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**Counter-Ideology Populism:
The Finns Party's Counter-Democratic,
Counter-Cosmopolitan, Counter-
Finlandization Platform, as told by Suomen
Uutiset**

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Abstract

Nationalist populist movements are on the rise across Europe. In Finland, the Finns Party became the primary oppositional movement against mainstream politics after their birth in 1995. The party political platform has been defined by nationalism, social conservatism, and populism. One of their main communication outlets is their online news website Suomen Uutiset, which publishes ordinary news alongside party communication. It is an important outreach tool, especially in a nation with many internet users.

This thesis sets out to produce a reading of the Finns Party's online news website SuomenUutiset.fi, and select material from the immigration critical internet forum Hommaforum.org. The analysis of this empirical material will demonstrate the underlying sociopolitical ideologies informing online news publishing for a political platform. The aim is to understand how the Finns Party utilizes media in communicating its policy and winning over the public. The theoretical framework draws on the work of globalization and cosmopolitanism researchers such as Ulrich Beck, David Held, Anthony Giddens, and Zygmunt Bauman. Counter-democracy by Pierre Rosanvallon is drawn upon too, along with theories on Finlandization, the public spheres, new media, echo chambers, and news media sensationalism. The research is conducted as an open content analysis of a case study, with a guiding methodology of Flyvbjerg's phronetic research.

The reading has been informed by a novel theoretical framework, combining concepts of counter-democracy, counter-cosmopolitanism, and counter-Finlandization under the umbrella term counter-ideology. The analysis shows the validity of this informing background ideology to be present across SuomenUutiset.fi coverage. What it has discovered is the intricate working of the counter-ideology informing the background of Finns Party politics. This research further proposes a way for understanding other similar cases located in similar contexts. The theoretical framework is recommended as an approach for researching populist politics in Europe, ones focused on resisting the European Union.

Keywords: the Finns Party, Perussuomalaiset, populism, counter-democracy, counter-cosmopolitanism, counter-Finlandization, counter-ideology, public sphere,

counterpublics, new media, legitimacy, echo chambers, Suomen Uutiset,
Hommaforum, Euro sceptics,

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Abbreviations

Kesk. – Suomen Keskusta (The Finnish Center Party)

Kok. – Kansallinen Kokoomus (The National Coalition)

MEP – Member of European Parliament

MP – Member of Parliament

Sdp. – Sosiaalidemokraattinen Puolue (The Social Democratic Party)

SMP – Suomen Maaseudun Puolue (The Finnish Rural Party)

UKIP – UK Independence Party

1. Introduction – The Finns Party of 2015

Last year, 2015, was significant in Finnish politics. It was the year of parliamentary elections: the Stubb (Kok.) Government elected in 2011 stepped down with the election of the Sipilä (Kesk.) Government in April. The new government was faced with an overdue task of reforming labor laws in the hopes of making Finland more competitive on the world market. The restructuring of the social- and healthcare administrative regions underway for many years was another critical issue, not to mention the 3rd Greek bailout package, and the escalating “refugee crisis” in Europe. The government enjoyed 57% of the popular vote on Election Day, which is the highest their support has been since. The most recent poll numbers from April 2016 showed the combined support of the government parties having fallen to 45.9% (Auvinen, 2016).

The new government consisted of Suomen Keskusta, the Finnish Center Party as the prime ministerial party, Kansallinen Kokoomus, the National Coalition standing just right of center on the political spectrum, and Perussuomalaiset, the Finns Party (sometimes referred to as the True Finns), Finland’s most prominent nationalist populist party. This was the first time the Finns Party participated in forming a government since their formation in 1995. Having been an opposition party until now, their new role in the government required adjustment. For example, the approval of the 3rd bailout package to Greece (Demokraatti.fi, 2015) was a major blow to the party. As the poll numbers show, the Finns Party have lost the most support, with almost half of their voters defecting since last year (Auvinen, 2016).

The year is well recorded on the Finns Party’s online news website *Suomen Uutiset*, (from hereon: SuomenUutiset.fi; Eng.: *The News of Finland*). Their remaining time in the opposition defined their election campaign, ultimately earning them four ministers in the Sipilä Government. With hope of curtailing excessive EU influence in the form of Greek bailouts and refugee processing, it was they themselves whose hopes were curtailed. How does a party come to terms with their new position, and how do they communicate this to their voter base, who placed lots of elite smashing hope into their participation in the government? The website can tell a lot about this: beyond normal party communication, they publish news about Finnish and foreign affairs, like a news organization.

This thesis will study the content on SuomenUutiset.fi and conversations on the Finnish immigration critical internet forum *Hommaforum.org*. The Finns Party's success can be ascertained from their communications on SuomenUutiset.fi; for that reason, this thesis will focus on examining how the Finns Party uses media to communicate their positions, values, and policy to the public. Being an increasingly relevant force on the Finnish political landscape, the Finns Party communication strategy is necessary to analyze to understand their popularity. With internet use in Finland being one of the most pervasive in the world (Internet World Stats, 2016), the case for online special interest media research is an opportunity to study broader phenomena of online news. Furthermore, the developing populist trends in Finland are similar to developments seen across many European democracies. Examining the recent rise of nationalist populism across Europe, especially in a context of Euro criticism is of academic interest as a recent, widespread phenomenon. These insights will prove useful in understanding how other European parties campaigning on similar platforms promote their ideas to their supporters and potential voters.

The questions, "How do political parties vying to speak for the public appeal to the public?", "How do narratives specific to Finnish nationalism reflect discussions in the international forum?" and "How do online internet forums and news websites function in generating conversation?" will be answered as detailed research questions in this thesis. They will lay the grounds for the theoretical framework, and guide the analysis in producing a pointed conclusion, suitable to base the theoretical framework's application to other similar cases.

This empirical material will not only be appropriate to analyze Finns Party media usage as a public outreach tool, and also offer insight into the user experience of following Finns Party news and Hommaforum.org conversations. My initial assumption guiding the research is that people who have pre-existing dispositions to opinions favored by the party and Hommaforum.org are most likely to seek out these platforms to engage with. The further aim of this thesis is to examine the attitudes and values exhibited on these websites, and examine how they are used to appeal to Finnish nationalism, mistrust towards the government and elites, and feelings of insecurity, to outline a outlining ideology or system of belief informing populist political opinions. A part of this will be the re-actualization of the concept "Finlandization". I also wish to develop an understanding of the underlying processes of media usage, political communication, and populism

in how the Finns Party employs their online media presence. Therefore, I suggest my reading of this case study to be applicable for other cases existing in different contexts. This will require examining what I will call the “counter-ideology”; this will be explained further in the paper. Understanding the counter-aspects of the Finns Party political platform will be key in producing a holistic understanding of how their brand of populism appeals to the public.

I will begin with outlining the theoretical framework of this research, which will include a review of contemporary media research literature, to outline the common topics being discussed presently. This will be followed by a methodological overview of the research process, and motivation for researching SuomenUutiset.fi as a case study. After that, a brief background of the case study, comprising of the Finns Party's history, and the nature of SuomenUutiset.fi as a political publication. Finally, the analysis will be presented in three subchapters, each focusing on a different element of the theoretical framework and a category of the empirical material. The final conclusion will summarize and evaluate the analysis in how it reflects trends, topics and issues being discussed abroad, and how the case study functions as an example of how research on party news and populist parties in general can be examined.

2. The Counter-Ideology Framework

2.1. The Current Conversations in Media Research

Recent political communication studies have focused on populist politics. Analysis has uncovered many curiosities about parties' communication strategies and media presence. For example, a study on UKIP media coverage already nods to their popularity being a result of their political platform, and not the main stream media attention they have received (Deacon and Wring, 2016). This would suggest that media outreach matters more through the party's own channels, and more personal interaction with their voters. In analyzing parties' own channels of communication, one can uncover important information regarding their resonance with the voter; especially the voter who is upset at the establishment. A case of the winner of the Icelandic municipal elections of 2010 demonstrates exactly the value of the party's own channels. Valtysson (2015) focuses his analysis on the strategy of "The Best Party". He explains how the party mastered the election narrative by playing on the distrust of the establishment, and by taking advantage of the multilayered communication possibilities of the internet. Most notably, party leader Jón Gnarr's personal blog "The Mayor's Diary" became an important tool of outreach during the campaign and after his election (2015, pp.52-53). What is interesting is Valtysson's note on how post-election, the highly viable performative element of the party's communicative platform fell apart, when their agenda changed from commanding attention and forming public opinion, to decision making (2015, pp.62-63).

Most new media research has studied the technological aspects of social media. User experience of social media is studied in Seegard's article (2015). Focusing on the participatory potential of the technology itself, Seegard argues that both voters and politicians see social media as an appropriate political tool and a useful one for engagement (2015, p.76). Recent studies also point to the fact that social media might not be the emancipatory Holy Grail for grassroots counter movements. Social media advocacy studies point to the wealthy and pre-existing powers to have the strongest representation on social media outlets (van der Graaf et al., 2016). As such, research on the broad platforms of Facebook and Twitter for example might not capture the full picture of alternative political movements.

Social media studies addressing the impact of news on users on the other hand reveals interesting phenomena. Social media reliance for news was noted to increase a perception of media bias in Colombia (Rojas et al., 2016). In another study, formation of online echo chambers is pointed out as a concern. However, the empirical data is not conclusive. Lee maintains that polarization occurs mainly during time of political conflict and is dependent on the “immediate political context”, which is not limited to social media but is an attribute of one’s public sphere online or offline (2016, pp.67-68). This also shows the necessity to consider studies of personalized social media communication, rather than study the large media outlets.

Media studies on the news itself focus mainly on mass media (Davis, 2010, pp.20-21). Naturally, the news broadcast by large institutions will have little to do with reaching out to special interest groups. Bjerke and Fonn (2015) examine crisis journalism content in Norwegian newspapers. They find that the coverage was focused on short term problems, isolated to pointing at certain corrupt individuals and not necessarily the system at large (2015, p.125). Yet the effectiveness of ingrained values in news stories are notable for corporate media outlets in general. Scholl et al. (2016) review how connecting news stories framed with morals and rights, values in general, have been found to resonate with readers. According to the Scholl et al., “by highlighting how an issue connects with underlying values, value framing may facilitate as well as motivate substantive policy reasoning about the issue.” (2016, p.74). An important point, since profiling media outlets is a method for readers to further engage with media they prefer to see. Wise and McLaughlin (2016) argue that the level of trust in a media outlet can vary the effects of the news’s message. As research on social media by Lee showed, Metag (2016) has a similar conclusion regarding traditional mass media: opinions on local or national matters is hardly affected by them at all, and is founded on pre-existing opinions.

However, media agenda setting is being recognized as a more prevalent phenomenon across the world; namely, what is discussed in public discourse will be on the political agenda in a democratic nation, too (Sevenans and Vliegenthart, 2016). Not surprisingly, migration is an issue this is pronounced in. Studies show that Muslims are being framed in American media as a threat (Bowe and Maki, 2016), and framing migrants and other non-nationals in media functions to justify increased security (Kaur et al., 2016). With these results, it is apparent that further research

is needed in special interest media. Knowing how echo chamber formation is dependent on a pre-existing context and can easily be enforced by media outlets, the effects of a party's own news website, like SuomenUutiset.fi, can be far reaching.

Research on Finnish media context itself is limited to mass media studies, and other broader phenomena. Näsi and Räsänen (2013) point to the internet gaining importance in the Finnish media landscape, but not at the expense of the old, traditional, more established media outlets such as newspapers. Näsi and Räsänen identify dramatic differences between demographics though, and especially older generations still rely on newspapers and television more (2013, pp.89-90). Political communication in Finland in turn has focused on defining authorities' discourse. Finnish government transparency is studied from the point of view of communicating policy (Vesa, 2015). Vesa points out that "in Finnish consensus democracy, policy-making often involves bargaining in tight elite networks." (2015, p.30). The recent studies on Finnish media and more specific context's is alarmingly lacking. Broad studies, such as the ones conducted by Vesa (2015), and Näsi and Räsänen (2013) leaves a lot to be desired for in producing more contextual knowledge from case study research.

Naturally, the entirety of media research going on globally today is impossible to address here. If these cases are an indicator though, the research going on today has left plenty of topics uncovered in analyzing the instrumental use of media in politics. Moreover, the recently ignited European refugee crisis as a case study is not appearing in the literature. Research in Finland on Finland seems scarce too. The lack of perspectives drawing on other disciplines is noticeable. Interdisciplinary research attempting to understand the workings of society beyond the pointed issues brought up here lacks representation. Therefore, I propose my own theoretical framework to guide the analysis in this thesis. The theoretical concepts explored will be clustered around Globalization, Counter-Cosmopolitanism, Counter-Democracy, Counter-Finlandization, Public Spheres, New Media, and Echo Chambers to establish the guiding framework for the analysis.

2.2. Setting the Stage for the Cosmopolitan Outlook: Globalization

To understand the cosmopolitan outlook, and how it is relevant, globalization must be looked into to establish a conceptual background. Giddens defines globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are

shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” (1990, p.64). Putting social relations on the foreground here is key; the concept encompasses all aspects of society. This includes economic, political and cultural factors, all of which are susceptible to globalization influences. This is supported by Held's understanding of distinct changes taking place in the world due to globalization.

