Discourses of activism

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Floor Basten, 2002
University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands

Introduction

Discourses on active citizenship often tend to stress only one of the two elements in the concept, focusing either on 'active' or on 'citizenship'. Both are not unambiguous terms but subjective interpretations that point to a desirable qualification held by the one who uses the terms. *Active* can refer to a degree of activity (ranging from hyperactive to nearly passive), the activity itself (voting, volunteering, campaigning, activism) and equivalent adjectives (good, productive, moral, responsible, patriotic). Interpretations of the term *citizenship* range from degrees in legal positions of full citizens, denizens and non-citizens to entitlements of citizens and criteria for gaining the status of citizenship, and citizenship as desirable activity in terms of demands to a citizen as member of the community. Discussions on citizenship can be regarded as *discourses*, that can give us insights (however implicit they may be) into issues of interpretation and identity of the interpreter. Discourses contain connected language used for a purpose and therefore they reveal meaning (Lakoff 2001: 8). They also reveal power relations: who has the right to define what active citizenship is?

The identity of the interpreter is an issue that – besides the *what* (the theme of the discourse as it is defined by the interpreter) and the *how* (the qualification as it is made by the interpreter) – concerns *power relations* (the success of the discourse in terms of reception and audience). Castells distinguishes three forms and origins of identity building: (1) *legitimising identity*, introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize domination, (2) *resistance identity*, generated by those not in power and (3) *project identity*, developed to redefine specific positions in society and, in the process, to transform the overall social structure (1997: 8-11). These definitions fit our working assumption, stated in the research proposal: attitudes, skills and behavioural patterns which equip people to participate actively as citizens are constructed in socio-institutional and cultural processes. As research team, we decided explicitly to exclude identities that denounce democracy. Based on our empirical evidence, Castells' typology will be slightly altered to reflect this decision – one might say that we adopted the 'politically correct' versions of his identities. In this chapter, I will refer to legitimising discourses and counter discourses.

As stated above, discourses reveal power structures: 'They are about language: who has the ability and the right to make meaning for everyone. Language-based controversies […] are really about which group is to enter the new millennium with social and political control. Whose take on things will be *the* take? Who gets to make meaning for all of us – to create and define our culture?' (Lakoff 2001: 19). The rights to make meaning in public discourse are shifting and definitions are not univocal any more. The term 'active citizenship' has different meanings, depending on the identity of the interpreter. The central message of this chapter is that legitimising identities do not recognize the activities of the other identities as forms of active citizenship, or that they do not acknowledge them in their discourses as such. To exemplify this message, I will discuss three legitimising discourses – neo-liberal, neo-republican, and communitarian – and their interpretation of active citizenship. I will demonstrate that these interpretations exclude acts of active citizenship defined in counter discourses. This can be

*http://www.surrey.ac.uk/pips/ETGACE/

made clear in analysing the different goals. For legitimising discourses, active citizenship is a goal in itself. Citizens must behave not just as citizens, but as active citizens in societal affairs. By way of governance, they are to perform tasks previously performed by the nation state and therefore *a priori* and top down defined in terms of the legitimising discourses. In counter discourses, active citizenship is not a goal in itself. Citizens act, because they identify a problem and want to solve it. Their becoming active citizens is a mere by-product of their involvement with a myriad of issues they care about. When legitimising identities stress that citizens need to be active or bemoan a lack of civic activities, the actual activities of the other identities are either denied or disqualified. This might explain the diminishing support for legitimising discourses, that, in turn, will increase the appeal for more active citizenship.

In the following sections, I will focus on the different discourses, combining literature with findings of the ETGACE-research. I will roughly divide the discourses into legitimising or common-sense discourses and non-legitimising or counter discourses. Then I will sketch some implications for education and learning of active citizenship. I will end this chapter with some concluding remarks.

Common-sense discourses

Common-sense discourses are discourses that imply continuity and progress. They are used by people who claim that their status quo and natural order is neutral and who keep their faith in large scale structures and systems. They define active citizenship as 'actively supporting and carrying out' their interpretation of the term and legitimise their conservatism with reference to common sense. In language, there is a difference between unmarked and marked ideas, concepts, and storylines (Lakoff 2001). The unmarked are natural, simple, and what we expect. They seem neutral and do not require defence or explanation. They are plausible. The marked, however, seem bizarre, complicated, and not what we expected at all. They are either subjected to severe tests or rejected all together. Unmarked are masculine, white, heterosexual, middle class, centre politics, positive, standard use of language, derision. Marked are feminine, coloured, homosexual, lower class, extreme politics, negative, dialect or bad language-use, criticism. 'Unmarked' equals the common-sense definition of a situation as it is accepted by the majority of influential people. Family and schooling have an important influence on passing on marked values:

> Victor, a 27-year old local politician, attributes his value system to parents and upbringing. His father was involved in politics in Greece, and his mother also was politically literate. He remembers political discussion at home when he was 5-6 years old. TV and reading also contributed. Schooling reinforced Victor's political views and activities. His school was 'pretty conservative', he recalls, and 'I knew what monetarism was before I started economics course […] I remember reading the *Economist*.' He concluded that 'the Labour Party was not reflective of the way economic trends were developing'. In his A-level group, the atmosphere was 'a little bit like a university, […] people with different views, […] quite willing to talk about things.' Victor was determined to become a politician. He enjoyed 'meeting people', 'getting your name in the paper'; it was 'good fun playing party politics'. He joined the Young Conservatives at 18, became a local councillor at 26, and plans to become an MP in his early 30s.
> (Edirisingha *et al* 2001: 24-25, 28)

A consistent set of values and explanations is called a frame. The creation of unmarked frames arises in a process of exnomination, in which groups become normalised: they become apolitical and non-ideological, their rules become *the* rules. Any explanation is based on 'that's just the way it is' or 'it has always been this way'. Common sense ideas are very resistant to change, because we do not want to reframe our reality safely based on common sense: 'Reframing is traumatic, and we resent being forced to do it. […] We get upset and angry when the connection between frames and reality is challenged' (Lakoff 2001: 48-50). Unmarked frames are invisible. Attributes of members of dominant groups are invisible, as their role in making things the way they are is invisible. Also, beliefs are considered as the only possible reality, and not as choices.

These discourses are highly legitimising. They legitimise structures of previous, unmarked dominance, and thereby project their logic into the future, leaving these structures invisible and unchanged. These discourses are characterised by different strategies. One of these strategies is the reference to an objective, external reality that allows for no interfering or influence, be it controlled by the invisible hand of the market, human intelligence, God, or any other higher power. This external reality may be characterized by chaos, unpredictability, uncontrollability and instability, but that is no reason to question the structures of dominance and power. Reference to 'a fast changing word' is made in this

discourse, but the legitimising identities who will guide others into the future will remain the same. Or, as Castells puts it: the legitimising identity is 'introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalise their dominance *vis à vis* social actors', and this identity '*generates a civil society*; that is, a set of organisations and institutions, as well as a series of structured and organised social actors, which reproduce, albeit sometimes in a conflictive manner, the identity that rationalises the sources of structural domination' (Castells 1997: 8 – italics his). In other words: it is the organised reproduction of domination. Civil society and state are both organised around a similar identity based on citizenship, democracy, social change by politics, and confinement of power to the state. These elements of national identity have, however, been compromised by processes linked to a new network society. Networking processes are not autonomous processes that arise out of the blue. People initiate, sustain, and develop them to a large degree. However, in describing a world as 'chaotic, dynamic, dangerous and unstable', the common-sense discourse not only denies all active participation in creating havoc, but also remains remarkably stable itself. It is the reassuring discourse of expertise and leadership based on years of experience in dealing with the vicissitudes of the life of the ordinary person. A legitimising identity is paternalistic. It claims to protect the innocents from the chaotic outside and hides that it is an active manager in bringing chaos about.

