Spaces and tactics of politics:

Transnational connections, neoliberalisation and the reshaping of civil society

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Gail Lewis | Birkbeck, University of London
Sandro Mezzadra | University of Bologna
Jemima Repo | Newcastle University

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University of Turku
Department of Social Research
Turku Political Sociology Study Group (TURPO)
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Keynotes

Lies and disguises: discourses of ‘culture’ and ethnossexual landscapes of sexual abuse
Gail Lewis, Birkbeck, University of London

The paper will take some of the recent reports into child sexual exploitation that has occurred in numerous cities and towns across England to explore the ways in which discourses of ‘culture’ are mobilised as explanations and boundary formations. It will argue that beyond these processes of boundary formation lies a landscape of class based hatred and misogyny which is disguised by the lie of ‘culture’ and the abused are abandoned.

The multiple shades of neoliberalism. Social movements, “progressive” governments, and new political conflicts in Latin America
Sandro Mezzadra, University of Bologna

Latin America has been a crucial site of experimentation for neoliberalism. At the same time it has been the region in which powerful social struggles since the late 1990s were able to challenge in the most radical way the legitimacy of the neoliberal project. “Progressive” governments established in several Latin American countries in the wake of those struggles use to define themselves as “post-neoliberal”. Does this mean that “neoliberalism” belongs to the past at least in a huge part of Latin America? And what about “financialization”, a term often associated in the region with the “Washington consensus” of the 1990s? More generally, which is the balance of two decades of struggle against “neoliberalism” in Latin America and of the long decade of “progressive” governments? On the basis of the collaborative research work I have been doing over the last years with Verónica Gago (Conicet, Buenos Aires) I will try to tackle these questions, in an attempt to produce “resonances” with other global landscapes, and particularly with the situation in Europe.

The biopolitics of gender in feminist theory and politics
Jemima Repo, Newcastle University

Gender is one of the most cherished concepts in contemporary Western feminism. Recently, feminists have argued that it is danger of being emptied of its critical content owing to its reduction to a synonym of sex, as well as its usurpation by neoliberal policies. These fears are justified and well-founded. At the same time, in this narrative gender easily becomes miscast as the pinnacle of feminist theoretical progress. Gender was never the brainchild of feminism to being with, although the notion is commonly attributed to Simone de Beauvoir or second-wave feminism. The idea of the social construction of gender was first conceived by psychiatrists in the 1950s studying the cognitive relationship between the ambiguous genitals and psychosexual socialisation of intersex children. Theorising gender was instrumental to creating protocols for ‘corrective’ surgeries on their bodies, and US second-
wave feminism appropriated the idea directly from these studies. In light of this biopolitical past, gender can no longer be taken for granted as a progressive theory. Rather, knowledge of this past necessarily reconfigures our understanding of its place, purpose, and future as a tactical hinge of contemporary feminist theory and politics.

Sessions

1a Spaces, experiences and boundaries of politics

Transnationalism, Turkish/Kurdish diaspora and the transformation of political activism in the South East European border land
Ulrike M. Vieten, Queen’s University Belfast

This paper will explore the transformation of the European border and political boundary discourse while looking at the role played by transnational European citizens with Turkish or Kurdish background in recent democratisation movements in the public realm of Istanbul/Turkey. First, an analytical framework will be developed with respect to conflicting post-territorial layers of national, on the one hand, and supra-national aspects of an emerging European citizenship, on the other. Second, it will be explored in what ways Turkish and Kurdish diasporic political activists, who live or have lived in different metropolitan cities articulate and enact their concern and commitment towards multi-layered institutional spaces, e.g. the European Union, Turkey, and also distinctive EU Member states. The question occurs how transnational political activism influences and changes the concrete local sites, e.g. Istanbul, intersecting with national, transnational, European and global spaces. Hereby, notions of an emerging radical democratic transnational public space are scrutinized to deepen our understanding, how ethno-national group belonging impacts on the possibilities of local anti-capitalist (neo-liberal) struggles and political mobilisation. The material for this paper is partly drawn from a comparative empirical study conducted by the author on “new” citizens’ inclusion in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands (2009-2013), enriched by digital/media discourse analysis of the recent Gezi park protests, and some archive footage.

Second-generation transnational political/civic engagement in diaspora
Mari Toivanen, University of Turku

Studies have shown that diaspora organisations play a significant role in terms of relief, (post-conflict) reconstruction and development in the sending countries. However, what is still largely missing in studies that concentrate on diaspora communities’ political transnational ties from the perspective of development is a focus on the second generation’s
participation in the sending states’ institutional and political spheres through various forms of (online) political activism.

This study looks at transnational political activities of members active in Kurdish diaspora organisations in Finland and in France. It examines how the second generation takes part in (post-conflict) reconstruction and development, including relief efforts and humanitarian aid with the aim to contribute towards peace-building processes in the sending states. On the other hand, focus is also on participation in military training camps and eventually combat that aim to contribute towards the autonomy of Kurdish regions. What forms and strategies of transnational participation do the second generation take part in? What meanings do they carry for them? How is transnational political activism spoken of in terms of belonging, identity and home?

The study sets out to shed light to different forms of “diasporic circulation”, referring both to the institutional and non-institutional means through which individuals participate in the political space of the sending states. Such forms of participation include temporal migration and short-term visits, for instance, to be trained by the PKK, but also economic and “political” remittances (such as long-distance voting), lobbying, providing logistical support in times of political disturbance, online political activism such as blogging and campaigns to raise awareness, and other forms of political participation that do not include permanent return to the sending state.

The data consists of qualitative interviews with second generation members active in diaspora organisations and online material collected from diaspora organisations’ official websites and social networking sites.

**Russian political protest as social performances**

Laura Lyytikäinen, *University of Turku*

This presentation analyses political protests as social performances in Russia. The paper argues that in the constrained political opportunity structure of Russia, mobilizing large numbers of protest participants is often difficult. Thus, opposition activists must compensate the lack of people with dramatic protests, which use humour, drama and innovative tactics to critique the power-holders. The paper uses the case study of a liberal Western-oriented youth organization named Oborona, which was part of the wider liberal opposition movement in Russia during 2005-2011. Basing on interviews and participant observations amongst the youth activists the paper discusses Oborona’s collective identity processes and their relation to protest performances. It analyses how activist identities are performed in protests and how different audiences respond to these performances. The paper shows how Oborona’s protests draw on background symbolism that associates the state with Soviet-type totalitarianism and portrays the demonstrators as today’s repressed dissidents and as the intellectual vanguard of Russia promoting for democratic change. The paper argues that Oborona’s demonstrations create affective solidarity among its participants, but stay distant from the wider public because of the protests’ abstract claims formed around political rights that do not touch the everyday problems of many Russians. The paper suggests that in
addition to the government’s strengthening grip over the political opposition the fragmentation of the opposition and its lack of unifying political program hinders large-scale mobilization and sustaining it.

