



Abstract



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Democracy and the futures

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Democracy is supposed to be used to generate futures for future generations. In principle, every generation creates its own model of democracy. In an information society the contents of the concept of democracy, its concrete models, societal tensions giving birth to popular movements and political parties, and technologies used are obviously not the same as those in an agrarian democracy.

From the point of view of a futures researcher there are several interesting questions related to the important issue of democracy, generation, generations and the futures:

1. The prevailing political culture in the Western countries is almost the opposite to the basic premises of futures studies: short-range instead of long-range, sectoral instead of multisectoral, simple instead of complex, no-change instead of change, etc. Is this something we as futurists should take as a 'permanent' state of affairs, and just be happy of the fact that more and more of the most important societal, economic and technological processes are taking place out of the reach of the political representative processes?
2. The technologically most advanced countries in the world are already deeply experiencing the information age, and we should be discussing the issues of democracy of the modern information society and even of the embryonic biosociety – instead of that we have political culture and structure of political parties, which was born in the industrial society.
3. Some megaphenomena in the world are real. Globalization and technological development give new true meaning to our old talk about democratic global governance.
4. In the near future, 5 to 10 years from now on, the baby boomers will be retiring, the X generation gaining more influence in the society and new generations will be rising up. Baby boomers are emphasizing representative democracy, and they are active voters. Younger generations may use new models for having societal impact, like Internet democracy and non-

representative direct activities. What will happen, do we vote in 2017, and if so, does it have real meaning?

5. In the longer time perspective – 2057, 2107 – it is pretty sure that big changes are to be expected in the way democracy is being understood and applied. What do the futurists have to say about that?

This paper is related to a futures study, which will be made for the *Committee for the Future of the Parliament of Finland*. 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”*. Finland was the first country in the world, which gave full political rights to women.