“[Globalization] involves stretching of social, political and economic activities across political frontiers, regions and continents... growing magnitude of networks and flows of trade, investment, finance, [and] culture... speeding up of global interactions and processes... [and] deepening impact of global interactions and processes such that the effects of distant events can be highly significant elsewhere...” (Held, 2010, p.29).

What is important to note is economic, political and cultural globalization all act in unison. This is supported on a theoretical level too. Sayer states the cultural political economy approach to globalization emphasizes equal importance of the influence by cultural and political economy forces (2001 cited in Nam, 2013, p.213). For this reason, it is important to emphasize when I discuss globalization in this research, I refer to all aspects of it on top of economic globalization.

2.2.1. What Globalization Promises and Delivers

Among students of cultural and political globalization, the fear of the diminishing nation state and people's cultural identities with progressing globalization is abundant (Giddens, 2002; 1990). Certain transcendence is noticeable, but the perception of erasing plurality is a mistake attributed to methodological nationalism (Beck, 2006, p.24). Methodological nationalism in the social sciences treats the nation state as the single form of political and social organization in society. Beck shows this to be wrong under a positive view of cultural globalization (also known as the cosmopolitan outlook), as methodological nationalism does not question the premise of referring everything to the nation state. Furthermore, the cosmopolitan outlook celebrates the diversity of culture, instead of subscribing to an enforced homogeneity without nationalism (2006, pp.24-33). Cultural globalization as such respects the diversity of the people. Political globalization begs a different question though. The aspect of lost sovereignty is an important notion, one which Zygmunt Bauman famously analyzes.

Regarding political globalization at the will of economic forces, Bauman argues that the erosion of the nation-state and the national economy is a fact (2005, pp.52-54). This is however, not necessarily a forced process: many nations have surrendered parts of their sovereignty to organization like NATO or the EU to gain more economic, political or military security. According to Bauman, this is a show of force from international financial markets and institutions, as they become more exempt from regulation and national legislation. The formation of “weak states” is what Bauman argues has promoted and been promoted by globalization, chipping away at nation states (2005, pp.59-64). This goes to further demonstrate how different globalizations are all interrelated and have the potential to build and enforce one another. Moreover, they have transformative influences over the nation state.

The nation state as a concept is at the forefront of our understanding of how globalization affects our daily lives (Bauman, 2005; Giddens, 2002; Held, 2010). Held identifies several disjunctures in the current political order which characterize the changing nation states' relationship with globalization. To summarize, the nation state is dealing with rapid changes in how its people, power, and territory are perceived, which leads to difficulties in promoting a common good, along with foreign affairs becoming domestic affairs too and vice versa (2010, p.36-38). Globalization offers up challenges which are immensely difficult to deal with in the present order.

The reduced significance of the nation state can be observed as a negative phenomenon, but as a result of political fragmentation, new cultural institutions are being formed. Observed phenomena point to the birth of new, and revitalization of old, cultures as being tied to globalization (Bauman, 2005; Giddens, 1990). Far from being a globally homogenizing force, Giddens explains globalization to be a phenomenon empowering and even revitalizing local cultural identities with weakening nation state ideals. A less homogenous nation state also means the creation of new social and economic groups in previously homogenous societies (2002, p.13). Even new nations are springing out, as this leads to further political fragmentation (Bauman, 2005, p.62). Cultural transformations are happening as such, but seemingly more by the terms of people rather than market forces. Local transformation is a large part of globalization (Giddens 1990,

p.64). This is a phenomenon welcomed and embraced by cosmopolitan theory. Instead of rigid nationalities, individualistic and localized identities are celebrated as part of the global community.

With these developments, economic, political, and cultural powers are not necessarily being concentrated or eviscerated, but merely redefined. It might take a long time for research to identify the value of these changes fully, but recognition of globalization producing inconsistent results is understandably causing some upset, but also positive impressions in others. With the Westphalian nation state losing significance in the face of new global structures overriding old ones, it is not surprising resistance is being met. As many authors in the field discuss the ontological security of the nation state being a constant which has permeated all sociological and political research for centuries (Giddens, 1990; Held, 2010; Appiah, 2006; Bauman, 2005), globalization will inevitably be a source of anxiety on this level. Focusing on the loss of the nation states former status in the face of growing transnational political and economic powers makes globalization seem like the enemy.

2.3. The Cosmopolitan Outlook

Held defines the cosmopolitan movement to be about egalitarian individualism, reciprocal recognition and impartial reasoning. The outlook sees each person as an autonomous moral agent. Held's model of cosmopolitanism assigns individual agency as the fulcrum of political enterprise, with consent, deliberation, and collective decision making as the core values of cosmopolitan institutions and forms of governance (2010, pp.15-16). Beyond values of individualism and collective deliberation, diversity is also respected. Appiah identifies cosmopolitanism as the belief that human variety is important, and that people have the right to shape their own lives and the resources they need for that, with other people of course (2006, p.104). This is crucial also in more utilitarian approaches to cosmopolitanism; as Held notes, people will inevitably choose different ways of life and cosmopolitans respect this difference (2010, p.71). In other words, cosmopolitanism begins in the respect for the individual, granting them autonomy to develop and express oneself free from constraints of traditional structures, as long as it does not limit another individual's choices.

With the weakened nation states, it becomes important to work internationally on issues affecting different groups of people. According to cosmopolitan theory, global interconnections

should be promoted in order to face new challenges on the world stage. However, this strategy is not accepted by all, and recession into nationalism can be observed across the world. The reasons for this resistance have been studied extensively.

2.3.1. Reasons for Resisting Cosmopolitanism

A major objection against globalization and cosmopolitanism is its inherent elitism. With seeming failure to adopt a global democracy spanning many heterogeneous societies, Keane calls the current project a “bourgeoisie cosmocracy”; it is only a small group of people with a positive outlook for globalization (Keane, 2001 cited in Davis, 2010, p.123). Bauman claims the positive image of globalization is an illusion altogether. He explains this by elaborating on a divide of perceptions and experiences between the affluent first world and forcefully localized, non-affluent communities. First world residents see cosmopolitan borderless society as benefiting all, while it is in fact solely benefiting the first world and mostly the affluent (2005, pp.78-80). Also, mobility and cultural recognition is unequal between the two groups. Bauman discusses the difference between the two by naming them “tourists” and “vagabonds”. The tourists are free to travel, and welcomed in most places across the world as wealthy travelers, while the vagabonds traveling out of necessity (as refugees or asylum seekers) do not enjoy freedom or welcome once they arrive at their destinations (2005, pp.80-89). According to Friedman, the cosmopolitan identity as something financially afforded, not adopted. He also notes how the cosmopolitan lexicon is rife with privileged language; among it the reference to the localized ones who cannot afford the cosmopolitan identity as being bounded and essentialist (1997 cited in Bauman, 2005, pp.88-89). As such, the message and the reality of cosmopolitanism do not match on all levels. Cosmopolitan globalism is at risk of becoming a movement of good intentions without the will or the skill to fix the problems hindering it.

Yet, as far as addressing these issues go, the toolkit for taking on the new problems might not exist. Held calls us grappling with increasingly transnational collective issues with tools insufficient for the job, “the circumstances of cosmopolitanism” (Waldron, 2000 cited in Held, 2010, p.39), as “the paradox of our time” (2010, p.4). Concrete examples of this reveal the frustrations towards the global economy. Appiah provides an example of rural villages in Ghana, calling them “pockets of homogeneity” (2006, p.103). These communities have retained a

homogenous identity when the urban centers in Ghana are seemingly more cosmopolitan. Appiah explains that the village communities feel their identity threatened by the changing world and changing socioeconomic relationships. A large reason is crop prices no longer being able to support farming communities (2006, pp.101-104). The world seems to change rapidly around the community and forcibly changes the way the community works. Moreover, the fact that to some this process might seem imposed upon them against their will.

Cosmopolitanization can be in broad terms be described as the process of cosmopolitanism, which Beck adds the notion of it being a forced cosmopolitanism (2006, p.101). He goes on to say it is the active process of enforcing globalization and promoting it as positive (2006, p.110). The point of forcing cosmopolitanism is key when discussing the reactions against cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanization sparks political conflict, as a nation is seemingly changed from within and against the nation's will (2006, p.101), such as with the farming communities in Ghana. Cosmopolitanization does not have immediately observable effects, rather they manifest over time. Any attempts to counter it as well must happen in a latent way. It is also a direct contradiction against how the nation state itself develops, and as such its legitimacy and legality is called to suspicion by the public (Beck, 2006, p.102). With this attitude, the foreign develops a new dimension, as xenophobic nationalists now represent the otherness in society. This brings forth nationalist anxiety and fuels further xenophobic sentiments. This kind of disorientation is what Beck narrows in on as a cause of anti-cosmopolitan sentiment. Thus, the boundary between cosmopolitanism and its resistance lies in tolerance and intolerance, as other categories can overlap dramatically in the opposed attitudes (2006, p.110). Yet, as I have noted, globalization is pervasive, and cosmopolitanism is integral in developing international networks. This begs the question, how can a global phenomenon be opposed?

2.3.2. Towards an Understanding of Counter-Cosmopolitanism

According to Beck, cosmopolitanism produces its own resistance with its seemingly chaotic and conflicting messages (2006, pp.110-111). Furthermore, anti-cosmopolitans have to deploy a cosmopolitan toolkit for their message to be heard (Beck, 2006, p.112). Therefore, the effect of anti-cosmopolitanization action ends up promoting cosmopolitanization (Beck, 2006, p.102). This is due to the core goals of promoting welfare, dignity, and opposing instability on both sides (2006,

pp.118-119). Therefore, it is inaccurate to talk of anti-cosmopolitans; the opposing parties are going along with cosmopolitan structural, cultural, and political changes even if they do not admit it. It is more accurate to discuss counter-cosmopolitans, due to their highly sophisticated use of cosmopolitan networks, promotion of select cosmopolitan attitudes, and a basic ideology of human rights.

Taking Europe as an example, both cosmopolitanism and its resistance are in fact European traditions in public discourse. Beck describes the EU as “institutionalized cosmopolitanism” in its realization (2006, p.114). However, during prosperous times, cosmopolitanism suits the needs of the economic system. As Beck exemplifies, with the USA drafting laborers from elsewhere in the world to benefit their economy (2006, p.114). Conversely, in times of economic strife, the urgency to rejuvenate the economy takes priority, and migration is seen as a threat to stability. Forces in the EU member nations can be mobilized against this with nationalist rhetoric, the root of which is a rather simple ideology founded in populism.

Beck explains that populists believe there is a categorical difference to be respected in between different nationalities. Populist movements are ultimately held together by prejudiced attitudes of outsiders.

“Essentialistic populism is one side, the other being the exclusion of, and contempt for, foreigners and exiles, and also of majorities and other minorities by which one feels ‘oppressed’ or ‘threatened’.” (Beck, 2006, p.115).

What this breaks down to, is nationalities borrowing tools of identity politics from legitimately oppressed ethnic and cultural minorities. While the discourses employed by minorities have been about empowerment, struggles for recognition and justice, and equality, the populism practiced by counter-cosmopolitans in European tradition revolves around drawing lines around who is a pure member of a given nation (2006, p.115). Yet, populists cannot appeal to old boundaries separating nationalities and ethnicities, because the global market and human rights legislation wields power over these old categories (Beck, 2006, pp.117-118). Counter-cosmopolitan morality here rests in a strange limbo, where universal concepts of human rights are promoted selectively and with privilege, prioritizing national allegiances. Here, cosmopolitan

attitudes have become the enemy, in the cosmopolitan framework in which the counter-cosmopolitans are now forced to operate.

With the political process becoming more disenchanting (Dahlgren, 2009; 2013; Rosanvallon, 2008; Beck, 2006), extra-parliamentary political activism in the form of radical left and right wing grassroots movement is flourishing across mature democracies. It is necessary to examine how people seek to influence the system beyond normative voting procedures and conversation. Many ways, most of which fall neatly under the concept of counter-democracy, have been in use for centuries.

2.4. Counter-Democracy as Democratic Resistance

Rosanvallon explains a need to study the distrust of the power of democratic institutions. His concept of counter-democracy outlines three aspects of how distrust is expressed: namely the oversight of the power of governance, prevention of the abuse of power, and testing judgements of the powerful. Counter-democracy itself refers to “a form of democracy that reinforces the usual electoral democracy as a kind of buttress, a democracy of indirect powers disseminated throughout society... which complements the episodic democracy if the usual electoral-representative system.” (2008, p.8). Rosanvallon specifies that this is not a form of democratic sabotage, and it seeks to complement the established democratic institutions (2008, p.8). What this entails is the analysis of civilian oversight of politicians, and politicians’ legitimacy in the eyes of the civil populace. Moreover, it is specifically distrust of the democratic ideal which has spurred the formation of counter-democratic movements across the world (2008, pp.2-8).

