

**THE POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES  
AMONG FINNISH NINTH GRADERS**

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# JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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Tiivistelmä: Maisterintutkielmani tutkimuskysymyksenä oli: What Are the Political Perceptions and Attitudes Among Finnish Ninth Graders? (Käännös: Millaisia Ovat Suomalaisten Yhdeksäsluokkalaisten Käsitukset ja Asenteet Poliitikasta?). Tavoitteena oli selvittää suomalaisten yhdeksäsluokkalaisten käsityksiä ja asenteita politiikasta. Tarkasteltavat teemat olivat: 1) Kiinnostus politiikkaan ja sen seuraaminen, 2) Miten politiikasta keskustellaan ja mahdolliset konfliktit poliittisista aiheista, 3) Poliittinen tietämys ja näkemykset politiikan tilasta, 4) Ukrainan sota. Tässä tutkielmassa halusin keskittyä nuoriin, sillä he ovat juuri siinä iässä missä heidän poliittinen identiteettinsä on muodostumassa. Muodostumista edesauttaa poliittinen sosialisatio, johon tutkielmassani keskitytään. Käytin aineistonhankintamenetelmänäni puolistrukturoitua haastattelua. Haastattelin yhteensä seitsemää yhdeksäsluokkalaista nuorta. Haastatteluista saatu aineisto on analysoitu käyttäen tukena ja vertailukohtana aiempaa tutkimustietoa. Merkittävimmät löydökseni ovat yhdeksäsluokkalaisten poliittinen kanssakäymisessä ilmenee polarisoitumista mikä on linjassa aikaisempien tutkimustulosten kanssa. Toisena merkittävänä löydöksenä ovat yhdeksäsluokkalaisten poliittisen sosialisoitumisen lähteet, jotka tutkimuksessani poikkeavat aiemmista tutkimuksista. Tutkimustulokseni antavat viitteitä siitä, että sosiaalisen median ja perheen rooleja on mahdollisesti liioiteltu ja ystävien roolia pidetty liian vähäisenä.	
Asiasanat: political socialization, childhood socialization, political opinion, political attitudes, ninth graders, youth, young people, adolescents, polarization, civic teaching	
Säilytyspaikka: Jyväskylän yliopisto	
Muita tietoja: Kiitos haastatteluihin osallistuneille	



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

When I started to think about a topic for my master's thesis, I first had the idea of doing something on populism or polarization. These topics have intrigued me during the past few years. When I started to explore these topics, I realised I wanted to focus on the adolescent population. This was probably because I have been working as a substitute teacher periodically for a few years. I also have many adolescent relatives.

Through these environments, I have seen how populism and polarization can affect people. I have noted that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to populism and polarization. In the case of my family, this phenomenon had gotten so bad that we had to agree to not talk about political topics at family gatherings. As I pondered these topics, my scope enlarged. I wanted to focus on young people as I figured that this age is when their political opinion is formed or starts to form. I sought to know how polarized adolescents are, but I also wanted to learn how they perceive politics itself. This led me to formulate my research problem.

The hard part was to figure out what I specifically wanted my research to be focused on. From my experience with adolescents, I had seen arguments about political topics that had clear gender divisions. One example of this was the support for Finnish prime minister Sanna Marin. During my substitute teaching, I had observed that many adolescent females openly supported Sanna Marin. In contrast, many adolescent males openly criticised her. This sometimes led to conflict.

This polarization between the genders was something I specifically wanted to study. Besides that, I also wanted to know about adolescents' perceptions about politics in general. I then decided that my topic would simply be "The Political Perceptions and Attitudes Among Finnish Ninth Graders".

## **1.1 Research Question and Research Aim.**

My research question is “What Are the Political Perceptions and Attitudes Among Finnish Ninth Graders?”. The aim of my thesis is in line with my research question: to find out political attitudes and perceptions among Finnish ninth graders. I will explain why I chose ninth graders as my sample later in the thesis. The specific topics I wanted to focus on were: 1) Interest in politics and where it is followed, 2) How politics is discussed and possible conflict about political topics, 3) Political knowledge and thoughts about the state of politics, 4) War on Ukraine.

## **1.2 Choosing the method**

From the very beginning, I had the idea of doing interviews. I wanted to research the opinions of ordinary citizens. I had two choices. I could either look at existing data, for example polls and other research on the topic. The second option was to gather the data myself. As I wanted to find answers to specific questions the second option seemed the best. I could have chosen to do a survey, but I wanted to get to the meaning behind simple answers. Therefore, I decided that it would be best that I do interviews.

For that, there were also multiple choices. For what I was going to ask, semi-structured interviews seemed the best fit. I could ask complicated questions and explain them more thoroughly if needed. I could also explain certain terms if the interviewees were not familiar with them. I came up with the general questions and the flow of the interview. I also prepared specific questions that would then lead to more open discussion (See Appendix 2). This meant that there was room for me to diverge from my regular questions or ask clarifying questions freely. According to Layna Mosley (2013), this is the best practise in interviews (p. 119).

As the participants were ninth graders, their political knowledge might not have been high. I thought that there would be a possibility that they might not even realize that they did in fact follow politics, because they had a narrow idea of what politics were. For this reason, it was important to me to have an opportunity to explain certain ideas and terminology to them and then ask about their view about it. This also presented a challenge. I had to make sure that I was not leading in my questions or my explanations. This is what Mosley suggests (2013, p. 117). It was also important to not be patronizing and not make the interviewee feel looked down upon.

In the end, the interviews ended up being more structured than I had planned. This was mainly because I had not foreseen how unengaged the interviewees would be. They were surprisingly shy and therefore they did not engage in conversation as

much as I had hoped for. I mostly got short answers and I had to ask a lot of follow-up questions. Even though I felt the interviews became more structured, they still provided me valuable research data. They were not too structured so as not to let the conversation naturally flow if needed.

### **1.3 Defining terms**

Before I go into detail about my research, I want to clarify some terms. These are key terms that are connected to my thesis. I wanted to define these exact terms because they had multiple definitions or are used synonymously with other terms and therefore could be confusing.

#### **1.3.1 Youth, teenager, adolescence, etc.**

When I was reading about my thesis topic, I at one point realised that there is overlapping usage of “youth”, “teenager”, and “adolescent”. It became even more indistinguishable as I was reading some material in Finnish and some in English. Therefore, I wanted to search for definitions for these terms as it made it easier for me, but also for the purposes of clarifying their meaning and use. By defining these terms, I also made sure that in this thesis the terminology will be consistent with the dominant conventions. I will go through these terms and explain also how I have used them when translating from Finnish.

The first term I started to define is “Youth”. This can be translated into Finnish as “Nuoriso”. This means young people as a collective. This translation was what some of the supporting literature used in their official translations. For English “Youth” can be used synonymously with “Young people”. As for a singular “Young person” the Finnish translation would be “Nuori”.

The age definition of the term is slightly different in the Finnish context in comparison to the English-speaking world. Finnish law states that everyone under 29 is considered as youth (Nuorisolaki 1285/2016, §3). This is the age-range they used in two of the Finnish supporting literature works Saari (2017) and Pekkarinen et al. (2019).

This age definition is different from how the United Nations (UN) define youth. They define youth as “...those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years” (United Nations, n.d.). They state also that it is important to note that this is only in regard to statistics and that it is different in a legal sense. They state that Article One of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines everyone under the age of 18 as a child. This is the same in Finnish law and it is stated in the Child Welfare Act (Lastensuojelulaki 417/2007, §6).

This same subsection also states that in regards to this section of the law, "Young people" are those who are 18-24 years of age. This is contradictory to the Youth Law (Nuorisolaki). This shows how many different ways one can define "Youth". There is also a medical definition for "Youth", but I did not see it as relevant here, so I will not be discussing it further.

"Adolescent" is also quite an ambiguous term. The Finnish translation for the term is "Murrosikäinen" or "Teini-ikäinen". I opt to use the former since "Teini-ikäinen" is a straight translation of the word "Teenager". These terms are also very much interchangeable, but on closer inspection, they do have differences. The term "Teenager" references the suffix in numbers from 13 to 19. They all have the suffix "-teen". This means that by definition "Teenager" is someone who is 13 to 19 years of age. The Finnish translation in my mind should be then the same.

"Adolescence" on the other hand references puberty. The term is defined by the World Health Organization as a phase between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19 (World Health Organization, n.d.). Another definition is from Psychology Today, which is a media website and magazine with a focus on psychology. Psychology Today defines "Adolescence" as ages 13 to 19 (Psychology Today, n.d.). This corresponds with the definition of "Teenager". Psychology Today continues by stating that "The physical and psychological changes that take place in adolescence often start earlier...". They say that these changes can start as early as nine years of age. The upper limit of the term is what is relevant in my thesis. Neundorf et al. (2013) talk about "Adolescence" and "Young adulthood". These terms are not defined in the article. Therefore, I assume that they mean ages up to 19 to mean "Adolescence" and everyone over to mean "Young adulthood"

The translations I use for these terms are the following: Youth = Nuoriso, Adolescent = Murrosikäinen, Teenager = Teini, Minor = Alaikäinen.

### **1.3.2 Political socialization**

Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. (2022) define political socialization as a process through which individuals learn and adopt the norms, values, and behaviour patterns of the political system and develop attitudes, beliefs, and feelings related to political issues (p. 37). Clawson and Oxley (2021) expand political socialization by stating that political socialization begins in childhood (p. 50-51). This is called childhood socialization. One of the aspects of childhood socialization is parental socialization or parental transmission.

There are also more general ways to describe different types of political socialization. These are vertical and horizontal socializations. David Easton (1968) defines these terms as: "We shall see that socialization is interpreted as contributing to system -maintenance in two fundamentally different ways: vertically (across the

generations) and horizontally (within the generations)” (p. 136). Parental socialization is for example vertical. Horizontal socialization is learning from peers.

### **1.3.3 Political opinion**

There are multiple definitions for political opinion. One reason for this is that political opinion is used synonymously with public opinion. Clawson and Oxley (2021) talk about public opinion. They state that there are two different definitions for public opinion. First is: “...most emphasize that public opinion refers to opinions on governmental and policy matters rather than on private matters (such as one’s favorite flavor of ice cream or favorite movie)” (p. 15). The second definition is: “...public opinion refers to the preferences of individuals, tallied such that each person’s opinion counts equally” (p. 16). The latter definition is what Clawson and Oxley state they use in their book. Both these definitions can also be defined as political opinion.

The foremost definition is exactly how political opinion is defined in the legal sense. For example, The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) states defines political opinion as: “holding an opinion thought or belief... .. on a matter related to the potential actors of persecution and to their policies or methods...” (EUAA, n.d.). This definition is specifically related to protection against persecution.

The second definition by Clawson and Oxley is related to democracy. As politics are an integral part of democracy, the definitions for political opinion correlate with theories on democracy. As an example, one definition of political opinion comes from Nadia Urbinati (2014). Her definition of political opinion comes from her theory on democracy. She explains democracy as a diarchic system consisting of “will” and “opinion”. Will is what the ruling power use to rule the citizenry. The other part of democracy’s diarchy is “opinion”. Urbinati explains that she uses “opinion” and “political judgment” interchangeably. The latter term is easier to understand. The will is what the ruling power uses, and opinion is what the ruled, the citizens use. In a democracy the ruling power cannot underestimate the power of the opinion of the people. If the citizens are not satisfied with how they are ruled, they simply use their power of voting to change that.

From these two different kinds of definitions, I use the foremost definition in this thesis. What I set out to find out was the opinions of the individual participants. I was not looking for a group consensus.

## **1.4 Thesis outline**

The goal of my research was to do an interview and then analyse the interview findings. My thesis is built around these two main parts. Before those however, I will

explain my theoretical approach and review the supporting literature. Then I will explain my research method and the interview process. After that, I will go through the interview findings and then analyse those findings. Finally, I will conclude by reflecting upon the results.

## 2 THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will explain what theoretical approach I am using, what field of studies my thesis relates to, and review the literature I will use as a support for my research. Finding these articles to support my thesis was a surprisingly difficult task. The main reason for this was because this topic has not been studied extensively regarding adolescents, especially in Finland. Therefore, it was hard to find any material related to it.

Political participation of adolescents can be studied through different aspects. What many of the studies focus on are youth movements or active participation in politics (Kassman & Vamstad, 2019, Coe et al., 2016). Even one of the works I have chosen has a focus on youth participation in extremist movements (Puuronen et al., 2017). These are not relevant to my thesis, so I had to look past them. What is relevant to my thesis, is political opinion formation. This is known to start happening during late childhood or adolescence (Neundorf et al., 2013). This area of studies is quite hard to pin down as it is multi-disciplinary. Political opinion formation can be studied from media studies, psychology, sociology, and of course from purely political viewpoints.

All of the studies I have selected use survey data. It is the most efficient way to find out opinions on a large scale. In addition, interviews are used as a complimentary method. The surveys only give one-dimensional answers and if we want to know the reasoning behind those answers, interviews are needed. This is important when trying to find out what people really think and why they think that way.

Pinning down the exact field is hard so therefore listing the prominent authors is also difficult. From the materials I have read, and the references in those materials, I have found some authors that have contributed to this area of study extensively. These authors are Anja Neundorf, M. Kent Jennings, and Richard G. Niemi.

These authors have all studied political opinion formation. They have also focused on studies on how this formation happens during childhood and adolescence. Jennings and Niemi worked together on studies which focused on parental

transmission of political opinion and interest. Jennings himself has contributed to the founding of political socialization research and theory (Beck, 1997). Together Jennings and Niemi have published many titles in this area starting from the sixties (Jennings & Niemi, 1968, 1974, 1981; Niemi & Jennings, 1991). Neundorf is a more contemporary author. Her work references Jennings and Niemi and builds on it (Neundorf et al., 2013). She has also worked together with Niemi on a few publications (Neundorf et al., 2016; Neundorf & Niemi, 2014).

In my analysis I will use supporting literature that I will compare my interview findings to. As part of that, I will also use political socialization theory. Jennings and Niemi have pioneered this area of studies, especially in regard to parental socialization. (Clawson & Oxley, 2021). Their studies range from the 1960's to the 1990's.

In this literature review I will introduce four works that I use as supporting literature in my thesis. Three of these works are published in Finnish. All of them had either an English summary or a description sheet from which I have taken the English names of these works. Each work consists of a study about young people and their connection to politics. I will analyse each study and explain the contents.

## **2.1 Civic engagement and right-wing populism amongst young people**

The first book I will be reviewing is edited by Vesa Puuronen and Kari Saari (2017) called *Nuorten yhteiskunnallinen osallistuminen ja oikeistopopulismi* (Translation: Civic engagement and right-wing populism amongst young people). It is an article collection based on the 2011-2015 completed, Europe-wide questionnaire, interview, and ethnographic study. This MYPLACE research project (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy, and Civic Engagement) was funded by the European Union and its purpose was to study young people and how vulnerable they are to being recruited to extremist groups. This study focused on right-wing populist groups. MYPLACE study was carried out in 14 European countries and this book mainly focuses on the Finnish part of the study. It makes comparisons to the rest of the study, but its focus is on the Finnish results. (Puuronen & Saari, 2017)

The book has two main topics, the societal participation of young people and right-wing populism. I will be focusing on articles that fall under the first category. These articles examine how young people think about societal and political topics and how they participate in society (Saari et al., 2017).

