



How to foster societal resilience in the time of polycrisis?

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How to foster societal resilience in the time of polycrisis?

1. Utilize foresight and futures thinking
2. Strengthen trust, citizen engagement and "digital bildung"

A gift to Finland

The Finnish Parliament established Sitra as a gift celebrating the 50th anniversary of Finland's independence.

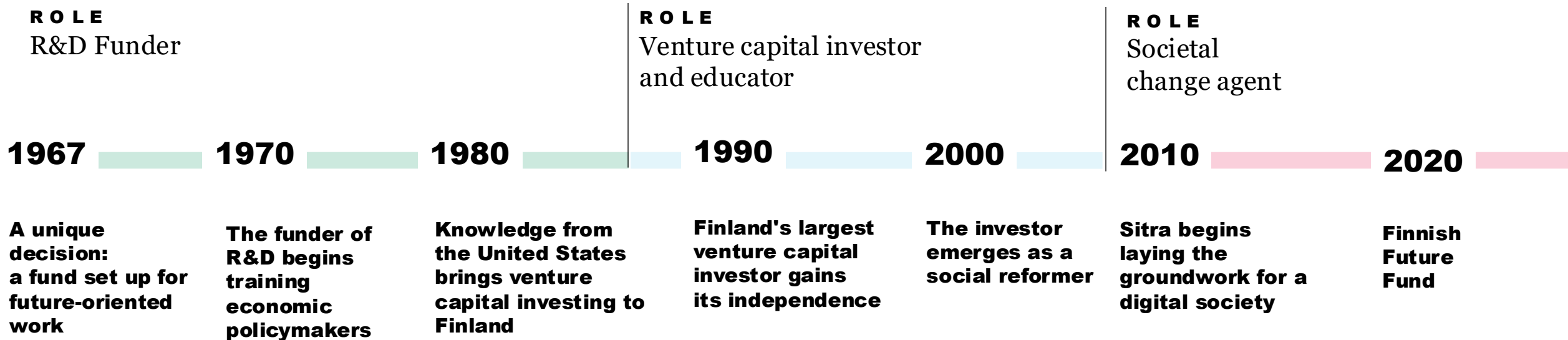
The public future-oriented organisation was given the mission to build the successful Finland of tomorrow.

The year was 1967.



Erkki Laitila, HS/Lehtikuva 1967

From R&D funder to societal change agent





Mission

Sitra accelerates well-being and economic growth for Finland within the limits of nature's carrying capacity.

Vision

We have boldly reformed society.



Impact

Our impact

1

Sitra strengthens futures thinking in society and enhances foresight capabilities in decision-making.

2

Sitra produces significant social innovations and strengthens Finland's innovation capabilities.



Role

Our role

We anticipate the future, drive change and accelerate solutions to major challenges in our society in collaboration with other actors. We're a

Futurist
Innovation partner
Funding partner

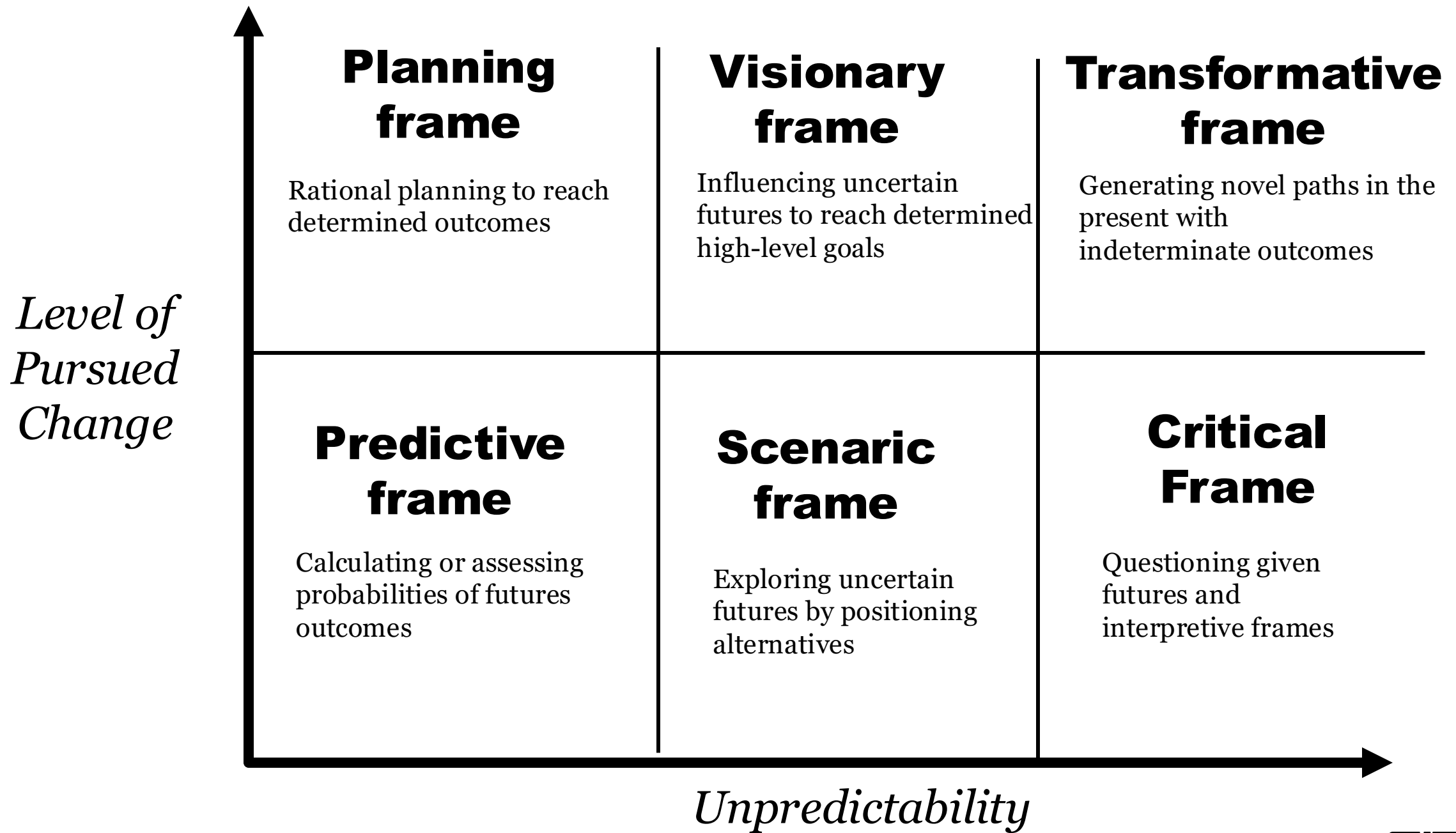
Foresight and futures thinking

Foresight at Sitra

In an uncertain world full of surprises, the role of foresight and insight are increasingly important.

We **produce futures knowledge** through societal foresight, insight and analysis and strengthen people's **future-oriented thinking and capacity to influence** the direction of future developments.