For instance, the very notion of citizenship has become chaotic and corrosive. The leaders of our nations have developed degrees in citizenship (human rights, residential rights, full citizenship rights). If there are grades and varieties in 'citizenship', who then has the power to define the term, to design policies accordingly and to distribute rights and responsibilities? And what about 'active citizenship'? Narrowing the legitimising identity down to 'political leaders' is, however, not precise enough. The corrosion of citizenship, dividing the haves from the have--nots, suggests that the legitimising identity also includes royalty, religious leaders, top managers of multinationals and media giants, in short: the upper class or 'haves'. It is not so strange that upper classes engage in legitimising discourse, since they are the ones who have everything to gain by successfully legitimising their special positions and keeping the structures of dominance as they are, and everything to lose if they fail. But there is more at stake then simple material losses or physical damages. What is at stake is 'a very particular kind of prestige, the prestige which applies to princes and presidents, kings and prime ministers, leaders and rulers. The claim of rulers to special status or qualities, and the actions they take in cultivating this claim, are the central part of endogenous legitimation, or the self-justification of rulers by the cultivation of an identity distinguished from that of ordinary men and women' (Barker 2001: 3). Self-legitimation is part of the continual rationalisation of rule; when it fails, government fails and even ceases to be government: 'Crises or erosions of legitimacy do not cause crises or erosions of government. They are a constituent part of what crises and erosions of governments are' (Barker 2001: 24).

However, narrowing down the legitimising identity to upper classes is not precise enough either. As Castells (1997) suggests, legitimising identities include civil society. Legitimation as the justification by reference to special and unique qualities sets the ruler apart from other people, while at 'the same time, identification between rulers and the people to whom the commands are issued serves to legitimate compliance with commands' (Barker 2001: 35). The legitimation process assists people to obey and to make sense of their compliance. It not just legitimises rulers, but also creates the identity of citizens and subjects. Civil society, as the materialization of institutional identities, both justifies the exercise of control or radicalising dominance and rule, and describes the ways and ends of how this control is used: 'Rulers, in order to sustain and cultivate their own identity and authority, sustain and cultivate not only their own, but that of those they recognize as marked off from the mass of their subjects by identities which attach them to both other individuals and groups, and raise them above them as leaders, representative, and spokespersons' (Barker 2001: 71). This form of co-optation of important groups or actors resonates with the finding in the Finnish life histories report, whose authors wrote that this 'is a very typical Finnish form of governance: the dissidents are recruited to responsible positions, thus limiting their actions to relatively lawful forms' (Laitinen and Nurmi 2001: 113). Interviewees in all countries report how they are asked for positions and activities. And, as the Slovenes note, they

> also gain knowledge through various political mandates at the local and national level as e.g. mayor's office, ministerial positions etc. Social learning occurs in contacts with other members of organisation though they consider international contacts as more important. More varied is societal learning. This way respondents have gained: knowledge on the nature of social regulation, identification and use of the opportunities brought by social changes, mastering the skills of lobbying, awareness of the role of political power in the realisation of their interests, recognising the status of different groups in the society. (Podmenik *et al* 2001: 176)

‘Legitimisation’ implies an audience to whom the legitimisation is addressed. This audience has become more critical and unbelieving; it has lost its innocence (see next section). Dealing with this calls for resourceful strategies that leave the active part of legitimising identities out of sight, unmarked, and invisible. What is crucial in the legitimising discourse, is not only what strategies are used, but also what the solutions are sought to decrease chaos. For convenience, I shall limit myself to three variations of the same subject.

Neo-liberal citizenship

The *liberal* perspective draws a clear distinction between state and society, and understands the relationship between the two as a social contract between free and equal citizens. ‘Contract’ refers to political relations in the political community in which rights and obligations of citizens are stated. The state is a functional organization with a limited task (the promotion of social justice) and a citizen is a person who is willing to subscribe to the contract and who therefore agrees with the principles of the democratic constitutional state. This perspective assumes political unity and equality which is brought about through civil representation. The concept is based on territorialism, which implies that demarcation lines coincide with geographical borders. Within these borders, people are equal and by definition willing to subscribe to the contract and the principles of the democratic state.

This discourse of free citizens and minimum state has been compounded with economic theories of free markets and minimum state. This is the *neo-liberal* perspective, that defines citizenship as the ideal of the self-governing community of free, equal, autonomous and judicious citizens. In this perspective there are no distinctions between citizens, i.e. there is no room for debates about citizen inclusion and exclusion; in fact, there can be only economic self-exclusion. The active citizen in this discourse is the citizen who is, through participation in the paid labour market, financially independent: the self-sufficient citizen. The neo-liberal discourse has penetrated governmental discourse and has left no political orientation immune. Neo-liberal discourse in government can be found in business-oriented managerial techniques and terms such as ‘tailor made’ and ‘quasi-markets’. The new regime of public management has sought to make public services more accountable and responsive to those who use them: citizens are consumers.

According to neo-liberals, social order and stability are the products of exchange relations, reciprocity and mutual profit. Society is a marketplace perceived from a utilitarian perspective. Autonomous individuals pursue their self-interest and as a side-effect bring about a greater good. In this vision, the good citizen is the productive citizen. Activity is defined in terms of consumerism and entrepreneurship. Society is a derivative of freedom and equality. Societal stability and integration are a matter of social-economic integration, of participation in the market. The new ethical purpose of the state is construed as protecting personal freedom. This assumes that dependence and reliance on the state run counter to autonomous citizenship. In the neo-liberal discourse, citizens act solely on the basis of their self-interest, and active citizenship emphasizes individual obligations, denying collective rights and responsibilities. Active citizenship is based on an individual model characterised by charity, through which individuals reach out to others and thereby become citizens through philanthropic action (Holford and Edirisingha 2000: 6).

Neo-liberals claim that the state is over-protective. Their concern is to diminish state reliance by placing a strong emphasis on the relationship between paid work and citizen status. The welfare state has encouraged passivity and indolence; moreover, the system of social security is no longer affordable and may distort the re-integration of long-term unemployed. What is needed is a revision of the system in order to stimulate people to participate in the labour market. Therefore, welfare provisions must be dismantled and individual enterprise through engagement with the free market must be encouraged.

Neo-republican citizenship

The *neo-republican* ideal of citizenship is that of a self-governing community. This ideal is more substantiated than the neo-liberal ideal: in the neo-republican perspective, a nation of citizens derives its identity from democratic decision making. Therefore, political participation is crucial. In light of integration and access, neo-republicans claim that citizenship rights have to be extended to all those who are affected by political decision making. In other words, this perspective corrects for a deficit in political rights. Active citizens are citizens who are politically active within the free and public sphere. Those who have no access to this sphere, need to be equipped with the rights and competencies to enter. Neo-republicans will look for strategies of information and education to help develop competencies, virtues and knowledge for fully fledged political participation (uniform citizenship).