These topics had been chosen as a part of the study because they gave insight into how young people see society and themselves as part of it. To get to the topic of

extremist participation the researchers had to learn how these young people think about society and how it differs between the ones that take part in extremist groups and the ones that do not. (Puuronen & Saari, 2017)

### **2.1.1 Analysing the book**

The purpose of the study was to gather data on young people's political, social, and societal efficacy and participation. The study comprised of many methods that complimented each other. These included a wide survey, in-depth interviews and a case-by-case ethnographic study. The study was Europe-wide. It included fourteen European countries. Every country had two study locations. These were always a city and a rural location, somewhat close to each other geographically. The purpose of this set up was to see the similarities between countries. This way they could also see whether there were any correlations in the differences between urban and rural locations. (Puuronen & Saari, 2017, pp. 11-12)

The Finnish locations were the city of Kuopio and the villages of Nurmes and Lieksa. There were four criteria for choosing these as the locations. It is not specified what they mean by "criteria". I assume from the context that they wanted these factors to be present in the locations. The criteria were: a) urban vs. rural, b) socioeconomic differences, c) prevalence of ethnic conflicts in recent history, and c) support for populism. The support for populism was measured as support for the Finns Party which is a populist party in Finland. (Puuronen & Saari, 2017, p. 12)

For the survey method, the researchers chose samples randomly from the resident register. The survey had a sample size of n=882, from which women were 47,6 percent and men 52,4 percent. As for the ages they list three age groups 16-17, 18-21, and 22-25. From these, the youngest group represented only 16,2 percent of the whole. That group also had only two years included and the other two groups represented four years. The rationale for this categorization was not disclosed. I surmise that it might be because the youngest group is representing under-age and the others are adults. (Puuronen & Saari, 2017, pp. 14-16)

The interviews had naturally fewer people as the sample size was n=59. From this, there were 30 females and 29 males. They were chosen from the survey based on the results given. The people were chosen to be equally representative of the survey results. As for the ages, they had seven interviewees from Kuopio and six from Lieksa and Nurmes representing 16-17 years of age. It is not shown how many from those were female or male. (Puuronen & Saari, 2017, p. 17)

## 2.2 Young people's perceptions of democracy, equality, and the welfare state

The first article in the book is by Kari Saari and Vesa Puuronen (2017) *Nuorten käsityksiä demokratiasta, tasa-arvosta ja hyvinvointivaltiosta* (Translation: Young people's perceptions of democracy, equality, and the welfare state). It is focusing on how contented or discontented young people are about society in general and some specific aspects of it. The reason for these questions is Saari's and Puuronen's claim that populism is fuelled by societal critique and societal dissatisfaction. The areas they asked about were: democracy and trust in institutions, equality, and social justice.

Saari and Puuronen found that Finnish young people keep the welfare state and its supporting network in high regard. These were also areas that young people thought of as worrying. Their biggest worry was the decay of the welfare state. They were worried that there would be budget cuts that would make the welfare state less effective.

Young people also trusted the current political institutions and systems (Saari & Puuronen, 2017, p. 25). The lowest out of political institutions is political parties and even that had an average trust of 5,5 out of 10. The only one lower than that out of all the institutions was religious institutions with an average of 4,6. The highest trusted institutions were the police and the justice system. The article also states that the trust in the police and political institutions had only grown.

Equality conversation had a bit more variation. The article has divided the answers between men and women, but also between their preferred political parties. Equality between men and women was generally supported highly by everyone. There were still clear patriarchal notions in some answers, especially when talking about jobs and conscription (Saari & Puuronen, 2017, p. 34).

In the article data, there was a big portion of people who saw men as better suited for both. When talking about conscription, inequality comes from the notion that men must do something that women do not. The ones who voiced this as a problem did not say that women should be conscripted too. They thought that women should have to do something else that would be similarly time-consuming and useful to society.

When talking about sexual minorities there were a lot more differences. A lot of the answers thought that sexual minorities should have the same rights as everyone else, but there was still a big portion of people who did not think so. Some also thought that LGBTQ people are "unnatural" (Saari & Puuronen, 2017, p. 33).

## 2.3 Young people's perceptions of politics and political parties

This article by Kari Saari (2017) *Nuorten käsityksiä politiikasta ja puolueista* (Translation: Young people's perceptions of politics and political parties). The article consists of two parts: young people's definition of politics and interest in it, and their perceptions of political parties. Saari states that defining politics is hard even for political theorists. It is therefore important to ask to define politics when asked if people are interested in it. The definitions give a better understanding of people's interests. I did the same in my interviews.

The first part in this article talks about young people's interest in politics. The answers were "very interested", "somewhat interested", "not very interested", and "not at all interested". Out of all the participants, roughly half stated that they were at least "somewhat interested" in politics. A bit over tenth of the people said they were "not interested at all". The youngest age group in the study was 16-17 years old. In this group, there were 200 participants. The clear majority answered that they were "not very interested". There was a nearly equal distribution of answers for "somewhat interested" and "not interested at all". Only a few said they were "very interested". (Saari, 2017, p. 53)

The interviews gave more insight into this matter. The definitions of politics by those who were not interested in politics were quite negative. They defined politics only as party politics, said it is complicated and hard to understand, and stated that ordinary citizens have no power. Overall, the definitions were mostly connected to party politics, but not all of them had negative connotations. In addition, some answers defined politics as broader and more personal.

The findings told the researchers that young people define politics in quite a narrow way. Saari states that young people act in political arenas but might not see their participation as political. Saari calls this phenomenon subpolitics or micropolitics (2017, p. 56). He also claims that this might explain why young people are seen as apathetic about political participation. They do not see themselves taking part in politics even though they are. This might also be reflected in voter turnout. Young people define politics in a narrow sense and therefore they do not see themselves taking part in it. Because of these reasons, they see voting as a piece of political machinery which they themselves are not part of.

The second part of the article explores young people's perceptions of political parties. They were asked about which parties they support, how they view each party, and about their perceptions of the left and the right wings.

In conclusion, there was a clear divide between the urban and the rural locations. The rural location had bigger support for right-leaning parties whereas the urban location had the opposite. There was also a division between genders, where men

supported right-wing parties slightly more and women slightly more left-wing parties. There was also more detailed data on how young people perceive each political party, but that is not relevant to my thesis so I will not go into detail about that. (Saari, 2017, pp. 57-75)

## **2.4 Young Citizens: A Statistical Analysis of the Political Efficacy among 9th Grade Students**

The second work I am referencing is *Nuoret kansalaiset: Tilastollinen tutkimus yhdeksäsluokkalaisten kansalaispätevydestä* (Translation: Young Citizens: A Statistical Analysis of the Political Efficacy among 9th Grade Students) (Borg et al., 2022). It is a report, consisting of multiple articles, based on the Education, Political Efficacy, and Informed Citizenship (EPIC) project. The report was published by Finland's ministry of justice. The project's goal was to find out the effect of democratic education in schools and post-primary education paths on young people's civic competence. Civic competence means how young people understand politics and how they think they can influence it. In the spring of 2021, the project collected the first part of the two-phase long-term data, in which ninth-graders participated. According to the original plan, the first phase of the data collection was to be carried out already in the spring of 2020, but the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the data collection by a year. The second part of the project is set to happen in the spring of 2023. (Kestilä-Kekkonen & Tiihonen Aino, 2022, pp. 18, 23)

The data collection was done as a survey, which was carried out in 37 municipalities and 80 schools. In total 5,272 ninth-grade students from 379 school classes responded to it. Ninth graders answered the survey using an online form during one lesson, which were mainly civic lessons. The questions on the form were designed by the research team. The team included Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen, Sami Borg, Laura Kestilä, Sakari Karvonen, Josefina Sipinen and Aino Tiihonen, Peter Söderlund, Venla Hannuksela, Miikka Korventaus, and Salla Vadén, and Silja Porkkala. Almost all of these researchers have also contributed to the writing of these articles. (Kestilä-Kekkonen & Tiihonen Aino, 2022, pp. 18, 23-24)

As the purpose was to find the political efficacy, most of the data is referencing exactly that. However, some of the data is only relating to political efficacy in support. That data can be looked at separately. The relevance to my thesis is in these more separate findings. The sample in this study and in my thesis are both ninth graders. The topics also have parallels. In this study, political efficacy is studied through some of the same questions that I explored in my thesis. Next, I will examine the three articles from this report, that I use as supporting literature in my thesis.

### **2.4.1 Political efficacy and political socialization**

The first article in this report is by Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen, Salla Vadén, Josefina Sipinen, and Miikka Korventausta (2022) called *Kansalaispätevyys ja poliittinen sosiaalisuus* (Translation: Political efficacy and political socialization). The purpose of this article is to explore the political efficacy and political socialization of ninth graders. The relevance of this article to my thesis comes from the part where it is explored how this political efficacy relates to political socialization and how it develops.

Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. state that political interest and knowledge depend on political socialization. As part of exploring political socialization, the authors wanted to find out the sources of political information that young people use. They asked ninth-grade students to list the three most important sources they use to get political and societal information. The results were as follows: 1) social media, 2) traditional media, 3) family, 4) teachers, and 5) friends (Kestilä-Kekkonen et al., 2022, p. 37). The list goes in order from most mentioned to least mentioned. Social media was mentioned in 80 percent and friends in 37 percent of the answers. The order also aligns with how people prioritized these sources. Social media was the most important one to 36 percent and friends to 7 percent of the answers. From the most important sources, the list only goes to 95 percent. Therefore, the last 5 percent of the answers were something outside of this list. These other answers are not disclosed in the article

### **2.4.2 The connection of classmates, teachers, and civic studies teaching methods to civic competence**

The second article is by Venla Hannuksela, Miikka Korventausta ja Josefina Sipinen (2022) *Luokkatovereiden, opettajien ja yhteiskuntaopin opetusmenetelmien yhteys kansalaispätevyyteen* (Translation: The connection of classmates, teachers, and civic studies teaching methods to civic competence). The article is mainly discussing how classmates, teachers, and civic studies teaching methods connect to civic competence. One of the measurements they use is how the discussion atmosphere in the classroom is related to civic competence. The Finnish term they use is "keskusteluilmapiiri", which I have translated to "discussion atmosphere", is not defined in the article. The term is commonly used in Finnish and the commonality of it might be the reason it is not defined. The term means the atmosphere or feeling experienced when having a discussion.

Besides comparing the discussion atmosphere data to civic competence, the article has it separately. This separate data is what I focused on. This has direct relevance to my thesis as that was one of the questions I asked.

Based on the findings by Hannuksela et al., only ten percent of the students considered the discussion atmosphere in their class to be "somewhat closed". Thirty

percent estimate the discussion atmosphere to be somewhere between "closed" and "active". On the other hand, 44 percent consider the discussion atmosphere in their class to be "fairly open" and just 17 percent as "very open". More than half of the students therefore thought that social issues are actively discussed in their class and that they are allowed to express different opinions in the class environment. (Hannuksela et al., 2022, p. 87)

### **2.4.3 Political efficacy and civic engagement**

The last article is *Kansalaispätevyys ja yhteiskunnallinen osallistuminen* (Translation: Political efficacy and civic engagement), by Sami Borg and Salla Vadén (2022). They investigated ninth graders' civic engagement and plans to engage. The focus was on organizations. Borg and Vadén state that organizational activity can be assumed to develop young people's social capabilities, which supports their ability to participate in civic activities. They wanted to see if there were any differences between genders in this issue, so they divided the findings into "boys" and "girls". In the article, there are two sets of data. The first is about already happened or currently happening civic engagement, and the other is plans for civic engagement in the future. One of these engagements is voting.

## **2.5 Homemade citizens: the development of political interest during adolescence and young adulthood**

This article by Anja Neundorf, Kaat Smets, and Gema García-Albacete aims to better understand the development of political interest during adolescence and young adulthood. They state that despite its importance, relatively little is known about the origins and the development of political interest over the lifespan. A crucial phase in the development is the age between childhood and adulthood. This age is called the formative years (Neundorf et al., 2013, p. 92).

This study used existing data from The German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP). Neundorf et al. state that this data source was used as it has two sets of data they needed. These are data that enable to follow individuals during their early adult years and permit matching parents and their offspring. They then use Latent growth curve analysis to model changes in trajectories of political interest (Neundorf et al., 2013, pp. 94, 100-105).

The data was gathered by the GSOEP in the span of 23 years from 1985 to 2007. The researchers opted to use only West German data as they argue that to be the most homogenous group of respondents. The dependant variable was political interest measured by the question "Generally speaking, how much are you interested in

politics?”. The answers ranged from “Not at all” to “Very interested”. “No answer” and “Do not know” were set to “Missing”. The sets of independent measures were set to two groups. These were “Parental characteristics” and “Life-cycle events experienced”. The age group in this study ranges from 17 to 35 years of age. The adolescent years are only at the beginning of this age-range, but still there. (Neundorf et al., 2013, pp. 98-100).

Neundorf et al. claim there are two factors that influence political interest. They are parental socialization and life-cycle events. Parental socialization is expected to take place during childhood and adolescence. This would build a base for political interest that then persists over time. On the other hand, life-cycle events are life-altering events during one’s lifespan. These events are for example: getting married or getting divorced, having children, graduating, or personal traumatic event.

These two factors are considered supplementary in their effects, including at the same age. However, the research found this to not take place. During the formative years, it was parental socialization that had the main effects on political interest. Most of the impact the life-cycle events had, was a stabilizing one. However, in cases where individuals did not acquire high levels of interest in politics from their families, life-cycle events had more of an impact. Furthermore, after the respondents reached adulthood life-cycle events had a bigger impact.

In the conclusion Neundorf et al. state that they are not ready to disregard the life-cycle model. The reason is that even though it did not have as big of an impact as political socialization, it still had an impact. Life-cycle events also were more impactful in certain cases. The article also states that life-cycle events were more impactful when combined with other life-cycle events. (Neundorf et al., 2013. pp. 110-111).

The most relevant finding in this article is the political interest growth model (Neundorf et al., 2013, p. 105). According to the model, political interest grows until the age of 25. At that age it starts stagnating and in the early thirties it starts slightly declining. In the article, they stress that this model is only representing the average and that there are differences in the degrees of political interests people have.

