

**Gender and Nationalism in Finland:
The Domestication of the National Narrative**

Ellen Louise Marakowitz

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores how different constructs of female are embedded in Finland's national narrative. Images and notions of female were important elements in the development of Finland's national storyline. This work examines how during the formation period of Finnish nationalism a particular female gender construct, that of caretaker, became the dominant cultural understanding of female within the national narrative. This concept of female afforded women a fair degree of power within the context of national identity and state development. Along with this power, though, came a particular understanding of appropriate citizenry for females. An ethnographic analysis of three Finnish women's associations illustrates the symbolic and practical dimensions of gender and nationalism for women in Finland, including the unique position of feminists operating within the framework of a Finnish understanding of the nation and the structure of the state.

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For my mother and in memory of my father

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This work examines the cultural construction of gender as it interacts with the cultural construct of the Finnish national narrative. Gender symbolism and the national narrative unite in a dynamic and distinctive interplay in the Finnish case. The inventive process of creating the Finnish nation was bound up quite dramatically with particular female images in Finland. In tracing the historical development of gender and the national narrative in Finland, the links between the national narrative, welfare state ideology, and female imaging reveal themselves as unique in their female-oriented focus. A new case in the area of gender and nationalism, Finland represents an example of a national narrative that is gender inclusive in its imagery. This imagery of female is encoded into the national construction, and provides a key building block of the welfare state foundation of the Finnish nation-state. The shape of Finland's 'imagined nation' challenges traditional notions of nationalism centered on male images and bonds. In understanding this process, it is necessary to distinguish the concept of nation from the concept of state. A nation is based in a set of ideals, ideologies, myths and historical images. A state is based in a set of concrete structures and policies -- in effect an implementation of nationhood.

In Finland, female-female bonds, female icons, and female only organizations have played central roles in the invention and reproduction of the Finnish nation. The woman as caretaker/nurturer, organizing on behalf of the whole, holds great importance in terms of national symbol and practice within the imagination of the welfare state. The nation both anchors itself in this symbol as well as models itself -- in its practices -- upon this imagery.

In the 'dream' of the Finnish nation, women only organizations represent an important organizational center as they embody images and notions of female which both create and support national narrative images. These organizations, and the gender symbolism found within them, have been critical in shaping Finnish national self-understanding.

Because the female was such an important image in the development of the welfare state portrait, it afforded women a certain elevated status within the national imagination, as well as in reality. At the same time, however, it imposed some clear-cut boundaries on what the culturally adored woman could be -- i.e., woman as caretaker/nurturers working on behalf of males as well as females in the context of multiple generations. Women whose understanding of gender coincided with this notion of femaleness were afforded great respect, and to a certain degree, power, within the structures of the

Finnish welfare state. Women whose understanding of female differed from this view found themselves limited by the powerful, but narrow definition of female represented in the national narrative.

This imagery of female as caretaker/nurturer resonates in Finnish welfare state ideology.¹ Extensive social support for its citizenry², which includes both women and men, is a key element of the ideology. In Finland, this imagery is united with a strong emphasis on state-sanctioned equality policies. These policies rest on the idea of an egalitarian social-democratic welfare state structure. Finnish national identity is rooted in a belief in equality and the absence of difference of worth (value), either gender or class based.³ Distinctions between female and male imagery and behavior clearly exist

¹ There is an extensive literature on women and caring. For a general overview of the topic, see Ungerson (1990) Gender and Caring. Waerners (1984) provides a perspective on how community care has been founded on women's unpaid labor. For an interesting analysis of caring work in Finland, see Simonen (1991). In analyzing caring work from a feminist perspective, she introduces the concept of 'social mothering', which is caring work done in a wage context as an extension of the women's sphere.

² See Saarinen (1987) for a discussion of women's groups as active agents in welfare state development and policy directions.

³ Of course, there is ample evidence that Finland's social structure is class-based in reality. See, e.g. Allardt (1964) and Roos (1985). For an examination of class conflict in Finland's civil war, see Alapuro (1988). For an ethnographic portrait of class in a small industrial town, see Lander (1978).

as defining characteristics, but they are perceived to be differences which exist as part of an interdependent relationship between male and female. Both men and women are mutually dependent on each other. This is in sharp contrast to other national narratives, where the dependency relationship is one-sided, typically with women dependent on men.

The social democratic welfare state model in Finland is built on a gender-inclusive national ideology embedded within an egalitarian frame. These two elements combine to create a climate which reflects the belief that issues are best framed in terms not surrounded and bounded by gender descriptions, but rather in categories of social welfare, social being an inclusive term referring to all citizens, which in the Finnish case actually means all citizens, not just men. When political and social issues and questions are framed in gender exclusive terms, e.g. women's equality, rather than egalitarian 'equality' terms, a tension arises. This tension creates a fissure in the Finnish national narrative, as the value system of the narrative is so firmly rooted in the supposed or at least sought after absence of difference in any form.

I trace how the notions of female and nation developed in Finland over time, and then examine the consequences of that development for contemporary women in Finland as they try to define, redefine, and organize

themselves. My research in Finland examines three female-focussed organizations. These groups illustrate the range of notions of female in the historical past as well as offer a glimpse of contemporary articulations of female in both image and practice. The organizations clearly illustrate the tension between the powerful role accorded the female in the national narrative, as well as the confining limits of that role. This tension is evident in the contested terrain of female gender in Finland. This contested terrain contains clues as to how different constructs of female provide particular maps for the relationship between gender and national identity.

The gender system functions within the context of a set of practical and symbolic constructions which provide information as to what it means to be female or male -- a gendered citizen -- in a given society.⁴ As such, it provides symbols and practical guidelines through which women interpret their existence, create their identity, and accordingly lead their lives. Women are active agents in this process of gender construction, and within the process operate within a given set of gender symbols as

⁴ Gender is a social construction; in effect, socially created expectations for feminine and masculine behavior. Gender encompasses all the cultural expectations associated with masculine or feminine that go beyond biological differences. For overview of gender, see Rosaldo (1981), Connell (1987).

well as interpret and shape the symbols of the gender system.

This work examines the ways in which Finnish women must negotiate the lines between their gendered selves and their 'citizenized' selves, as cultural ideas and practice about gender and female imagery are intertwined with Finnish concepts of nationality. In Finland, female gender constructs have been encoded within the national narrative in such an integral way that the notion of female in Finland exists to some extent as a politically charged concept. As a result, there exists a very well-defined interplay between gender and nationalism in Finland.

Ideas central to nationalism and national forms exist as part of a complex system of state production, reproduction, and ideology. The issue of nationalism has been investigated from several perspectives. Of greatest interest for this work are those theories of nationalism which understand it to be an invention based on different sources. In Nations and Nationalisms, Gellner (1992) explores nationalism within the framework of political legitimacy. He argues that a 'shared' reality creates the invention of nations than had not previously existed (Gellner:1983:48). He adds that nationalism is the imposition of high culture onto the folk culture by a glorification of folk cultural ways and styles. Other

scholars (Fox 1991 et al.) have shifted their gaze toward the role national ideologies play in the production of national cultures. Freidrich (1990) has extended the search for cultural links to nationalism by examining how language intersects with ideology. These above studies, however, are somewhat limited by their lack of attention to connections between gender and nationalism.

Recently, however, an increasing number of scholars are exploring the interplay between inventions of gender and inventions of the nation. As Combs-Schilling (1990, 1991) and others (Parker, 1990) have demonstrated, inventions of nation and inventions of gender can be mutually constitutive, so that the erotic can be used to "encode the political" (Combs-Schilling, 1989) and public projects can be conflated with private desires (Sommer, 1991). Koester (1991) shows that a national identity may be quite connected to and rooted in a particular set of gender values. Mosse (1985) explores the relationship between notions of respectability as they relate to sexuality and nationalism.

Anderson's (1989) formulation of nationalism, as a constructed image, provides the standard model for explorations of nationalism as constitutive in quality. In Imagined Communities, Anderson (1989) notes, "...nationalism might best be conceived not as an ideology, but as if it belonged with 'kinship' or

'religion', rather than 'liberalism' or 'fascism' (Anderson:15). National identity is something created, constructed, and made up of many components, some illustrated in particular areas or themes, while others shade all aspects of a landscape. Nationality, then, is a relational term whose identity derives from its inherence in a system of differences. Just as gender is a relational term which obtains its meaning in difference, so too, nationality, and the narrative which creates it, are relational terms. Anderson's model of nationalism offers a sound approach to the constitutive nature of nationalism, but its usefulness is limited by its assumptions and interpretations concerning issues of gender. The Finnish case exposes a weakness in Anderson's model.

Most prominent theorists of nationalism, especially western European nationalism, like Anderson, consider nationalism to pivot on male fraternities and male-male bonding. Anderson states,

... regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (Anderson:16)

In using the term fraternity, Anderson offers the image of a passionate brotherhood. This brotherhood, according to Anderson, cuts across class and other divisions, to

promote an imagination of comradeship and bonding which functions to unite, and ultimately, create a nationality. This central role of brotherhood results in a relational difference for women in terms of nationalism, and results in specific social circumstances. One may often find the idealization of motherhood as well as the harnessing of proper 'homosociality' into certain appropriate male-male bonds, or the invisibility of non-reproductive oriented sexualities, such as lesbianism.⁵

The Finnish case of nationalism, to some extent, contradicts Anderson's formulation.⁶ It calls into question a basic component of Anderson's representation of nationalism -- namely that the national imagination is based on fraternity and brotherhood. In the Finnish context, passionate brotherhood as a component of the national narrative seems muted at most. What replaces this passionate brotherhood in the national narrative is the powerful combination of the idealization of women as

⁵ For articles on these two aspects of the fraternity of nationhood, see Nationalism and Sexualities, Parker, et al. editors, 1992. Goldbert and Edelman address the issues of male homosociality. Lesbian invisibility is discussed in Hidden from History, Duberman, M. et al., eds and de Lauretis, T., "Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation," Theater Journal.

⁶ The Finnish case follows Anderson's formula as it does appear to be the case that in Finland class divisions were ignored in the push toward independence. They reappeared rather quickly, however, as class divisions ruptured into a civil war almost immediately following independence from Russia.

caretakers of the family -- a family model of multi-generational caretaking -- with the egalitarian, gender inclusive tenets of the state structure. The result, in effect, is a national narrative which is anchored firmly on female nurturance and care⁷, and translated almost directly into the nationalism model. This was a result, not of a specific engendering of the national narrative, but rather through its gender-inclusive thematic presentation. The Finnish state, whose imagined sense of community rests in large measure on a collective dependency of female nurturance, is one constituted through 'nurturance' -- both by and for the entire imagined community of the state -- rather than brotherhood. The Finnish case forces a re-evaluation of the nationalism model formulated by Anderson.

This is further evidenced in the history and placement of female solidarity in Finland. Even in its most militant historical phase, female solidarity was closely linked with nationalist strivings. In the introduction to Nationalisms and Sexualities, Parker, Russo et al. argue that,

Historically, female solidarity emerged in the West after the first waves of nationalist fervor

⁷ This female nurturing dimension of the national narrative in Finland in no ways precludes the willingness of the citizens to die for the imagined community, which passionate brotherhood engenders. Finland's civil war and the two wars against the Soviet Union provide ample evidence of a willingness to die for the community.

passionate brotherhood, or fraternity, while not absent in the narrative, is tempered by the mother as national caretaker, whose strength and position in the narrative is enhanced by egalitarian motifs. In effect, the value placed on equality and gender equivalence made room in the national narrative for an image appropriate female who is both dramatic and valorous. It also results, in what I term the 'domestication' of the state system. All of the building blocks of the 'imagined community' of the nation are evident in this configuration -- the idealization of motherhood, the invisibility of lesbianism, and the deep horizontal comradeship -- and, unique to Finland's case, a mutually dependent familial unit with woman as caretaker. I will show how important the woman's role has been to the constitution of the Finnish nation, but also clarify some of its limits. Although women are very prominent in Finland in many dimensions of public activities, including politics and employment, and women in many other countries are seeking to gain some of the things that Finnish women already have, particularly in the area of domestic issues and legislation, still, Finland in some important ways remains patriarchal in its structure'. The irony in

⁹ This can be seen in the sex segregation in occupational statistics, as well as the lower earning power of women. In addition, it was only recently that women were permitted to be ordained as priests in the Lutheran church. This was a hard fought battle.

From another perspective, Finland's structure embodies a patriarchal one in terms of the position of women within

development of the nation, and thus an integral part of governmental policy.⁸

The year universal suffrage was granted, 1906, nineteen women were elected to the national parliament. Their election, although supported in part by women's organizations, including women's rights organization, was not the result of a need to push women into the political realm. It was, rather, the result of a more gender inclusive approach to the building of nationhood. Of critical importance is the fact that it was only after the feat of universal suffrage that the Finnish nation established its independence. The Finnish national narrative allowed for all forms of subordination to be included in its story line. (Combs-Schilling, personal communication).

It is ironic that the Finnish national narrative, in its "mutual dependence" approach to gender, actually resulted in a nationalism engendered, and pivoting around caretaking as a primary fueling characteristic. The

⁸ Of course, it was not until the late 1940s that the Finnish state saw a great expansion in its social welfare programs. This is in part related to the relative wealth of the nation and its ability to provide social services to its citizens. Legislation in the earlier period, did, however, attempt to redress social inequalities. For example, legislation between 1918-1922 introduced massive land reforms which enabled tenants to purchase land at fixed prices. This resulted in a 65% increase in the landowning population, and by 1937, 90% of farmers owned their land. Social legislation was also passed in the 1920s and 30s which improved the standard of living, including extensive factory legislation.

receded; working for such issues as suffrage, welfare and reproductive rights, women's movements challenged the inequalities concealed in the vision of a 'common nationhood' [which were typically the case]. (7)

In Finland, however, topics such as women's rights, suffrage, and welfare issues were central themes in the developing national narrative of the late 19th century. In fact, women's rights organizations flourished during the narrative creation period, as the state was being imagined, and became relatively dormant in the post-independence period, until the second wave of feminism occurred internationally. Their importance and agency were most noticeable during the pre-independence period. It is significant that they were by no means the only groups working on behalf of women and Finnish nationalism.

In Finland, unlike many Western nations, the suffrage battle was fought on behalf of the rights of both women and men. The suffrage victory meant that both sexes earned the right to vote. Many types of organizations fought for suffrage, including working class and trade groups. Women's rights groups were but one group among many in the struggle. The combined struggles for women's rights as well as social welfare issue became priorities in the national imaginings, not simply 'women's' interests. It was not necessary for these issues to go through a politicization process, because issues of suffrage, class, and gender were important to the

Finland is that the very source of Finnish women's national elevation is also a source of gendered constraint. This is a complexity and contradiction which Finnish women must deal with, and a complexity that I elaborate in this dissertation.

Women's organizations provide a crucial arena for the research of gender and nationalism in Finland. Finland's ethnographic locale is one in which women's associations have played a critical role in the establishment and reproduction of the Finnish nation, hence they represent a culturally appropriate place to examine the locus of female gender. Organizations of men and women, including all female organizations working on behalf of the whole, helped shape the Finnish national narrative and bring about the Finnish state. Women's voluntary associations in Finland also offer an historical perspective because they have existed as important actors in the Finnish context for about a hundred years, spanning pre-independence days to the present. These associations thus offer a unique opportunity to explore how, within Finland's own version of a social welfare state, multifarious, competing, and at times contradictory versions of definitions of female intersect with national

a welfare society. See e.g., Holter (1984) for a discussion of patriarchal conditions in Norway. This topic is also further addressed in this work in the chapter on women and the state.

definitions of the state and gender. Women's associations, directly and indirectly, provide clues to what it means to be female in Finland, and what kinds of over-arching constraints exist in negotiating gender.

Also, to a fair degree, the Finnish political system, in addition to having an electoral channel, has what has been referred to as a 'corporate channel' (Lovenduski: 1986). This refers to the fact that in consort with electoral politics, there is a highly developed network of involvement among private citizens through commissions, councils, committees and delegations, as well as through voluntary associations. Helander (1979) describes 'corporatisation' in the Nordic political systems as "the participation of interest groups in the authoritative distribution of values in direct contact with public authorities." This has particular resonance in terms of access to decision making arenas for different groups, including women's associations, in Finnish society. Because of this 'corporate' feature of the political system, Finnish women's groups provide a functional frame through which to examine how gender is related to national identity and welfare state ideology.

Women's associations are an excellent source of material for two other reasons; they span a wide range of women's interests and they are also groups specifically designed for women. The following list describes the

basic types of women's organizations found in Finland¹⁰: homemakers' associations¹¹, countrywomen's associations (farmer's wives), women's movements (women's rights, feminist), organizations of women in political parties, organizations of women in trade unions, social and humanitarian women's agencies, and religious and temperance societies. In addition to these contemporary groups, there was also an active women's auxiliary military association which was banned following the second world war.

Despite variations among groups in terms of objectives and practice, all nonetheless consist of women working together, in groups identified by themselves and outsiders, as women's associations. It is clear that the definition of what constitutes a women's organization

¹⁰ This list is in no way exhaustive of the types of women's groups found in Finland, but is merely meant to offer a general template of the types of organizations found. There are, for example, smaller, single-focus groups, which I have not included in this list, as well as sports and other types of 'hobby' groups.

¹¹ I deliberately use the term homemaker in this context, in contrast to housewife. In Finnish, the word emäntä [from the root emä - mother] may be translated as housewife, housekeeper in its strictest sense. This meaning is closest to the woman who is the keeper of the house, the counterpart to the isäntä, the male who is the master of the house. These terms have expanded to include women who are caretakers of commercial establishments or airline attendants and men who are owners or innkeepers.

There is another Finnish term for the 'woman of the house', and that is kotirouva. This is also translated as housewife, but the implication is of a higher status or class than emäntä. Urban women would also be more likely to use the term kotirouva to describe their position.

varies considerably, but the fact remains that by the simple yet significant act of joining one group as opposed to another, a woman has indicated an expression of solidarity with a particular locus of female identity. Women's associations create a climate or venue where women may gather in what is neither a strictly public nor solely domestic sphere. Women are viewed as caretakers of family in the national narrative, and this tends to place them within the domestic setting. The association venue, however, produces the opportunity for the development of an intermediary, overlapping sphere which has combined elements of both to create a new configuration.¹² The reason this is an important locus of female identity is that the associations represent a conscious decision on the part of the women to actively participate in a setting outside of the domestic sphere. The shape of the new configuration is the lens through which it is possible to explore varying gender constructs and subsequent interpretations of women's relationship to Finland's own version of the social welfare state. Depending on the nature of the group, as well as how the members view their relationship to the nation, members might view their activities as more in the public domain or more in the domestic. The determining factor appears to be the

¹² Dominy (1985) presents an interesting discussion of overlapping domestic/public spheres in New Zealand.

interpretation of gender roles and activities and subsequent definitions of politics and what constitutes a political issue.

The differences in the group purposes, goals, historical development, and organizational structures of the three women's associations studied provide a comparative base within a common fabric. They all share the common thread of the shared belief that there exists a reason, perhaps even a need, to gather together as women, gendered beings distinct from men. The assumption held by all groups is that there is a positive, defensible reason for grouping together as women. While this does not imply that all groups focus specifically or consciously on improving the lives of women, this may be a side effect. The important point to remember is the belief -- based on either conviction or convention -- that group membership, at least initially, should consist primarily, if not solely, of women. Where men do participate, it is marginally only.

Regardless, then, of the group's goal or purpose, whether it be charitable, social, political or educational, in Finland there has been an enormous sense of the need to voluntarily unite as a group of women pursuing particular goals and activities. Each group has a female-centered identity. As such, the gendered identity of the group provides an excellent avenue through

which to examine varied gender constructs in Finland and their relationship to the Finnish nation state. All the associations I studied were totally independent of any official political party, trade union or church affiliations. While individual members may have themselves affiliated with one of the above institutions, or the group may have been formally identified with one or more of the above, none of the associations themselves had any official links.

Accordingly, I have done an ethnographic analysis of three women's voluntary associations chosen because they illustrate a broad spectrum of expression of female gender system and its relationship to nationalism. The three groups I studied are: The Martta Organization, an established and somewhat traditionally based group, is a national organization for "homes, homemakers, and other women," which engages in home economics education as well as cultural and civic education (it was critical in the formation of Finnish citizens and national development); The Feminist Union, a feminist group, is also a national organization for women, which seeks to "eliminate sex discrimination, and advance the feminist effect of women"; and Extasi, a much more recent and fluid group, is a radical group, based primarily in Helsinki, which seeks to overturn the dominant values of society through anarchy, shock tactics, and radical sexual behavior. Not

surprisingly, in the Extaaasi group gender exploration we find the clearest example of seeking a different concept of female -- a movement away from woman as caretaker and nurturer. Within the Extaaasi group we also find the most direct expansion of the definition of female.

The women's associations I studied also illustrate the intersection of gender with national narrative, and the encoding of the domestic into the state national narrative, as well as the struggle -- as seen in the case of Extaaasi -- to move beyond and out of the bounds of the narrative.

The contested terrain of gender in Finland thus gives rise to a spectrum of expressions of femaleness, and within the spectrum of the gender construct I've delineated three broad categories of identification coinciding with three gender ideals; caretaker, feminist, and androgynous gender constructs. I use these categorizations as shorthand descriptions for each particular group's construction of the gender construct. It will become clear, however, that in teasing out the gender constructs within each category, symbolic interpretations and meanings often transcend these neatly defined groupings.

This work is a case study on how gender and nationalism intersect in Finland, a small, Nordic country. My hope is that this research will add some new material

and perspectives on how gender and nationalism operate in a social welfare state. In addition, this study offers an overview of the shape of feminist movements in the setting of the Finnish nation -- a nation whose state structure is built on a gender-inclusive national ideology embedded within an egalitarian frame.

CHAPTER TWO: THE BEGINNINGS: IMAGES OF WOMEN, WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATIONS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FINNISH NATION

The Song of the Martta's

Here we are singing the Martta's song
 We feel warm and our voices ring
 What is most valuable in life
 Gives us energy to work and battle
 Forever home and fatherland
 We give them everything
 Dearest Finland and land of our birth.

We work for our home
 For the happiness of the people and our
 homeland
 Our energies, our senses, our readiness
 We are happy to give forever
 Forever home and fatherland
 We give them everything...

If you're a Martta, we'll shake hands
 Come and join me in work
 Let us work for the happiness of our
 Finland
 The diligent ones are not left wanting
 Forever home and fatherland....

(Alli Nissinen)

The verses above stress the strong sentiment of patriotism and hard work embodied within the goals of the Martta association. They provide partial evidence of the role women's associations, and the images of women found in them, played in the imaging of the Finnish nation. This chapter will trace the development of Finnish nationalism from its beginnings in the mid-19th century to its conception in the late 1970s.

An historical analysis of Finnish nationalism reveals three factors which propelled the Finnish nationalist narrative toward its goal of an independent Finnish state. First, Finland, under Swedish influence

and rule (12th century-1809), and to a greater extent under Russian rule (1809-1917), was allowed to develop a strong and independent political base and structure within its domestic borders. Second, the Finnish language movement provided a cohesive focus and identity -- both symbolic and practical -- for the nationalist movement. Finally, the development of organized groups and movements was an important factor in consolidating and implementing nationalist sentiment.

The intersection of gender and nationalism is played out within the frame of these organized groups. The female imagery found in Finnish literary references, biblical portraits, and the economic conditions of the countryside resonates within women's associations. Throughout the narrative of Finland's history, then, I will focus on the common thread of women's associations which developed, flourished, and in some cases waned during this historical frame. In particular, I will examine the Martta group and Unioni (the Feminist Union), as these two distinct women's associations are embedded with different notions of female, and help to illustrate the dimensions of gender and nationality in Finland.

Political History

Writing in the late 19th century, a Finnish historian noted,

Finland was an entity by itself which could no longer become Sweden and ought never to become Russian. In other words, we felt we were Finns, members of the Finnish nation. (in Singleton:1989:34)

How did the Finnish people -- living in that area of land defined geographically as Finland -- come to view themselves as part of a Finnish nation? And how was it that Finnish nationalism, which had grown to an extensive level by the late 19th, early 20th century, was able to actually produce an independent nation? A configuration of political conditions generally favorable to the development of a political base as well as a growing consciousness of Finnish language cohesiveness -- as distinct from Swedish -- were the two main things propelling Finland into independence.

Up until 1809, Finland had been a part of the kingdom of Sweden-Finland. The shape of Finland's position within the Swedish kingdom fluctuated during its duration as part of the kingdom. Between the 14th and 17th centuries, Finland became quite linked to the Swedish Crown. During the 14th century, Swedish laws and administrative practices were taking hold in Finland. In 1362 the Finns were organized in the traditional medieval four estates (nobles, clergy, burghers and peasants), and the right of Finnish representatives to take part in the

election of Swedish kings was granted.

Finland was often viewed as a buffer ground between Sweden and the eastern reaches of Russia. During the next several hundred years a series of wars between Russia and Sweden-Finland took place, and during most of the time that Finland was a Swedish province, Finnish men were conscripted to fight for Sweden-Finland. In 1808, however, Sweden lost control of Finland, and Finland found itself formally annexed to Russia. This was an important moment in Finnish history, because, in annexing Finland, Tsar Alexander I, in exchange for an oath of allegiance to the Tsar, acknowledged Finland's right to internal autonomy. Alexander's decree states,

When We convoked Finland's Estates to a General Diet, and received their oath of allegiance, We desired ...by means of a solemn act... to confirm and secure to them the maintenance of their religion and fundamental laws, together with the 'liberties and rights that each Estate in particular and all of Finland's inhabitants in general, have hitherto enjoyed...We consider the oath of allegiance of the Estates of the Peasants in particular...to be good and binding on all the inhabitants of Finland. (in Singleton:1989:65)

In fact, for Finland, becoming a Grand Duchy of Russia enabled the solidifying of its nationalist base. Local government remained very similar to its form under Swedish rule, but the national government shifted so that more administrative duties were carried out by members of the now larger Imperial Senate, which basically operated as the government of Finland. There was a Russian

Governor-General who presided over the meetings of the Senate, but as most of them did not know Finnish, the Vice-Chairman of the Senate -- a Finnish citizen -- presided.

For Finns, the above arrangement worked out quite nicely until the end of the 19th century. Up until that time, the Finns truly were autonomous, with very little interference from the Tsar or Russian legislators. During the 1880s, however, the situation deteriorated. Alexander III was suspicious of Finnish nationalist aspirations. In 1890 Alexander issued an imperial decree, annulling legislation regarding internal matters in Finland. Matters worsened in 1899 with the February Manifesto. Under this manifesto, most Finnish legislation came under the direct surveillance of the Russian government.

Reaction to the February Manifesto varied across political lines, with some groups (Old Finns - the Compliant) advocating negotiation with the Russians while others (The Young Finns - the Constitutionalists) believed that it was impossible to negotiate their way with the Russians. Many of the Constitutionalists resigned their posts and even went into exile. A third group (The Activists) advocated direct action against Tsarism through strikes and other forms of insurgency. After several more years of increasing Russification,

including the attempt to conscript Finnish soldiers to serve under Russian officers (an attempt which was met with ever increasing passive resistance), the situation changed dramatically for the Finns. Russia had been defeated in its war with Japan, and social unrest and ferment produced a wave of strikes in Russia. The Governor General, Bobrikov, who had enforced and implemented the Russification legislation was assassinated in Helsinki in 1904. These events led to a more conciliatory approach toward Finland, as Russia was in no position, materially or politically, to exact allegiance. In October, 1905, the Tsar conceded a parliament to his Russian subjects. In Finland, on the very next day, a general strike was called.

The strike was led by members of the Social Democratic Party, but support for it was widespread among other parties. One month later, the November Manifesto was signed, which rescinded many of the decrees of the February Manifesto. This gave way to a new Senate, which drafted a bill to establish a parliament elected by universal suffrage, with equal voting rights for men and women and with guarantees of civil liberty. Constitutionalists were prominent in this new Senate. A unicameral legislature was formed, and in the first elections, in 1907, 890,000 votes were cast. The Social Democratic Party, which gained the largest number of

seats (37%) today remains a party of power, as do several other original parties.

