

FINAL REPORT

(5 September 2018)

Project name

“Abroad this would create a storm”. A Study on Populist Parties' Racism-related Scandals and Journalistic Choices.

Project concept (as formulated in the application)

The study discusses the racism accusations aimed at the Finns Party and the presentation of these accusations in the media between 2010 and 2016. The project is internationally comparative and its goal is to identify the best practices to support journalistic work and to foster societal discourse.

Grant received

2015

Amount granted

100,000

Funding received from other organisations (amount and granting entity)

Travelling grant for Mari K. Niemi from the Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists supported the project indirectly by providing the opportunity to follow Donald Trump's presidential campaign in the United States.

Person responsible (name, position, and organisation)

Dr.Soc.Sc., docent Mari K. Niemi. Senior Researcher at the Centre for Parliamentary Studies until 31 December 2017, after that the Director of InnoLab research platform at the University of Vaasa. (Locations during the project: University of Strathclyde, University of Gothenburg, and University of Valencia.)

Project summary

The project explored the media scandals of populist parties, the handling of racism, and on a wider perspective the populist parties' relationship to media drawing international comparisons. The central theme of the study was the critical analysis of journalistic choices and developing journalism on the basis of the analysis. The development work was often done together with journalists (e.g. interviews with journalists, workshops, etc.) in both the studies included the project and the segments invited to the project's main publication. The project additionally placed much effort into creating and maintaining a dialogue with the representatives of populist parties and their voters.

Project goal

The goal was to generate new research on the media strategies of right-wing populist parties and on how journalism has been produced under the pressure of populism. As a more practical continuation of this analysis, the project also aimed at providing tools for journalists for handling populism and to produce high-quality, critical and fair journalism. The goal was also to support societal discourse that allows everyone to participate.

The goal was reached (on scale 1–5; 1=bad, 5=excellent)

The project reached well (4) the academic goals project director had set for it. On the other hand, discussion on the topic is still ongoing: only time will tell how much practical use this study is able to provide for journalists dealing with these issues.

Project publications, articles, and writings

The project's main publication in Finnish is published by Vastapaino (2018, jufo 2) and titled *Media ja populismi. Työkaluja kriittiseen journalismiin* (Editors Mari K. Niemi and Topi Houni, 359p.).

Planning the book, coordinating the book project, and editorial work were done with the help of the project funding, as well as the research on which chapters 1-2, 4-6 and 11 and guiding principles 1 of the book were based on. Also the communications about the study and marketing of the book were carried out as part of the project, particularly in social media.

Hatakka, Niko; Niemi, Mari K. & Välimäki, Matti (2017): Confrontational yet submissive: Calculated ambivalence and populist parties' strategies of responding to racism accusations in the media. *Discourse & Society* 28(3), 262-280. SAGE. (publication forum 2).

Annu Perälä & Mari K. Niemi: Asylum Seekers Arrived, Elites Occupied the Air. Topics and Interviewees in YLE's Magazine programs during the "Asylum Seeker Crisis". Nordicom (jufo 1).

Additionally, the following book chapter is currently in the review process:

Hatakka, Niko & Välimäki, Matti 2019: The allure of exploding bats: The Finns Party's anti-environmental populist performance and the media. In the book Bernhard Forchtner (editor): *The Far Right and the Environment: Politics, Discourse and Communication*. Routledge (publication forum 3).

Presentations in scientific conferences

Niko Hatakka & Matti Välimäki: 'Nöyrä mutta hyökkäävä. Maahanmuuttovastaisten populistipuolueiden strategiat rasismisyytöksiin vastaamisessa valtavirtajulkisuudessa.' Median ja viestinnän tutkimuksen päivät 2016, Helsinki.

Mari K. Niemi & Annu Perälä: Whose voices were heard? 'European refugee crisis', rise of populism and journalistic choices. Political Studies Association (PSA) Annual International Conference 2017. Glasgow.

Mari K. Niemi: The 'Nightmare Called Multiculturalism'. A Case Study of a Populist Anti-immigration Party's Crisis Communication after Entering a Coalition Government. ECPR General Conference 2016, Prague.

