand he has special life-political views regarding political issues and aspects, e.g. interesting observations on the political dynamics between generations.

He is aware of the decision-making and resolution moments in politics but as part of his social-ethical world view he constantly emphasises the common good and public interest. A kind of universal interest is alive and that must be the goal of good politicians. It is realisable to overcome the Beckian ‘either-or’ politics by ‘yes-but’ speculations and synthesis in the direction of the common good and universalities. The struggle aspect of politics is not on *Anton’s* list of favourite things. This means global and Christian-social responsibility. The media-democracy is a modern and constant fact for *Anton*, and he tends to grin at the conservative and stabile role of the media, which is *“commercial and superficial.”* The media likes, e.g., violence as a shocking effect and dramatic joke, *“giving people what*

they expect”[with a subtle ironic grin, KP]. This entertainment dimension of media is somehow upholding the unfair and unequal structures of global business and domination. He speaks like a careful new-leftist at the end of 60s, when ‘all the flowers were flourishing’!

Markku, our lonely Social Democrat, defends the social responsibility of the conventional parties in several ways. He has been involved in party politics for ten years and he has “*in principal been outside.... of the dirty cabinet games of the communal politics.*” Somehow he is defending the social prestige of politicians’ virtuous skills and the relative independence of the politicians! We have to remember that this is part of the rhetoric of almost all successful politicians nowadays! The collective norms and group discipline are part of the everyday politics and *Markku* is aware of them, but according to *Markku*, those laws of the political world are not taking control over him. For *Markku* politics implies the collective utopias of a better and more equal world. And on this road politicians have to agree and act between the contradictions and alternatives. All the time politicians have to cultivate and improve their awareness of individual needs and interests in the direction of social benefits and common will. Mr. Hobbes is close by in *Markku*’s speeches.

The late-modern media-connection between the average people and party-political activists is mainly a positive point for *Markku*: “*the quick and intimate relationship is... a resource of knowledge... for critical political culture.*” Sometimes this media-connection is too intimate or vulgar: “*popular editors dig out the trash bags of the candidates before the presidential elections.*” Maybe, “*the media has too much power - but the media in the United States of America is, without irony, in power.*” And that’s the big problem of political elitism living together with capitalism in the USA. In Finland people have many-sided public forums, reference groups and knowledge sources. “*We have critics and pedagogies of political media, too.*” One crucial Scandinavian tradition defending pluralism in Finland is the strong autonomy of local communities; “*it influences hand in hand with universal democracy*” and keeps our political discussion open. *Markku* is speaking in the realistic terms of a skilful old politician.

The totalitarian rhythm of media power (Sasa and the young women from Kainuu)

For Sasa, the anarchist, the main task in politics is to get people involved in politics. The relatively small groups of anarchists are, by the 'innovative destruction' strategy, provoking people into life-political and self-regulating participation. Autonomy and having one's own political space is an absolute value for anarchists. Sasa doesn't like any doctrine or political ideology or '-ism'. All the ideas and ideologies in the history are somehow producing new power structures; people have had enough of these ideological initiatives. They want to have more politics against real existing political institutions and the state. The media is fine, or at least the inevitable condition and means in this "*struggle*".

Sasa, who is often seen on Finnish Television, is many ways unsatisfied with the questions and contexts in media interview situations. Editors are using him as a dramatic and angry voice of the social and political marginal. In spite of this, Sasa is trying to turn the meanings of public spaces into the language of 'innovative destruction' (Bakunin). The editors buy exotic episodes for their programs and clip the interviews and documentaries arbitrarily for their own use. On the other hand, e.g., in South-Asia, where Sasa was visiting, youth groups imagine that by the spoiling of some institutional or commercial object the society is changing. The media inspires and urges these illusions in extreme political situations. On the other hand absolute pacifism is a little bit naïve, Sasa claims, "*pacifists are only waiting for the violent reactions of policemen and they are afraid of them.*"

Sasa has chosen the middle course and he plays with the tensions and contradictions between state powers and semi-militants. The bodies and rhetoric of the state are skilful. Finnish civil servants, for instance, "are buying" the radical associations of unemployed persons with promises of jobs. By powerful and skilful disobedience it is possible to disclose the hidden contradictions in a society – the wretchedness of New Public Management in the liberal West.