Finland's actual declaration of independence, on December 6, 1917, was the result of circumstances surrounding the First World War, and its impact on both the Russian and Finnish economies and social orders. The internal strife in Russia once again allowed for more room for Finnish nationalist maneuvers, and in July of 1917 the Eduskunta (Finnish Parliament) passed the Enabling Act, which proclaimed the independence of Finland in all matters except foreign affairs and defence. Lenin came to power in November, 1917, and he expressed approval for Finnish independence. The situation in Finland was far from clear, however, because the provisional government in Finland which took power -- the Civil Guards -- were in direct clash with the Red Guards, who were reluctant to accept the government. The seeds for the civil war had been sown.

In late January, 1918, the Red Guard took control of Helsinki and established a revolutionary government called the Peoples' Commission. The Reds controlled the southern part of Finland while the Whites were concentrated in the north and northwestern portions of the country. The Reds sought a greater alliance with the Soviet Union, while the Whites were vociferously opposed to such a relationship. With help from the Germans, the

Whites won the civil war by May of that year. The Whites exacted quite a toll on the defeated Reds through a series of deadly reprisals. The war and its aftermath divided the Finnish nation bitterly and decisively. Interestingly, however, the Social Democrats, the socialist party, were able to regain the largest number of seats in the 1919 election. This pointed to the support of the socialist parties among the public. The divisiveness of the Civil War continued as a strong element in Finnish politics up until the Second World War, when national cohesiveness was necessary to keep Finland independent. Still, today, however, remnants may be seen of the division between the socialists and non-socialists. Historically, the divisions between socialists and non-socialists were more closely aligned with anti-anti-communist sentiment, although this distinction may be lessening.

The political history of Finland in its post-independence days has seen its internal struggles¹³ dim in light of external enemies. For Finns, what is known as WWII does not apply to nor describe their experience. The Finnish history of this period involves two separate wars as well as a final concluding battle. Finland

¹³ The Lapua Movement, a right wing movement, gained power in the 30s and called for a ban on all Communist activities. Several years later, when it threatened armed revolt, it was outlawed.

describes the first war as the Winter War. (1939-1940). During this war, Finland was engaged in battle with the Soviet Union over its eastern territory which bordered with the Soviet Union. In this war, Finland and Germany were not co-belligerents. The second war is described as the Continuation War. In this phase the Finns were once again fighting the Soviet Union, although in this war they were co-belligerents with Germany as the German army became allied with the Finns. As the Continuation War with the Soviet Union came to an end, Finland, which had been allied with Germany during that war, found itself in the position of having to force German soldiers off its soil. Germany razed Lapland on its way out. At the end of the two wars, although Finland had lost a good portion of its Eastern territories, and had taken in thousands of refugees from those areas, it had put aside its internal political differences and successfully fought to retain its independence. For Finns, there was a strong sense of security in Finnish independence¹⁴, which only re-

¹⁴ This is not to ignore the entire debate about 'Finlandization', or the idea that a country could be independent from the Soviet Union, but still walk a delicate line in making sure that it didn't step on any toes in the Soviet Union. The Paasikiivi line, which J.K. Paasikiivi embarked on in 1946, when he became president, had as its objective to keep peace and mutual trust between Finland and the Soviet Union, by maintaining an active neutrality. This line formed the foundation for the concept of Finlandization.

In other words, a Finlandized country would always keep a wary eye over its shoulder to make sure it wasn't angering the Soviet Union. Even in the event that

enforced itself during the post-war period, particularly as the nation had come together during the time of shortage following the war. The post-war period brought about more than a unified Finland. It also brought about two structural changes to the Finnish nation -- urbanization and full-scale industrialization. Finland's industrial push came primarily after the second world war, almost involuntarily. As a result of war reparations treaties with the Soviet Union, Finland was in effect forced to industrialize. The Soviet Union did not want cash payments from Finland. Instead, it demanded specific manufactured goods. In order to meet the demands of these payments, Finland found itself in the position of needing to modernize, or in some cases develop industrial bases. Although this resulted in a period known as 'the time of shortage', this difficult and sacrificing passage to industrialization left Finland with a modern and efficient manufacturing base. This base was one of the reasons that the Finnish standard of living jumped so sharply from the mid-60s onward. Once the reparation payments were complete, Finland found

'Finlandization' existed on some level in Finland's relationship to the Soviet Union, there appeared to be no danger that Finland would lose its sovereignty and become a satellite or part of the Eastern European block, although conservative American politicians feared such a possibility. For an examination of the conflicting nature of Finlandization, see Berndtson (1991). See Mouritzen (1989) for an overview of Finlandization in terms of its impact on political posturing.

itself quite able to compete in the world market.

Politically, Finland was also in an interesting position, and one which afforded its socio-economic base great growth possibilities. Finlandization, discussed above, was actually a cloud with a silver lining. Although Finland's political leaders had to consider the impact of their policy on the Soviet Union, at the same time they enjoyed the benefits of special trading status with both the Eastern bloc and the Western bloc. For example, during the OPEC oil embargo of 1973, Finland did not suffer from this economic crisis as most oil-importing Western nations did, because it imported its oil from the Soviet Union. While the economies of other nations reeled from suddenly high oil prices, Finland was able to continue solidly building its economic base, as well as developing specialized, high-tech industries in which it could be competitive with larger nations.

The Language Awakening

When the language of forefathers is lost, a nation, too, is lost...For language forms the spiritual, and the land the material, boundaries of mankind; but the former is stronger, because the spirit means more than the physical. (Adolf Ivar Arvidsson in Singleton:1989:77)

Arvidsson, an early proponent of the Finnish language, made the above statement in the early 19th century. Although he turned out to be an unsuccessful advocate of the Finnish language cause (he eventually emigrated to Sweden after authorities moved against him), he captures the essence of the language question in the development of Finnish nationalism. Leaders of nationalist awakenings in Finland clearly understood the need to unify behind a single language. In the early 18th century Finland's population was 85% Finnish speaking and 15% Swedish speaking. Many Finnish speakers could read and write, due to the work of Lutheran clergy, but because all official matters were conducted in Swedish, these skills were of relatively little use in dealing with the authorities. It was up to the poets and historians of this early period -- most of whom were Swedish speaking and in fact wrote their works in Swedish¹⁵ -- to provide the foundations for the expansion

¹⁵ J.L. Runeberg wrote Vartland (Maamme), which became the Finnish national anthem. It was written in Swedish. There is a tradition of this, however, in that writers often use the dominant language in order to reach a more

of the Finnish language as well as to prove its historical traditions and riches.

The critical event in the Finnish language movement came with the publication of the Kalevala, Finland's national epic, in 1835.¹⁶ Elias Lönnrot, a doctor of medicine, had become interested in folklore during his student days. He received financing from the Finnish Literature Society¹⁷ and went off to remote regions of Eastern Finland, where he collected material from the rural Finnish citizenry. The first edition of Kalevala contained the oral traditions and tales in their most original form. A later edition, published in 1849, was expanded and re-shaped by Lönnrot to conform more to his idea of what a national epic should consist of.¹⁸ It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Kalevala

powerful audience. Grigor Prlicev published the epic poem, the Sirdar, in Greek rather than Macedonian, although the Macedonian nationalist movement regards it as a seminal work for its cause.

¹⁶ General reference works on the Kalevala include Laitinen (1985), Kuusi et al. (1977). The Kalevala has been translated into over 70 languages. The classic English translation are Kirby (1985 [1907]) and Magoun (1985 [1963]). Of more recent vintage are Bosley (1985) and Friberg (1988).

¹⁷ The Finnish Literature Society (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura) was founded in 1831.

¹⁸ It has been determined that out of over 20,000 lines, about 600 were composed by Lönnrot.

as an inspiration of Finnish nationalism.¹⁹ The stories of the Kalevala are expressed through song. The Kalevala has been described as a work through which the Finnish people 'actually sang themselves into existence.' (Friberg (1988) quoted in Karner (1991) and as the 'heart of a whole nation irresistibly blooming into song.' (Billson:1900:33, quoted in Karner 1991).²⁰

In the Kalevala Finns were able to see expressed, in their own language, the history of their nationality and common identity.²¹ It is also an exciting story, with forces of nature (the Pohjola or people of the north) clashing with the hands of civilization (the people of Kalevala). These groups represent the forces of evil (Pohjola) and good (Kalevala). What provides particular power in the Kalevala is that it serves to both describe a common identity, while still retaining a unique sense of Finnish individuality. As Mead notes, "...the poems reflect the attachment to locality that remains an enduring Finnish quality." (Mead:1968:47) In terms of

¹⁹ Two books are found almost universally in Finnish homes -- the Bible and the Kalevala.

²⁰ For an interesting discussion of the role the Kalevala played in developing Finnish nationalism, see Karner (1991). He argues that because Finland was autonomous under Russian rule, it needed the Kalevala to find its identity as opposition to an outside dominating force was lacking.

²¹ Wilson (1976) contains a description and analysis of folklore and nationalism in Finland.

nationality and gender, the outline of female imaging in the Kalevala is of particular importance. This will be discussed in a later section.

The publication of the Kalevala went hand in hand with a growing movement to establish Finnish secondary schools. This expansion provided a growing class of class of educated Finns who used Finnish as their mother tongue. In 1870 only 8% of university students enrolled as Finnish speakers. By 1900 this group made up 56% of the student body. Along with expanding educational opportunities in Finnish, the mid-19th century saw an increase in original literary works written in Finnish. Prominent among this new group of authors was Aleksis Kivi, a tailor's son, who wrote The Seven Brothers, viewed as the first Finnish novel. The Finnish language press was also becoming stronger during the late 19th century, although it was subject to censorship by Russian authorities. The enforcement of censorship varied considerably, however.

Another obstacle to the Finnish language movement was the opposition of the Lutheran clergy to the Kalevala. The church portrayed the Kalevala as a pagan work, and was particularly disturbed by its Finnish 'creation myth' content. The church was, in fact, opposed to the Finnish nationalist movement, and fought against the expression of Finnish nationalism found in

the Kalevala. (Laitinen:1985)

It should be noted that in addition to dealing with Russian censors, advocates of Finnish language were also fighting with Swedish language protagonists. There is, in fact, a Swedish Language political party which still exists today. The conflict between the two language groups provides further evidence of the struggle to define "Finnish" identity and nationalism.²² Of course, at the same time, this Swedish/Finnish language debate served to further focus the Finnish language movement. Another interesting consequence of the Finnish language movement was that it served to transcend the social divisions between Swedish and Finnish speakers. Language differences essentially translated into class differences. The elites (Swedish speakers) were forced to learn Finnish in order to participate in this growing aspect of Finnish nationalism. The Kalevala worked as a bridge between the masses and the intellectual community (Karner:1991). This is a further building block of the Finnish nationalist narrative tenet of egalitarianism, as in practice, it was built into the dialogue.

²² Finland currently has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. There are certain areas of the country (mostly in the Western regions) which are predominantly Swedish speaking. In government positions, it is necessary to pass very stringent language exams in both languages.

Movements and Organizations

Organizations provide a strand which links political structure, language questions and gender issues. Groups and movements illustrate the pattern of gender roles which became prominent in the nationalist narrative. The interdependent relationship between men and women is reflected in these movements.

Movements of various shapes and types emerged in Finland during the middle of the 19th century. These movements, and the organizations which resulted from them, provided individuals access to aspects of social structure and the larger 'society' around them. Irma Sulkinen identifies three particular periods of movements in Finland: the revivalist movement (mid-19th c.), formally co-ordinated social groups of citizens (late 19th c.), and party political organization (early 20th c.) (Sulkinen: 1989:181). In tracing women's involvement in the revivalist movement and the citizens' groups, we begin to get a picture of how the relationship between female and male identity helped to shape the ideas about women in the national narrative.

Revivalist movements in Finland are important to consider, because they illustrate something about the extent to which male and female relations during that period were based on an inter-dependent bond between men and women. To a certain degree, as well, they offer a

contrast to the strong patriarchal tone in establishment Lutheranism. Women were prominent in the spread of the revivalist movement. In the early period of revivalism, it was a young shepherdess called Liisa who inspired religious awakening in southwestern Finland. In another instance, a group of women, from servant girls to daughters of the well-to-do, were brought into court because of the commotion they caused with their preaching (Sulkinen: 1989: 182). It appears that female leaders garnered great support, and both men and women came to hear them. The revivalist movement, in its emphasis on individual will, struck a blow against the hierarchical society based on rank in that it brought together individuals across class lines.

Women were able to become leaders in the revivalist movement, because although at that time women and men had distinct roles and areas of activities, there was not an implied sense that women's spheres were any less important. Even in the case that women's spheres were perceived as less powerful, they were nonetheless acknowledged as vital to the productiveness of the collective community. In this early period women were beginning to forge their relationship to the broader public, which would eventually culminate in a citizenry predicated on gender-inclusiveness. In the late 1880s the face of organizations shifted to one not based on

religious revivalism but rather on groups of citizens organized around a cause. Temperance groups (in which women often led the way), workers associations, youth clubs and women's associations all sprung up during this period. At the beginning of this stage, men and women belonged to the same organizations -- including even the women's groups, such as Martta and Unioni. While gender differences existed and were acknowledged, there was no practical articulation of them in terms of associational membership and goals. It was very typical for both men and women to be members of the same group.

The efforts of the above groups were focussed primarily on improving conditions for the populace, whether through moral means, such as temperance, labor issues, or educative and home economic goals. All of these goals were directed at creating that 'educated populace' which would provide the fodder for the Finnish nation. Ironically, however, it was this shaping of the citizenry which set into motion the different categories of male and female within the political structure. As Sulkinen notes, "...the demand for equality was one of the terms of democratic citizenship from an early stage...[yet] what was expected of male and female citizens started to be sharply categorized according to the new type of gender division. Just as her identity had been, so the demands made of women as citizens were

soon associated with privacy and the family, in contrast to man's public and working life...these two spheres were...shaping the emergent, 'democratic' citizenship (Sulkinen:189)." An interesting aspect of the Finnish case is that what was demanded from women -- their adherence to the role of caretaker of the family and motherhood -- became an important building block in the nationalist narrative. The state, in its gender-inclusive aspect, is implicitly acknowledging the importance of this role. Universal suffrage was not an issue of women's rights, it was simply a reflection of the inter-dependent structure of male-female relations in Finland. This, in part, explains the relative ease with which women gained the vote at the same time as men.

The inter-dependent structure of male-female relations in Finland during the 19th century was rooted in the division of labor in the countryside. The agrarian traditions of Finland were still a very important feature of economic life, and these traditions helped to shape the image of women during this period. The division of labor in the countryside supports the notion that women and men are complimentary but equal. This division of labor on the farm lasted well into the 20th century as Finland went through industrialization and urbanization much later than much of the rest of Europe. Up until 1965, 60% of all Finns lived in rural

settings and were farming small farms. The history of the division of labor in Finland is not one in which women were sitting at home and embroidering. It is a history in which women carried on strong and important roles and experienced levels of self-worth that echoed their contribution to the family economy. In Eastern Finland in particular, women have played a critical role in the running of the farm.

For women of Eastern Finland, the control of the cows and the farm lay in their hands.²³ Women wore the keys to the barn and were responsible for all activities related to the cows, including milking and sending the milk off to market. Women came to be known as the cattle keepers of Eastern Finland. Most importantly, not only were women the main cattle keepers but they also owned the cattle they kept, thus they had an opportunity to add productive value to their domestic life. Men, on the other hand, were responsible for farm work involving planting and harvesting. All the fieldwork fell to the men. It can be argued that fieldwork was valued more highly because although boys might help their mothers with cattle work, men historically would not touch that work. [With modern mechanization, however, this has changed, and I watched husband and wife teams hook up

²³ For an ethnographic history/description of women cattle keepers in Eastern Finland, see Frolander-Ulf (1978).

their cows to the milking machines and share equally in the maintenance of their cattle].

Women developed special relationships with their cattle, and even today, when going into the farmhouses of women in villages I would see a picture of their favorite cow hanging on the wall of the tupa (living/kitchen area). Note that the work of women on the farm rested with live animals -- a job perhaps perceived as closer in nature to nurturing than field work. Literary references of the time, especially the Kalevala, reflect the strong role of women in Finland in this agricultural domain.

In the Kalevala, the country [Finland] was believed to be the creation of an all-embracing water mother. There is great detail about how the various geographical forms were created, and there is a tremendous amount of very detailed information about trees, terrain, and even 'berry-bearing bushes.'²⁴ Of importance in this analysis is the fact that it is a female form who is the instrument by which the land is produced. This provides the most potent image of the strength of women, and certainly an indication that we have the beginning of an inter-dependent relationship, for without a female, the world would not have been created. Women's importance is

²⁴ This is of particular significance because berries, and the juices and jams created from them are part of Finnish cultural life. Berry bushes, however, were not widely domesticated until Martta introduced that technique in the early 20th century.

further reinforced by the fact that in the Kalevala, cattle take priority over other farm stock.

Other women in the Kalevala are portrayed in a variety of roles or kin relationships. Louhi, Pohjolan emäntä [Louhi, the mistress/homemaker of the North] is a strong and fierce woman, who defends her land from a series of invaders. There are a series of strong women in the Kalevala, including the mother and wife of Lemminkäinen (one of the major male characters). The North is a matrilineal society; inheritance flows through the female side. Louhi gives advice, marries her daughters, decides issues of war and peace, and obtains the Sampo [money spinner -- a device in which to forge iron].

Mothers in the Kalevala represent the strength of life, particularly in terms of their families. The position of the mother-in-law is tantamount, and many verses express the lament of the daughter who is going off to be married and live in the village of their future husband. It is not the husband, however, who they fear. It is rather the mother-in-law who is in the dominant position. In the Kalevala, Seppöinen, the ironworker, is killed. His mother is able to bring her son back to life. He is resurrected through her will to see him live (the power of mother love) and through various potions and skills, including sewing parts of his body together.

In the above examples we see representations of women as powerful, practical, and endowed with the power of mothering and caretaking. A mother can even make life where there has been death. Louhi presents a distinct picture of the potent female -- the one who is an 'emäntä' in the fullest sense of the world. She is a landowner and the arbiter of decisions about the land as well as her family. She represents the forces of the north, which come into conflict with the forces of Väinämöinen, the old and wise male character in the Kalevala, and an inhabitant of the more southern region. There are clear sexual divisions made here, with the wildness of the northern area (Louhi's domain of magic and power) belonging to aspects of female culture and the more 'civilized' domain of Väinämöinen belonging to the male culture.

In this literary picture several points emerge. Women are strong and powerful, and also more 'natural', and the absolute divide between male and female gender is also apparent. The Kalevala, through its verses and stories, reveals that the really big battle is waged between the two genders, with the male gender winning out as the more civilized and conforming to Christian religious doctrine. Still, however, the strength of practicality and the importance of women emerge. Louhi is not simply a matriarch in terms of matrilineal lines

of inheritance or in hostess capacities. She is talented and skilled in her business, dealing with both farm matters as well as financial matters. Within Finnish literary tradition, then, there is evidence of strong women's roles, and clearly interdependency between the sexes, even in the midst of a struggle with the forces of 'civilization's' maleness. There is, however, also ambivalence toward women's power, as the north is viewed as representative of the forces of evil.

Female Imagery, Martta and Unioni and Nationalism

Martta and Unioni, founded in 1899 and 1892 respectively, were central actors in the surge of associational development that took place in Finland at the end of the 19th century. Although the groups started out with relatively similar goals, e.g. universal suffrage, an independent Finnish state, and the improvement of standards of living, including areas of education and labor, the emphasis of each group was distinctly different. Over time, these different approaches, based in part on different female imagery, and different interpretations of that imagery, resulted in decidedly different relationships to the polity. As the history of the two groups unfolds, it becomes apparent that it is the Martta female imagery which takes hold in the Finnish nationalist narrative.

The Marttas

If women would have understood, as they are now beginning to understand, that all state institutions and activities have an aftereffect on a generation's upbringing, their ideals and the building of character, then certainly women would experience a greater enthusiasm to have an impact on and do what is best for the direction of humanity. (Lucina Hagman, 1882, quoted in Naisen Voima [The Power of Women])

Lucina Hagman, quoted above, was instrumental in the establishment of Martta. Hagman is appealing to women by telling them that they have a responsibility to a larger family than their immediate one, because the state in fact, will exert an influence on the ways in which children develop. This is one of the first evidences, in regard to the Martta group, of the complex relationship between national identity and women's identity. The domestication of the state begins here, in the inner identity of women. Women are being called upon to understand the importance of the state in the development of individuals, and the role women have in that productive process. The connection is being made between the state and citizen building. In essence, Hagman is telling women that in order to maintain the influence that they do have over their family in the private domain, they must also realize the role that private domain activity plays in the development of the state and the role that the state will play in the development of that private domain. The phrase 'domestication of the

state' takes on new meaning. The female imagery, as employed by the Martta association, derives its power in relation to the creative force of women both with the family and as molders of the building blocks of the Finnish state, namely its citizens.

From the beginning, the Martta group was focussed on the unique and special characteristics, and perhaps more importantly, skills and opportunities that women had, in their specific task, as mothers, to have an impact on the development of the next set of citizens. At this time, the late 1890s, Finland was, as mentioned earlier, developing its nationalist ideals. Lucina Hagman's words at the first meeting, where she gave a rousing speech, illustrate this theme:

If Finnish women would begin, in large circles, in one strength, to spread among the women of the country and share information about our most important calling [vocation], they would surely be blessed with productive work. No one understands us, no one is able to help us as well as we can help ourselves, if we would be not just cowards or fainthearted, but rather stand bravely in the ski tracks of our own activities. The idea has arisen, that women, from all the corners of our country, would be able to unite in widespread cultural work in order to advance our country women in respect to raising spiritual and educational ideals. It's thought that this work will come about through lectures and pamphlets, which deal with child-rearing, hygiene and housework [care of the home]. The fostering of patriotism and the understanding of civil duties would be an important goal to have in view. (Naisen Voima: 20)

This quote illustrates clearly the link between the educating of a citizenry and women's role in that

process. Women are viewed as not only the ones who should do this important 'nation building' work -- or actually 'citizen creating' work, but in fact, are touted as the only ones who can or are able to do this work.

These barely shrouded nationalist aims came into conflict with the Russification which was occurring at the same time in Finland. Under its status as a Grand Duchy of Tsarist Russia all registered organizations had to be approved through the Russian bureaucratic channels. At the time of their initial application, in 1899, the name proposed for the group was 'Sivistysta kodeille' [Culture/Education²⁵ in the Home]. The founding members were shocked when they received word that the Senate had not approved the organization and its by-laws. After some discussion, the members realized that the educational aims of the organization seemed too threatening to the bureaucrats responsible for approval. They determined that the stumbling block for approval lay in the name of the organization -- particularly the word education/culture (sivistys).

Alli Nissinen, a founding member, suggesting calling the group Martta, after Martta (Martha) in the bible. This was seized upon as an excellent solution, as

²⁵ The word 'sivistys' is not easily translatable from Finnish into English. It contains a combination of ideas, including notions of 'civilizing' or 'culturing' as well as educating. See also, 'bildning' in Swedish and 'Bildung' in German.

typically, religious groups were viewed favorably, and certainly as non-threatening. In addition, the by-laws were modified to read, "the goal of the group is to spread information to our countrywomen about the care of children and to promote their skills in simple women's handicrafts." (Marttan yhdistysopas [Martta organizational guide] :1988).

The following year, in 1900, the organization was approved under that name. The aims of the group had not changed, only its name. Already in its earliest period, then, we can see that this most traditional of groups was perceived as possibly revolutionary in the ideological work of creating and mobilizing Finnish nationalist sentiment.

It is interesting to explore the use of the name Martta as a name for the group, because it reveals some of the female imagery upon which the association was founded, as well as the cleverness of the founders in defusing the objections to the group. The Marttas were able to come into existence by couching their name and aims within the rubric of a biblical and presumably non-threatening female role. Choosing the name Martta from the bible has particular resonance in terms of the encoding of the caretaker image of women in Finland.

In the Bible, Martha was one of Jesus' disciples. She was the sister of Mary and Lazarus. Martha has a

leading role as homeowner and hostess, and deals directly with Jesus and other guests by bringing them food, washing their feet, and altogether making sure their needs are met. She is so busy serving guests that at one point she complains to Jesus about Mary, who sits listening to Jesus' teaching and supporting Jesus' head, rather than helping Martha with the guests. But rather than agree with Martha, Jesus commends Mary on her interest and attention to his teachings, and rebukes Martha's anxiety yet it is this anxious hostess with whom Finnish women chose to ally themselves. The name Martha comes from the Greek (Aramaic), and is the feminine form of the word Mar, which means lord and master. Martha thus means mistress or hostess. This feminine equivalent of master incorporates the idea that women are complementary but equal. There are equivalent roles for men and women in this imagery, but they are simply made up of different aspects.

The name Martha (Martta) makes sense for the group. In contrast to Mary, who is sitting at the feet of Jesus and taking in his teachings, Martha is busy running a house and taking care of the needs of the guests. She is controlling, and although she may wish to have either more help from Mary, or more time herself to listen to Jesus' teachings, she nonetheless recognizes her duty as homeowner and hostess, as well as the power that she

wields. She confronts Jesus (one of the few times in the Bible where Jesus is confronted by one of his own followers).

The biblical story and the Greek (Aramaic) name emphasize the woman in a strong, albeit complementary role. She does not back down from her duties. This is an important aspect of the Martta organizational ideology and concept of woman. It is critical that the woman of the house, the hostess, be in control of her duties [recall back to the emphasis placed on hostess duties and the number of baked goods presented]. The Martta woman is secure in her role.

Also, Martha in the bible is concerned with practical issues. For instance, when Jesus [the gospel according to St. John, Chapter 11] plays with the idea of Lazarus' death, it is Martha who reminds him that perhaps Lazarus body had already decomposed. Martha is not one for miracles. She is focussed on the practical realities of day to day life. These provide the source of her strength as well as the locus of her identity. She is taking care of people. Martha is taking care of the guests and her home. Reference is not made directly to motherhood, but rather it is the household, where I would argue that Martha is taking care of men and women with whom she is in contact. She is taking care of a larger family -- a fictional family -- the family of

Jesus and his disciples. We see the same family templates bringing the Martta woman to take care of the Finnish family of the nation-state through practicality and strength. The Martha of the bible thus represents and provides an image of the female as proprietor of home, strength and wisdom in practical matters. Martta's greatest faith is in the belief in her judgement and expertise.

In this biblical reference to a particular female image and role, the Martta group has found imagery which can be used to link women to the state. The Martta figure of the bible also echoes the complementary but equal images of women in the Kalevala, thus a Christian image is linked to a purely Finnish one. Even in its choice of name, the Martta group helped to re-enforce the innovative and important role of women in the development of Finnish citizenry and the development of the Finnish nation-state. The Martta woman combines the concept of motherhood -- caretaker -- with its practical realization -- mothering -- to create a powerful strand in the nationalist narrative. The Martta organization makes the link between patriotism and caretaking explicit. In doing so, the end result was a nationalist narrative in which caretaking took on two dimensions for women -- it represented a non-partisan direction of support and at the same time was a political element in that it was a

founding concept of the Finnish nation-state. The Martta group encoded caretaking and practical skills within the text of nationalist development by elevating mothering, not just motherhood, into the definition of female citizenry.

Interestingly, to the Marttas, women's work and being was not essentialised into natural tasks. It is rather learned work, skills that have to be honed, developed, and battled for through victories of working together. Recall a stanza from the Martta song, 'what is most valuable in life, gives us energy to work and battle...we work for our home, for the happiness of the people...our energies, our senses, our readiness...let us work for the happiness of our Finland.' The Marttas cannot take anything for granted -- it must all be fought for. They are happy, but it is a joy established within the dimension of pragmatic realism which binds them together.²⁶

The Martta organization played a critical role in

²⁶ In a discussion with the head of the national Martta organization, she expressed surprise that a gathering of lesbians that had taken place at Unioni's Open University the previous weekend received press coverage. She laughingly recalled the times when foreign women in Helsinki would call up Martta headquarters believing that it was a lesbian organization. [She directed them to SETA, the gay and lesbian organization]. Her basic reaction to the lesbian weekend as well as the mistaken thought that Marttas are lesbians was that Marttas don't have time for such frivolous things as lesbianism. They have families to take care of!

elevating the practice of mothering in several ways. Both practically and symbolically, Martta sought to train women to produce strong Finnish citizens. Culturally, the ability to develop much out of a little, and to work hard and proudly in what one produced were key elements of the Martta strategy for women's role in citizenship development. For example, Finland's climate is a harsh one. Growing seasons are short, winters are long, and the possibility for nutritional deficiency ran high from pre-independence days to the not so distant past -- as recently as the immediate post-war period in the 50s. Because of the austerity of nature's bounties in terms of subsistence resources, the position of caretaker in the family is particularly crucial.