Three steps to get started in foresight

1

Create a common understanding of changes

2

Challenge existing assumptions about the future

3

Imagine and build radically different futures



MEGA TRENDS 2023



PEOPLE

Growing well-being challenges

POWER

The battle for democracy intensifies

Erosion of trust

The spiral of burden

Weakening dependency ratio

NATURE
Nature's carrying capacity eroding

Short-term decision-making

Influencing through information

TECHNOLOGY

Competition for digital power gears up

Overconsumption

Resource sufficiency

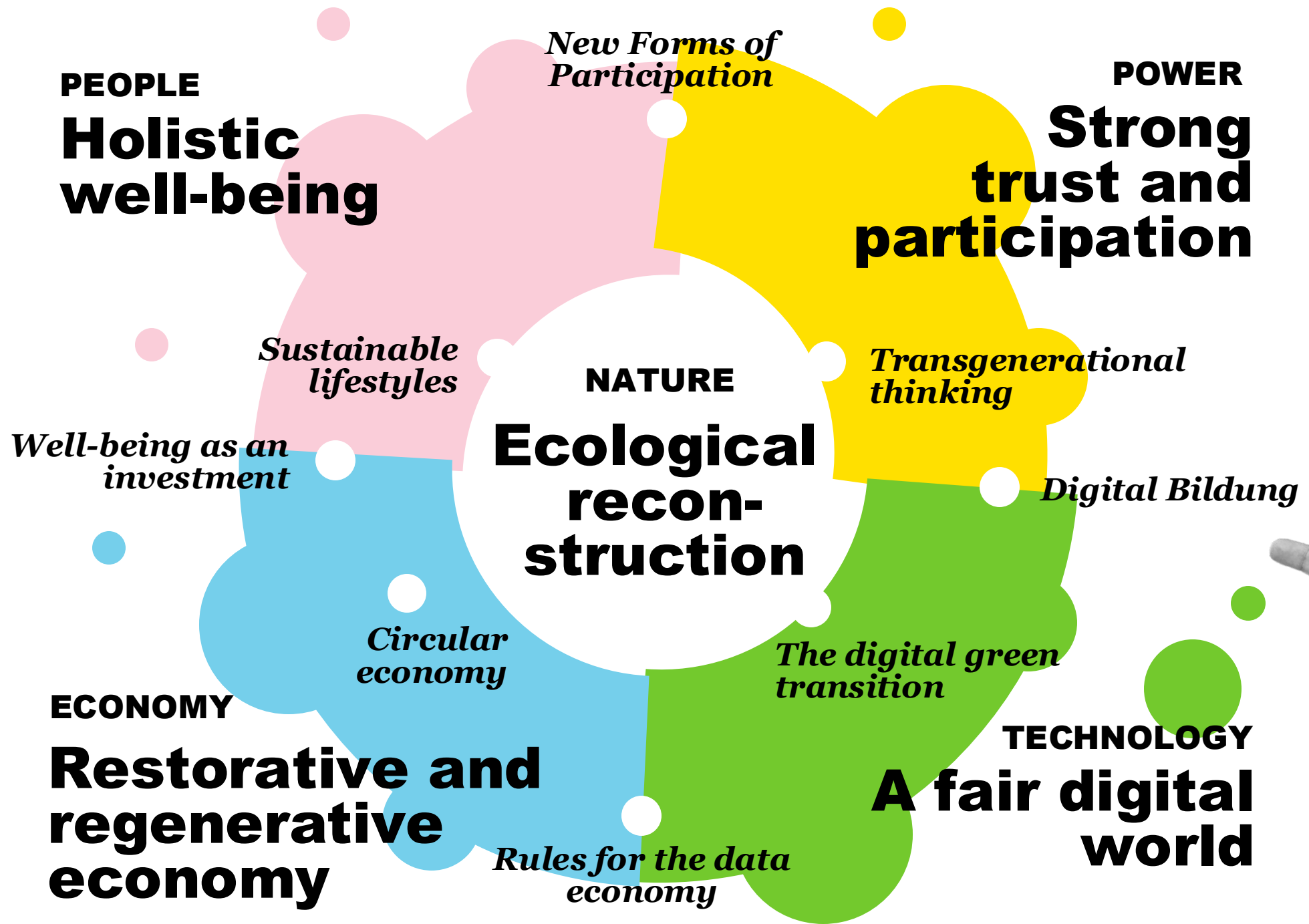
THE ECONOMY

Economic foundations are cracking

Dominance of technology giants

Group discussion/10minutes:

What impacts could megatrends
(or other changes taking place)
have for the field of adult learning?



Trust, citizen engagement and ”digital bildung”

“**Bildung** has a cognitive dimension, an ethical dimension and a social dimension. **Digital Bildung** requires knowledge and skills, participation opportunities and capabilities to play an active role and express oneself creatively and safely in the digital world. Digital Bildung responds to what people should know and how they should act and participate so that the digital compass vision can be achieved in a manner that ensures that people’s mutual respect and trust in an increasingly digital society become stronger.”

Government report:
Finland’s Digital Compass

PUBLICATIONS OF THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT 2022:72

vn.fi/en

OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions – 2024 Results:

- A key finding of the 2024 Trust Survey is that **socio-economic conditions and demographic characteristics matter**. People who feel financially insecure, women and those with low levels of education, as well as those who report belonging to a group that is discriminated against, consistently report lower levels of trust in government.
- Related to this, **the sense of political agency is crucial** in explaining the different levels of trust in national government in all countries. The trust gap between those who report they have a say in what the government does and those who say they do not is 47 percentage points.

OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions – 2024 Results:

- Engage better with citizens to enhance trust in both local and national government. There is a significant need for more meaningful and inclusive opportunities for citizen participation and influence in decision-making processes.
- This requires setting clear expectations about the role of deliberative and direct democracy within representative democracies; improving the mechanisms through which governments give all people a voice and are responsive to these voices and supporting spaces and capacities for civic and political engagement. Policies designed to promote political inclusivity and engagement or mitigate economic vulnerability and discrimination could also be key to closing trust gaps and empower people to participate in public debate.

Soft spots of Finnish democracy

Finnish participation paradox

Finns have high trust in public institutions, but comparatively low perception of their opportunities and ability to influence political processes.