The young women from Kainuu spoke about "*the speed and rhythm of the media game*" which points to the self-ruling character of the game in politics. At the time of the interview the game, where old guys were trying to overthrow the leadership of the Coalition party by the personal speculation and changing fractions, was present in media. Somehow *the girls*

from *Kainuu* feel powerless in the face of this sort of media game. A more dramatic and skilful game in the political arenas isn't a solution here; the activities of the politicians must be simple, focused on 'rules of fair play' and concrete themes. The public light of the media is an extremely "decent control over this game arena". The media gives stigmas, selects, speculates and itemises issues and agendas. It has a lot of power. It is possible that "all things are changing to shit during this media-rolling." The young women added the claim, "money works out a lot of things, in the media business as well." Speculations on media power come back to the issues of centre vs. periphery and local activities. In this context the representatives of democracy at the communal level are "fair players of the game and counsellors in common matters".

What's really happening behind the agenda-setting of the dominant media?

The young men living in the Vantaa Prison had quite 'anti-theoretical' attitudes, but they presented some sensitive ideas in the discussion of 'what is political in the world?' They criticised the power of money in politics and recognised the dirty aspects and corruption in the rules of the game. The popular analogy for politics among the prisoners is working life. "Politics means the heart of Finland; they have to decide on Finnish affairs. And I have to say... you that they must have more and more tasks... they have to do something about the social problems of poor people. It is a stupid fact that they are only articulating the interests of rich people and establishing schools for the engineers."

The young prisoners are eclectically adopting news, facts and analytical tools via newspapers and television. The power of media is functioning over the politicians. They are realistic in examining the media: "If Toni Halme were to say something relevant in politics, it would have no meaning without media, which must be there nearby." It is hard to know what the meaning of media drama is in the discourse of the prison boys: what is fiction and where the real documentary begins? The boys are little bit afraid of media power, "it is difficult to know what's really happening behind the media, which manipulates important things around us!"

The well-educated young men are open for most part to the political concepts present in the modern world. They keep a sceptical distance from the participation cultures structured according to these concepts and ideologies. We may comprehend them as the researchers and critical editors, the political ideas and life-political roles are living hand in hand. Their argument is that the individual's responsibility is a central idea in politics and political media. The journals and public forums of provinces and parties are nostalgically present in the discussion, but according to discussants sitting in the faculty of social sciences, nowadays the power of choice is in the hands of individuals. The role of the individual isn't an easy one; e.g. the Helsingin Sanomat Corporation (the biggest media and journalism conglomerate in Finland) has a lot of power.

Sometimes the main journals have a lot of trivial headlines, but they have a silent power in agenda-setting. One member of the thematic discourse group condenses the issue: *"The best propaganda consists of those themes not analysed in the media!"* And they have this modern paradox; media relations are also the main political relations. You cannot have political stands without television and you cannot act via the television room of your home: *"No one will have enough time for analytical and contextual reading of several producers of news."* The basic feeling of the well-educated guys is critical; they have no general belief in objective materials or analyses: *"There are always subjective interpretations and ways of illuminating things."* They laugh at the small-minded headlines describing the middle class life-style of the Finnish journalists observing their near contexts. The privatisation of the Finnish electronic media means many sad things too for the boys active in the debate; the money is determining themes and corruption is arising in many commercial media companies and the research motivation of journalists isn't so strong as it was ten or twenty years ago.

The modern media also teaches *young educated women* in the late modern political culture. They have a bit more idealistic an understanding of participatory changes via media. Women believe in self-made articles in media and young radicals (feminists, the so-called Fox Girls organising attacks in the name of animal rights, and anarchists) skilfully play with media editors. The empathy of media is often insufficient: *"Sometimes they have no interest to know what the concrete and fair purpose of a politician is."* Behind the media are working real human beings. It is an abortive question to ask for right or objective informa-

tion: *"We have several media, and politics means just this: questionable realities."* But it is easy to find main tendencies in dominating commercial media, e.g. the attempt to bring Finland into NATO. The critics of media do not have so many moralistic aspects; like almost all young persons interviewed, the young, well-educated women understand well the personification of the politics via the media. Through charismatic personalities it is easy to grasp distinctions in the late modern era. But sometimes the popular images, such as sportsmen coming from outside the social and political arenas are too dominant, without any substance in their messages: *"It may be the warning of our Zeitgeist!"*

VIII IDEAS FOR THE EUYOUNG PART QUESTIONNAIRE

Young people have situation-dependent and theme-bound concepts of politics. It will be highly interesting to know the variation of political concept.