**Possibilities for democratic change – the viewpoint of local decision makers**

_Ritva Salminiitty, University of Turku_

In recent years, local democracy has been challenged by the major changes in municipal operating environments such as market-demanding provision of services, new management styles and, especially in the Finnish context, the consolidation of municipalities. These trends have challenged citizen participation and driven participation into discussion in substantially new aspect. Coincidently academic discussion about democracy has emphasized the participatory character of democracy. This tendency has strengthened the interest for deliberative democracy theories and has manifested in expressions like “new democracy” and “participatory turn”. Nevertheless, these approaches have so far led rather to theoretical constructions than concrete proposals for action in municipalities.

This research attempts to shed light on the current discussion focused on the “participatory turn” and the state of local democracy from the perspective of decision-makers. It is based on two surveys, which were conducted in Finland in the city of Turku in 2005 and 2013. In addition the research data contains the interviews of city councilors. In my research I evaluate how city councilors see the need and possibilities of democratic change in local level and how their attitudes are related to gender, age and political parties.

**1b Feminist and gendered politics**

**Gendering austerity politics in Finland: a case study of an academic protest against the government program**

_Johanna Kantola & Anna Elomäki, University of Helsinki_

_Anu Koivunen, Stockholm University_

_Hanna Ylöstalo, University of Turku_

This paper analyses one particular attempt to gender the Finnish government’s austerity politics in 2015: the highly successful academic’s demand for the government to carry out gender impact assessment of its government program. The conservative right government issued a first government program in 20 years that contained no gender equality measures or promises for a separate gender equality program. At the same time its austerity measures were highly gendered and bound to exacerbate the position of women in the labour market and to strengthen the male breadwinner model in the country. We analyse the success factors and the impact of this action through media analysis, process tracing and participant observation using multiple methods and data sources. The key thrust of the paper is to use the case to discuss broader changes in the Finnish societal and political context that defined the parameters of the action. We ask questions about the changing media context, the
changing political context and what this means for feminist interventions whether they come from academics or the more established women’s organisations.

The politicization of gender and sexuality in Contemporary Russia
Inna Perheentupa, University of Turku

The aim of my PhD is to map the feminist activism in Russia today and look at how it has changed from the 1990’s. I wish to produce new empirical knowledge about feminist politics and the social change, that has been going on in Russia after the Soviet Union collapsed. I will analyze what kind of cultural toolkit (Ann Swidler 1986) do the Russian feminist activist of today possess and how has the toolkit possibly changed from the 1990’s. This will also give me a possibility to look at the changes that have happened in the political culture in Russia from the 1990’s to today. A special interest of mine is also to observe the feminist concept ‘personal is political’ in Russian context and to compare it with its history and politicization in the western countries. My preliminary research questions are: 1) how have the feminist movements goals and ways of activism been defined by different generations of activists? 2) What kinds of philosophical and political traditions do the different generations of feminists lean on? 3) how is the slogan ‘personal is political’ present in the feminist activism in Russia? A large part of theories concerning social movements and feminist politics have been created in the context of western institutional order. I am looking forward to testing these theories in the context of Russia.

Online publics between feminism and antifeminism: the struggle over feminist issues
Ricarda Drüeke, University of Salzburg

Feminist practices are changing and networked media are becoming increasingly accustomed to remaining connected and presenting a platform for forms of political action. For example a discussion of sexism and sexual assault has been particularly present on Twitter and in social media over the past several years – as has been shown by the hashtags #YesAllWomen, which reports on misogyny, discrimination, and violence, or #shouting back and #EverydaySexism, which likewise focus on everyday sexism. In the German-speaking areas, #aufschrei, which gathered and shared sexist experiences and sexual assaults, became hashtag of the year in 2013.

These new modes of expression, communication and networking of and among feminist actors on a local and global virtual level offer possibilities for the enactment of active citizenship. However digital publics do not only provide a space for feminist protest articulations they also enable antifeminist comments and antidemocratic movements. Gender topics are currently fiercely contested, as can be noticed almost on a daily basis in the discussion forums and comment pages of news websites. These debates are dominated by offensive language and hateful attacks. Research on digital publics has been biased towards issues concerning democratic and emancipatory publics. Accordingly, the research question of the proposed presentation is twofold: On the one hand, I am interested in the question of how digital publics offer a space for feminist activism and on the other hand
based on antifeminist reactions and hate speech the presentation sheds light on the
problems and risks of digital publics.

**Women acting politically in contemporary Russia: ways, means, and the politics of mis/recognition**
Vikki Turbine, *University of Glasgow*

This paper considers how women engage politically in their daily lives in contemporary Russia. This brings attention to an under analysed area of research on political engagement in Russia, as women are either often dismissed as not being genuinely politically engaged, or describe themselves as not interested in politics, but rather in civic or social activities. Through excerpts from qualitative interviews about political engagement conducted between 2013- 2015 with women living in Ulyanovsk and Moscow, the paper argues for closer scrutiny of the ways in which women’s everyday political engagement can be mis/recognised. The paper argues that the women interviewed were politically engaged, for example, discussing in some detail the impact of key political issues, such as the conflict in Ukraine and EU sanctions, on their daily lives. There was also evidence among younger women of an appetite for political knowledge, discussion and campaigning, often sourced online. However, the opportunities for women to express their political engagement in various forms of activism (or even in discussions with family and friends) were constrained by both practical considerations, such as time (due to care responsibilities, for example), but also as a result of practices of social sanctioning of women’s voices on political issues. Both forms of constraints are shaped by the wider conservative, heteronormative, patriarchal, gender politics evident in Russia at present. The paper concludes by arguing that asking women explicitly about their political engagement reveals a wider range of political interests and actions among women than previous studies suggest, but that the problem of mis/recognition of these as ‘politics’ remains.