The Martta organization addressed this issue by constantly striving to develop new and innovative ways to improve living standards, particularly food standards. It was the Marttas, for example, who introduced widespread domestication of the berry bush into Finland. Although wild berries have always been an important factor in Finland's cultural milieu, the domestic cultivation of berries introduced a control and assurance over the berry crop. The Martta organization not only developed innovations in agriculture and household management, they also set up an organizational system which spread the information systematically throughout

the countryside.²⁷ This nationally organized network of small local groups offered women as homemakers and cattle keepers the opportunity to feel part of a larger community of women, all working for the common goal of Finnish nationalism and patriotism, in part through the strength of the nuclear family. The Martta women have a mission -- they may be viewed as soldiers for the building of the state. This occurred in both ideological ways as well as institutional contexts as the Martta groups, in the post-independence period, received state funding to carry out their work.

In the beginning, then, Martta groups were organized around such activities as education about gardening (small plot farming), cooking, and then the hiring of paid household advisors. These advisors would go from village to village and spend time with the local Martta groups. The Finnish nation invented itself not so much from its bootstraps but rather its mother's apron.

At this early stage of the Martta organization there was a fairly clear link made between work designed to increase Finnish patriotic sentiment and practical work. The work in each sphere was designed to support the other. Early speeches by Helena Fellman, a Martta member, on topics such as patriotism, hard work and

²⁷ This method of spreading information was really a precursor to the type of extension work which the Marttas became very involved with in the early to mid 20th century.

temperance, evoked strong responses from the public. It soon became clear, however, that Martta's most important, and perhaps necessary work - and the work struck the most familiar cord -- was its work in practical areas.

Of key importance in spreading not only the practical, but also the ideological aims of Martta, was its magazine, called *Emäntälehti* [Homemaker Magazine].²⁸ This publication was central to the success of the Martta group in spreading its word widely. It also provided an excellent forum through which to provide a link between ideological and practical issues.

One example of such dealt with the issue of egg production. At the beginning of the 20th century, Finland was still importing eggs from Russia. Martta took on the goal of instructing Finnish women in the art of raising chickens so that they could create rewards both for themselves, through acquiring extra income for themselves, as well as for the country, by passively shedding attempts of Russification. Even in writing about chicken care, *Emäntälehti* editors managed to offer some barely hidden words of Finnish nationalist ideals, as well as particulars in terms of important characteristics of women. An example:

A chicken who is a good egg layer is up early

²⁸ Ollila (1989) provides an interesting analysis of the Martta vision and ideology in the early post-independence years, 1918-1939.

gladly spends time in the company of other chickens, and she's so happy with herself that friends never irritate her....She's always hungry. She sees her care as if through the motto: if I have to give you a lot of eggs, then you have to give me a lot of food.
(Naisen Voima: 23)

In this quote, in addition to tips on what will make a chicken productive, we see ideals that would be considered appropriate in a hard-working female human being -- namely, industriousness, satisfaction with self, hunger to do well, and the idea that all of these characteristics must be fed and nurtured.

Emäntälehti was also more directly involved in political issues. It published articles calling for universal suffrage, and in such a way worked hand in hand with other women's groups. Once women did gain the vote, in 1906, at least five of Martta's founding members²⁹, including Lucina Hagman and Alli Nissinen [Emäntälehti editor] were elected to Parliament. This assured that news from the political front easily found its way into the magazine. Martta members were thus exposed to the Parliamentary debates concerning marriage reforms, including inheritance and debt obligation issues.

Martta women were thus working for the family as a whole, including the national family. Women are critical

²⁹ Although these women were founding members of Martta, they were also founding members of Unioni, and as such, their identity in the public political world was more based in their Unioni membership and legislative work for women's rights issues.

to the national political order, but not as women involved in politics. Although they are successful at the national political level, it is within a certain limited role, one which corresponds to the domestic issues of concern to women as caretakers. This image of women is wedded to images of the Finnish nation as a caretaker of its people.³⁰

The Marttas represented a perfect image for the Finnish welfare state; in effect, they were a resource model for state understanding of itself. Finland's nationalist narrative does not image the nation as a woman (unlike Iceland, for example, where Koester (1992:8) argues that "the nation itself began to be perceived as a woman") but rather images the nation as a caretaker -- an image that Martta women stressed and embodied. The history and development of the Martta group in the 20th century supports the idea that it is the Martta imagery of female which ultimately became closely aligned with the Finnish state.

³⁰ The most extreme example of this image in a woman's organization was the Lotta group. This group, founded at the end of Finland's civil war, was a women's auxiliary defense group linked to the right wing government and its militia, the Suojaluskunta (Civil Guard).

Unioni

Unioni was also founded during the period of growth in associations of citizens. It was founded in 1892, seven years before Martta. Several of the founding members of Unioni were also instrumental in establishing Unioni as a major women's rights organization. In contrast to the Martta group, whose members cut across class lines (even if its leadership was from the upper and educated classes), membership in women's rights associations in Finland basically consisted of highly-educated, upper-class women. Some of the earliest pioneers or representatives of women's concerns in Finland were literary figures. The poet Fredrika Runeberg (1807-1879), in an imaginary letter from a mother-in-law to her future daughter-in-law, has the older woman reminding the younger that the husband's honor and glory are the most important thing for a new wife to remember. The wife should demand nothing and suffer anything for her husband. This is to be a very poignant image in the Finnish nationalist narrative. Frederika Runeberg, an accomplished writer, was forced to watch as her own works were always in the shadow of her famous husband, Johan Ludvig Runeberg.³¹ Women's rights

³¹ J.L. Runeberg was one of the poets considered instrumental in the Finnish nationalist movement. His poem about Lotta, the Finnish woman who is a patriot, is where the name for the women's auxiliary group, the Lottas, comes from. An official Runeberg Day is celebrated in Finland.

organizations were founded to battle this type of female imagery. Much more specifically tied to legislative reforms and gender informed analyses, women's rights organizations never attained the same niche in the nationalist narrative as womens' groups such as Martta.

The first Finnish organization for women's rights, Suomen Naisyhidistys (Finnish Women's Association) was organized in 1884, and a bit later, in 1888 Kesuteluklubi (Conversation Club) was founded. Several members of these original organizations, including the educator and future founding member of Martta, Lucina Hagman, protested the authoritarian management of FWA, embodied in the leadership of Aleksandra Gripenberg. Maikki Friberg, who became prominent in Unioni, stated that "Gripenberg had much too strongly reproached those women who had not registered with the FWA" (von Alfthan: 1966:28). The schism within the organization reached a peak, and in 1892 a group of FWA members split off to found Unioni. The group numbered 84 at its inception and elected Lucina Hagman as its first chairperson. Of the 84 charter members, 17 were men. Even in a woman's rights organization, then, we see that men were accepted as equal participants within the frame of the organization, at least in its early years.³²

³² Although men belonged to the group, it appears that no men were ever elected to officer positions. Also, in later years, Unioni developed a policy in which men were

As an educator, Hagman was interested in the development of equal education for girls, and was one of the founders of the first co-educational school in Finland. In addition to educational concerns, the early Unioni goals were related to political and economic rights for women. To that end, one of Unioni's main goals was universal suffrage. Women's organizations, such as FWA and Unioni, were the only groups to specify suffrage as something which women were seeking, i.e., defining suffrage as a gendered issue. Doing so had the effect of removing the suffrage fight from the nationalist fight in that it separated the issue into a gender issue rather than an issue of national concern. A common political goal of most organizations of that time period was universal suffrage, framed as a nationalist need. The right of women to vote was not particularized, but rather subsumed in the general struggle for universal and equal suffrage. In fact, working class mobilization for the vote was an important factor. This in some ways muted the effect of the women's organizations, who were fighting for suffrage through a gender-based perspective. It also rooted the push for suffrage with the newly-developing working class -- few of whom belonged to women's associations.

In terms of political, economic and societal rights,

not allowed to be members.

Unioni was at work on several fronts. A goal which Unioni proposed in 1894 was that it shouldn't matter whether an officeholder was male or female -- similar work should receive similar pay. In 1895 Unioni submitted several proposals to Parliament. These proposals included the eligibility of women to hold municipal office, the improvement of women's status in marriage, full adulthood for women at 21, the broadened right of women to be legal agents, delegates and witnesses, and the lowering of the tuition at state schools for girls to the level boys paid. The 1895 Parliament either threw out or ignored the proposals. They were discounted in particular by the nobility, who viewed them as evidence of the destruction of the entire society. Along with the vote, however, women were also eligible to hold national office, and they were elected to governing bodies from the very beginning. In the first democratic election in 1907, nineteen women were elected to the national parliament.

Finnish women did not attain complete suffrage in local government until 1917, and it wasn't until 1929 and the passage of the Marriage Act that the last vestiges of male guardianship over women were repealed. The first maternity legislation, which provided some help for women in the workplace, was passed in 1927.

Unioni's early years also show involvement in

humanitarian work. Their efforts included a home for working class women recovering from illnesses as well as a soup kitchen in Helsinki for women and children made hungry by the ravages of the civil war of 1918. In addition, Unioni was involved in educative initiatives for working class women, training them to develop their handicraft skills into income producing ventures.

Unioni's other major line of activity, particularly after the suffrage victory, was in the area of peace and international peace work. Maikki Friberg (1861-1927), who was chairperson between 1920-27, established the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The years between 1920 and the mid to late 60s were relatively quiet times for Unioni. Membership remained small and projects were pretty much limited to peace work, small welfare projects and maintaining international connections.

The above thumbnail sketch of Unioni illustrates how Unioni, and its image of woman, basically became somewhat marginalized from the nation-state structure and national imaging. We do not see the same convergence with the nation-state as was evident in the case of Martta. In effect, the cultural setting which allowed for universal suffrage to so easily include women, was also the setting which limited a feminist-centered perspective. Women working within the Martta frame were clearly working for

the good of a larger family, whereas the Unioni women's efforts were focussed on women themselves -- working for issues that were of concern to women, not the larger whole. The frame is one of sisterhood, not of the nuclear family. And the frame of sisterhood did not have a place within the nationalist narrative, except in the context of sisterhood as bonding for the state, as in the case of Martta.

Only in the 1970s, with the revitalization of feminism, largely because of the international movement, does Unioni become actively engaged, in the Finnish context, in women's issues. Because issues were defined in terms of gender, they were interpreted as somehow unpatriotic. Within the nationalist narrative of Finland, women can point to many accomplishments and rights, beginning with their early right to vote. And clearly, the Finnish state and the dominant cultural evaluations of worth make women central to the Finnish state, but it is only certain types of women -- a certain definition of female -- which is acceptable. Unioni, and feminists in general in Finland, are trying to move the possibilities for women -- as broad as they are -- to areas outside of the role of nurturing caretakers of the whole nuclear family, i.e. the national family.

During the period of revitalization, in the 70s, Unioni, recognizing that the framing of issues as

gendered might be seen as a threat to the national image, represented their goals as ones which would be good for the whole, even though they were framed within a strictly female context. That is why, at this stage of renewal, Unioni goals were focussed on issues of equality in the work place, access to restaurants for women, reform of marriage laws, and the like. In the Finnish feminist movement of the time there were many fewer discussions of the 'body politic' or radical sexually divisive topics than in the U.S. or other western European feminist movements. The women's movement as embodied by Union's policies of the 70s could at least be represented as the type which could be framed in terms of equality, a powerful strand in the nationalist narrative. The actualization of Unioni goals could be represented as a benefit to all of society, as equality was a national goal. Thus, by framing issues in such a manner, Unioni women could be seen as members of the polity who were aiming to reform the system, to make it better. Even in this mild form, however, the feminist agenda was not a dominant one in Finland (Marakowitz; 1988). The power afforded women within the official nation-state outline - - even given its limited nature -- effectively sapped power from an organized feminist movement. The power that the women's movement did have in Finland during this renewal period was closely linked to the state

(Bergman:1986). There are even debates as to whether it is representative of a form of state feminism in that it is so closely allied with the state. The state is ready to embrace feminists providing they conform, at least to some extent, to the image of women as caretaker -- and feminists working as women together for equality only furthers to strengthen the nation state. Unioni, in its 70s revitalization period engaged in this type of reformist work.

CHAPTER THREE: GROUP VIGNETTES

Martta Meeting

On a Sunday evening in late October I was to attend one of my first regular Martta meetings, ['Marttailta' or Martta evening as it was called.] The group was a small, local Martta Yhdistys [association] in one of the outlying villages, with a population of about 150. The chairperson of the Martta circle had called me several days earlier to let me know when and where the meeting would be. The regular Martta meetings, which took place about once every two weeks, didn't really start up until well into the Fall. In the summer most people were busy at their country cottages or with their families and then early Fall was harvest time, so it wasn't until October, when the days became shorter and agricultural chores were over, that there was time for meetings.

The meeting was to start at 7 p.m. and the snow had already started falling that afternoon. Driving was treacherous and visibility was limited because the wind was forcing the snow, which was falling heavily, to swirl and form strange patterns on the road. Finally, after quite a few kilometers, from main road to gravel, when I was just about ready to give it up for lost, there was the house on the right hand side of the road. A big farmhouse with lights blazing stood out clearly. I pulled my car into the long driveway.

A bit of trudging around the front of the house in

the snow brought me to the realization that most houses have 'the front door' in the back of the house. My timid knocking brought Kaisa, a smallish, cheerful-faced woman in her 50s to the door. My knocking prompted her to say that she thought perhaps the door had been locked. [I later learned that most people just walked through the open door of farmhouses and called out their arrival]. Through the outer room I emerged into the warmth of a very large kitchen with a big oven, a table and a bed/couch as well as some chairs. This room in farmhouses is known in Finnish as the tupa, or big open kitchen/sitting room. In addition to preparing food and eating in this room, it was often used for informal visits by neighbors. Sitting in the tupa were about nine people of varying ages although the average age seemed to be at least 50. One younger woman sat with a baby in her lap. There were two men seated at the table. This was confusing to me because Martta, as a housewives association, was supposed to be a women's group. It turned out that the men were husbands of some of the women attending. The men had come along as 'Mattis', i.e. drivers and chauffeurs. As soon as the meeting proper started (with singing), the men moved to the living room where they watched television.

The table was laid with food, including Karjalan pirakka (Karelian pies, the traditional food of Karelia,

a sort of rye piroki with either potato or rice filling) as well as eight other varieties of homemade cakes and cookies including a whipped cream, kiwi decorated cake. After going around and shaking hands with everyone at the meeting, I was offered coffee and food. All the women drank coffee with cream. Tea was not really offered to the women. The men, however, drank tea, because (as the women told me) coffee was too hard on their stomachs. I was always grateful for the chance to drink tea because I was by nature a tea drinker. I drank coffee, however, as it was simply poured for me without discussion.

A place on the couch was offered to me. It was clear that everyone knew each other so it was not surprising that there were a few curious questions put to me. The singing of the Martta song signalled the beginning of the meeting and the exit of the men. After the song there was an informal discussion about dues, and several women paid. Women brought out their knitting or handwork as the meeting began. The 'official business' part of the meeting had the chairperson going over the mail from the Joensuu [district office] group. The mail contained an announcement about what the Martta Annual Theme for the year was to be, information about courses available through the district office, and an invitation to join the Martta organization on a 'Boat Seminar.' The seminar was designed to teach Martta members how to re-

vitalize the organization and take the membership into the 21st century. Members weren't too interested though, as the excursion took place in December when it was very dark, and thus a boat trip to Stockholm wouldn't be very interesting. Also, it seemed rather expensive. The final bit of mail contained a request for a representative at the national annual meeting in Helsinki. No one seemed very interested in going.

The meeting then became much less formal and there was talk of the next activity (other than regular meetings) that the group would have. It was decided that this would be the pikku joulu [Christmas party]. Father's Day, a holiday which comes just before Christmas in Finland, was considered too soon an event to plan for, and besides, everyone had their own family to celebrate with, so why would a Martta event be necessary?

Another point of conversation was what might be a good study group topic. The choice of topics for study group was presented by the National Office, via the District Office in Joensuu, and then sent to the local group. The topics available were 'The Lean Line - Eating Well', 'Women's Strength', 'Walls Between People - Breaking Them Down', and 'Christmas Wreaths'.

Once the more business-like aspects of the meeting were over, conversation became much more informal, turning to subjects such as bears, wolves and foxes. One

woman commented that as she had to walk 4 kilometers through the forest to get to the meeting, she carried both a big flashlight as well as a knife to ward off any animals. The women seemed amused at my fear of running across a bear or a fox. Perhaps because there was a stranger in their midst, there was much more conversation about the old days.

In the old days (1930s, 40s, 50s) the group was much larger and much more active. Entire families would come to the gatherings by horse-drawn carts. There was talk of the group parties Martta would hold and the many courses that the group sponsored.³³ Women reminisced about the time when they had their own paid 'advisor' who lived in the center village (kirkonkyla - village with the church) for 6 months to a year. The advisor went around giving courses to the different associations in the outlying villages as well as advice to individual women.

Towards the end of the evening the traditional lottery was played. The money from the lottery was put into a fund as a sort of 'coffee money' to help defray the costs of hosting a meeting. (Not to mention the cost of all the baking!!) The woman at whose house the

³³ The Kansalaisopisto (Folk School, or Adult Education School), is usually described as the reason the Martta courses really decreased. In fact, the KO seemed to have taken over many of Martta's functions.

meeting took place provided the prizes, usually hand- or homemade items such as a pillow or honey or preserves. She held out a handful of strings and for 2 marks per string each woman could pull a string. Those who pulled ones that had buttons on the end were the winners. Everyone seemed pleased that I pulled a button. I went home with a handmade pillowcase. The meeting closed with a song.

The Martta group usually meets at the individual home of one of the members. This is an interesting location because it is both public and domestic. Its domestic aspects are twofold. First, for the member who is hosting the meeting, she is within the domestic confines of her own home. Second, for all the members of the group, the meeting or activity is taking place in a 'domestic' setting, in the private domain of another person. In this descriptive case, as in many meetings, the actual meeting place is not just the home but in fact the tupa or sitting/kitchen area, often viewed as the 'heart' of the domestic area.

But the setting is not purely domestic. For all the members except the hostess (emäntä) there is a definite need to step into the public world in order to attend the meeting. Despite the fact that the actual locale is typically in a home, it is nonetheless outside of the private sphere. To the extent that it is not made up of

mother-child units, it is not domestic in nature, as domestic domain has been traditionally defined.³⁴

It can be argued, then, that the meeting place for Martta activities at the local level has something of a fluctuating identity. It is public in a domestic setting. Because of its domestic aspects (and interests), it offers a safe place where women can go without arousing the question of worry or concern of husband or family. In fact, several members commented on how Martta meetings were often one of the few places a woman was allowed to go to alone because her husband was certain where she was and who she was with. In terms of public/domestic, the meeting locale affords some distance from the domestic sphere but doesn't directly challenge it, since it still maintains ties and images linked to the domestic domain.

In terms of who participates in the group at regular meetings and study groups, it appears to be basically made up of people who already know each other. An outsider, as I was, was welcomed into the group, but for the most part, the group operated with members who were already acquainted. Most, if not all the women, were

³⁴ Rosaldo (1979) defines the domestic domain as the minimal institutions and modes of activity which are organized immediately around one or more pairs of mother-child units. For a broadened analysis of the domestic domain, see Yanagisako (1979), Collier and Rosaldo (1983), and Rich (1976).

either married or widowed. There wasn't much space for single women. In fact, kin relations, through generational, collateral or marriage ties, often linked members. These were groups where the continuity of the association was at least partly based on mutual friendships and kin relations which had been ongoing over time.

How does this participation profile translate into the public/domestic picture? The fact that there are substantial personal ties between members situates the group less in a public realm, where one might be apt to meet strangers and base relationships on instrumental needs. In this setting, where most people are familiar with each other, if not longtime friends, the ambiance created is one of mutual recognition, not public anonymity. Everyone is somehow linked to at least one other member, be they friends, neighbors, relatives or a combination of the above. This leads me to conclude that the participants lend a more domestic sense to the group.

From this short vignette of a meeting several clues as to how Martta groups work can be gleaned. The local group has a chairperson who runs the meeting; there is a structure of authority. There is also a secretary and treasurer for each group, although they are not mentioned in this description. In addition, there is a distinct beginning and end to the meeting signaled by the singing

of the Martta song. On the face of it then, it would appear that there is a pretty strict design as to the nature of a meeting. This is also evident in the "top down" nature of information on themes and topics for group activities and study groups. This information is filtered down from both the national and district offices. In spite of the relatively informal nature of the setting and the familiarity among members, there are definite guidelines and procedures to be followed. There is a formality imposed upon an informal setting.³⁵

This is not the end of the story, however. While Martta women are certainly exposed to the structures and guidelines of a more formal, external and political world, they nonetheless manipulate those rules by not taking them too seriously and not investing them with value beyond their worth. For example, while it may be true that the chairperson gains skills in learning about the procedural aspects of running a meeting and certain bureaucratic tasks, a far more important characteristic or skill which the chairperson must possess or learn is the ability to bring people together to create an atmosphere where people feel welcome and want to participate. This attribute extends itself beyond the

³⁵ Of course, it is interesting that there wasn't much else formal to do except go through the mail. Even more revealing was that the members weren't terribly interested in any of it.

group and into the community.³⁶

Members commented often on how the success of a particular group depended in great measure on the chairperson and her personality. If she was unengaging and standoffish the group wouldn't flourish. If, on the other hand, she was warm, open, friendly and enthusiastic, the group would be successful and active. It was important that she not think of herself as better than anyone else. This would be poisonous. Thus, even in a position which could be interpreted as one of higher status and of a more public nature, there was the sentiment at least, that the skills involved in holding the position were more personal than anonymous, meritocracy based skills.

The function of the group gathering seemed to be multi-faceted. Clearly, there is nothing of an overtly political nature about the meeting, although it may be viewed as implicitly political because of how women and politics are viewed in Finland. The geographic area in which people lived was spatially quite large. People did not live in close proximity to one another. Very simply, the meeting served the social function of bringing people

³⁶ Martta associations are often called upon to provide serving help at community functions, such as Independence Day or the Cross-Country Ski Race. Their services were always offered for free, with the community (parish) providing the food. The local associations would take turns serving at the events.

together in order to have contact with each other. In this sense, one could argue that the meetings served a very social purpose. Not only could one learn about the latest gossip but also, to a lesser degree, find a forum to discuss personal issues although as a rule there didn't appear to be too much of a confessional or help-seeking aspect to the Martta groups. Also, as many women worked on knitting and handiwork, the group served to provide a forum in which to share the work process. The handiwork created -- often socks to be sold at the Christmas fair and bought by bachelors³⁷ -- also provided income for group activities.

In the past, the members said, the Martta meeting provided the rare opportunity to sit down and spend some time with your neighbors -- to provide a rest from the agricultural and family chores which kept women occupied. Today, the meeting also provides much needed relaxation -- but not from agricultural chores. Several women related to me this same interesting perspective -- Martta evenings provide a break from watching television and all the other leisure time activities which people constantly find themselves busy with, so much so that they don't have time for their neighbors!

Finally, I turn to the function of food. Often a

³⁷ In the countryside the number of unmarried adult men is a problem, since most of the adult women have left the rural areas for the urban areas, primarily Helsinki.

very important aspect of gender identity for females is caring for others. An essential part of caring for others is feeding them and making sure that they have enough to eat. Once having met the criteria of survival, one can talk about the symbolic aspects of food and examine the rituals which may surround food preparation and serving.

At the Martta meeting described above, there were eight different types of baked goods in addition to the standard karelian pie. What is the significance of this? All of the food preparation is the responsibility of the evening's hostess (emanta). Since the majority of items offered are homemade, it clearly takes some time to prepare for a meeting. The whipped cream cake -- often with kiwis lacing the top -- was served last, as a sort of crowning jewel upon the design of the presentation. Both heavy cream for the coffee and a whipped cream cake were indicators of prosperity. During as well as after the war, for quite a few years, sugar and most sweet things were scarce if not almost impossible to attain.

Still, it seemed to me that having eight types of desserts was overdoing it a bit and I wondered whether this show of 'sweetness' was at all related to having a guest at the meeting. It turns out that having a guest doesn't make much of a difference in this regard. I subsequently found out that the Martta district office

had been trying to deal with the 'over-production' of desserts for quite some time. Unofficial guidelines sought to limit the food production and serving to just three items. The district office recognized that women were, in fact, competing with each other over the desserts. If at the meeting of one house there was kiwi cake, lingonberry torts and pirakka the emanta at the next meeting felt that she had to have at least that much if not more or she would not be considered as adept and fine an emanta as the previous one. By extension, of course, this could be taken to imply that she was not as competent and skilled a homemaker for her family, or not engaging in a proper show of reciprocity.

In the above analysis, it becomes clear that the Martta woman operates within a domestic setting, but for the greater good. The Martta woman is a caretaker of her family, and by extension, the nation.

Summary

Caretakers see their group activities and aims as an extension of their 'household' functions (maternal role in family, caretaker) even as they take place at broader levels of interaction such as the local community, the nation, or even international projects. With mothers as icons of Finland's social welfare state ideology, the familial domain of caretakers extends into the province of state policies, as caretakers carry out and support

the state goals of maintaining the welfare of its citizens. In this sense, for caretakers, the 'domestication of politics' means that their domestic concerns are simultaneously political concerns, hence the extent of their participation in national politics. The caretaker idea of what it means to be female supports as well as is supported the Finnish social welfare state. This national narrative constitutes the caretakers as the agents of the state.

Unioni Gathering

The #3T tram stopped right in front of the lovely old Unioni building in the center of Helsinki. The Bulevardi address of Unioni had been listed, along with the announcement of 'Conversation Club' and its topic, in the general Where to Go column of Helsinki Sanomat, the largest newspaper in Helsinki. I recalled having heard that Unioni activities usually took place in the apartment left to them by one of the wealthy older members -- the Maikki Frieberg home. This reflected the class make-up of some of the earlier members as well as its Swedish-speaking heritage³⁸.

After being buzzed into the apartment building, I climbed the steep, carpeted staircase. 'Conversation Club', the bi-weekly theme discussion group at Unioni, was starting at 7 o'clock that evening. The theme for the evening was 'The Ninety Year Struggle of the Women's Movement'. At the top of the stairs I wasn't sure where to go, and although there were several women in a small office to the left of me, no one greeted me or offered directions. There was, however, a big living room where some women

³⁸ Up until 1809, Finland had been part of the Swedish empire. The upper class, therefore, was made up primarily of Swedish speaking citizens and Swedish was, of course, the official national language and the one used in government, business, and education. While there were always Swedish speaking Finns in the working and middle classes, Swedish speaking Finns most often represented the upper class.

were seated and this appeared to be the right place. It wasn't entirely clear, though, because there were also women seated around a large table in what appeared to be a dining room. There was the large table in the center and a small pantry off one end leading, apparently, into a kitchen. My sense was that perhaps there was more than one activity going on at the same time. Were there other kinds of groups meeting in the same place? Even some that weren't directly part of Unioni?

The sound of Billy Holiday wafted through the living room which was full of antique chairs and tables adorned with lace doilies. Off the living room was a small den which contained a comfortable couch and chairs as well as a television and stereo. The den led into another room with a big table and book shelves on all available walls, leading me to believe that this was the library. I later found out that council meetings were often held around this table.

The walls in the small den held pictures of women who seemed to be former chairpersons or otherwise significant women in Unioni's history. Most of them had Swedish surnames.³⁹ A special exhibition of paintings and drawings done by women who had attended a week long Unioni course at Unioni's open university was on the

³⁹ The Swedish surnames provided further evidence of the likelihood that Unioni founders were of upper class origins.

wall. These courses took place at Villa Salin, a waterfront villa located in Helsinki, also acquired by Unioni through the bequest of a member.