2.4.1. Oversight by the People and its Populist Misuse

Rosanvallon discusses the power of oversight as an idea dating back to the French Revolution. With institutional surveillance, the intention was to keep the governing bodies in line with the will of the people. Surveillance as such, was a neutral term, until the political elites begun surveillance of the public. While the term might bear negative connotations of authoritarianism, there are still practices of civilian surveillance employed by non-elites (2008, pp.12-14). Other powers of oversight are more obvious institutions: the expression of popular will or sovereignty with voting rights. A right that has become viewed as an insufficient way to keep the government and elected

leaders in check (2008, p.12). Other forms of oversight in Rosanvallon's terms are vigilance, denunciation, and evaluation (2008, p.13). These according to him are permanent as opposed to the periodic nature of elections, are available to both individuals and organizations to be used, and most importantly they enhance society's powers to influence what course of action governments take (2008, p.14). With this oversight, the power to subvert official bureaucracy is granted to the civil populace. However, this usually results in obstructionism more than anything. Rosanvallon claims society has power to sanction and shut down any unfavorable decision making or implementation through extra-parliamentary means. This has become even more pronounced in heterogeneous societies. With a diverse group of angry people, it is easy to create a coalition of the disappointed around a single issue, instead of a majority of people rallying behind a positive message (2008, pp.14-15). Populist politics aims to take advantage of this negativity and directs it towards sanctioning ruling elites, instead of employing normative democratic discourse. What is not recognized is the destructive aspect of deploying this political toolkit.

Rosanvallon explains populism to be synonymous with using counter-democratic tools in a destructive way. Populism radicalizes oversight, sovereignty and judgement politics to the extreme. This approach views government authority as an evil that needs to be fought against, resulting in the crumbling of respect of authority and risks increased violence (Rosanvallon, 2008, pp.265-273). Rosanvallon's theories paint a grim picture of what fuels counter-cosmopolitanism and populist politics. Appealing to feelings over reason in this case shows the real power of what people on the lower steps of traditional power structures can do to upset the system. One way to draw upon this base is the questioning the elites' legitimacy for governing.

2.4.2. Legitimacy

Rosanvallon outlines empirical or utilitarian legitimacy to be a natural attribute of an organization, which it earns from useful contributions to its field (2008, p.112). This however is different from political legitimacy, which requires usually a majority's support (social-procedural legitimacy produced in systems of universal suffrage), support of an impartial authority or legitimacy through impartiality, and subscription to universal values (substantial legitimacy) (2008, pp.112-113). Legitimacy as such encompasses many aspects of power and values, all which require consideration. However, to simplify the matter, Dahlgren defines legitimacy as people

questioning who should have power over them and why (2013, p.31). To enforce political legitimacy, and retain a people's government, several support systems have formed beyond the usual democratic process. For example, citizen initiatives, calls for direct democracy, and e-democratic tools demonstrate how people attempt to reclaim power from the ruling elites.

Legitimacy has traditionally been a product of voting (2008, p.3). However, Rosanvallon's primary claim is that voting is hardly enough for politicians to win the voters' trust. Hay highlights three reasons as to why the political process's legitimacy is undermined: the subversion of collective interest by political elites while lying about serving it, political elites serving corporate interests, and insufficient use of public funds (2007 cited in Dahlgren, 2013, p.13). While the political establishment plays its part in delegitimizing itself, there is another type of legitimacy challenging political legitimacy, gaining new support in the internet age: public opinion. The press has historically been the holder of public opinion. Public opinion cannot be claimed by a single authority according to Rosanvallon. It does not disappear, nor can it be compromised by other forces, and the media can wield it but not completely control it. Also, the dialectic opposites have been more pronounced with the legitimacy of oversight and governance being held by the press and the politicians respectively (2008, pp.117-118). The press has been the voice of distrust (2008, p.119), the voice which alternative politics has now co-opted.

By understanding the function of the distrust of power, and the power of distrust, we understand how the public utilizes the counter-democratic tools to bend the system in their favor. Of course, while claiming to fight the elites, the populist front produces its own elites of power relationships in their quest for building up their legitimacy to govern by wielding public opinion. Resistance to elite projects in the case of Finland has been noted in studying Finlandization, and its resistance. Being inherently a product of globalization, Finlandization adds the contextual element to this framework to understand how people counter elitist political projects.

2.5. The History of Finlandization

Finlandization is defined by Newman and Paasi as "textually and discursively (re)produced interterritoriality in which, through education and the media, people were socialized with the supposition that the [USSR] represented a threat to [the Finnish people]" (1998 cited in Ridanpää, 2012, p.135). Missing from this definition however, is the Finnish political elites' role in

Finlandization as a political project. Paavonsalo notes that Finlandization was never a people's movement, but an operative framework for elites and those aspiring to be such (2013, pp.16-17). To understand this, we will need to explore the history of the concept and its background.

Ridanpää (2012) traces the origins of Finlandization as foreign policy to post-World War II Finland, when the Finnish government signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the USSR in 1948. What became known as the Paasikivi-Kekkonen doctrine, named for the two presidents dictating the line of policy, involved appeasing the Soviet Union to avoid repercussions and aggression (Hämäläinen, 2014).

The term was, according to Moisio (2008), coined in the 1960s in Germany, referring to a general situation where a small nation is required to abide to the control of a powerful neighbor (Finland being the 20th century political example of this). Ridanpää also notes that the term was a badge of shame for the Finnish political elites, as Western European media drew parallels with Finland and Czechoslovakia, more often than with other Nordic countries (Ridanpää, 2012, p.135). It applied both to Finnish policy and the media landscape of the time.

Ridanpää explains that the media entered into more or less voluntary self-censorship to abide by this code of silence. Discussions about the USSR were conducted with extreme care. After Finland's longest serving President Urho Kekkonen stepped down in 1982, the first critical arguments of Finnish foreign policy was published in the popular press (Ridanpää, 2012, p.136). Paavonsalo also notes that its most despised form was specifically media self-censorship and concession (2013, p.22). What is also important, is that Finlandization as government policy did not end with Kekkonen's resignation, his successor Mauno Koivisto continued the policies that did not end until the collapse of the USSR (2013, pp.14-15). After the end of the appeasement policy in the 1980s, the concept turned into a popular term used to slander political opposition (Majander, 1999; Moisio, 2008).

Ridanpää (2008) employs Finlandization in a media sociology framework. The use of Finlandization in media research has a long tradition. Majander points to definitions of Finlandization from the 1970s. Two definitions concern the media explicitly: "Restricting open media in one's country to muffle or minimize criticism [on the USSR]... [and] openness to penetration of Soviet ideas and media..." (Majander, 1999, p.78). Using Finlandization to

understand modern Finnish political news cannot rely on dated definitions however. The term requires a new context in which it can be appropriately examined and used to study communication in the 21st century. Ridanpää in his article has already taken up the task to bring Finlandization into a contemporary setting.

2.5.1. 21st Century Counter-Finlandization

Ridanpää points the end of Finlandization to have come at the end of the Cold War and with Finland's ascent to EU membership. Thus, he calls the era following this "post-Finlandization" (2012, pp.136-139). After the collapse of the USSR, Finland began the process of reintegrating (Moisio, 2008) with Western Europe. The largest project involved with this was driving Finland into the European Union. Moisio identifies two interest groups working for opposite goals on this case. The Traditionalist in his terms refers to the anti-EU side, who prioritized nonalignment and national sovereignty (2008, p.87). They were opposed by the Westerners, who partly on a platform of reasserting Finnish identity as Western Europeans, campaigned for EU membership (2008, p.85).

The Traditionalist shared a lot with the National Realists of the Cold War, who aimed to keep Finland independent with the appeasement policy. The Western Liberalists of the Cold War are the same people as Moisio's Westerners in the early 1990s, so the political power game and these elite structures were not changed (2008, pp.84-85). In the end, the Traditionalists lost the EU referendum campaign, which resulted in a total loss of their legitimacy in Finnish politics (2008, p.87). This was the end for National Realism in Finland; paving the way for National Populism to take hold of the political counter culture.

What is missing from this framework is the Finnish Rural Party (SMP). Their way was arguably the third way: one without deeper integration with the West or the USSR. Being counted as a fringe party, many Finlandization analysts have not dedicated research for their platform. The National Populists can be said to have been the only anti-Finlandizationists of the Cold War. Their platform was about the enemy from within the nation, the ruling elites who were a threat to the nation by practically inviting the USSR to define policy. A platform which was based on the fear of foreign aggression by denouncing politics of fear and loss of principles.

With the USSR gone and with the EU as the new foreign influence on Finnish policy, counter-cosmopolitan populism focusing on the EU would gain the characteristics of the anti-Finlandization narrative easily. Yet, discussion of anti-Finlandization in this paradigm would be equally inaccurate as discussing anti-cosmopolitanism; populist international, EU-bound networks are working in the frames they are actively opposing. To discuss the brand of counter-cosmopolitanism prevalent in Finland, I employ the term counter-Finlandization to refer to the populist EU-criticism.

To draw together the existing media connections of the theoretical framework, I will examine several media theories in order to argue a point of view in this case study.

2.6. Deliberation and Information on the Internet

2.6.1. The Diminishing Public Sphere

Habermas's public sphere involves a space of conversation dedicated to "communicative rationality, deliberative democracy, and civil society." (Dahlgren, 2009, p.5). In media studies, it is used to analyze media institutions, power structures, and patterns of communication which serve or hinder democracy. The Habermasian approach maintains adherence to respectful, literal, transparent, and impartial dimensions of discourse. Furthermore, it relies on all participants looking beyond their selfish interests, be open minded to other points of view, and support the best argument (Dahlgren, 2009, p.91).

However, what is lost in the normative public sphere has been attempted to be reclaimed by other processes. As the Habermasian "bourgeoisie" public sphere has been criticized for being exactly that - bourgeoisie with limited, if any, representation of other social groups (Coleman and Ross, 2010, pp.30-31) - the emergence of more developed public spheres in the form of the mediated public sphere and participatory public sphere (Coleman and Ross, 2010, pp.31-39) is not surprising. However, power structures are not challenged necessarily enough in said spheres to produce meaningful or completely accountable public discourse. As such, Coleman and Ross (2010) draw on counterpublics as the reaction to mass and widespread opinions. Defined by Asen as "emerging as a multiplicity... Counterpublic theory discloses relations of power that obliquely inform public discourse and... reveals that participants in the public sphere still engage in

potentially emancipatory affirmative practice with the hope that power may be reconfigured...” (Asen, 2000 cited in Coleman and Ross, 2010). Coleman and Ross further note that these counterpublics attain the most success when they do not communicate to a small interest group, but rather try to appeal to a larger, diverse audience (2010, pp.90-92).

The historical development of the public sphere has led to the decline of its autonomy. The modern welfare state and commercialization of media has replaced large parts of the conversation with special interest content not necessarily adhering to rationality or the common good. Furthermore, mass media is still held as the most important actor in the modern public sphere of modern democracies (Davis, 2010, pp.20-21). This lends understanding to counter-democratic criticism of the media. Mass media can be seen as part of the ruling class apparatus, which redefines public opinion for their benefit. Without a doubt, this is a reason why the internet has become a platform for reclaiming public discourse, and the counterpublic the new platform for deliberation.

2.6.2. Politics on the Internet

Dahlgren takes Miège's three tiered pyramid of public spheres and adapts it to his conceptual framework to discuss how the public sphere can be adapted to new media. On top of the pyramid is the elite sphere which consists of the state, legislatures, and the most powerful part of the corporate sector; a powerful sphere which also includes decision making power unlike the other two. Next there is the mainstream media sphere and its usual players. The lowest tier is simultaneously the weakest, called the societal sphere. A sphere where all kinds of communication far from power structures takes place. It is in this public sphere where alternative politics arise and which is most empowered by the rise of internet technologies (2013, pp.48-49).

New media falls in the alternative political toolkit (Davis, 2010, p.100). It provides a platform for intense debate, which one-directional mass media cannot reproduce (2010, p.120). The weakness however, is the lack of discrete boundaries between news and other content online, or between the new media environment and traditional mass media; rather old practices carry over into the new media and new practices developed on the internet are adopted by established mass media (Dahlgren, 2009, pp.173-174). The fluidity of new media is what makes it hard to analyze. A definite aspect enabling new levels of political engagement is the possibilities of interaction.

Coleman examines the new media frontier from the perspective of democratic engagement. In terms of politicians' worries on legitimacy being undermined by citizens claiming legitimacy over politicians in the more egalitarian environment. This would manifest further in calls for more direct democratic action, and rising expectations which would lead to increasing political apathy when political decision makers are completely unable to answer all requests and questions (2001, p.130). The online public sphere is thus more egalitarian, and the loudest voice is not necessarily the most powerful one and vice versa.

Dahlgren identifies several different domains of online public spheres. They fall under pre-political, proto-political, journalism, advocacy, activist, and e-governance domains (2009, pp.167-168). With these, Dahlgren demonstrates the transformation of journalism when it entered the internet. With the competition for the largest share of the audience, many news sources have begun to incorporate more non-journalistic material in their content, along with non-journalistic sources started providing content disguised as news. Furthermore, now users are becoming implicit in producing content online (2009, pp.172-173). What this ties with is sensationalist news casting. Vista points to sensationalist messages spreading effectively across mass media (2014, p.417). He points to the psychological phenomena of negative emotion events being easier to recall, over neutral events. This is alluring to journalism as it facilitates a better spread of the stories, but is also susceptible to the truth bending in the process (2014, pp.418-419).

Implicit in content production is the ability to choose what one sees online. This phenomenon is probably the most damning feature when discussing special interest news, as it can lead to reduced properties of the public sphere, namely the loss of opposing points of view.