**2a Racialisation, class and migration in activism**

**Irregularity across asylum and labour. Understanding the construction of migrant irregularity in the Swedish context**
Maja Sager, *Lund University*
Klara Öberg, *EHESS & Gotherburg University*

In this paper we want to explore the position of dynamics of labour in migrant irregularity in Sweden. In studies on irregularity – as well as in movements and organisations supporting irregular migrants’ rights – there is often a distinct split between studies focusing irregular labour migration on the one hand and studies that focus on irregularity as produced through refugee migration. We want to think about how we can bridge that split politically and analytically.
We are inspired by a range of studies that places migrants’ mobility – in the sense of being mobile as well as mobilizing collectively – at the centre for understanding migration and the way in which labour is organising – as well as organised by – migration (for example De Genova’s work on deportability or Mezzadra and Neilson’s work on multiplication of labour). Though, many of these studies have an empirical focus in contexts in which labour is at the centre of the migration movements in a more explicit way than in the Swedish context of irregularity.

Drawing on material and analyses from a series of ethnographic studies focusing the experiences of refused asylum seekers in the Swedish welfare state (Sager); experiences of irregular workers and the structures of the irregular labour market (Öberg); and, practices, strategies and subjectivities in migration rights advocacy in Sweden and the UK (Sager) we want to reflect on the role of labour market dynamics in the way in which irregularity is constructed, experienced and contested in the Swedish context.

The ethnographic material from the different studies in itself exposes the various and complex links and overlaps between migration in the context of labour and migration in the context of asylum. The paper will trace some themes in the material in which these links appear, and contextualise these experiences and accounts with an analysis of how labour, migration and the asylum system link in the Swedish context.

**Anti-immigrantism and racialized ‘underclass’**
Katariina Mäkinen, *Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies*

This presentation investigates the Finnish anti-immigration activism in the context of neoliberal class relations. Relying on empirical research on Hommaforum, I suggest that the Finnish anti-immigration activism constructs and maintains conceptions of racialized ‘underclass’: conceptions of useless and immoral ‘dirty’ migrants that are perceived as a threat to the nation and to its respectable citizens. Such conceptions have of course historical roots both in racist discourses and in class discourses, but I claim that they are currently shaped also within the neoliberal citizenship regime in which ideals of entrepreneurship, hard work and individual success define respectable citizenship and belonging. The sentiments of resentment and bitterness that are articulated in anti-immigrantism can thus be understood not only in light of nationalist and racist tendencies but also as part of a process in which class relations are shaped anew and in which the question of ‘underclass’ becomes significant as a constitutive outside to respectable citizenship in neoliberalism. This is a process that also has implications for anti-racism, as it becomes important to avoid fostering the current neoliberal conceptions of ‘underclass’ as part of progressive politics.
Maneuverings within the hegemonic: experiential knowledge as acts of contestation
Sara De Jong, University of Vienna

This paper will engage with what many critiques have considered de-politicised spaces, namely service-oriented, hegemonic, white-normed NGOs close to the state, operating in the field of migration. Drawing on interviews in the UK, the Netherlands and Austria with racialised staff members of such NGOs who share a similar migration trajectory to their so-called ‘clients’, I will trace the ways in which they can employ their exceptional experiential knowledge in relation to those they support to contest hegemonic migration politics. I will situate the interview narratives in relation to two distinct neoliberal moments: first, NGOs increasingly operate according to a logic of competition and efficiency, providing cheap labour where the state falls short in its welfare provision. Secondly, under neoliberalism equal opportunities or affirmative action approaches have given way to diversity management, in which being ‘different’ has come to be seen as a resource, a certain ‘human capital’ that can make businesses as well as non-profit organisations more productive. In the light of these neoliberal ‘imperatives’, the migratory experience of these racialized NGO workers becomes framed as ‘intercultural competences’, and ‘language skills’ and becomes a source for providing cheap labour as ‘social-worker-cum-interpreter’. In this paper, I will argue however, that the racialized NGO workers within these white-normed hegemonic NGOs push the boundaries of what constitutes ‘productive’ knowledge and manage to politicize their experiences in the context of their role. At the same time, following Foucault’s concept of governmentality that has alerted us to the more subtle ways of regulation through the conduct of (self-)conduct, this paper pays attention to the ways in which these politicized subjects might get co-opted into structures of governance.

2b Migration, regulation and resistance

‘Give us free movement, but do not take our workers’ – Political morality and the EU free movement in Romania
Saila Heinikoski, University of Turku

Romania is a very controversial case in the EU mobility discussion: upon its EU accession in 2007, only 10 out of 25 countries provided immediate access for Romanian workers (eight of those were countries that joined the EU in 2004), while the three largest Member States (Germany, France and the UK) only lifted their restrictions in 2014.

My paper will discuss how the right to free movement in the European Union is presented in the statements (2005–2015) of the Presidents and Prime Ministers of the semi-presidential Romania. One major contradiction in the discourse relates to the fact that Romania has a large Roma population moving around in the entire EU. I argue that the politicians do not express a sense of community with the rest of the EU, but rather build boundaries between other countries.
The selected material allows me to examine the Romanian political reactions during the Europeanization period of Romania, reflecting also the perceptions of Europeanness, nationality, ethnicity and belonging. For conducting the analysis, I will introduce a new methodological framework based on four moral theories and discuss the results with the help of the transactionalist integration theory of Karl Deutsch. To put it simply, I will employ four concepts that are central in the normative ethical discussion: agreement, community, utility and solidarity. Furthermore, I will examine to what extent these concepts are present as supporting the right to free movement as a principle, and to what extent they are considered policy justifications for restricting free movement.

Becoming ‘refugee’ in Cairo
Jouni Häkli, Elisa Pascucci, Kirsi Pauliina Kallio, University of Tampere

The Refugee Convention (1951) defines a refugee as someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.” In contexts of forced displacement within the developing world, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) occasionally recognizes migrants coming from a certain conflict area or who are part of a particular mass movement as ‘prima facie’ refugees. Yet in other cases, asylum-seekers have to convince the aid agencies that they qualify for international protection. This active seeking for refugee status, which most travelers have to accomplish to be formally helped, involves a process of subject formation that we call ‘becoming refugee’.

