

The challenges of national visions and strategies in a democracy - Finland -

*"We cannot solve
the problems we
have created with
the same thinking
that created
them"*

-- Albert Einstein

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Scenario

- Finland
- Committee for the Future
- Futures work in Finland
- Top substantial futures issues
- Experiences and perspectives for the future

Finland on the Globe



Finland in figures



Population (2005)	5,3 million
Total area	338.000 km ²
Political system	Republic, multiparty system, independent since 1917 (modern parliament since 1906) Member of the European Union from 1995
Capital city	Helsinki
Currency	Euro (€) since 2002; before that Finnish Mark
Official languages	Finnish, Swedish
GDP (2005)	157,4 billion € (≈ 205 billion \$)
GDP per cap. (2005)	30.000 € (≈ 39.000\$)
Gini coeff. (2005)	0,269 (eg. France 0,327, USA 0,466)
Employment rate	67,8% (Oct. 2006)
Unemployment rate	7,2% (Oct. 2006)
Broadband conn.	1,3mill., penetr. ≈ 25% (June 30, 2006)
Mobile phone penetr.	100+% (June 30, 2006)

Futures activities in Finland from the nineties

- The first **Committee for the Future** was nominated in the Parliament of Finland in 1993
 - Based on the initiative of 167 parliamentarians out of 200
 - Since the year 2000 it has been one of the permanent committees of the Parliament
 - The Committee for the Future was the first of its kind in the world
 - <http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/parliament/committees/future.htx>
- In the early nineties the **Finnish Governments** started to give special futures reports to the Parliament
- During the last fifteen years several of the **Ministries** have also made their own futures strategies
- **Why?**
 1. The futures activities in the public and private sectors can be understood as reflections of the changing **operating environment**
 2. **Futures studies** (theoretical and methodological development, cases) have been developing since the 1940's ⇒

Committee for the Future - Parliament of Finland

- Deliberates **parliamentary documents** referred to it
- Makes **submissions to other committees** on futures-related matters, which are included in their spheres of responsibility
- Have a **bearing** on development factors and development models of the future
- **Conducts research** associated with futures studies, including their methodology
- Functions as a parliamentary body that conducts **assessments of technological development** and the effects of technology on society
- In 2006 and 2007 the Parliament of Finland will be celebrating its **100th anniversary** under the theme *"The right to vote - trust in law. One hundred years of Finnish democracy"*
 - Two reports:
 - *Democracy and Futures.* (Eds. Mannermaa, Mika - Dator, Jim - Tiihonen, Paula 2006). Committee for the Future, Parliament of Finland, Helsinki. 208 p.
 - Mannermaa, Mika (2007) *Democracy in the Turbulence of the Futures.* Committee for the Future, Parliament of Finland, Helsinki. Appr. 200 p. (date of publishing Jan 10, 2007)
- <http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/parliament/committees/future.htx>

Futures reports of the Governments to the Parliament - Finland

- 1993:** Future of Finland and alternative policies of action (Aho's government)
- 1996:** Finland and the future of Europe (Lipponen's first government)
- 1997:** Skill and fair play - an active and responsible Finland (Lipponen's first government)
- 2001:** Finland 2015 of balanced development (Lipponen's second government)
- 2004:** Good society for people of all ages (Vanhanen's gvt)