Intellectual capacities such as critical thinking and reflection are emphasised. Quoting from *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* (QCA 1998), the UK team wrote:

> The emphasis is to develop active citizens who are 'willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and to extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service, and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves' (QCA 1998: 7-8).
> (Holford and Edirisingha 2000: 44)

It is the phrase 'to build on and to extend … the best in existing traditions' that makes the neo-republican discourse legitimising. Moreover, neo-republican competences are highly rational and reflexive. The Finnish, for instance, refer to the philosophical analysis of the relationship between education and democracy by Puolimatka (1995), whose central claim is

> that democracy presupposes critical citizens, who are rational political actors committed to freedom, equality and justice. Other conclusions include: that education for critical citizenship works towards the unfolding human potential, that methodical socialization and indoctrination in democratic values are not genuine possibilities, that commitment to democratic values can be taught without violating individuality and without frustrating rational reflection.
> (Laitinen & Nurmi 2000: 59)

Neo-republicanism has its roots in the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. It seems that neo-republicans find their panacea in human intelligence – but not just any intelligence: the more *enlightened* the population, the more *politically correct* its citizens. There is an automatic link between higher education and higher moral development in this perspective. For instance, as the UK team quotes Emler and Frazer (1999) as evidence,

> people with more education tend to take a more active role in politics and to have more clearly defined political identities. Individuals with lower levels of education, on the other hand, are more likely to have racist sentiments and to express hostility towards ethnic minorities.
> (Holford and Edirisingha 2000: 47)

By contrasting higher with lower educated people, their respective activities are also contrasted. This suggests not only that lower educated people are apolitical, but also that racism and hostility are apolitical. Indeed, political participation and self-government are to result in social unity, not fragmentation. Neo-republican citizenship is essentially active in the public sphere – in contrast to the passive neo-liberal notion which underlines freedom in the private sphere. This active notion stresses political rights and virtues. The active citizen is a spokesperson. Political participation is the expression of the principle of equal (uniform) citizenship *and* it is experience of or training for citizenship in which political loyalty and legitimacy are produced. People learn to take up social responsibility and to be tolerant through political participation and debate, which, in turn, establish shared goals and values. In mastering the competences and civil virtues that political participation requires, the political debate, solidarity and social integration are established.

Communitarian citizenship

Legitimising identities depend on an intermediary 'buffer' level that accepts their discourse and puts it into practice. Castells (1997) points to civil society and Barker (2001) to the leaders in civil society who are selected by legitimising identities and rewarded for their loyalty. But why, Barker asks himself, does a special and rewarding relationship with government for some not cause widespread disaffection or dissatisfaction among others? Why are exceptions for some, but not for most, accepted and is inequality largely ignored? An answer can be found in *communitarian* citizenship. Unlike the neo-liberal and neo-republican perspectives, both based on the principle of territorialism, the communitarian perspective is based on the principle of extraction: the nationality of the parents is the determining factor for membership of the community, which can be defined as an ethnic nation that precedes the nation state. It is, in other words, a pre-political perspective on a culture nation that is based in German Romanticism, stressing authenticity, uniqueness and ethnic-cultural nation. The nation is, in this sense, a projected unity of a population that is attributed the right to its own state by those who project this unity. Nationality is defined not in terms of citizenship (central to the two previous discourses), but along the lines of (assumed) descent, language, religion and shared history. The nation is therefore not a carrier of universal values (principle of territorialism), but a representative and keeper of an ethnic-

cultural nation. The active citizen actively conforms to these cultural values. The Spanish exemplify this with Manel:

> The idea I had about marriage and family was that I had to work and earn a living for all the other family members and that only the father had to work. [...] I worked hard and all the money was for my family's subsistence. [...] I have never been interested in parties or associations. [...] I just acted to accomplish the mission I had been trusted to do and that was it.
> (Gómez *et al* 2001: 189)

In creating alliances with minorities, rulers legitimate themselves and confer status to representatives, both in their relations with other representatives and with their own groups. Rulers will chose representatives who come closest to their own conception of order. In most countries, this means that rulers will chose patriarchs, who will then pass down control to their own communities in the private sphere. The status and authority of rulers and representatives remain unquestioned, because in this type of common-sense discourse, dominance is explained by referring to a higher power and to established religious and cultural traditions that precede politics, and therefore acquire an apolitical status. A combination of the communitarian perspective and politics of identity can be found in communitarian inspired pluralism. In this view, participation in civil society within the proper pillars (ideological or cultural communities and institutions) is proposed. This has been the case in the Netherlands and in Belgium (Basten and Van der Veen 2001: 116; Snick *et al* 2001: 214). Harmony among the dominant traditional groups can be perceived as an approved tool for maintaining social, political and economic power at the cost of weaker groups. Therefore, the communitarian discourse can be considered legitimising.

The right to define

Above I referred to these solutions as variations to one and the same subject. The three main conceptions of citizenship and their visions on society all have their different interpretations of citizenship (see table 1).

Legitimising discourses	The Active Citizen is …	The problem is …	The solution is …	The strategy is …
Neo-liberal	… financially self-sufficient; both producer and consumer	… that the welfare state is too costly and makes people lazy: citizens are merely calculating clients	… minimal state … maximum market … global village … everybody a paid job	… activation of citizens by revitalisation of consumer ethos
Neo-republican	… politically capable and active in the public domain, a spokesperson	… limited interest and expertise in politics, gap between citizens and politicians: citizens are clumsy … there is too much citizen participation: citizens are a hindrance	… more democracy … less democracy … to allow citizens to participate: direct democracy in pre-determined matters	… activation of citizens by revitalisation of public spirit
Communitarian	… a representative for his or her specific community	… individualisation and fragmentation of traditional frames: citizens are me-oriented hedonists	… a return to collectives … to re-establish discipline	… activation of citizens by revitalisation of civil society

Table 1: legitimising identities and their discourses

However, they also have something in common: they do not only point to incapacities of citizens, but also and foremost to the incapacity of governments. The debate about citizenship is, in fact, a reflection of political impotence, but does more than just *re*flect: it *de*flects the image in such a way that this impotence is lost out of sight. Every time the term 'citizenship' pops up in the public debate, the message is communicated that the state *can* no longer direct, but moreover, that those responsible for the functioning of the government no longer *wish* to direct: citizens must direct themselves. What at first was actually impossible, is in reformulating it into terms of citizenship even normatively

undesirable. The shifting rhetoric of a factual statement to a normative justification also leads to a very real shift in responsibilities. The responsibility for solving societal problems is, by describing them in terms of failing citizenship, put into the hands of citizens and civil society. On the surface it is a discussion about an alternative for governmental policy (governance), but at a deeper level it has an undertone that focuses on the question of how citizenship and civil society can be (re)designed in order to make the *existing*, *unchanged* governmental policy more successful (De Haan 1992). Common-sense discourse both render activities of legitimising identities out of sight, unmarked, and invisible, and prescribe the activities of other identities. However diverse the solutions might be and however sympathetic one can be of them, the message is the same: people must be active citizens, but in defining 'active' they play no significant part. They have to take over passively the goals, orientations and values prescribed in discourses of those who feel responsible for and entitled to the make meaning for everybody. In helping to establish a global network society, legitimising identities played – and still play – an active role in creating the very same chaos they now feel compelled to protect the ordinary person from, by not only defining his or her being in terms of citizenship, but also prescribing his or her actions. Or, as Castells puts it bluntly: 'The emphasis on community volunteerism and charity as substitutes for the welfare state, while stressing the importance of a concerned civil society, is essentially an ideological screen not to face the cynical abandonment of collective responsibility under the pretext of exercising individual responsibility' (1997: 294).

An influential majority has had the right to control language and to determine what language is suitable for public discourse for a long time. The dominant descriptions of these groups are now, however, challenged by non-dominant and marginalized groups, who have learned to defy description and enter the public discourse using their own voices and vocabularies. Let us take a closer look at some of these new discourses as explored in the ETGACE research.

