

## **Chapter Eight**

# Disobedient media – unruly citizens: governmental communication in crisis

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## **Introduction**

During the previous years, the demand for critical research in governmental communication in Finland has been on the increase. Several governmental agencies have commissioned academic institutions to critically examine their communication activities. An invitation to produce policy proposals to enhance citizens' participation and other democratic activities is often included. In this chapter, I want to ask why this research interest has emerged and why it is situated at the present day.

My initial answer is that this interest results from the political elite's need to find new ways of communicating directly to citizens and of circumventing the 'corrupting' influence of the media and journalists. Among authorities, the feeling is widespread that the media today do not function properly and fail in providing citizens with the information that is deemed necessary to maintain an informed and democratic citizenship.

## **A web of distrust**

This feeling of distrust hides a second layer of distrust, which is situated between the political elites [1] and the citizens. This second layer provides us with the starting point of our analysis. A number of research projects from different European countries show us that this gap between top decision-makers and citizens is deeply rooted and cannot be easily overcome (see e.g. Borg, 2005; ESC, 2005). The referendums on the EU Constitution in early summer of 2005 in France and the Netherlands showed not only the distance between popular sentiments and the government in those countries but more generally, the weaknesses in the European Union's legitimacy.

Reactions from both the European Union and national elites were illuminating. First, the ignorant voter was blamed: people were misinformed and based their votes on ill-considered causes. Second, the European Union's PR work was blamed, and the European Union was expected to further improve its image among the Europeans. Third, the media and journalists were blamed: they put too much emphasis on the negative sides of politics in general and of the European Union in particular [2].

My basic thesis is that in order to understand the origins of the distrust that reigns between the political elites and the media, we have to elaborate how the

elites assess the role of the media. Based on recent research, it appears that according to political elites, a major change has taken place within the last two decades. As a result of this, political elites see journalists and the media as disobedient: they do not fulfil their proper social and political role as defined by political elites. As journalists do not provide citizens with relevant information, citizens are said to be lacking the ‘correct guidelines’ for their actions, which in turn leads to political and social unruliness.

From the point of view of political elites, there is a web of distrust with the media in its centre as follows:

- Citizens do not trust political elites because of the media’s disinformation;
- Political elites cannot trust citizens because they are misinformed by the media; and
- The media are responsible for the gap between the political elite and citizens.

### **Dichotomy between ‘yesterday’ and ‘today’**

Many recently produced research projects have generated interesting and detailed material on the relations between political elites and the media (see Kantola, 2002a; Alho, 2004; Korkiakoski *et al.*, 2005; Hakala *et al.*, 2005a, 2005b). Anu Kantola found in her study that during the late 1980s and early 1990s, a major attitudinal shift took place in Finnish elite groups. She characterizes this shift as a transformation towards a managerial ethos [3]. The change coincided with the deep economic and financial crisis of the early 1990s, which was even more radical and disruptive in Finland than in most European countries. In Kantola’s study, elite members spoke of a major difference between ‘before’, i.e. before the crisis, and ‘after’, i.e. after the crisis. The difference was described by using dichotomies like ineffective/productive, politics/expertise, irresponsibility/responsible, public sector/private enterprises, national/international, consensus/competition, virtual/real, sick/healthy, greedy/disciplined, bad/good, etc. (Kantola, 2001: 62).

Kantola concludes:

*In the past world the scale was national. Finland was governed by forest industry, forest owners, trade unions and agricultural producers, whose mutual contracts guided the society. In the new world the scale of society has changed: economy has grown global and national contracts do not suffice any more. In the past world much depended on politics; in the new situation the use of reason and economic expertise are employed as a way to manage things (Kantola, 2002a: 267).*

The new world was not totally harmonious, though. One of the problems for the elites was publicity and the media. For the financial elite, ‘the main lesson from the crisis was the notion of publicity as a swamp which could suck a careless

speaker down, and sink the whole national economy with him [...]' (Kantola, 2002a: 210). Politics was discussed and decisions were taken in unofficial discussions and meetings, as a public debate would get too easily out of reins and turn uncontrollable. There has been a traditional tension between politicians and journalists, but there are signs that these relations are now worsening (Aula, 1991: ix–xiii and passim; Kantola, 2002a: 220–1, 238–39, 300; Kantola, 2002b: 266, 275, 282. See also Alho, 2004: 296–97, 311–17.).