## **2.6 Youth Barometer 2018**

The final source I have chosen is *Vaikutusvaltaa Euroopan laidalla: Nuorisobarometri 2018* (Translation: Influence on the edge of Europe: 2018 Youth Barometer) (Pekkarinen et al. 2019). The Youth Barometer is a yearly publication by the state youth council which is an expert body on youth work and youth policy appointed by the Finnish government. The Youth Barometer measures values and attitudes of Finns aged 15 to 29. Every year there is a new topic that is the focus of that year’s Youth Barometer.

Some of the questions are the same every year, which allows the researchers to see changes in the long term.

The 2018 Youth Barometer was titled *"Influence on the edge of Europe"*. Its focus was on youth political participation. This data was gathered during the year prior to the publication. Some data had comparative data from previous years. The data for this year was gathered through phone interviews, which lasted on average 33 min and 40 seconds. In the end, they interviewed 1902 people from which 579 were 15–19 years of age. The interviews were structured, but the order of questioning was partly randomized to minimize the effects of the order. There were two data sets that had relevance to my thesis. The first was about political interest and the second was about opinions about politics.

### **2.6.1 Political interest**

The way the researchers determined political interest was by asking "How interested are you in politics?". The answers were: "very", "somewhat", "not very", "not at all", and "don't know". The results were slightly in favour for political interest. The age group closest to my interviewees was 15-19. In this age group, 53 percent answered "very" or "somewhat". The interesting part in the Youth Barometer was however the fact that they show a trend of political interest growth from 1996 to 2018. The title of this chapter was *"Young people's interest in politics at record high"*. This trend could explain the difference in the political interest in the MYPLACE project and the 2018 Youth Barometer.

Another aspect of the political interest was how it changes during people's lifetimes. The Youth Barometer had data on this as they had people participate from 15 to 29 years old. The trend was that during this age the political interest rises. The youngest age group in this case was 15-19 and the oldest 25-29. The number of answers as either "very" or "somewhat" was 53 percent in the youngest age group, the amount had risen to 70 percent in the oldest. Also, the oldest group had zero percent answers of "don't know" as the two younger groups had one percent. Such a small percentage could be concerned as irrelevant, or it could be indicative of a trend as both the youngest groups scored one percent.

### **2.6.2 Opinions about politics**

The way they measured opinions about politics was by asking how much young people trusted institutions. Most of the institutions were political, but there were some that are part of the system, but not political themselves. Examples of the political institutions are political parties and the president, and examples of non-political institutions are the police and banks.

The question asked was “How much do you trust the following institutions?”. The answer options were “very”, “somewhat”, “little”, and “not at all”. The findings showed that trust in political institutions was generally high. When talking about more specific institutions the lowest trusted institution was political parties and even that had trust of over half. European union was trusted slightly more than political parties. Other specific institutions all fell somewhere above the political parties.

From non-political institutions, the police was the highest rated institution on trust. In fact, it was the highest trusted institution of all. The armed forces and the justice system were also very high on the list, with banks slightly below.

### **3 RESEARCH**

In this part, I will go through the research method and all the different considerations that I had to think about when planning and executing my research interviews. I will explain why I chose to do this type of research. I will also explain in more detail about research methods and interviews, and what they mean in research. After that I will explain the different issues, I had to consider in my research. Most of these were to do with interviews. Lastly, I will give a brief explanation of the problems I faced during my research.

#### **3.1 Qualitative or quantitative research**

According to Roger Pierce (2008), the debate about quantitative and qualitative research is somewhat irrelevant. Both have their strengths, and they are not mutually exclusive. As I mentioned before, I could have chosen to do surveys and I would have gotten good data on my topic. In some of the literature that I have chosen to use as my supporting literature, they have done both, surveys and interviews. This was also an option, but for my purposes I did not deem it necessary.

My choice of semi-structured interviews was the best fit for my research question. As Pierce puts it: "The strength of this method [interviews] lies in its unique capacity, through in-depth interviewing and observation, to learn and understand the underlying values of individuals and groups" (2008, p. 45). My research focus was on these underlying values. Therefore, using only surveys would not have been sufficient.

I still could have used surveys in addition to interviews and I agree that this method would have probably given interesting results. I had two issues with doing so. Firstly, my topic was such that it would not benefit from knowing the overall opinions of a larger group. That is not the focus of my thesis. The more specific questions that could have been asked were only formed after I had done the

interviews and learned about the perception and opinions. The second issue comes from this method. After I had done the interviews and gathered data, I could have formed survey questions and done a survey. This would certainly have given me more information about the topic. I chose not to do this as it would have made my research so extensive that it would not have been plausible to do in the scope of a master's thesis.

So, is my method purely qualitative? One would easily categorize interviews as qualitative methods, and I would have previously done the same. Semi-structured interviews can actually fall into both categories. Layna Mosley (2013) says: "...the semi-structured interview often permits a quantification of interview data." and "...these coded interview data are virtually interchangeable with other types of data, such as those generated through surveys." (p. 117). This means that although the data is considered qualitative, its nature is such that it can be analysed through quantitative methods. This is the approach that I took with my thesis. I use both qualitative and quantitative methods in my analysis.

In the analysis chapter, I use both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. In my thesis, qualitative analysis comes in the form of analysing the language, the definitions, and the explanations. Quantitative analysis is used when I start to compile the answers into quantitative forms. This method is used only in a small scale as it is not very useful in such a small sample. I will not be using for example percentages when talking about my interview data. That would be mostly unuseful and even confusing when the sample is only seven people.

## **3.2 Choosing the sample**

I chose ninth graders because that is the most interesting age for my questions. They are still a few years from voting age, but they have already begun to get some (legal) liberties and responsibilities. At that age, they have begun the formation of their political identities. Also, even if they are not eligible to vote yet, they can still be credible and influential political actors (Greta Thunberg for example).

The other reason was that as they are already 15 years old, they can choose for themselves if they want to take part in the research (TENK, 2019). Their guardians must be informed of the research, but the ultimate choice is the participants themselves. This makes the whole process easier. And I could not see a reason to interview anyone younger than them. For my research purposes, they were the optimal age group.

The size of my sample was something I wondered about for a long time. When I started to figure out my questions I estimated the amount of material I would get and

used that to figure out a suitable sample size. I also looked at other research and how large samples they used in their interviews. As an example, Saari et al. had six participants from Lieksa and Nurmes, and seven from Kuopio representing the age group of 16-17 years of age. I decided on six interviewees as that seemed the most appropriate for this type and level of research. In the end, the interviews were shorter than expected so I decided that one extra would be for the best.

Another aspect of choosing a sample was to think about how I would get that sample. Random sampling is the best way in almost all cases. As I did not have a purely random sample my results will not be as representative of my sample group as they could have been. I will explain about representation in the analysis chapter of my thesis. A purely random sample would have been a kind of lottery of choosing the participants. I decided that I would do this, but I would ask for volunteers, from which I then would randomly select participants. In the end, I got so few volunteers that I did not need to randomly select them, I simply chose everyone that wanted to participate. This means that because I invited them and they knew the topic, the sample is not purely random. It is still random enough for the purposes of this thesis.

### **3.2.1 Classifications**

One classification is the age. The rationale for picking the age was mentioned before. Another classification that I chose was gender. I decided early on that I wanted to have an equal amount of male and female interviewees. I chose to have this gender division as I had observed differences between gender lines in this age group when it came to political issues. I wanted to find out if that was really the case and maybe see if there were any underlying factors to this division. If there were to be none, this half-half approach would not affect the rest of the research as they were otherwise the same group.

As for other classifications that I could have chosen there were few. The interviewees were all from the same school and from the same grade. There were a total of four classes of ninth graders and the interviewees came from all four. I did not see any differences between the classes, so I did not think that to be relevant information to note.

The only classification, that I now regret not asking about, is their socioeconomical status. I could have asked background questions that would have given me an idea about what kind of homes they are from. I think it would have been interesting to see if that would have risen as a factor in some questions. In hindsight, it would have been relevant to my topic.

### **3.3 Practical considerations**

As the interviews would have to be private, I had to think about a good place for them. I asked for a suitable room from the principal, and we originally agreed on the school's conference room. When the interview day came, I found that the conference room was already booked for many of the needed times. I asked about this from the principal and inquired if there were any available classrooms for example. He recommended that I would ask the school's student counsellor if I could use her room. I did as instructed and she was happy to lend me her room.

The room ended up being perfect for my purposes. As the student counsellor's room, the students were already familiar with it. Its purpose is to give the student counsellor and the students a place where they can talk in private. This meant that it was perfect for interviews.

### **3.4 Equipment used**

For the interviews, I had to use a recording device. I could not simply use my phone as that would have been a privacy security issue. I loaned a recording device from the university. This device was Zoom H1n audio recorder. For my purposes, this worked very well. As the device had a micro-SD card as its memory, I had to make sure to completely wipe it after the use. After the interviews, I uploaded the recordings to my private network drive on the university's network, through remote access. After the recordings were safely stored, I wiped the micro-SD card. For this, the university website had a guide to download an open-source application that would override the memory and therefore completely wipe it clean (JYU, 2022b). This application is called Eraser. After this thesis is submitted and graded, I will erase the recordings from the private network drive.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

As I started planning this research and the interviews, I embraced the fact that I had little knowledge about doing this type of research. Therefore, I wanted to be extremely careful and learn about all the ethical considerations. Firstly, I contacted the university's ethical board and asked them do I need an ethical review. They said that in cases where the ethical guidelines are followed that is not necessary. As the

interviewees that I had planned on were over 15 years old and I had planned of informing their guardians, I had no problems (TENK, 2019).

I knew that I had to write some sort of a research notification. The university's website had more information on the topic and templates (JYU, 2022a). Furthermore, I learned that a privacy notice would also be necessary. These both would have to be shown to the students and their guardians. These would also have to be given to the interviewees as physical copies. I used the templates the university provided for research notification, privacy notice, and consent and filled them for my research purposes.

As I explained the interview process to the students in the classroom, I wanted to be absolutely clear about their rights. I explained what the interview and the research are for and why I wanted to interview them. I also explained that it was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to decline at any time even after the interview. Of course, I did not want to scare any potential volunteers away, but I thought it was more important to not make them feel pressured in any way. To the interviewees, I explained everything in more detail and gave them copies of the research notification and privacy notice. I also pointed out that even though they were signing a consent form they could still opt out of the research after.

### **3.6 Safety considerations**

At the time of the interviews, the COVID-19 pandemic was still an ongoing problem. I had to make sure that I followed the current guidelines about vaccinations and mask usage. At the time there was no official recommendation for the use of masks for the staff in schools, but I felt that it would still be for the best to use it. I wore my mask when entering the classrooms for my explanation about the research. When we went to the interview room, and I was alone with my interviewees I asked them about their preference about the mask. All said that it would be okay for me to not wear it during the interview. One however said they would be wearing theirs, so I did the same.

### **3.7 Other considerations**

There were some more trivial matters that I thought of. These were not crucial matters, but I still wanted to think about them to make the interviews go as smoothly as possible. When I first envisioned the interviews, I wanted to think of ways to make the interviewees as comfortable as possible. I thought that a good way would be that they could be absent from their lessons. This would also motivate them to volunteer.

Next, I thought that it would be a good idea to offer them beverages and snacks during the interview. I thought that it would also motivate them to volunteer. Ultimately, I decided against this, because it would inconvenience the interview. It would probably make them more comfortable but eating and drinking can make talking a bit awkward. Therefore, I decided it would not be beneficial.

The final consideration I had was about what to wear. I decided that I should come up with something that would be very neutral. Nothing too formal or casual. Nothing too bright or provocative. I chose my clothes according to these factors.

### **3.8 Scheduling and problems**

After I had finished making the research notification and privacy notice, I contacted the civics teacher. We agreed on six lessons on two separate days that I could pick students from. We also agreed on two extra lessons in case there were some problems in the earlier days. I had also written a message that was to be sent to the students and their guardians regarding the interviews. This message also included the research notification and privacy notice. The civics teacher felt that it would be best if the message was sent by the principal of the school. I concurred and contacted the principal. He said that he would review the material and send it. He also told me that the system they use for messaging the students and their guardians does not support file attachments. He recommended that I would create a cloud folder with the research notification and the privacy notice and attach a link to it in the message. I promised to get that done by the next day and sent the existing material to him right away. That was Wednesday.

The next day I did what the principal had recommended and edited the message to include a link to a Google Drive folder where I put the research notification and privacy notice. I sent it Thursday midday. By the next day, I had not received any messages, so I sent a WhatsApp message to the principal, which he had read by Friday evening. By Saturday I was a bit frustrated as the message that the principal had promised to send had not been sent. This meant that on Monday I could not interview anyone. This is because even if I informed the students themselves on Monday, their guardians would not be informed and that would be against the ethical rules of research.

I decided that I would go to the school on Monday as I was already planning to go there. My plan was to talk with the civics teacher and decide how to continue. I also planned to talk with the principal and ask if he could send the message on Monday. I could also go talk directly to the student and inform them about the

interviews and about the message to ensure that their guardians would be informed by the next day.

I talked with the civics teacher, and he was cooperative with the changes. I had a harder time getting to meet with the principal. I saw him immediately as I entered the building and asked to talk with him, but he said he was so busy he would probably have no time for me that day. I still tried and waited for him, but he did indeed have no time for me that day. The next day I tried again and learned that he had fallen ill. I did not know how to continue so I talked with the civics teacher again. He felt that it would still be best if the message was sent by the principal. We decided to post-pone and try again after. The next week was their winter holiday, so we rescheduled it for the week after that. When the time arrived, I contacted the principal and after a few back-and-forths, he sent the message (See Appendix 1). So, the following week I finally got to start my interviews.

## 4 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

In this part, I will transcribe the interview findings. I will purely focus on the raw findings and not go into analysis. I will separate the findings into topics focused on in the interviews. These topics I had planned beforehand, but they solidified during the interviews. Not every interviewee got the same questions, but these overall topics were discussed with everyone. The questions that were the same for all were easier to write down. For some, the answers would not necessarily show the true meaning behind them and therefore I have had to explain them in more detail.

For my research, I had planned on interviewing six people, three male and three female. I had estimated that the interviews would be around 30 minutes long. That was what I aimed for as they would be done during civic lessons which are 45 minutes long. This would give me enough time to talk them through the research notification and privacy notice and any questions they might have. In the end, the interviews were a bit shorter than I had planned as the interviewees were not as talkative as I had hoped. Some were very shy and nervous. This meant that they gave only short answers and I had to ask them a lot of follow-up questions to get to the meaning behind their answers.

The other problem was that there were not as many volunteers as I had hoped. I honestly thought that because they would get time off their lessons most of them would volunteer. This was not the case, and I became worried that I might get enough volunteers at all. Fortunately, I still got the amount I had planned on. In the end, I decided that an extra interview would be for the best as I had only interviewed two boys out of six. Also, as the interviews were shorter than I had planned, this extra interview did not bring me that much unplanned extra work. This brought the total number of interviews to seven, from which three were males and four females.