Counter discourses

Counter discourses can be defined as discourses that respond to (counter) legitimising discourses, claiming an equal right to decision making and meaning making. They are concerned with emancipation and equality: those who were marked in public discourse by the unmarked, now claim their rights to mark themselves, thus changing the public discourse. These discourses are applied by project identities: they are future oriented and aspire to set thing right.

The universalistic notion implied in the common-sense discourses described above, has been defied by feminist (and) historical research, which has shown that 'universalistic' is a term with masculine connotations. The values 'free, equal, autonomous and judicious' are not only mostly male aspirations, but because institutions and organizations in society are impregnated with white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual male explications of these adverbs, their practical consequences also privilege the unmarked over the marked: women, coloured, homosexual and disabled people. But not everybody identifies with the atomistic universe these adverbs sketch. Some prefer to make sense of themselves or to define themselves in relational terms, connecting themselves to others: the learning of active citizenship, then,

> can be seen as the continuous process of 'confrontation' with a personal, social and societal context and relations, (re)constructing meaning and acting upon that (new) meaningful connection, taking up personal and social commitments.
> (Celis *et al* 2001: 5)

Citizenship is not the univocal, objective and stable measuring rot that it is claimed to be; but with claiming equality of citizens, the existing inequality between citizens and outcasts (quasi-citizens) has become non-negotiable (Voet, 1992). In Finland, the myth that gender equality has been achieved – supported by an emphasis on gender neutrality and extensive rhetoric of gender equality – makes it difficult for women to raise questions about gender inequalities and to challenge self-evident dichotomous assumptions about gender differences (Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2000). Women, as Lister (1997) points out, are still struggling to achieve many social rights which are necessary preconditions for equality of access to political and civil rights. Counter discourses focus on making invisible inequalities visible, on 'un-marking' and reframing legitimising discourses. Project identity is about taking the right to make meaning. It aims at the legitimising identities that promote neo-liberal, neo-republican or communitarian ideals, or a combination of those. In the three subsections below I will discuss how project identities reconstruct the common-sense discourses described above.

No to neo-liberal discourse

Neo-liberal discourses define active citizenship in terms of freedom and economy. This definition has been criticized by anti-capitalists and anti-globalists such as Klein (2002) and Rifkin (2000), who point out that participation in or engagement with the market is by far a panacea for social-economic integration, drawing attention to the huge differences in economic and living standards between the north and the south, and within both hemispheres, making clear how the invisible hand of the market puts most of the global income into the pockets of only a few. Free participation in the market does not mean self-sufficiency. Rinne (1998) found that the ongoing process of the re-division of labour is liable to generate many problems for Finnish citizens, since so many of the societal institutions and expectations have been constructed on parameters defined by the labour market. Population will become polarised between those who have stable jobs on the one hand and those drifting between temporary jobs and unemployment on the other. This trend is also described in Klein (2002). She states that large enterprises and multinationals have stopped selling products or services, and have started selling concepts, experiences and lifestyles. They have gone so far in their ambition for eternal brands and logo's, that they spend all their money on advertising. This has two consequences. First, brands and logo's are marketed more and more aggressively, taking over public spaces and human beings as carriers of their advertising images. In the end, it will be extremely difficult to develop an identity that is not already cool-hunted, commodified and sold back to the original owner. It is Nike that defines sports, not the athlete, as it is the Body Shop that defines responsibility, not the active citizen. But this is not just about consumerism. It is also about controlling consumers, censuring products and media, directing choices and opinions. It is about privatising language, cultural dialogue and public space. Second, the actual assets of the enterprise have to be reduced to a minimum in order to pay marketing. This means that the responsibility for production and personnel is outsourced. Production takes place in low-wage countries. Personnel in shops and offices have unstable jobs with low salaries and flexible working hours. As Klein concludes, marketing is paid with the costs that are saved at both sides of the production-distribution line (2002: 272-273).

Neo-liberalism only acknowledges the possibility of economic self-exclusion in a free market situation – and indeed, some identities do exclude themselves from economic participation for reasons mentioned below. However, research and practice show that the labour market is not so freely accessible as presumed by neo-liberalism. A lot of the people we interviewed are active in organisations that help the unemployed or difficult to employ. People do not always stay out of the labour market because they are passive and indolent, but because they do not measure up to the standards of full time availability as they need or provide for care. For instance, full time availability is not self-evident for people with physical, mental or psychological problems. This also has repercussions for women's participation. In the Netherlands, the issue of the regulation of women's participation in the labour market has continued to provoke extensive discussions and disagreement. In Slovenia, an androcentric culture combined with misogynist values (negative prejudices, overburdening with unpleasant and routine jobs in work and within family) results in unequal access of women to more prestigious, economic and scientific positions (Jogan, 1998). Also, in the neo-liberal concept, the context of the family is significant precisely because it is largely ignored as location of citizenship activity or as locus for citizenship rights for women: citizenship rights were developed in non domestic, public spaces, whereas the family became a space of responsibility for the man to govern. Women were traditionally encouraged into the private spaces of home duties. Where they had access to the labour market (public work spaces) it would be frequently for lower wages and limited job choices (Isin & Wood, 1999). One might say, that 'women' is a marked category in the labour market: women have to justify and explain their presence, proving that they deserve their right to participate, whereas the unmarked participation of men is self-evident.

Moreover, once people have accessed the labour market, they might find it is not so easy to stay on. People drop out of the highly competitive labour market because they cannot balance full time availability and private or family life. In a perspective that one-sidedly focuses on the relation between citizenship and market participation, and in which active citizenship is conceived as productive citizenship, a lot of people are dismissed as 'free-riders'. In Finland, for instance, relatively well-paid working families feel cheated, because they have to pay for other's welfare (Laitinen & Nurmi 2000: 65). The creation of a non-citizen (in terms of unpatriotic, financially dependent, immoral) legitimates the characterization of idle or parasitic women, ethnic groups and others whose roles do not easily fit the established model of active citizenship (Rose, 1998), such as carers and volunteers.

Others reject participation for political reasons, stating that life is more than economy and devoting their time to develop more equal models. Many claim that it is wrong to put a price on everything and that not everything should be for sale: human feelings and emotions should not be commodified, nature should be protected against capitalistic thinking that wants to calculate its costs and benefits.

The Spanish quote Antonio, who is against the market forces that emphasise people as individuals, and who claims the need of unity in order to socially control the neo-liberal market tendency:

> They keep telling you, 'you are yourself', but I'm no one at all. Whatever I know – I depend on my context. How important can I be? What matters is the context you are in! They're giving you this version once and again, because it's convenient for them, they want to individualise everything. But we all depend on each other, as it has always been. They want to sell us the opposite idea, because if they find out we have the power to do it all together, then that'd be the end of the story.
> (Gómez *et al* 2001: 206)

The promise of the global village as the reality of the post nation state vision has not been kept: the economic divide has increased, cultural diversity has decreased (Klein 2002, Rifkin 2000). Many people we interviewed would not be active citizens in a neo-liberal discourse: they disagree with its assumptions and are willing to earn less to save time for their own definition of active citizenship. They deconstruct the myth of the free market and the financially self-sufficient citizen, making visible the flaws in neo-liberal theories and stressing their interdependence with others. They question, in other words, the legitimacy of the neo-liberal discourse and look for alternatives that undermine its self-evidence.