Although the interviews in Kantola's analysis originated from 1995 and she did not focus specifically on the relationship between political elites and media, her findings are most helpful when interpreting the more recent research results [4]. The managerial ethos that Kantola describes has effectively spread in the mid-2000s, even to the local or municipal level. Interestingly enough, the distinction between 'before' and 'after' as described earlier receives a different meaning when it is applied to the relationship between the elites and the media in the light of recent research results (Alho, 2004; Hakala *et al.*, 2005a, b; Junnila, 2005; Korkiakoski *et al.*, 2005).

Although the major change took place in the early 1990s, the danger that publicity and the media pose to elite politics now appears to be much more articulated and pronounced. The 'good' that was achieved with the transformations of the early 1990s, now seems to be jeopardized by the irresponsibility and unpredictability of journalists. 'Yesterday' now refers to a mythical past, when the relations between decision-makers and journalists were assumedly correct and mutually fruitful, and where the media could be trusted to fulfil its democratic mission. 'Today' now refers to a situation that is characterized by the loss of trust as journalists seek out negative news and focus on scandals in their pursuit for commercial success (see Korkiakoski *et al.*, 2005: 28–33, 43–44).

As one informant in Korkiakoski *et al.*'s (2005) research project on municipal democracy in Imatra [5] stated:

*Among the decision-makers we have a common understanding that in the recent years the news reporting has worsened. Before that there might have been even a bit too much consensus, stating that all is well in the realm even when something negative had happened, but now again small issues are blown out of proportions and things are heated up without reason (Korkiakoski et al., 2005: 31, my translation).*

The report concludes by stating as follows:

*Several decision-makers think that the reporting of the local newspaper has worsened compared to the earlier situation, although opinions differ why. One decision-maker states that the attitude of the local paper used earlier to be even too positive. Today the press unreasonably exacerbates issues (Korkiakoski et al., 2005: 31, my translation).*

In order to better understand the logic behind the distinction between ‘yesterday’ and ‘today’, as it is found in Korkiakoski *et al*’s study, I will outline the arguments in more details [6].

### Yesterday

When an important decision had to be made, the normal procedure for the decision-maker (minister, top governmental official, city mayor, and so on) was to order the PR officer to write a press release which included the basic information but left the news editing to journalists. The press release was then distributed to the media through the routine channels. A journalist would respectfully edit the material and write a news story, which would normally be printed or broadcasted according to its assumed newsworthiness. Thus the message – the information on the decision – was disseminated to the public in more or less the form that the decision-maker had originally intended. As there was a tacit understanding of the importance of governmental information, shared by all major media, there were no major variations in the editing and deliverance of the message. This procedure guaranteed that the information that decision-makers deemed important ‘got through’ and that citizens were ‘properly’ and ‘objectively’ informed. In this model, the decision-maker decided on the newsworthiness, and the news angle was already defined in the press release.

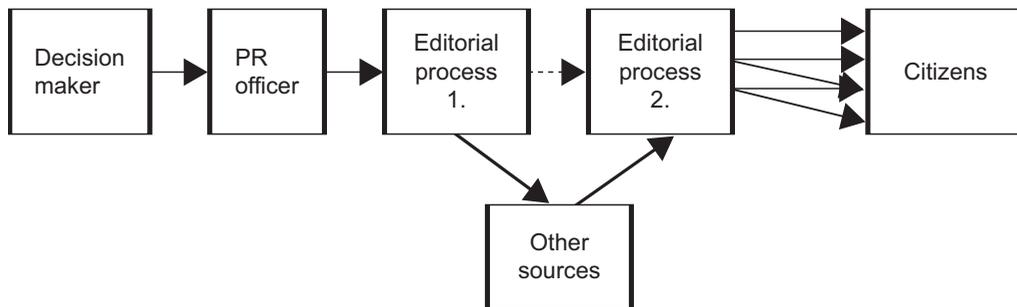
### Today

When an important decision is made ‘today’, the decision-maker orders the PR officer to write the press release. Compared to earlier practice, the situation however differs in two major ways. First, it is not enough to merely write the press release and wait for the journalist to do the editing. Today, the PR officer not only has to provide the journalist with information on the decision as such, but the PR officer has to process and shape the information into a news story, preferably with pictures, ready to be published and printed as such. Second, it does not suffice to provide journalists with a ready-made news story but it has to be ‘sold’ to them, i.e. journalists have to be convinced and persuaded of the importance of the issue. This has led to the emergence of an expert known as a ‘spin doctor’ [7].