Foresight activities in Finland I

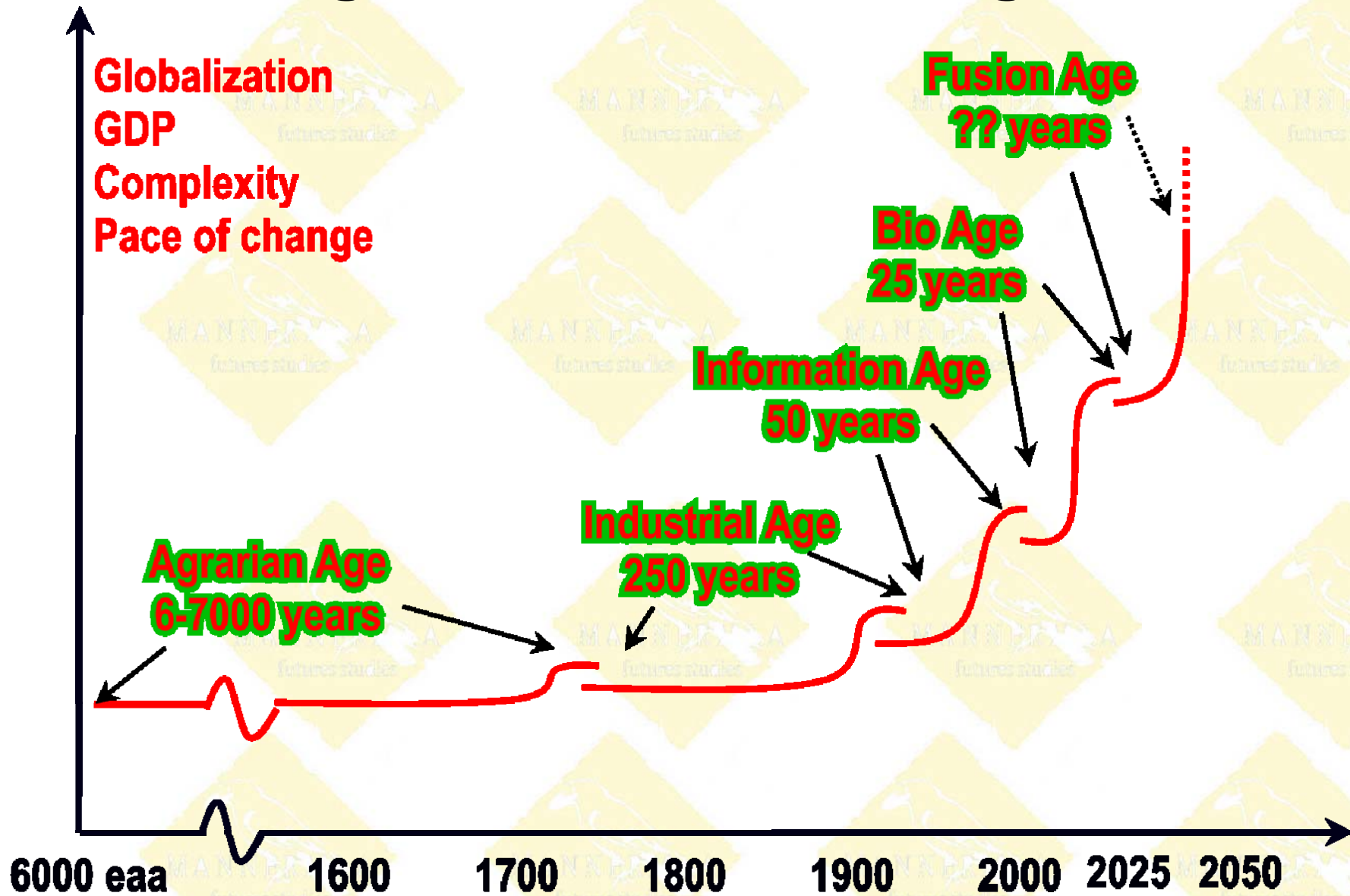
- **Government's Foresight Network 2004-2007**
 - Consists of representatives from all ministries and the Prime Minister's office
 - Main objective is to coordinate ministries' foresight activities
 - Reports, forums
 - Cooperation with eg. the Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OECD
 - www.mol.fi/mol/en/index.jsp
- **Finnsight 2015 (the Academy of Finland, Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation) 2005-06**
 - The foresight project examined the change factors that have impact on Finnish business and industry and on Finnish society and identified future challenges of innovation and research activities
 - The focus in foresight was on social and global issues
 - <http://www.finnsight2015.fi/>

Foresight activities in Finland II

- **Foresight Forum of the Ministry of Trade and Industry**
 - Finnish governmentally supported co-operation platform dedicated to promote the practices to generate, disseminate and utilize the information about the future
 - http://www.ennakointifoorumi.fi/index_en.php
- **Sitra's (The Finnish National Fund for Research and Development) national foresight network 2006-2007; foresight topics:**
 1. Future of welfare and everyday living
 2. The future of work life
 3. The future of the public sector
 4. Multiculturalism
 5. The future of environmental technology

<http://www.sitra.fi/en/Programmes/innovation/foresight/foresight.htm>
- **Academic institutions**
- **Municipalities, corporations, associations, etc.**
 - strategic futures activities commonly done

Big Waves of Change



(Modified from Oliver 2003)

TOP Futures Phenomena

The times they are a-changin'
-- Bob Dylan, 1964

- ***Global development and uncertainty***; climate change, future of global economy, cultural, environmental and developmental problems, global terrorism
- ***The power of globalization***; democratic global governance(?), blocks, future of the European Union
- ***The ubiquitous information society***; always open (24/7), virtuality in economy, politics, everyday life, Some Brother society
- ***Complex risk society***; increasing complexity, division of labor, special expertise \Rightarrow increasing physical and virtual risks; power of meritocracy
- ***Growth of structural differences***; economic, sectoral, regional, individual (in and between societies); future of welfare society?
- ***Age structure***; ageing of the western world, longer average life expectancy
- ***Biosociety, fusion society***; the next big evolutionary waves?
- ***Governability***; economic players vs. democratic institutions, governance at different levels (local, national, supranational), virtual governance (virtual tribes, virtual nations)

Some problems in national visioning

A. "There is no single national vision!"

⇔ cf. companies; Nokia: "Connecting people"

B. "In a small nation with consensus spirit too much well-meaning (mega)trend jargon, too little radical ideas, alternatives, weak signals

C. More cross-cultural international futures thinking needed

Weak signals... what if?