This paper is based on the analysis of interviews carried out with asylum-seekers in January 2015 in Cairo, a city that hosts one of the biggest UNHCR operations in North-Africa and the Middle East. In discussing how those who are not entitled to ‘prima facie’ refugee status find themselves and perform as refugees in need of help from aid organizations, the paper leans on an experience-based understanding of political agency. We look into how some key material artefacts in the configuration of humanitarian aid, the ‘UN cards’, operate in between the aid organizations and the asylum seekers in their negotiations over ‘becoming refugee’. We pay specific attention to our interviewees’ embodied subjectivities, and particularly the degree to which they accept, resist or seek to transform the idea of being ‘refugee’. Rather than a fixed position, we consider refugee subjectivities to vary across different times, situations and configurations. In exposing this plurality, we suggest that ‘becoming refugee’ is one significant instance where people employ their mundane political agencies, both challenging and reproducing the complex socio-material relations that constitute the refugee regime. This provides starting points for studying why and how some asylum-seekers – in Cairo as well as in other contexts within the developing world – increasingly get involved in political activities, such as sit-ins and open protests, while others take more compliant roles in these dire circumstances.
Spaces of political contestation in migrant St. Petersburg/Moscow
Anni Kangas, University of Tampere

This paper inquires into tactics which challenge the policing of labour migration to St. Petersburg/Moscow. Russia’s migration regime is draconian yet highly inconsistent. This creates spaces of ambiguity. In this paper, I analyse ways in which different organizations and individuals try to seize this ambiguity and challenge notions of political belonging that underpin the migration regime and revolve around the state-citizen-territory trinity. The article focuses in particular on labour migration from Central Asia to St. Petersbur/Moscow. Central Asian migrants present an interesting case for this type of an inquiry. They are irregularised and policed as outsiders – sometimes very brutally – but at the same time their labour incorporates them economically to the global circuits of capital and, through these circuits, to local political communities. Moreover, as subjects of the former empire, migrants from Central Asia are occasionally treated as semi-insiders of the political community. The focus of the paper is on the strategies through which migrants – or organizations/activists assisting them – stake their claim to belong and challenge their status of ‘illegals’. On this basis, the paper argues for a need to develop such multidimensional and anti-essentialist notions of political belonging that would best enable showing that legality and illegality are contestable performances of the state (Balibar).

2c Politicized bodies and everyday life

Self-tracking technologies, politics and the upgrading of bodies
Harley Bergroth, University of Turku

In this presentation I map wearable self-tracking technologies as sites and tactics of political struggle and (re)definition of body politics in contemporary Finland and beyond. By wearable self-tracking technologies I refer to a wide range of gadgets, devices and applications that are used to collect data on – and optimize – various aspects of one’s daily life.

Over the past decades it has been noted how individuals in western societies have increasingly engaged in ritualized self-surveillance as part of health-conscious and efficiency-driven lifestyles. This development has boosted the markets for wearable health technologies. For many Finnish self-trackers data is seemingly objective means for achieving a better, upgraded body and ‘self’ in a technical as well as in a moral sense. However, through design technology is necessarily imbued with politics and thus not separate from formations of power relations and social inequalities. In neoliberal capitalism it is important to investigate how the seemingly all pervasive productive ethos is lived, (re)produced and possibly challenged in and through everyday body optimization practices and the use of self-tracking technologies.

I investigate self-trackers as the first phase in my PhD project, a multi-sited ethnographic study on technology-mediated body optimization and body development. Theoretically I will draw from STS, sociology of the body and foucauldian power analytics. In addition to the
discursive dimensions of social dominance and resistance I am interested in the materiality of politics and therapeutic technologies of the self.

**Natural parenting as a radical response to neo-liberalism**
*Anna Avdeeva, University of Helsinki*

My presentation will be devoted to an analysis of natural parenting as one of the most radical forms of intensive mothering originated and implemented in the context of neo-liberalism. This parenting model advises mothers to expend a tremendous amount of time, energy and different resources in raising their children (Hays, 1996). Originally, natural parenting emerged and started to be spread in the US and the UK in the latter half of the 20th century. As a concept, it originally referred to a bonded style of childcare. One of the main ideas in this discourse of natural parenting is ‘unselfish nurturing’: the concept entails creating a tight attachment between the mother and the child through such practices as long-term breastfeeding on child’s demand, co-sleeping and babywearing (carrying a baby in a sling or in arms).

Recently, scholars have begun to view natural parenting as an ideological construct and a paradigm of privatization of family, which is characteristic of late capitalism and neoliberalism at large, and which permeates almost all aspects of current parenting and family life. It is considered as a form of cultural opposition to the philosophies of the rationalized market societies and the dominant political rhetoric of self-interested gain in Western societies (Hays, 1996). Following the assumption, that natural parenting could/should be considered as a form of resistance, I will provide an analysis of how natural parenting resists the neo-liberal ideology of self-interested gain and what kind of changes of family gender regimes and parenting as ideology and set of practices it entails.

**Therapeutic technologies and political resistance**
*Suvi Salmenniemi, University of Turku*

The paper discusses the meanings and modalities of politics in therapeutic technologies. Therapeutic technologies refer to regimes of knowledge and practice which aim to transform our relationship with ourselves and shape the ways in which we make sense of ourselves and the social world. Previous scholarship has suggested that therapeutic technologies depoliticise by promoting individualism, diminishing commitment to social institutions, and encouraging withdrawal from collective struggles. This paper suggests that something more complex is afoot. It argues that therapeutic technologies may not only depoliticise and promote political quiescence but also politicise and serve as spaces of counter-hegemonic action and political resistance. Drawing on an ethnographic research among producers and consumers of therapeutic technologies in Finland the paper unpacks the ways in which therapeutic technologies can serve as a locus of political critique and dealing with contradictions of contemporary capitalism. It traces how therapeutic technologies are
mobilized to take issue with neoliberal capitalism and its conception of personhood and the
social. The paper concludes by suggesting that in order to better understand the spaces and
tactics of political engagement and the grammar of socio-political conflicts, we need to
problematicize the often narrow scope of politics and resistance and direct our gaze also to
sites that do not at first glance appear political.

3a Anti-racism and decolonization

Contemporary ‘Quilombismo’. The translocalism of an Afro-Brazilian culturo-political movement
Inkeri Aula, University of Eastern Finland

During colonial centuries, Brazil was constructed by the workforce of millions of enslaved
Africans. Flight was a major form of resistance, resulting in the creation of rebel maroon
communities called quilombos, multiple in time, space and form. Today various communities
reclaim their constitutional land rights as “remainders of quilombos”. This legal definition,
however, is contested as too narrow, excluding diverse afrodescendant communities.

In the manifest of Quilombismo in 1980, the Afro-Brazilian scholar Abdias do Nascimento
defined all black associative forms and social practises as part of quilombist heritage. He
proposed the communitarian economy and egalitarian structure of historical quilombos, such
as Palmares founded in the 16th century, as an ideal model for society based on “African
cultural values”.