Unlike earlier, the journalist would not just edit the press release and make it suitable for publication. Today he or she has to carefully assess its newsworthiness, using criteria more and more based on commercial considerations:



**Figure 1:** The process of governmental communication ‘yesterday’.



**Figure 2:** The process of governmental communication 'today'.

why should the issue be of interest to the reading public? Are there conflictual elements, disagreements between different governmental agencies, hidden motives? Are there other sources contradicting the 'official' information? Only if the issue fulfils these criteria, it is allowed entering the editorial process. And only then will be decided on the news angle. Because of the application of these criteria, the angle may diverge radically from what the PR officer originally intended. The final result may even fundamentally contradict the original message and seriously question the intentions of the decision-maker [8].

The interviews with the decision-makers appear to show that the shift from 'yesterday' to 'today' alters the relationship between political elites and journalists, even to this degree that despite the elite's attempts to better control the media – as the earlier mentioned examples of pre-editing the news and spin-doctoring indicate – the media have become today, from the elites' point of view, increasingly unpredictable in their behavior. This only increases the concern to find better ways to 'get the messages through' to the citizenry (see Åberg, 2005: 37, 38).

One municipal decision-maker is quoted in Junnila's (2005) research project on local public spheres, stating:

*Before all what needs improvement is that we can better control ourselves what is communicated, when it is communicated, and also how it is communicated. So it would be an improvement, a big improvement that we would not be then at the mercy of the media as it often happens that it comes at a wrong time, when the issue under decision-making is still in preparation and it is not yet ready, or then it comes public through totally other values than what we want to stress and we know what is really the major matter (Junnila, 2005: 57, my translation).*

To put it bluntly, from the elites' viewpoint, journalists are seriously misleading people. Today, news criteria are more and more determined by commercial goals,

and citizens are missing out on much of relevant and necessary information when publishing it is not considered commercially interesting and profitable. For political elites, this results in citizens that are ignorant of the realities of decision-making and the underlying ‘real’ choices in matters of, for example, economic policy, security policy, or municipal economy. This is not only clearly reflected in opinion polls but also increasingly in the formation of one-issue-movements. These movements are seen by decision-makers as material evidence of how poorly informed people ‘really’ are, when they take stands based on emotional reactions while informed reasoning would naturally bring them to quite different positions (see Kantola, 2001: 65; Kantola, 2002b: 279–81, 284, 286; Junnila, 2005: 51–52; Korhikoski *et al.*, 2005: 31–32).

From the elite’s point of view, this unavoidably leads citizens to making ‘wrong’ choices. Because of the ‘lack’ of media responsibility, people do not understand the realities that frame decision-making. Because of their ‘lack’ of understanding, they cannot form ‘correct’ opinions and make the ‘right’ decisions. This lack also feeds into the continuous danger of political populism: the elite fears aspiring politicians who, in their opinion, sell simplified solutions to dire problems and try to capitalize on voters’ potential anti-elitism. One way of formulating this fear is as follows:

*Basically the question is that citizens’ expectations and political realities do not meet, and the gap between them is expanding. The media could act as an intervening force and decrease citizens’ expectations, making them thus more realistic and increasing citizens’ understanding on the conditions of decision-making and municipal issues more generally. If these kinds of intervening forces do not exist, there is a danger that more so-called one-issue-movements will emerge (SM, 2004, my translation).*

This quotation is taken from an internal memorandum of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [9]. It points to the increasing fear for local civic movements that undermine the traditional balance of power between local parties and local authorities. Local media are expected to support and safeguard this balance and guard off ‘unrealistic’ criticism. What especially concerns the Ministry is that this kind of criticism is put forward more and more by professionals and by highly educated local groups such as doctors and teachers. From the point of view of the elites, their demands have gained too much weight and received too much attention in local media, leading to the mobilization of what the memorandum calls one-issue-movements [10].