No to neo-republican discourse

The neo-republican discourse promotes more political participation by citizens. It is assumed that more participation equals more democracy. Although this discourse has met less critique for its practical consequences – as was the case with neo-liberal discourses – it has been criticized for its unrealistic goals. The assumption that participation and democracy are self-evidently related ignores, according to one of the Dutch interviewees, political reality, with power differences and double agenda's:

> In practice, the polder model works as a way to canalise and to moderate resistance. Its result is that the decisions taken mostly are in the interest of the powerful, instead of the victims of a particular policy.
> (Basten and Van der Veen 2001: 143)

Moreover, it will result in the opposite: participation implies activity, and that is always a minority affair. Requirements for participation are impossibly high, so that politics becomes '"unrepresentative" and unequal, for while most citizens can manage an occasional foray into the polling booth, few are willing or able to more continuous engagement, and the power then slips into the hands of those who most love politics' (Phillips 1994:70). Active citizens are then the political animals, who acquire a special identity that sets them apart from others: the self-legitimation of government can only function if one sees the mass of people as subjects rather than as citizens. Legitimation of government and policy in the sight and hearing of the ordinary subjects is rather popular, as Barker remarks, pointing to the many public appearances, but the principle actors are the rulers or aspirant rulers: they are the active players (Barker 2001: 107-108). And as the Dutch report in their literature review:

> Whether the message is that citizens should be activated in order to participate, or that less active participation of citizens would be desired, the 'citizen' is treated as a somewhat 'being there' factor in the decision-making process that can be manipulated in varying degrees. In other words: the focus is that of the policy maker or policy advisor, not that of the receiver of the policy. […] The citizen as an actor is practically absent in the literature.
> (Basten and Van der Veen 2000: 92)

In self-legitimation, 'rulers both accord importance to the mass of the people, and deny it, concentrating significance on themselves alone' (Barker 2001: 109). This claiming of the major roles by rulers reverses the neo-republican goal into its opposite result: it is precisely not about citizens' political involvement, and 'the paradox of this account is that it proceeds from democratic premises to a concluding statement which is not about citizens, but about rulers, a judgement and a description not of politics, but of government' (Barker 2001: 111).

Furthermore, one might become suspicious of the motives for the neo-republican appeal for more political participation, if one takes into consideration that apparently even political leaders are not interested in their own nation state any more. For instance, as a survival strategy in overcoming their own legitimising crisis in a global network society, leaders in national governments delegate power to leaders at lower levels of local and regional government for two reasons. First, it is argued that regional and national minorities find their easiest expression in the territorial differentiation of state institutions at

local levels. Second, national governments tend to focus on managing the strategic challenges posed by the globalisation of wealth, communication, and power, hence letting lower levels of governance take responsibility for linking up with society by managing everyday life's issues, so to rebuild legitimacy trough decentralization (Castells 1997: 272-275).

Moreover, as Castells (1997) and Barker (2001) point out, politics is not neutral, but highly incorporated into the logic of the media. Image, as the Slovenes note, as well as connections, is everything:

> Olga and Ana, both members of the Parliament, perceive the public, and especially the media, to be extremely sexist to women in the public life. […] Miha's experience serves as an example: "…this is, I'd say, for me, one of the most demanding, and also most repulsive matters in politics that it really doesn't count, that the actions do not count, correctness of handling does not count, what counts is interpretation, and this is the basis they judge your work on, this is the basis which does, or doesn't bring you the votes in elections…".
> (Podmenik *et al* 2001: 165 – italics theirs)

Many people we interviewed were dissatisfied with party politics and formal democratic routes in trade unions. They chose other means to fill in their active citizenship, and precisely this made them, in a neo-republican discourse, not active citizens. Those who were not dissatisfied enough to leave, are still critical about the limits of politics.

This discourse has also been criticized indirectly for its implicit link between political literacy and participation on the one hand, and rational thinking and reflexivity on the other hand. This link suggests that the neo-republican perspective is a rather elitist perspective. It applies mostly to the higher educated and ignores efforts from the less educated. The indirect criticism is that our interviewees often chose for less academic and formally accredited education, pointing to the significance of informal study circles in which they engage. These study circles might not be formally recognized as education, and they might not be focused on rational political activity, but they can be very effective means to create awareness and to get organised. As the Finnish quote Anja:

> We then, I and my friends, when this kind of circle of friends was born in this activity, we established Alkuvoima (Primal force) activity group. It started because we young (farmers) never succeeded to achieve positions of thrust […]. Our way to act was too visible, critical and radical. So, they hadn't instantly courage to trust us. For this reason, we decided, that is all right, we can act by ourselves too. That time Finland was going to join European Union - a very pointed antagonism between countryside and city. There were young women in the same situation. They had also experienced the loneliness of mother of young children, and they had also experienced the lack of sole mates in the neighbourhood. Then men started to join our group too. We created it as an informal, and it became very quickly as a kind of study circle, we supported each other, and it became also as a demonstration group capable to react very fast.
> (Laitinen and Nurmi 2001: 75)

The Slovenes report the experience of Pavla, who leads the local society of country women and organises literary evenings, exhibitions, fairy tale hours for children. Pavla says that 'all this lecturing, with one talking and other listening, they are a little old fashioned and people also don't like them. But let's say some workshops, circles, learning in small groups, much more let's say in informal ways […] I think is much better, it attracts people more than let's say other things […]' (Podmenik *et al* 2001: 166). Another example, provided by the Spanish, are dialogic literary circles in which literary classics are read and commented on by people of all types of background (age, gender, race, ethnicity, education). Teresa explains how participants agree on a book of a proposed list selected by the group, and how they meet every Monday to read, comment, and discuss it. Regardless of their background or education, everyone has to justify and convince others of their arguments, and 'it doesn't matter whether that person has a university degree, or a certificate in basic education or whether he or she takes literacy classes. We all learn from each other, because we all have our own experiences to bring to the discussion' (Gómez *et al* 2001: 196). Finally, a lot of learning is done in the private domain. In the example of Daniel, a gypsy, the line between public and private is blurred, as he tries to be a role model,

> an example for his children by teaching them and their mother to learn to write and read. Considering the high percentage of illiterate people among Gypsies, sharing one's home as a space of learning with one's family is being key in changing Gypsy children's points

> of reference. In our current informational society education plays a central role in social inclusion.
> Daniel: 'I want my children to study higher education, I do not want them to depend on anyone. At home I help my children, if they see their parents are making efforts they will hopefully do the same. (About his wife who is learning to read and write) my children encourage her, "mom you should not read like that; you have to read in this way" they help her'.
> (Gómez *et al* 2001: 201-202)

These examples show that it would be wrong to stigmatise the lower educated as 'more likely to have racist sentiments and to express hostility towards ethnic minorities'. It is more likely that the lower educated express reluctance to the academic nature of the neo-republican discourse. In this neo-republican discourse, it would be difficult to recognize the informal study circles and the sharing of one's home as a space of learning as active citizenship, both because of the blurring of public and private, and the defiance of academic rationality. In the project discourses, however, these activities are recognized as new voices in public discourse.