Usually, these interviews went as follows. The first question I always asked was: "Are they interested in politics?". The follow-up questions were to define this answer

and to give me a clear picture of what they meant with their answer. This first line of questioning gave me an overall idea of their political interests and sometimes about their political views as well. The other topics were: where they get their information, how politics is discussed with friends and family, conflicts about political discussion, the Finnish political atmosphere and democracy, and the war on Ukraine.

These are the topics that I had conversations with everyone. The order and the linearity of the conversation differed with everyone. For example, the war on Ukraine was mentioned by almost everyone before I could ask about it. That is why I chose to firstly go through every interview one-by-one and write out the answers. Then I went back and looked at the topics and collected the answers to each. For each topic, I will write out the base answers, but I will also go into more detail about their answers to my follow-up questions. This was the reason I chose this interview method. If I wanted simple answers, I could have done questionnaires, but I wanted to get to the ‘why?’ behind their answers. Some interviewees gave the same answers, but the follow-up questions revealed differences in their reasoning.

## 4.1 Interest in politics

The first question that I asked everyone was how interested they were about politics. I knew that for this kind of interview, it might be the case that only people that are interested in the topic, would volunteer. That is why I emphasized that they would not need to be at all interested in politics to volunteer. Nevertheless, I was still worried I would only get similarly interested volunteers. That is why I am happy that I had quite a lot of variation.

From my seven interviewees, four said that they are interested in politics, two said they are not, and one said somewhat. These answers were solidified through follow-up questions. From those that said they were interested in politics, three answered that they follow politics regularly, and the rest said they only follow when it is topical, or when they see something interesting. These answers can be seen in the following table. I have given the interviewees an anonymous code that only displays their gender. I chose to show their gender as I had hypothesised that there would be differences between the genders. I have labelled them F1-4 and M1-3.

TABLE 1 Interest in politics and how often do you follow politics?

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
Interest	Yes	Yes	No	No	Some	Yes	Yes
How often	Regular	Topically	Topically	Topically	Topically	Regular	Regular

From these answers, interviewee F2 is the only one who stands out from the rest. She did say that she is interested in politics, but she did not follow it regularly. She did however say that she usually found a lot of information about an interesting topic and used many different sources to find out the facts. Thus, she did not follow politics regularly but then did a deep dive when something interesting came up.

I wanted to know more precisely what they meant when they gave their answers, so as a follow-up I asked them to give an estimate of how many times a week they engage in political news. Those who said regularly, answered daily or almost daily. F2 and M1 said a couple times a week. Interviewees F3 and F4 could not give an estimate and just said when it is interesting.

Another question that I asked was that has there been any change to their interest. The answers varied, but most said that when something interesting happened their interests' peeked. Another answer was that some said that as they have grown up politics have started interesting them more. This was due to them naturally becoming more interested, but also partly because they felt they were taken more seriously as they had grown older.

#### **4.1.1 What is politics?**

This question I have to admit was hard to ask and sometimes I had to ask it in the middle of a conversation to make sure I knew what we were truly talking about. Some did not know how to answer, and I clarified the question to explain to me what we were talking about when we were having our conversation about politics. I wanted to know what they thought of when I asked them about politics. These answers varied quite a lot. The most general answers were the government, the parliament, the president, local governments, laws and regulations, taxes and taxation, political parties, governing, and power. In fact, only F4 did not mention the state in her definition.

Some interviewees gave more detailed answers. Some thought that politics was all about governing and the arrangement of common affairs. Some thought that politics was all about the national-level discourse. F3 thought that politics always is the act of disagreement and trying to push your own agenda.

As a follow-up, I asked my interviewees if they thought that their student government is politics. There was somewhat of a consensus that it was but there was something different about it. The one difference most said was that it was so small scale that they were not sure if it counts as politics. They said that it was more like organizing than politics. What they said to be political about it, was voting and being in charge of common interests. The only strict denial of student government being politics came from interviewee F3. She said that politics was always about conflict and

thus the student government was not politics as they mostly agreed on everything. She also said that it was only organizing.

## 4.2 Where do they follow politics?

This part was a bit complicated to write clearly. The difference in what they thought of as politics made them give different answers in this part. They would also use the same social media applications but would give different answers whether they thought these applications were putting out political information or news. To try to make this part as clear as I can, I have made a table to show what sources these teenagers use and whether they say there is political information or news in them. I have used “Y” as a yes answer, “N” as a no answer, and “-” if it was not talked about. For each source, I have given two answers. The first answers if they use it or not and the second if they get political information from it.

TABLE 2 Where from do you follow politics?

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
News websites	Y/Y	Y/Y	N/-	Y/Y	N/-	Y/Y	Y/Y
TV-news	N/-	Y/Y	N/-	Y/Y	N/-	Y/Y	Y/Y
Instagram	Y/Y	Y/Y	N/-	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y
TikTok	-/-	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/N	Y/Y	Y/N	Y/Y
YouTube	-/-	-/-	Y/N	N/-	Y/Y	Y/N	Y/Y
Other social media	Y/Y	-/-	N/-	-/-	N/-	-/-	Y/Y
Friends	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/N	Y/N	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y
Family	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/N	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y

I asked my interviewees where they follow politics. Sometimes, I asked specifically about some sources, or I needed clarifications about some sources. For example, if they answered social media, I asked what social media sources they meant. If I asked specifically if they use a certain source, I also asked if they get political content from it. Most said that they followed news sources and more specifically news websites or TV-news. News websites that they mentioned were yle.fi, iltalehti.fi and iltasanomat.fi. From social media, the most mentioned are listed separately in there, but Snapchat and forums were also mentioned. Some told me about videos and when asked those mostly came from Instagram and TikTok, but also some from YouTube.

Social media usage also varied. Some followed specific people or organisations that posted political content and for some, it was just a by-product. Yle’s Instagram account was mentioned as a reliable source. Instagram was also a place where the people whom the interviewees followed posted political messages. For example, celebrities usually did this when it was topical.

TikTok was interesting in that it was divided according to whether it had political content. I am speculating here, but TikTok relies heavily on suggesting material based on what you have watched and liked (Smith, 2021). The same use of algorithms to engage the viewers is also what drives other social media or video-sharing platforms (Jameel et al., 2019; Tufekci, 2018). This use of algorithms might explain why some said these platforms had political material and some said they did not.

### **4.3 How politics is discussed with friends, family, and others**

In this part, I will go into more detail about how the interviewees follow politics through social media and how it is discussed with their friends and families. If we look at the last two rows of Table 2, we can see that all of them listed their families as sources for political information. From these only F3 and F4 said that they did not talk about politics with their friends and F4 said not even with friends. Both of them said that they are not interested in politics, so these answers are not that surprising.

When the interviewees talked about social media as a source, a lot of it was in fact talking with their friends. They used social media as a medium for communication. Most said that this usually was just talking, but sometimes they were sending memes and videos to each other. Most answered that they have rarely sent news articles, and they mostly just talked about these topics. F1 said that she used social media to reach out to friends who are living further away. She also stated that social media and forums were a good way to get to know like-minded people whom to talk to. From the answers, I concluded that most of the communication with friends happened in school.

With family, there was not much talk about social media. It was more focused on face-to-face conversations. Some said that their parents were the ones that gave them the most information about current affairs. They also said that as they have grown older and became more interested in politics, their parents have engaged with them more about these topics.

I also wanted to know if they talked with anyone other than their friends or family about politics. The common answer was that in the civics lessons. Besides that, some said they occasionally talked with their fellow students and the topics might be about current affairs. Some said that the war on Ukraine had been discussed in school, but that had also happened mostly in the civic lessons.

#### 4.4 Conflict about politics

One of the questions I wanted to ask was to see how open they can be in their political discussions. I wanted to know if they feel like they can be open and honest about their opinions. I made distinctions between friends, family, and overall discussions. The results are seen in the following table. Same as before in Table 2 have used “Y” and “N” for yes and no answers respectively, but I have also used “S” for somewhat.

TABLE 3 Do you feel like you can talk about political topics freely?

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
Family	Y	Y	S	Y	Y	Y	Y
Friends	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Generally	S	S	N	S	S	Y	Y

To follow-up, I asked about how open they can be. With friends, the results were in line with their answers in Table 3. They felt that they could truly be open with their friends. Most said that their friends had mostly the same ideologies and worldviews as they themselves. Some said that there were some differences, but nevertheless they could still be honest with each other without judgement. Even if there were differences, they could talk about them openly and without conflict. M1 said that even the worst case would be that they would agree to disagree.

With family, the story was mostly the same. Some families talked more about politics than others. Most interviewees answered that they could be as open with their families as they were with their friends. F3 did however answer that they felt they could not be as open with their family. This was mostly due to lack of interest, but also that some topics might lead to conflict. The other family members did talk about politics, but F3 stayed mostly out of it.

This is also where I saw the fact that almost all of the interviewees had similar political views to their parents. Most said that their parents talk about them about elections and whom they are voting for. Not all did know their parents’ party affiliations but could still estimate what it could be. This was also a hard question as not all interviewees were certain about their own.

The only ones that did not have an answer were F3 and F4 who said that their parents did not talk about their voting activity or whom they supported. F3 said that her parents might have talked with her siblings but she did not pay mind. F1 answered that her parents share the same values as her, but hers are more extreme. She also stated that her parents might have different priorities to her. They might prioritise economic issues where she would focus on human rights or the environment. M3

stated that he shares the same ideology and party affiliation as his parents and that he thinks that is what usually happens.

#### **4.4.1 Have you ever not said something because you feared the consequences?**

The last row in Table 3 has the most variation. This question was about everyone else other than their friends and families, but it turned out to mostly focus on their peers in school. These results needed the most follow-ups to explain, and I will try to write them out. The main follow-up question that I asked everyone was: "Have they ever not said something because they fear the consequences?". All of them answered "Yes", but for somewhat different reasons. Interviewees M2 and M3 said that they had left something unsaid because it might have hurt someone's feelings. They wanted to be civil and not hurt someone unnecessarily. When asked about the topics they gave examples: NATO, human rights, and economic issues. They also said that these possible conflicts happen mostly as they said with "girls".

Interviewee F4 felt that political discussion almost always lead to conflict and therefore it was easiest to not talk about it. She also said that it does not interest her much, so it was easy to not pay mind.

The biggest group in row "Generally" in Table 3 was what I have labelled the answers as somewhat. These need more clarifications as they had the most variation in their answer. Most said that it depends on the topic or the discussant. Some had clear topics in mind, and some spoke about it more generally. Some felt that they can have conversations, but they lead to nowhere, so it is easier to not have them. Some said that the conversations cannot even start as some people have existing prejudices about themselves or the topics. Topics that were mentioned were: human rights, climate change, minorities (LGBTQ+), and refugees. Most of the female interviewees said that most of the conflicts happen as they said with "boys".

## **4.5 Finnish political atmosphere and democracy**

The state of politics and democracy in Finland were somewhat interlinked, and they were not always asked in this order. The difference that I wanted them to realise about these questions was that the first question was about how they thought the current government and the leadership were managing and the second question was about how they view democracy and what is its state in Finland. For these answers, I have created the following table that shows the answers for both questions. I have used "G" for good, "S" for somewhat, "N" for not good, and "-" if they did not have an answer.

TABLE 4 How do you view the current state of politics and democracy in Finland?

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
Politics	G	S	-	-	N	S	S
Democracy	G	-	-	G	G	G	G

As we can see from the table, only two interviewees gave a clear answer about the political atmosphere. All of the others were either not sure about it, did not have an opinion, or had both positive and negative opinions. Many of them stated the war on Ukraine as a worry, but I will talk about that in more detail in the next part. The ones that answered somewhat had similar views. They said that there are some decisions that they agree with, some that they do not, or that they question. Many of them also had a similar worry about the decision-making being “too political” or divided. M3 said that he worries that the decision-making process is too slow and too compromising. Decisions take too long and because they must compromise it might not be what was originally planned and even be worse. F2 said that she worries about the decision-making being too focused on the big cities and especially on the capital city.

The two outliers in this question were F1 and M1 and they had completely different answers to each other. F1 thought that the current state is good and was only worried about the current events that could have an impact. On the other hand, M1 does not support the current Finnish leadership and thus the state is not good. He stated the national debt as a worrying issue. He also stated that he is worried about the way the government is addressing Russia, and in his opinion, Finland should stay neutral and not provoke.

#### 4.5.1 Democracy

Regardless of all these worries all of them had similar hopes about the future and in the system. In this, the democracy question usually mixed in and that was generally seen as being very good in Finland. When we started talking about democracy, first I wanted them to define democracy. Even though the answers were different for almost everyone, there were some common terms and ideas.

The consensus was that it is something that involves and affects everyone. It is decision-making about common issues. Some terms that the interviewees commonly used were: the people, voting, deciding together, and common issues. M3 said that in a working democracy not a single individual holds all the power. M2 answered that democracy is when the people decide who decides about their issues and that the parliament is a reflection of the people. F1 said that democracy is about giving every citizen the possibility to have an influence.

#### **4.5.1.1 Finland in relation to the rest of the world**

As a follow-up to the democracy question, I asked how my interviewees viewed democracy in Finland in relation to the rest of the world. This had a bit more division in the answers. Most of the division came from the fact that many of them said they have never thought about it. Therefore, they did not have a clear answer for me.

Most of the interviewees agreed that Finland is doing at least similarly well in relation to others. Some said that it is in fact one of the leading countries. Some mentioned some current issues like Covid-19 and the war on Ukraine, and in light of those issues, Finland was doing good. Those who did not know how to answer said that there are probably differences but not sure if they are positive or negative. M2 stated that Finland is leading for example Russia, but behind bigger countries like the U.S.A and some bigger European countries. He then clarified that even those countries have problems.

## **4.6 War on Ukraine**

I wanted to have this topic as a separate part because it was widely talked about in the interviews. All but one of the interviewees mentioned the war before I even asked them about it. As I have written previously it became the topic of discussion related in some way in almost every one of the previous topics. The questions I wanted to know were, if the war had increased their interest in politics, if they had talked about it in school, and if it had brought any worries or fears. One issue many of them mentioned was NATO and the discussion surrounding it.

### **4.6.1 Increase in interest**

All of the interviewees said that they follow politics at least when it is topical. Therefore, it is not surprising that all of them were aware of the war. Most of them said that when the war started, they followed it very closely and frequently and as time went on, they did it less. But following the war and being interested in were not the same thing I realised. Some said that they do follow it but are not that interested in it. For them, the reason was that it does not directly affect Finland or them themselves. F3 stated that it is more of a worry than an interest.

Those who said that their interest had increased about the war, had also become more interested in the politics surrounding it. They wanted to know why Russia started the invasion and about the issues leading up to it. F2 said that she had listened to many experts on TV talking about it and also had read some articles about the

history of the issue. As a note, my interviewees had been only around seven years old when the annexation of Crimea happened in 2014.