### **Consequences: entertainmentalization of politics?**

The recent studies cited earlier seem to confirm earlier analysis on how the loss of trust between decision-makers and the media on the one hand and between the elites and citizens on the other is experienced (see e.g. McNair, 1999; Meyer, 2002;

Louw, 2005) [11]. Four trends that stand out in the contemporary Finnish political life and which strengthen this spiral of anti-trust can be distinguished.

First, there is a tangible distance between members of political elites and ordinary ‘back-benchers’. Members of the political elite – be they elected politicians or civil service mandarins – tend to identify themselves with the establishment and vested interests, not with the legislative or popular will as expressed in Parliament [12].

From the point of view of the elite, the danger with Parliament is its embedded bias towards populism, which the media and journalists today feed. As citizens are ‘wrongly’ informed by the media, they also vote in elections on ‘false’ premises. This means that they potentially vote for ‘wrong’ candidates, i.e. the candidates who promise most. After the elections, these politicians have to try to please their voters in order to get re-elected – which means that their first loyalty is towards their voters, and does not lie with the political elite. This is why, from the point of view of the elite, the Parliament and ordinary MP’s are not trustworthy (Kantola, 2002b: 286; Alho, 2004: 296–97, 299) [13].

Second, as a result of the lack in trust, decision-making continues to withdraw from media publicity. Journalism’s constant quest for negative issues and contradictions is considered to hinder reasonable public decision-making. In line with Habermas’s well-known thesis on the re-feudalization of the public sphere, the political elite believes that the pre-decision phase – planning and preparation – can best do without publicity. It is preferred to smooth out the differences and disagreements in the confinements of a smaller circle without media attention, as this attention might bring about populist political panics. Only final decisions are brought into the public eye; the decision-making process, the argumentation, and the political debate are left non-public (Kantola, 2002a: 210–12, 220–21, 300; Alho, 2004: 299; Junnila, 2005: 53; Korhikoski *et al.*, 2005: 22–26).

Third, there is a change in the recruitment of decision-makers. As decision-making and decision-makers try to shield themselves from the media and their interferences, politicians who know to differentiate between what they say in public and what they do behind closed doors, are advantaged. The net result is that the ethics of civil service takes over from open political contestation, which leads to the professionalization of politics, or to expert politics. This process does not favor innovative and popular and/or populist politicians but those who closely follow the ‘governmental line’ and restrain from bringing out new ideas or alternative solutions to political issues (Helander, 1998: 61–64; Kantola, 2001: 67; Kantola, 2002a: 280–81, 320–22; Alho, 2004: 296–97; Korhikoski *et al.*, 2005: 22–26).

Fourth, and contradictory to the previous point, media attention is the only way forward for the political career of young politicians. Media visibility and media charisma are a necessity as there are today very little other means to contact potential voters. This leads to an almost symbiotic relationship between aspiring politicians and journalists. The problem is, however, that in order to get promoted in politics and to be able to fight for cabinet positions

some day – which is often considered the ultimate aim by politicians – politics cannot be spoken about publicly, i.e. you are not allowed to bring about conflictual issues, which the media can use to create havoc. Acting otherwise might seriously harm your career (Kantola, 2002b: 287; Korhikoski *et al.*, 2005). Polly Toynbee recently asked in *the Guardian* why the critical non-Blairite Labor MPs do not rebel, and answered by herself: ‘Because for the very good reason that dissension in government is the fast-track route to opposition’ (*The Guardian* 28 October 2005). Criticizing the Government means that you do not only harm yourself but also damage the party (Aula, 1991: 209–10; Alho, 2004: 298; Korhikoski *et al.*, 2005: 42).

These four processes pave the way to political entertainment. This means that politicians fight for media attention amongst each other and with other celebrities. And they revert to trivial issues: what their favorite hobbies are, how their family life is, how they spend their summer vacations, and if they have any marital problems. ‘Real’ politics is kept behind closed doors and is not performed in front of journalists and citizens (Aula, 1991: 215–16; Alho, 2004: 297; Louw, 2005: 59–92).