Participatory inequality

Significant regional and demographic differences

Voter turnout in elections

Low compared to our Nordic peers

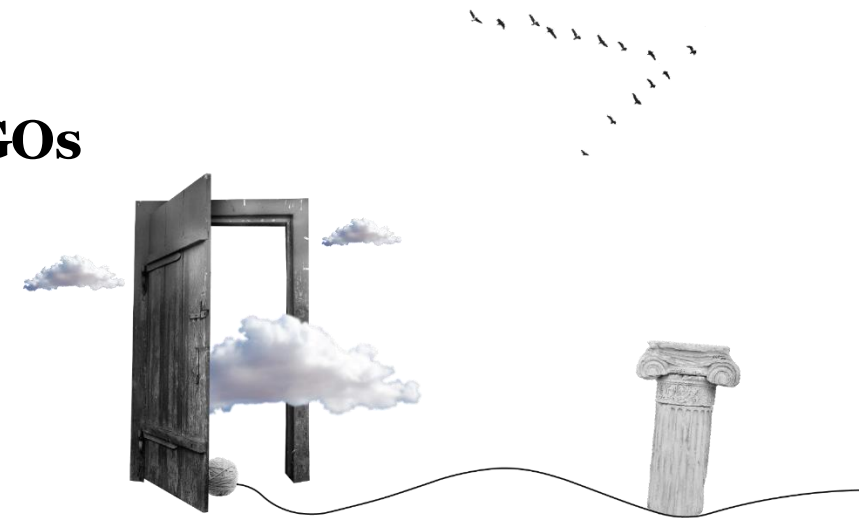
Drop in the attractiveness of political parties and NGOs

Affective polarization on the rise

Still moderate by international standards

High-quality research, but lack of developers

Democracy education



Democracy must be both defended and reformed



- Scaling up democracy innovations (citizen assemblies, participatory budgeting, citizens initiatives, digital participation)
- Protecting the basic values of Nordic information welfare state – accessibility and pluralism
- Promoting transparency of algorithms and data and further public debate on societal dimensions of data (auditing, reporting, protecting privacy, ownership of data)
- Coming up with new tools and means for citizens to navigate in the rapidly changing media and information environment – and to be active citizens

Sitra's Democratic Innovations Program

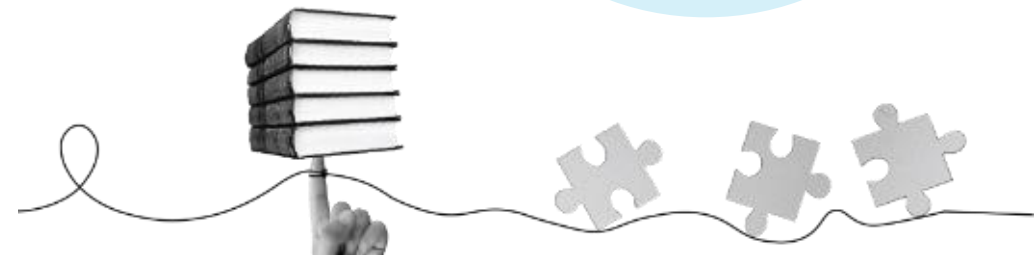
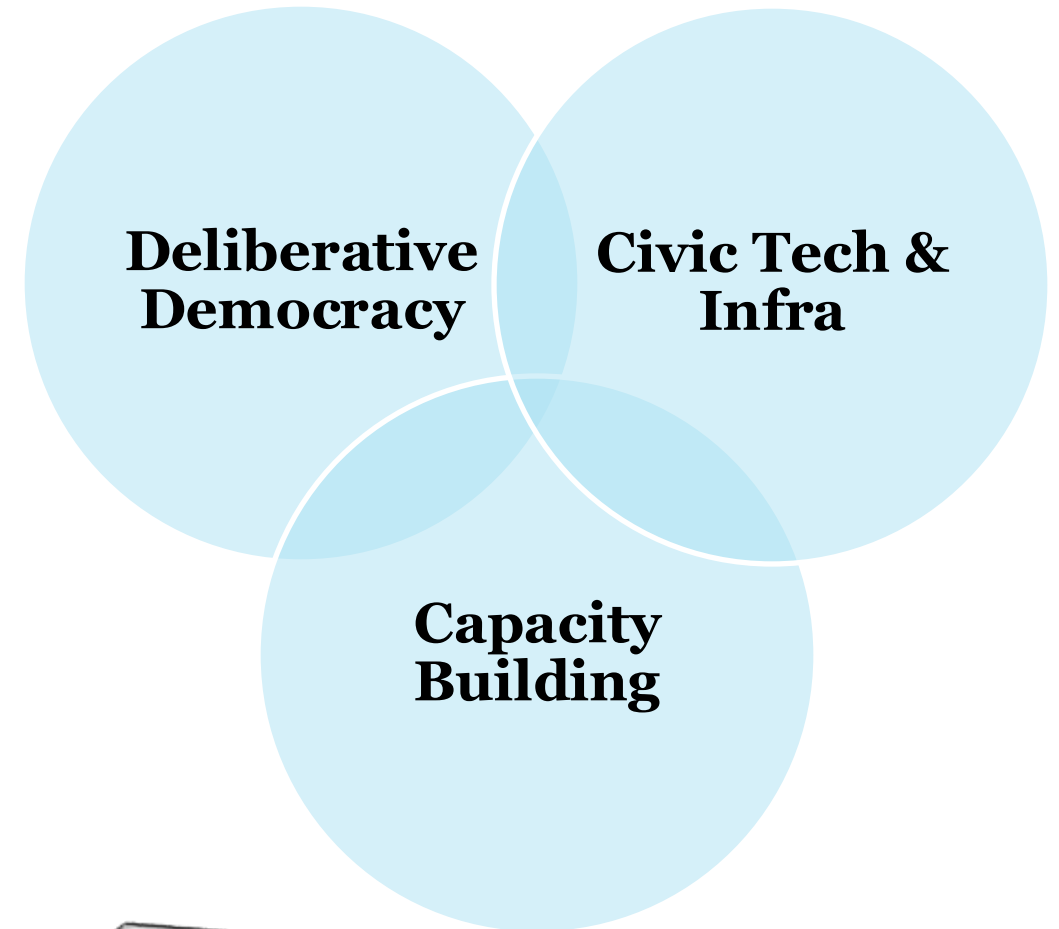
What?

We develop democratic innovations to support representative democracy.

- **Deliberative citizens' panels:** a randomly selected and stratified group of ordinary citizens come together to learn, discuss and make recommendations for policymakers.
- **Civic Tech solutions** for gathering, analyzing and understanding what large groups of people think of societal issues in their own words.

How?

We fund experiments, raise awareness, and organize training for citizens and decision-makers to build capacities.