Recent studies have demonstrated the long-term transcontinental connections of Afro-
Brazilian cultures, such as the constant exchange between Brazil & Africa and a strong
presence of European and Indigenous peoples in the historical quilombos. I juxtapose these
present perceptions on tranlocalism with ethnographic study from 2005 on two communities
in Northeastern Brazil, who center around the Afro-Brazilian art of capoeira angola, another
central symbol of black resistance in Brazil, and self-define themselves as quilombos.

Kilombo Tenondé gathers capoeira practitioners from many continents combining methods
of permaculture, a transnacional model of ecological self-sufficiency, with ideas of
quilombismo on a farm in Bahian coast. Quilombo Cecília has an activist history of anarchist-
become-afrocentric studies and culturo-political activities in the historical centre of Salvador.
The quilombismo of these two centers echoes both the historical quilombos' antagonism to
colonial order, and their grassroot translocalism.

Marginal stories, mainstream narratives: political potential of imaginaries of race, gender and
class
Salla Tuori, Åbo Akademi

Contemporary political debates and struggles about the nation and its subjects rely and draw
from specific understandings of race, gender and class. Is there any political potential in
contrasting past and often marginalised narratives on race, gender and class with current debates on diversity, difference and national subjects? I will reflect remembering and forgetting as political actions.

Empirically the paper will draw from material from marginal, transnational Finnishness, in the context of Finnish migration to Latin America and particularly Brazil. Narratives of race, gender and class in the context of 1950s and 1960s Finland and Brazil will be analysed as part of transnational migration in a colonial world. The material consist also of contemporary narratives and memories of past migrations.

In the paper I will read and analyse the complicated relations of race, gender and class in the particular context of migration. These marginal stories will be contrasted with mainstream narratives of national subjects in the Finnish context. The discussion is about uses of history in the contemporary political uses and understandings of race, class and gender in the Finnish context.

**Rethinking antiracism in Finland**

Minna Seikkula, *University of Turku*

Under recent years Finnish NGOs have increasingly adopted explicit discussion on racism and antiracism in their advocacy work. It might be possible to perceive this as a turn at least on a terminological level, since the prior focus has been to great extent on issues like diversity and tolerance. As researchers in critical studies on racism have pointed out, it is far from simple or straightforward what is meant by antiracism (e.g. Lentin 2004). In the presentation I will discuss through what kind of discourse antiracism is made intelligible in current NGO campaigns against racism in Finland. I will discuss how the campaigns both try to challenge but also possibly reproduce discourses characteristic to the post-racial era (Goldberg 2009; Lentin & Titley 2011).

**‘Antibodies’ against discrimination and hate speech: The practice and the production of meaning in anti-racist activism in Greece.**

Mariangela Veikou, *University of Leicester*

This article focuses on forms of opposition to ‘othering’ and far right politics in present day Greece. This opposition takes a variety of forms, comes from a range of actors and is motivated by a number of concerns with differing assessments of what should be done. More specifically, the paper focuses on discrimination, hate speech and hate crime from the perspectives of those who are active in mobilizing against racism and counter-acting the populist and neo-nationalist turn in Greece. It examines the largely left-wing anti-racist movements and community sector organisations which campaign against the ‘othering’ and also the activities of far right political parties inciting discrimination and hatred against the ‘other’. The analysis focuses on the ‘antibodies’, as the opposing forces to discrimination, it describes present-day social movements and actions from grass-roots to governmental level, their strategies and politics, their potential diversity of thought and action and their
contribution in providing the resources for social change and the production of new meaning in the context of anti racism in Greece.

3b New spheres of labour market inequality

Managing multiple marginalization: Russian-speaking women doing sex work in Finland
Anastasia Diatlova, University of Helsinki

The presentation is based on research for a PhD dissertation which examines the lived experience of Russian-speaking sex workers in Finland as it pertains to their marginalized status as both sex workers and foreigners. The study aims to understand how multiple-marginalization affects groups that already exist on the fringes of society. The personal accounts of sex workers are taken in tandem with the accounts of experts in the field i.e. law enforcers, policy makers, immigration officials, social workers, etc. The study examines how personal experiences of sex workers are shaped and affected by social and legal policy.

The presentation is based on interviews with experts and women involved in sex work, as well as ethnographic research in exotic dance clubs and sex restaurants in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The presentation discusses the relationship between sex workers’ perception of their work, rights and access to services and experts’ perception of sex work, sex workers’ rights and their access to services.

Mobility as inequality in the space of capabilities: young Russian-speakers’ migration to Finland
Daria Krivonos, University of Helsinki

Migration is one of the channels for social mobility and advancement – though often initially achieved at high social costs. My work is based on ethnographic fieldwork of young Russians’ employment and in-depth interviews with young Russian-speaking migrants in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Departing from capability approach (Sen, 1993), I will try to show the significance of mobility for personal well-being in the context of migration (Näre, 2014) and point to the restricted capabilities for mobility as inequality in the space of capabilities (Kronlid, 2008). Establishing a new life in another country are conceptualized by my research participants as a key way for social advancement in terms of career prospects and well-being in terms of family reunification. Seeking opportunities outside Russia, young Russian-speaking migrants resort to mobility to Finland as a means to improve their life chances. However, depending on their citizenship status like belonging to EU or non-EU countries, migrant status like student, worker, family member or returnee, young Russian-speaking migrants find themselves in the unequal space of capabilities for mobility that define their access to the labour market and welfare in Finland. For example, capability for mobility, that is the possibility to cross borders, is often restricted for my research participants due to their insecure migrant status and a requirement to renew the residence permit every year. For others, who already have a job and search for a better job outside Finland, capability for mobility is also restricted due to the right to work only in Finland. My
fieldwork, similarly to other research on migration (Näre, 2014), shows that capability for mobility is intrinsic to well-being and imagining potential futures. It further shows that differential abilities to move across borders undermine social justice as the freedom to achieve valuable activities.

High skilled migrants engaging in border struggles
Olivia Maury, University of Helsinki

High skilled migration has in research often been disconnected from a discussion on political struggles and the impact of borders has been undermined. This paper looks into how extra-European migrants with a student’s residence permit in Finland struggle against borders. These struggles are intertwined with the production of subjectivity as the migrants constantly risk losing their status as students and are involuntarily reduced to precarious migrant workers. The analysis is done from a critical perspective on borders, grasping these as flexible and porous rather than functioning solely as dividing lines between nation-states. The residence permit is here considered as an extension of borders, present in the every day lives of the migrants. I observe these border struggles by analysing interviews with migrants coming from different Sub-Saharan African countries to Finland in order to study. The paper aims to point out situations where the migrants try to minimize the effects of the residence permit, and thus borders. Simultaneously, borders gain a more abstract form in the racialised migrant body. Along with the analysis based on experiences of holding a student’s residence permit the paper also sheds light on contestations against racial discrimination as a type of border struggle. By observing border struggles I analyse structural processes that affect the subjective experiences of migrants.