### **How to surpass the media**

For political elites, the media and journalism seems to be the destabilizing main factor – or at least one of the main factors – that endangers the legitimacy of the political system. When journalists ‘mislead’ citizens, these citizens cannot be expected to act in a reasoned and responsible way. Moreover, the normal ‘democratic’ ways for controlling and regulating the media have not been successful enough. What other means are still available to re-establish ‘yesterday’s’ situation, when governmental messages still successfully ‘got through’ and were received as intended by citizens?

There are two inter-related approaches by which decision-makers try to circumvent the media and establish more direct links with citizens. First, authorities are seeking ways and channels to approach citizens directly, without the ‘corrupting’ influence of journalists. Second, authorities are promoting different forms of non-mediated interaction between them and citizens, such as for instance citizens’ hearings, both on a local and on a national – mostly via the Internet – level (see SM, 2004; and Korhikoski *et al.*, 2005 for concrete examples).

Especially when it comes to the Internet and its potential capacity to get round the media in order to inform citizens directly, authorities have great expectations (see e.g. Åberg, 2005: 37; Huhtala, 2005: 47). This is exemplified by the following statement by Matti Vanhanen, the PM of Finland:

*The mass media – traditional and the new media as well – produce news with an accelerating speed. Competition between different media has hardened. Although many actions and measures of the governmental administration have long lasting effects – not only for individual citizens but for the whole*

*society – they do not make big headlines. This is why the state administration finds itself in a situation where it has to make special investments in order to get its messages through, in an arena occupied by the media. In this task, the administration is much assisted by new media technologies and especially by the departmental web pages. We have invested much in these means in the last few years and my hope is that this development will only be consolidated (see Hakala et al., 2005a, my translation) [14].*

This emphasis on Internet-based governmental informational strategies and PR can also be clearly found in the guidelines for governmental communication, which the Prime Minister's Office has adopted. These are to be followed at all levels of the state administration (VNK, 2002; see also Hakala et al., 2005a).

But even the Internet can pose problems. One top decision-maker – quoted in the Imatra research project – stated the following at the open Internet-based question-and-answer forum, which the city council had provided for citizens:

*It functions easily as a destructive method, as people read the questions. Many of them are very negative, so all they read them and start developing them even more negatively. Thus they create a negative spiral, which is not aimed at seeking solutions but probes more problems. Those who are supposed to answer on these questions are on defensive, and there is no real interaction. This method is destructive (Korkiakoski et al., 2005: 44, my translation).*

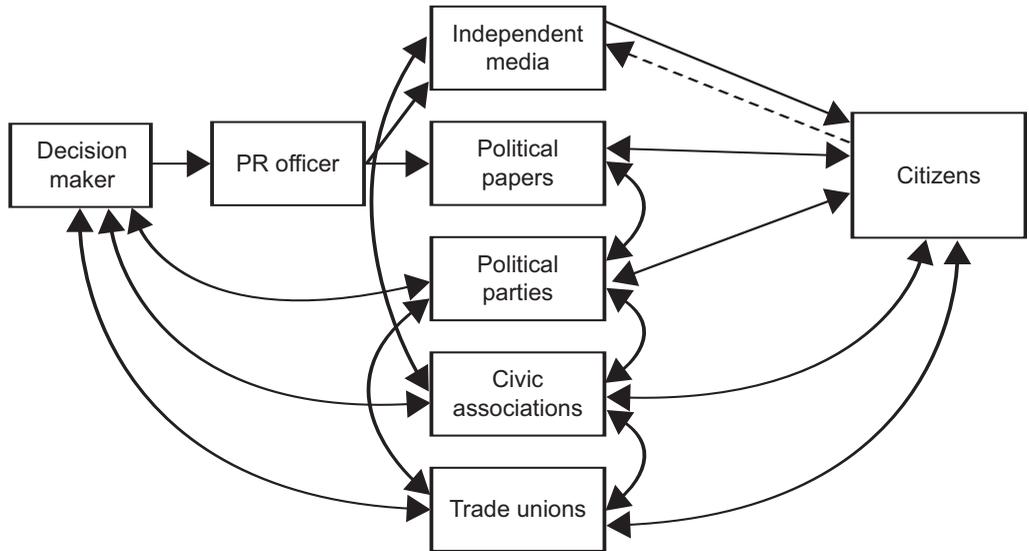
The result was that the Imatra City Council's open Internet forum was closed down for an unspecified period of time. In the summer of 2006, its reopening and reorganizing was still under consideration.