As I sat in the living room, the doorbell kept ringing to let people in. Aside from a murmured hello to the other women in the room, I didn't really speak to anyone. One of the small tables held a jug of coffee and store-bought coffee cakes (pulla) and a small, hand-written sign noting that it was five marks to have coffee and pulla. There didn't seem to be any tea so I put my 5 mark piece in the dish, took my coffee and pulla and settled in to wait for the start of 'Conversation Club'. A bit later, hot water and tea bags appeared.

A core of about 4 or 5 women who appeared to know each other well were talking. Myself and two other women, one sitting on either side of me, were silent. We waited for the evening to begin. Although it was difficult to be really accurate about the ages of the women gathered, it appeared that the average age was late 20s or early 30s. By the time the meeting started there were about 14 women there.

The same woman who had brought out the hot water for tea started the evening by introducing herself as the organizer of 'Conversation Club.' She explained that 'Conversation Club' met about twice a month and passed out a pamphlet outlining the dates and topics of upcoming

events. She then introduced the evening's speakers. Although outside guest speakers sometimes came in to do a talk, tonight Unioni members would be leading the discussion.

The first speaker, an older woman in her fifties with short gray hair was recognizable from her picture on the wall amongst the former chairpersons. She gave an extensive talk in which she traced the history of Unioni as well as the general history of feminism in Finland. It was interesting to hear the Martta group portrayed as a kind of 'daughter' group of Unioni, founded a year later to reach a more rural and Finnish-speaking population of women in Finland. The speaker then turned the talk over to a woman who I recognized as the current chairperson of Unioni.

She explored the topic in a way which brought it closer to current issues. What kinds of women's groups are now found in Finland? Trade unions and political parties have women's sections, but women weren't really represented in high positions of power relative to their numbers. So what kind of difference could Unioni make? What role could it play in Finnish society? Should it act as a political pressure group or should it be more of a personal help, personal development kind of forum? Could it be both? In any event, she stressed that Unioni could be a place to have different opinions and

encouraged people to feel free to express them.

Questions and answers opened the discussion period. While the women who seemed to know each other spoke out more freely, everyone had the chance to make some comments before the group broke up for the evening.

The meeting place for the majority of activities is the above-mentioned apartment owned by Unioni.⁴⁰ In its layout, and in its furnishings (to a certain extent), the Unioni apartment appears in many ways to be a typical, old, large apartment of an upper-class resident in downtown Helsinki. It's not a cold set of offices in a modern building or even a public building such as a school or community center. Visually it appears as a 'home-like' setting. Of course it must be recalled that the building is owned by Unioni, as an organization, and not by any one individual. In that sense, it is very definitely a public space. In another sense, however, it has become a sort of "surrogate family space."

As a group, Unioni has been left large and valuable bequests from its members, including the Bulevardi apartment and the Villa Salin. Rather than bequest these valuable pieces of real estate to family members in the biological sense, these Unioni women decided to leave

⁴⁰ Martta also owns its own real estate but these offices usually hold district divisions as well as the national office. The core of Martta activities take place in the homes of members.

their wealth to the group so that Unioni would have a permanent place to meet, not to mention financial security for the group to have the resources to continue.⁴¹

An interesting picture is emerging. Unioni space is public in that no individual member owns the space. At the same time, however, members -- especially those who are active and spend a lot of time there, come to view it as their second home, a place where they feel particularly comfortable.⁴² Unioni is clearly trying to redefine female and the family and to move the definition of woman beyond woman in her dimension as caretaker/nurturer. These feminists are re-defining women, family, and home and state to include women who do not fall into the dominant image of female.

Who participates in Unioni? There may be people who are familiar with each other as well as total strangers

⁴¹ Two points should be noted. Unioni also owns other apartments which were either left to them or bought with money which was bequeathed to them. These apartments serve as places where older Unioni members can live in their later years of life -- kind of 'retirement' homes for long term Unioni members who otherwise wouldn't have a place to live. Secondly, Unioni, in contrast to Martta, takes very little, if any money from the state. Their support must come from the members.

⁴² Members in interviews mentioned many times that Unioni was a place they felt to be like a second home to them. What came out though, was that as Unioni was changing directions some of the older women didn't feel as at home at Unioni any longer and the newer members felt more at home with the changes.

or newcomers. Whose interests is Unioni set up to serve? At any given time there may be several activities going on simultaneously. Conversation Club, for example, was designed as an open-to-the-public kind of activity. Given this, anyone who read about the event in the newspaper was free to attend. Clearly, personal friendship issues did not arise because there was no way of knowing who might attend. However, other types of meetings, such as council gatherings or specific Unioni groups were for members only. Even though the women in these groups did know each other, women joined Unioni out of an interest in the group or perhaps because a friend told them about it. For the most part, it is more of a 'public' gathering of people rather than an intimate one characterized by biological family or even neighborly ties.

The vignette only gives a brief glimpse into the structure of one Unioni activity. Conversation Club was set up in such a way that a speaker or speakers would introduce the topic and then open the floor for questions and discussion. The commitment to the group was minimal -- there was no requirement to attend a certain number of meetings or be bound to do any preparation or reading beforehand.

The group was run quite loosely although the coordinator (who happened to be a teacher) generally kept

the discussion under control to the extent that everyone had a chance to talk freely in an orderly way. Issues about the structure of Unioni activities will be more detailed in the section pertaining to council meetings.

Conversation Club functioned as its name implies -- to raise a topic and bring out discussion about it. Note that by using the term 'conversation' a certain informality of spirit comes across, removing the event from the realm of the heavily serious, scholarly discourse of an academic setting. In doing so, the informal name helped make the event accessible to more women. Even though the topics raised in Conversation Club are certainly not light in tone, an attempt was made to put them across in a comfortable, inviting sort of way. Conversation Club in fact, may function as one of the primary vehicles to introduce the public "non-Unioni" woman to what Unioni is all about.

On the question of food it appears to be a very 'public' kind of relationship. The club coordinator is responsible for the brewing of coffee and tea as well as purchasing the pulla.⁴³ It is laid out without a fuss in such a way that anyone can make a simple choice as to whether or not to partake in the refreshments. No one's ego or self-worth is on the line because, at least in

⁴³ Unioni fronts the money for the refreshments at Conversation Club, although it gets some back by charging 5 marks if one wants coffee/tea and pulla.

this instance, no one has invested any great energy or large part of their personal identity in the food preparation and aspects of group activity. The separation of women as caretaker and woman as individual working on women's issues is a very important distinction.

Summary

Unioni feminists seek to expand the definition of female. They view their activities as being much more explicitly political than Martta group activity. They want to contest the domestic image of women accepted as a main tenet of the nationalist narrative and the nation state. Even as they identify themselves as women, they simultaneously acknowledge a desire to shape and define their gender identity in a way which takes them outside of the bounds of the domestication of politics. The Unioni women aim to reform the welfare state in order to broaden the images of women.

Extaasi - Kirjakahvila (Book Cafe)

The cafe was to open at 11 a.m. so I arrived for my shift at twenty before 11:00 in order to get ready. My co-worker, Maija, had not yet shown up. Since there was a metal gate across the entrance to the cafe kitchen, I couldn't do much besides explore the cafe. The Book Cafe was run solely by Extaasi members. While the original intent may have been to have a cafe for just women it had developed into an 'alternative' sort of inexpensive cafe where anyone who wanted to could come in and eat. Extaasi has been described variously as an anarchist or terrorist group. Regardless of the terms used to describe it, Extaasi aims to shake up the staid structures of Finnish society.

The Book Cafe was located in the 'new' student building of Helsinki University, although the building was in fact quite old and currently being renovated. The cafe, on the second floor of the building, had two entrances. The same area that housed the Book Cafe also housed the Book Cafe library in another room, which had a wonderful collection of periodicals in many languages, including the Women's Review of Books and the Village Voice. The student cultural center also was organized in these rooms.

In the cafe itself there were bar type stools one could use to sit at a wooden table. There was also a

long coffee table and a sort of bench as well. The kitchen is separated from the cafe by a long wooden counter with a few bar stools to the side. The walls of the Book Cafe are black and are adorned with various writings, art and statues.

Maija finally arrived about a half hour later⁴⁴, laden with several heavy bags of groceries containing the day's perishable supplies, such as milk, cream, fruit, cheese, vegetables and some juice and soda. She remained silent as to where she had been, and in fact, barely grunted a hello to me. I took this as a rather ominous sign. At the meeting the week before, when Maija had found out that she would be working with me, she had just two things to say to me -- could I cook? and do I speak Finnish? I answered with a more confident yes to the second question.

Nonetheless I did eventually ask where she'd been. She then explained that one person always goes shopping at the beginning of the shift. All the food at the Book Cafe is baked fresh daily by the workers. The Book Cafe tends to keep to a fairly vegetarian menu with tuna fish the only exception to the vegetable rule.

The kitchen contained one oven, four burners, two

⁴⁴ In the weeks to come I would discover that there would be days when Maija would come in several hours late, sit down for a sandwich before doing anything else, and offer no explanation for her non-appearance except that she had been tired.

refrigerators and freezers, a dishwasher, a double sink, a fair amount of baking utensils, coffeemaker and a display case cooler which didn't seem very cool. We set out to make the food for the day. Generally, the food was set up in such a way that there would be a self-service sandwich area on the counter where cheese, tomatoes, lettuce and pickles would be laid out. The rolls [sampylat] for the sandwiches would have to be baked by the workers for each day. Coffee and tea were also self-serve items.

The Book Cafe serves several varieties of homemade pizza daily, although there really weren't any hard and strict rules about what was to be made. Maija, however, was very interested in making the rolls for sandwiches as well as pizza so we set out to do this. Being a total novice at making rolls, I watched her do most of the mixing, helped place the rolls in the pan, and watched them in the oven. Maija told me that sometimes on a shift the workers would make some traditional pulla if they had the time and felt so inclined. In addition to food duties and serving the customers, we made sure there was always music playing, and, as Maija liked reggae, that's what we usually listened to (as did the customers).

As there was renovation going on, painters seemed to be pretty steady customers. They were also the only ones

who consistently returned their plates and cups to the kitchen, even though they were never asked to do so. Other customers were people who worked in the surrounding offices and friends of the Extaasi people, although they tended to show up later in the afternoon. At that time a TV would often be wheeled in and videos would be shown.

After several weeks of working at the Book Cafe I had become more accustomed to all the baking involved and also become aware of the pride which the Extaasi members felt in their home-baked goods. One day I was attempting very diligently but unsuccessfully to make something called voisilma pulla [butter-eye coffee cake]. As I was pressing indentations into the center of the roll in order to place butter and sugar in the middle, an Extaasi member started laughing at me and said, "You are like a Martta with your apron and pulla!" She teased me about the care I was taking in creating this pulla. It suddenly struck me that here I was at the radical Extaasi cafe and I was making one of the most traditional of all Finnish foods -- voisilma pulla! All at once the ironies of radicalism and traditionalism converged into the very center of that roll.

The Book Cafe seemed to be a center of activity for Extaasi in that friends would come and hang out, reading magazines and papers from the library, either in the cafe or the library. It was a very loosely organized place,

with a credit book for purchases for customers who were known to the Extaaasi people. One afternoon a male friend of the Extaaasi crowd actually gave haircuts to four people in the middle of the kitchen floor!⁴⁵

Extaaasi members -- and often their friends -- were always welcome in the kitchen part of the cafe, and often spent a long time talking on the kitchen phone or just pulling up a stool in the kitchen and chatting. And no one was ever adverse to helping out in a pinch.

The Book Cafe never really made a profit. At the end of each day each worker would figure out her hours and simply pay herself from the cash box which was locked in the kitchen at night. There were times when the Book Cafe barely broke even.

Analysis

For the most part, Extaaasi activities took place at the Book Cafe [hereafter, KKa]. Clearly, the KKa is a public space in that it has no connection to any member's residential home. It may be viewed as even more public than the Unioni apartment because the KKa space does not even belong to Extaaasi but is rather part of space provided them by the University of Helsinki Student

⁴⁵ While I was working at the cafe there were several health inspections and the cafe was cited for serving soup because it was a hot dish and not something the cafe was equipped to handle.

Union. The 'public' nature of Extaaasi's space is very well-defined.

What, though, of the shape of this public space? Interestingly enough, the space used by Extaaasi, and identified with them, is a cafe. What makes up a cafe? In a cafe setting one will find some kind of kitchen facilities in which to prepare the food as well as an area for customers to consume the food. Therefore, while in very concrete terms the location is public, its internal make-up may be viewed as rather domestic in shape, and even, in some respects, traditional. [Recall back to the tupa of the country houses, where cooking and socializing took place.] The preparing and serving of food in a public setting is an extension of traditional female roles of food preparation and serving within the family. The 'heart' of Extaaasi's activities, (at least on a day to day basis), take place in the domestic realm of the kitchen.

Who is participating in KKa activities? Extaaasi, as a group, is very loose about defining who is or isn't a member. Unlike Martta or Unioni there are no clear guidelines and dues requirements required for membership status.⁴⁶ In terms of working at the cafe, however, the

⁴⁶ In the time since my fieldwork, Extaaasi has become a registered organization, going under the name, Naiskahvilanaiset [Women's Cafe Women]. Official registration may call for more strictly defined membership guidelines.

number of positions is limited and thus it is basically only Extaasi people who actually run the cafe. While membership in Extaasi is a pretty fluid concept, it is not as easy to secure a work spot on the cafe schedule. At least in terms of who runs the cafe then, they make up a definite, well-defined and delineated group of people who know each other. The women who work at the cafe know each other and have friendships and social contacts amongst themselves which extend beyond the cafe work. In that sense, the cafe is fairly private, perhaps even domestic, although it is clearly a commercial establishment, unlike either Martta or Unioni's food functions.

But the workers are illustrative of but one element of who participates. The customers, of course, represent another aspect. The people who frequent the cafe are both female and male, Extaasi members or not. There is no need to be a part of Extaasi. In fact, there is no need to even know what or who Extaasi is in order to walk into KKa, order food, and eat. Customers included the painters renovating the building, employees from nearby offices, and people off the street as well as Extaasi related people. In this sense, the openness of the cafe to any and everyone represents a truly public setting. There is an opportunity to mix with all.

In talking about the structure of Extaasi I want to

emphasize that I'm referring only to the specific running of the cafe as that is what has been described. As stated above, the cafe was run on several loose principles. Each shift usually had 2 people working. The only exceptions to this were that on a very slow day only one person might work or alternatively, three people might work on a very rushed day.

No one was considered a boss. The only kind of differentiation made was if someone was a better cook and thus wanted to make a certain item or felt that something should be done in a certain way. Shopping tasks were pretty equally divided. Money was handled by all workers, including wages as described previously in this chapter.

The structure was very ambiguous. Because of this the running of the cafe was sometimes determined by the clicking or clashing of personalities. The lack of a formal, hierarchical structure led me to define the structure as basically informal and private in that there weren't any real mechanisms with which to resolve conflict on a day to day basis.

What was the point of having a cafe? On the surface it appears that Extaasi, in running a cafe, was attempting to provide a social outlet and avenue for people of the Extaasi mode to get together. There is also the very important function of running a cafe. What

does the cafe provide? For one thing, the cafe provides jobs for Extaaasi members. Granted, the pay was quite low, and the hours were not extensive, but given the minimalist, alternative, and marginalized lifestyle many Extaaasi members led, this job (not to mention the free food in the bargain), allowed for a relatively stable source of income for those Extaaasi people who worked there. The work there was not done on a voluntary basis, but was rather a public enterprise.

On another level, though, the cafe provided much more than just income for its workers. It provided a social setting, a center if you will, where Extaaasi could create and provide an alternative environment to the commercial cafes or university run cafes. The KKa did not make a profit. Goods were priced at about or just a fraction above cost. That in itself allowed Extaaasi to practice some of its aims of 'turning society upside down.'

For the KKa, and by extension, Extaaasi, it is evident that food plays a central role. Even as the cafe was run on 'alternative' methods, i.e., the low prices, it nonetheless sought to produce healthy and traditional food. For the members who worked there it was a source of pride to produce the best pizza, or the best sampylat [sandwich rolls]. And even pulla, the most typical of traditional Finnish foods, was made. One member noted

that she learned all her cooking and baking skills through working at the Extaasi Kirjakahvila. It was striking how such a radical group was, nonetheless, deeply rooted in some of the traditions of female gender identity which they were trying to avoid.

Summary

For the Extaasi women, the image of woman is removed from the bounds of the typical male/female divide. Extaasi women seek to turn the nationalist narrative upside down; to remove some of the central threads in its fabric. They challenge not just the boundaries of female imaging, but female imaging altogether. In their androgynous attitude and perspective, they represent the greatest challenge to the Finnish welfare state, and may be interpreted as contestors of statehood.

CHAPTER FOUR: WOMEN AND THE STATE

Women and the State

In exploring women and the state structure in Finland I will examine two dimensions. I first offer a brief overview of the relationship between welfare state policies and women within the structure of the state. This is followed by a description of women and political participation in Finland.

Women and Welfare State Structure

In terms of welfare state structure, it should be noted that welfare is not synonymous with power. The family, in its nuclear family structure, has been a changing institution in Finland throughout the 20th century. Whereas historically Finland was fundamentally rural in nature, with the family as the basic unit of production, male and female roles, while distinct, were nonetheless of relatively equal importance in farm tasks.

In the Finnish context one finds what Helga Hernes has described as the "... 'woman-friendly' state, a state which enables women to have a natural [emphasis mine] relationship to their children, their work, and their public life" (Hernes 1985:15). Within this understanding, the state has in effect made the domestic go public -- and subsequently made reproduction go public. To the extent that the state assumes responsibility for reproduction, the state structure becomes one in which women's lives are more dependent on

and determined by state policies than men's lives, as men may be less involved with reproductive tasks. Women, in their reproductive roles in the domestic spheres, as wives and mothers, and their reproductive roles in public spheres, in their employment in caregiving professions, find themselves as multi-faceted participants in welfare state policies.

As such, women have more interest and are more supportive of public growth and regulation as their status and influence are dependent, to a degree, on a not simply a stable, but ever expanding public sector. At the most basic level of reproductive agency women are mothers, and as such clients of welfare state policies in that capacity.

Simonen (1991) has defined the concept of mothering by delineating 3 categories of mothering: biological mothering (human reproduction), political mothering (women as the major unpaid caregivers for small children) and social mothering (welfare state formation and its division of labor, where women are typically employed outside of the home in caring/service professions). For the Finnish case, the third type of mothering, social mothering, is most relevant.⁴⁷ Within the frame of

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the specific characteristics of genderdivisions in a welfare state, see Julkunen and Rantalaiho, eds., Hyvinvointivaltion sukupuolijärjestelmä. [Gender Organization of the Welfare State], Tutkimussuunnitelma. Jyväskylän yliopiston

social mothering we are able to see the transition from women's activities in family and volunteer work to state subsidies for that work to ultimately employment by the state of women for that work. This was evident in the case of the Martta organization, whose work began as volunteer, became subsidized by the state, and ultimately began to be taken over by state agencies.

For the development of the welfare state in Finland, an examination of policy development shows that there were two waves of policy reforms in state development. The first wave, which was in the early historical phase, was related primarily to market activities, such as regulating employment and land and property reforms, all with the aim of easing class tensions and aiming for the implementation of social-democratic rule. During this period, trade unions and employer associations gained significant influence, and women were still marginal to most of the centers of power.

In its second wave, during the 1960s, the push of welfare state reform focussed on reproductive areas, such as maternal health, childcare, the care of the aged and sick, socialization and schooling. A pre-cursor to the 60s expansion was the 1956 Act on the national pension. In providing pensions for the elderly, the state was to a degree removing children's responsibility towards elder

parents. Because the above-mentioned topics of care represent 'reproductive' areas, women are more likely to be actively engaged in the policies formulated and implemented in regard to these issues. In this situation it becomes difficult for feminists or anyone who frames issues in terms of gender exclusivity, i.e. women's issues, because the underlying theme is that the issues belong to everyone, as indeed, does the state. Indeed, debates about offering a salary to individuals (traditionally women) who stay home with children (as an alternative to child care) represent the state reaching far into the domestic setting and conflating domestic and public policy.

Specific legislation does address gender issues directly. Below I describe the Finnish Equality Legislation.

Finland passed an equality bill in 1987. It consists of three parts:

- 1) a general ban on discrimination on the grounds of sex;
- 2) the prohibition of discrimination in working life and;
- 3) a requirement for active measures to promote equal status. Family life and personal situations are exempted from the general ban. Temporary discriminatory measures aimed at promoting equality between men and women are also exempted. This legislation is based on the principle of gender neutrality. Unfortunately, its enforcement

provisions are not strong, and there are loopholes which employers can find to get around the law. Although the legislation creates even greater possibility for women's access to public life, it doesn't eliminate the structural impediments which keep women from advancing.

Women and Political Participation

Finnish women take considerable pride in the fact that they were the first women in Europe to gain the vote in Parliamentary elections, in 1906.⁴⁸ In 1917 their voting rights were extended to include suffrage in local elections, as well as their right to run for office. Finnish women were the first in the world to become entitled to hold elected public office. Finnish women had very early on won the opportunity to be politically active and to participate in the formal political system. This chapter offers an over-arching picture of women in formal politics in Finland, and seeks to illustrate the extent to which opportunity translated into concrete results for Finnish women.

Already at the beginning of the 20th century, women's sections in Finnish political parties first appeared. They functioned primarily to recruit women into political activity, give them the opportunity to become familiar with the rules (informal and formal) of politics, and to push for women's issues within the parties. (Haavio-Mannila in Lovenduski: 1981). Support for women candidates was also a primary goal, and as will

⁴⁸ As early as 1865 some women in Finland had gained the right to vote in municipal council elections. They were not allowed to be candidates and the women permitted to vote were limited to single women who were taxpayers. Married women were considered to be under the guardianship of their husbands (Haavio-Mannila:1985).

be shown below, turned out to be quite a successful endeavor. The share of women in the membership of parties varies between 30 and 60% (Council for Equality Between Women and Men [hereafter CEMW]: 1985). The proportion, however, of women in the executive levels of the parties has remained low. In Finland, some parties have had women as deputy leaders, but never as the party leader (UD:42).⁴⁹

The Finnish political system is a multi-party one, with at least at least nine parties actively engaged in the political process. This array of political parties can, however, be classed into four major groups: (1) Socialist, including the Social Democratic Party and Democratic League of the People of Finland (Communist); (2) Urban Centre, including the Liberal Party, the Swedish People's Party and the Christian League; (3) Rural Centre, which would include the Agrarian/Centre Party and the Finnish Rural Party; and (4) the Conservatives, i.e., the National Coalition Party and the Constitutional People's Party.

Historically, women in Finland have had higher participation in the non-Socialist parties. As of 1985, the two largest non-socialist parties, the National Coalition and the Centre Party, were made up of about

⁴⁹ In 1983 four Finnish parties (People's Democrats, Centre Party, Social Democrats and National Coalition Party) had women deputy leaders.

half women, while the two socialist parties were made up of approximately one third women. (CEMW:1985).

It appears, however, that all parties are adopting agendas on issues of concern to women such as childcare and health standards as important on the political agenda with the result that distinctions between conservative, moderate and radical sex-role ideologies have become less important. Only around the issue of abortion do we see fundamental differences of opinions in regard to women's rights, with the more conservative parties, invoking a religious dimension and holding a more restrictive attitude towards abortion. On the whole, then, this acceptance of 'women's rights' and the importance of 'women's issues' is consistent with the development of Finland's welfare state policies, where women are seen as crucial participants in that system.

Finnish voters cast ballots for individual candidates, thus party bureaucracy may be to some extent by-passed.⁵⁰ The electoral system is set up as one of proportional representation according to the highest average. This balloting system also allows women to support female candidates without needing to support a particular party. This has tended to diminish drives to

⁵⁰ The Finnish voting system uses the d'Hondt method of tallying votes. In this method, all candidates are linked to particular parties, but the votes are tallied proportionately. Pesonen (1968) offers a description of Finnish election techniques.

create a women's party. The level of voting participation by both men and women in Finland is high. In 1917 73.1% of the men and 65.7% of the women voted in general elections. In 1982 the comparable figures were 76.2% of the men and 75.3% of the women, figures which are roughly comparable to participation in municipal elections (CEMW:1985). Finland is divided into 15 electoral districts, each of which select between 8 and 25 members of the 200 member legislative assembly (Parliament or Eduskunta in Finnish). There are also 10,000 municipal councilors who are elected in the same way as the MPs. Finland's political system has an ever expanding corporate dimension as well, and this means that the importance of elected assemblies has been declining in Finland vis-a'-vis other decision making bodies. Trade unions, employers organizations and other representatives of the state actively engage in incomes policy negotiations and women are far less numerous in these bodies than in elected assemblies (Haavio-Mannila in Lovenduski: 1981). It is important, then, to have information, not just on elected officials, but also material on women's participatory levels in some non-elected positions.

There is ample data available on Finnish women voters, candidates and office holders. By 1910, only 4 years after universal suffrage was achieved in Finland,

nearly 10% of the members of Parliament were women (Haavio-Mannila: 1985). Finnish women, since having achieved the vote in 1906, have been on average better represented in Parliament than in any other liberal democracy (Skard: 1980). Below I give a brief overview of women's success in representation at the national level, i.e., in Parliament as well as at the local level in municipal councils. Following that, I present some data on the percentage of women involved in non-elective positions.

Parliament

It appears as though women are more successful in gaining representation at the national level than at the municipal level, which is relevant to the main thesis of this dissertation, namely the importance of women in national narrative and imaginings. In 1917, the first year of Finnish independence, women made up 9% of the Parliament. By 1983, with 62 women in the Parliament, their percentage had risen to 31%, and in 1992, with 77 female members of parliament, the figure is 38.5%.⁵¹

⁵¹ It is interesting that in eastern Finland women were more often voted into parliament (especially from non-socialist parties) than women in western Finland. One theory is that due to the cultural traditions arising out of the traditional male labor of the area (hunting, fishing, trading journeys, and later forestry), men were away from home for long periods of time. This left women home alone taking care of the farms and homes, and thus able to develop a more independent stance. Haavio-Mannila (1985). See Koester's work in Iceland for a similar environment for women.

While these figures are not consistent with the percentage of women in the population, it is nonetheless a significant proportion of representatives. Women Mps have been more involved with issues and legislation relating to human safety and security, special social groups and minorities and environmental protection (CEMW: 1985). One study on members of parliament's activities showed that women tended to work in areas categorized as reproduction (the family, health, alcohol, housing and social security) while men concentrated on problems in the production category (communications, fiscal policies, energy and regional policies.) (Sinkkonen and Haavio-Mannila: 1981:158). It has been pointed out that it might useful to challenge the categorizations of production and reproduction in the above study, as housing and social security, e.g., might be viewed as issues of production as well as reproduction in the context of Finnish culture (Blackmar:1985, personal correspondence).

Municipal Councils

In municipal councils women tend to be less represented than in the national elections. This is an interesting phenomenon as it does support the idea that women's legitimacy and power was more evident in nationalist structures rather than in the limited locale of the regional. It was easier to make inroads at the

national level.

Although the percentage of women holding municipal positions rose from 6.8% in 1950 to 25.2% in 1984 it still represents a notably smaller percentage than their representation at the national level. However, if we look at the 1980 general figure, which shows women making up 22.2% of municipal council membership, we can break that down into rural and urban percentages. In that year women totalled 40% of the council members in the five largest urban municipalities, while in the rural municipalities they made up only 20% of the councils' membership (CEMW:1985). Interestingly, however, it appears that women achieve positions of power in local government politics (municipal directors, chairs of local boards, council and committees) more often in small rural, geographically isolated units (Sinkkonen:1979).

Non-Elective Positions

At the level of Government Ministries (Cabinet Positions) women have tended to hold such positions as Minister of Education or Social Affairs and Health. There have been women holding other ministries, such as Justice and Finance, but these are the exceptions. Finland has the only female Minister of Defense in the world. Of the current cabinet, seven of the seventeen members are women.