The goals of economic policy: sketches of the political struggle between domestic and export-oriented labour unions in Finland
Paul Jonker-Hoffrén, University of Turku

Finnish economic policy has had as its main objective the restoration of the competitiveness lost since the beginning of the current economic crisis in 2008. Politicians, employers’ representatives and export sector labour union representatives point to the divergence in Unit Labour Costs between Finland and Germany and slowing (labour) productivity growth.

This article discusses first of all what is meant by “competitiveness” in Finnish public discourse. An important aspect of competitiveness is seen in discussions about the duration and negotiation of the collective agreements in the period 2007-2015. I argue that in this period the collective agreement negotiations took place either at the wrong level (sectoral instead of centralized) or with the wrong goal. The word “wrong” is used in connection with the structure of the Finnish economy – various authors show that Finland is a so-called wage-led economy. Exports are important in this economy, but wage developments are more important for growth, as they prop up domestic demand. Recent years have shown that Finland’s current account has balanced, which makes wage developments of the domestic sector more important for economic growth. However, recent collective agreements show the
opposite: the ‘medicine’ for economic growth is extremely moderate wage growth for all, which is a standard neoliberal policy prescription.

The core interest of this article is the balance of power in the labour market system: why do labour unions representing domestic sectors fail to get their voice heard, even though they represent more employees than the export-sector unions?

3c Spaces and conceptualisations of political protest

**Occupy pedagogy at Azania House**
Katarina Jungar, *University of Helsinki*

At the time of writing this the occupation of Azania house (the administrative building at University of Cape Town, formerly called the Bremner building) has gone on for three weeks. The Rhodes Must Fall movement is a collective of student, staff and workers mobilising for direct action against the institutional racism at the University of Cape Town. Essentially they demand a de-colonizing of the university. In this paper I am focusing on the occupation itself as a de-colonizing space. Most days during the occupation of Azania house were used for planned or un-planned talks, lectures, film screenings and workshops. Black academic staff from UCT, as well as academic staff from other Universities, and the broader community, who stood in solidarity with the movement, kept on visiting the “University of Azania house”.

The Rhodes Must Fall movement is very strongly grounded in the tradition of Black consciousness and the writings of Steve Biko and Franz Fanon. The relationship between black and white students in the movement and even the possibility of white students involvement in the movement, were discussed extensively. Furthermore some of the occupants were black feminists and queers who insisted on putting power relationships in relation to gender, sexuality and masculinities on the agenda. I am interested in this space as a de-colonial “reimagining” (Leonardo & Hunter, 2007) of the university. The pedagogy of occupation or the pedagogy of Azania house meant debate, struggle and “solidarities within, between and across spaces”. How can Azania House help us to reimagine a de-colonized university?

**OccupyUAL and the democratising of space**
Pat Naldi, *University of the Arts London*

Central Saint Martins College has, since its 2011 relocation to King’s Cross, London, become the corporate face of University of the Arts London (UAL). Its building is the flagship of the largest urban redevelopment in Europe – King’s Cross estate. The site is an example of neoliberal corporatisation of urban space whereby ‘public’ spaces are given up for ‘privatised’ spaces in which citizen spatial participation and contestation is regulated by the capitalist concerns of estate owners.
On 19 March 2015 a group of art students entered the administrative reception area of Central Saint Martins, and made their way into the boardroom pretending to assemble for a meeting. Waiting until the staff left, the students then occupied the reception. Protesting at the closure of courses and wider institutional concerns, OccupyUAL, was born.¹ They followed Occupy movements and other student occupations taking place worldwide.

Through this paper I will propose how faced with ‘no alternative’ OccupyUAL turned the building into a site of political contestation. Their demands to democratise the university with financial transparency, fair pay, no racism, and free education, is not the only means through which to achieve this I contend. It is through the occupation, public workshops, and talks staged within the space, that democratic participation, I will argue, is realised. For in our neoliberal society that privileges private spaces, as Don Mitchell writes, ‘what makes a space public’, one in which there can be political representation, is when a group ‘takes space and through its actions makes it public’.:²

More than 'anti-' movements? The question of organization and joys of action in Arendt, Graeber, and Butler

Ari-Elmeri Hyvönen, University of Jyväskylä

The Occupy and other contemporary movements challenge some of the established ways of looking at political struggles. As Judith Butler has urged, they call for “our ideas of action […] to be rethought”. This paper argues that contemporary critical imagination has become preoccupied with the idea of resistance (contest, dissent), in ways that leaves us with a deficient account of political action as a world changing praxis. I discuss the shortcomings of resistance approaches via three themes: change, organization, and ‘joys of action’. I first examine Hannah Arendt's writings on the “revolutionary spirit” and its reincarnation in the student/civil rights movements of the 1960s. I then point out that Arendt's understanding of 'public happiness' resonates in interesting ways with anarchism of David Graeber and his thinking on the experience of freedom in “temporary bubbles of autonomy”. Finally, I turn to Judith Butler's writings on the recent movements as ways of illuminating the intertwining of mundane and bodily concerns with more traditional political issues in a way that supplements Arendt and Graeber. Nonetheless, there are shortcomings in Butler's approach, partly emerging from her flawed reading of Arendt. Setting the three authors in trialogue on questions of change, the role of organization/institutionalization, and joys of action will thus help us to: (1) conceptualize the 'inherent greatness' of action, autonomous from its 'contesting' something; and hence (2) better analyze contemporary political movements.

¹ On the 12 April 2015 Occupy UAL still continues to occupy the administrative reception area of Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London.
Archiving as activist practice
Susan Pell, Richmond, the American International University in London

Archiving is increasingly part of activist practices. Groups, like Occupy Wall Street and Olympic Resistance Network, are archiving records of protest events, creating oral histories, and assembling media articles, while other groups, such as Radical Reference and Activist Archivists, are holding conferences and offering tutorials for activists on how to create archives and catalogue documents. More than just a repository of activist materials, these radical archives are used directly in social struggles, tying together knowledge production and political practices. They serve as spaces in which collective knowledge and memories of political struggles are cultivated and mobilized within contemporary campaigns, and also spaces of experimentation and collaboration in which to create, organize, and support different, and often collectivized, knowledge claims. As such, the formation and activation of radical archives may be viewed as one strategy, among others, to challenge and transform hegemonic political power and open up other possibilities. Understanding this turn to the archive by radical groups can therefore provide insights about forms of contemporary political struggles and the stakes involved in an age of information-laden contestation. This presentation seeks to discuss the archival turn in activism and how it can help understand both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles. I draw from fieldwork in anti-gentrification archives in London, UK and Vancouver, Canada. Using these archives, I explore what they say about contemporary knowledge production practices, the role of documentation within political struggles, and the alternatives they might offer to expand social justice in the city.