No to communitarian discourse

A return to morals, then? After all, one might say that a focus on culture and value is not a focus on politics, and that communitarians thus have no political interests. In a very narrow (neo-republican) definition, this might be true. However, if one sees politics as more than just public debate and democratic decision making, a one-sided focus on culture and values is political indeed, precisely because it masks politics in a broad sense by denying politics in the narrow sense. For instance, the Netherlands nowadays witness a de-pillarisation process. However, the traditional Dutch pillarisation reflex (the institutionally putting apart of 'strangers' in a pillar to serve the emancipation of new groups) has risen its head again in the discussion on emancipation of 'new comers' in politics (women and immigrants). Critics claim that this does not function very well in practice, because these groups often lack the power traditional groups had. They risk being put aside and made objects for welfare projects: equal representation of different interest groups – as was the case in the old system – is no longer a valid assumption. New interest groups are under-represented in the new system: women and ethnic or other minority groups might be allowed, and sometimes even encouraged, to develop their own organisations and 'group identities', but they are largely excluded from top level positions in decision-making channels and public institutions (Bussemaker & Voet, 1998). The dark side of the habit of seeking harmony is the exclusion of non-traditional pillar groups from the negotiations, thus reproducing uneven situations. This is not to say that everything is political. It means that in delegating their interests to representing political parties and other power holders, people tight socio-cultural interests with political power, while political representatives make it look like they represent a cultural identity. This way, the political dimension in every day life is covered up, as shows the story of Marlene, who grew up

> thinking that everything that everybody else said, was true. Consequently, I did not have a lot of ideas myself. I thought everybody else knew better than me, from the postman to the bank manager to the doctor, to everybody else. [At school, the priest said that] becoming a mother is the most important thing for a woman.
> (Edirisingha *et al* 2001: 24)

Socio-cultural attributions – in this case gender related – have political repercussions for they define who is marked and who is unmarked, and therefore identify who has a right of say and who does not, or, as Teresa's case shows, who is worth more:

> I have worked for a long time and then I started to receive a subsidy for a long-term illness that I have been suffering for many years now. When my husband died, though, they stopped paying me that subsidy because you cannot receive two subsidies at the same time (one as a widower and another one as a long-term sick person). But they give you 45 per cent less than the pay your husband was receiving before he died. And household expenses are the same as if I was the one to die and he was to continue to receive his old pay. If the wife dies, her husband continues to receive the same integral pay, but if the husband dies, she stops receiving any other pay and gets 45 per cent less than her husband... This law has been in force since the 1930s and they have done nothing about it. It's not fair!
> (Gómez *et al* 2001: 206)

In a communitarian view, these repercussions are made invisible: 'by assuming an apolitical status, the exnominated (majority) group achieves its political ends without needing to justify itself, or them. Similarly, the assumption that the status quo is neutral is an exnomination made possible by our cultural frames' (Lakoff 2001: 54). Today, as communitarians try to recover their losses, they still refer to the family as the cornerstone of a responsible society. However, as Castells points out, this family is not in majority any more (1997). The ere of unmarked powers is reaching its end as marked identities resist being marginalized.

Not only are women constructing their own identities, but the norm of heterosexuality itself is being called into question. For instance, Mieke, a Belgium interviewee, could not find a role model for herself (being a lesbian) and decided to be one for others. Nigel, an interviewee from the UK, was driven by his sexuality and strong commitment to address gender issues. His awareness of issues facing gay community began in the private domain when he began to realise his sexuality. He revealed his feelings to his parents when he was 21 and they were very supportive. The main challenge to his feelings was during the 1980s when several of his friends died in the AIDS outbreak. This has made his activities more political and public:

> during the 80's I lost quite a few of my friends through AIDS which even upsets me now […], you didn't know if they were sick or not. It just happened over night, just an awful thing […], I suppose to a certain extent that spurred me on to sort of strive to achieve something for different reasons, for personnel reasons, maybe for reasons to say come on I have actually done something that is actually helping people […].
> (Edirisingha *et al* 2001: 30)

It is obvious, that both gender and sexuality can no longer be defined within a communitarian discourse. People resist description. Feminist activism has diminished gender related injustice, but there is still a long way to go. In the case of AIDS, it is a matter of life and death. In a cultural battle, the gay movement has participated tremendously in demystifying the disease (Castells 1997: 218). From a communitarian point of view, that stresses active conformity to gender and sexual roles, these efforts not considered acts of active citizenship.

The alternatives offered

In trying to 'set things right' and access power, people might incorporate a project identity, in which they integrate their specific identity with the well-being of society and humanity at large (Castells 1997: 106). Citizens, like rulers and elites, are engaged in a process of self-legitimation:

> The way in which the people legitimate their political identities will often be the deliberate reversal of the legitimation of rulers, using, and inverting, the symbols and claims of those they oppose in order to express their own identity, grievances, or claims. […] When citizens legitimate themselves, they strengthen themselves. They cultivate, sustain, and develop both their role as powerful foundation members of the polity, and their claim that their views both formally expressed in the ballot and informally expressed in demonstrations, meetings, agitations, and protests should as a matter of courses be heeded by their rulers.
> (Barker 2001: 115-116)

Strong citizen identification can be ground for affinity with government (participatory aspect in legitimising or common-sense discourses), but the more citizen identity is cultivated, thus gaining significance, the more there is the possibility of dissonance between rulers and citizens (revolutionary aspect in counter discourses). A project identity can be established 'when social actors, on the basis of whichever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure' (Castells 1997: 8). Citizens then engage in the project of a different life. As Kirsi, one of the Finnish interviewees says: 'I am just experiencing that I am fighting for my own world view. Or not even world view but the world where I would like to live' (Laitinen and Nurmi 2001: 77). Their appeal to authenticity in their identity principles manifests itself depending on history, locality and spirituality. As it is opposed to the clearly defined adversary of globalisation, this identity is reactive-defensive (Castells 1997: 106). Many of our interviewees mention authenticity and integrity as their basic values. Olga, a Dutch interviewee who runs in business in bio-dynamically produced health drinks, says:

> For me it's all about authenticity, and not about all that bullshit about being powerful. I always want to grow, develop myself. If you ask me why I am alive, I'll say 'you live to enlarge your consciousness'. I really like doing that. […] I don't think my enterprise […]

> has to grow. So I think quantity has to be in balance with quality. If you lose the overview, you'll just have to pause for a moment. Just growth isn't important. […] My ambition is balance.
> (Basten and Van der Veen 2001: 121)

As the Spanish report: 'Interviewees remark the importance of the connection and the *coherence between the discourse one defends and the direction of one's actions.* To be an active citizen is not only a matter of having social beliefs but of acting consequently as well' (Gómez *et al* 2001: 203 – italics theirs). More indications of this holistic view can be found in the reports of the other teams, referring to active citizenship as a personal lifestyle, solving the divide between public and private. Castells calls this the ecological approach to life, in which environmental justice is an all-encompassing notion. This approach is a diversified movement fighting not only for the well-being of nature, but also for the well-being of workers, ethnic minorities, women and the poor (1997: 132-133). What matters are not abstract notions of technical and economic interests, but direct encounters with injustice, pragmatic and issue-oriented approach. The Finnish, for example, write:

> In Finland, the animal activists' strikes against fur farms since 1995 have raised a lot of debate. In public discourse the activists have been seen in many ways. For some, they seem to be terrorists who destroy others' legal property, and for some, they are some kind of heroes defending animal rights against the system. […] the activists seemed to have abandoned parliamentary politics. Instead of representation, the activists stressed direct participation and activity. In addition to environmental issues, the activists showed particular interest in human rights, peace, and anarchist activities.
> (Laitinen and Nurmi 2000: 71)

As discussed above, the self-legitimising discourse of the haves is focusing more and more on the global level. The withdrawal of the national leaders from their down-to-earth nation-states is reaching ethereal heights. Furthermore, as a survival strategy, leaders of multinationals leave there earthly possessions behind to invest in image and air. And finally, leaders of spiritual communities have never felt much responsibilities for earthly worries anyway, since they are focused mainly on the hereafter. In short, the haves are metaphorically leaving the planet. As a result, Castells succinctly puts that 'reflexive life-planning becomes impossible, except for the elite inhabiting the timeless space of flows of global networks and their ancillary locales' (1997: 11). He says that unilaterally cancelling the contract between citizen, capital, labour and state 'sends everybody home to fight for their individual interests, counting exclusively on their own forces' (1997: 310).