**POPULISTIPUOLUEET RUOTSIN,
SUOMEN JA TANSKAN MEDIASSA**
- mikä selittää erilaisia journalistisia valintoja?

Paneelikeskustelussa (in English):

KENAN HABUL
Aftonbladet

ELISABET SVANE
Politiken

PIRJO AUVINEN
Yleisradio

Media ja populismi. Työkaluja kriittiseen journalismiin (toim. Mari K. Niemi & Topi Houni, Vastapaino) -teoksen julkistus 21.5.2018 klo 12:00 Päivälehdessä museossa.

Other presentations, lectures, and trainings

2018

Mari K. Niemi, Topi Houni & book authors: Media & populismi book launch. 21 May 2018. Päivälehti Museum, Helsinki.

Mari K. Niemi, Topi Houni & book authors: Public forum for Media ja populismi book in Saaristobaari. 23 May 2018, Turku. Hosted by Editor-in-Chief Ville Pernaa (Suomen Kuvalehti).

Mari K. Niemi, Topi Houni & book authors: Public forum for Media ja populismi book in Restaurant Myllärit 24 May 2018, Tampere. Hosted by journalist Lauri Nurmi (Aamulehti).

Mari K. Niemi and Matti Välimäki, teaching visit to the University of Valencia in spring 2018 with a two-day workshop for international students (from Europe and Latin America) on human rights issues through a course titled *Legal English Workshop*. Multi-mode teaching with the following lectures:

1. 'Post-WWII Western Europe: Migration & Politics'. (Välimäki)
2. What populism is and why is it relevant with regards to immigration and minority rights? (Niemi)
3. 'Right-wing populist parties' views on immigration and immigrant politics'. (Välimäki)
4. Populism, media dynamics and journalistic choices (Niemi)

Mari K. Niemi (presentation): Populism, Media Dynamics and Journalistic Choices. How Nordic media has reacted on the rise of populist-nationalist anti-immigration parties? The Future of Freelancing – Nordic Freelance Seminar. Suomenlinna, Helsinki 2017.

Mari K. Niemi (speech): How populism speaks to us – and why it works? Speechwriters' and Business Communicators Conference, European Speechwriter Network. Magdalen College, Oxford. United Kingdom 2017.

Mari K. Niemi (lecture): Promoting Racism? How rising right-wing populist parties challenge public debate and human rights. Legal English Workshop, School of Law, University of Valencia. Spain 2017.

Mari K. Niemi (presentation): Racism, Politics and Media in Europe. How the rise of populism stretches the boundaries of acceptable speech? In: Human Rights and Media: Reflections for Policy Makers, NGOs and Journalists (2016) University of Glasgow. United Kingdom 2016.

Matti Välimäki (lecture). 'Immigration & Politics in Sweden and Finland'. Course: Europe and the other. University of Turku, European Studies, 2016.

Completed (or soon to be completed) doctoral theses

Of the articles published in the project, Hatakka, Niemi & Välimäki (2017) will be included in the article dissertation in political history of both Hatakka and Välimäki.

The project's media coverage (articles of the project, TV and radio programmes or other media coverage)

Of the researchers who have worked in the project, many have appeared in public as experts of their research topic during the project. To economise the effort, we will report here only the media hits from the first week of the *Media ja populismi* book's publication (see below)

Mari K. Niemi also often discussed the themes of project in her *Ylämaan kettu* blog (Suomen Kuvalehti), in her columns for the *Nykypäivä* magazine, and in her guest blog posts for the *Tiedekeskiviikko* blog of the Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists. Niemi and other authors also discussed the themes of the blog in the blog of the Centre for Parliamentary Studies.

In addition, the project's theme was discussed in e.g. Niko Hatakka's blog post: (<https://blogit.utu.fi/ekeskus/2017/01/05/voiko-rasismia-vastustaa-vaarin/>) and in an opinion piece by Hatakka, Mari K. Niemi and Emilia Palonen published in Helsingin Sanomat: "Populismi ei kuihdu vaan valtavirtaistuu." (21 May 2017) <https://www.hs.fi/mielipide/art2000005219143.html?share=6d446df4efcf1b201e5e3e1641998d93>

A Facebook page was created for the *Media ja populismi* book and in connection separate event pages for three events organised during the week of the book's publication.