2.6.3. The Online Public Sphere that never was

Echo chambers are prevalent across new media, but their existence predates it. Take the example of refugee news coverage: Bauman points out the selective media coverage which silences the rational arguments for helping people starving across the world. As the media alongside stories of famine bring information of the lawlessness and atrocities happening in the homes of potential refugees heading to Europe, the public consciousness can shut down and demands to keep the problems in their locales are heard more often (2005, pp.66-69). So certain types of filtering have taken already place in mass media too, and seemingly deliberately.

Echo chamber formation begins with filtering. Sunstein notes that it is impossible to take in all the produced news media (2007, pp.3-6), and picking stories to one's preference is simply done to prevent overload (2007, p.52). This has led to the internet becoming the platform of news personalization services and websites (2007, p.4). Sunstein holds there are inherent unchecked risks with this kind of filtering. Namely, people deliberately exert control over their "communication universe" (2007, p.44) to create echo chambers. Their problems arise from fragmentation, lack of solidarity goods, and the absence of a chance to form preferences under good conditions. Fragmentation of society creates preconditions for polarization, which at its most negative results in emerging hate and violence. Solidarity goods by Sunstein's definition are goods which increase in value when more people engage with or use them; Sunstein uses political debates as an example. Finally, the good conditions required for preference formation requires access to adequate information and broad, diverse opinions on a given topic (2007, pp.44-45). Primarily, these systems take away from a "well-functioning system of free expression" when people no longer receive exposure to adequate information and broader opinions (2007, p.5; p.45), and when a heterogeneous society lacks people with common experiences (2007, p.6).

By these definitions, echo chambers become a risk to the public sphere and civil society, especially when new media has the potential to further insulate individuals from differing opinions (Sunstein, 2007, p.49). Public deliberation in echo chambers is second rate to self-imposed insulation from other opinions (Sunstein, 2009, p. 153), but the internet has made it easier than ever. Vista also points out the recognized potential of monetizing the ability to directly feed users their preferred content (2014, p.420).

2.7. The new Counter-Ideology Paradigm

This framework demonstrates the conceptual similarities and ideological prevalence of various counterforces in society and politics. The concepts of counter-democracy, counter-cosmopolitanism, and counter-Finlandization outlined here, and supported by the other concepts, will be discussed as a counter-ideology permeating the Finns Party media platform. The validity of this umbrella concept will be assessed with reference to the empirical material.

Furthermore, as Rosanvallon's counter-democracy demonstrates subversive civic oversight to not be about sabotage or anti-democracy, we have seen the necessity to redefine anti-

cosmopolitanism as counter-cosmopolitanism, and reconstitute analyses of Finlandization into the concept of counter-Finlandization. It is my conclusion that discussing the nationalist populist, counter-cosmopolitan movements across the world, it is inaccurate to call them anti-movements. As the theoretical framework has put forth, these movements depend highly on the networks they are working against. This too, will be examined further with the aid of the empirical material.

3. The Research – A Flyvbjergian Case Study

3.1. Theoretical Overview for the Method

My research method is based on Flyvbjerg's phronetic social science research. In these parameters, the aim is not to provide ultimate proof for a adopted point of view, but create a framework along with concepts which will help understand and interpret the phenomenon at hand (2001).

Flyvbjerg proposes that case studies are the appropriate approach to phronetic social scientific research. He draws on the fact that one good example contributes to knowledge over objective facts (2001). Their role in producing specific contextual knowledge which contribute most to the field is an advantage appropriate for the research in this thesis (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Thus, using an example and dataset dependent on one specific context, the Finnish political landscape and media environment, can produce an example which constitutes further research in other contexts. What is encouraged is recognition of the context and understanding that while the case is not meant to be reproduced with complete accuracy in other research, the reference points created with the theoretical framework will serve as a generalization for similar contexts.

Flyvbjerg's phronetic research is based on contextualism. A case study under this method is found to have value in its specific context which have more value for advancing knowledge than a case striving to produce objective knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2001; 2006). Flyvbjerg argues that there is no such thing as objective, context independent knowledge. Any further progression in knowledge would not be possible, as objective knowledge could not progress past the very basic elements of a given area of knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006). What gives this case its specific context is the framework of values outlined in the theoretical framework. The understanding of dominant cosmopolitan values and the resistance to them contextualizes the analysis of the empirical material. Values are an important starting point for phronetic research according to Flyvbjerg too (2001, pp.130-131).

3.2. Sampling

In the beginning of the research, I gathered all the articles published in 2015 on SuomenUutiset.fi. The articles were skimmed through initially, to eliminate non-news, video

material and announcements; all publications which were either too short to have significance in the analysis, or were links to external material. After this initial categorization, the remaining articles were divided by topic and content. The articles with many reader comments were highlighted too, to be considered in the analysis. This part of the filtering also canceled out news stories, which were limited to a few paragraphs of quotations and short news reports. While most of these shorter articles were no longer considered, certain ones have been highlighted in the analysis and are indexed in Appendix A, in order to highlight the intensity of attention given to certain topics of interest on SuomenUutiset.fi. The third phase of the analysis consisted of analyzing the article content and evaluating them within the theoretical framework. The articles were found to cycle around several themes, the themes lending themselves to analysis on almost the entire range of theoretical concepts outlined in the theoretical framework. The most exemplifying ones were chosen for the final analysis, and are indexed in Appendix A.

Further material was taken from Hommaforum.org's front page, where the administrators have highlighted quotes from forum users, or public figures. To best exemplify how Hommaforum.org functions as a counter public and an echo chamber, while enforcing the SuomenUutiset.fi narrative, three examples of the front page's "Highlighted quotes" and the discussion threads attached to them were studied. These are indexed in Appendix B. I have translated all the Finnish material presented in the analysis myself.

3.3. Strategic Selection

The analysis was conducted as an open qualitative content analysis guided by the theoretical framework. Due to the nature of this research, the flexibility inherent in a qualitative content analysis method (Anastas, 1999 cited in Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.118) narrowed it down as the most suitable method. As Mayring states (2010 cited in Drisko and Maschi, 2015), content analysis may address "themes and core ideas" found in the research material (2015, p.82), which is what I set to do out in this study. The data was categorized under counter-cosmopolitan, counter-democracy, and counter-Finlandization related news stories, which are displayed in Appendix A. Additional data from Hommaforum.org was selected to show political alignment, criticism of mass media discourse, and counter-democracy, which can be seen in Appendix B. Reading of the empirical material was informed by these categories.

SuomenUutiset.fi and Hommaforum.org were selected as the empirical material of the study for a number of reasons. The primary reason being SuomenUutiset.fi being the most accessible material of Finns Party communication. SuomenUutiset.fi is not constrained by circulation in the same way as a normal membership news magazine, as sharing it on social media one article at a time is possible.

Hommaforum.org was selected for its connection to the Finns Party and SuomenUutiset.fi more specifically. Hommaforum.org founder Matias Turkkila is also the editor-in-chief for SuomenUutiset.fi (Homma ry, 2016a; Suomen Uutiset, 2016). It is also common knowledge that Finns Party members have been active on the website too, among them MP Olli Immonen (Korolainen, 2015), and as the empirical material shows, MEP Jussi Halla-aho (Appendix B).

Strategic selection of the articles was employed to retrieve the most representative results of the theoretical framework. Selecting the most interesting ones from 2015 allowed me to form a more coherent picture of the overall use of editorial oversight and journalists' points of view. Furthermore, the wide variety of political events over 2015 was effectively captured by exhibiting many examples of issues taken up by SuomenUutiset.fi over the course of the year. As such, studying the data from SuomenUutiset.fi and Hommaforum.org as a case study functioned best in creating a generalizable theoretical framework, which can be applied to cases in other contexts as parts of other research.

3.4. Limitations

The study's empirical material is limited to Suomen Uutiset news articles, and Hommaforum.org conversations and publications. Within the parameters of this thesis, the empirical material was selected strategically over a period of one year. As presented by Flyvbjerg, the research method is not an imitation of natural scientific research (2001, p.129). As the results are interpreted subjectively from the researcher's point of view, certain other perspectives are potentially lost. However, this is also research on values, as per Flyvbjerg's methods (2001, p.130), meaning it is in essence a judgement on the SuomenUutiset.fi world view for better or worse.

The data sampling was a challenge for the research due to the wide scope and multitude of data in the original sample. Familiarity with the discussions in the news helped to overcome the initial

difficulties of narrowing down the sample, as more common topics of public discussion demonstrated Finns Party policy more discretely. However, the narrowing down of the data suffered from a loss of representation on certain issues and values. If it were not for the general homogenous nature of the weekly news published on the website, a more systematic sampling would have been preferable. Yet, to select the most interesting articles, and to demonstrate differences in broadcasting news in between the party in the opposition and in the government, the broad sample was necessary. In the end, the presented sample in the appendices constitutes a coherent dataset suited for the purposes of this research.

Narrowing down the data had the further issue of classifying articles as news and non-news. While some links presented on SuomenUutiset.fi did not exhibit any characteristics of news, further classification between party communication, general news, and minor pieces like announcements was a challenge in selecting the final data. To combat this, the original broadness of the sample was retained.

Hommaforum.org posed its own challenge. As an extremely active user forum, the amount of conversations on a daily basis are impossible to sample representatively in any research to claim representativeness. For this reason, the Hommaforum.org data sample was limited to three examples, as these were originally highlighted by website administrators. This calls to attention to how the administrators wished to guide the conversation, or thought was most representative of the conversation.

3.5. Overview of Data

SuomenUutiset.fi has published 846 links under their news feed in 2015. Out of these, 33 were links to external material, otherwise did not qualify as news, or were visual material. This leaves 813 total news stories from 2015 which were considered a part of the original sample. The final sample consists of 174 articles undergoing deeper analysis.

SuomenUutiset.fi publishes original journalism periodically, when most of their news is reporting from external sources. Columns by party members and journalists are featured occasionally, a foreign correspondent on Greek and other EU affairs writes in frequently, and even investigative journalism pieces are featured.

Among the most discussed topics, news on immigration, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, or related policy topics amounted to 205 published stories. These stories either explicitly discussed or brought up migration related topics, making just over one quarter of SuomenUutiset.fi coverage about this topic. Other frequently covered topics were on Greece and the Euro-crisis, reports on parliamentary sessions, introduction of Finns Party members or policy they promote, and economic news spanning from domestic to global.

A significant portion of the news is dedicated for party communication. During election season, the party summer conference, and government negotiations for example, articles discussing party policy were featured often. The most frequent voices featured on the website in 2015 were party leader Timo Soini, other MPs and MEPs, various municipal and other party representatives, and outside experts supporting Finns Party points of view.

A typical article on SuomenUutiset.fi reports on political discussions during a debate or question hour in a session of parliament. The center focus is what a Finns Party member or minister had to say on a particular case, which might be supported by points from other party members. A quote from a MP countering the Finns Party member or party in general might be featured too, however presentation of their point of view is limited to the quotation almost every time.

Even though the opinion pieces and analytical texts were selected into the sample, they constitute a small minority in the empirical material. However, the strength of this analysis is founded in finding the subtext, undertones, implications, and innuendos of the quotations; the motives for selecting the specific quotes and using the specific authority voices is analyzed highly to uncover the agenda masked by journalistic integrity.

4. Case Study Background: SMP, Suomen Uutiset, and the Finns Party

The Finns Party has its legacy in post-war Finland. The precursor to the Finns Party was formed in 1959, going by the name Suomen Maaseudun Puolue (The Finnish Rural Party) or SMP for a larger part of their history (Perussuomalaiset, 2016). SMP was born out of an offshoot of the Finnish Agrarian League (now the Finnish Center Party); its founder Veikko Vennamo clashed against Agrarian League chairman and President of the Republic Urho Kekkonen specifically on appeasement of the USSR. Vennamo was the foremost critique of Finlandization for the entire Cold War. He and his followers built momentum not only on foreign policy, but also the anti-establishment critique aimed at the rich and powerful, who were said to be disenfranchising the Finnish public. The antagonism against the USSR could be identified in the core support of SMP coming from people having to resettle after territorial secessions to the USSR. While the party was around since 1959, it gained prominence after over 10% voted for them in the 1970 parliamentary election. Vennamo was the undisputed figurehead of the party who was loved by his supporters. However, his charisma did not win him support beyond the SMP ranks (Widfeldt, 2010).

It was in 1961 when the first incarnation of *Suomen Uutiset* was published as a member magazine for SMP supporters. The magazine stayed in print until SMP dissolution in 1995 (Ps Verkkotoimitus, 2014a). The original magazine was characterized as a membership engagement magazine, and revered to by SMP supporters as a trustworthy news source. The news was aimed at the rural voters, covering topics of special interest in the Finnish countryside. Among its most read sections was chairman Vennamo's personal column (Männistö, 2014). Without a doubt, the magazine's fame and importance was highlighted during a time when resources to print news were scarce, and criticism on Finnish foreign policy faced a moratorium.