No to everything but discourse

The concerns of counter discourses involved in picking up the human and environmental pieces left behind by the haves, make clear that solutions are sought by others than the causers of problems. The unmarked discourse of the haves is so powerful in its common-sense reference, that the marked discourse of the have--nots is constantly forced to make problems visible – problems that in an unmarked discourse just do not exist:

> Tacitly, the exnominated group assumes a set of shared interests that are reflected in discussions about what kinds of discourse will be taken seriously. And because those taken seriously embody the "neutral" status quo, automatically the conservative side has an edge in any argument: they don't have to make the case that their side is reasonable, or socially responsible, or normal: that's just a given. But the other side has to argue that change – the move away from the familiar and the comfortable, out of frame and toward the marked, is worth the cognitive and social fragmentation that it necessarily entails, a much more difficult argument to make because it forces participants to venture onto unfamiliar and shifting ground.
> (Lakoff 2001: 57-58)

Counter identities are forced to find the solutions for the problems they identify, since legitimising identities do not acknowledge these problems and thus see no need for change or improvement. 'If you don't take the opportunities that the market, politics or God gives you, then that's your own fault' seems to be the message from identities that legitimise their truth by referring to their own commonsensical truth. This way, counter discourses do not only fight globalisation and its representatives, but common sense as well. However,

> The grand exclusionary scheme (explicit or implicit) of concentrating information, production, and markets in a valuable segment of population, disposing of the rest in

> different forms, more or less humane depending according to each society's temper, is triggering, in Touraine's expression, a '*grand refus*'.
> (Castells 1997: 109)

The leaders of counter movements can be considered rebels or vigilantes. They create and cultivate their own distinctive identity in a process of self-legitimation as political activity, with claims drawn from or attuned to the values of their own supporters. They reject and dismiss the legitimating claims of existing rulers, but they do not oppose to government as such: 'Rebellion is a rejection not of government, but of a government. It does not reject or resist the power of the state, but seeks to appropriate it. And it identifies a select group, marked off by piety, or courage, or insight, or dedication, who are uniquely qualified to undertake the appropriation. The chosen remnant can be characterized by their religion, or their race, or their class, or their culture, or their political insight in a way which both stresses their exceptional nature, and demonises those against whom, and against whose values, they are opposed' (Barker 2001: 93-94). Castells forecasts that people operating from a project perspective will play the key role in constructing a new civil society and a new state (1997: 356). Indeed, that rebels do not necessarily seek to destroy government is clear in that they seek to usurp only some government functions. Ordinary citizens do not have to legitimise themselves as someone with governing authority for engaging in politics. Aspiring to government, however, involves legitimation of oneself as a governor: 'To call yourself a messenger of God, or the father of the nation, or the defender of the weak, is in each case to set yourself apart from ordinary people, whether subjects or citizens' (Barker 2001: 104), or in other words: activists set themselves apart from the bulk of humankind. Their leaders may call for fighting the battles in courts or for civil disobedience – a political and potentially democratic route – or command dissent coercion – a violent and militant route advocating murder, arson and sabotage in the name of higher laws. So far I discussed activists who operate from a project perspective. In the next section, I will elaborate on activists who operate from a resistance perspective.

Refuge discourses

This type of discourse is based on the themes of reservation and self-control: those who are excluded now celebrate their exclusiveness in turning their backs on the excluders. One might say that people operating from a resistance identity also engage in self-legitimation, setting themselves apart from other people:

> Taking action against hierarchical structures is quite difficult, because they are everywhere. But what I do undertake is to provoke discussions. A lot of people think that they cannot live without someone else telling them what to do. Because otherwise it will be a chaos and then it will become a mess. While people also have their own responsibility and they do can think for themselves. Maybe that is something they might have to learn. Because now people are raised not to think for themselves and to just obey to what someone says.
> (Interview with Rita, the Netherlands – translation and paraphrasing mine)

However, dismissing ordinary people is not a necessary aspect of elevating one's own self-image, 'but it can be a powerful obverse. The less ordinary people are assessed, the more remarkable, if only by default, is the actual or potential leadership' (Barker 2001: 102). The resistance identity, however, seems to be far more characterized by deliberate absence of leaders. Castells calls them the prophets, the 'symbolic personalities, whose role is not that of charismatic leaders, or of shrewd strategists, but to give a face (or a mask) to a symbolic insurgency, so that they speak on behalf of the insurgents. Thus, voiceless insurgents have a voice, and their identity may enter the realm of symbolic struggles, and stand a chance of seizing power – in people's minds' (1997: 362).

Castells distinguishes a space of flows, that organises distanced social practices simultaneously, and a space of places, where social interaction and institutional organisation are physically organised. Theses spaces are drifting apart, and the 'disjunction between the two spatial logics is a fundamental mechanism of domination in our societies, because it shifts the core economic, symbolic, and political processes away from *the realm where social meaning can be constructed and political control can be exercised*' (1997: 124 – italics mine). However, it is precisely in the space of places that resistance identities seek refuge and regain control, where they create their own realm of social meaning and political control. It is the rewriting of neo-liberal, neo-republican, and communitarian discourses with use of strategies that literally defy common sense, showing alternative ways of life and living together. This is illustrated by Donald, one of the Dutch interviewees:

> We try to demonstrate that the economy can be organised also in a different way. For instance by running a small non-profit shop for periodicals and a give-away shop, to

> demonstrate that trade not necessarily has to do with earning money. We also have a biological restaurant […]. Some of these initiatives are really successful, for instance the give-away shop […] this shop is visited each week by hundreds of people. People who do not come from the leftist scene or activists scene also visit it. A lot of the visitors are migrants, just many common people, who have been appealed very much to the idea of not throwing away things but to use them again.
> (Basten and Van der Veen 2001: 124)

This type of counter discourse can be summarised in the metaphor of the street as the locus for people's control over their living spaces. In the physical dimension of 'street', the street is the traditional public meeting point and the place to express opinions, be it in a small circle or large demonstrations: space of places. There is also a symbolic dimension that resonates with Castells' 'realm where social meaning can be constructed and political control can be exercised', and in which the space of places is deliberately used to counteract the space of flows. Strategies to regain power in social meaning making and political control are related to defending the street from the discourse of the space of flows. It is the celebration of the space of places. For instance, the physical street has become invaded with discourses of space of flows rapped in advertising messages. Klein names 'culture jamming' or 'adbusting' as one of the possibilities to talk back to advertising (2002: 318). Another is the so-called Reclaim The Streets strategy, a strategy that brings together alternative music scenes, activists against multinationals, political artists and radical environmentalists. Its demands are non-commercialised spaces in cities and natural development on the country sides and in the seas. RTC is the manifestation of an alternative vision of what society would look like if it were not dominated by commerce (2002: 353). Reclaiming public space is the conflation of art and revolution. This tradition has its roots in the 60s, when The Digger Papers wrote: 'Street events are rituals of release. Re-claiming of territory (sundown, traffic, public joy) through spirit. Public NewSense' (in Stephens 1998: 43), and when

> the streets were not simply defined as a democratic public space but rather as a canvas, a backdrop full of engrossing and useful props and actors. The street as a stage was therefore the most appropriate site for a political satire which drew simultaneously from fantasy and burlesque as well as from the melodrama of a violent clash with the police.
> (Stephens 1998: 97)