What does the term 'politics' mean to young people? (I agree / disagree)

- ? Getting information, debating and participating in the political system
- ? Trying to solve international and global problems
- ? An inevitable way to manage common matters
- ? A struggle between social classes and groups
- ? Building a better and more ecologically sustainable world
- ? An inevitable way to solve problems and conflicts
- ? Dishonesty and empty promises
- ? 'Personal and life solutions are political'
- ? Action of my own, my group or my network
- ? 'Monastic Latin'
- ? 'An arena for old fogies'
- ? The repulsive, dirty game of politicians

So-called 'political capital' (e.g. Putnam) is highly relevant if we try to explain the background of political participation:

Things that are important to me can best be advanced by:

- a) Political parties
- b) Labour organisations
- c) Hobby organisations
- d) Citizen movements or other grass roots movements
- e) Communities or local networks
- f) My friends
- e) No particular movement or organisation, since I consider personal choices concerning my life to be political acts
- f) Some other way, how _____

During the eighties, Roland Inglehart found two independent dimensions of NEW and OLD politics common to many modern (behaviouristic) survey researchers. But we have to consider the meaning of his basic question dealing with (post)materialism. Here is one example of how to edit/develop the basic "Inglehartian" question set in a more contemporary and ecological direction:

Please, rank the following political issues from most important to you personally (number 1) to least important to you (number 4).

- A) Maintaining order in the nation
- B) Giving the common people more say in important political decisions
- C) Economic growth and consumption
- D) Protecting the environment

(E.g., if a person's first choices are A and C, she/he could be labelled as a 'materialist'; if the first choices are B and D, a 'post-materialist')

The following rotated factor matrix of the main components of analysis (Varimax, made by Villina Hellsten visited in EUYOYPART-meeting) is a useful way of two-dimensionally illustrating a person's level of activity in NEW and OLD politics. Those interviewed will be asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements (on a scale from 1 to 5) (All statements are AVAILABLE FOR EUYOUPART QUESTIONNAIRE use). Variables of factor analysis are given below.

	<i>F1 NEW politics</i>	<i>F2 OLD politics</i>
Vegetarianism is a useless phenomenon of short duration.	0.64	
Nation being surveyed] must take in more refugees.	-0.63	
Patriotism is one of the most important virtues a person can have.	0.62	
Demonstrations make decision makers' work more difficult.	0.62	
We need more severe punishment for crime	0.56	
Women have no reason to demand more rights	0.54	
The position of workers has weakened in an alarming manner		0.78
The law is applied differently on the rich and the poor.		0.71
Big firms are exploiting working people		0.68
Conflicts between workers and bosses are important		0.66
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	2.22	2.02
Cumulative (%)	22.2	42.4

The following list of statements inspired of Villiina Hellsten will constitute a fruitful basis for factor analysis in EUYOUPART. These variables are adequate for the analysis of political cynicism, 'new' and 'old' politics, means of political participation and contradictions in politics.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

- Those in politics and government seem to me to be playing their own game which is hard for me to understand and have an influence on.
- Politics and government seem so complicated that I really can't understand what they are about.
- I am capable of political action only as an individual not as a member of an association or group
- It doesn't really matter which parties are in government – in the end, things will be pretty much the same anyway.
- At this point of my life I can't be interested in what goes on in the rest of the world; right now the most important thing to me is to party with my friends.
- To me it is more important to live the present to the fullest than to bother myself with politics.
- Parties are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions.
- Politicians make their decisions only according to the party leadership's instructions, not by listening to their conscience.
- Politicians waste taxpayers' money with their travel and other personal expenses.
- Politicians protect each other even if they have broken the law.
- Mainly ruthless and publicity-seeking people want to become politicians.
- Most people who receive social support do not actually deserve any financial assistance.
- The reasons for unemployment most often comes from the unemployed themselves.
- The welfare state makes people less willing to take care of themselves these days.
- If social support was not so generous people would learn to stand on their own feet better.
- I think that the state should not interfere with levelling people's income differences, because not everybody can be successful, after all.