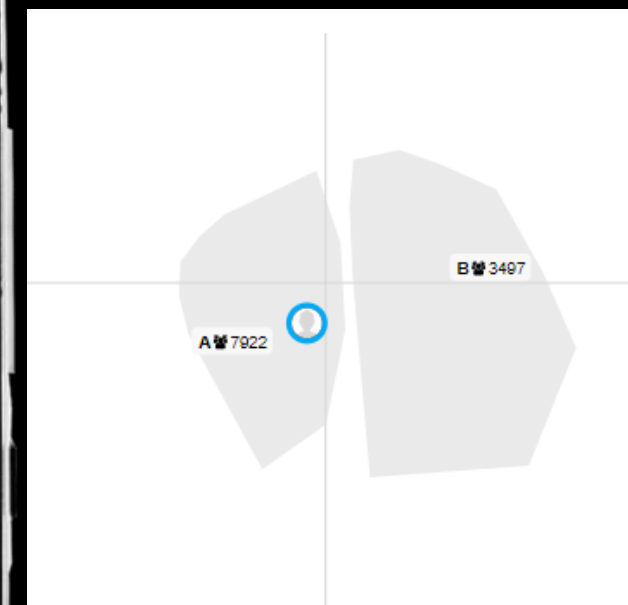
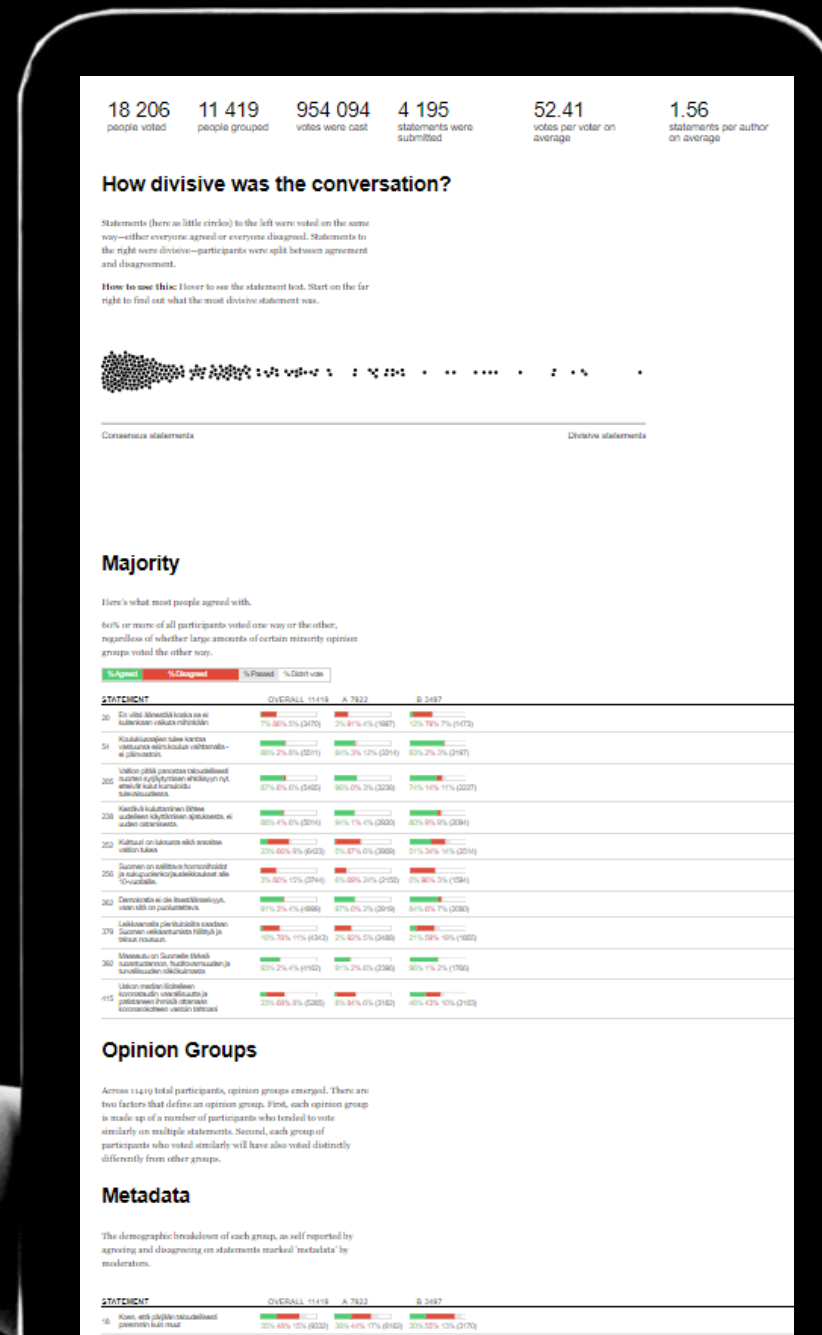


Case #1: Civic tech solutions to support decision-making

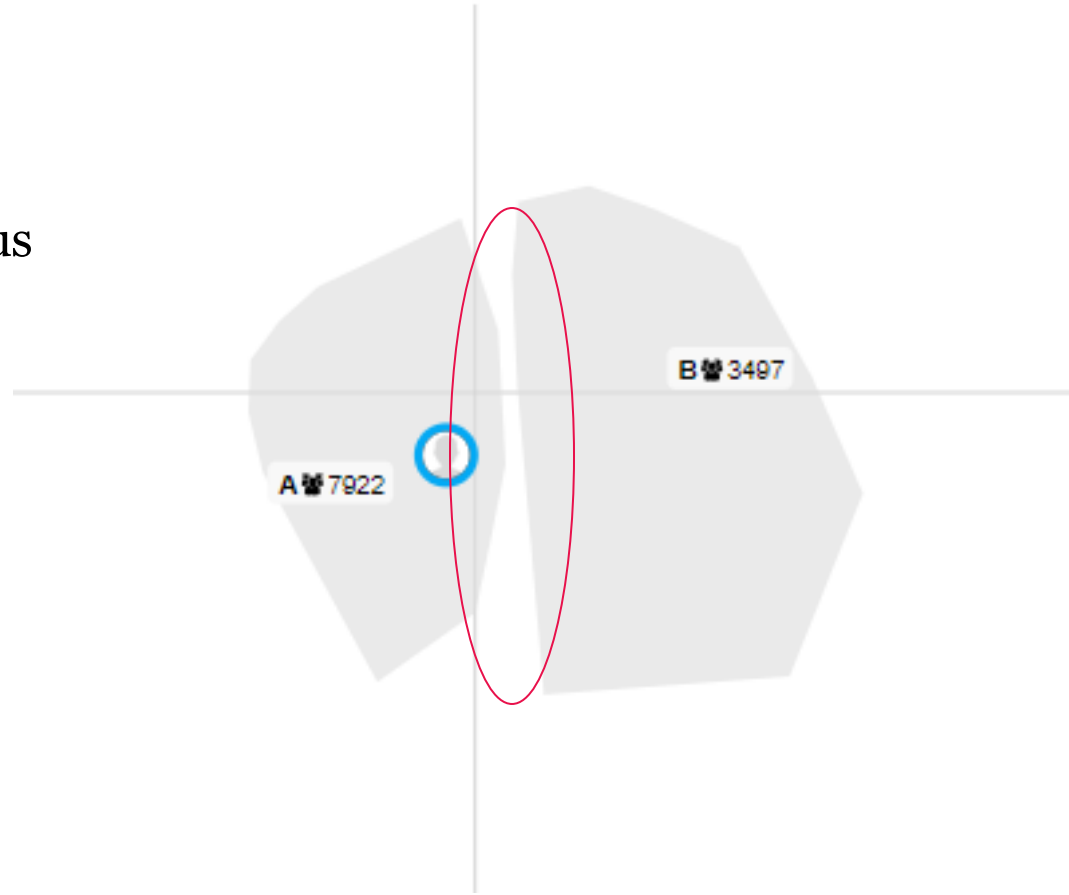
Polis is a digital participation platform for gathering, analyzing and understanding what large groups of people think in their own words

Open-source platform developed in the US. We have created a GDPR compliant version.