Newspaper articles and TV and radio programmes in the week of the book's publication

Yle News (21 May) Monday at 12:00 pm (at 2:20-3:00) (<https://bit.ly/2sf6lwt>)

Demokraatti (21 May) Tutkimus: Perussuomalaiset sai puolueista eniten tilaa Ylen maahanmuuttokeskusteluissa (<https://bit.ly/2wZnOxP>)

Ilkka / Lännen media (21 May) Tutkija: Populismi ei ole hyvä tai paha ilmiö – media ei tartu perussuomalaisen provosointiin enää niin helposti (<https://bit.ly/2x1GCwr>)

Hufvudstadsbladet (21 May) Forskare samlar råd om hur populism kan hanteras – "Det gäller att varken förföras eller demonisera" (<https://bit.ly/2IWQGvo>)

Suomen Uutiset (21 May) Uutuuskirjassa syyniin joutuivatkin populistien sijaan toimittajat – katso video julkistustilaisuudesta (<https://bit.ly/2GExhu6>)

Uusi Suomi (21 May) Suomen populistisen vastamedian aktiivit profiloitu: "Tekijöinä 30–50-vuotiaita miehiä" (<https://bit.ly/2rZu0AZ>)

STT / Etelä-Suomen Sanomat (21 May) Populistipuolueet hyötyvät jännitteisestä mediasuhteestaan (<https://bit.ly/2KLgibQ>)

Demokraatti (21 May) Tutkimus: Puheenjohtaja Soini sulatti toimittajien sydämet – Halla-aho: ”Äärimmäinen homofobia ei ole koskaan ollut medialle ongelma” (<https://bit.ly/2s1MYWU>)

STT / Demokraatti (21 May) Tutkimus: Media ei tartu enää yhtä herkästi perussuomalaisten täkyihin – ”Huhtasaaren presidenttikampanja antoi viitteitä” (<https://bit.ly/2IE7nZ5>)

Tamperelainen (21 May) Tamperelaistutkijat haastattelivat MV-lehden tekijöitä ja lukijoita – ”He ovat menettäneet ainakin osin luottamuksensa journalismiin” (<https://bit.ly/2ke3Fuw>)

Pohjalainen: Editorial (22 May) Populismi kasvaa kaapissa – Suomen kannattaa ottaa oppia Ruotsin virheistä (€) (<https://bit.ly/2kwcWOU>)

MTV Huomenta Suomi (22 May) Populismi haastaa median (kirjan toimittaja Mari K. Niemi haastattelussa) (<https://bit.ly/2s2VYyH>)

MustRead (22 May) Tutkijat kritisoivat maahanmuuttojulkisuuden yksipuolisuutta Ylessä – perussuomalaiset sai suhteettomasti näkyvyyttä (€) (<https://bit.ly/2GFGe65>)

Yle (Radio Suomen Päivä) (22 May) Media ja populismi (kirjan toimittaja Mari K. Niemi haastattelussa) (<https://bit.ly/2IC7Fnx>)

Kansan Uutiset (22 May) Mari K. Niemi: Jos populistipuolue ei saa julkisuutta, se korottaa ääntään ja väittää, että media on eliitin puolella (<https://bit.ly/2s2xYb7>)

Suomen Uutiset (22 May) Turhaa teoretisointia populismista – politiikan tutkijoiden uutuuskirja yrittää selittää monimutkaista ilmiötä yhdellä yksinkertaisella käsitteellä (<https://bit.ly/2kfc80C>)

Suomen Uutiset (22 May) Tutkimustulos: Vastamedioita luetaan, kun valtamediaan ei luoteta (<https://bit.ly/2IWRCQx>)

MV-media (23 May) Media & populismi – tiedekirja arvioi MV-lehteä (<https://bit.ly/2kpinPL>)

Radio Moreeni, Tutkain (23 May) Media ja populismi, Elina Noppari ja Ilmari Hiltunen (<https://bit.ly/2kqqhbp>)

Länsi-Suomi (25 May) Populismi ei häviä, vaan leviää (<https://bit.ly/2J8v0fR>)

Journalisti (25 May) Pyrstö ja nokka populismissa (<https://bit.ly/2KRM7zN>)

Alfa TV, Uutiskauha (25 May) Vastamedian käyttäjät ovat 30–50-vuotiaita miehiä, kertoo tutkija Elina Noppari (<https://bit.ly/2GWPUta>)