#### 4.6.2 Worry about the war

I wanted to know if their interests were related to any worries they might have about the war. I asked all of them if they were worried about the war in any way. I also asked them specifically if they were worried about other states or if the worry was focused on Finland. Furthermore, I have rated their severity of worry. I have made the following table to show the results. I have but two rows that I named "Worry" and "Focus". The first tells how worried they were and the second tells the focus of their worry.

TABLE 5 Worry and focus about the war on Ukraine

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
<b>Worry</b>	Yes	Not much	Scary	Reserved	Mild	Reserved	Bewildered
<b>Focus</b>	Ukraine	Future	Others	Finland	Finland	Finland	Finland

I have tried to use the terms that the interviewees themselves used to describe their worries. For F4 and M2 I asked them as a clarification question if they meant that they were more reserved than worried and they both then used the term reserved. I have therefore put it as their answer. The focus part had not as clear answers as I did not specifically ask about it. I have put the answers that I gather they were talking about in their answers.

For F1, F2, and F3 I have put the answer that they gave. F2 was worried about the future and what Russia might do next. I assume she meant it as what they might do to Finland, but I did not ask her to specify. It could also mean what will happen in Ukraine in the future, so I decided to put the answer as is. F3 used the term "others" and I think she meant the ones involved in the war, but again I did not ask her a follow-up question, so I have put her answer as is.

For the rest, they either talked about only Finland in relation to their worry or specifically stated that they were worried about Finland. Therefore, I have put their answers as Finland, because that was clearly their focus.

#### 4.6.3 In school

This question had some interesting results. This is because some said that the war had been talked about in school and some said it had not. Those who said it had been talked about in school mentioned that it had been talked about in civics class. F1 mentioned that during the first day of the war, it had been talked about so much at home that she felt like not talking about it in school. She even said that they talk about

it surprisingly little with her friends. Those who said it had not been talked about in school still said they have talked about it with their friends.

#### **4.6.4 Language used to talk about the war**

I wanted to go through the recordings and listen to the phrases and how the interviewees talked about the war. I realised that I had made a mistake during the interviews and not used precise language when I was talking about the war. These results are therefore a bit distorted, but I will write about them transparently.

As I mentioned before, most of the interviewees started talking about the war before I even mentioned it. Therefore, the first time they mentioned it was without any influence from my part. I will regard that as a pure answer. The only one that did not mention the war before me was F4. I am disregarding her answer here and focusing on the others.

The phrases used were mostly similar to each other, Most used the term “war”, but did not clearly talk about the war on Ukraine or the Ukrainian war. They used terms like: “The war” or “That war”. Interviewee M1 said “Those Ukrainian wars” the first time he mentioned it. I do not know why he talked about it in the plural. He might be referring to the Crimean annexation. Interviewee F2 did not use the term war and just used “The Ukrainian thing”. For my own language usage, I used the term “Ukrainan sota” which translates to either “Ukrainian war” or “War in Ukraine”. After we had established what we were talking about we mostly used terms like “it” and “that” to talk about the topic.

## 5 ANALYSIS

In the previous chapter of my thesis, I have transcribed the interview findings. In this chapter I will analyse these findings. I will use other research on the topic as support, but also as a comparison to my findings. I will go through my findings in a similar order as laid out in the findings chapter. There are some differences in the order in cases where they were easier to analyse either together or separately.

I will go through my findings and analyse and compare them this way. After that, I will analyse whether there were any correlations between the answers. I wanted to see whether similar answers in one question led to similar answers in another.

### 5.1 Interest in politics

As I have mentioned previously, I was worried that I might only get volunteers that were interested in politics. Therefore, I made it very clear when I was asking for volunteers, that they would not indeed need to be interested in politics. In the end, I did get some variation in this regard. However, there are two reasons why it is not suitable to consider their interests in politics as a representation of their age group. The first reason is that it was not a blind sample, as they were asked to volunteer, and they knew the topic. And secondly, the sample size is quite small. The relevance of this question is therefore only in regard to their other answers. It is still possible to look at other research done on the topic and see how representative my sample is.

#### 5.1.1 Comparison to other research

First, I will look at Kari Saari (2017) *Nuorten käsityksiä politiikasta ja puolueista* as a comparison. This article has data on how interested young people are in politics. The youngest age group in Saari's study was 16-17 years old. In this group, there were 200

participants. The answers were "very interested", "somewhat interested", "not very interested", and "not at all interested". The clear majority answered that they were "not very interested". There was a nearly equal distribution of answers for "somewhat interested" and "not interested at all". Only a few said they were "very interested".

The second comparison is to Pekkarinen et al. (2019) *Vaikutusvaltaa Euroopan laidalla: Nuorisobarometri 2018*. It had a similar approach to Saari's. The question was "How interested are you in politics?". The answers were: "very", "somewhat", "not very", "not at all", and "don't know". The results showed a trend of slightly more political interest than not. The age group closest to my interviewees was 15-19. In this age group the ones that answered "very" or "somewhat" was 53 percent. The most interesting part in the 2018 Youth Barometer was however the fact that they showed a trend of political interest growth from 1996 to 2018. The title was "Young people's interest in politics at record high". This trend could explain why there is this difference in the political interest between the MYPLACE project and the 2018 Youth Barometer.

If we compare these results to my data, we see how close my findings are. From my seven interviewees, only two said that they were not interested in politics. Of course, my interviewees only answered a simple question of whether they were interested or not. However, as only one of them answered that they were somewhat interested in politics, it still leaves four who answered that they were interested in politics. Therefore, my interviewees' narratives provide qualitative evidence of increased political interests that support the data from the 2018 Youth Barometer.

### **5.1.2 Rise in interest**

I asked my interviewees whether there had been any changes to their interests. This question was specifically towards the level of interest, not about the direction of interest. One common answer was that as they had grown up, their interest in politics had risen. This is a common occurrence according to other research. Saari's findings show that interest in politics rises with age (2017, p. 53). The oldest age group in his findings was 22-25, and that had completely different results from the youngest group. The amount of people who answered that they are very interested is over double in the oldest group compared to the youngest. The oldest group also had only a very few people who answered that they were not interested at all. The more neutral answers were also balanced in favour of the more interested side.

This trend was also shown in the 2018 Youth Barometer. The youngest age group in this case was 15-19 and the oldest 25-29. The number of answers as either "very" or "somewhat" was 53 percent in the youngest age group, the amount had risen to 70 percent in the oldest. Also, the oldest group had zero percent answers as "don't know" while the two younger groups had one percent. This might be such a small percentage

that it could be concerned as irrelevant, but it could also be considered a trend as both the younger groups had one percent.

According to Neundorf et al. (2013), there are two factors that influence political interest. They are parental socialization and life-cycle events. Parental socialization is expected to take place during childhood and adolescence. This would build a base for political interest that then persists over time. On the other hand, life-cycle events are life-altering events during one's lifespan. These events are for example: getting married or getting divorced, having children, graduating, or personal traumatic event. As these events alter one's life and even their world view, therefore it is not hard to think that these events would influence political interest.

These two factors are considered supplementary in their effects, including at the same age. However, Neundorf et al. found that this did not happen. During the formative years, it was parental socialization that had the main effects on political interest. Life-cycle events had very little impact during that age. After people reached adulthood life-cycle events had a bigger impact. Nevertheless, at maturity the majority of political interest was formed already and therefore the impact of life-cycle events was mostly stabilising.

The most relevant finding in this article is the political interest growth model (Neundorf et al., 2013, p. 105). According to this model, political interest grows until the age of 25, and then it stabilizes. First, it starts to stagnate and in the early thirties slightly declines. Neundorf et al. stress that this model is only representing the average and that there are differences between people with high and low political interests.

My findings provide a possible explanation for the trend of growing political interest during adolescence. Some interviewees stated that they were being taken more seriously as they had grown older. This could at least partly explain this phenomenon. As people reach adulthood, they are taken more seriously in a social sense but also in a legal sense. They are given more freedoms and responsibilities. By these I mean for example getting a driver's license and the right to vote. Responsibilities also come from the fact that they become fully responsible for their own actions in a legal sense. This could also explain why Neundorf et al. found that during a certain age, the interest starts stagnating and finally decline. When reaching their late twenties people would have on average settled down and the only thing that would impact their interest are life-cycle events.

## 5.2 Political understanding

It was important to me to find out what my interviewees viewed as politics. Another term I wanted them to define was democracy. While the understanding of politics among the interviewees is an interesting topic in its own right, its particular relevance is in regard to how it illuminates and contextualizes the other answers in my interviews.

### 5.2.1 Defining politics

I will again use Kari Saari's (2017) article to draw a comparison to my findings. The research found that the definitions of politics by those who were not interested in politics were quite negative. Those people defined politics only as party politics, said it was complicated and hard to understand, and stated that ordinary citizens have no power. Overall, the definitions were mostly connected to party politics, but not all of them had negative connotations. In addition, some answers defined politics as broader and more personal. The findings showed the researchers that young people define politics in quite a narrow way. The article states that young people act in political arenas but might not see their participation as political. Saari calls this phenomenon "subpolitics" or "micropolitics". (Saari, 2017, pp. 54-57)

Comparing this to my findings I got similar results. When I asked my interviewees to define politics the most common answers were the government, the parliament, the president, local governments, laws and regulations, taxes and taxation, political parties, governing, and power. What I did not get as answers were the more abstract perceptions of politics. Most agreed that when it comes to smaller issues that is not politics. For example, I asked them whether their student council was politics or not. Most agreed that it was but said that there is something different about it. Most said that because it did not have "real power" it cannot be thought of as "real politics". F4 interviewee outright denied that the student council is politics. Her definition of politics was that there always needs to be conflict. When people agree on things that is not politics.

### 5.2.2 Defining democracy

When I asked my interviewees to define democracy none of them had a specific answer to this question, but some common terms were used. These were: the people, voting, deciding together, and common issues. M3 said that in a working democracy, a single individual does not hold all the power. M23 answered that democracy happens when the people decide who decides about their issues. And lastly, F1 said that democracy was about giving every citizen the possibility to have influence.

In Kari Saari & Vesa Puuronen (2017) *Nuorten käsityksiä demokratiasta, tasa-arvosta ja hyöinvointivaltioista* the definitions for democracy were very similar to my findings. The definitions referred to equality, freedom of opinion, and the opportunity to take part and have influence in deciding societal issues. With influence, they mostly meant voting and specifically voting for a representative.

The definitions are very similar, with the only clear difference being that my interviewees did not mention freedom in a specific way. Equality was also not specifically mentioned, but equality of opportunity and voting was.

### **5.3 Sources of political content**

In the findings, I have connected how much political interest my interviewees had and how much politics they followed. The aim was to give a better understanding of what they meant with how interested they were. I do not mean that they cannot be interested in politics if they follow it less. Moreover, I think the reverse could be argued. I do not think that a person who says they are not interested in politics would follow it much. This is supported by my findings.

Those who said that they were not interested in politics would only follow politics when it was topical. The one interviewee who answered that they were somewhat interested, said they also followed topically. From the four who answered that they were interested in politics, three said they followed politics regularly and only F2 said they followed topically. F2 however said she would deep dive into issues that became topical. This supports the fact she is interested in politics.

#### **5.3.1 Political information sources**

The findings show that most of my interviewees get their political information mostly from their parents and friends. The second most common sources were social media and news websites. This would support Neundorf et al. theory about parental socialization, but I would also draw attention to the horizontal socialization. I will explore this later in more detail, but I will mention here that friends were seen as the most trustworthy party to talk to. They saw friends as being reliable sources of information and reliable to be open about opinions. This is supported by the fact that the only two interviewees that said they are not interested in politics were also the only ones that said they do not talk about politics with their friends.

Interestingly there was variation in what the interviewees saw as a source of political information. I was told that some social media sources have political content by others and not having it by others. This could be explained by how these social media applications work. All of them suggest content based on what the algorithm

deems you would watch (Jameel et al., 2019; Smith, 2021; Tufekci, 2018). This means that different people get different suggestions.

### 5.3.2 Comparison

In 2022 the ministry of justice of Finland published a report titled *Nuoret kansalaiset: Tilastollinen tutkimus yhdeksäsluokkalaisten kansalaispätevydestä*. This report is as the title suggests about political efficacy. As part of that, they wanted to find out the sources of political information that young people use. The article that discusses this is by Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. (2022) *Kansalaispätevyys ja poliittinen sosiaalisuus*. Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. state that ninth-grade students were asked to list the three most important sources they use to get political and societal information. The results were as follows:

1. Social media
2. Traditional media
3. Family
4. Teachers
5. Friends

(Kestilä-Kekkonen et al., 2022, p. 37). If we compare this to my findings there are clear differences. If I were to put my findings in a similar order, it would be approximately like this:

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Social media
4. Traditional media
5. Teachers

The reason why this is an approximation is because my data has divided social media and traditional media into specific media outlets. The data would therefore be different according to how that data is understood. If we simply look at the number of mentions of any of the social media applications, then that would clearly put social media at the top. The other way to look at the data is to calculate the average for social and traditional medias. This would be easy, but for my data there is another complication. Each part has two answers, if they use it or not, and if they see it as a source of political information. When I also took that into account, this is the order that I came up with. The only ones that could have been put in a different order were

social and traditional medias. Their positions could be switched with each other depending on how the answers are comprehended. Otherwise, the list is best as is.

This list would probably be different if my interviewees were asked the same question as in the study above. This is however the order that comes from my findings. The biggest difference is the role of friends. In my findings, friends and family were the most important sources of political information. Some specifically stated that they get most of their news from their parents.

The difference between my findings and the findings by Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. could be explained by what is thought of as a source of information. My interviewees told me that they would get news about politics mostly from their parents or friends. Are they the source of information then or is it the media they point out to? My interviewees saw friends and family as the sources of this information, but it could be seen differently.

What makes my findings even more different is the fact that I found out that most of my interviewees use social media mostly to communicate with their friends. This means that even when they are talking about using social media, they are talking about communicating with their friends. Social media is mostly a medium, not the source itself.

Another big difference is the role of teachers. My interviewees did not even list school or teachers as their sources. Civic lessons were talked about when talking about political knowledge. When talking about civic lessons most of them voiced criticism about it. They thought that it was deficient in helping them acquire political knowledge. They stated that they do not feel confident about how much they know for example how the government works. They talked about how these things should have been taught during civics lessons. These same interviewees were however the ones that were interested in politics. It could explain why they deem that they were not getting enough information.

## **5.4 The discussion of politics**

Another aspect that could explain why my interviewees picked friends and family as their biggest sources of political information might have been how freely they feel they could talk about politics with them. All my interviewees told me that they could talk freely with their friends. Almost all told the same about their families. Only one said that they could do it somewhat freely. The answers became more negative when we talked about other people besides friends or family. In this category, only two people said they felt like they could freely talk about politics. Four said they could somewhat, and one said they cannot freely talk about politics.