New Politics (authoritarian vs. libertarian issues)

- For [country name] to stay [nationality] presupposes restricting immigration.
- Children should be taught to be more obedient and disciplined.
- In the present situation the benefit of our nation needs to be put before individual benefits.
- One strong leader can resolve our country's problems better than parties and the parliament.
- Immigrants ruthlessly exploit the [nationality] social security system.
- Nowadays young people don't honour traditional [nationality in capitals] values.
- People who break the law should be given more severe sentences.
- For some legal offences, the death penalty would be the most appropriate punishment.

- Presently things are so insecure in [name of country] that the police and the army should be granted more powers.
- Development aid must be increased.
- [Country name] should accept more refugees.
- I think that protecting animal rights is very important social issue.
- I think that vegetarianism is nothing more than just a temporary fashion phenomenon.
- [Country name] must try to increase its economic well-being, even if it means damaging the environment.
- Women should not demand any more rights for themselves because gender equality is already very advanced in [country name].
- Patriotism is one of the most important virtues a person can have.

Old Politics (class conflict)

- Owners of the big companies become rich their workers' expense.
- The law is applied differently for rich people than for the poor.
- Co-operation in companies is impossible to achieve, since in reality managers and workers have opposing interests.
- I think that the best reward for good work is good pay.

Participation modes ("old" vs. "new"):

- Voting is the only proper way to influence how things are run.
- Direct action is a thread to the democratic system.
- The law should always be obeyed, even though some individual rules might appear wrongful.
- Demonstrations are mostly useless, and they just hinder decision-makers' work.
- Sometimes damaging other people's property may be necessary so that important issues can be advanced.
- I think that things will never change if people do not themselves interfere with matters using "tougher measures."
- I think that the use of the Internet should be restricted so that it could not be used in organising illegal activities.
- Discussing issues with people on the Internet and trying to influence other people's opinions is, to me, just as a political act as voting.
- If I considered some issue to be important enough, I would be ready to go and participate in a protest demonstration even in some other country.

- I think that young people who participate in demonstrations against globalisation have a good cause, and the violence that has become associated with them results only from the unnecessarily tough measures by the police.
- I don't think that people from other countries should be allowed to come to [country name] to take part in demonstration, since we have enough trouble with our own radicals.
- I think that it is great that many young people exercise their participation potential to the extent that, in addition to voting, they are active in demonstrating.

Political consumerism

- People who buy so-called fair trade products from developing countries just want to buy themselves a good conscience.
- People who believe that they can influence things by boycotting certain products or companies are just too naive.
- I think that voting is too old-fashioned a way of influencing matters in today's world, and that's why I do politics with my personal consumption patterns.
- I think that voting is too old-fashioned a way of influencing matters in today's world, and my choices of education and profession are more relevant in politics. In these arenas I'm able to reflect and reach responsible political conclusions.
- Politics today is so diverse that everyday choices you make personally are the best way to influence things. Voting and parties are simply not enough anymore.

Relations of 'belonging' and levels of political participation

Political participation happens on several levels, and those 'belonging' relations are a part of political identification:

Where do you feel that you belong? Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

1 As a member of my local community	1	2	3	4	5
2 As a [nationality] person	1	2	3	4	5
3 As a person from [region, e.g. "Central"] Europe	1	2	3	4	5
4 As a European	1	2	3	4	5
5 As a global citizen	1	2	3	4	5
6 As a mixed or many-sided person	1	2	3	4	5

IX CONCLUSIONS: DIS-ILLUSIONARY AND ACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE REFLECT THEIR POLITICAL COMMITMENTS

The play metaphor is highly useful in the analysis of young people's relations to political participation: how to play the game or is there a chance to play at all? Considering the metaphor of play used for politics, the differences between the following three types are obvious. Firstly, the majority of young people have no other message to politicians than their passive, pejorative or cynical style and symbolical movement: this includes both moralistic anti-politicians and those who want to replace the present dirty play with the young people's own fair play (Paakkunainen1993). This group, however, tends to reject playing as such - because of its many intrigues and immoral conduct – in favour of binding politics to substantial moral rules of conduct which are assumed to prevail in other areas of life. After the analyses of transcribed thematic interviews it is easy to conclude that the relevance of this group is decreasing.