With Veikko retiring as SMP chairman, his son Pekka took over in 1979. Lacking the charisma of his father, he drove party support to new and final lows, participating in unpopular governments as Minister of Finance, and eventually losing party leadership in 1989. This did not undo any damage though: the party was deeply in debt, members were defecting to other parties, and with the Cold War ending and Finlandization being abolished, the party lost its core agenda. In desperation, the party turned far more populist:

“Heikki Riihijärvi, who had succeeded Veikko Vennamo’s son Pekka as party leader, led the party to adopt a strident anti-immigration position in the 1991 election campaign – he even stormed out of a TV debate in protest against the other parties’ unwillingness to discuss the issue. It was not a vote-winner, however.” (Widfeldt, 2010)

In 1995, SMP was declared bankrupt and was removed from the national party registry (Widfeldt, 2010). Active members such as the party’s last remaining MP Raimo Vistbacka, along with SMP secretary Timo Soini, set out to form a new party. The Finns Party was formed the same year, with Vistbacka as its first Chairman. Current chairman and the Finnish Foreign Minister since 2015, Soini took over in 1997 (Perussuomalaiset, 2016). In his new party, Soini has become a cult-like figurehead much like his mentor and idol Vennamo (Lehtinen, 2008). By 2007, the Finns Party had begun to gain traction, showing signs of their message reaching more people than before.

“In the 2007 parliamentary election, the True Finns got 4.1 per cent and five seats in the Finnish national parliament... and in 2009 the party got 9.8 per cent in the election to the EU parliament. In 2010 the party has been above 12 per cent in some opinion polls. The recent surge in support largely associated with the popular leader Timo Soini, whose humor and comparatively mild-mannered populism comes across well on TV, at the same time as he commands some grudging respect in the established parties. Up to now the party, which combines a comparatively mild form of immigration skepticism with EU criticism and attacks on the political establishment, has been politically isolated... there is a historical precedent in that the fact that the predecessor Rural Party was involved in government coalitions in the 1980s... Soini does not suffer from the same amount of stigmatization as many leaders of comparable parties.” (Widfeldt, 2010)

In 2011, the Finns Party reached new heights by becoming the third largest party with 19.1% of the popular vote, earning them a total of 39 parliamentary seats (Tilastokeskus, 2011). The party decided to remain in the opposition regardless of their success (MTV3, 2011), adding more precedence for them to participate in forming the government last year.

On the 97th Independence Day of Finland, December 6th 2014, *Suomen Uutiset* was relaunched as SuomenUutiset.fi as the new news website of the Finns Party. It was effectively the rebranding of the *Perussuomalainen* print magazine web edition, which had over 50,000 unique visitors on

Week 48 of 2014 (Ps Verkkotoimitus, 2014b). 2015 was the first year during which SuomenUutiset.fi published a full year of material under their new nostalgic name.

5. The Analysis of SuomenUutiset.fi and Hommaforum.org

This analysis is structured according to the concepts found in the theoretical framework. We will begin with broader themes, and narrow down on more specific cases, demonstrating the cohesion of the concepts all together as the analysis progresses.

5.1. Counter-Democratic Approaches to Policy Building

5.1.1. Denouncing the Opponents' Legitimacy

SuomenUutiset.fi questioned the legitimacy of the former governments and their decisions on a regular basis while the Finns Party was still in the opposition at the beginning of 2015 (Appendix A, 8.1.1.-8.1.6.). The criticism focusing on the government in general, and individual parties seeks to undermine the legitimacy of these elites in their decision making (Rosanvallon, 2008). The image of them operating outside of public approval is seemingly easy to play on, as the reader comments under these examples demonstrate. Regarding criticism directed at the Swedish People's Party (Appendix A, 8.1.7.), users generally agree with the sentiment of Swedish People's Party having been in the government illegitimately with support numbers in single digits. The anti-elitism inherent in the message and the comments functions well for legitimizing the Finns Party's policy and political platform, one which came into use upon their participation in the new government.

SuomenUutiset.fi has been active in accusing the new opposition parties of corruption, democratic sabotage, and lying (Appendix A, 8.1.8.-8.1.11.). The presumption is that they are operating without the support of the people outside of the government, seeking to label them as implicit in practically criminal activity. These examples come to show that delegitimizing the political opposition is an integral part of the Finns Party media strategy. Pointing out cases where intentions and morality of the opposing politicians is questionable, SuomenUutiset.fi creates a news bubble which casts all parties not working with the Finns Party as suspicious power abusers. An aspect of surveillance in the past reserved for the free press and the public (Rosanvallon, 2008) has now been co-opted by special interest news broadcasting.

Extra-parliamentarism in general is being drawn attention to. To counter the negative effects of government agencies and companies on people's lives, the Finns Party calls for deregulation

(Appendix A, 8.1.12.) as to ease the lives of private citizens. Furthermore, government companies in breach of contracts are called to be sanctioned (Appendix A, 8.1.13.), and refugee center establishment is a cause for alarm as responsible authorities were cited to not have to ask municipal governments and locals about the matter (Appendix A, 8.1.14.-8.1.16.) These instances demonstrate how SuomenUutiset.fi imposes oversight even on the non-democratic public administrators. Rosanvallon's theories on populism exemplify this strategy well (2008). The people must be able to account for all decisions and actions, which is not seemingly possible if nonelected heads of government agencies and companies can operate and make mistakes at the people's expense.

5.1.2. Wielders of the Public Opinion

To support the party's own legitimacy, SuomenUutiset.fi often appeals to the public opinion. Prominent Finns Party members recite rhetoric of them being a people's party, who are actively engaging with their voters and giving thanks to them (Appendix A, 8.1.17.-8.1.22.). An article citing MEP Jussi Halla-aho reproduces similar ideas; he is quoted saying the party is a "democratic party opposing non-democratic opinion leaders" (Appendix A, 8.1.23.; similar story in Appendix A, 8.1.24.). SuomenUutiset.fi also regularly publishes quotations from MPs, saying they have been contacted about a given matter by concerned citizens (Appendix A, 8.1.25.-8.1.27.). All of these rhetorical devices create the image of a party that listens to the public, and governs according to public opinion. Rosanvallon's (2008) counter-democratic ideals are being realized here on a new political institutional level, as mainstream politics have successfully adapted appeals to the public opinion to their repertoire.

Supporting Finns Party popular opinion wielding is the frequent opinion polls featured on SuomenUutiset.fi. Finns Party policy is frequently presented accompanied with favorable poll numbers (Appendix A, 8.1.28.-8.1.37.). This resembles the situation of the lost public sphere well: instead of deliberation and listening to differing opinions (Sunstein 2007; Dahlgren, 2009), the majority rule is presented as the justification for a line of policy. Polls from abroad are taken into consideration too, in cases where Finns Party policy is being shown favorably (Appendix A, 8.1.38, 8.1.39). Other polls, such as public perceptions of party leaders, where Timo Soini is found to best understand the daily struggles of common people (Appendix A, 8.1.40.). Opinion polls are

a strong claim to public opinion; the impression of objective knowledge available to all through public enquiry gives legitimacy to anyone who bases their platform on a mandate by the people presented in a poll (Rosanvallon, 2008). The mandate is seemingly strong, as when party support started dwindling at the end of 2015, SuomenUutiset.fi did not dismiss the poll numbers (Appendix A, 8.1.41.-8.1.43.). Acknowledging the bad performance is in itself a way to ensure the people the party has listened to them, and now they will focus efforts to correct their behavior to win back public support.

Opinion polls are not infallible however, there is an element of mistrust in the media. In March right in the middle of parliamentary election campaigning, SuomenUutiset.fi ran a story of Party Secretary Riikka Slunga-Poutsalo encouraging party field operatives to get to work to disprove recent bad looking support polls (Appendix A, 8.1.45.). The power of distrust (Rosanvallon, 2008) in the media elites is deployed with this commentary. The disparity in the strategy between the negative campaign polls and negative government support can be attributed to the election strategy itself probably. The counter-democratic rhetoric employed by the Finns Party is supported by pandering to the distrust of elite institutions; this will be discussed in detail later. While in the government, the Finns Party represents this elite institution, taking this strategy partially out of their grasp.

5.1.3. Policy Building with Citizen Initiatives

Another way to claim public opinion is showing support for citizen initiatives. They have been reported on by SuomenUutiset.fi multiple times when the agenda suits them (Appendix A, 8.1.45.-8.1.48.). One example which received prolonged exposure was the initiative to overturn mandatory Swedish education. In February, SuomenUutiset.fi ran an article with the title “Is [the initiative] being buried by the committee?” (Appendix A, 8.1.49., 8.1.50.). Demonstrative of the sensationalism exhibited on SuomenUutiset.fi, they were unable to produce any evidence beyond processing taking longer than they felt was necessary. This is an example of what Dahlgren pointed out as incorporating non-journalistic elements into news online (2009), namely editorial conjecture. Another example of rhetorical sensationalism was MP Ritva Elomaa’s reminder that not only the people behind the citizen initiative, but a greater majority of Finns were for scrapping mandatory Swedish education (Appendix A, 8.1.51.). Interestingly, the statistic cited by Elomaa

simply said that a poll had concluded that 60% of respondents felt there were more useful languages to learn in school beyond Swedish. SuomenUutiset.fi provided no further citation to back up the majority of people wishing to scrap mandatory Swedish. The manipulation of statistics in this way shows the extent of sensationalist speeches pervade the Finns Party platform. It is understandable though, as once again appealing to opinion polls is abiding to their counter-democratic claim to representing the public opinion (Rosanvallon, 2008). The initiative was struck down in the parliamentary vote, where the Finns Party was almost completely alone in supporting the measure (Appendix A, 8.1.52.). The legitimacy of the other MPs was attacked, as SuomenUutiset.fi and Finns Party MPs noted many others fell back on their 2011 election promises.

The whole case demonstrates further counter-cosmopolitan (Beck, 2006) and even counter-Finlandization narratives. The appeal for self-determination in education is a counter-democratic and counter-cosmopolitan appeal, in respecting individualism. Also in its rejection of seemingly the foreign, the case of the citizen initiative seems to fight further foreign influence in Finland; even though Sweden or the Finn-Swedish population is not cast as an external threat here, the Swedish language is still seen as an imposition on the culture. This case demonstrates excellently how all three concepts come together. These cases further show what the nationalist politics have tapped into. They have put the cart in front of the horse, so to speak, in this voter base building metaphor. They draw opinions the public to form policy. This risks further degradation of traditional political legitimacy and trust in the political system in the modern age.

Calls for suspending the Schengen agreement, along with breaking international refugee agreements by, for example, turning away refugees at the border if they come from “other safe countries” are frequent (Appendix A, 8.1.53.-8.1.56.). However, regarding the Dublin accords, Suomen Uutiset highlights the news that calls for its total compliance, rather than having it scrapped (Appendix A, 8.1.57.-8.1.61.). Obstructing cosmopolitan projects in the name of security is resonating of Beck's theory (2006). In there is Rosanvallon's populist obstructionism (2008) driving calls for a shutdown of these deemed unreasonable international treaties. The national borders are the way to defend the integrity of the Finnish people, lest foreigners who might pose a security risk get in. Notably, the Dublin Accords, another international treaty is called in defense

of said borders too, showing how this narrative is distinct from an anti-cosmopolitan narrative of total rejection of such an institution.

Interestingly, when Germany closed their borders in September in response to the refugee crisis (Appendix A, 8.1.62.), SuomenUutiset.fi did not miss the opportunity to highlight the fact this was done against the Schengen agreement, and pointed out this could normally be done as an agreement at large summits. Here is a paradoxical disjuncture. It could be attributed to simply two different journalists reporting, yet there is an underlying logic here. Germany here is cast as the superior elite who is disrespecting the rules they have committed to, their actions against the Schengen agreement are frivolous and without regard for the other nations. Finland on the other hand is the smaller nation, the victim. This shows the victimization narrative being co-opted from minority civic justice activism (Beck, 2006). The justification is Finland not having to follow the rules that do not benefit them anymore, as Finland is a victim of circumstance. This case shows how consistently counter-democracy and counter-cosmopolitanism can be used to support each other.

5.1.4. Mistrust of Media Power

As the media according to Rosanvallon used to be the domain of public opinion (2008), Finns Party reaction to their criticism by the media needs to be examined. If they truly are able to wield public opinion for their benefit, then there needs to be an explanation for why the media is not on their side almost all of the time. The main defense against the media is calling into question their legitimacy, by tying them to the ruling elites. Finns Party media attention is even turned into a counter-democratic side-effect. In a September article, Minister of Defense Jussi Niinistö is quoted on the topic.

"The role of the media as the fourth power in the republic cannot be overlooked. The Finns Party is without a doubt payed attention to intensely in the media. This is because our party is new and it has succeeded in upsetting traditional power structures. Another fact is that few reporters think like the Finns Party actives," - Niinistö (Appendix A, 8.1.63.)

The values were draw on further in an article reviewing a study of the Finns Party-media relationship (Appendix A, 8.1.64., 8.1.65). Both of these articles explain that the Finns Party media reputation is a notoriety earned by addressing issues from a point of view not shared by media outlets. Similar conclusions are drawn in other articles (Appendix A, 8.1.66., 8.1.67.). Branding

themselves as the counter-cultural force against a media elite works as another counter-democratic narrative. Drawing attention to the idea that they are fighting an illegitimate elite supports their claim to be fighting for the unrepresented public.

The media elite status is played on in another way too: many articles cite people questioning the purpose of not reporting the “true” costs of Finland’s immigration policy (Appendix A, 8.1.68-8.1.70.). This plays on a counter-Finlandization narrative too (Paavonsalo, 2013), creating the image that the media elite is favoring the establishment’s views on immigration to gain political favor. The media’s elite status is played on further, with reporting often how Finns Party members are treated unfairly at the hands of reporters and outlets (Appendix A, 8.1.71.-8.1.74). This further affirms the image of a dialectic antagonist relationship between the party and the media; a relationship where the Finns Party is treated unfairly.