Based on constructive interaction and finding common ground



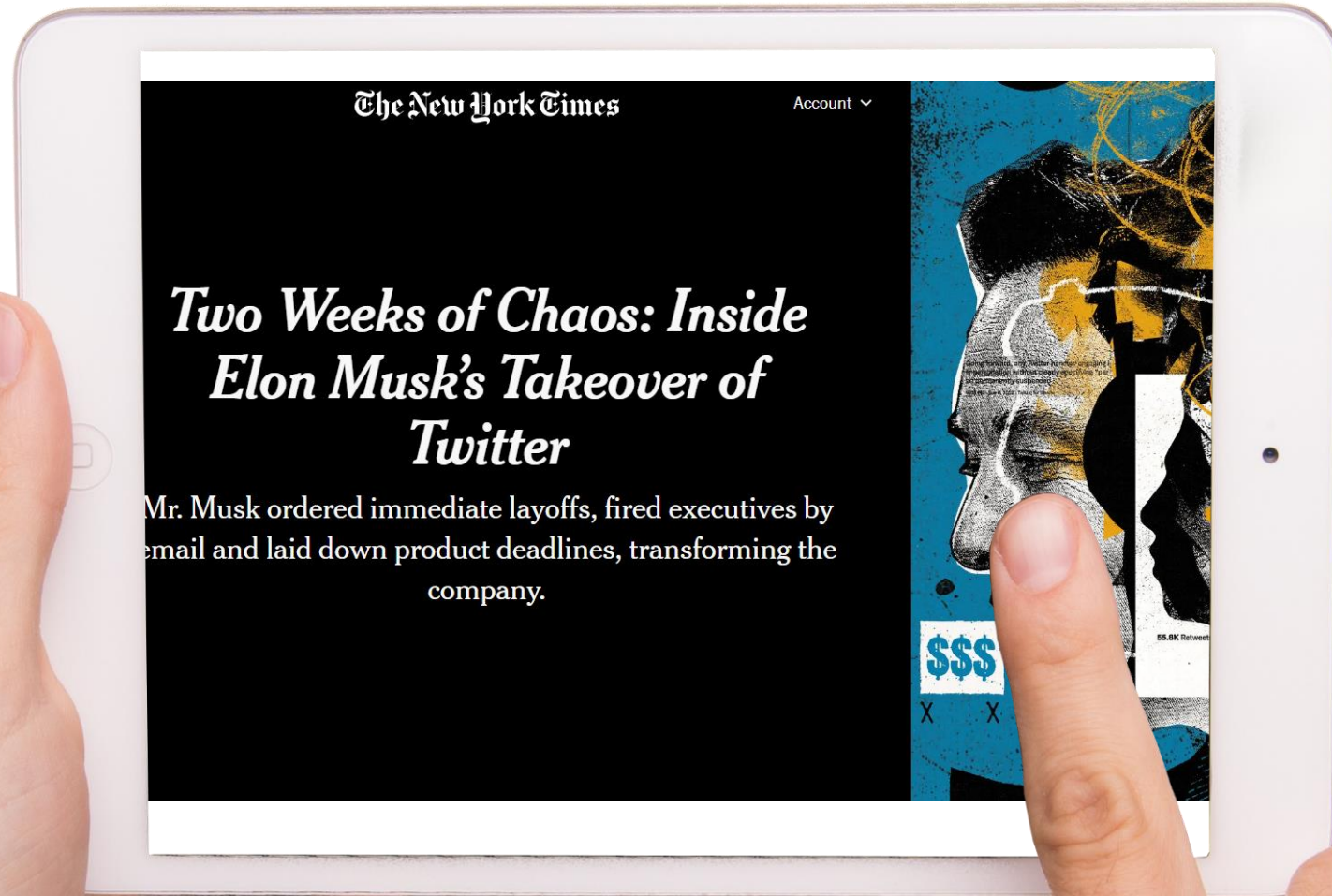
Oh, there are many of us thinking like me. What does this other group think?