### **Evaluation: the 'real' yesterday and its aftermath**

How should we evaluate this 'yesterday-today' thesis describing the relations between political elites and media? Is it only a myth or is it based on evidence?

In general, the distinction is based on a real development, familiar to all European countries. The thesis is right in stating that between the 1970s and the 2000s deep-cutting changes have taken place in the relations between political elites and media, creating increasing tensions and even hostilities among them. It is however blatantly wrong in solely blaming the media and media's commercialization for this.

The thesis is also wrong in describing the relationship between decision-makers, the media and citizens as once ('yesterday') being a more or less unilinear and one-directional 'chain of command', starting from the authorities, going through the media towards the citizen-audience. The situation in Finland in the 1970s was much more complex than this romanticized picture allows. In the 1970s, there was still a thick network of civil society organizations acting as



**Figure 3:** The process of political communication in the 1960s/1970s.

mediators between the state authority and citizenry. The media were one of the institutions that did not only mediate both ‘upwards’ and ‘downwards’ but also internally interacted constantly in many different ways. This means that the media’s functioning was complemented by the workings of many other institutions, political, social, and cultural organizations, trade union movements, political parties, civic associations etc. (Aula, 1991: 207–11; Siisiäinen, 2000; Siisiäinen, 2003: 74–6, 77–9; see also Nieminen, 2004).

Problems started in the course of the 1970s with the decline in social and political mobilization. In the beginning, this was not very obvious and mediating networks seemed to function as they had always functioned. The decline in mass participation did not become immediately apparent. Even when the networks got thinner and more brittle, and most of their outer layers started to break away, eventually leaving only the political core visible, the political structures and their functioning did not change. Political elites tried to continue as if nothing has changed although its major supporting structures had all but vanished (Siisiäinen, 1998, 2000; Jokinen and Saaristo, 2002: 244–54; Nieminen, 2004).

At the same time, the space of public politics has narrowed dramatically. Compared to the situation of some 30 years ago, the public sector in Finland has been downsized considerably, especially when compared with the private sector. As the nature of politics is (to a great extent) about re-distributing public resources, there are today less and less resources to redistribute. As a result of the neo-liberal politics – extensive privatization programs and the overall reduction

of the public sector – the political elite has much less power as it used to have (Kantola, 2001: 65; Kantola, 2002b: 281, 292; Kalela, 2005: 250–64).

The natural result is that due to this public authority's declining capacity in providing public services and public goods, citizens have turned more and more towards the market in order to satisfy their needs and expectations. There is not much that people can expect from politicians and politics any more, as the rapidly declining number of voters shows, not only in Finland but in most European countries (see Kalela, 2005: 260–62).

The change in the media's role has to be firmly placed in this context. If we try to apply the dichotomy 'yesterday–today' here, we can say that 'yesterday' the media and journalism were interlinked with other civil society institutions in many different ways. They had to share the stage with a diversity of institutional interests – be them political parties, trade unions, or cultural and social movements. 'Today', there is much less traditional civil society left, as civic activities have been organized in quite different ways. This means that the media do not have to accommodate the interests of civil society in the same way any more. The media have lost much (if not all) of its mediating functions in relation to the authorities and citizens. This also grants media more freedom from civil society and the state, but also less and less freedom from the market. This is clearly a problem for state authorities. Should it be a problem for citizens too?

### **Role of critical communication researchers**

I started this chapter by referring to the increasing demand for critical research on governmental PR and communication activities. To be more exact, there have been two types of invitations. First, researchers have been approached as PR experts. They have been asked for advice on how to make governmental messages more attractive, how to deal more effectively with the media and journalists, and how to improve the public appearance of members of political elites. Second, researchers have been approached as consultants in helping to enhance citizens' participation. In this respect, they have been asked to assist in looking at strategies to increase people's political and social level of activity, to develop new forms of direct communication, e.g. through Internet, and in creating dialogical and trusting relations with civil society actors.