When it comes to new media, the Finns Party is more positive. In the aftermath of a rape in Helsinki, the calls for reviewing legislation on punishing rapists came up in the media by large (Appendix A, 8.1.75.). The Minister of Work and Justice Jari Lindström began an investigation on whether there is a need to review relevant laws (Appendix A, 8.1.76.). What was highlighted was how internet conversation had brought the nation’s outrage forth, and was able to inform the minister’s work. The discussion and interaction made possible by the internet has already been recognized in the Finns Party support of certain citizen initiatives, and it is a fact appreciated by SuomenUutiset.fi in their work too (Dahlgren, 2009; 2013).

In an editor’s note, SuomenUutiset.fi Editor-in-chief Matias Turkkila published a note on mass media news websites shutting down their commenting sections (Appendix A, 8.1.77.). In his note, Turkkila reaffirmed SuomenUutiset.fi’s commitment to dialogue and reader contribution to their news with commenting. The citizen is invited to participate in the conversation and deliberation. This is what Dahlgren (2009; 2013), Coleman and Ross (2010), and Sunstein (2007; 2009) celebrate as the great possibility of the internet. SuomenUutiset.fi is a prime example of how this can be turned political in a party news outlet. Coupling this analysis with how opinion polls are being used on SuomenUutiset.fi, there is a concreteness to Rosanvallon’s (2008) idea of mass media slipping away from representing public opinion in 21st century Finland. As the media becomes more corporate, people see it as an extension of elite power in broadcasting preferable

opinions. SuomenUutiset.fi narrows down exactly on this mistrust of power, and capitalizes on the imagery.

The internet in its full usefulness to the counter-ideology gains from certain counterpublic narratives. One such narrative is provided by Hommaforum.org. Finland's most infamous internet discussion forum has a particular profile. The description on the website states "Homma is an ideologically awakened and concerned citizens' immigration critical, politically non-aligned popular movement," (Homma ry, 2016b). What constitutes them as a counterpublic and their usefulness for the Finns Party, manifests in a way in which Finns Party legitimacy is built up even further.

Based on the amount of Finns Party material, and links to material featured on the site, puts Hommaforum.org's non-alignment to question. In the site's history, on April 9th 2009, the registration of Homma is announced and *Perussuomalainen* magazine and *Suomen Uutiset* editor in chief Matias Turkkila is featured among the founding members (Homma ry, 2016a). Featured quotes at the front page often feature Jussi Halla-aho's blog excerpts. A further examination of the conversations show lots of activity with the Finns Party, if coalesced around Halla-aho. Furthermore, the front page in April 2016 features an ad for the Finns Party Youth wing. This calls for a critical assessment of whether or not the self-described citizens' movement in fact constitutes a mere echo chamber geared for supporting the Finns Party. Below are three excerpts from the front page's "Highlighted quotes" and samples of the linked conversations.

5.1.5. A Politically Non-aligned Counterpublic?

Deference to EU-membership is demonstrated in the same capacity and in connection to the refugee crisis in one highlighted front page quote (Appendix B, 9.1.). The conversation linked to it follows a rather familiar formula as seen on SuomenUutiset.fi. A user questions whether Finland even requires the influence it is said to be gaining in the EU.

"Why does Finland have to sit at these decision tables? Can we not make it [by ourselves]? Calculating the plusses and minuses of Euro-membership we find ourselves swinging into the negative clearly. It is probably unrealistic to think Finland is an independent nation?" (Appendix B, 9.1.1.)

The themes of EU as the target of counter-democratic, counter-cosmopolitan and counter-Finlandization resistance continues on with this and thousands upon thousands of other threads available on the website. Highlighting the quotation and conversation thread on the front page is a clear statement of political alignment guided by counter-ideological thought.

Characteristic of a counterpublic (Coleman and Ross, 2010), the rhetoric of what could be deemed as the media elite's discourse is mocked relentlessly. One highlighted quote is straight from a conversation thread.

''Allahu Akbar' means that this has nothing to do with Islam.'' (Appendix B, 9.2.)

This was published in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris. The mocking continues in the linked thread.

''If you hear an impassioned [phoneticization of the phrase "Allahu Akbar"] yell, and blood spills, contact the nearest social democrat. They will point out that nothing has happened, and it has nothing to do with anything at all'' (Appendix B, 9.2.1.)

It is obvious that the staff and participants of Hommaforum.org find the mainstream public sphere to be impossible to engage in, as the example of ridiculing social democrats shows. The counterpublic status of Hommaforum.org is a badge of legitimacy for the people engaging with each other on the platform.

As stated earlier, admiration of Jussi Halla-aho is abundant on the website. A quote from Jussi Halla-aho's facebook post after the November Paris massacres (Appendix B, 9.3.). The linked conversation thread consists mainly of agreeing with his sentiments, as exemplified in the quote below.

''In the middle of all of this, our Master says what every rational person is thinking out loud. This is touching.'' (Appendix B, 9.3.1.)

It is difficult to determine if calling Jussi Halla-aho a Master is sarcastic or humorous, but the admiration of the man is clear in the ensuing conversation, if not already in the fact that his Facebook post was highlighted on the front page. The highlighted quotes do not amount to too many on the front page, and having two massacres among them brings into question what is payed

attention to on this website. Without a doubt, the filtering of positive events in the favor of the most brutal terrorist attacks in Europe of 2015 begins to constitute an echo chamber (Sunstein, 2007).

The tone of comments, and general ideas have a great degree of similarity between Hommaforum.org and SuomenUutiset.fi. While SuomenUutiset.fi has not a single mention of Hommaforum.org in their 2015 coverage, the amount of Finns Party material on Hommaforum.org itself more than makes up for the deficit. This is in fact a better way for the Finns Party to claim grassroots credibility by not attempting to directly build on Hommaforum.org's reputation from their end. With Hommaforum.org announcing themselves as a grassroots organization without political affiliations, but putting forth individual Finns Party members on their website, and allowing Finns Party organizations and MPs to advertise on the website, the illusion of non-allegiance is sufficient. The public sphere of Hommaforum.org seems to remain independent, even though the research above has proven a thematic connection. A concrete connection of coordinated topics might not exist, and even if it did proving it in the parameters of this research would be impossible. Yet, the material displayed here shows that SuomenUutiset.fi builds on Hommaforum.org's earned reputation, and it is used to bolster the position of the Finns Party on the Finnish political landscape.

5.1.6. Counter-Democracy against the Finns Party: the Case of Sebastian Tynkkynen

To display how deeply the counter-democratic ideas resonate among Finns Party supporters, the case of Finns Party Youth wing leader Sebastian Tynkkynen's dismissal demonstrates the intensity of what SuomenUutiset.fi readers hold important. In October, The Finns Party dismissed Tynkkynen from the party, giving a reason based on an illegally gathered personal information registry (Appendix A, 8.1.78.). Tynkkynen believed this was not so much about keeping the list (against Finnish law, the party had a legal counsel examine the case), but about rallying party members against the party leadership (Nieminen, 2015).

The announcement on SuomenUutiset.fi did not go over with the readership well at all. The story was the most commented on of October 2015 with 965 comments posted before archiving. The top voted comments call out Soini being dictatorial, some even calling for his dismissal.

A reason for this might be the dismissal of not just Tynkkynen, but the part of the party membership upset with the direction the party had taken in the government. In other words, Tynkkynen's dismissal resonated of rejecting the counter-democratic methods that had given the Finns Party to rise up into the government. Tynkkynen was calling for an extraordinary party board meeting to discuss whether their position in the government could be justified in terms of the party's immigration agenda (Kotkavirta, 2015). A position probably supported by many of the readers.

This case demonstrates the eagerness of the party actives to sanction even their own party if they step out of line. Just like with the opposition party's activities, SuomenUutiset.fi is not abiding to calls of counter-democratic action. The case proves how integral counter-democratic, horizontal power structural values are important to the Finns Party core voters. Also seen here are certain heightened expectations of the Finns Party voter base (Coleman, 2001).

5.2. Counter-Cosmopolitan Value Networks

5.2.1. The Counter-Cosmopolitan Unity

Counter-cosmopolitan unity across Europe is exhibited frequently. Especially the Danish People's Party's members and election success in 2015 has been hailed as confirmation of the Finns Party working for a good cause (Appendix A, 8.2.1.). What is further confirmed is that there is international learning taking place. With the ECR visit to Helsinki (Appendix A, 8.2.2., 8.2.3.) and more specifically with Danish People's Party MEP Morten Messerschmidt interview with Suomen Uutiset (Appendix A, 8.2.4.). Messerschmidt says he has actively learned from his Finnish counterparts, and says his friendship with Timo Soini was established nowhere else but the European Parliament. Other celebrated guests include Alternative für Deutschland's Bernd Lucken (Appendix A, 8.2.5.) and Sweden Democrats' Kent Ekeröth (Appendix A, 8.2.6.). As per Held's definition, globalization has created political ties across borders (2010), and these cases show that it is even embraced among non-cosmopolitan ideologues. This also works for showing support for counter-cosmopolitanism (Appendix A, 8.2.7.) and even for non-ideological associates (Appendix A, 8.2.8.-8.2.12.). SuomenUutiset.fi also promotes policy popular across the EU when it suits their political agenda. One example of this is the discussion on EU wide refugee quotas. A great deal of SuomenUutiset.fi publications in 2015 characterized the issue which has complete non-support

from the greater majority of EU nations. MEP Jussi Halla-aho is quoted on many occasions, guaranteeing an alliance of EU nations standing against this plan (Appendix A, 8.2.13.-8.2.16.). Highlighting this international unity shows what Giddens (1990) and Held (2010) have elaborated on the growing of international networks. It is clear here that the Finns Party fits the description of counter-cosmopolitanism by their mode of operation across Europe and within the EU.

Counter-cosmopolitan allies are supported in other forms of news coverage on SuomenUutiset.fi. An example of this was the President of Portugal reportedly dissolving a newly formed government due to an “anti-European platform” (Appendix A, 8.2.17.). The reporter added an opine piece at the end of their article:

“[The president’s intrusion] tells of the decreasing popularity of the proclaimed official European policy. Simultaneously, it is an example of the habit of discounting official election results and how harsh language is deployed against critics.” –Appendix A, 8.2.17.

Another article on the British Parliamentary Elections in 2015 focused on UKIP’s failure to win more than a single seat, despite receiving 12% of the popular vote (Appendix A, 8.2.18.). Both the opinion piece on Portugal and the report on UKIP shared a concern for the state of democracy. Both cases were cast as disrespecting official election results to silence the counter-cosmopolitan elements in national politics. Using Beck’s conception of populism (2006), it is obvious to see some parties here are rejecting the idea of cosmopolitanism occurring. As those supporting cosmopolitan ideals more than the Finns Party or their allies were influencing the events in the UK and Portugal, cosmopolitanism by and large becomes the enemy to fight.

What is noted though, is that these counter-cosmopolitans surge in support amidst this resistance. Many leaders are cited to have lost elections in the past years (Appendix A, 8.2.19.). Another cited case is that of the treatment of the Sweden Democrats by the ruling coalition and other opposition parties:

“The continued support has brought us to the point that further isolating is cheapening democracy. Thousands of people vote for the Sweden Democrats, their votes cannot be cast aside.” –Jokisipilä (Appendix A, 8.2.20.)

The take away from this is, according to SuomenUutiset.fi, is that the support for the Sweden Democrats has only increased as a result of their forced isolation. These two instances reaffirm

counter-cosmopolitan validity by referring to nations where support for the nationalists, or lack of support for their ideas in the government get sanctioned by getting voted out. Using Beck's (2006) and Rosanvallon's (2008) theories in tandem gives an interesting point of view about how counter-democracy and counter-cosmopolitanism complement each other in 21st century European politics. Furthermore, the show of support across the European continent gives validity to the Finns Party's own platform by appeals to populist values of the lowest common denominator.

5.2.2. The European Union as the Scapegoat

Through the international network, the main aim of the Finns Party foreign policy is to resist further cosmopolitanization, and cosmopolitan values. An obvious target for this is the international institutions with economic and political power. Delegitimizing is employed to attack these institutions too. Corruption of EU institutions is called on often (Appendix A, 8.2.21.), along with the IMF (Appendix A, 8.2.22.) and Greece (Appendix A, 8.2.23., 8.2.24.). SuomenUutiset.fi calls for denouncing the former two, and ejecting the latter from the Euro to rectify the problems. This is another case of counter-democratic populist sanctioning at play (Rosanvallon, 2008). Since these institutions have not operated like has been agreed on, the solution is to sanction them by excluding them.

The Finns Party agenda holds that the cultural differences within Europe are too great for a working financial union. This is repeated many times through party members and other sympathetic expert voices:

"According to Elo, the Greeks' decision to reject their creditors' demands confirms that the same rules for economically and culturally different Euro-nations are not suitable." –Appendix A, 8.2.25.