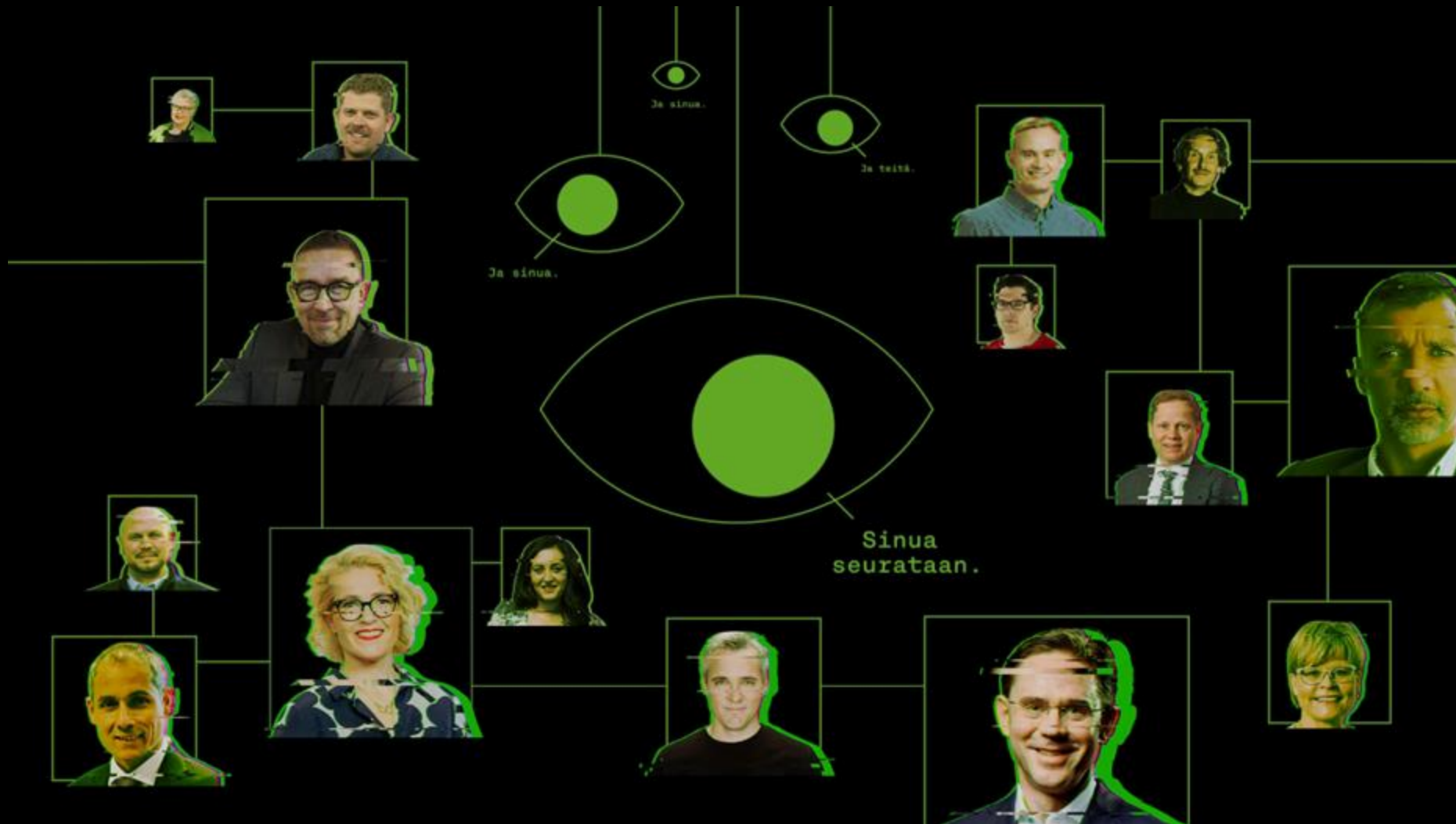


Consensus between opinion groups

Case #2:

Perspectives on “digital power”?





The Digipower investigation – How are decision-makers influenced?

#digipower

SITRA

Digipower investigation looked for answers to:

- With whom do European decision-makers share their data?
- What kind of an overview can be built with the collected data?
- What kinds of parties hold data and how is it used to profile service users and target content?
- Can the collected data be used to influence the person connected to the data?



[Publication can be downloaded here](#)

Key findings

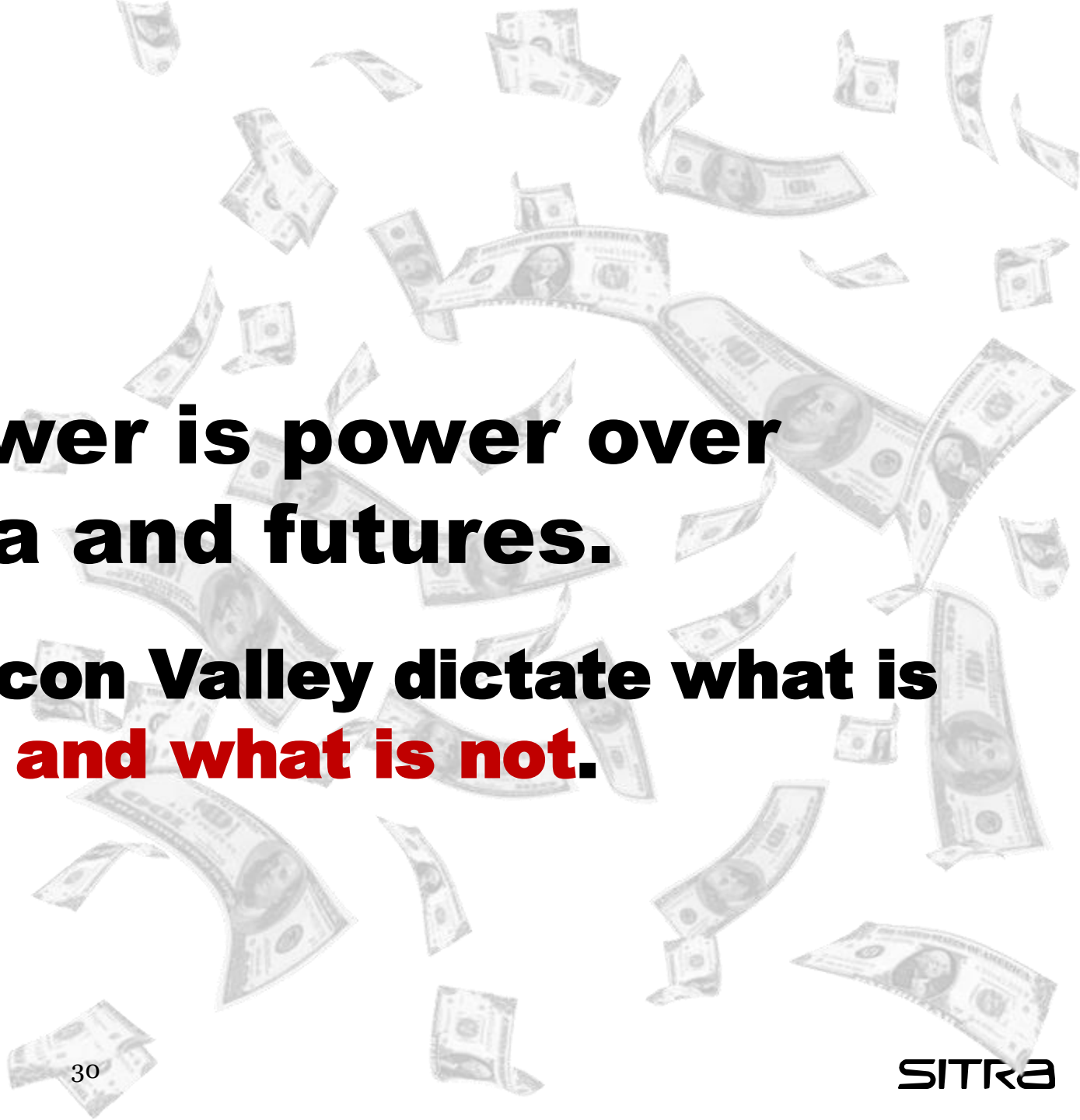
- Decision-makers both in Finland and elsewhere in the European Union are susceptible to unnoticed forms of influencing in digital environments
- Data collected from a single website visit not only spreads to a much larger range of actors than expected, but also enables decision-makers to be profiled in greater detail than previously thought
- Digital power is held by few and it's (infra)structural in nature: It enables the data giants to refine data with data gathered from multiple sources thus creating a “power loop”
- Essential questions: As more and more of our everyday life takes place on digital platforms, how can we ensure our sovereignty (as individuals and as societies) and the sustainability of our democracy?

“Digital power is the ability to connect the dots between different types of data and between different ”data layers”. It’s about knowing how people, ideas, locations etc. are connected in different information spaces - and then deciding on what will happen next.”



**Digital power is power over
agenda and futures.**

**Values from Silicon Valley dictate what is
seen – and what is not.**





News > World > Americas > US politics

JD Vance says US could drop support for NATO if Europe tries to regulate Elon Musk's platforms

Republican vice presidential nominee says 'Germans and other nations' – not Russia – would 'have to fund Ukraine's reconstruction'

Gustaf Kilander Washington DC

• Tuesday 17 September 2024 22:39 BST

Case #3: Understanding new technologies including AI must be seen as a civic right that societies and institutions should actively protect.