An examination of women's leadership positions on

municipal committees is revealing. The percentage of female members and/or chairs of municipal committees in 1978 shows sharp variation depending on the nature of the committee. The following committees have fewer than 5% female representation in membership and 0% female chairs (with the exception of the Real Estate Committee with 7.1% female chairs and the Building Regulation and Municipal Planning Committees, with under 2% female chairs): the Technical Services Committee, the Fire and Rescue Committee, the Public Works Committee, the Civil Defence Committee, the (City) Transport Committee, the Agricultural Committee, and the Planning Committee. It is only in committees such as the Museum, Vacation, School, Health, Temperance, Board of Adult Education, Cultural, Social Welfare and Library Committee that we see significant percentages of women as both members and chairs -- ranging from 26.9% and 11.5% (women membership and chair respectively) for the Museum Committee to 50.1% and 30.9% for the Library Committee. ("Position of Women", Statistical Surveys:1980). On the above list of committees, women were thus found in greater numbers, as both regular members and chairs, in committees which were more closely linked to caretaking roles. It is important to bear in mind that the caretaking role in this context is not necessarily perceived as a weaker one. For example, within the Finnish cultural value system,

education is considered critical. As literacy is also highly valued, the Library Committee performs an important function.

From the above outline of women's political participation we can clearly see that in terms of activity in formal national politics Finnish women have an important but fairly segregated role.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE MARTTA ORGANIZATION: AN IMAGE OF
NATIONAL CARETAKER

Organization Background

The 1989 membership figures for the Martta Association put membership at slightly over 80,000. The median age of the members was over 50, and the majority were members of long standing. Martta also had a male membership of between 3-5%. Most of these males are husbands of members, and their membership can be explained as their status as spouses.⁵² There is a national Martta office (Marttaliitto) which is located in Helsinki. Finland is then divided into different district offices (piiriliitto, of which there are 17), and finally into the local associations (yhdistykset) and even smaller clubs (kerhot).⁵² In 1972, for example, there were 1,435 yhdistykset and 589 kerhot located throughout Finland. In a population of just under 5 million people, this is an extensive network of local groups. For 1992, the comparable figures are 69,861 members, 1,401 yhdistykset, and 391 kerhot. Martta has groups all over Finland, although there is a greater concentration in the eastern areas of the country.

⁵² This was more prevalent in the period when the membership dues were very inexpensive, and it was possible for an entire family to join for a low sum. As the dues have gone up, the membership of peripheral individuals has decreased.

⁵² The main difference between yhdistykset and kerhot, in addition to the smaller membership in a kerhot, is that administratively, the kerhot are looser than the yhdistykset. You would thus be more likely to find a kerho in a very sparsely populated area.

The central office develops programs and materials for the entire Martta organization. The central office, for example, determines the annual Martta theme, and then passes that information and any supporting materials on to the district offices, who offer it to the chairperson of the local groups. The district office is not in and of itself a Martta organization, but rather an arm of the national group and a clearing house for the local groups.

The signature activity of the Marttas is the Marttailta [Martta evening] or theme evening. This is the basic gathering for the Martta women, at which they might discuss a particular theme, often based on educational material offered through the central office, or have a paid advisor come in and do a demonstration of say, vegetarian cooking. The Marttailta is often just a meeting with no particular theme in mind, and simply a gathering of the group to spend some time together and plan future activities. Generally, Martta groups meet once a month. Although meetings often take place in the evening, there are also groups which meet in the afternoon.

Other important Martta activities are trips around Finland as well as courses on various topics. The courses range from the very practical, such as nutrition, gardening, wreath making, or microwave cooking, to the more spiritual/emotional as "Breaking Down Walls Between

People" or Finnish female poets. In 1988 the national Martta office held a Boat Seminar to Stockholm to discuss and plan for the future of the Marttas. Women from all over Finland attended the 3 day seminar which included workshops, lectures, and small group work.

Each local Martta group, to varying degrees, is involved in community activities, whether it be work for Independence Day festivities or organizing the annual Spring Cleaning (Talkoot). The Marttas, attired in their Martta dress and apron, were always a clearly visible sight at functions, serving food and taking care of the canteen aspects of the events. Some Marttas, for example the Joensuu Marttas, run a cafe at the market square, where they sell light refreshment and baked goods. In Helsinki, the central organization runs the Martta Hotel and Restaurant.

Individual Martta groups may choose the extent to which they work with nationally promoted themes and objectives. There are also international projects which Martta engages in, such as development work in third world countries. Martta's "Mother and Child in Kenya" project is one such example. All local groups, however, must keep good records and statistics for the central office, so each group has a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. The reason that the groups have to keep such close watch over their activities, and report on numbers

is that the Martta Association receives a substantial portion of its money from government subsidies. Because of this connection, accounting must be strict and accurate. Martta currently represents a broad spectrum of women who lay claim to the image of women as agents for the state. The ethnographic material presented below, garnered from my work with several yhdistykset (local groups), illustrates this.

The Martta Now - The Members

Why Women Join Martta

Many Martta join because it is something they learned from mothers and mothers-in-law. It is an associational affiliation that passes from generation to generation. Women are especially likely to join when there is a change in life circumstances -- for example, they get married, or have a child, or move away. At these points of passage many women were persuaded that there would be an advantage to joining the local Martta group.

Most typically, women were asked to join in when they moved to a new village, often after marriage. It was a situation where the local Marttas would come by and visit and invite the person to join. Although this would happen when almost any married young woman would come to the village,⁵³ it was definitely the case that if a teacher moved into the village she would automatically be asked to join the Martta group. Although the Martta group was certainly open to all the women in the village,

⁵³ I specify married woman because the membership of Martta is made up to a large extent of women who are married or widowed. A divorced woman that I interviewed had belonged to Martta when she'd been married, but once she moved after her divorce, the Marttas in the new village did not invite her to join. Another woman had joined Marttas as a founding member of her group early in the 1930s as a secretary of the group, but when she remained single she quit after several years because as she says, "it really was a group focussed on families."

because it was on one level an educational group aimed at improving standards of homemaking, teachers, who were considered a high status profession, were always tapped to become members, and hopefully even active as chairpeople, secretaries or treasurers.

Such was the case with Anna, who became certified as a teacher in 1951. She recalls that in her village, the emäntäs, or homemakers (farm wives) had founded the group, but then teachers had been asked along. In 1952 she moved to the village where she became a teacher and raised her family. In that village there was a Martta group that had been founded in 1927. She recalls

Another teacher was the chairperson. She was already old and she thought that I could become the new chairperson. But I didn't become it right away, although I did join right away. It was always really clear, that, I would be a Martta, because all the farm wives of the village were Marttas. That was the custom at the time. All of them were Marttas.

In a similar fashion, Annukka, who's been a member for the past 26 years, remembers her linking with Marttas in the village where she moved. She had been active in Marttas where she'd lived previously, but in the new village:

...a group of Marttas came to my house and asked if I wanted to join and told me that they were looking for a treasurer. I did not want to become a treasurer right away but I did join. The group was made up of mainly farmer's wives.

A comparable story was related by Sirpa, another teacher, who moved to the center village in 1946. Several women

came over soon after she arrived and asked her to join and become active, which she did. For Sirpa, being involved in Martta also allowed her a closer relationship to the parents of the children she taught:

It's nice to teach a child when you know their parents, what kind of home they come from, what particular problems the family has.

The teacher-Martta link, then was important for both the Martta organization itself, in lending prestige and educational organization to the group, as well as in cementing ties between Martta and the community.

Although the teacher status added something to the status of the group, it also opened up the community to the teacher.

Another group of women joined because it was a custom passed down from an earlier generation. This earlier generation was often made up of women who had been founding members of the groups in their villages. The tradition would be carried on almost without question by daughters and daughters-in-law.⁵⁴

Helmi recalls her life as Martta:

My fate was such, that my mother was the local Martta chairperson. I've been a part of Martta since I was a child. As a young child, I was always along with

⁵⁴ Although the women I interviewed who had joined for this reason were extremely satisfied with Martta participation, I did run into a young woman in her 20s who told me she was involved with Martta because her mother-in-law compelled her to do so. She was embarrassed about belonging to a group which was so old-fashioned but felt that she really didn't have a choice.

my mother. Probably since I was five years old I've gone traveling to the different Martta meetings. At that time

I was a 'little Martta' -- they actually took children on as members. They don't do that any more.

Her own participation as an adult Martta began after she got married, in 1960. After a short period in Helsinki, where she studied, she came back and got married. She moved to the next village over, where her husband lived, and where his mother was secretary of the Martta group. It all just 'fell into place' and she joined. Helmi represents the Martta member for whom being a Martta was almost a part of growing up and a natural order of adulthood.

In the case of women who join through a particular set of life circumstances, two particular ones stand out. One is the change in life that occurs when one is married, and the other is the one which occurs when children leave the home. As the Marttas are particularly related to the family setting, it would make sense that women would see a benefit to joining upon marriage. Elma puts it quite clearly,

I have been married for 30 years, so for 30 years I have been active in the Marttas of my village. The treasurer they had at the time had to leave so she called and asked me if I would like to take over. I went to the Martta evenings for a month and then took over the work of the treasurer.

Interestingly, although her own mother had been a Martta she hadn't known that much about Marttas, because her mother hadn't been that interested in the group. It

seemed as though, Martta membership was almost mandatory for married women in the village, although there were always some women who didn't join.⁵⁵

For older members it represented a strong force in education. Hilkka recalled that "the Marttas were the only educational club there [in the village where she lived in 1931]. I met people of my age and became interested."

Most of the women discussed above joined at a relatively young age, at the start of their married lives. For some women, however, Martta participation became something which developed later in life. Tynne is representative of this choice. She remembers,

I was married, and had four children, all of whom were already in school, so I had plenty of time on my hands. Someone asked me to join the Marttas, so I did. I didn't always attend the meetings, though, for it was a long way for me to get there.

Again we see the theme of being asked to join emerging in Tynne's story, but also the idea that she waited until her children were at least school age and she would have a bit more time for the activities. Although the Marttas prided themselves in being a group which was inclusive of all family members, it wasn't always possible to maintain

⁵⁵ When asked why some women in the village did not belong to Martta, most answers touched on the issue that perhaps some women did not think they were good enough to belong to Martta, although all members vehemently denied that there was any kind of class system involved in Martta membership. It was definitely a group for everyone.

active ties.

Sometimes the reason is quite practical, as in the case of Sinikka. She joined quite late in her life, and has been a member since 1980. She recalls:

My neighbor belonged to the Marttas and she was complaining that nobody else here does, and she always has to go to the meetings by herself. She wanted me to join, for I had a car and I could give her a ride, too.

Arja, a woman who represents all the strands of motivations for joining offers this in response to the query about when she joined the Marttas:

I don't remember exactly. It was over ten years ago. I was feeling rather lonely where I lived. I was working as a karjakko [dairy cattle worker] and my employer was the Martta's chairperson and asked me to join. My mother was a Martta, too. I went there to look for some action. My children were small at the time, and I couldn't always attend the meetings, but I did pay my membership fee.

In Arja, then, all threads are captured. She saw the tradition through her mother, she was asked to join, and she sought out an additional activity in her life.

What we see in members' decisions to join is the fact that the Martta group presented a space which would be educational, outside of their regular activities, and a tie with other women in the village.

Meaning of Martta Membership

Despite the fact that Martta membership is outside of the realms of kin relations, and not a combative 'movement', most women involved felt strongly about their participation and the role Martta has played in their lives. The meanings of membership ranged from simply something to fill up the spare time, to a much more involved role. Practical benefits are evident, as well as social elements. The relationship between the private realm of a nuclear family and the broader family of the nation emerges as Martta groups offer an alternative to the isolated life of a farmer's wife. This was particularly true in the past.

Ritva comments:

Martta involvement has been very important, especially when I was younger. It was a chance for all the women in the village to get together. It has always been a good venthole out into the world, not just for me but for many others as well.

The practical benefits coincide with the social for

Sirpa:

...it's been important because I've made friends and acquaintances -- always gotten new ideas and enthusiasm -- and it's practical in learning how to prepare more modern foods -- you always learn something -- it's never boring. That 'all over good feeling' at the very least.

For members, then, Martta membership became a lifeline to the larger world. One member found the trips that the Martta group organized to be the greatest benefit. The Martta image of the female is constantly put into

practice. Women are learning practical skills, and also developing as individuals, and connecting to the larger world in ways that redefine and aggrandize their own position in it.

What is striking about the Martta group, and the caretaker image of female, is that for the members, although Martta is a family centered organization, its support for the family comes in part by insuring that women have opportunities to refine themselves outside family connections. In this way, too, a certain amount of respect is accorded to the mother and caretaker, and the extent to which this work requires skilled concentration, outside input, and material support. In Martta, women get emotional as well as practical needs addressed. Hilka captures these sentiments:

It's been very refreshing to have meetings and see my friends as a compensation to all the worry. It was also a good chance to take distance from home. We sang Martta songs, read poetry and stories. It was a lot of fun.

From my own attendance at Martta gatherings -- an outsider though welcomed -- I can confirm that they were sustaining and fun. Although a number of people in Finland hold the stereotype of old women sitting around, knitting and gossiping, the principal issue at many of the meetings was simply to enjoy oneself, connect to each other, and confirm the value of one's lot in life -- even while knitting!

Leadership positions within Martta Groups

Within a local Martta group there are three leadership positions -- the chairperson, the treasurer and the secretary. But there seems to be little power manipulation, little individual maneuvering to get them. In fact, Martta members who held those positions were often complaining about how they had planned to take the position for a limited period of time and now found themselves, ten years later, still holding the position. In most cases, the women who occupied one of these posts was simply asked to do it by another member. As we saw above, teachers were often tapped to be chairpersons. Other than that, though, there were no distinct criteria upon which the posts rested. As Helmi put it, "I always stressed in my Martta activities that there are no political or class boundaries." The major requirement for taking on a post was a willingness to do so.

For Ritva, who was a founding member of the Martta group in her village, she was the secretary for a long time because, having attended business school people figured she would have the right skills for the job. Later she became the chairperson, and was considered very successful in that she persuaded many people to join in Martta activities through her enthusiasm.

Martta groups must keep very close financial and activity records. They are accountable to the state via

the national Martta office. Often the leadership roles involve a fair amount of paperwork.

Hilkka, after belonging to her Martta group for five years, became the chairperson. She recalls:

...Aili was their chairperson at the time, and she wanted to retire, and that's how I became the chairperson, though I wasn't too crazy about it.

Thus, even though the position of chairperson carried with it a certain degree of prestige and status among the Marttas, women did not fight to gain those positions. On the contrary, it was often necessary to twist their arms to make them accept the position. In fact, one older member theorized that perhaps the reason younger people were staying away from Martta was that they were afraid of being asked to fill leadership positions!

Martta -- Who is it for? (Individual, Home, nation?)

The Marttas are variously described as a home-economics organization, a charity organization,⁵⁶ and as a homemaker's group. All people agree on one issue. Martta is not a political organization. This is stated in by-law #4 of the Martta Organization regulations. (The regulations for the local groups). "The yhdistys will not take a stand in party politics" (Marttaliitto ry:1988:17). Partisan politics have no place within the group. As one member stated, "even Communists could come."⁵⁷ But as I have demonstrated, politics is intrinsic to the Martta organization. It helped to bring into being the Finnish state, and its members continue to support the nation-state as agents of the state. They are a national organization supporting overarching nationalist aims. An excerpt from the Martta handbook, on the aims of the Martta Association:

Culture and national development means the value and preservation of things characteristically [intrinsically] Finnish. This includes patriotism [isänmaa], a just and equal society, respect for other people's work and beliefs and the preservation and development of Finnish culture and traditions. (Marttan yhdistysopas [Martta organization guide]:15)

⁵⁶ Martta members emphatically deny that the Martta group is a charity group.

⁵⁷ One member commented though, that if someone was from a leftist party or very poor or if the mother had leftist opinions and bore a resentment against better things, then she wasn't a Martta.

Martta, there to benefit the home, was also benefitting the nation. Because they participate in the domestic setting, not usually viewed as a political domain, they don't view themselves as political actors, but in the imaging of the state, and its perpetuation, they are prime actors.

An element of class was involved in that it was felt that the Martta lessons could be most beneficial to the less-educated and perhaps less well-off farm wives, as well as their daughters⁵⁸. Anna, the teacher and chairperson states:

It was founded to encourage the welfare of the Finnish home and home economics. When the emäntä was educated and taught then she would know how to run a home such that work would be done well in the best possible way. In the summer in the garden and in the winter in the home. They planted carrots and rutabaga and turnips which weren't known in many places before the Marttas. When it was founded, the benefit came to the home where there was an active Martta. The Martta member herself brought benefits into the home. In that way, it was then a benefit for everybody.

Anna stresses the themes of home and nation in her quote. The Finnish home, the appropriate and efficient Finnish home, would benefit from the skills of the mother as caretaker. The creation of such a home becomes a political act in that the benefits to the individual family would translate into benefits for the nation. The

⁵⁸ Many girls from the countryside were trained at Martta Home Economics schools to become maids and household help for families in the cities.

home advisors employed by Martta re-enforced this theme. Caretaking was professionalized, something which women, if they wanted to do something for their family (nation) would be willing to learn and do well. We clearly see, then, that although the Marttas do not articulate political goals or aims, they are in fact steeped in a clear relationship to Finnish nationalism, as agents in the production of the Finnish state.

Martta Ideology

Marttas do not view their group as ideological, in much the same way that they do not see any political nature to their work. Martta's song alone refutes the view that there is no ideological base to the Martta organization. The song involves a battle -- a battle for the framing of the nation. "Give us energy to work and battle; If you're a Martta, we'll shake hands come and join me in work." A war is being waged by the Marttas, and there is a distinction between the women who accept that ideology (those with whom they'll shake hands), and those who reject it (all the others). Because, however, the Martta ideology conforms with the dominant political, cultural and gender norms, it does not make itself apparent. It appears to be just a basic aspect of life, not any type of ideological battle to fight over. This also illustrates how the image of Martta women leads to their position as agents for the state, and emphasizes the sub-current of ideology which underpins the organization.

Several members, however, did offer their particular views on Martta's ideology. The question which elicited the most heated responses was whether or not Martta is a women's organization.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Many questions regarding the women's movement and feminism in particular were met with unfavorable comments. For example, once in asking someone what she thought about

We're definitely not a feminist organization. Our aim is to influence the home, through women. Especially in the past, it was important to help overworked mothers with many children and a lot of work around the house. When children are small, it's hard to have time and energy to look for outside activities. That is when the Martta org. can help a lot. It gives you a nice change, as well as information and support.

(Annukka)

The heart of the Martta ideology is captured by Annukka. All the Martta members I talked with were strong supporters of equality policies in the work place, as well as help for overworked homemakers. The majority of their daughters were working full-time outside of the home, and they recognized the need for a more equitable distribution of labor at home.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the frame of the Martta ideology, as the members perceive it, is one working for the whole, larger family, including the nation. That sense of working for the nation is illustrated by Arja and Anna:

feminism, feminismi in Finnish, she started to talk very positively. I was rather surprised until I realized that she thought I had asked her about Punainen Risti, or the Red Cross. Her comments about feminism were far from positive, and she made it quite clear that she had no connection with feminists.

⁶⁰ The Martta women I talked with all mentioned how their sons or sons-in-law were now participating in childcare and housework. They acknowledged that it was very different in their day, but they approved of the changes. There was unanimous agreement, however, that the best place for a child to be in the pre-school stage is at home, with his/her mother. That is why they support child care allowances which would permit women to stay home with young children as opposed to public daycare.

Home, religion and fatherland.

Martta is first and foremost not affiliated with any party, so in that way you can't think of it as having any real kind of ideology. Marttas are patriotic, and the correct Marttas are religious.

The Martta ideology rests on a goal -- the furtherance of the Finnish state through the cementing of this image of female.

What is the Martta spirit?

The ideological notions of caretaker and patriotism are reflected in the Martta spirit and its expression in practice. Martta activities within the community, particularly the parish, illustrate how the Martta spirit is related to the life ideology elements. Diligent, hard-working, industrious, and active are all the adjectives which come to mind when describing the Martta spirit.

Typical comments about the Martta spirit:

Taking care of the home.

Even though in the Boat Seminar⁶¹ a lot of people were opposed to it, I think that religion is a big part of Martta work. And the spirit of the home.

The Martta spirit includes quite a bit of work outside of the home, as the Marttas organize the 'talkoot' or collective work parties. A typical talkoot organized by

⁶¹ The best answer to the seminar leader's question about what the Martta spirit was came from one member who said, "We'll know by tomorrow morning after we've been in our cabins all night with three others!"

the Marttas is the spring cleaning talkoot, where the entire community is asked to come out and help clean up the community as well as clean their homes. The Marttas are generally the ones who provide volunteers to do the catering for local government functions or celebrations, such as Independence Day. Here again we see the political and personal (gender) connection that the Marttas -- homemakers and nationmakers -- combine in their lives.

Marttas in the future

Finally, it is important to understand how the Martta's view the future of their organization. In many interviews, there was a definite sense that the future would be difficult for the Marttas. A variety of reasons were given. For one thing, women felt that women were moving out of the countryside more often than men, and this left a dearth of possible new members. Also, it was clear that the Martta members themselves had become so involved with other activities that they had less time to go to Martta events. In addition, many of the traditional Martta activities, such as courses, were being taken over by other groups, such as the village council, who could offer similar courses at a lower rate.

In November, I attended a 2 day 'Boat Seminar". The district office (piiriliitto) of the Marttas in the area where I'd done fieldwork organized this event, in which the Marttas from the area went on a cruise from Helsinki to Stockholm, working while on the boat, and having a free day in Stockholm for shopping or whatever. The theme of the seminar was what was the shape of Martta's future. We left for Helsinki very early on the bus that the Marttas had chartered. The six hour trip to the capital went quickly, as there was plenty of singing. On the boat, however, we got down to business, and examined the question of Martta's future.

The work was organized into a combination of large lectures and small group work. The lectures included the following topics: the position of women in Finland, career opportunities for women (with acknowledgement that women were in a worse position than men)⁶², academic analysis of this phenomenon⁶³, and what kinds of activities would now attract people to join Martta. They acknowledged the fact that the Kansalaisopisto (folk school) had taken over many of the courses of Martta, and discussed what Martta could do to gain back some participants.

In small groups we worked to come up with solutions for dwindling membership and activity levels. The main suggestions focused on increasing the involvement of youth and young women, as well as activities and courses that recognize that women were now working outside of the home to a much greater extent than previously. There was also an emphasis on getting men more involved in household management, as well as the recognition that courses (cooking, microwave, gardening) for single men

⁶² The word feminist was brought up only once, in reference to the declaration that the Marttas were most definitely not feminists. Even women's rights were not discussed.

⁶³ They used the work of sociologist J.P. Roos to explain how there are different sensibilities for the different generations of Finnish citizens. The post-war generation (the generation of haves) is very different from the war generation (the generation of scarcity), for example.

might be well-received. There was some discussion on whether there should be pay for Martta work (within the local groups), but this suggestion was soundly put down, as most women felt that the voluntary nature of Martta work was one thing which made it so special.

From the Boat Seminar discussions, it seemed evident that the Marttas clearly understood that the state had shifted from supporting their work to actually taking it over on some levels. Although there are numerous reasons why Martta activity is diminishing, it is clear that the state has played a primary role in this, in actually taking over the activities which Martta had previously served.⁶⁴ This provides further evidence of how the Marttas, as agents for the state, have in fact done their work very well. One might say that they have done it too well, as they are in danger of losing their unique position as the state has adopted it so fully into its own practice.

⁶⁴ In an interesting update, however, the position of the Martta group is strengthening during the early 1990s due to the severe economic situation Finland finds itself in. Once again, as during the lean years in Finland's history, the Marttas can offer people economical and efficient household methods. They just recently published a cookbook of economical recipes.

CHAPTER SIX: UNIONS TODAY: AN INQUIRY INTO FEMINISM AND
THE STATE IN FINLAND

Feminism in the Finnish context

The portrait of developing feminism in Finland is tied in quite closely to nationalist narrative notions of female and equality. Unioni, and its place within this process, provides a focal point for understanding how the feminist image of female has been limited by the narrative motif of female as caretaker and nurturer of a multi-generational family. In particular, the concept of equality, as understood by the state and feminists, is critical to an understanding of the relationship between the feminist image of woman and Finnish nationalism.

Political structures provide the context for the development of social movement politics. By their nature, social movements often raise serious questions outside normal government channels, often regarding subjects that are not being treated as topics of public concern. (Gelb:1988:30)

Gelb, in the observation above, points out a key obstacle for the development of feminism as a social movement in the Finnish context. Both in the imaging of the Finnish nation, as well as in its deployment, gender inclusiveness and the value of equality are emphasized. The issue of equality is considered to be of primary concern within legislative channels. The state anticipates or co-opts women's concerns into public policies -- even without significant pressure from women's groups. Policies related to women are generally discussed within the framework of 'equality' or 'family'

policy. In framing the issues in such a way, the state serves to limit the rewards of its policies to those who choose to continue to identify gender relations as interdependent. As a result, the nature of an independent feminist movement is shaped by its relationship to 'state equality.' State equality, in effect, chokes off an independent feminist movement just as it gathers steam.⁶⁵ This is in sharp contrast to the United States, for example, where the state does not take the initiative in promoting gender equality. In the U.S., interest group feminism develops, where the relationship to the state exists in part via lobbying groups involved in the fight for equal rights and legal equality. Because there is little state recognition of gender inequality as an issue important to state survival and health, a social movement develops around the issue. Under the conditions of state equality found in Finland, women's political participation and activism within a feminist social movement, organized outside of official channels, will be limited. There is, in effect, a lack of space for a women's movement (Marakowitz: 1988). Instead, women act

⁶⁵ For an interesting discussion of equality in the American context, see Sarvasy (1992). She divides 1920s feminism in the U.S. into social feminism (social reforms first and feminism second) and egalitarian feminism (focus solely on equality). Finland's situation reflects social feminism to some extent, but differs in that it was embedded within state goals, rather than as a campaign on the outside of state structures and ideology.

via political parties, trade unions, and other official or semi-official bodies. They act not as lobbyists pressuring those bodies, but rather as participants within those bodies.

A renewed feminist movement (the 'second wave of feminism') unfolded internationally in the 1960s, and Finland felt its impact by the mid 1960s. The social movement for women's rights which developed in Finland at this time took on, not surprisingly, a different shape from movements in other Western countries. In the United States, for example, this second wave of feminism found its expression in small groups of women, often grass roots in nature and non-hierarchical in structure. The guiding principles of feminism found in the U.S. were the ideas of sexual politics and the 'personal is political.' Sexual politics was understood to encapsulate a system of interpersonal power by means of which individual men dominated individual women. A clear and distinct connection is made between the personal relationship between men and women and the political nature of that relationship.⁶⁶ The phrase 'the personal is the political'⁶⁷ echoed the formulation of sexual politics

⁶⁶ The classic exposition of sexual politics is found in Kate Millet's Sexual Politics (1970). See also, E. Janeway's Man's World, Women's Place: A Study in Social Mythology.

⁶⁷ This phrase was coined by Carol Hanisch, in The Radical Therapist, 1971 (Eis)

and the politicizing of personal male-female relationships. Women were kept subordinate to men because of the social control of all women by all men under the patriarchy. This social control was enforced, in part, through personal relationships via economic, psychological, legal and ideological means. The subordination of women, according to this analysis, extended even into the reaches of heterosexual intercourse, which was perceived as the expression of men's power over women. This analysis of women's subordination resonated for American feminists for two reasons. First, it was centered in an area in which American women were visible and active participants, i.e., interpersonal relationships with men, and second, it offered at least a partial explanation as to why women weren't found in positions of power in the public arena. The majority of American women were not in positions of power within the political system. In addition, the American political system did not pay much heed to women's concerns. These two factors combined to force American feminists to work outside of the system and even call for a dismantling of that system. American feminists had little to lose by calling into question the basic structures of the system as they were not part of its workings.