The reason for the negative answers was found in the next line of questions. I asked them whether they had ever not said something because they feared consequences. All of them answered yes, but follow-up questions revealed it was for varied reasons. Two male interviewees answered that they had left something unsaid because it could have hurt someone's feelings. F4 answered that some topics almost always led to conflict and therefore it has been easiest to just not talk about them. Most agreed that some topics easily led to conflict, and it also differed on whom they talked to. That is why it was just easier to talk with friends about these topics and not talk to their classmates. Some also stated that they felt like they could not talk about certain topics with their friend if someone could hear them. They feared that a bystander might start arguing or even teasing them.

#### **5.4.1 Comparison**

As for comparison I will look again at *Nuoret kansalaiset: Tilastollinen tutkimus yhdeksäsluokkalaisten kansalaispätevydestä*. The article in question is by Hannuksela et al. (2022) *Luokkatovereiden, opettajien ja yhteiskuntaopin opetusmenetelmien yhteys kansalaispätevyteen*. Hannuksela et al. talk about how these different things connect to civic competence. One of the measurements they use is how the discussion atmosphere in the classroom is related to civic competence. The findings in the article showed that only 10 percent of students thought their class atmosphere was constrained in reference to political discussion. The majority at 61 percent felt their class's atmosphere was either somewhat or very open. The last 30 percent were somewhere in the middle. (Hannuksela et al., 2022, p. 82)

### **5.5 Political atmosphere and political opinion**

I wanted to find out what my interviewees thought about the political atmosphere in Finland, their opinion about the political system, and about their opinion about politics in general. I asked them two questions about the current state of politics in Finland. The first was about how they thought the current government and the leadership were managing. The second was about how they view democracy and its state in Finland.

Only two gave a clear answer to the first question, one "good" and one "not good". The rest of the answers were: three "somewhat" and even two did not know how to answer. The state of democracy had clearer and more positive answers. Five of them answered "good" and two did not give an answer.

As for the reasoning behind these answers, the timing of my interviews provides some explanation. The interviews were completed in the spring of 2022. The COVID-

19 pandemic was still an issue and Russia had started its invasion of Ukraine about a month prior. Both of these huge issues were very clearly on the interviewees' minds. All but one mentioned the war before I even asked them about it and most talked about the pandemic in some context.

My interviewees gave good insight with how they explained their answers. When we were talking about the state of politics in Finland many of my interviewees stated a worry about the decision-making being "too political" or divided. M3 said that he worries that the decision-making process is too slow and too compromising. Decisions take too long and because there must be compromises the result might not be what was originally intended. F2 said that she worries about the decision-making being too focused on the big cities and especially on the capital city.

### 5.5.1 Supporting literature

The focus of the supporting literature is mostly on how much trust young people have in institutions. Both Kari Saari & Vesa Puuronen (2017) *Nuorten käsityksiä demokratiasta, tasa-arvosta ja hyvinvointivalttiosta* and Pekkarinen et al. (2019) *Vaikutusvaltaa Euroopan laidalla: Nuorisobarometri 2018* have data on how much young people have trust in institutions. I have studied these findings and reached some conclusions that can be compared to my findings. In Saari & Puuronen's article, the findings were given in a rating of 0-10, with 10 as the highest amount of trust. In the 2018 Youth Barometer, the answers are given in words. The answers here were "very", "somewhat", "little", and "not at all" trusting. The institutions listed are also similar, with few exceptions. I will not go through every exception as I will not even mention all the institutions specifically.

As for the findings themselves, the findings were similar in both studies. The trust in political institutions was generally high. When talking about specific institutions the lowest trusted institution was political parties and even that had trust of over half in both findings. European Union was listed in both studies, and it was trusted slightly more than political parties. Other specific institutions are not in both lists so I will not go through them specifically, but they all fell somewhere above the political parties.

From non-political institutions, the police was the highest-rated institution in both studies. In fact, it was the highest trusted institution in both lists. The armed forces and the justice system were also very high on both lists. Banks were slightly below them in both studies.

In Saari & Puuronen study some of the young people were also interviewed. These interviews gave more insight into how contented young people were with democracy in Finland. These interview answers also voiced some criticism. Most of the interviewees agreed that representative democracy is important, but at the same

time, they felt like they had no real influence on how decisions are made. They stated voting as a civic duty, but they also said that direct action has no real effect. Even though this was the case, they were still somewhat contented at the current system as they stated that radical action is not needed at this moment. Most of them also agreed that illegal action should not be used. (Saari & Puuronen, 2017, pp. 28-31)

From these findings, we can draw parallels to my findings. My questions and answers were more about how they see the current system working not necessarily how trusting they are about it. As the question is closely related, I will be comparing the findings. I just want to make it clear that they are not in fact the same question and therefore this comparison might not be very reliable.

The comparison shows that all findings have similar results. My interviewees were hopeful about the future, even those who did not think that the current state of the world was that great. What I found out in my interviews was that they had not really thought about it before. As an example of this, I asked how they would compare democracy in Finland to the rest of the world, and most answered initially that they do not know or specifically stated that they had never thought about it.

## **5.6 Analysing correlations**

In this part, I will analyse whether there were any correlations between certain answers. I wanted to be as comprehensive as possible, so I decided to table all the answers. When I started to do this, I realised that it was unnecessary for some of the questions as the interviewees were unanimous in some of them. Therefore, I left those out of the table. I only included the topics that had some variation in the answers.

I will give my reasons for why I left some topics out. As I was making the table, I had the definitions for politics and democracy both in it. When I was analysing the definitions for democracy, I realised that even though the wording was somewhat different in their answers, they still held a similar view of democracy. Therefore, it was not necessary to include it in the table.

### **5.6.1 Making the comparison table**

The answers for political interest are taken from Table 1 (p. 33). I asked my interviewees about their political interests, but also how much or how frequently they follow politics. This was so that I could see what they meant when they answered whether they are interested in politics or not. All but one of the answers align with each other. If my interviewees said that they were interested in politics, they would also answer that they followed politics regularly. The ones that said they were not interested or somewhat interested answered that they only followed politics when it

was topical. The only variance was F2, who said she was interested in politics, but she did not follow it regularly. I have still labelled her interest as “High” as she also said she would do a deep dive on interesting topics when they came up for example in the news. This showed to me a deep interest in political topics and thus I put her interest as “High”.

As for the question of whether my interviewees’ interests had risen, I got three answers. The first answer was it had not risen. If it had risen there were two answers for why it had. Those were growing older or the war on Ukraine. I have labelled “The war” as one of the reasons, but I have put “(Event)” after it as I see this as a triggering event that is similar to a life-cycle event that Neundorf et al. (2013) talk about.

For the definitions of politics, I decided that I would categorize them. This would make the table clearer. I analysed each answer and decided what kind of definition each was. I looked at different definitions for politics and found a compiled list from the website OpenLearn. They list five different definitions for politics: “Politics as that which concerns the state”, “Politics as conflict resolution”, “Politics as conflict”, “Politics as exercise of power”, and “Politics as a social and public activity”. I had these definitions in mind when I analysed the interviews. Most of the answers had something to do with the state. I have also put another answer after “The State” if their definition was more specific toward something else. The only answer that differed from OpenLearn’s list was “Organising”. Two of my interviewees mentioned politics as organising something. This could fall under social and public activity or even under the state, but I felt it to be too specific for such broad definitions. Therefore, I have put it as “Organising” in the table.

In the following Table 6, the row “Freedom to express opinion” is concerned with how they felt they could talk about political topics. All of them felt they could talk completely freely with their friends and almost all felt the same about their families. For this category, I have analysed their answers about speaking to others and to the question of whether they have ever not said anything, because they feared consequences. All of them answered that they have left something unsaid, so I analysed their reasoning as to why that had happened. Based on these I have categorised their freedom to express opinion. The reason I have given M2 and M3 “High” freedom, is because their reason for leaving something unsaid is so that they would not hurt someone else’s feelings. The others feared backlash or outright bullying. Their reason for leaving something unsaid is motivated by fear rather than consideration.

The answers for the state of politics and state of democracy are taken from Table 4 (p. 39). First, I thought about combining the two questions into one. I decided against it as there were few cases where the interviewee did not know how to answer and therefore combining them would not have shown the entire perspective. Next, I

thought about not considering democracy at all since they had a consensus besides the two who did not know how to answer. Ultimately it was that reason that I kept democracy in this table. It seemed interesting to see if there was any correlation for why these two could not give answers.

From these reasonings I compiled the following table:

TABLE 6 Comparison of interview findings

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
<b>Interest in politics</b>	High	High	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
<b>Rise in interest</b>	Growing Older	The war (Event)	No	No	Growing older	The war (Event)	The war (Event)
<b>Definition of politics</b>	The state /Power /Organisation	The State /Power	The state /Conflict	Decisions /Organisation	The State	The State /Decisions	The state
<b>Freedom to express opinion</b>	Limited	Limited	Low	Limited	Limited	High	High
<b>State of politics</b>	Good	Somewhat	-	-	Not good	Somewhat	Somewhat
<b>State of democracy</b>	Good	-	-	Good	Good	Good	Good

Next, I will do comparisons on parts of the table that show interesting correlations.

### 5.6.2 Political interest vs. rise in interest

The first correlation I want to examine is the relation between interest in politics and rise in interest. This part of the table shows clear correlations between these two answers.

TABLE 6.1 Political interest in comparison to rise in that interest

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
<b>Interest in politics</b>	High	High	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
<b>Rise in interest</b>	Growing Older	The war (Event)	No	No	Growing older	The war (Event)	The war (Event)

From Table 6.1 we can clearly see that if political interest is low there has not been growth. It could be that case that the ones who report growth in their political interest started with low interest and it has grown to high interest. What I find more plausible is that for the ones who report low interest, growth in interest is more unlikely or slower. The reason for this is that Neundorf et al. (2013) state that political interest in

childhood and adolescence is mostly impacted by parental transmission. After reaching adulthood other factors start to have a bigger impact. Therefore, I would argue that if a ninth grader reports low political interest, it is on average most likely that their political interest stays relatively low in the future.

In Table 6.1, the cases where the interests rise due to the war it cannot be said for certain whether those rises in interests are kept in the long run. Neundorf et al. show that growth in interest is normal and the more interest you have to start with the end result is also more. The only disrupting cases can be what Neundorf et al. call life cycle events. These events Neundorf et al. refer to are big, life-changing events. It is still very subjective as to which events in one’s life are life-changing. The Ukraine War could be a life-changing event, especially for Finnish people. The proximity and history with Russia might make the war more shocking.

### 5.6.3 Political definitions

TABLE 6.2 Definitions of politics comparison

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
Interest in politics	High	High	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
Definition of politics	The state /Power /Organisation	The State /Power	The state /Conflict	Decisions /Organisation	The State	The State /Decisions	The state

There was no overall correlation between definitions of politics. There were two individual correlations that I see as significant. These are F3 and F4. They both have low interest in politics and their answers were the most different from the rest. For F3 the difference comes from how negatively she describes politics. She defined it as most did, as something to do with the state, but she said that it is about conflict. When I asked if the student council is politics, she answered that it is not, because they mostly agree on everything.

For F4 the difference becomes from how vague her definition was. It can be seen in her answer as she was the only one who did not mention the state. I do not claim that this alone makes her definition vague. It was more of the fact that she answered like she was not sure and answered that it has something to do with decision-making and organising common issues.

These definitions can in part explain the low interest these two have. F3 sees politics as something negative and F4 sees it as something distant and complicated. The opposite could also be true, especially for F4. It might be that because their political interest is low their political knowledge is equally low. Therefore, politics seem hard to understand, distant, and thus uninteresting.

### 5.6.4 Freedom to express opinion

My hypothesis before doing my interviews was that there is a gender division in this age group when it comes to political issues. In Table 6 there is only one issue that correlates to gender, and that is “Freedom to express opinion”. Even that has contradictive data.

TABLE 6.3 Freedom to express opinion comparison

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
Freedom to express opinion	Limited	Limited	Low	Limited	Limited	High	High

The only two interviewees that I have put as “High” in this are M2 and M3. As for the rest, their answers highlighted that they do not feel like they can completely freely talk about political topics. The topics that my interviewees stated were: human rights, climate change, minorities (LGBTQ+), and refugees. I put M2 and M3 as “High” because the only reason they had left something unsaid was so that they would not have hurt someone else’s feelings. I see this phenomenon as worrying. Even though some may say the way they act is patronizing, it is still worrisome that they think they should suppress their opinion in any case.

This might also explain why M1 felt they could not talk about politics freely. M1 was the only male interviewee who also had “Limited”. This can be explained by the fact that he was the most right-leaning interviewee that I had. As political leaning was not something I specifically asked in my interviews I have only estimated M2’s political stance. This estimation is backed by some of his answers. For example, from Table 6 it can be seen that he was the only one who was outright against the current government at the time, which was led by the Social Democrats. This difference in opinion might explain why M2 felt like he could not freely express his opinion.

Another divergence from the rest was F3. She was the only one I have labelled as “Low”. This was because she was the only one who said that they cannot be completely open about political topics with their family. This makes her differ from the rest and so I put her as “Low”. This low freedom to express her opinion might explain at least partly, why her interest in politics was so low. These also correlate with her negative definition of politics.

### 5.6.5 State of politics and democracy

TABLE 6.4 State of politics and democracy in comparison

Interviewee	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3
State of politics	Good	Somewhat	-	-	Not good	Somewhat	Somewhat
State of democracy	Good	-	-	Good	Good	Good	Good

I wanted to have this comparison because it showed one positive comparison. Overall, the state of democracy was thought to be good in Finland. Even though most thought that the state of politics was not that great and M1 thought it is not good, they still thought that the state of democracy is good. This was backed by how they talked about democracy. M1 said that even though he does not care for the current government he still believes in the system and voting. He continued by saying that if the people decide who governs then those who do not like it just have to cope.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of my research was to find Finnish ninth graders' perceptions and attitudes about politics. To this end I designed interviews. I decided on interviews because I wanted to get to the "why" behind simple answers, and therefore questionnaires would not have been enough.

The starting point of my topic was polarization. I had observed in my personal life the effects of polarization with adolescents. Arguments between female and male students and my relatives had shown me that there clearly was a gender division. Besides polarization, I wanted to learn more about adolescents' attitudes and perceptions of politics.

The interview process was a learning experience and I admit that there are some things I would do differently the second time around. For example, overestimated how eager my sample group would be to participate in the interviews. Another change would have been to ask more background questions so that I would have gotten a sense of my interviewees' socioeconomic status. I think socioeconomic status could have had interesting correlations with the other answers.

In addition, I overestimated how talkative the interviewees would be. This caused the interviews to be more structured than I had planned. In the end, this had no significant impact on the interviews or the findings. Nevertheless, it could have had an impact, and next time I would anticipate this. This could mean that I would ask different kinds of questions or anticipate short answers with already thought of follow-up questions.