Though the interviewer heard lot of moralistic attitudes towards politicians and political participation, all the discussants in the process have some open doors to political expression and participation. *The young women from Kainuu* and *boys from the jail* compared political activities to everyday fair games and practices and often laughed at institutional politics. Furthermore they had their own discussion traditions in politics and some participatory means (e.g. demonstrations) and they are principally open to conventional participation in matters like voting. Among the political activists, *'the scout'* and *'the conservative'* used rhetoric of individual and rational fair play in politics and criticised politics from this horizon. 'The new right' and the enlightenment project of Scouting in Finland are channels for these 'non-playing' programmes.

But there is also a growing tendency of individualistic civil competence that threatens the older people's political establishment. In many ways this latter group is individualistic and elastically orientated group as well. They consist of both 'democratising' potential players and play-breakers who realise that the present politicians are bad ones and are intent on becoming better players themselves: not so much restricted to formal arenas and ready to take the opportunities to be found in politics.

The second group is rather oriented towards changing the rules of playing, in the sense of opening and democratising the chances for all citizens to become players, as well as in the procedural sense of changing the rules to be closer to the ideal of 'fair play'. This group has experienced the rise of stable democracy as a chance for a real and competent individualism in politics. They believe in new kinds of opportunities for political action and play (Spielraum), seeking new forms of communities and alternatives to the present 'risk societies' assuming their own responsibilities (Heitmeyer & Moller & Siller 1990, 210-211). Most of the activists and well-educated persons in interviews are thinking this way.

These individualistic and elastic tendencies are a new phenomenon. They involve stylistic and symbolical experimentation and shameless ways of breaking up the conventional political ideologies and collectives. Political participation is a chance to potentially actualise a situation or theme bound discussion. The majority of the interviewed young people were open-minded; dogmatic 'either-or' attitudes were out and 'yes-but' orientations were in. Though most of the discussants avoided formal membership in political organisations, '*the Social Democrat*', '*the Christian-ethical activist*' and '*the feminist*' were ready to influence matters from inside political institutions, networks and parties. Life-political activities from consumerism to professional politicking were open for almost all partners in the discussion!

All this embarrasses politicians, researchers and other adults. The establishment is not ready for living, rapidly moving critics, irony and civil competence. It has no understanding of the emotional and cynical styles not losing their voices and identities in the midst of a psychedelic and bureaucratised risk society. In addition to individualistic actions, especially the literally competent young people are ready to make political contributions together.

Among the young discussants we can detect a small group of play-breakers who have joyfully accepted the playful character of politics and are ready to use it as a chance to alter the whole style of politics. Some of the well-educated persons, a girl from Kainuu and especially 'the feminist' and 'the anarchist' are play-breakers, ready for radical and illegal debates and participatory means. They want to act politically by breaking away from the

established games and by inventing new forms of play. It is in this group that the rhetoric of earnestness belonging with the traditional organised, institutional and collective forms of politics is most clearly rejected. This group of interviewed persons have artistic or literary heroes, such as Milan Kundera and Antonio Negri, whose playful or anarchistic style of acting 'destructively' they want to transfer into politics. And they will not leave their work unfinished. In their action programs and back pockets we could find an alternative that points beyond the old democracy founded on the power of collectives.

Any theses suggesting a de-politicisation or participatory passivity of youth appear less convincing today. Not only because they are often put forward by those who have 'vested interests' to defend, but far more importantly, claims of this kind can in general hardly be opposed or defended without specifying one's standpoint: one's criteria and the thematic or temporal respects of the argument. Furthermore, those presenting such arguments do not realise that such concepts as politics are today susceptible to opposing and even incommensurable interpretations, and these late-modern and ambivalent interpretations in particular should be studied, not the plus or minus appraisals of such labels as 'polities' by various audiences.

Sometimes young people only speak of participation, sometimes they act in imaginative ways

My case study of the Finnish young people in the late eighties and this thematic project lead to some important conclusions. First of all, it is impossible to speak of 'youth' as a collective singular in the sense of a subject adopting more or less identical positions; rather, the internal divisions among young people are at least equally strong as among older folks, both in their attitudes towards politics and in the figurative language they use for the phenomenon of politics. There are some political activists ready for participation inside conventional political organisations. As a tendency, however, we can detect a more or less clear generation-bound shift from one paradigm to another. This shift appears explicitly negative, but many ways in the form of an open-minded view: it is a rejection of the collective and institutional paradigm of established forms of politics. What comes instead of it in the texts of the young discussants, however, is a wide and colourful

spectrum of views and participatory landscapes. Sometimes young people only speak of participation, sometimes they act in imaginative ways.

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