In Finland, however, the ideas of sexual politics as

outlined above did not really take root until much later, well into the 1980s.⁶⁸ This is because, in contrast to the American case, not only was the Finnish state receptive to the concerns of women, but those concerns were integral to state policy. In addition, women in Finland are fairly well-integrated into positions in the state bureaucracy as well as trade unions. As participants in the systems, rather than agitators on the outside, as in the American case, Finnish feminists found it much more effective to work within the structure. Dismantling the structure would, in effect, diminish some of women's power base. There is a limit, however, to how far Finnish feminists can drive issues within the context of the state structure. State intervention in areas of equality, as well as areas of concern to women, can lead to the shift from a 'private patriarchy' (women in a position of dependence upon a male in a nuclear family) to a 'public patriarchy' (women dependent on a 'state'). (Hernes: 1984). This is particularly true in social welfare states like Finland, where women's lives are more dependent and determined by state policies than men's, because they are both clients or recipients of social

⁶⁸ There were, of course, discussions of patriarchal structures taking place in Finland before the 1980s. In terms of policy goals, however, the work was still to be done within the structure. Also, issues such as violence against women only came to the forefront in the 1980s. In 1992-3 Unioni received a grant from the state to start a women's shelter.

welfare and employees in the public sector (Haavio-Mannila in Alapuro: 1985).⁶⁹

⁶⁹ For discussions of women and the welfare state in terms of dependency relationships in Scandinavia see, Patriarchy in a Welfare Society, Holter, H. ed., Welfare State and Woman Power, Hernes, H.. For discussions of women and the welfare state in the U.S., see Women, the State and Welfare, Gordon, L. ed. For an analysis of women and the welfare state and its connection to Marxism, see Women and the Welfare State, Wilson, E.

The Women's Movement in Finland

A brief history of the women's movement in Finland underscores the way in which the state becomes a stumbling block to the development of an independent women's movement. Jallinoja (1983) has identified three periods in the Finnish women's movement. The first period was the late 19th century (women's rights movement) which saw the creation of organizations such as Unioni. The women's rights movement was concerned with gaining basic civil rights for women, such as the vote and education and employment opportunities. In this period, the women's movement was closely tied to Finnish nationalist sentiment. Issues of women's rights became subsumed under the rubric of Finnish nationalist needs, and rather than understand suffrage as a 'women's issue', it was viewed as a necessary element to the foundation of a Finnish state.

The second period (equality movement) was from 1965-1970, and was dominated by the short-lived, but influential group, Yhdistys 9 (Organization 9)⁷⁰. When it began, Yhdistys 9 fought for issues such as abortion on demand and an equal division of housework but it later shifted its emphasis toward women's right to pursue careers and participate in public life. The notion of

⁷⁰ This group was made up of influential women as well as men, who made up a third of its membership.

equality in the Yhdistys 9 understanding rested on a male perspective, i.e., the male sex role was also seen as the ideal to be aspired to for women. The group dissolved itself in 1970, however, as the activists wanted to turn their attention to where the centers of power were, and the real decisions were made. The allure of the state became too great, as it appeared as though the state would address the issues which the group fought for. As a result, members of the group turned to political parties and governmental structures. (Sinkkonen in Rendel: 1981). The independent women's movement once again was choked off by the understanding that the power to bring about equality rested within the state structure.

The third period, identified as the women's liberation period, began in the mid 1970s. This stage saw the emergence of smaller, less-centralized feminist groups who, while continuing to fight the battle for equality as understood above, began to work to promote 'women's culture' and strengths. These smaller groups made their presence felt -- via a sort of feminist consciousness -- in media and academia. However, like many 'alternative movements' in Finland, this strand of feminism turned to larger, more traditional and official organizations (Bergman:1987:5). Unioni, a traditional, official organization, was the natural group to turn to

for a re-vitalized feminist movement in Finland. The women who radicalized Unioni in the mid-1970s were representative of women who believed in the notion of equality as expressed above -- and were still working through state institutions to gain it, but who also wanted to promote a sense of 'women's culture.' By centering themselves within a traditional women's rights organization they gained access to its standing and resources. At the same time, however, they were once again limited in their ability to create a truly independent social movement of feminism. The organization was closely linked to the political apparatus, and its own internal structure was hierarchical, in direct conflict with feminist tenets of grass roots activism and a non-hierarchical base.

Equality in the Finnish Context

It is clear from the above material that the attraction of the state flowed through all the periods of the women's movement in Finland, and took away from its strong, independent development. In order to understand another dimension of how this connection operated it is useful to examine the concept of equality in Finland throughout from the 1960s to the present.

The renewed feminist movement in Finland, in its first phase (1960s), was shaped in large part, by its understanding of the concept of equality. In the Finnish gender debate of the 1960s, equality was understood as a concept which involved both men and women, as the sex roles of both genders were being carefully scrutinized. Writing in 1968, Finnish sociologist Katarina Eskola observed,

"...the debate about sex roles does not concern only the question of facilitating women's condition, but also concerns the question of ameliorating the condition of men. Changes in women's condition mean also changes in men's condition. The emancipation of women in the field of employment requires man's emancipation in family life. Both parties are enriched by this." (Eskola:1968:8)

What differentiated the Finnish case from the gender debates in other countries was that in Finland, men were considered to be important participants in the sex roles debate. They were not thrown out of feminist groups;

instead they were brought in⁷¹ as full participants. Just as in the first women's rights movement, in the late 19th century, where women's issues became part of the nationalist debate, in the 1960s and 1970s, women's issues were broadened to become part of a social vision of an improved future. Finnish women retained "the belief that the exploitation of women could be abolished in conjunction with wider social political reforms." (Parvikko:1989:13) For Finnish women, then, the root of gender inequality was seen as a social problem. It was not so much men, or women's relationship to men which was the problem. Instead, inequality was interpreted as a lag in the implementation and realization of an expanded social good. Men were not the oppressors, but rather it was the social system which was not developed enough to offer full equality to women.

Partly thanks to the women's movement there are now in Finland only a few passages of law and other official provisions in which women are not bestowed with the same liberties and rights as men. Thus women are to a great extent formally liberated from their submissive position, but the liberty has not brought with it equality in all areas of life. The official equality between the sexes in front of the law

⁷¹ The abortion law reflects this. Even in the early 1970s, abortion reform was viewed as a social issue, part of reformist social policy. It was not considered to be a concern of women only. The decision to terminate a pregnancy belonged to men and women equally. Although reflecting shared responsibility, interpretation of abortion in this form also reflects a clear non-acceptance of women's autonomy. Women's self-determination is disregarded in this formulation.

is not yet complete. On the unofficial level there may still be discerned many inequalities and different treatment. The efforts to realize fraternity between men and women and human solidarity to abolish sexual segregation are still largely unconscious. (Haavio-Mannila: 1968)

This passage, from Finnish Woman and Man, an early (1968) classic on sex roles in Finland, offers two points which are germane to a discussion of equality in Finland.

First, Haavio-Mannila acknowledges that although women have pretty much attained equality legally, there are still problems in implementing those liberties on the daily stage. Mannila, a bit further in the book, concludes that this occurs because women and men have different means available to achieve socially valued (particularly in terms of public participation) statuses. In other words, the problem is a structural one, in which society has simply not internalized the value of the particular contributions women make to the common good. For Haavio-Mannila, women's opportunity to fully participate in social action would be an indication of the attainment of equality.

Second, the phrase 'fraternity between men and women' stands out as a telling reminder of the importance and cultural value attached to viewing male and female relations as interdependent. By using the term 'fraternity' Haavio-Mannila effectively erases sisterhood as a goal -- or even an option. She leaps beyond

sisterhood to the image of a future where humanity is the norm and the sexes are no longer segregated by inequality in society. Not surprisingly, issues of importance to the women's movement during this period (the equality period), revolved around sex segregation in labor⁷², and to some extent political decision-making. Yhdistys 9, the 'equality' group of the time, made inroads in gaining for women access to some of the same levels of social participation as men.

The women who took over Unioni in the mid-70s shared the above outlook on equality. What they added, however, was a cultural feminist perspective to the debate. According to this view, special value should be attached to women's attributes and women's perspective. Although still working to achieve equality, i.e. parity with men, Unioni women looked to exploit women's unique qualities, which could be harnessed to improve society. Solja, a member who joined in 1981, was active in an Unioni political action group which arranged meetings with female parliament members. She suggested, "give women 2 votes in elections, whereas men would have only one each ... or mothers could use their children's votes."

In this statement we see the acceptance of change as rooted within women's activism in the public,

⁷² Most of the work involved empirical and statistical information on women in the work force.

institutionalized arena, embedded in women's role as citizen -- a voting member of the state. At the same time, though, there is a desire to change the system to accommodate and acknowledge women's 'better' qualities -- women would be more beneficial to the running of a good state. Finally, there is an interesting aspect of keeping the mother-child bond (physical reproduction) within the realm of the female as caretaker. If women would be entitled to their children's votes, then in all likelihood women are still the primary caretakers of children, regardless of the state's role in reproduction.

Women's Subordination: The Missing Ingredient Found?

The year 1980 was a watershed year among Finnish feminists for the understanding of women's conditions in Finland. In the context of a discussion on the shape of women's studies in Finland, Auli Hakulinen noted,

Contemporary Women's Studies are not, at least not only, studies on equality. This is because the new women's movement defines its goals in a larger sense than merely aiming at equality with men. The importance of finding women's own identity, which differs from that of men, is stressed. (Hakulinen:1980)

She adds further,

And the endeavor is the liberation of women; not only setting her at the same position as man, but liberating her in her own terms to participate in social reform work. (Hakulinen:1980)

The first quote illustrates a move away from equality as the focus of the women's studies. While not totally dismissing equality studies, Hakulinen nonetheless argues for a broadened interpretation of equality; there is a recognition that equality is but one strand in the complicated issue of gender relations. She challenges women to find their own particular voice, similar to Unioni's endeavor to uncover and celebrate women's unique contributions. She still makes a connection with the original equality argument, however, in noting the relationship between a re-capturing of women's identity with social reform work. Most importantly, however, liberation implies subordination, and herein lies the

really radically new understanding of gender. By introducing the concept of subordination into the Finnish gender debate, Finnish feminists opened up the door for a new focus for feminism.

Studies in the 1980s still focussed on labor issues, but the approach differed because categories of male and female were being called into question, and the male model of attainment was being questioned. Gender as a socially produced category, which involved elements of subordination in its production and realization, became a focus of inquiry. The major shift in Finnish feminist thought came about in the late 1980s. For Finnish feminists, sexuality and the ideas behind sexual politics came into focus.

In Finland, sexuality has been studied very little. ...women's studies are marked by a concentration on the relation between the sexes in the labor market and on parental relations, but sexuality and corporeality have been forgotten. If we wish to move forward theoretically we need more courageous and many-sided studies. (Rantalaiho:1988)

Within academic discourse, then, feminist analysis via a sexual politics approach was called for. Did this translate into the social movement of feminism in Finland? In fact, in the late 1980s, another group of feminists took over Unioni in order to press for an agenda more rooted in examining feminism through the analysis of sexuality and 'the personal is political' mode. This group of feminists believed that the

subordination of women, through interpersonal relationships and sexuality, was the area of analysis which would lead to a change in gender relations such that women would no longer be oppressed by men.

In approaching gender relations from this perspective, these women challenge the state, and its image of women, in a way which is radical in the Finnish context by confronting and questioning the assumption that male-female relations are interdependent. The women who took Unioni over in 1987 highly value the personal, internal work women need to do to gain an understanding of their gender and its connections to society. They bring up questions about heterosexuality, and also give value to alternatives to it, such as lesbianism. In effect, they focus on sisterhood -- and female-female bonds (be they companiate or companiate/sexual -- homosocial or lesbian) -- instead of solidarity between the sexes. In terms of the national narrative, this approach disputes two of its central tenets -- the image of woman as caretaker/nurturer and equality as a social goal.

It is instructive to examine the way in which the actual takeover of Unioni happened in 1987, as it sheds light on the shift in feminist perspective and its ultimate goals for society and for women. This background will also lay the framework for the rest of

the chapter, which is an examination of Unioni in its current phase, where members of both factions are still active. The approaches of neither group are mutually exclusive to the other, i.e., all members may still fight for expanded legal rights for women. Their debate illustrates, however, how even the feminist notion of woman is contested within Unioni, and also how difficult it is to form a solid and independent feminist social movement in Finland. In order to understand the dimensions of the debate it is necessary to first understand the organizational structure of Unioni.

Unioni Organizational Structure

Unioni's stated purpose is to "strengthen and increase the influence and participation of women on different levels of society." (Unioni by-laws). Activities take place on two levels --consciousness raising groups, where women exchange experiences, and as a pressure group, where Unioni takes aim at policies and political topics. This would include courses and seminars exploring various topics, as well as statements and press releases concerning legislative or economic issues. The specific activities that Unioni focusses on vary in some respect, according to the membership involved, as well as the composition of the central board, as will be demonstrated below.

Unioni, as a nationally registered organization in Finland, has a set of legislative by-laws which govern its organizational structure and process. This set of rules and regulations set forth the parameters under which Unioni is run, and in an organization as wealthy as Unioni, one can see how individuals and groups within Unioni, who have different conceptions of feminism and Unioni's role in it, might have an interest in maintaining or changing by-laws. While it is likely that Unioni could get some government support for some of its programs, it has chosen, for the most part (with the exception of the women's shelter, for example), to remain

free of government funding, as this allows for the greatest freedom of activity. At this financial level we see concrete evidence of Unioni's differing relationship to the state as compared to the Marttas, who are very highly subsidized by the state. Also, Unioni has sufficient resources, independent of government money, to run its own programs as well as to fund various proposals from outside groups.

The general administrative structure of Unioni is as follows. Unioni is made up of about 350 dues paying members plus about 50 honorary members, but its mailing list is 900.⁷³ Unioni is run by a governing council or executive board (hallitus in Finnish) which is made up of seven permanent delegates and seven alternate [deputy] delegates. The alternate delegates have voting power in the event that the permanent delegate is unable to vote. All members of the board (permanent and alternate) are elected at the Fall meeting through an election in which all members of Unioni who attend the convention may vote. The board elects from within its own ranks the offices of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

⁷³ In 1988, Unioni's mailing list contained over 900 names. In a mail survey I conducted of Unioni members, I sent questionnaires to the entire mailing list. I received 597 replies. The replies I received from women, over and above the 350 dues paying members, were from those people who considered themselves supporters of Unioni who had just fallen out of touch, but still agreed with the cause. (See appendix for survey results).

Although the role of the board has been the subject of a certain amount of debate in recent years, as evidenced by the struggle described above, according to the by-laws it does have certain clearly defined responsibilities. Chief among these is the handling of Unioni's considerable financial resources. This involves investing the endowed monies, as well as overseeing Unioni's real estate holdings, including Villa Salin, Unioni's Villa on the bay in Helsinki. There is, however, a separate Villa Salin council, which oversees the running of the Villa Salin.

In addition to managing the financial investments of Unioni, the board is also instrumental in making decisions regarding the allocation of Unioni funds. This involves day to day operations as well as making decisions regarding the allocation of money to various groups and organizations seeking support from Unioni. There is always a certain amount of debate regarding what kinds of projects should be funded, although there is a fairly strong consensus that projects supporting women or women's activities should be given priority. The board also makes decisions regarding who would get to use Unioni space, including outside groups.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Similar to project funding, groups made up of women were given priority in using Unioni space. For example, there was a fair amount of discussion as to whether the Chilean refugee group should be allowed to use the space for parties, since there would be men as well as women

The board holds meetings weekly, and more often if special needs arise. The meetings are run according to an agenda decided on in advance, with each member having an opportunity to discuss the topics at length. The meetings could be quite lengthy, sometimes lasting as long as five hours. In general, the board would not take a formal vote, but would rather come to a consensus about an issue, after having heard the various opinions of the board members.

For Unioni general membership, the board is considered very important. Although much of Unioni activity emanates from the grassroots, it is nonetheless the board who essentially set the tone of the organization and its overall goals. All applications to join Unioni go the board, which then recommends the applicants for approval.

In addition to the board meetings, Unioni holds two general membership meetings, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. As mentioned above, the board is elected at the Fall meeting. Unioni also holds monthly meetings, which are open to all members. Although not as well attended as the Fall and Spring meetings, these meetings are important, because in addition to general issues

attending. Most members felt that as long as the Chilean refugee group didn't take space from a women's group, then it was alright. Several members, however, felt that the Chilean refugee group, as a mixed group, should really find a different place to gather.

about Unioni, it is at these meetings that applications from prospective new members are approved. While these approvals are essentially pro forma at this point, what is important is that the applicants are not members of Unioni until they are approved of at this meeting. At a typical monthly meeting, board members discussed a range of topics. They often deal with concerns about membership, such as whether Unioni membership is becoming too homogenous. The majority of members are between 30 and 40 years old: is it possible to attract both younger and older members? The board also examined its economic and budget responsibilities and its implementation of policy.

Of course, Unioni is not made up solely of a system of government and by-laws. Unioni's essence comes from the activities of its members, which take place in formal and informal groups. Some of the more active, formal groups in Unioni are the library group, the women in development group, consciousness raising groups, the domestic violence group, and the political activity group. The groups vary greatly in terms of how often they meet and how active they are. A group affiliated with Unioni, but not an official group within the organization, is the Women's Cultural Center, which publishes *Naisten Ääni*, the publication of Unioni. This group also stages various protests throughout the year.

It is a very active and visible group, and a majority of its members are also active as Unioni members. In addition to groups, Unioni organizes frequent discussion and lecture series, which are open to the general public. Conversation Club has weekly or bi-weekly meetings which focus on such topics as feminism in Finland, women writers, women and film, and the like. There is usually a speaker, either from within Unioni or from the outside, who gives a brief presentation followed by discussion. In addition to Conversation Club lectures, outside speakers are brought in to discuss special topics, such as a British lawyer, Jane Atkins, who discussed the recent Equality Act and Marriage Act in Finland.

Unioni also holds special functions through which it attempts to draw in a larger public, both through inviting members of other organizations, or as the provider of an official rolemaker for a particular event, such as International Women's Day. One event which Unioni sponsored was the "Hat Party." The "Hat Party" was a theme which offered a lighthearted way of emphasizing women's networking potential. This was a primarily social function, held at Villa Salin at the beginning of the summer. Various women's groups were invited, including the Marttas group, but they did not attend. Women from government were also invited, and some did attend. Women were invited to 'wear a special

hat', and to show their solidarity for women's issues by using the party as a way to network and build coalitions amongst women.

Unioni also runs the Women's Cafe at its headquarters in the center of Helsinki. This is a relaxed setting where all women (not just Unioni members) can come in for coffee or tea and browse among Unioni's publications and library holdings. In addition to providing a women-only space, the Cafe exposes non-Unioni women to the organization. It also re-confirms the Finnish view of women as nurturers, i.e food-providers.

Finally, the Feminist Radical Therapy group(s) currently make up an important part of Unioni's activities. Many Unioni members participate in an FRT group, and Unioni space is used to hold meetings and trainings. The trainings usually last a week, and then occasional weekends. Later in this chapter this group will be the focus of a case study, as it represents the clearest illustration of the battle between the first and second wave of feminists in the revitalized Unioni.

The 1987 Revolution in Unioni

According to members on both sides, the overthrow of the council at the annual meeting was about power and control. The actual event which precipitated the overthrow was the tabling of new applicants' applications at a council meeting. A group of women supportive of the dissenters had applied to join Unioni, and the old board had tabled the new applications until after the annual meeting. Many of the women in the dissenting group were active in Feminist Radical Therapy. There had been some conflict over the use of Unioni space for FRT meetings (they lasted an entire weekend and precluded any other group from using the space), and the FRT members wanted to be sure of representation on the board.

It soon became apparent that a deeper level of discontent existed at Unioni, and the FRT faction tapped into that dissatisfaction in order to gain enough votes to overthrow the council. Unioni is a wealthy organization, and the dissenters believed that Unioni's money was not being used wisely -- neither in terms of investments nor funding projects.⁷⁵ The mood and atmosphere at Unioni after the overthrow was markedly

⁷⁵ There was also a great amount of debate concerning Villa Salin, Unioni's waterfront property in Helsinki. The Helsinki city council was forcing Unioni to either make modifications to the existing property or sell it, and this decision caused great debate in terms of what Unioni's position should be in this matter.

different. Members who had been thrown out of power were shocked and saddened, and attempted to fight back⁷⁶, but the overall feeling at Unioni was that the group had become much more open and tolerant to new ideas and movement goals.

These dissenting women emphasized a more personal approach to feminism, and were interested in developing the internal side of feminism. Whereas the first new wave feminists still wanted to work for legislative reform within the equality model, the second wave women were interested in issues of the body, sexuality, and psychology. The latter group did not dismiss the work of the earlier group, but they did feel that it would not really be effective unless it was accompanied by internal healing. This new group of feminists were more radical in that they were trying to push the feminist agenda away from the inter-dependent notion of the sexes, to one in which women were truly able to identify with other women as their primary focus. Feminist Radical Therapy, a form

⁷⁶ When the new board was elected in the 1987 revolution, the old board called for a special general meeting, as they wanted to contest the election of the board. There were some bureaucratic fights as to whether there was, according to the by-laws, even a right to call this extra meeting. It was finally allowed, but its challenge to the election results was ineffectual. The members who called for the meeting also tried, unsuccessfully, to argue for a waiting period before new members were approved. Their reasons for this proposal were that Unioni, an organization with such a long history, and such a wealthy endowment to protect, should not just quickly and automatically allow in new members.

of women-centered group therapy, was a primary focus of this group.

Feminism and Unioni

In order to best understand how particular versions of feminist ideology -- as reflected by the two strands of feminism currently found in Unioni -- have had an impact on Unioni members' lives, I explore how feminism and feminist ideology are interpreted by members. In addition, I explore the dimensions of a policy debate within Unioni concerning Feminist Radical Therapy. This conflict dramatically portrays Unioni's struggle to define and realize the goals of feminism.

The Draw of Unioni

The specific route to Unioni's doors varied. Women came to Unioni through friends who already belonged⁷⁷, or after hearing or reading about Unioni in the media, or through its own publication, Akkaväki. For members who joined in the mid-70s, during Unioni's shift toward broader membership and closer ties to the re-emerging women's movement, motivation sprang directly from involvement with the women's movement. Leila joined in 1974 because:

I had been politically involved with the women's movement in the past [with the Finnish committee for International Women's Year]. I did not join so much as an individual who was trying to figure out my own role as a woman. That's something that came later. Sure, in a way it was also a political move because at that time many Kokoomus [Conservative Party] and RKP [Swedish Party] women were joining Unioni. Back then I think we were all feeling more political.

For women who were politically active in political parties, Unioni offered the chance to work on women's issues outside of party politics. Hilikka, who joined in the mid-1970s, expresses this view:

As I remember, I joined just because I had been politically active all the time and I probably had this

⁷⁷ Up until about 5 years ago it was necessary to have the approval of two current Unioni members in order to be approved to become a member. This policy has been abolished, although new members must still fill out applications and be approved of at the monthly meetings. In fact, one of the major disputes during the year I was doing fieldwork was over the fact that the then current board had held applications back in order to prevent the potential new members from having voting power at the semi-annual meeting in the fall.

feeling that I should join such an organization, which isn't part of party politics but that also dealt with women's issues.

Sometimes after a woman had firsthand experience with discrimination she decided to join. For Helmi, who was 27 when she joined in 1978, this was the case:

Just after I finished college I went to work. I suddenly noticed then, that although there'd been a feeling of equality at university, at work men were getting better promotions and better positions than women. That really had an impact.

For others, the calling to actively pursue feminist work was the clear motivation. Niina, 40, speaks to this:

I feel like I've been a feminist all my life. I met some people who were involved in Unioni activities, and I thought, yes, I want to be involved. At that time [1983] you still needed two references to join. I was afraid I wouldn't make it. I was really ready to join. And I made it. Right away I became really interested in Unioni projects.

Merja has been a member since 1982. She joined Unioni fairly late in her life, at the age of 56. She says:

I've been a feminist all my life, because without good women we won't survive. I've always been ready to give a good woman a kiss and support her. To me it's a way of living. Unioni used to be a 'Rouvasvaki' [Women's Club -- rouva is an upper-class wife] for wealthy people, but it has changed now, and I think the members now represent the workers rather than upper class people. One reason I joined was that I thought I could be active and of use for the organization.

Running through these quotes are both liberal feminist beliefs, seen by the fact that many of the women were already involved in political movements either the women's movement directly or actual political party work -- as well as the idea that equality has not been

realized. Interestingly, sisterhood is not mentioned as an important factor. Thus, even though the women in the first revitalization phase formed extremely close bonds with their feminist 'sisters' through the course of the first revolution, their understanding of being a Unioni member was not rooted in the 'support' idiom.

In contrast to the first revitalization phase women, those of the 1987 revolution much more often cited internal and intimate reasons for joining. Two themes echo throughout their responses -- 1) the desire for the support and information to be found among other women; and 2) a particular yearning in their personal life -- a sort of searching for sisterhood. Absent are the direct links to political organizations or parties that the other members mentioned. Although some of the second revolution women may have been active in this arena, the focus in their joining was personally motivated, not politically so.

Typical of motivation among this group is Leena, 36, who says:

I had gone to a consciousness raising course at Unioni's Open University. I wanted to find new information and I'd always liked to read feminist books. It was important for me to notice that others had similar thoughts, interests, problems.

Another member, Seija, 30, also joined after attending a consciousness raising course. She describes how Unioni fit into her life at the time she joined,

I had just gotten divorced and had a lot of time on my hands. I was consciously looking for a new way of life after the divorce. I had a vacuum in my life. And Unioni fit in perfectly.

Anna joined in 1981 when she was only 19. Her comments capture the idea that the site of change is personal.

The most important reason was to get the support of other women. Personal support and to be with a group of people who shared my outlook in such a way that I could feel that here there'd be a certain sisterhood. I longed for that. I think I wanted to change my life in some ways. In fact, I wanted to change other things besides my life. I wanted to change the world in such a way that it would be a better place for women to live. I thought that here I could get personal support as well as be able to function in such a way as to somehow change the world and Finland.

The idea of a feminist movement which could improve the world is not absent, but merely shifted in its starting off point. Some members stated clearly that they simply 'wanted to make new friends'. Feminist Radical Therapy was an activity which rallied new members to Unioni. We had an FRT course and those of us who were in the course decided we wanted more opportunities within Unioni -- especially for FRT plans and programs -- and maybe also the broadening of Unioni activities. [My joining] was totally related to the FRT course. From what I understand, a lot of other people joined after having taken the FRT course. (Irma, 28)

It's clear from the above quotes that Unioni was perceived as a different organization for the participants in the 1987 coup. The shift was to the internal, although in fact the organization became at the same time more bureaucratic. In addition to adding an emphasis on the importance of self-discovery there was a sense that it was important to open Unioni up to as many

women as possible -- in effect, making Unioni a more tolerant organization.

Defining Feminism in Unioni

The category of 'feminist' is much too broad a concept to delineate the strands of feminism within Unioni. While Unioni members may label themselves as feminist, it is very clear that within the group there are contradictory and competing views as to the meaning of feminism. The fight within Unioni really rests in part on whose definition of feminism should be put into practice. The women who took over Unioni in the 1970s defined feminism so as to keep it closer to the strictures of the nationalist narrative -- and therefore place those women in a position of greater state-sanctioned influence. The members of the second wave of Unioni's regeneration -- in the late 1980s -- pulled feminism and the image of women further away from the nationalist imagination by chipping away at the image of woman as nurturer and caretaker and questioning the interdependency of male-female relations.

The center of the struggle to define feminism rested on gaining (or maintaining) control of the governing council and its membership. The struggle to gain control of the board brought out accusations of non-feminist means, power plays and 'male-modeled' actions against those attempting the overthrow. The old board was

accused of secrecy, hierarchical methods, and inefficiency.

Feminism, or declaring oneself a feminist in Finland, may be an act of courage in some situations. Stereotypes abound -- feminists are whores, feminists are man-haters, feminists have gone too far. Others say, however, that it wasn't at all difficult to be a feminist in Finland because "it's a non-threatening, toothless role." (Leena). The feminist cause contains an ideology based on social and structural change, and is, by its nature, combative in terms of the outside world. Although feminism, in practice, may espouse non-violent, non-hierarchical means, it nonetheless takes the view that female rights must be explicitly politicized. One member stated that "where the word democracy makes me think about responsibility, the word feminism makes me think of cooperation and communal power" (Ursula). Feminists understand, though, that they must nonetheless do battle in the world, as they are fighting to change something. The split between the old and new is interesting on several levels. For the earlier group, feminism should be used to empower women, and to more widely open up public arenas of power to women. In addition, though, it is critical that the actions be done by women and for women. Women's culture is something to be cherished and used effectively to better women's

position.