Epistemic rights in the age of AI

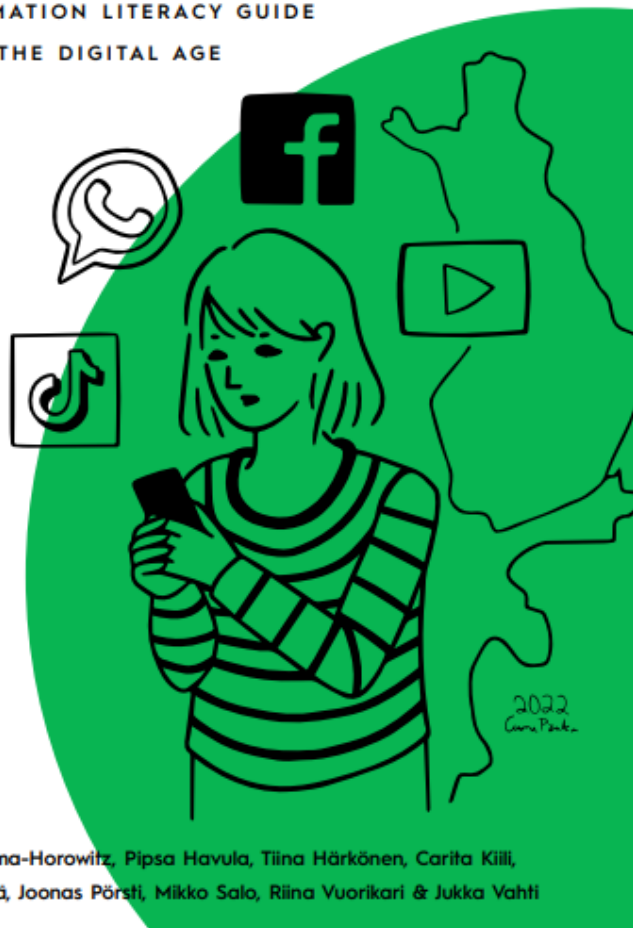
ACCESS TO RELEVANT INFORMATION	CAPACITY	PARTICIPATION	NO COERCION OR MANIPULATION
All people have equal access to relevant and truthful information that helps them to form informed views about artificial intelligence and the use of AI in different contexts.	All people have an equal capacity to critically assess the impact of AI systems at the individual or societal level. People can use this understanding to protect their own and/or society's interests.	The impacts of AI on society, individual rights, and democracy are subject to public deliberation in various settings, with a guarantee of meaningful participation by AI service users and civil society actors .	All people have equal freedom to form their views without being manipulated or pressured into a particular position. This applies to deliberate manipulation, mis- or disinformation produced by using AI.

Paraphrased for the AI context from Nieminen, Hannu (2023, in press). Why we need epistemic rights. In: Horowitz, Nieminen, Lehtisaari & D'Arma (eds.). Epistemic Rights in the Era of Digital Disruption. Palgrave Macmillan.

Case #4

Digital Information Literacy Guide

A DIGITAL INFORMATION LITERACY GUIDE
FOR CITIZENS IN THE DIGITAL AGE



FaktaBaari  EDU

Kari Kivinen, Minna Aslama-Horowitz, Pipsa Havula, Tiina Härkönen, Carita Killi,
Elsa Kivinen, Harto Pönkä, Joonas Pörsti, Mikko Salo, Riina Vuorikari & Jukka Vahti