The question is how to answer to these invitations without losing the critical edge necessary for social scientists. It is easy to conclude that the first kind of invitation is a slippery slope: although it can be rewarding for individual academics in short term, it is not really the critical researchers' core business. The second kind of invitation is more difficult to assess critically, as it can be linked to the democratic and social activist role for academics. The question that remains is that the democratic perspective, sought-after by governments tends to be top-down or even paternalistic so that academics find themselves in the position of legitimizing pseudo-participation. On the other hand, it can be

interesting to see whether academic research could have a real and lasting impact to governmental practices.

In my own experience, there are three major issues, which the researcher must make clear to him/herself before engaging in such a project. First, it should be emphasized that problems in citizens' political activities are basically structural in their nature and cannot be solely solved by increasing the level of communication. Second, there will always be a tension between the distance that critical research requires and the demand of ethical commitment, necessary for democratic academic practices. And third, the critical researcher will always have to negotiate a position between his/her own interests as a researcher, the government's urge to incorporate the academia for administrative purposes and the social and cultural movements' needs to use the researcher's expert knowledge for their particularistic goals.

## Notes for Chapter Eight

- [1] When using the concept of political elite, I am referring to both top politicians, such as ministers and city councillors, and top civil servants such as heads of governmental offices etc. In Finland, it is sometimes claimed that the country's core political elite can sit comfortably at the back seat of a taxi. Here the expression is used somewhat more widely. (See also Alho 2004; Kantola 2002a, 55–56; Moring 1989; Nieminen 2000, 50.)
- [2] See e.g. leaders in Suomen Kuvalehti, 3 June 2005, and in Helsingin Sanomat, 24 July 2005. See also the Economist 2 June 2005.
- [3] Kantola analyzed 32 interviews of Finnish highest-level political decision-makers. The interviews were conducted in 1995. (Kantola, 2001: 61; Kantola, 2002b: 271.)
- [4] As a part of a larger research on governmental communication, Leif Åberg analyzed 20 interviews of highest level governmental officials, including ministers, in 2004–2005 (Hakala *et al.*, 2005b). As a part of a research project on the local public sphere in the town of Imatra, Jaana Korkiakoski *et al.* analyzed 29 interviews of the inhabitants in the town of Imatra (spring 2005), including nine municipal decision-makers and officials (Korkiakoski *et al.*, 2005). As a part of her MA thesis on the local public sphere in the town of Somero, Asta Junnila analyzed seven interviews with local decision-makers in the spring of 2005 (Junnila, 2005). The illustrative citations that are used in this chapter are based on the published reports on these studies, but the writer was also informed by all of Korkiakoski *et al.*'s interviews.
- [5] Imatra is a small Finnish declining industrial town of ca. 30,000 inhabitants in Eastern Finland, close to Russian border.

- [6] It needs to be emphasized that this description is only exploratory. It attempts to outline a series of arguments for further research and does not claim to present final conclusions. See also Aula (1991) for an interpretation of the origins of this development.
- [7] Although this phenomenon is not (yet) so ubiquitous in Finland as for instance in the United Kingdom (see e.g. Louw, 2005), ‘spin doctoring’ is a part of a common political landscape.
- [8] For a good illustration of the ‘politics-as-strategy-cycle’, see Louw, 2005: 70.
- [9] The memorandum is based on a seminar discussion between municipal decision-makers and ministerial civil servants.
- [10] This interpretation was confirmed by a series of informal discussions in the spring of 2005 with the members of the local elite. See also an interview with the ex-mayor of the City of Vantaa Erkki Rantala (2005).
- [11] See also Norris’s (2000: 3–12, 309–10) account; however, her own contradictory conclusions cannot be addressed here.
- [12] The same is the case at the local level with the municipal council, as the case of Imatra shows us.
- [13] Again, this development applies also at the municipal level, as seen e.g. in Korhiakoski *et al.*, 2005: 22–26.
- [14] A statement by the PM of Finland Matti Vanhanen on 7 April 2005, when he received a committee report on the monitoring and assessment system for governmental communication.

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