This approach -- valuing women's culture -- is evident in several actions that were carried out by a group of women who staged a demonstration on the Parliament steps. Rather than just holding placards or picketing, they chose to perform a sort of 'woman's demonstration.' They called themselves the 'Itkeänaiset' [literally, Crying Women], and cried, dropped handkerchiefs, and wailed. The 'Itkeänaiset' have a long cultural tradition in Finland. Where women had no other power they would use tears and wailing to get their point across. They would ignore all the male jokes or abuses and just sit stoically and seriously and/or cry or wail. This type of action combined a long-standing cultural tradition of women and Unioni's idea of liberal feminist action, i.e. turning to a traditional political structure to effect change.

Not all Unioni feminists approve of the above tactic, though. The feminists of the 1987 coup, while not vociferously opposed to the idea of 'Itkeänaiset', nonetheless did not believe that it was the most effective avenue for change. For example, Irma states:

I don't support those shock tactics. ... they are kind of silly because they have an impact on the women who already have an understanding as to what the question is and what Unioni does. It doesn't have any kind of impact on the broader public -- or any kind of attracting pull. I don't say...I'm totally opposed to it, but if it has an impact only on the people already conscious then it really doesn't have much meaning in practical terms.

The 'Itkeänaiset' strategy is viewed as something which has no lasting effect. It is enjoyable for the women involved in the action, but it doesn't really influence public opinion much, especially if it's not part of a larger project.

All the expressions of feminism, by both the 70s women and those involved in the revolution, voice a certainty in a 'woman's point of view'. Irma, a leader in the second revolution, sees feminism as basically an ideology that actually aims at increasing the 'women's point of view'. For Anna, it is '...a view of the world. A way to view things and life. A way to see people as having the same value, a way to fulfill oneself -- both men and women'

For feminists, then, the recognition that they are women -- conscious of their gender is critical. Karri, 34, articulates this view clearly,

...because I'm a woman I act as a woman. One always hears that we're all people; it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman. It's not the same. To me it's very essential if you're a man or a woman. It affects everything, and that's how it has to be seen. I'm very conscious of being a woman and how it affects my life. Feminism is consciously being a woman. My stubborn idea is that every woman is a feminist; it's mindless for a woman to say she's not a feminist.

For Leila, a member who joined during the first revolution, but who has come to support the second revolution, feminism means 'freeing the resources a woman has, internally and externally.'

She adds,

On a personal level, it means knowing what sex you are. Accepting and understanding what it means to be a woman. The joy in discovering the power of being a woman. As you discover that, the most difficult thing to come to terms with is noticing your own burdens and mistakes and attitudes that you have to fight. On a practical level it means involving women in a common awareness process, and through that, action. To look and see where a woman's position in society needs improvement.

On a practical level, Unioni members see feminism, and a woman's point of view as one which takes into consideration women's needs, even if the issue isn't one which is specifically related to women. Several examples as to how a feminist ideology works in practice:

Take the building of a library in your community. You would still want the woman's point of view considered as the library is being built. You would want to make sure the library provides services that women need.
(Leila)

Look at this apartment for example. That little kitchenette was clearly designed by a man. There's no counter space. The house I used to live in was designed by a woman architect. We designed the whole house together, and I expressed my point of view as a woman.
(Laura).

In all of the above quotes it is clear that there is a sense that the dominant viewpoint is really a male viewpoint, and that women's input is necessary in order to be sure that women's needs are being met. Clearly, then, the citizenry that dominates is male, and thus women must constantly battle if they are to get their needs met.

Feminist Radical Therapy

Feminist Radical Therapy, at least in the case of Finland's feminists who belonged to Unioni, represented a fairly radical departure from the kind of work Unioni had previously been engaged in. Feminist Radical Therapy didn't mean the end of that kind of work, but it did signal, to some of the older members, a significant shift in attitudes and direction.

Feminist Radical Therapy combines a group therapy model with feminist analysis of individual problems. Several times a year the facilitator (a Finnish woman who lives in the Netherlands) comes to Finland to run the FRT courses. They take place at Unioni's Open University. The course lasts about a week, during which time all the participants live at Villa Salin and intensively interact and get to know each other as well as the Feminist Therapy method. After the course the FRT group meets on its own, without the facilitator. FRT group members take turns running the group. The regularity with which an FRT group meets varies from group to group. Some groups meet once every three weeks, while other groups, particularly those whose members live in different parts of Finland, get together for long weekends several times a year. An FRT group is made up of the members who attended the original week long course. That is the composition of people who stay together for the life of

the group. Groups may last a year or even longer, although often several members drop out and the final number is smaller than at the onset. At least one group has been meeting for four years.

At an actual FRT meetings the structure is as follows. An important rule followed is that participation is based solely on what a member feels like doing or saying. No one is ever forced to speak or act. First there is an "I feel like" period, during which a woman says to the group "I think that" and the group can answer yes, no, or partly, with no explanations. There is then a second round called the "annoyance round" where if a member is irritated by someone in the group she can tell that person, but the person is not allowed to answer. The third round is the "supportive or encouragement round" when members say good things about other people in the group, or even themselves. Group members are not allowed to say negative things about themselves, however, because the group is trying to give women self-confidence. After the rounds there is about 15-20 minutes of working time, during which everyone can do whatever they want, and no one is allowed to interfere unless they're asked to. In addition, groups engage in role reversal, meditations and massages. Non-verbal communication is also considered important and valid.

Feminist Radical Therapy thus contains two elements.

It is concerned for the most part with the self improvement of its members. Its feminist dimension is that in addition to personal development it adds the social, in the sense that members become aware that all women's problems are similar. If a woman is dealing with a problem, everyone else in the group realizes that they, too are confronting a similar issue in some aspect of their lives.

Members active in FRT describe it with great enthusiasm.

Ursula describes what she gained:

...through regression, I was able to trace my memories back to a long time ago, when I was having a lot of problems. The leader...gently carried me back from those memories, fuller and more completely than I've ever been. It was a joyous feeling and experience that lasted for a long time...there were 17 of us and during the course of the week each one of us would open up and share our experiences and thoughts. It made me think, 'this is what life is really about.' In everyday life one doesn't notice how strong and courageous and smart people really are. It gave me a new respect for people. And it can offer a person so much all at once, that she won't really need it on a continual basis.

For Ursula, FRT worked in such a way that it seemingly gave her a new way to look at life and the difficulties she was encountering. The FRT course was in sharp contrast to the traditional consciousness raising course she had attended at Unioni the spring before she joined. She found that course to be one where there wasn't room for people to talk and interact. The FRT group thus offered a space for personal growth. Ursula's experience

with FRT emphasizes the psychologically therapeutic aspects of the group.

For Niina, the importance of FRT seems to lie more in the support network that is formed after having gone through the course. Niina comments:

We work to talk about our own problems, traumas, pain, -- whoever wants to talk and do work. When one is able to talk about the little problems, the larger problems begin to emerge. And yes there are larger problems. By talking in the group you get help from others. Many times problems are solved. It's always been very important to me; I've been a part of it from the very beginning. When you're in a bad place and have bad feelings...there are always people who you know you can call and say, let's talk a bit or who you're able to help. FRT is really wonderful.

Niina's description offers elements of the therapeutic as well as the feminist/social. Talking over one's problems certainly constitutes a large proportion of therapeutic work, but for Niina, there was the additional benefit of knowing that there was a supportive group of women out there, who would be there for her just as she would be for them.

FRT created a controversy for several reasons. First, FRT was considered to be radical, and almost dangerous, in that it could, without proper supervision, unleash a torrent of aggression and anger.⁷⁸ Second, it

⁷⁸ I was told that some women argued that the course was not run by a professionally trained therapist, and therefore could lead to serious problems if things got out of hand. One woman evidently did have a bad experience and wrote a letter of complaint, saying that the course was a sham and should be discontinued.

was considered radical in the sense that it dealt with issues of the self and personal discovery. Feminist Radical Therapy is set up for the individual woman to uncover aspects of her personal psychology alongside a feminist analysis. This is very different from consciousness raising groups.⁷⁹ Even women's studies in Finland has been, until very recently, much more concerned with legislative issues of equality rather than individual issues and the body politic. FRT began to introduce the notion of a woman's sense of self, as an individual, including her sexuality.

Opposition on this ground almost takes on a moralistic quality as in the idea that there is something selfish and almost egotistical in examining one's own problems. Concretely, the issue revolved around FRT groups use of Unioni space. When an FRT group met for a weekend they would take up all of the Unioni space. This meant that no other groups could use the Bulevardi building for the weekend. Some expressed a fear that other activities would lose out. More symbolically, though, FRT represented a much larger threat than a hogging of space. Tuula, of the first revolution, states

⁷⁹ Unioni offers an official consciousness raising course. During the first revolution, most new members went through the course. One woman had been meeting with her 5 member consciousness-raising group regularly since 1978. Most members, however, did not find that the consciousness raising course turned into a long-lasting group for them.

her view succinctly:

It is selfish, self-inspecting, antisocial acting. People should focus out. Personally, I think it's nonsense. Free conversation isn't allowed. Women are just insulted and they're not given a chance to defend themselves. Feeling sorry for themselves, hitting pillows, shaking hands. Sure it helps to talk about your problems, but you have to get over them, too.

Tuula views FRT as not only ridiculous, but almost dangerous. There is a sense that by examining their inner selves, women in FRT won't have enough energy or interest to work outside of themselves. Hilkka, who echoes some of this view, nonetheless questions herself about it:

Maybe I have a little bit of prejudice. ...it's sort of a 'navel gazing group'. All the activities in my life are above all, at the societal level. I don't view the world by way of an internal life, but rather see it through the structures of society. The position of an individual is the way it is due to societal institutions...not because during his/her childhood the mother was this way or that. It's important that we each know ourselves...but I don't see that as the way through which we can improve society...which is important in an individual's life. It is important to feel, but you can't effect change through soul-searching...a person should be able to fight on behalf of other people's equality, not just for their own.

Hilkka, thus, accepts the fact that FRT might have some validity, but nonetheless is troubled by the fact that there may not be a connection made between the inner soul-searching and activism for the outside world. Hilkka's judgement stems from her view that individuals have a responsibility to work for the betterment of women's position.

Third, FRT was viewed as radical because many,

although not all, of the women who were active in the group were lesbians or bi-sexuals. The opposing faction believed that Unioni would be viewed as an organization made up of only FRT women, in other words, lesbians. Although there were few direct comments about the link between FRT activities and lesbianism, there was definitely a sense of change in atmosphere when the new council took the reins.

No one ever explicitly expressed disapproval of lesbians in Unioni. In asking people their views on this, though, varying levels of tolerance emerged. There was a fear among some members, that Unioni would be branded a lesbian group and thus lose some of its reputation. Of course Hilkka pointed out that although there may be that fear, "all the labels about Unioni that can be thought of, have already been thought up." Karri discusses a bit about the history of the lesbian presence in Unioni:

I think, or at least hope it's better now than it used to be. In the seventies they [lesbians] were not allowed in Unioni because the members were paranoid of Unioni being stigmatized as a lesbian's organization, because at the time all feminists were considered lesbians anyway. A change took place gradually, ... as the hetero members starting turning into lesbians, or bi-sexuals. In the group I used to hang out with, we started having more or less erotic relationships with each other, because we were always together. ... not many people knew about this, and at the time there were people who didn't approve of lesbianism. There were women, whose relationships were multi-leveled, and the older members in Unioni looked the other way, not wanting to see or know anything about it...the change to lesbianism started from the inside and made it easier for lesbians to join

Unioni.

For a period, then, lesbianism, as an outspoken choice, was practically a taboo subject within Unioni. The new atmosphere after the council's defeat changed was dramatically different. A lesbian group began using Unioni space for its Thursday night "Akanat" [the name of the lesbian group] meetings. This meeting was open to the public and advertised in the "Where to Go" column of Helsinki Sanomat, Finland's largest newspaper. The Akanat group, although not an official work group of Unioni, was nonetheless clearly associated with the Unioni name in public, through the use of Unioni space. This connection between Unioni and a public lesbian activity was unprecedented. In fact, Anna, a member of the coup who views herself as bi-sexual, remarked:

A wonderful thing is that the percentage of lesbians has increased. It's clearly visible...it was kind of taboo to even talk about it before -- but now I know people ... I think the hetero portion is really small at this moment. It really has an impact on the spirit of the place -- it's much more relaxed and a more comfortable place to be than in the old time when people seemed almost afraid of each other. Earlier, lesbians were in the closet [pilloissa] because it wasn't approved of -- Unioni was known as a hetero org. and maybe they didn't dare come here. But now what I've seen from Gambrini's [gay and lesbian bar in Helsinki] -- those lesbians who are coming out -- many of them come here! It's great because it's new and they are really the most independent of all women. **They are not dependent on men.**

The last line of Anna's quote returns us to the national construct. Finland's construct of nation which depends on male-female dependence is denied in Anna's

observation. Lesbians represent a radical departure from the first revitalization feminists, who still adhere to male-female dependence and the understanding of equality which flows from that. There were limits, however, as to how far Unioni would go in its public connection to lesbianism. As much as the enthusiasm was spreading for openness towards lesbians in Unioni, some members were still cautious. I asked members whether it would be possible to have a lesbian group marching in the lesbian and gay rights parade under an Unioni banner.⁸⁰

Responses were guarded. Niina, who identifies herself as a lesbian, says:

I don't think one should connect Unioni with lesbians. They're different things. Not all women are lesbians, and it's wrong to connect the two. It would eliminate some women who might want to come to Unioni. Unioni should try to recruit ordinary women. I'm not saying that lesbians aren't ordinary women, but you know what I mean. If Unioni were to get an image that everyone here was lesbians, it wouldn't be the right image.

Hilkka, who is not opposed to the lesbian presence in Unioni, nonetheless tries to explain possible opposition to it this way:

⁸⁰ Two groups, which are independent from Unioni, but closely linked with the organization, are the Women's Peace Group [Naiset Rauhan Puoli], which is heavily involved with peace work on its own as well as with other peace organizations and The Women's Cultural Center [Naisten Kultuuri Keskus], which produced Akkaväki, the magazine publication of Unioni. These are representative of organizations which existed on an independent basis but were intimately connected to and recognized as independent aspects of Unioni. The Peace Group, however, does not particularly cultivate it's connection with Unioni.

I think -- maybe it's this in Finnish sexual politics as in everything else -- that people are really afraid of difference. Maybe they are afraid of those feelings in themselves and they thus brand everyone else.

The problem Hilkka does have with lesbianism, however, is linked less to a fear of the organization being branded lesbian and more to her core belief in the need to solve the problems of the world. She adds:

I don't think that women are the ones who can solve all the problems of the world and that ideologically one could build such an organization inside Unioni where all the decisions would be made by a woman or women. Separatism doesn't work.

Hilkka, then, represents the older Unioni member coming back to the connection to men, which is really the bottom line of the communal understanding of the relationship between men and women. The female-female bond, as a group of women supporting each other in thematizing gender is acceptable, but when the female-female bond becomes the whole of the family, and extends into a unit made up of solely women, working for women, its effectiveness is greatly diminished. For Unioni members, the standard feminist phrase, 'sisterhood is powerful', captures to a large extent their view of family and of each other. The phrase -- very common to many feminist movements worldwide -- refers to a sisterhood -- a kin relation of equality and collaterality. An organization of 'sisters' may represent a new family form, where women can improve their lot. Unioni shifts attention away from emotional and familial ties with the nuclear family --

and heterosexual unions at its most radical -- and argues that a more fulfilling and more effective female bonding must be fought for.

What does this mean for the relationship between Unioni and the Finnish state? Since a central identifying factor for Unioni members is their solidarity ties with other women, in order to push forward 'women only' rights they are in effect attacking a dominant Finnish paradigm of gender and nation. Women, as a collective of women working for women will be effective agents of change in this view, as they come into direct confrontation with the nation-state.

For Unioni members of the first revitalization period it is important that the power of female-female bonds still allow for outside roles in kin structures, particularly heterosexual unions. These 'ordinary' kin networks offer the assurance that Unioni women, even as feminists, have not rejected the main tenets of the Finnish system -- namely heterosexuality and women's role within a nuclear family, even if Unioni is modeled along female-female bond lines.

The supporters of the revolution in Unioni, however, have begun to question the basic tenets of the gender and nationalist system and its emphasis on the heterosexual unit and woman's nurturing role in it. While certainly interested in humanity, their starting point is not so

much that women are inherently better than men and the best in the role of caretaker/nurturer (although some may voice this) but that women need to work from within themselves to understand their particular struggles with the patriarchy and how it influences their lives. Rather than focus on areas of concern which are outside of themselves, such as the peace movement or governmental bodies dealing with equality issues -- both of which embody the role of caretaker -- they choose to focus on individual development and the link between external oppressive forces and the ways in which women internalize these forces to their own detriment. This way of thinking about issues of gender starts with the idea that women, as individuals, must make the connection between what they feel emotionally and experience mentally and the greater forces at play in the patriarchal world. As some Unioni members view the situation, fighting for equality and the dismantling of the patriarchy without this introspection is like beating a twig against a brick wall -- not much impact, and in fact greater force may just break the twig.

Heterosexuality, and its main repository, the typical 'nuclear' family, serve to mask some of the real causes of women's difficulties in this perspective. This is not to say that all the women in the second group are lesbians, or that they believe that all women must be

lesbians in order to be true feminists. What is clear, however, is that the site of change has shifted to a more individual base -- one where certainly collectivity and support have a place, but the woman herself, including her understanding of her sexuality and physical and psychological well-being, comes first.

This more radical group of Unioni feminists is basically arguing that alternatives to mainstream [reformist] feminism should be explored. While they may support most of the reformist goals of the first group, they also seek to expand the 'family', to not only make room for the less conforming 'sisters', but to also support them with Unioni resources. Rather than marginally support the image of women within the nationalist narrative, this more radical group seeks to challenge that image and allow women to examine how sexism within the nationalist frame -- through limited roles -- has limited her internal sense of self.

CHAPTER SEVEN: EXTAASI AS A CONTESTED IMAGE

Around the same time that Unioni was feeling the shift of new members' concerns, in the mid 1980s, another group for women was gestating in Finland. This group, although made up of all women, does not fit the idea of a typical women's group, either in the homemaker vein of Martta or the feminist vein of Unioni. The group, Extaasi, instead brought a new twist to organizations for women, and challenged many of the existing paradigms and tenets of the nationalist narrative and women's image within it.

Extaasi Historical Framework

The historical context from which Extaasi grew was a very differently shaped one from the climate which spawned Unioni and Martta. Finland was a secure, independent state, its economic base was very strong, and the international and intellectual climate during the second half of the 20th century produced a different set of concerns than the ones that had engaged Martta and Unioni in their formative years. Extaasi thus grew out of a climate of a very strong and independent Finnish nation. Finland's national identity was securely in place by the time Extaasi was imagined, and this allowed for greater access to challenging elements of the nationalist narrative. Founding members of Extaasi were born, at the very earliest, in the late 1950s, with the majority born in the late 1960s. Finnish independence

struggles become salient as issues only on Independence Day, when Finland's struggle is examined and celebrated. Any ongoing concern for the continued independence of the Finnish nation is non-existent for members of this group.

The Finland in which Martta and Unioni were founded was a primarily agricultural nation.⁸¹ In the time of Extaasi, Finland had completed industrialization and started the move toward high tech industries as well as service sector growth. Most importantly, however, Extaasi members grew up in a climate and state in which the existence of a wealthy social welfare state already committed to the welfare of its citizens was a given. The Extaasi members had an economic base which they could count on, and from which they could question basic aspects of the Finnish state and Finnish society.

Extaasi, coming of age in the mid-1980s, had very different social movements as its reference points: the women's rights movement in its second wave (the 1970s), the civil rights movements, the sexual revolution and civil rights for sexual minorities, de-colonialization or self-determination movements among Third World countries, and the environmental movement. These types of social movements combine a push toward individual rights and freedoms with a collective push toward more equality or

⁸¹ As late as 1920, 60% of the working population was involved in agricultural work. One in six individuals lived in a town.

better quality of life, as in the environmental movement.

In the Finnish context, some of these social movements act to focus the attention away from internal, Finnish affairs, and shift the gaze to outside concerns, such as Third World movements and civil rights. The shift involves moving away from social movements particular to Finland to movements which are part of a wider, more global views.

Extaasi beginnings

To say that Extaasi was founded is too strong a term. Extaasi, as a group, rather developed over time, without a strong manifesto or definite line. Unlike Martta and Unioni, which are established, large-scale organizations, Extaasi has no sets of documents to examine or early published material to examine. The material about Extaasi's beginnings is rather gathered from material collected in interviews with members.

There was no exact starting date for Extaasi. Sometime in 1984 or 1985, several friends just decided it might be a good idea to have a place just for women, a sort of women's house. As to what prompted action regarding this idea, one member commented,

It was just that a group of women returned home from the big world after spending longer periods of time in Amsterdam and London, where they had learned that women can do things that are different from what they'd done before.

Exposure to the broader world gave force to ideas, and how to implement them, and so several women started gathering money toward this goal. They sold things at the summer flea market, and started having theme nights at a local cafe, which they would rent for the occasion. The events were publicized in the newspaper -- including Helsingin Sanomat, the main paper -- advertised as 'women only' events. The topics covered were things like women's videos, aggression, women and journalism, aggression and

performances. More and more women started showing up -- sometimes even more than 30 at a time. At the gatherings, the friends would buy and prepare food and refreshments for sale.

In about a year, they felt that they needed more space. They managed to get a free space from a student organization, which they organized into the Kirjakahvila (Book Cafe). At this point, however, the cafe was open to men as well as women. With the full-time operation of the cafe, the group "grew like a snowball going down a hill", and more organized theme 'parties' became the norm.

In addition to running the cafe, Extaaasi was also active on several other fronts. They were working to some extent with the Green party on environmental issues (at least being supportive of them) as well as trying to get support from the Finnish parliament for a women's house.⁸² Extaaasi members also participated in a band, which was called Extaaasi, as well as a publication, called Hiimosta Rottiin [An lust for rodents], which was written by Extaaasi members.

Extaaasi does not have any official membership rolls

⁸² The idea of an anarchist group seeking public support, from the state for a project at first glance seems almost amusing. In the context of Finland, however, given the level of state participation in funding social projects, it is not that surprising that Extaaasi, almost unconsciously, turned to the state.

or requirements. As one member says,

Nobody ever joins Extaaasi. There are no memberships or files. Extaaasi was a name we made up, when we had to come up with a name for the cafe.

By the same token, there is no official ideology or line as to Extaaasi's mandate. Members offer somewhat different interpretations as to what Extaaasi stands for.

One of the original organizers states a particular theme:

It's an alternative movement against the existing social system. For instance we don't buy politically incorrect brand names; we use recyclable stuff. We don't discourage men from being involved, too. It's in the direction of anarchy, but people think and operate as individuals.

In this rendering of Extaaasi themes, the group is clearly linked to broader social issues, such as the environment, but yet individuality is not to be sacrificed. Even to claim that the group is anarchist would be too definitive a term.

In another expression of the purpose of the group's identity, this is the comment:

[Extaaasi's ideology is] to be without an ideology. Extaaasi has as many ideologies as we have people. There are no ten commandments you have to follow in order to be in Extaaasi. You do have to be a little bit crazy, that's the only ideology. Crazy in a positive way,....

Again, the openness of the group's identity is strongly re-iterated, as well as the theme of action, in a positive sense. Both of these Extaaasi members are representative of the older tier of members, and this might explain their response to action.

For the Extaaasi member, Johanna, who joined when she

was about 14, and who was 16 at the time of the interview, Extaasi represented something a bit different. Extaasi was a sort of anarchist group in her mind, but it was also a place to meet women and to hang out. It was an exciting thing -- a group in which a lot was happening.

One idea connects all the various notions of what Extaasi is. Extaasi and its activities intend to shock society; to wake them up to the fact that something radical is going on out there. What this has meant structurally is discussed below.

Extaasi's main activities revolved around Kirjakahvila and the theme parties which took place there. In addition to the day to day running of the cafe, special events were held. Theme parties might involve sado-masochist demonstrations or 'fashion shows' of Fantasy clothing. Extaasi was also involved in occasional illegal activities, such as squatting. Individual members of the group sometimes got involved in small thefts such as stealing money from the cash box of the cafe, or in a more extreme case, stealing some money from a bank account. These acts, although done by individuals, also separated the older members from the younger members of the group. Older members were much more reluctant to get involved in blatantly illegal personal crimes such as stealing. Squatting could be

viewed as more of a protest or political action.

As the actual physical space of Kirjakahvila became no longer available, Extaasi scattered and became less of a cohesive group. Also, members of Extaasi moved to other international cities, particularly London, Amsterdam, and New York. The group, at least in its Helsinki version, lost some of its energy. Older members got more involved in other jobs or other aspects of their lives. There was also some concern on the part of older members that they really didn't want to participate in the types of personal illegal activities mentioned above. Being in Extaasi became too much of a hassle.

Extaasi's Version of Male and Female

Clearly, Extaasi members acknowledge differences between male and female imaging and roles in Finnish society. The initial activities of Extaasi were organized around 'women only' events as there was a perceived need for such events. The decision to organize along these lines, however, was not reflective of a move toward solidarity with other women, but rather stemmed from an understanding that society -- including the nation state -- was not a positive place for women, and women would need to find space where they could be safe and creative on their own terms. The 'woman only' aspect of Extaasi events was one way in which Extaasi was trying to step out of the limited roles of women available under the dominant nation-state image.

Extaasi members view sexual radicalness -- through lesbianism in part, but more evident in sado/masochistic activities -- to be the area in which they are best able to articulate their particular vision of male and female imagery. The Extaasi group directly attacks both 'complementary but equal' understandings of gender and 'equality model' explanations. Instead, they opt for a third understanding, one which is rooted in an androgynous sense of gender identity. In articulating androgyny as their gender identity base, Extaasi finds itself jutting right up against the images of women in

the nationalist narrative. Questions of equality are not relevant in their world-view, because they are fighting outside of the prescribed system. The images of women which Extaaasi choose to consciously express include neither caretaking images nor reformist equality based models based on sisterhood. Instead, there is almost a move toward indifference and professed non-conformity in terms of 'feminine' standards.⁸³ There are common interests or beliefs among Extaaasi members⁸⁴, but they are not what the group is focussed on. There is, in fact, a tension between an anarchic ideology and a sisterhood. There is loyalty amongst group members, but this is never expressed in terms of 'we are a family standing together.' Extaaasi members, on one level, even reject caretaking in the context of other members. Again, we see a distinct departure from nationalist ideals of women.

Other aspects of Extaaasi affairs illustrate the move away from caretaking and nurturing roles. Earlier it was noted that occasionally Extaaasi members would steal money

⁸³ Some Extaaasi members were mothers, however.

⁸⁴ Extaaasi certainly works together, of course. They couldn't have run the cafe without some cooperation and organization, just as they wouldn't have a band, publish a magazine, or organize such successful parties. What I am referring to here is not so much a sense of working together in a practical sense, but more so supporting each other as a way of being with other members.

from the cafe's cashbox.⁸⁵ The theft of money from the coffers of the cafe points to anarchic ideology. As an anarchistic group, it perhaps should be alright, in fact even a good thing, that people would feel free enough to have the money 'float' around in that way. At the very least, individuals in Extaasi should be able to act according to their own norms, ethically, morally, or even legally. At the same time, however, it is potentially disruptive to the group as it disrupts its resources.

Internally, then, Extaasi is not organized along intensive affective lines. Externally, as well, there are factors which promote Extaasi's status as outside of the family idiom altogether. These factors are connected both to Extaasi's conscious decision to shake up societal and state foundations as well as an 'imposed from the outside' rejection of their value system. The lesbian nature of the sexuality of many Extaasi members already removes them from general acceptance and approval in society. Whereas there might have been some acceptance of non-heterosexuality in the Finnish cultural system⁸⁶,

⁸⁵ Extaasi maintained a bank account, but only several women had access to it.