4a Biopolitical resistance to empire? Borders and the body politic

Robert Imre, Mikko Joronen & Rune Saugmann, University of Tampere

Social movements and collective action often recreate borders. These borders are both conceptual and physical. In this panel we seek to discuss biopolitics in it’s broadest and most diverse understandings of the terminology surrounding the concept, and explore the implications for ‘bringing the body’ back in to cultural studies.

Some examples include, the ‘occupy’ movements manifesting itself in a number of spaces and places around the world along with the variously termed ‘springs’ or ‘revolutions’ in the Middle East and North Africa. These ‘multitudinal’ political changes have a direct lineage to the late-[post]modern kind of political change found in both the radical left and the autonomist movements in Europe as well as earlier and concomitant demands for political change in Cold War East-Central Europe. The challenge this sort of thinking brings to cultural studies is profound in it’s ‘disengagement’ of traditional politics. For state actors, the conundrum is two-fold: first, these movements shared a resurgence of bodily presence of people actually challenging the state by occupying spaces, refusing to work, working at a slower pace, petty theft from both government controlled and private enterprises; second, state actors were left confused as to the demands of this body politic and could not react to
coopt the body and ‘meet the demands’ of the people concerned. As such, the body returns to the body politic.

Recent criticisms such as Hardt and Negri’s analysis of the deepening problems of liberal-capitalism and the post-Cold War world order has salience for us in terms of examining this biopolitical change in which ‘the multitude can act from below’. This action, and indeed the very definition of ‘multitude’ in it’s resistance to both securitization and total corporate control of everyday life, is not necessarily a resistance to the state.

In this workshop we are examining the possibilities of how ‘the body’ might challenge borders of any kind: conceptual as well as physical. We invite critical analyses of any of these categories and especially how the ‘body politic’ might contest contemporary political arrangements.

4b Politics of welfare and social justice

Girls and others in a Nordic welfare state
Elina Oinas, University of Helsinki

What does it mean to grow up in a welfare state that is both celebrated as the guarantee for equality and social support, and ridiculed as the authoritarian control mechanism that kills individuality? Does subjectification in the girl-friendly state apparatus mean sameness and adherence to homogenizing normative expectations? Can a girl-friendly state be imagined without notions of borders and nationhood?

The welfare state citizen is wrought by ambiguous expectations of autonomy and relationality, of personal achievement ideology and commitment to a collective nationalistic anthem of belonging and passing. These expectations can be especially heavy on young girls balancing between ideals of freedom of self-expression, yet longing for acceptance and being “just normal” (Oinas 2001). The state is also seen as a cherished platform for rights, individuality and freedom for all girls – or only some girls? Does it enable only certain ways to perform gender and citizenship? What kinds of girlhoods does the context enable and demand? The paper focuses on health related public services and will discuss a remarkable feature in Nordic research on girls and the state: the absence of a contextualizing theorization about the specific subjectification processes that the welfare state context enables.

Embodied processes of capitalisation? Filipino nurse mobility in ageing Finland
Tiina Vaittinen, University of Tampere

In Finland, the rapid ageing of the population is expected to lead to a grave labour deficit in elder care in the near future. Private internationally operating recruitment companies have been quick to react to these anticipations. Over the past years, a steadily increasing number of registered nurses have been recruited from the Philippines, to work in Finnish elder care,
while being deskilled into practical nurses or nurses’ assistants. In this presentation I will first show, how certain gaps in the Finnish governance of nurse immigration, combined with the increasing marketisation of elder care, open up a space within the declining welfare state, where transnational care companies can capitalise on the deskilled mobility of the Filipino migrant nurse. I will then focus on examining the potential spaces of resistance, by which the nurse, and the embodied networks of relatedness that s/he carries with her/his mobile body, may both support and rupture these processes of capitalisation. The presentation is based on multi-sited ethnography on the global (bio)political economy of care/needs, conducted in Finland 2011-2014 and in the Philippines in June 2014.

Representations of human trafficking in Texas and beyond: What is human trafficking in Texas represented to be?
Kathleen Mufti, University of Turku

My PhD study examines the problem of human trafficking in the American state of Texas, and how it relates to the wider national scope of the issue. Human trafficking is an overarching conceptualisation of a complex social problem often described simply as ‘modern slavery’ (Schauer & Wheaton 2006). It is a social problem that exists throughout the world, with sex trafficking, a subtype, considered one of the fastest growing organised crimes in the world (The Texas Department of Public Safety 2014). On the U.S. national level, human trafficking was first concretely addressed in 1998 during the Clinton administration. In Texas, the first concrete anti-trafficking laws were passed in 2003 (Busch-Armendariz et al. 2009). In my research, I explore human trafficking in terms of the field of policy in Texas; Texas is a state that shares a common border with Mexico, and is considered a “major destination and transit for human trafficking” (HHSC 2008, 8). The aim of my research is to examine the problematization of human trafficking in Texas, and to investigate how this interacts with the national processes. My PhD study will add to existing literature on human trafficking in the U.S., and beyond, by approaching policy issues in a social constructionist perspective. My data, which will comprise of textual material and recorded transcriptions from interviews, will be examined by following Carol Lee Bacchi’s social constructivist approach to policy, and Malcom Spector and John I. Kitsuse’s (2001) sociological approach to social problems. This presentation will, thus, explore human trafficking in Texas with the focus of answering the question: What is human trafficking in Texas represented to be?

From welfare state to the state of wellbeing: politics of welfare and citizenship in the Finnish political discourse
Arttu Saarinen, Kia Andell & Suvi Salmenniemi, University of Turku

The paper analyses how political reasoning concerning welfare and citizenship has transformed in the Finnish political discourse. Drawing on a rich archive of political documents from the 1980s-2000s, it addresses public discourse as an important space of political struggles concerning the meanings and boundaries of welfare and citizenship. The transformation of political reasoning is analysed from four analytical angles: (1) the moral
values the political discourse appeal to; (2) the vocabulary it uses to render reality amenable to political deliberation; (3) the issues it raises as problematic and requiring political intervention, and (4) the subjects it envisages.