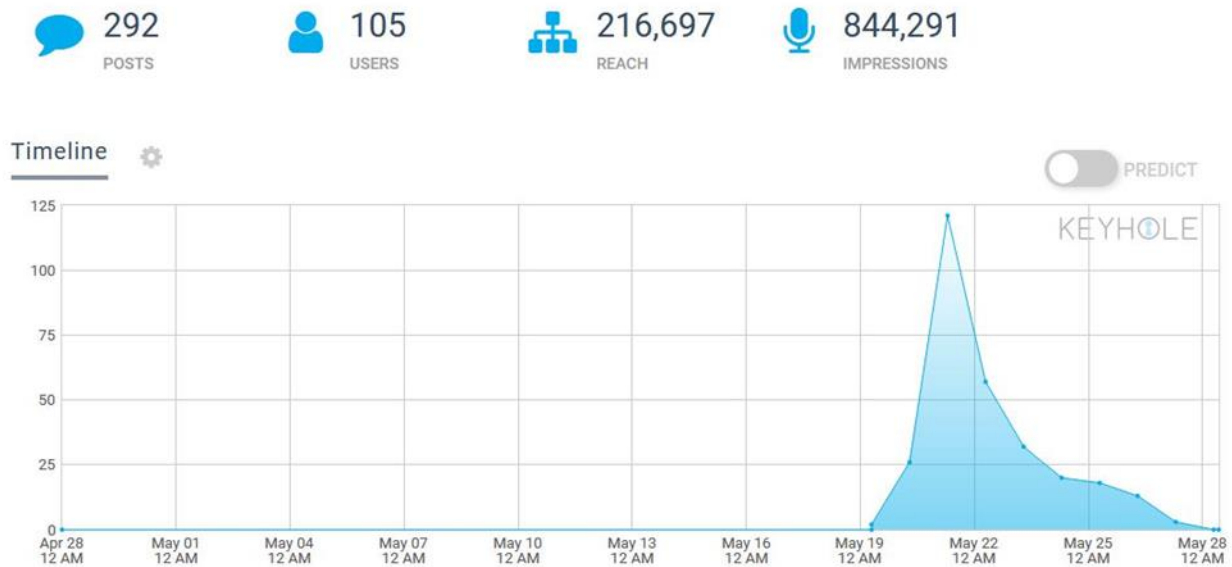
Yle Pressiklubi (25 May) Viekö populistit mediaa kuin pässiä narussa (<https://bit.ly/2KTnym6>)

Helsingin Sanomat (25 May) ”Emme vastusta vain eliittiä”, perussuomalaisten poliittinen suunnittelija Riikka Purra puolustautui viimeisessä Pressiklubissa (<https://bit.ly/2Jdg53Y>)

Alusta (25 May): Uutuuskirja avaa median suhdetta nationalistiseen oikeistopopulismiin Euroopassa ja Yhdysvalloissa. <http://alusta.uta.fi/juttuset/2018/05/25/uutuuskirja-avaa-median-suhdetta-nationalistiseen-oikeistopopulismiin-euroopassa-ja-yhdysvalloissa.html>

Twitter

Visibility of the hashtag #mediajapopulismi on Twitter by 28 May 11:00 am:



- Posts: Total number of tweets with #mediajapopulismi
- Users: Total number of users who have used #mediajapopulismi in their posts
- Reach: Total number of users who have seen #mediajapopulismi on their Twitter wall
- Impressions: Total number of times #mediajapopulismi was seen on Twitter

Source: keyhole.co/#mediajapopulismi

Potential problems during the project

Problems did not occur. The biggest aberration with the project plan concerns the use of funds – money was left over. (See separate financial report).

Feedback for the foundation

Besides the most visible results, the project enabled the doctoral students who took part in it to develop themselves as experts in a versatile manner. Important aspects in this regard were conference trips abroad, possibility to work on peer-reviewed referee articles and book chapters outside their dissertation (in material acquisition we also used students as paid assistants/trainees), opportunity to

edit a book and learn about scientific communication during the project, and getting to teach the themes of the project in a foreign university.

The project also enabled the main author of the study Dr.Soc.Sc. Mari K. Niemi to work abroad – although none of the three visited universities charged a bench fee, the flexibility of funding and being able to cover travel expenses through the project supported internationalisation and enabled, for example, a two-month visit to Gothenburg, during which Niemi conducted journalist interviews in Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.