⁸⁶ The gay rights movement in Finland is quite organized. There is a nationwide gay rights organization called SETA which works hard at gaining rights and ending discrimination against gays. It is true, however, that many gay and lesbian individuals in Finland experience societal disapproval and rejection, particularly from their families. In no way are lesbian and gay relationships just considered one more variety of relationship.

the absolutely bold move of combining a sexual minority status with sexually minority behavior leaves the Extasi group far on the outside. When lesbian sexuality is combined with sadomasochist behavior and activities, the minority and fringe status of the group multiplies exponentially. As the stance is one which is non-family oriented, the reaction of the public to the group is one which really offered no frame of reference through which to understand Extasi activities. This lack of a sense of connectedness to this symbolic kinship system further delineates Extasi women as out of the nationalist narrative, and begins to explain how their understanding of male and female produces a context in which they are contesting statehood.

Extaasi Activism

The women who were active in Extaasi seem to just fall into participating in the groups' activities. As noted earlier, for some women it just seemed like an exciting venture, where they could amuse themselves and always find a good amount of activity. For other members, Extaasi is more of an artistic group, functioning through 'performances' to entertain, shock, and have fun all at the same time. And for still other members, Extaasi is most important as a sort of anti-social, anarchist group. Although no one defined it as a terrorist group, some of the activities bordered on that level. (Bomb throwing, for example.)

Extaasi experiences are not always tame. One younger member, Maija, proudly recalled the times she mud-wrestled, danced naked on stage [at a party] and was beaten up as memorable incidents from her Extaasi experiences.

Another woman, Liisa, joined Extaasi after reading about an event in the paper. The event was advertised 'for women only' and this interested her and her girlfriend. They attended, and had such a good time that they began to go to other events and to make friends. For Liisa, Extaasi served as a way to meet other women, other lesbians in particular, in another setting besides the lesbian evenings at the local gay bar. She thought

she would have led a different kind of life, met different kinds of people, if she'd only had access to the bar life. Extaasi involvement does not preclude her from going to the bar, but she does feel the Extaasi exposure has really broadened her horizons.⁸⁷ She does not really consider herself to be a 'member' of the group, although she admits that people might identify her as such due to the frequency of her attendance at events, as well as her friendships within the Extaasi crowd. As Liisa describes her feeling about the closing of Kirjakahvila,

I think since Kirjakahvila ended, it left a terrible hole in the cultural life of Helsinki. It was where new trends and ideas were given birth to. It was a great place. You could always drop by and see friends there. Even, then, for someone who didn't identify herself as a 'member' Extaasi played a clearly defined role.

Extaasi members who were instrumental in getting the group off the ground, definitely felt that the group had changed over time. After working with the group for several years they began to experience burnout, particularly in light of some of the activities of the younger members, such as stealing and perhaps some of the more illegal and terrorist activities. It is not that

⁸⁷ Liisa comments that she didn't participate much in protests because "I'm such a good girl I was always afraid the cops would take me to jail. But Extaasi has mobilized a lot of people and forces. The other women's groups sort of thought we were sort of crazy."

these members hold any ill-will towards the group, but rather that they simply felt it was time to move on, either in their relationships or in other goals.

Feminism and Extaasi

All the women interviewed agreed that there were certainly women who identified themselves as feminists within Extaasi. A few Extaasi women were even Unioni members. It was very clear, however, that it would be inaccurate to label or describe Extaasi as a feminist group. Some members believe that Extaasi is an example of much better, more brave feminism, while others wouldn't call themselves feminists or ever perceive of Extaasi as a feminist group. This reiterates one of Extaasi's clearest characteristics -- it has no single ideology or line.

Jaana, at 29, is one of the oldest members of Extaasi. She is a professional, has been active in Extaasi for several years, and also belongs to Unioni. She describes herself as a feminist as well as lesbian among other descriptions. For her,

Feminism is something political. A woman who calls herself a feminist may work to better women's situation or may curse all men to the deepest hell because they're all rapists and molesters and violent and then she may go home and lie down next to her husband. I find those categories limiting. I don't like to think that way. For instance, although I'm a lesbian, not everything I do is lesbianism, everything I do is because I'm me.

For Jaana, feminism as an ideology, a life ideology, falls short in the link between its theoretical and

activist base and the reality of many self-identified feminists' lives. Regarding Unioni, the place where feminism has found an institutionalized base in Finland, Jaana's words are even sharper.

Unioni is so fucking bureaucratic it sucks. Most of the women find a way to act there [in Unioni] like the rest of society acts, holding on to bureaucracy. The only difference is that in Unioni women boss each other around. For lesbians this [Unioni] is as tough a place as any other place in the world; woman can be sexist, too. I don't think feminist women are more tolerant that way.⁸⁸

Feminism then, at least as embodied through the Unioni incarnation, had several flaws. It was both bureaucratic and intolerant. Feminism appeared to offer very little support for the lesbian part of Jaana's identity, and in view of that, she was critical of Unioni. She joined Unioni interested in feminism, but found it too limiting a choice.

In Jaana's experience and understanding of feminism we see the rejection of her female identity in both external and internal terms. Externally, Unioni is not accepting of her lesbianism, in effect rejecting her from the feminist family. Internally, Jaana believes it is not useful for her to define herself solely as a feminist, and all of the supposed support that might offer, because it is too limiting to her sense of

⁸⁸ Subsequent to this interview, the official attitude towards lesbians changed within Unioni, and it became more tolerant and open to having 'out' lesbians as members.

personal integrity and wholeness. Only by not forcing herself into one category does she believe she can true to the whole.

The sentiment that Unioni does not like lesbians is echoed by another woman, Sinikka, who is also older and a member of both organizations. She joined Unioni in 1982 to get some exposure to feminism. Going to evening courses and gatherings was helpful in this regard. She nonetheless observed,

I think Unioni women don't like lesbians. There are mostly married women in the equality movement. They didn't want to help Extasi financially because they didn't trust our stability.

There is also a hint of Unioni's bureaucratic stuffiness in this statement as well. And even for women who know of Unioni, but who do not belong, there is a general impression that the group is not particularly friendly toward lesbians or at the very least made up of mostly heterosexuals who do not understand lesbian issues.

Feminism, as expressed through Unioni, fails for Extasi women because it does not encompass a wide enough range of female imagery and roles. Even feminism as expressed through the dissenting group of women who took Unioni over in 1987 falls short of the vision of Extasi members. It is limited by its insistence on collectivity and its support of liberal feminist means -- working with the state -- as the route to achieve its goals. Anarchism, which involves action that puts the individual

on the line, at the front of the battle, both politically and individually, is the 'ism' to which Extraasi members subscribe.

Extaasi and Lesbian groups

As many Extaasi members identify themselves as lesbian or bi-sexual, it is appropriate to consider what role lesbian activism might play in their lives, and how that fits into their understanding of gender.

Whereas many Extaasi members do not characterize themselves as feminist, lesbianism is viewed as a very open option, and lesbian lifestyles are a distinct and open part of their identities. Participating in the organized lesbian movement is another matter, however. Just as defining oneself as a feminist may be seen as too limiting a category, the same could be said for defining oneself in purely lesbian terms.

SETA is the central gay rights organization in Finland. Akanat is the major lesbian group in Finland. Akanat used to meet at SETA's space, but now meet at Unioni's Helsinki home. Extaasi women are certainly familiar with both groups and are often members of one or both groups. The Akanat group was typically viewed as a group which had a certain value, but was perhaps a bit old-fashioned and single-minded in its approach to lesbianism. To focus solely on lesbianism felt not very worthwhile. Jaana comments,

It's [Extaasi and Akanat] really two different worlds. In Akanat, the main point is being lesbian. They think of what it's like to be or become a lesbian, and coming of out the closet and lesbian rights and gay men vs. lesbianism --everything revolves around that [lesbianism]. Extaasi has never had a clear line when it

comes to sexuality. It doesn't claim to be an official lesbian group. Extaasi women don't attend SETA happenings. They don't feel like it; they're not interested.

Thus, even though most, if not all, Extaasi women are lesbians in their sexual preference, they still find the most comfort in belonging, or being active, with other women who view that aspect of their identity as a given. This is not to say that Akanat women doubt their lesbianism, but rather that Akanat women view their lesbianism as a subject onto itself. They are looking to explore that aspect of their identity.

Extaasi women want to engage in other work, namely acting up and pushing societal limits. Also, sado/masochism is an activity which is readily explored by Extaasi members. This interest is not necessarily condoned by SETA, and has at times been keenly criticized by Akanat. The magazines published by Akanat and Extaasi illustrate this conflict.⁸⁹ As mentioned previously, Extaasi published a magazine (sporadically) called Himosta Rottiin [A lust for rodents]. As one might surmise, this magazine focussed on S/M topics, complete with articles and photographs. Sometimes the women in the pictures were local Extaasi members and

⁸⁹ There are certainly members of Extaasi who go to Akanat functions and likewise. The lesbian community is relatively small in Finland, and usually women try to expose themselves to as many sources of lesbians as possible.

other times they were from other sources. The magazine pictured women in an urban setting as well as out in the Finnish countryside. This magazine was sold at one of the major bookstores in Helsinki, and thus available for purchase by anyone, male or female, gay or straight.

Akanat published a magazine (also sporadically) called Torajyvä. This magazine's content concentrated on personal issues about lesbians. A typical issue might include coming out stories, poetry, love stories (autobiographical or fiction) and commentaries. This magazine was not available in public bookstores and in that way it did not -- at least officially -- get into the hands of the general public. Kaija, an Extaasi member recalls reading it in high school and finding it a good alternative to the feminist publication, Akkavaki. She described it, however, as

...basically women's love poetry to each other. I guess the idea was that we're tough and we can do a magazine like that. I remember also thinking that it was a horrible magazine because they hated men so much.

The Akanat magazine was seen as the main publication of the organized lesbian movement in Finland. It had been publishing for several years when Himosta rottiin came out. The shock value of Extaasi's magazine was not lost on the general public or within broader media venues. One Sunday, Helsingin sanomat, Finland's largest newspaper, commented on the magazine in its Sunday magazine supplement. In its "What's New" section, it had

a column entitled, "Is this where women are going?". The article described Extasi's magazine and queried as to whether this was the direction in which feminism and lesbianism were moving.

This publicity angered some Akanat members. Lesbians in Akanat believed that Himosta Rotiin was damaging the reputation of all lesbians by portraying S/M as a typical part of lesbian relationships. Also, there was a bit of resentment over the fact that while Akanat had been laboring away for several years in its attempts to both be a source of support for other lesbians, and gain greater rights for lesbians, it had never received the type of publicity which Extasi was enjoying.

Finally, Akanat also questioned whether it was a good idea to sell a magazine like Himosta Rotiin to the public, as this could possibly be damaging or dangerous to Extasi women as well as others, if individuals used the magazine as a sex vehicle for themselves.

This conflict illustrates the different approaches to life-style and self-definition. Lesbians who identify primarily with the Akanat crowd view their lesbianism as the primary building block of their identities. Life experiences are filtered through that lens, and understood as resulting from that key component of their identity. Extasi lesbians, however, attach a greater importance to shock, and pushing issues (even if not are

all involved in S/M, none certainly have any argument with it) and thus once again find themselves, partly by choice, and partly by initiative, outside of sexuality/gender networks they might share with their non-Extaasi lesbian-identified sisters.

One final note is that even as Extaasi strives to produce an almost definitionless gender identity for women, it nonetheless finds itself firmly rooted in the caretaker model on one level. In running a cafe, Extaasi has bought into a certain amount of legitimacy and acceptance of female imagery as expressed in the nationalist narrative. The pull of those images is too strong to eradicate completely and although the cafe was never viewed as a particularly nurturing environment it nonetheless produces an image of women once again in the kitchen, and once again taking care of a family -- even if they are 'semi-paying' customers.

CHAPTER EIGHT: GENDER AND NATIONALISM: A MODEL

In the preceding chapters I've outlined how gender and nationalism intersect in the imaging of the Finnish nation. The landscape of female images in Finland produces divergent and competing ideas about women, both in terms of the position of women in public and private domains, as well as the nature of women's relationship to men. These variations in the meaning and interpretation of female have an impact on how women view their relationship to the state, and subsequently, lead their lives. These distinct images of women are informed by what I term different 'life ideologies', or strategies which connect gender to national identity. These various 'life ideologies' are the framework through which women go about the practice of their daily lives.

The 'life ideology' is embedded at various levels of self-awareness in the construction of female in Finnish societal and cultural norms. Three notions of female dominate the gender discourse in the organizations I've studied -- caretaker/nurturer (the Martta female), feminist (the Unioni female), and radical/androgynous (the Extaasi female). The multi-layered dimensions of female in Finland make it impossible to draw a generalized conclusion about the relationship of women (a monolithic category), to the Finnish welfare state. Instead, it is clear that each of the three notions of female reflect a particular and different orientation to

the role of women and nationalism, and consequently, women's relationship to the state. Women align themselves with a certain image, and in doing so, define and carve out their alliance to the state based on a specific set of understandings and assumptions. Below I offer a model of the relationship between the three distinct female gender constructs and nationalism in the Finnish welfare state.

Female Gender Constructs and Nation/State Relationship

<p>G e n d e r C o n s t r u c t Caretaker/Nurturer</p> <p>Life Ideology Woman as mother, nurturer of sons and daughters, familial ties. Men and women complementary but equal</p> <p>Nation/State Relationship Women as Authors of National Identity and Agents for the State</p> <p>Martta image of female</p>

Gender Construct

Feminist; expand role of women beyond caretaker; legitimacy of women to participate in public affairs

Life IdeologyEquality Perspective

men and women equal, based on lack of difference. Male-female relations interdependent, but value of sisterhood stressed. Heterosexuality is the standard.

Subordination Perspective

analysis of male-female relations through sexual politics. Male domination of women; male-female relations essentially power of men over women. Lesbianism is option

Nation/State Relationship

Women as Re-writers of the Nation and Reformers of the State

Unioni image of female

Gender Construct

Radical; emphasis on androgyny
and gender neutrality or
unimportance

Life Ideology

Anarchism, especially
regarding accepted gender
divisions; male-female
relationship not a focal
point; sexual radicalness
stressed

Nation/State Relationship

Women as Non-readers of the
nation and Contestors of the
State

Extraasi image of female

Each gender construct is 'driven' by its unique relationship to the life ideology. The life ideology aspect, which is essentially reflected in practice, offers clues as to the relationship of women to the nationalist narrative, and subsequently, the relationship of female to the welfare state in Finland. Central to each gender construct is the belief about the nature of male-female relations. The further away women get from believing that male-female relations are characteristically and necessarily interdependent, the more distance they take from the state and its underlying nationalist image of women.

Caretaker: The Nationalist Imaging of Woman

In the caretaker construct, the male-female relationship is one of inter-dependence. Men and women have distinct roles, but they are complementary, and thus necessary to each other. The caretaker role, while highly valued, is but one aspect of a two-dimensional relationship. For caretakers, the aspects of life which give meaning to their existence revolve around issues of the family, patriotism, work and religion. The state rewards them for their adherence to nationalist and patriotic ideals, by offering them respect as well as a status as professional caretakers. The greatest element of respect afforded Martta women is the fact that the state, in emphasizing its own role in functioning to 'care for' and 'nurture' its citizens, is offering a great sense of positive symbolic value to women's traditional activities as they further the goals of the state. A great source of pride to the Marttas is the fact that the President's wife is a Martta. The family for the caretaker woman is not only her nuclear family, but also the family of the nation.

For the Marttas, the family, as defined conventionally, represents the pinnacle of importance in her life. Martta activities are centered on functions which could include families within the community, such as Christmas fairs and the like. Certain holidays, such

as Father's Day, were not considered appropriate Martta functions, because in that case, the 'real family' would take over and be responsible. The Martta association, even though it is a woman's group, serves the needs of families. This was particularly evident in its earlier days, when entire families would belong and attend meetings. The Martta woman is working for the good of her family, and the good of the Finnish family (hence 'serving' families at larger occasions.) She seeks to improve the life of her family, and make her role as wife and mother in that family setting even more productive and efficient. In a sense, the Martta group serves to 'professionalize' the role of mother, and the act of mothering and caretaking within the family. While it is not an economic undertaking, it nonetheless is perceived as critical to the shaping of the family.¹ The self-improvement which Martta women gain from courses which the association offers is translated directly into rewards for their families, because the woman is becoming constantly more skilled. Not surprisingly, the emphasis in Martta work is on practicality and efficiency.

Along with family/mother, another important element of life ideology critical to the Marttas is the concept

¹ Although not interpreted economically, it can be said that Martta work contributes to the economies of families by instructing women how to budget well and shop both economically and nutritionally for their family.

of collective work. The Martta association represents the embodiment of the collective work ethic at two levels. On the one hand, within the group itself, work is done collectively, such as knitting and weaving. For the larger community, the group provides free labor for community functions, such as Independence Day and "Clean up Day".

Flowing through all of the above, is the adrenalin of the potent mixture of patriotism and religion. The Lotta organization, mentioned earlier, represented this mix at its most extreme. The Lottas represent the logical extension from women as agents for the state to women as soldiers for the state. The Marttas recognize their importance to the state and the rewards to be gained in creating a healthy, well-educated family for the nation.

The caretaker life ideology provides the clearest expression of direct Finnish nationalist sentiment. An acute awareness of 'being Finnish' is an identifying characteristic of Martta activities. The symbolic and iconic representation of the Marttas is taken directly from traditional concepts of Finnish national identity, such as their blue uniforms, emblematic of the Finnish colors in the flag, blue and white. The Marttas are representative of the state, and as such act as its agents. Their understanding of female is reflected in

the national imaging of woman as caretaker/nurturer, and by extension, the state as the same.

Unioni: The Feminist Construct

Unioni's life ideology contains different elements. In contrast to the caretaker image, where women find their greatest legitimacy and value through activities solidly centered in their role as nurturers, in an interdependent relationship with men, feminist women view the world through a more 'gendered' perspective. Feminist women are concerned with how their position in society is not really achieving its full potential. This sense of needing to change something about the gender system motivates their actions.

Different feminists, however, have varying viewpoints on where the problem lies. For feminists whose life ideology is underpinned with an equality perspective, the difficulty resides in social conditions which limit the full range of equality between men and women. In this scenario, men and women are allies, both striving to correct the gender imbalance which limits women's full access to public arenas. In this conceptualization of gender relations, women and men are still perceived to be interdependent on one another. In addition, there is still an aspect of caretaking involved in the female identity. In this case, the caretaking involves not the Finnish state directly, but rather the

caretaking involved in attempting to redress the state of inequality between the sexes. Even though both men and women are hurt by limited sex roles, it is women who must initiate the fight to rid Finland of its inequality. Equality, as an ideal, is a strong tenet of the Finnish nationalist narrative, and until that can be fully realized, it will be seen as a weakness of the state. The equality-based feminists, then, in their work to reform the state, are actually serving to strengthen it.

Not surprisingly, the equality-based feminists find the state extremely receptive to the issues they raise. As we have seen, equality-based feminists tend to work through state institutions, as well as trade unions and other official organizations, to further their aims of equality. In fact, the state has tended to take over their cause, and integrate the demands into the state structure and bureaucratic channels.² These facts indicate that equality-based feminists, working as reformers of the state, are really quite closely tied with strong strands in the nationalist narrative. Unioni women are limited in their rewards from the state, however, because they frame their issues, to some extent, in a gendered way. In doing this, they step away from the equality motif of the narrative, and lose some

² The Finnish state has an official 'Office of Equality between Women and Men'. There was an uproar several years ago when a man was chosen to run it.

legitimacy in the system. Because, however, they still adhere to the heterosexual model, they retain their power as legitimized through an adherence to the model of inter-dependent male-female relations.

The feminists who subscribe to the subordination perspective find themselves much more on the outside of the state system and the nationalist narrative, and accordingly, find themselves with even less cultural value. In arguing that men dominate women, they are blatantly rejecting the interdependency model of male-female relations. They are also repudiating the idea that equality is an ideal which men also share. In their analysis, men have something to lose if women liberate themselves from their oppressors (men). This radical thought shakes the very foundations of the Finnish national narrative, i.e., equality and inter-dependency. Once women are able to expand their horizons beyond those two underlying national narrative strands, they may cause the collapse of the system. Even heterosexuality is questioned in this view, as it is no longer necessary to focus on male-female relations as the only type available to women. These feminists believe that it is possible to have female-female bonds that are primary in nature. What keeps these feminists from collapsing the entire nationalist narrative is the fact that they, too, still believe in the idea of the Finnish nation. Even as they

work in Feminist Radical Therapy to understand the role that the patriarchy plays in their lives, they still work within the traditional equality mode for legislative improvements for women. In addition, in working through *Unioni* they have chosen a traditional organization with strong ties to the state apparatus. Even the subordination feminists, then, are still trying to reform the state. Their sense of Finnishness has stayed intact.

One element which connects both forms of feminism is that both tend to consciously shy away from activities and skills that would tend to identify them with the traditional feminist woman, particularly in terms of practical skills. This is obviously not to say that feminist women do not have these skills, e.g. cooking, sewing, handicrafts, but rather that their identity is not anchored by the traditional female skills of housekeeping and family caretaking. They try to work very hard to expand the female identity beyond these spheres.

Extaasi: The androgyny construct

Extaasi's much more radical gender construct contains two basic elements: sexual radicalism and anarchism. The radical gender construct is interesting because while ideologically it rejects gender divisions, in practice it does not totally do away with the desire to have a group which functions primarily with women

members and for the benefit of women.

In terms of sexual radicalness, there is a certain degree to which lesbianism, in and of itself, is radical in Finland, as discussed above. It is a sexual stance which is in direct opposition to the idea of the heterosexual nuclear family. In the Extaaasi gender construct, lesbianism is just a mild infraction of gender norms.

Rather than just quietly live as lesbians, and not try to disrupt the norms, radical women take their sexual radicalism further. Extaaasi women also don't want to have to conform to the traditional feminine ways of dress, and instead choose to be androgynous, or punk, or basically whatever way they feel. Their aim is to shock the world. Feminists, who happen to be lesbians, typically pale in comparison to radical women, who push androgyny to the extreme.

At a second level, Extaaasi women express their sexual radicalism with sexual practices and behavior which are even more unacceptable than just simply lesbianism, such as sadomasochism. Running the cafe, and having public parties there, at which there were s/m performances, gave the Extaaasi group much more publicity and notoriety of shock value than the feminist women received.

Where does the anarchist element of Extaaasi come

into play? Extaasi claims to exist as a group designed to turn societal norms upside down. Particularly in a culture such as Finland's, where conformity and homogeneity are highly valued, Extaasi forces one to take notice, and to think about issues in ways which may be uncomfortable. Unlike feminists, who are, to a great extent, still trying to work within the system to reform it, the anarchist element of Extaasi allows them to ignore or even make fun of the system. An example of Extaasi humor is in their pamphlet entitled "The Right Price: A Guide to Shoplifting."

The radical construct takes clear aim at both the Martta caretaker and Unioni feminist gender constructs. In conscious ways, it manipulates the symbols of importance to caretakers, such as patriotism and the fatherland. Interestingly, however, in ways which are not so evident to the members, Extaasi, finds itself steeped in the traditional ways, as portrayed in the vignette by the baking of the traditional Finnish foods. In a practical way, then, Extaasi is closest to the group (Martta) it is most trying to startle. As discussed above, feminists, on the other hand, would not even want to be identified with traditional baking, as it too closely is linked to the traditional gender construct.

In terms of Finnish national identity, radical construct women attempt to use it as a reflector of their

agenda. The anarchism of Extaasi is partially based on an international model, as picked up in Amsterdam, London, and New York, and as such, prides itself in its internationality. However, elements of the caretaker gender construct for Finnish women is never totally absent from Extaasi member's behavior. This is most evident in the case of food, as well as running a cafe, which is clearly an activity linked to caretaking and service. Extaasi's radical gender construct clearly contests the state. As anarchists, they aim to defy all that the state has to offer, although that may not be the case in reality. In the Extaasi view, equality is not even an issue. There may be an acknowledgement that women need space because they've been mistreated within the culture, but they don't analyze this in the same way as the subordination feminists above. Extaasi members don't have faith in the state -- they must challenge it, not reform it, in order to validate their position within it.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, I would like to point to several issues in my work. This research has shown that nationalism is indeed a constitutive and relative term, along the lines of Anderson's model of nationalism. What this case adds, however, is a consideration of a dimension absent from Anderson's formulation -- gender. It is not the 'brotherhood' which Anderson describes, but rather a gender inclusive community which gains importance in the Finnish national narrative. Finland's state structure developed out of a national narrative founded on a combination of female imagining and an egalitarian motif. The Finnish case prompts a new and different understanding of how gender and nationalism may intersect: nationalism does not have to be grounded in a fraternity -- a brotherhood -- but instead may find its support in a gender inclusive -- sex inter-dependent story. In looking at how nationalism and gender are constituted, particular attention should be paid to the type of gender understanding through which the nation is imagined. Just as the shape of the national narratives in the context of the third world may call for a different set of analytic premises, it appears that within the Western European context of nationalism it is not possible to talk of a general set of assumptions in terms of Western nationalism, but rather explore its different structures and formulations.

The Finnish case points to the importance of historical and geographical specificity as factors in explanations of the imaginations of nationalism. Elements such as industrialization, cohesiveness of population, internal governmental structures, and economic bases are all important to consider in attempting to gain a complete understanding of national storylines. All of these factors combine with the ideological underpinnings -- language being an important foundation in the Finnish case -- to create a specific and unique national narrative.

In Finland's case, the importance of female labor, both on the farm and later in the waged labor force, was recognized as a critical aspect of Finland's development. The national narrative -- in its equality underpinnings -- maintained and supported this belief in the value and importance of female labor. In doing so, it continually propelled women into the work force, as well as into formal politics, without them losing aspects of their 'femininity'.

The image of female as caretaker/nurturer was the one which was dominant in the national narrative, and subsequently became an organizing principle for Finnish state development. In its combination of egalitarian and equality (male and female interdependency) tenets, the Finnish national narrative inspired the shape of the

Finnish state, its understanding of nationalism, and its perception of women as citizens in that state. Nationalism is, as Anderson points out, a relative term, and in the Finnish case, its uniqueness lies in opposition to inequality and other forms of subordinations well as an expanded notion of the social good. That is why, even though caretaker/nurturer women were understood to operate within a private, domestic setting, they were nonetheless able to participate in public affairs -- particularly at the national level -- up to a point. As they try to expand out of the demarcated 'female' area, however, they run into obstacles. The Finnish case raises questions about other forms of state equality -- found for instance in certain aspects of the Swedish system -- and brings attention to the limits or possibilities of those systems.

Even with the relatively homogeneous population of Finland we find different notions of what it is to be female and a citizen. Different understandings of female symbol and practice will translate into different arrangements between women as citizens and their role in the state. It is not a simple equation that women who are in the public sphere in publicly recognized activities are in fact those with the most power. As we see in the case of Finland, when the female image of caretaker is put into practice in the state structure,

those women who view their identity within that frame are afforded a great deal of power -- both publicly and privately.

The notion of female citizen also takes on a different quality in the context of Finnish state equality. In terms of feminism and a feminist perspective, women who adhere to this understanding of their gender find themselves in a very different position than feminists in the United States, for example. Under conditions of state equality, women who follow a feminist ideology find themselves in a perplexing bind. While their calls for equality are heeded by the state apparatus, at the same time they are dismissed if not expressed in terms of gender inclusiveness and male-female interdependency. They may, in fact, be perceived as possible threats to national understanding or 'misreading' of the national narrative. The Finnish case point out that discussions of western based feminism must be expanded to include those contexts in which the state is, to some extent, integral to the feminist movement. The domestication of the state offers feminists a certain degree of power, but it is available in limited and specific forms. This work also shows the strength of cultural traditions, and how deeply they are embedded, even in groups, such as Extaasi, which espouse to throw them away. Female symbolism and practice in terms of the

dominant gender construct of caretaker/nurturer were still expressed by the women who were contesting the Finnish state.

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