Extremely strong and rapid growth of structural differences : Individuals, companies, sectors, regions, states

Birth of isles of good life: Boredom towards meaningless rat race

Ultra individualism: "I, me, mine - and I"

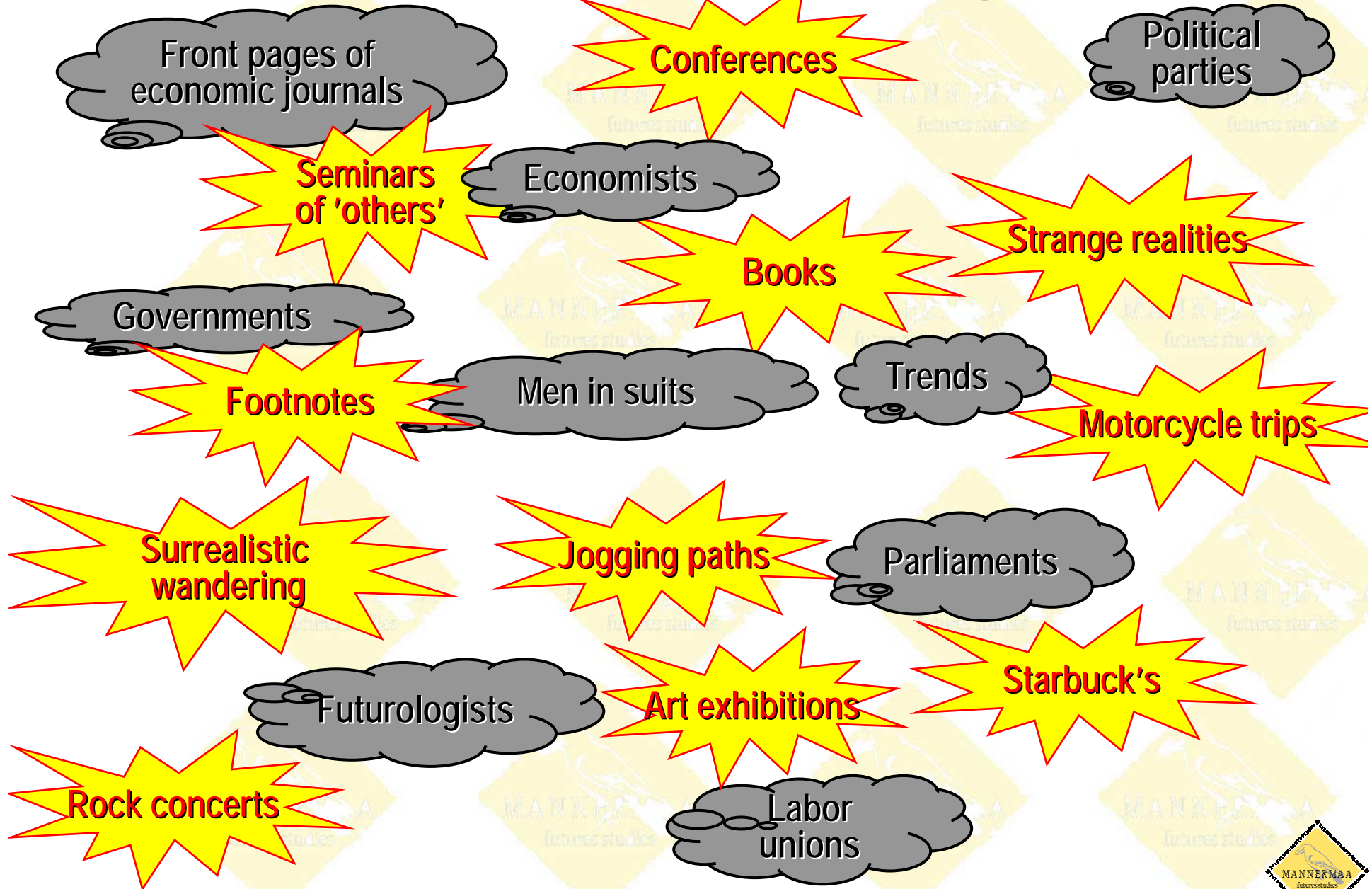
Power of hackers and crackers: purposeful destruction of information systems, nets

Hyper intelligency of computers and networks (technological singularity): human beings become pets?

New definitions of human rights: rights of GM humans, cyborgs, avatars and 'higher' animals

Human immortality: Life after death will become true!

In Search for weak signals



Futures perspectives of futures work - Finland

1. Committee for the Future in Parliament from 2007 →
2. Governmental Futures reports will be made
3. Intensified coordination (national foresight networking activities)
4. Thematic special activities and reports
5. New paradigmatic thinking needed (from industrial mental models into the globalizing ubiquitous information society, etc.)
6. New methods and formats will be developed
7. More discussion on desirable visions (national, EU, global levels)

Elements of a desirable *vision* for the future?

1. Humane world of dignified life
2. Principles of democracy respected
3. Human rights self-evident everywhere
4. Ecologically sustainable development
5. Societally fair development
6. Effective economy
7. High-level science and education
8. Culturally tolerant and creative
9. Strong civil society
10. Global ethics

Thank you!