My interview findings were mostly in line with previous research. Political interest and knowledge correlate with the supporting literature. The most important findings in my opinion were about polarization and political socialization. I will reflect upon these findings more thoroughly next.

## **6.1 Polarization**

Polarization was my starting point when I started to think about a topic for my thesis. The topic and the research question evolved, but my research still was partly connected to polarization. One question I wanted to learn about in my interviews was how freely my interviewees feel they can talk about political topics. As a follow up I asked them whether they have ever felt like they have left something unsaid in the conversations with their peers and family that touched on political issues. Both questions gave answers that I connect to polarization.

The results showed that all of my interviewees had not said something because they had feared the consequences. The reasons were different, but both reasons are related to polarization. The first reason was fear of verbal attacks and the second was so that the other party would not hurt their feelings. Both reasons relate to the same issue, polarization. If a topic cannot be discussed without fear of repercussions that topic has become polarised. Optimally all issues and opinions could be discussed openly.

Reporter Matti Virtanen (2021) wrote a book about polarization and identity politics in Finland. The book consists of interviewing experts, which Virtanen, a seasoned reporter is good at. One of those experts was the research manager of the Finnish Business and Policy Forum Ilkka Haavisto. Virtanen asked Haavisto about polarization and identity politics in Finland. Haavisto told that even though opinions have changed only slightly, the conversation has changed a lot. Even though opinions might not be far apart they have become so polarized it is hard to talk about them. Finally, Haavisto stated that gender division has become more apparent. Women have moved slightly to the left and men slightly to the right. Haavisto also predicted that this trend will only keep going. (Virtanen, 2021, pp. 62-68)

This phenomenon is apparent in my findings. The opinions of my interviewees are not very far apart, but there is clear polarization with certain topics. My interviewees also reported that most of the conflicts happen with the opposite gender.

## **6.2 Political socialization**

My findings show that the role of the family is important to adolescents in engaging with political content. My interviewees stated that most of the information about current affairs come from their parents. Also, the ones that had higher political interests reported that they engage in political conversations with their families. It was not proven, but I hypothesise that those with lower political interests keep lower

interests in the future. This is because at that age if their interests have not risen it is mostly due to a lack of parental transmission. As parental transmission is the most important factor in political interest growth, therefore on average low interest would stay low.

Clawson and Oxley (2021), and Neundorf et al. (2013) focus on the parental aspect of political socialization. My findings support parental transmission theory. The difference is that my findings also emphasized horizontal socialization. This difference is shown in the comparison with Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. (2022). My findings show that even though young people use social media a lot, they are using it also to communicate with each other. In some cases, it is the main reason they use social media. Therefore, it could be claimed that the role of social media as a platform for the passive acquisition of information is exaggerated as it is mostly used as a method of communication rather than as a source itself.

Another aspect that is missing from the literature on parental transmission is the rest of the family. When my interviewees were talking about having conversations with their families, they often mentioned their siblings as well. Even F3, who reported low political interest and low engagement in political conversations with her family, stated that her parents might talk about politics with her siblings. My research suggests that there is a gap in the literature on youth political socialization in respect to how the category of the family is understood. It would be interesting to see how much of an impact siblings have on political socialization and whether the role of parents has been exaggerated. It would also be interesting to see whether different family models have different results of childhood socialization.

### **6.3 Final thoughts**

I have stated that I had other options for method in this research. I chose semi-structured interviews because they seemed the best fit. Reflecting on that decision I think I made the right choice. I have shown how a small sample size can give huge amounts of information when using the right method. This information can then be analysed through qualitative and quantitative methods. Furthermore, the analysis is made more worthwhile when compared to existing research.

Even though interviews were not the easiest route I am happy that I chose to do them. This process taught me a lot about doing this type of research, but also about doing research in general.

### 6.3.1 Further research

Previously I stated that I chose not to do both questionnaires and interviews as the questions that I could have asked in a questionnaire were realised in the interviews. For future research, questionnaires would be plausible. Questionnaires could also help ask background questions that would determine for example participant's socio-economic status and political position. For these kinds of questions, questionnaire is sufficient and maybe even better suited than interviews.

As for future research topics, I think that all of the topics I have asked about in my interviews could do with more in-depth research. Next, I will give examples of what I think are the best suited and the most interesting to do further research on.

The sources for political information were an interesting finding as they went against other research. The reasons for this difference I could only speculate on in this thesis. Therefore, this would be an interesting research topic to see where these differences come from. It is important to note that it is also unclear whether some sources can be thought of as sources or as mediums for relating information from other sources. For example, my interviewees stated they use social media mostly to communicate with their friends. Is therefore social media the source or simply a medium of communication?

It would also be interesting to see how effective horizontal socialization is. Does it go against parental socialization, or does it only support it? How inclusive is it? Does horizontal socialization only work with close friends or siblings, or does it also happen with a larger group? Does polarization have an effect on this?

Furthermore, polarization could be studied on its own. Further research on this topic could be focused on finding the specific topics that are polarised and the way polarization emerges in conversations. As my interviewees stated the situation and the other party affect whether they take part in a conversation. It would be interesting to explore this topic further and maybe formulate some tools for easing conflict with polarized topics. These tools could be aimed at teachers to use in the classroom or them to teach to students. This way topics could be discussed in the classroom, but also help students have conversations in their private lives.

Finally, I would like to see research on the effectiveness of civics teaching in Finnish schools. Some of my interviewees criticized that the civics lessons are not enough for them. As I have stated, these interviewees were the ones who had high political interests. Is this therefore only a trend amongst students who have high political interests, or does it affect students with lower political interests? Is this a problem only in this particular school or is it a systematic problem? Research on this topic could help shape future civics curriculum. Hannuksela et al. (2022) researched this topic but they only studied how large of an effect teachers and teaching methods

have on a student's civic competence. They do not go into detail about the contents of civic studies which my interviewees focused their criticism on.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

Message sent to the students and their guardians:

Hei [REDACTED] yläkoulun 9-luokkalaiset ja heidän huoltajansa.

Olen Joose Kokko ja opiskelen Jyväskylän yliopistossa yhteiskuntatieteiden ja filosofian laitoksella politiikan tutkimusta. Olen maisterivaiheen opiskelija ja teen pro gradu -tutkimusta aiheesta *Nuorten poliittinen kiinnostus ja demokratian tila*.

Tutkimusta varten aion tehdä haastatteluja [REDACTED] koululla 9-luokkalaisille. Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on täysin vapaaehtoista. Lisätietoa tutkimuksesta ja tietosuojasta saat tiedotteesta ja tietosuojailmoituksesta, jotka löydät linkistä:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1G3nXr7B4lhPhk-pBBimeFfwDKtAigNjK?usp=sharing>

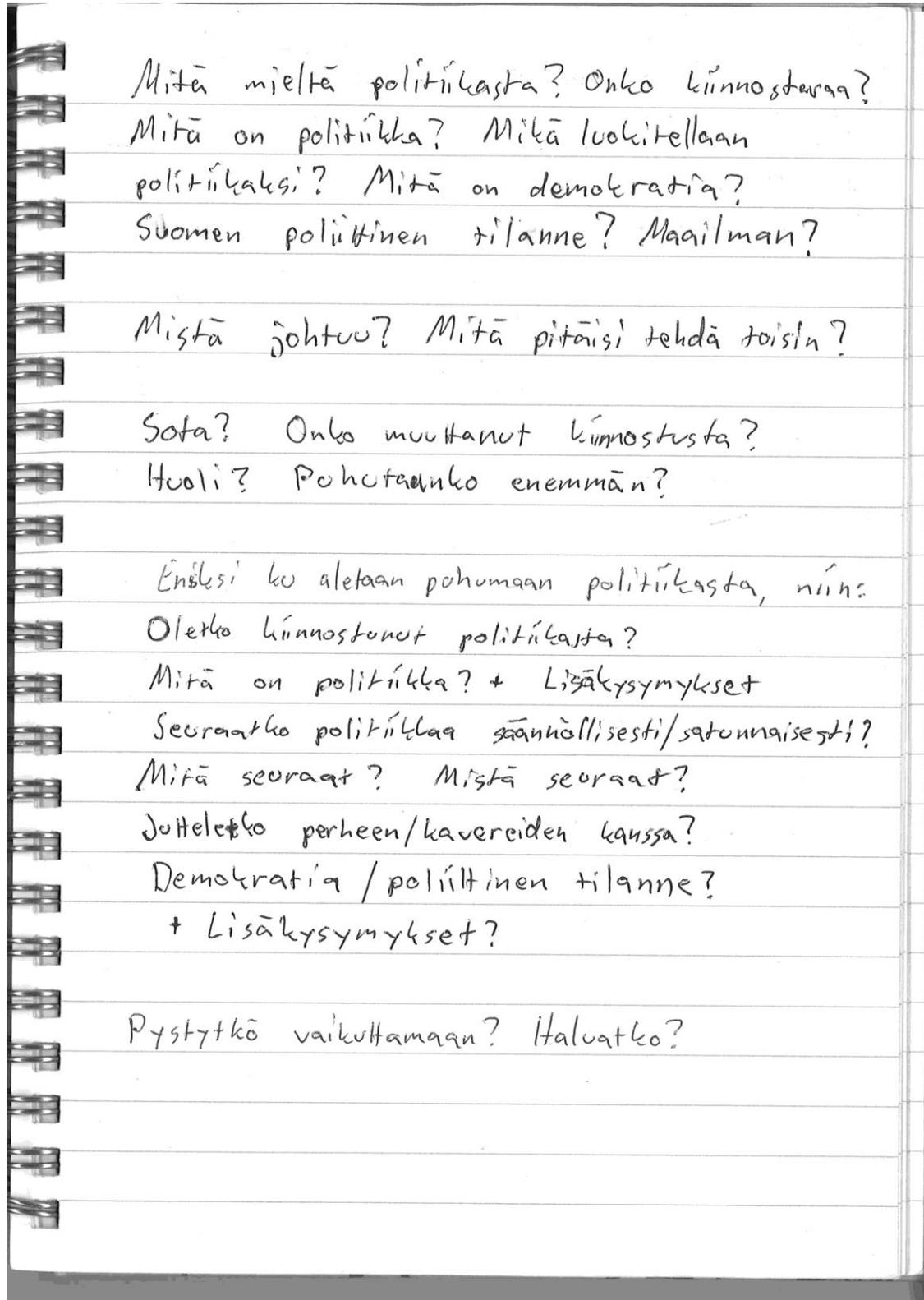
Tiivistettynä, tutkimukseen osallistuvalle tehdään 30–45 minuutin yksilöhaastattelu. Haastattelua varten ei tarvitse valmistautua ja se tapahtuu keskustelunomaisesti. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan. Tutkimukseen osallistuvilta edellytetään suostumus. Jos tutkittava on täyttänyt 15 vuotta, hän saa itse päättää osallistuuko tutkimukseen, huoltajille on kuitenkin informoitava tutkimuksesta.

Haastattelut tapahtuvat päivinä 21. – 25.3, yhteiskuntaopin tuntien aikana. Haen vapaaehtoiset haastateltavaksi tuntien alussa. Jos vapaaehtoisia on useampia, suoritan arvonnän.

Ystävällisin terveisin Joose Kokko

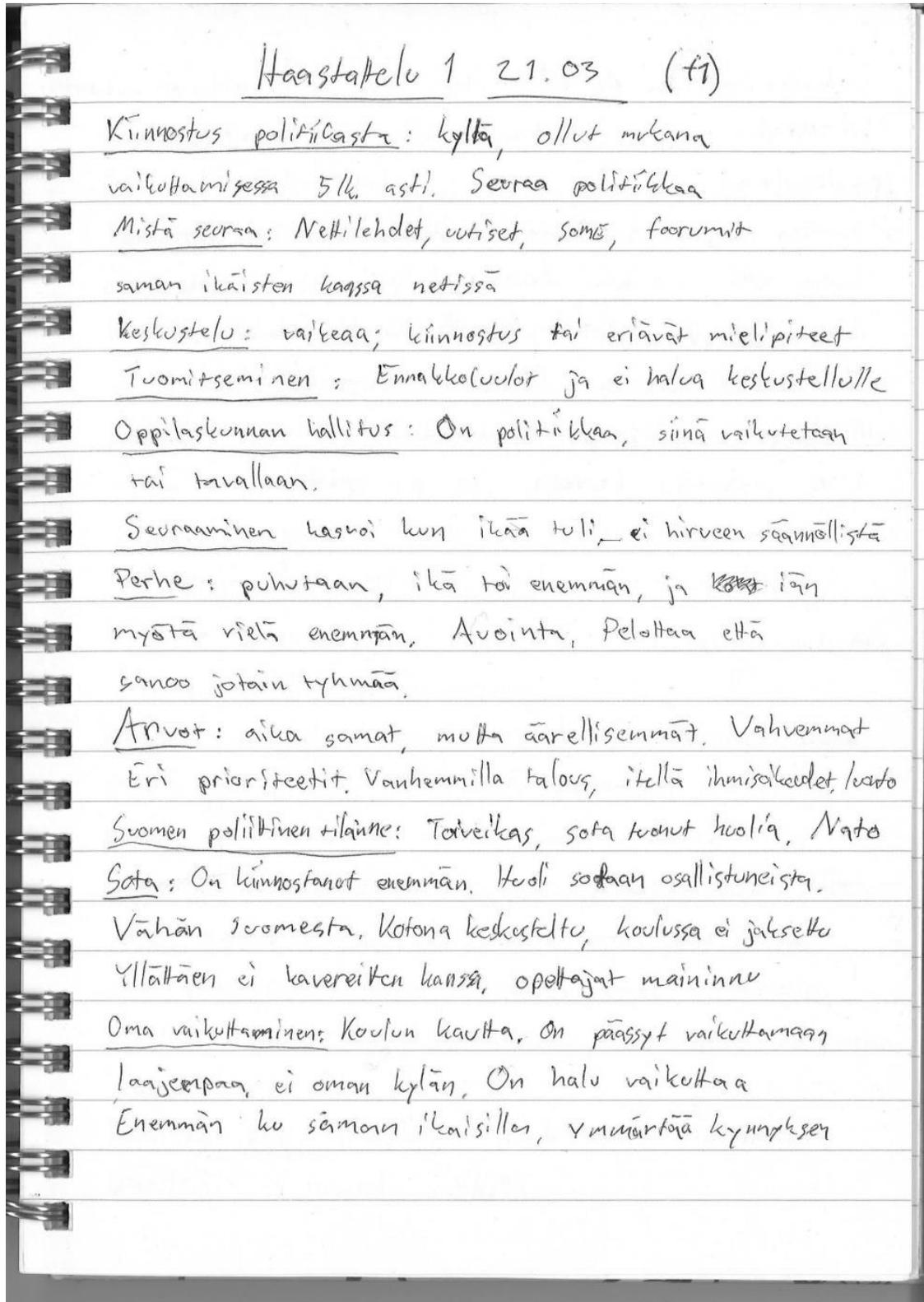
## APPENDIX 2

Interview questions:



## APPENDIX 3

Interview answers:



Vaihtaminen: ei ole tullut eteen, ellei olisi päässyt mihinkään

Demokratia: jokaisella kansalaisella on mahdollisuus vaikuttaa

Suomen tilanne: hyvä, varsinkin nyt, vs. Venäjä

Tuntuu että on osa demokratiaa

Aäestysprosentti: Toteutuko demokratia, mietityttää

On korostettu uutisissa. Ei tiedoteta tarpeeksi

Koulussa pitäisi puhua enemmän

Itse nykyään kartalla, itse piti opetella

## Haastattelu 2. 21.03 (mt)

Kiinnostus: Kyllä, jonku verran

Seuraa: kun tulee vastaan (muuta uutisia [yleisesti])

Uutisia: semi-säännöllisesti 1-2 kert viikossa

Lisääntynyt - kiinnostus kasvan myötä

Seuraa: joka puolelta somea, TikTok, IG, kaverit  
ei nettilehtiä, uutisia harvoin

Kaverit: jotain mullistavaa (Ukraina), yleensä TikTok  
mitkä saatu eteen,

TikTok: seuraa eduskunnan jäsentä (Tynkkynen)

klippejä keskusteluista, joskus kommentointia

Ukraina: lisännyt kiin. jonku verran, glassa puhuttin  
paljon, vieläki jonku verran

Kaverit: joskus puhutaan, kahta kaveria: samaa  
mieltä voi puhua, eri mieltä varovasti / välttää  
puhua ja ei ehkä uskalla mainita kantaa

Sanomalta jättäminen, ei ole tyrmätty, mutta deltaa  
näin tapahtuvan, ei ilmaise omaa kantaa tai  
edes puhu politiikasta, haluaa pysyä kaverina

Perhe: Äitiltä paljon kuulee, avoimesti voi puhua  
sama kanta

Suomen pol. ilmapiiri: Ei kannata tän hetken  
päättäjiä -> huonolla mallilla

on mahdollisuus parempaan

Suomi suhteessa maailma: Ei tiedä muista maista,  
varmaan aika samalla mallilla

Demokratia: kaikkien jutut, kansa, äänestys  
on tietäkseni hyvä Suomessa

Vaihtaminen: ei tällä hetkellä, joskus voi olla  
aiheita johon haluisi, mutta ei ehkä pysty

~~että~~ Kytä ja koulu ympäristöön pääsee

Ei välttämättä lasketa poliittiseksi

Politiikka: eduskunta, ekana ja puolueet

pienempi vaikuttaminen ei politiikkaa, valtion asiat

Mitkä asiat eri mieltä päättäjiin: uhkaus Venäjään,

pitäisi pysyä neutraalina

Sota: pitkänen huoli Venäjän poltteluista

Avustuspaketti: aiheutti Miljardeja velkaa Suomelle,

(EU-elvytyspaketti?)

Äänestys: tulee parempia päättäjiä, tai voi voi,

on kärsittävä

## Haastattelu 3 22.3 (f2)

Kiinnostus: kyllä samoisista on, koittaa selvittää  
puhutaan kotona, riippuu aiheesta

Seuraa: ei säännöllisesti, pari kert. vk., uutiset  
netti, some, tarkemmin etsii, vanhemmilta  
ei tiettyä

Uutiset: puh. tv, nettilehdet yle, wikipedia  
tai muilta joihin luottaa

Some: tämän hetkiset aiheet, mutta ei vältt. luotetta.  
monet sanoo eri asioita, mikä on totta, ei selkeyttä  
tiktok, IG, kaverit, julkiset saattaa puhua

Kaverit: enemmän keskustelua, ei lähetettyä

jos on tapahtunut jotain, voi puhua, kaikki ilmai-  
see mielipiteet, kaikista aiheista

Jostain aiheista voi puhua jostain ei

ei tiettyä: ilmasto, maahanmuutto, seksuaalivähemmistö

Onko jättänyt sanomatta kyllä, on hankala tulla  
esiin, ku pelkää reaktiota

Perhe: pystyy puhumaan ja puhutaan yllättävän paljon  
on puhuttu ketä äänestä

Mitä on politiikka: päätöksenteko, propaganda  
vaikutusvalta

Oppihal: tietyllä tavalla äänestetty, päättää vkt.  
asioita

Opphal. on ollut ala-asteella

Vaikuttaminen: voi puhua, mutta ei tiedä miten se auttaisi, ympäristö ja luonto tärkeitä haluaisi päästä enemmän, tulevaisuudessa pääsee äänestys ilmastomarsi, oman mielipiteen ilmaisemisella

Suom. pol.til.: ~~on~~ siellä on ristiriitaa, syrjässä asuvia ei vält. mietitä, toiveikas muutoksesta täl hetkellä ei näkyvissä

Suomi vs maailma + ei oo ajateltu, on eroja mutta ei välttämättä neg. tai pos.

Sota: vähän enemmän, historiaa tilanteesta taustaa otannut selvää, myös vähän huoli ei Suomen turvallisuudesta,

ti. kolossa mutta kavereitten kesken

## Haastattelu 4 22.3 (f3)

Kinnostus: ei niinkään, jos joku tulee vastaan ei eti

Aihe: joku minun liittyvä, ei esim.

Mistä: TikTok, satunnaista, ei muita

Youtube: käyttää, ei poli.

Kaverit: mitäkään ei kiinnosta

kiinnostavat jutut kuitenkin jaetaan/enemmän puhutaan kouluissa

Pystyy puhumaan kavereitten, mutta ei muitten

ei jaksaa alkaa väitteleen, on jättänyt sanomatta

Aiheet: ei mitkään tiettyt

Luokkakavereilla: on tullut sanaharkkaa, ei kuuntele

Perhe: välillä muut, avointa, mutta voi tulla riitaa

mieluummin jättäytyy, on ollut tilanteita että olis

halunnut puhua mutta ei ole

Ei puhuta vaaleista tai puolueista / äänestyskesästä

Pol. Toiminta ei mukana, ei motiv. tulevais. ehtä

jos aihe motivoi

Pystyis kuitenkin ei vaaan moti.

Scm. Pol. til.: sen verran etteimennä sotaan

ei hirveen pettynyt, ei kyl tiiä paljon asiasta

Sota: enemmän pelottava ku kiinnostava, vähän huoli, muitten puolesta ja vähän Suomesta  
Vähän enemmän puhuttu, perhe, kaveri, ja koulu  
Ei ite oikeestaan seurannu, perhe sanonu  
Mitä on politiikka: presidentti, lait ei hirveest tui mieleen, tappelua "minä haluan" se ärsyttää, siksi ei kiinnosta, enimmäkseen  
Ei ehkä kaikilla tasoilla, ylempänä parempaa  
Opp. hal. = ei politiikkaa, se on järjestelyä enimmäkseen ajattelee samantyyliä, ei konfli. ei poli.  
Demokratia: en tiitä, (selitys) "ai kaikki äänestää"  
Äänestys: joo, miksi? huvikseen, tuhata aikaa vois olla hyötyä, ei ole turhaa

## Haastattelu 5 22.3 (F4)

Kiinnostus: En erityisen paljon, seuraan asioita

Seuraa: joku viikko, ei tiettyjä lähteitä  
utiset tv, nettilehti Ilta-lehti Yle Some IG

TikTok: sieltä ei tule vastaan

IG: Yle Uutiset joku voi mainita

Aiheet: ei tiettyjä, mikä ajankohtaisista

Kaverit: ei jossain jakelua, keskustelu jos aihe  
kiinnostava tai koskeva esim. ei tuo mieleen  
keskustusten näkee kavereita usein

Perhe: ei puhuta, tai saman verran ku kavereitten

Avoimuus: kaverit joo, perhe joo,

Perhe: ei puoluekanta tai äänestysakt

Oma puoluekanta ei osaa sanoa

Koulussa: ~~ei puhuta~~ uskoisin, ei puhu koulussa  
yleensä mistään, mutta voisi, ei ole huom.  
että olisi puhuttu pol. aiheista

Kiinnostus: aika sama ku kavereilla, ehkä eri  
aiheista, luokasta ei tiää

Suomi-pol til: ei tietoa, ei mielipid.

Suomi vs maailm.: uskoisi että toimii tääl paremm?  
hallinto ku muualla

Demokratia: kansa, äänestys, kaikilta kysytään  
Suomessa hyvin

Tulevaisuudessa: tod.näk. haluu äänestää, haluaa  
vaikuttaa koko kansan asioihin

Hyöty: ei osaa sanoa, uskoist että on, ~~jos~~  
~~äänestää~~ jos jaksaa mielipiteitä voi olla vaikuttava

Pol. toiminta: ei mukana

Opp. hall.: kyllä on, siinä vaikutetaan yht. asioihin

Vaikuttaminen: pystyisi, tulevai. on mahdollisuus

Sota: on puhuttu, kotona, koulussa, puhutaan paljon

ei nyt kosketa Suomeen paljon, mutta apua

kannattaa miettiä, varautunu ei pelkoa

muiden maiden puolesta vähän huolta, on miettiny

Kolu: opettaja saattanut mainita

Sotä: ei ole lisännyt kiinnostusta, on seurannut

enemmän, ei ussia lähteitä

Haastattelu 23.3. (m2)

Kiinnostus: aika kiinnostunut, varsinkin vaalien / sodan aikaan, ajankohtaista

Tiheys: ~~melkein~~ päivittäin, jos ei ajantoh. silloin tällöin jos sattuu kohalle

Mistä: nettilehdet, uutiset TV, yle, jostus some

Some: IG = yle, julkaisut

Kaverit: jostus juteltua, ei niinkään some, kalussa enemmän ku vapaailla

Muut: harvemmia

Perhe: aika paljonki, vaalit, lait

Pystyy puhumaan: kavereitten kans, kalussa perheessä

Samomata jättäminen: jostus ehtiä, joku ajattelee erillailla saattaa suhtua: maahanmuutto, Nato

Kiinnostus: sama ku kavereitten, enemmän vähä kumout

Suom pol til: jostus hyvin jostus ihmettyttää

noh menkööt, luottaa kuitenkin kansa päättänyt

Demokratia: kansa saa päättää, kettä päättävät

kansan asioista, eduskunta on kansan näkönen

ihän hyvä tilanne

Vs Mu maailma: jostus edellä, jostus jälessä  
edellä Venäjää, jälessä Jenkkijä vaikei  
sielläkään kaikki hyvin, Euroopan suurimmat  
Sota: enemmän tuli seurattua, mietittyä meljän  
tilanne, hyökääkö ne tänne, mutta luotto ettei  
varautunut / spekulointia

Nato: kaverit, porukat, kaikki suht samaa mieltä

Mitä on politiikka: lakipäätökset, verotus

Opp. hall.: tavallaan joo, ei niin suuria päätöksiä

Toiminta: ei ole ollu mukana, ei mun juttu

~~Äänestys~~ Demok.: on osa, tuntuu sitä

Väikuttaminen: jostus halu, ei oo jaksanu, ois  
pystynyt, kävisi äänestään jo nyt

Äänestys: ihmiset valittaa, mutta ei tee mitään  
pitää jotain tehdä sen ettei, helppoa tapaa,  
toinen vaihtoehto asettua ehdolle (ei halua) ei tiedä  
on hyödyllistä

Perhe: tietää ketä porukat äänestää, tietää  
poliitikannan,

Oma: sama lu vanhemilla, sieltä se tulee,  
kavereilla; joillai sama joillai eri

On tilanteita joissa eri mieltä, mutta siitä  
voi puhua asioista

## Haastattelu 7 23.3 (ms)

Kinmostus: kyllä, uutisia, päivittäin, karvoita  
kyselytunteja tms.

Mistä: Nettilehet, uutisten mukana

Some: IG, snäppi, fb, YT, TikTok, välillä tulee  
vastaan, Sebastian Tynttymen (lol), jättää tulkinna  
varaan,

Epäily: Ehkä vähän 11 ja 15, dramaattisim, VLE paras

Some: Meerejä lähinnä,

Kaverit: tulee puhuttua, ajankohtaisista

Aiheet: ajankohtaiset

Perhe: kyllä, Isä ja Äiti seuraa, keskustellaan

Koulu: YH tunneilla

Avoimuus: voi puhua, oma mielipiteeseen voi iluaista

Eriävät mielipiteet: kaverien kanssa, "olla on seun-

ja molla mun", joskus jättää sanomatta ettei se  
konfliktilla, ~~aito~~ jos sanomisella ei merkitystä  
tai joku voi pahottaa mielensä, muodolluudesta vooksi

Koulussa: jos joku puhuu liittyy mukaan, ei ole  
havainnut riitoja

Puolukanta: Ei oo kertono, mutta arvioi oikealle

-> kokoomus, kertovat ketä äänestävät, sisarukset  
ottavat kantaa, oma kanta sama ku vanhemmilla

Kavereilla: 'jättiläisen' kanssa samantapainen

tytöt yleensä aivan eri ja heidän kans 'riittäjä',  
tykkää keskustella

Aiheet: ~~politiikka~~ oikeudet (ihmis), budjetointi, verotus

Suom. pol. til.: usko että demokraattista, osassa samaa  
osassa täysin eri

Demokratia: yhdessä päättämistä, tyytyväinen,  
yhdeällä ei ääretöntä valtaa

Suhteessa maailma: erittäin hyvä, ongelmiakin on:  
muutos ei sitä mitä haetaan ko kompromissoidaan ja  
rosi' hädasta, vasen vs. oikea

Osa dem.: olen osa, aikoo äänestää, agitelee  
omaa etua, haluaa edistää ja muutosta, ei saa  
olla huterä päätös, mietti omaa tilannetta

Mitä on politiikka: Valtion sisäiset asiat, kansa

Opp.hall: on politiikkaa

Osallistuminen: kyllä, opp. hall, ei muuta

Toleranssiosuudessa: on harkinnu, "kyllä susta poika tulis  
hyvä politiikka", herättää kiinnostusta

Vaihtaminen: on päässyt

Mu vaihtaminen: ei ole, ei ole kiinnostanu, ei

Sota: herätti aiheita kohtaan, alkaessa  
pölysiäki, nyt vähemmän

Alussa koko päivä puhuttiin ja ihmeteltiin  
Perheessä: Isä seuraa hyvin paljon, ei nyt  
ehkä päivittäin, koulussa keskusteltiin oppitun.  
Huoli: ei meillä hätää, hämmennystä maailmanpol.  
kohtaan,

Tunallisuus: ei vaaraa, luottaa puol. voim.

Nato: Ite ei-kannalla, mutta her. ristikriittaa  
lieveni sodan myötä, hyvin paljon  
eräviä mielipiteitä, TV:stä & YLE, poliitikot  
ja asiantuntijat ja puol. voim. henkilökuntaa  
Aika vahva ei-kanta perheessä