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PEOPLE

Growing well-being challenges

POWER

The battle for democracy intensifies

Erosion of trust

The spiral of burden

Weakening dependency ratio

NATURE
Nature's carrying capacity eroding

Short-term decision-making

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THE ECONOMY

Economic foundations are cracking

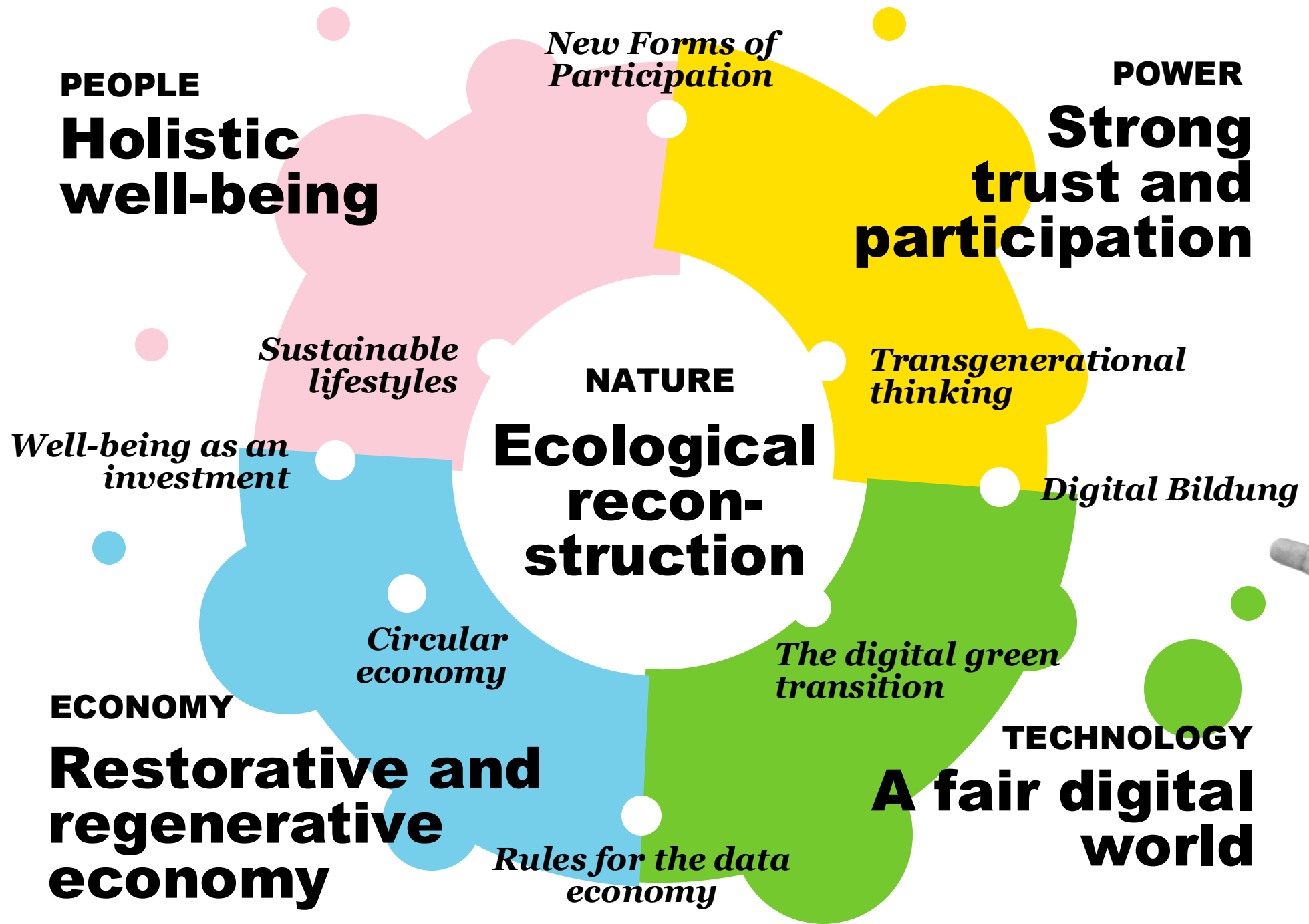
Overconsumption

Resource sufficiency

TECHNOLOGY

Competition for digital power gears up

Dominance of technology giants



PUSH

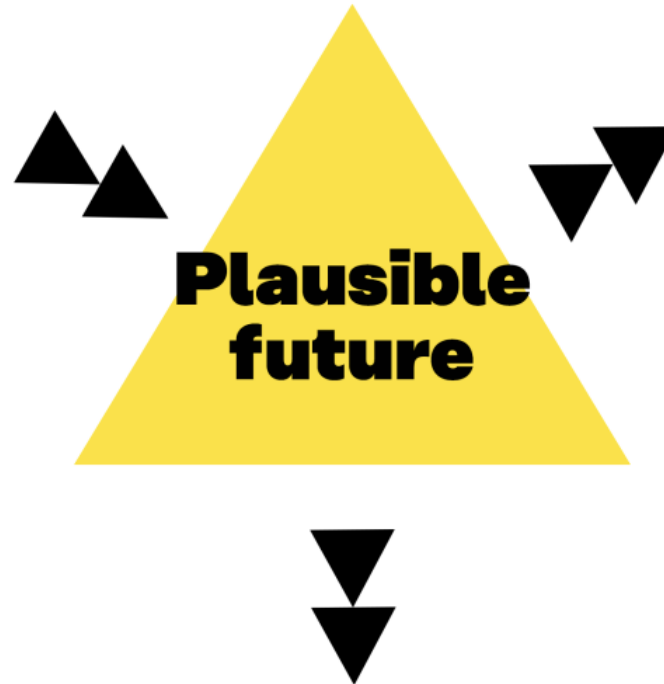
Push of the present

Current processes of change such as the economy, technology, the environment, culture.

PULL

Pull of the future

Images of the future, dreams, wishes, plans.



Weight of the past

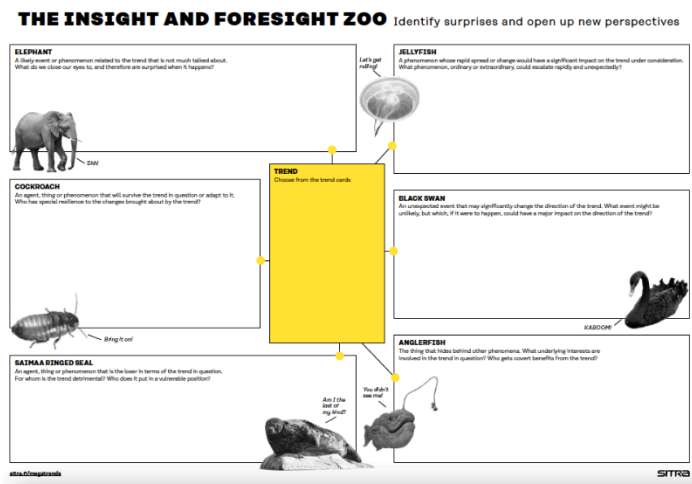
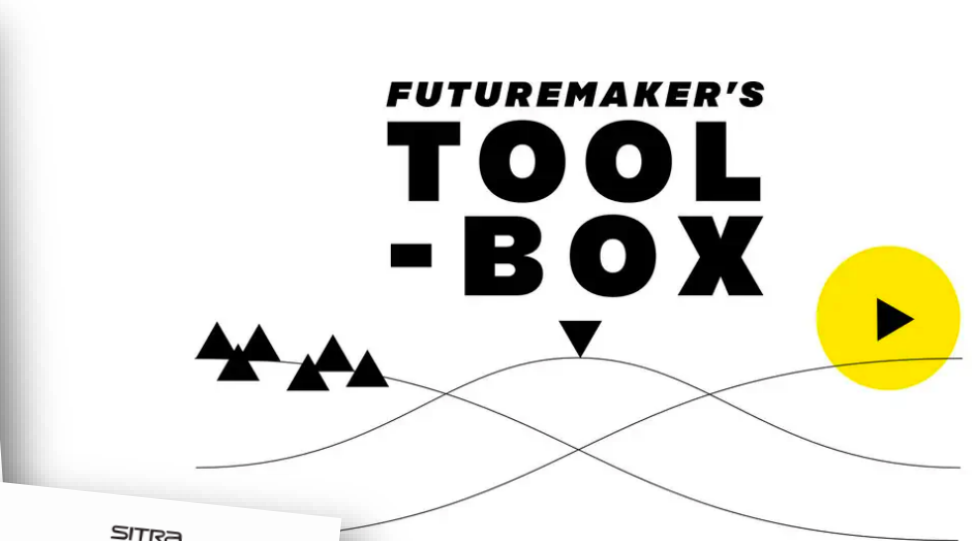
WEIGHT

Continuities, belief systems, world views, obstacles to change.

[Futures triangle](#),
Inayatullah 2008.

Group discussion/10minutes:

Weight of the past and
push of the present affecting
life long learning/adult learning:?



**FUTURES
FREQUENCY**

Keep these in mind!





Case #5
Democracy,
children's
rights and AI



In Finland, discussions about artificial intelligence are too technology-driven and short-sighted.

The significant societal impacts of artificial intelligence are primarily addressed through the lens of economy and competitiveness.

Broader societal impacts, such as the connection to democracy, remain in the shadows.

Background

Why do we need a project to link democracy, AI and children's rights?

- Artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly integrated into various services, impacting our society and democratic system
- Understanding AI, using it creatively, and influencing AI development is the right of every child and young person
- Equal opportunities must be guaranteed for everyone, regardless of background, to be active participants in the age of AI
- Children and young people should be provided with the tools to use power over their futures related to AI usage, direction, and decision-making
- Trust in AIs and their creators is low and may become a bottleneck for their use

The operational model is preceded by a preliminary study funded by Sitra and conducted by the University of Helsinki, which will be completed at the end of 2024.

Ideas for the project have been sourced from, among others, Scotland, but our goal of combining democracy education with AI education is internationally unique.

In the "Democracy, Children's Rights, and Artificial Intelligence" project, a new operational model is being piloted and developed for schools.

The aim is to develop critical thinking in children and young people and strengthen societal participation by connecting AI education with democracy education in an innovative way.

The model

The operational model is created through co-development

- The active role of experts, teachers, students, and partners as developers of the operational model (Innokas model)
- Ten project teachers from different parts of Finland (5th grade)
- Experts: democracy education, children's rights, artificial intelligence, co-development, future thinking, and innovation process
- Partners involved in the development and funding of the model
 - Public sector operators
 - 1-3 selected companies

What do we want

Objectives

- The new operational model has been piloted in ten Finnish schools, and the University of Helsinki has conducted an evaluation of the model
- The operational model becomes established in schools in Finland and is ready to be presented in other Nordic countries
- The model is adaptively implemented in Finnish teacher education
- A new network of experts on *sustainable AI* has been established