We suggest that Nordic welfarist rationality has been articulated with neoliberal rationality, which produces a novel interpretation of welfare and citizenship. The welfare state emerges as a reward for adhering to the logic of the competition state. The tensions between neoliberal and welfarist rationalities are resolved by articulating them in a causal relationship: welfarist values of social justice, equality and social solidarity are portrayed as an outcome of neoliberal policies of market efficiency, productivity and national competitiveness. This articulation gives rise to a new conception of welfare emphasising subjective wellbeing and an increasing individual and “community” responsibility. It also crucially re-defines citizenship, framing it increasingly in therapeutic terms. The paper concludes by discussing what this transformation of the grammar of political reasoning can tell us about the logics of governance and alternatives to it.

4c Activism, Social media and consumption

Rebellious people with a mobile phone: the role of social networks in local struggles
Mónica Ibanez-Angulo, University of Burgos

In January 2014 the working class neighbourhood of Gamonal in the town of Burgos, Spain, made it to the front page of international newspapers in relationship to the riots triggered by the neighbours’ opposition to the construction of a boulevard that had been planned by the city hall. While local authorities, especially the mayor, presented the boulevard as an improvement to the neighbourhood, residents had shown repeatedly their disagreement, creating a civic platform and organizing demonstrations, concentrations and press conferences. Yet, the municipality turned a deaf ear to citizens’ complaints and set off the construction; however, as soon as bulldozers arrived to the neighbourhood, messages began to inundate the air and before daylight pickets were posted on the spot. The following days mobile phones became one of the most useful weapons among rebellious neighbours who used their telephones to inform each other on police activities and, above all, on escape routes from police forces. The success of the neighbours’ struggle (the boulevard’s project was definitely stopped) has contributed to upkeep the civic platform and to initiate new forms of resistance. By looking at the ways in which this civic platform was constituted and continues to be active addressing new social issues and struggling against institutional corruption, in this paper I will analyze the extent to which very local forms of resistance can become wider social movements and the ways in which communication technologies can effectively become the weapons of subaltern people.

Inside or in sight? Cloaking strategies of political activists on Facebook
Jannick Schou and Johan Dam Farkas, IT University of Copenhagen
This paper presents the first findings from an on-going study of (extreme) Danish right-wing groups utilizing cloaked Facebook pages in order to disguise as radical Islamists. Cloaked websites are sites that deliberately disguise their authorship in order to circulate hidden political agendas (Daniels, 2009). While existing research has shown how groups have used cloaked websites for various political purposes, such as spreading propaganda against abortion laws and the civil rights movement (Daniels, 2009; 2014), less have considered how political groupings may appropriate pre-existing commercial media, such as Facebook, to deploy cloaking strategies. The study is based on multi-sided ethnographic field studies as well as qualitative content analyses of a number of cloaked pages during 2015. The study employs an actornetwork inspired approach, and seeks to analyze the complex interplay between human (citizens) and non-human actors (Facebook) mobilized in the continuous production and negotiation of cloaked pages. Preliminary findings suggest that Danish right-wing groups utilize various cloaking strategies to spread malicious propaganda by giving the impression that they represent radical Islamist groups. Furthermore, the study finds that these cloaking strategies have proven to be highly effective in making the public, including members of the Danish parliament, believe that the disguised Facebook pages actually represent “real” radical Islamists in Denmark. As a consequence, the cloaked pages have proven to be a powerful activist propaganda tool as it enables the right-wing groupings to influence political debates. The paper concludes by reflecting on these preliminary findings and outlines further trajectories of research.

References:

‘Branded solidarity’ and the politics of fair trade. Analysing fair trade brand communication on Facebook
Kinga Polynczuk-Alenius, *University of Helsinki*

Contemporary fair trade takes provenance from the politically-laden solidarity trade. However, in the processes of evolution and, especially, mainstreaming of fair trade, the political charge has been reduced and replaced with commercial awareness, marking the birth of the modern non-statist version of the movement which strives to achieve economic justice through markets, not political actions. In this configuration, fair trade brand communication on Facebook might be perceived as a site of enacting solidarity and economic justice activism: one that positions commercial entities and consumers as the agents of economic and social change.

This paper probes fair trade brand communication on Facebook, focusing especially on the presented discourses of solidarity and links drawn – or omitted – by the brands between fair trade and politics. Two brands chosen for examination operate in different institutional
contexts and face divergent social attitudes to and awareness of fair trade – Pizca del Mundo in Poland and Pukka Herbs in the UK. The paper discusses the findings of discourse analysis and visual analysis of the content posted by the fair trade brands on their Facebook fan pages.

As a result, the paper proposes the term ‘branded solidarity’ to describe the mode of solidarity in which fair trade brand is positioned as a primary actor in both constructing and enacting the bonds of solidarity between Northern consumers and Southern producers, and as an agent to whom consumers lend their economic capacities, trusting that it will advance the cause of economic justice.

Utopia of political citizen. Finnish social movement’s visions of achieving sustainability
Satu Husso, University of Turku

Although utopian thought has been rare in the last decades, it can be an illustrative concept in studying social movements because of its political dimension. Usually utopia is defined as an ideal and better society. It arises from “socially constructed gap between the needs and wants generated by a particular society and the satisfactions available to and distributed by it” (Levitas 2011, 2010). Utopias can serve different purposes. Contemporary utopianism functions as exploration of alternative socioenvironmental order and as social criticism. It also stimulates of the will to change and deconstruction of current structures. (Bradley and Hedrén 2014.)

In this presentation, I focus on the utopia of sustainability created by Finnish social movements pursuing sustainable society. I have analyzed the media texts of two social movements, Degrowth.fi and Moderation in Danger (Kohtuus Vaarassa in Finnish) with the tools of semiotic narrative analysis in order to investigate what consists of their utopia and in relation of what it is utopian, and moreover, who are the promoter of change.

The narrative analysis of the movements’ media texts suggests, that the movements argue that the liberal capitalism and penetrating consumer culture are not able to satisfy people needs of socially and economically sustainable life. However, deconstructing the taken for granted power positions and knowledge is not sufficient, but subjectivity has to be developed. Both movements construct a mutual narrative of political citizen – a deeply responsible subject that is resilient to the suppressing power of neoliberal market economy.