



An Organisation for Promoting
Understanding of Society

LISTENING POST

Denmark at the Dawn of 2019

PART 1: THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

In this part, the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experiences in their various social roles, be they: in work, unemployed or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood, voluntary or leisure organisations; or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives': the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

PART 2: IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In Part 2, the aim collectively was to identify the major themes emerging from Part 1.

Theme 1: People versus System

There seems to be widespread belief of polarisation between humans and system. Dysfunctional bureaucracy, endless evaluations with no contact or meaning, expensive IT-systems that turn out not to work as intended – it is easy to understand why the Danish Social Democrats put forward the human alternative: "People before systems". At the same time, trust is being eroded - trust in the state of law and in international agreements entered into as a result of the atrocities of WWII, trust in Human Rights and in civil servants who – by means of their "torches of darkness" throw bright lights upon unimportant issues, thereby leaving the real problems in utter darkness – become servants of government rather than agents of truth and law observance.

Theme 2: IT ambivalences

The Internet and Social Media have lost their virginity. One considers leaving FaceBook and thus becoming more open to contacts with children, family and friends but is also intrigued and not wanting to miss out on all the exciting stuff going on. Proof of fake news, fake science etc. lead to general uncertainties regarding knowledge and authorities. Criteria for what to trust and what not to trust seem to become blurred. Facts erode and end up simply as opinions.

Religion, science and occultism converge. Technology develops rapidly paradoxically resulting in everyone being very busy and fearing to be made redundant. In the bigger picture, it turns out that in contrary to the original, democratic intention tech giants have developed into a surveillance society that STASI couldn't have wished for even in their wildest dreams. The personally designed adds and information business on Social Media encloses citizens in echo chambers providing no insight and information on the discussions in other groupings.

Theme 3: Rising climate awareness and youth in action

The long and hot summer has enhanced climate awareness and climate is taking up more space in media and conversations. It seems as if the summer of 2019 became the sensuous proof that warnings and admonitions of climate pioneers are not just fantasies and conspiracies. Youths seem to have become mobilised and, in addition, seem to be able to take initiatives of their own. In USA, young people have had enough of school shootings and have organised themselves against the gun lobby. Whereas PC groupings demonstrate authoritarian tendencies, right wing populists monopolise anti-authoritarianism. Fear of strangers has furthered isolationistic tendencies, but now the climate crisis points unequivocally at international cooperation and at a joint consciousness that the Earth belongs to all of us.

PART 3: ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION

In Part 3, the participants were working with the information resulting from Parts 1 & 2, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here, participants were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world: their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.

Hypothesis 1:

The contrast between human and system leads to regressive societal development where citizens renounce or are dumped of insight and responsibility in relation to the organisation of whole, direction and leadership and become defiant and impotent.

Hypothesis 2:

Public opinion is in crisis – discussion and critique is being privatised.

Hypothesis 3:

Climate crisis advances international cooperation after the refugee crisis.

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