RTS is one of the contemporary examples. It resists labelling, because it has no identifiable leaders and no centre. It mixes different protests into a do-it-yourself attitude: the having fun without needing permission from the government nor the benevolence of business (Klein 2002: 357). The street as a symbol of defiance, of resisting common-sense discourses, is a strong symbol, precisely because the 'street' has two meanings. It is the withdrawal from legitimising identities, and it is the withdrawal from the traditional discourse strategies. It counters both common-sense discourse and identity by wrapping its distorting message in distorted language. It is the deliberate mixing of genres and styles, the deliberate ambiguity and play. Anti-disciplinary politics of the 60s is

> a language of protest which rejected hierarchy and leadership, strategy and planning, bureaucratic organisation and political parties and was distinguished from the New Left by its ridiculing of political commitment, sacrifice, seriousness and coherence.
> (Stephens 1998: 4)

The protest went outside the traditional political domain in an attempt to radicalise the very meaning and character of 'politics'. In its language it revealed no aims, no ideology, no party, and no list of demands: this new politics was a parody drawing on popular culture. The aim for incomprehensibility and the refusal to be subjected to a singular reading are key strategies in resisting cooptation. There were no leaders, no strategies, no mobilizing messages. It was the rejection of discipline, sacrifice, order and restrain. 'Street' was a space 'outside' and separate from the dominant institutions of mainstream culture. It had a metaphoric significance of autonomous cultural sphere, unclouded by delusions of mass culture (Stephens 1998: 106). Contemporary actions are focused on re-establishing that 'street'. This kind of thinking can still be found today, for instance in the case of Dorien, a Belgium interviewee. Dorien has multiple sclerosis and is homebound:

> She calls herself a room scientist in winter and a street philosopher in summer. She reads and studies all the time and this is her way of being an active citizen, when she is communicating about politics, social issues, the environment towards friends and family,

> when she writes ‘open letters’ (letters to newspapers to pronounce her opinion) towards politicians, etc.
> (Snick *et al* 2001: 244)

As for Dutch interviewee Rita, personal and politics are difficult to divide, since ‘politics is about how your live and the choices you make’ (Interview Rita – translation mine). All this indicates that ‘street activism’ is still very much alive today.

Rejecting discipline by playing with language and distorting public discourse is not the only strategy. Some activists are not afraid to cross the line between legal and illegal. As the Spanish report, many Spaniards joined illegal organisations to fight against political and social oppression in the 36 years of dictatorship and harsh repression (Gómez *et al* 2001: 190). The Dutch also report illegal activities, as do the Finnish:

> In Northern-Finland she also familiarised herself with Metsä-ryhmä of Luonto-Liitto (the Forest group of the Finnish Nature League). There she learned by doing how to influence in practice: she participated in many kinds of activities from obstructing loggings to organising forest conservation congress. Thus, many efforts of Metsä-ryhmä included more or less illegal activities. Kirsi has been imposed a fine on civil disobedience.
> (Laitinen and Nurmi 2001: 90)

In crossing the line, activists are really saying that ‘we’ are not part of ‘your’ society, ‘your’ legal system does not apply to ‘us’ and ‘your’ science is meaningless, useless, and untrustworthy to ‘us’. This means that law and science, the social and cognitive unifiers, both come into question (Lakoff 2001: 213).

Another withdrawal can be discerned, this time not from traditional public discourse or law, but from public life all together. Bill, on of the UK interviewees, remembers that in the 1950s,

> gay people and the gay community generally were quite persecuted and I think that is not an understatement, there are some fairly harrowing stories going around [… T]his sort of thing arises in an early teenager, in the late 40s early 50s in my case. [… I]n the 1950s […] to be a gay man was not a good thing at all and OK consensual relationships between full adult men were totally illegal and were pursued and prosecuted so I think that left quite a bad taste.
> (Edirisingha *et al* 2001: 30)

Pigga, on of the Finnish interviewees, explains how she developed her sense for self-definition in retreating from a ‘uncaring system’:

> Using their native Same language was prohibited and if the pupils were found in this forbidden activity, they were severely punished.
> Pigga: We were forbidden to use our own language at the time we lived in the Sodankylä boarding school.
> Interviewer: Is that true? Was there some guarding for this?
> Pigga: Well, yes. And if we were caught we were reprimanded or sometimes punished for it. (Pigga’s first interview)
> The experience has clearly been intensive. Still it seems that Pigga does not want to give it undue emphasis. At least she is not blaming the teachers individually, but rather the uncaring system of the times. The contrast to former life in home among own culture is in any case large and obviously the learning is largely negative. It is important to learn, not to get integrated into the Finnish culture but to be able to resist it in subtle ways.
> (Laitinen and Nurmi 2001: 84)

In Belgium, one of the interviewees has talked about his farm, where he has hired mentally handicapped personnel. He had been working with troubled youth, but

> grew tired of his job because of the rigidity of its structures and the slowness of decision-making. So he ended up taking over his father’s farm, partly because he couldn’t stand to see the farm going down hill (his father wasn’t very innovative). He installed some tourist facilities in a barn, because at a period when scandals in the agricultural sector (hormones, dioxide) were given a lot of attention in the media, he wanted to let people get a better view of farming again.
> (Snick *et al* 2001: 250)

These last three examples of resistance identity can be seen as the country side version of the street metaphor and can therefore be rephrased in the answer of Candide to Pangloss:

> et Pangloss disait quelquefois à Candide: 'Tous les événements sont enchaînés dans le meilleur des mondes possibles: car enfin si vous n'aviez pas été chassé d'un beau château à grands coups de pieds dans le derrière pour l'amour de mademoiselle Cunégonde, si vous n'aviez pas été mis à l'Inquisition, si vous n'aviez pas couru l'Amérique à pied, si vous n'aviez pas donné un beau coup d'épée au baron, si vous n'aviez pas perdu tous vos moutons du bon pays d'Eldorado, vous ne mangeriez pas ici des cédrats confits et des pistaches'. – Cela est bien dit, répondit Candide, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.
> (Voltaire 1984: 184)

Implications for education and learning active citizenship

It is very difficult to distract policy implications from the above, because it is unclear whose 'active citizenship' needs policy. Most active citizens are not recognized as such by legitimising identities; therefore, they resist policy, because they operate from another identity basis and resist the policy makers and their legitimising discourses. However, from a linguistic point of view, a few things can be said here. First, as Castells points out, '*The new power lies in the codes of information and in the images of representation around which societies organize their institutions, and people build their lives, and decide their behaviour. The sites of this power are people's minds*' (Castells 1997: 359 – italics his). Education and learning for active citizenship within project and resistance identities can be improved by attention for better understanding information and images of representation. From a linguistic point of view, it seems important to be able to make visible the unmarked invisible and to be able to analyse discourses for what they are worth: legitimising, project, or resistance.

Concluding remarks

A legitimising identity is served by keeping the existing discourses going. As long as unmarked categories remain invisible, the common-sense discourse makes easy claims: this is how it has always been. In this discourse, active citizenship is related to the market, to politics and to the cultural community. The legitimising identity uses all three discourses to rationalise its dominance in defining what citizenship as a desirable activity is, and to self-legitimate its special status.

A project identity is based on changing the discourse by adding own definitions. Newcomers to the public discourse resist being defined by legitimising identities and take their right to define themselves. They change the content of discourses. Their active citizenship is based on emancipation and care for humankind and environment. One might say that they clean up after the legitimising identity.

A resistance identity changes the structure of discourse in an attempt to distort not only the discourse, but also the legitimising identity that uses it. It is characterised by refuge or withdrawal from the legitimising identities and a counter strike by reclaiming their right not only to define themselves, but to redefine discourse's structure.

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