Culture is brought into the economic arguments as further justification of ejecting Greece from the financial union. Cultural variety is hardly celebrated (Appiah, 2006), and the tone certainly denies them political autonomy within the EU-framework (Held, 2010). Rejection of international tools for solving international problems, along with not considering cultures at equal worth, but supporting this line with the counter-cosmopolitan populist notions of other EU nations being on their side. Furthermore, calls for respecting human rights are frequent on SuomenUutiset.fi too. In one article, the Greek parliament denounced their creditors' repayment

plan as political instead of economically sound, and refuse to pay it outright (Appendix A, 8.2.26.). Highlighted in a subheading is the phrase “Human rights are being trampled”. We have as such arrived at a disjuncture in SuomenUutiset.fi rhetoric. On one hand, the news draws on cultural differences in justifying Greece’s exclusion from the Euro, while on the other they call attention to the EU-institutions’ actions as violating human rights.

An interesting aspect of counter-cosmopolitanism can be examined here, when exploring what cultural differences amount to what degrees of recognition and respect. The party lobbied against a law which would have made refugee tenants equal alongside Finnish tenants under apartment rental law (Appendix A, 8.2.27.). Another proposed law would have offered illegally residing children emergency healthcare for free; highlighted here was the fact they would have been equal with Finnish children. The law was later struck down; an action lauded by MP Hanna Mäntylä (Appendix A, 8.2.28.-8.2.30.). Putting Finnish people first was a prevailing attitude during government negotiations (Appendix A, 8.2.31.). The platform was already laid for this in the beginning of the parliamentary race: Mäntylä in a press conference called the Stubb Government to shame on the growing poverty in Finland (Appendix A, 8.2.32.). Mäntylä further drew attention to social security payments being paid abroad to people who had never even been in Finland. The economic reasoning behind this is not relevant, what is important to note is Mäntylä’s refusal to recognize families split across nations and continents, and taxpayers in Finland could be directly helping alleviate suffering of their relatives here. All of the examples seen here demonstrate how Mäntylä sees Finnish citizenship as the privilege that one must have to attain the rights Finnish people have, placing into question how far attitudes of equal worth are extended among Finns Party ranks.

5.2.3. An Essentialist Construction of Cultures

The counter-cosmopolitan populist agenda has taken a minimalist stance to what counts as the equal consideration for human rights (Appiah, 2006). This is explained perhaps further with the idea of the essentialist concept of the nation put forward by Beck (2006). Being under attack by the foreign constantly is an image put forth by SuomenUutiset.fi too. One example is a Finns Party city councilor is quoted saying the refugee crisis stems from a population explosion in developing countries, and one way to control it is limiting birthrates (Appendix A, 8.2.33.). Not only does this

show Beck's (2006) analysis to be accurate in how the foreign (refugee in this case) is endangering Finnish society and should be dealt with harsh measures, it also is a complete denial of autonomy for an entire continent of people (Held, 2010). Promoting such remarks on the party's official news site is now risking the radicalizing of the populist oversight (Rosanvallon, 2008).

Measures to protect and prioritize Finnish culture and its vitality are featured across SuomenUutiset.fi coverage. Legislation is recommended by the Finns Party youth wing to ban cultural practices seemingly countering Finnish values (Appendix A, 8.2.34.), and the use of public funds to promote multicultural values is criticized (Appendix A, 8.2.35., 8.2.36.). Also, the EU itself is a questionable community of values (Appendix A, 8.2.37.), which as addressed earlier is questioned for the constant rule breaking. All of these constitute an attack on the Finnish way of life from beyond the national borders. The cultural influences of Islam and the EU's governing principles are presented as an outright danger to Finland, its people, and culture. Beck's (2006) populist dialectic of the nation state and the extra-national danger is being reproduced by these counter-cosmopolitan talking points. Recalling counter-Finlandization narratives (Moisio, 2008; Majander, 1999; Paavonsalo, 2013; Ridanpää, 2012), it is easy to ascertain the populist anxiety with foreign cultural and economic powers colluding and acting within Finnish society. These are also external threats in the way the USSR's military belligerence was during the Cold War.

Finnish culture is not the only culture under attack: according to SuomenUutiset.fi, Sweden has endured the same fate and *Folkhemmet* (Eng: the people's [national] home) is practically gone. Claiming strongly to the public opinion again (Rosanvallon, 2008) with the help of opinion polls, SuomenUutiset.fi brings counter-democratic justification to the counter-cosmopolitan and cultural essentialist ideologies. The message is that due to migration and multiculturalism, the Swedish cultural identity is being erased and Swedish values are dying a prolonged death (Appendix A, 8.2.38.-8.2.40.), implying it is only a matter of time before this pattern is repeated in Finland. As migration related news constituted the largest single topic covered in 2015 on Suomen Uutiset, exploration of the counter-cosmopolitan content as a detailed example is necessary to establish what SuomenUutiset.fi draws on in defining the dangers Finland faces.

What this demonstrates is the validity of applying this framework to a foreign context too. The rhetoric of the destroyed national home by the foreign influence is indistinguishable from the other

counter-Finlandization narratives. Folkhemmet terminology fits in seamlessly with the usual narrative, as seen in the articles above. Cultural context as such can be changed freely when discussing counter-cosmopolitan and counter-Finlandization narratives.

5.2.4. Sensationalism leading to Radicalization

The solution to the European refugee crisis is according to SuomenUutiset.fi up to the nation states individually. To exacerbate the situation, sensationalist news stories are often employed in driving the point home. In a September article, SuomenUutiset.fi covers allegations of refugee centers being operated for profit (Appendix A, 8.2.41.). The moral dubiousness here stems from the idea of taking advantage of a crisis for profit. Human traffickers are highlighted too (Appendix A, 8.2.42., 8.2.43.). The profit miners also can be the refugees too. The title “Now it is finally admitted: most of the asylum seekers are looking for a better standard of living” implying the ill will of the asylum seekers coming into Finland is featured in one article (Appendix A, 8.2.44.). The “standard of living surfers” are a concern of how legitimate asylum seekers are in their claim to refuge in Finland. The questions of the situation being taken advantage for the profit of a few, at the expense of the Finnish tax payer is a populist appeal to repel a seemingly damaging practice (Rosanvallon, 2008; Beck, 2006). Again a good example of how counter-cosmopolitan and counter-democratic media coverage goes hand in hand.

Expert opinions are often called on to support the sensationalist stories. Finnish ambassador to Afghanistan Anne Meskanen is quoted to say that most Afghan ‘refugees’ are not in need of safety but looking for better living conditions within the EU i.e. misusing the refugee application process to gain access into the Union (Appendix A, 8.2.45., 8.2.46.). All of these examples demonstrate how the negative imagery is overpowering the journalistic integrity to investigate the situation more closely (Dahlgren, 2009; Vista, 2014). SuomenUutiset.fi does not go beyond to support many of the claims they quote.

A good example of this is MP Teuvo Hakkarainen. His quotations have earned space on the issue of refugees and immigration a few times. In one November article, he calls the influx of refugees and immigrants an occupation (Appendix A, 8.2.47.). In another, he complains about a refugee center being relocated in a former arthritis treatment center, which had closed due to lack of funds (Appendix A, 8.2.48.). He draws the parallel of the risk of rapists and terrorists coming

in as refugees, to this new refugee center, as the government directly supporting terrorism. SuomenUutiset.fi does not back this up in any way. Hakkarainen's quotes stand alone and the sentiments are appreciated by the readers too. The comments section under the arthritis hospital story is filled with agreement with Hakkarainen's sentiments, general praise, and xenophobia. Some users dare to question Hakkarainen's reasoning on the subject, but are almost without exception countered with appeals to free speech and alternative thinking as to justify the rhetoric. Vista (2014) appears to be correct in how effective negative emotions work to catch readers' attentions; not just for the story, but also seemingly contradictory comments in the comments section received comment replies expressing displeasure. This can also be shown to be true for engaging with the material, as the arthritis hospital story had 157 posted comments before archiving.

Further negative emotions are pedaled with fear. MP Juho Eerola sees a threat in the influx of refugees, especially regarding chances of increased sexual harassment and assault increasing, increase (Appendix A, 8.2.49.). Difference in sexual conduct is extrapolated further as a risk in other articles too (Appendix A, 8.2.50.-8.2.52.). In another case, Eerola attributes increased ISIS recruiting in Finland to multiculturalism (Appendix A, 8.2.53., 8.2.54.). Risks of multiculturalism is discussed elsewhere too (Appendix A, 8.2.55.). Terrorism and sexual assault serve as the prime examples for fear of the foreign in SuomenUutiset.fi narrative. These examples further show how the cosmopolitan project brings cultures defined by hostility to Finnish shores. Cultural self-determination is being dismissed by appeal to the most extreme examples, packaged in media sensationalism. Beyond the extreme fears, this narrative is supported by more generalizable observed phenomena. An article that concluded there were immigrants in Germany who did not want to integrate was cause for SuomenUutiset.fi's concern (Appendix A, 8.2.56.). By this, SuomenUutiset.fi shows indifference and even rejection of cultural diversity. The moral panic that can be ignited from this though, is the end goal. Multiculturalism in this way is linked to radicalism, as the host culture in Germany is said to have been rejected by the new arrivals. All of these examples show how the sensationalist stories (Vista, 2014) support the purpose of the counter-cosmopolitan fear mongering (Beck, 2006) and counter-democratic populist agendas (Rosanvallon, 2008). The entire refugee/asylum seeker/migrant narrative found on SuomenUutiset.fi is utterly dehumanizing.

SuomenUutiset.fi has committed several investigative journalism pieces in researching how human traffickers operate on social media. One investigative piece into a Facebook group which advises readers on how to maximize their chances of receiving refugee status ends in another opine editor's note (Appendix A, 8.2.57.). In it, Editor-in-chief Turkkila questions how Finland has created an "automaton" of refugee statuses being granted based on a correctly told tale. One more investigative piece penned by Turkkila dwells into human traffickers' advertising Facebook groups (Appendix A, 8.2.58.). Turkkila ponders the loss of political capital alongside economic capital in his editor's note, and in the spirit of unequal consideration casts the people who ultimately take advantage of these services as a bit dumb.

"The ones leaving their homes believe they will board an elegant yacht, but are greeted with a rubber boat. The arrivals lose their money to the smugglers, and worst case their lives to the sea." –Turkkila (Appendix A, 8.2.58.)

This is paradoxical, as in the former article he cast asylum seekers as the clever ones who can fool the Finnish authorities. More importantly, these two are examples of how the refugee is either the conniving scam artist, or then the dunce who does not realize that the dream sold to them by faceless human traffickers is not true. What is completely lost in both articles, and the earlier examples, is the humanity. Turkkila does not consider the desperation behind people's motives in traveling across continents to reach safety. SuomenUutiset.fi demonstrates complete disregard for any other point of view in pieces other journalists would pride themselves in demonstrating their access to information, impartiality, and most of all understanding of the human condition. The loss of humanity is a critical indicator of potential radicalization (Rosanvallon, 2008). By viewing the other as dangerous rapists, murderers and cheaters who are infiltrating the nation from within, responses to the crisis will be called on to become even more radical than before. This of course all ties in with the counter-Finlandization narrative: the external predator on Finnish society and sovereignty lurks even in the post-Cold War era.

5.3. Re-actualizing Finlandization

5.3.1. Reconstituting a 21st century counter-Finlandization

Counter-Finlandization narratives are not aimed at the original cause of the original Finlandization, Russia. In 21st century, the enemy has developed beyond the old one. Articles

critical of Russian actions are published, but they also feature co-operation as a solution to concrete or potential problems (Appendix A, 8.3.1.-8.3.10.). Some resistance to Russian information warfare is called for however (Appendix A, 8.3.11., 8.3.12.). What is interesting though, is the use of the Russian border to inspire fear. MP Veera Ruoho summarizes that relations with Russia must be kept good to keep border control on the eastern border in working order (Appendix A, 8.3.13.; similar story in Appendix A, 8.3.14.).

What these cases show is that Russia can be used to stroke fear of another impending refugee crisis, should they decide to open the border. SuomenUutiset.fi is in fact tapping into the old underlying fears of an authoritarian Russia to convey correct mental images. As such, the Finns Party promotes a certain appeasement policy when it comes to Russia (Ridanpää, 2008; Paavonsalo, 2013; Moision, 2008). This is done to support the anti-immigration narrative, and builds on the socialized fear of Russia (Ridanpää, 2012), giving reasoning to as why this process is more accurately a counter-agenda, rather than an anti-agenda.

What has taken Russia's place as the extra-national threatening force is the EU. As previous examples in this study have noted, EU-criticism is a major part of the Finns Party political platform. SuomenUutiset.fi features this with a tone of counter-Finlandization at its core. It has been cast as a project of the elites (Appendix A, 8.3.15., 8.3.16.) and not being a place where Finnish interest can be represented fully (Appendix A, 8.3.17.).

These examples show the general attitude of how the EU is viewed through SuomenUutiset.fi articles. The tone of counter-Finlandization resonates well; the EU has now become the enemy the USSR was during the Cold War. What SMP stood for then, the Finns Party stands for now: removing this foreign overbearing influence from Finnish policy. The case of the Euro is the most demonstrative of the counter-Finlandization narrative.

5.3.2. Das Monster Eurozone

The EU's common currency is naturally a good target for discussing a monolithic institution stripping away Finnish self-determination. Like the rest of the EU, the Euro is constructed as a project of the elites too. This is accompanied by drawing on Finland's loss of sovereignty (Appendix A, 8.3.18.) and empowering financial institutions (Appendix A, 8.3.19.). Its plight on

Finland is made clear, and the need and means to fight it has been declared. The example of Finland being the first to leave the old ECU-system is cited too (Appendix A, 8.3.20.). All of this is accompanied with the rhetoric about Finnish sovereignty and financial independence. The Finnish economy without the Euro would be fantastic, and Finns being the only ones deciding on Finnish economic policy would be best for all. Inherent in this counter-Finlandization narrative is also the fact that the Euro is the institution SuomenUutiset.fi wants to run down or to leave. The other frameworks of the EU are not touched upon in most of these stories; the Finns Party accepts certain benefits or the necessity to work within EU frameworks to promote prosperity. This demonstrates my argument of using counter-Finlandization as the accurate term. Anti-Finlandization is not apparent in the case of the Euro, rather the Euro is just an element infringing on Finnish sovereignty. The commitment to the Greek bailouts is especially telling of this.

The Greek quagmire is a heavily covered topic on SuomenUutiset.fi. While the narrative of how guilty Greece is of their own situation is clear in the examples below, there is a certain counter-Finlandization narrative in discussing the Greek self-determination too. Regarding further deals made with Greece, SuomenUutiset.fi ran a story citing Paul Krugman describing the situation as a coup (Appendix A, 8.3.21., 8.3.22.). This evokes some sympathy for Greece. There is an equal part to the crisis that is not Greece's fault, but something that can be attributed to the overbearing institutions in charge of the currency.

In an editorial, a reporter speculates with a certain admiration if Syriza is trying to play their cards in a way they would be encouraged to leave the Euro completely (Appendix A, 8.3.23.). This example gives the hope of a counter-democratic solution (Rosanvallon, 2008), while Greece would be regaining control of their own affairs; in other words, Greece is most often presented as the largest winner of a potential Euro-exit. Furthermore, Roger Bootle of Capital Economics is cited for one of these Greece solutions (Appendix A, 8.3.24.). He is quoted on saying Greeks should stand up for themselves, reject Angela Merkel's solution and find a Greek solution for the problems. Counter-Finlandization for Greece, let the Greeks decide for themselves! What could be better? Far from all of these examples being emancipatory, this suggested liberation is nothing more than leaving Greece to deal with its own problems. The counter-cosmopolitan populist believes the international forum is place to draw strength from for private agendas, and the public

fallout of an international problem should be contained in the smallest possible area. Greece is no exception; SuomenUutiset.fi utilizes the counter-Finlandization, counter-cosmopolitanism, and counter-democracy narratives to argue for Finland's interest in no longer supporting Greece. This case demonstrates where it all comes together: the counter-ideology's use of sensationalism, populism, essentialist methodological nationalism, and anti-elitism to promote their own political agenda.

5.3.3. The Economy of Values

Addressing other economic issues, Finnish self-determination and sovereignty is deployed by party members to rally nationalist sentiment. In the middle of intense trade union negotiations with the government, Finns Party publicist Matti Putkonen came out with a statement calling for trade unions to “fight for the Finnish economic self-determination, and... to leave their ideological eyeglasses in the drawer.” (Appendix A, 8.3.25.). Timo Soini is also quoted calling for Finnish corporations to use Finnish labor over other resources (Appendix A, 8.3.26., 8.3.27.). Mastering the nationalist rallying calls functions not only as a nationalist populist slogan, but also as an ideological separator for issues at large. The dialectic between “us” and “them” is prevalent across the highly polarized discussions on SuomenUutiset.fi.

In a column, former MEP Sampo Terho spoke for the openness and value dialogue in Finnish society and politics (Appendix A, 8.3.28.). He accused Finns Party political opponents of silencing the conversation on certain topics, including but not limited to, EU-federalization, Euro bailouts, and immigration. In other words, Terho accused his opponents of Finlandization. As we have established however, it is no longer Finlandization of appeasing a foreign nation with military power over Finland. What is now the enemy, the one who is peddling Finlandization to the masses is not the fear of aggression, but the encroaching unrecognizable values. The code of silence among the elites of pro-cosmopolitanism, liberal refugee and migration policy, and globalization in general is what 21st century Finlandization is claimed to be about. The Finns Party looks on in horror as the other parties openly accept foreign influence in their policy, and mobilize their support in fighting these influences with an entirely new counter-Finlandization narrative. The transition from Cold War to EU-era counter-Finlandization is seamless in the course of history; The Finns Party has picked up where SMP left off on. Everything remained, from the rhetorical

devices, to the Finnish elites. What changed was the enemy, an enemy that now resides even deeper inside the nation than the USSR ever could have. However, the EU is not a same level threat either, it is just the scapegoat, the manifest of the cosmopolitan, non-Finnish values. The fear what the party capitalizes on is all the same though.

5.3.4. An Editor's Note on Terrorism

As a final point, we return to discussing the freedom of speech to exemplify one more aspect of counter-Finlandization fear narrative. In April, a seminar featuring political cartoonist Lars Vilks organized in the Parliament Building was canceled (Appendix A, 8.3.29.-8.3.33.). An editorial by Editor-in-chief Turkkila was particularly harsh about this call, saying that the Finnish government is bowing down in the face of terror threats (Appendix A, 8.3.34.). These sentiments are reflected by MEP Halla-aho and MP Hakkarainen too (Appendix A, 8.3.35.), but Turkkila phrases the issue in a unique way:

"The most concerning thing for Finnish freedom of speech is the fact that Tiitinen's decision speaks volumes of the fact that Finland even with the police is incapable of securing a member of parliament's seminar. A man who has worked for over ten years as the head of Finnish Security Intelligence Service messages the parliament has surrendered in the face of terror threats. In essence, Tiitinen's message is that we are scared, and because of that we are adjusting our behavior to counter a threat." – Turkkila (Appendix A, 8.3.34.)

The threat of external force on Finnish sovereignty is cast as Tiitinen's motivation to canceling this event. Much like the threat of USSR military aggression, Turkkila sees terrorism as another reason for voluntary self-censorship and narrowing of Finnish sovereignty. This is significant, as it demonstrates the versatility of counter-Finlandization rhetoric. As many a time, SuomenUutiset.fi has featured calls for increased security due to increased risks from migration (Appendix A, 8.3.36.-8.3.37.) and terrorism (Appendix A, 8.3.38.), but only when the freedom of speech is concerned does Editor-in-chief Turkkila speak up to denounce our values of freedom and openness to be under threat. This is the crucial difference between this line in SuomenUutiset.fi and elsewhere: many reject increased security and limited public freedoms as a response to terrorism, SuomenUutiset.fi finds them necessary and doesn't question shrinking refugee quotas and denying foreigners entry to the country. When information, expression, and public gatherings are disrupted voluntarily (according to them), then Finland has lost its self-determination, much

like SMP said about the USSR during the Cold War (Ridanpää, 2012). Turkkila's editorial brings the uniqueness of counter-Finlandization narratives into the spotlight. The nationalist values cannot be surrendered in the face of terror, but increased security to protect these values are a necessity to defend what is already under attack, constantly.

6. Conclusion – Towards an Understanding of Euro-critical Populism

The aim of the research was to develop a reading of the Finns Party online media utilization in reaching out to the public. The search for the broad themes central to the Finns Party platform was undertaken when sampling the data and developing the theoretical framework. The research questions “How do political parties vying to speak for the public appeal to the public?”, “How do narratives specific to Finnish nationalism reflect discussions in the international forum?” and “How do online internet forums and news websites function in generating conversation?” were set to guide the analysis and development of the theory.

Instead of looking for definitive proof of the conformance of certain data to observed patterns elsewhere, the thesis set out to develop an understanding of the new counter-ideological phenomenon becoming apparent through the Finns Party's use of online media. What was developed was a novel theoretical framework, combining counter-democracy, cosmopolitan populist, Finlandization, and public sphere theories to demonstrate the existence of an entire counter-ideology, comprised of counter-democracy, counter-cosmopolitanism, and counter-Finlandization.

This thesis has concluded that the counter-ideology motivates a large part of the news coverage on SuomenUutiset.fi. The support of counter-democratic methods, accompanied by smearing the legitimacy of political elites and nondemocratic opinion leaders is the Finns Party's main approach to winning over the public opinion, and claiming to represent it. Counter-democratic methods for this include the use of opinion polls, expressing support for citizen initiatives, promoting citizen deliberation, and sowing mistrust in mass media. The news stories published are laden with sensationalism, which contribute to sacrifice public sphere ideals. However, the sensationalist elements prove with reference to reader comments posted under the news stories that negative emotional association works to grab the interest of the readers, and potentially spread the content

further. Another curious aspect of the Finns Party is the utilization of a counterpublic online forum known as Hommaforum.org. While not referring to Hommaforum.org on their website, SuomenUutiset.fi and the Finns Party in general is highly supported on the forum itself. Especially MEP Jussi Halla-aho enjoys continued reverence among its users. The legitimacy of the Finns Party is supported by the movement which brands itself a politically non-aligned people's movement, although overtly supporting Finns Party with front page references to their members and other material.

The Finns Party's political platform is built on the promotion of nationalism and Finnish self-determination over further globalization and cosmopolitanization. However, under the façade of overt resistance, there is an underlying compliance to the cosmopolitan global order. Demonstrated by an extensive network of allies, sympathizers, and others sharing Finns Party concerns across Europe through SuomenUutiset.fi interviews and articles, the anti-cosmopolitan populism of Ulrich Beck (2006) is more appropriately redefined to be counter-cosmopolitanism. The resistance to further cosmopolitanization in the international cosmopolitan framework gives the Finns Party a superiorly unique position in the Finnish landscape. The counter-cosmopolitan narrative is supported by the essentialist view of the Finnish nation and culture, which as per Beck's populism theory is in a dialectical existence against the foreign. As shown on SuomenUutiset.fi, the foreign is the aggressor and negative influence, something to be feared. In the course of this narrative, the sensationalist fear mongering of the dangerous foreigner amounts to a complete loss in humanity when discussing migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. This is worrying on the level of how Rosanvallón characterizes the radicalization of oversight with populism, as this can lead to extremism and violence.

Counter-Finlandization has been introduced in the analysis as a reconstitution of Finlandization and counteraction against it for a 21st century political context. SuomenUutiset.fi works in the parameters of countering Finlandization with appeals to retaining Finnish sovereignty while working in the international institutions. As such, the construction of Finlandization in the counter-ideological framework no longer concerns foreign military powers, but the cultural effects of participating in the international community. SuomenUutiset.fi holds that the Finnish elites are silencing certain aspects of immigration, the EU, and other cosmopolitan projects and challenges

to make them seem more favorable as Finnish sovereignty is slowly reduced. The enemy of Finland is no longer an external nation, but rather the values and ideas emanating from the cosmopolitan community and institutions, such as the EU. The counter-ideological term is proven accurate in this case too, as the Finns Party utilizes some of the socialized Finlandization fear in the case of Russia, and ignites similar moral panic about refugees, and feelings of insecurity from terrorism.

What the analysis has showed is how counter-cosmopolitanism and counter-Finlandization overlap in many ways. Resistance to foreign influence is the end goal of these two counter-ideologies, and are both supported by ideas of nationalism and self-determination. We have effectively seen how counter-Finlandization is another form of counter-cosmopolitanism, but context specific and drawing on historically and culturally specific experiences of a nation. Potentially, the reconstituted Finlandization and counter-Finlandization can be used as an analytical tool in other contexts when taking the contextual factors into consideration. These observations are not self-evident from the material, but a product of the synthesis of the theory and empirical material.

The implications of these discoveries go beyond just the case of Finland and the Finns Party. As the counter-cosmopolitan unity displayed in the analysis shows, the Finns Party has plenty of allies, which include not just 'old' parties, but also new up and coming populist movements like themselves. The framework of this research is potentially enlightening in producing further readings of other context specific research. Beyond researching media, the framework has potential to explore the field of sociology and political sciences with an interdisciplinary approach drawing on media and communications theories. What is key to understand here is the media's facilitation of these attitudes and the ideology; the non-apparent discoveries found in this paper were only found from stringent analysis of the material available. The potential to develop further understanding of how populists utilize counterpublic narratives, the internet in general, history and culture, or the power of distrust to promote their political agenda is apparent from many similar political parties across other nations. The Sweden Democrats, the French National Front, UKIP, the Dutch Freedom Party and the Danish People's Party all have earned notoriety by their populism and extremism; understanding their ideologies and how they communicate them is key in avoiding further extremism and fragmentation across the European political landscape.

What might not be recognized is the heterogeneity of these platforms, as the political opponents are quick to brand them as collections of closed minded, homogenous old school nationalists, which as this thesis has shown is an inaccurate assessment. As Coleman and Ross stated (2010), the alternative movements which appeal to broader audiences are generally the most successful ones. Timo Soini if anyone is aware of this. In one of the final news stories SuomenUutiset.fi published in December 2015, Soini's reply to a question asked by opposition leader Antti Rinne (Sdp.) in jest about what kinds of gifts they would receive is quoted.

"Christmas is red. I believe that suits the left. The Christmas tree is green, I suppose that suits the Greens. Christmas is founded in Christianity: I believe that suits the [Christian Democrats]. I wish the opposition, our democratic treasure, a peaceful Christmas time, so that they would remain in one piece next year too." – Soini cited in Leskelä (2015)

There are probably as many opinions about Finns Party leader Timo Soini, as there are people who know about him. One thing everyone can agree on though: he did not build up the Finns Party to where it is (or used to be last May) by being ignorant about what the people want to hear.

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