



Finland & NATO - The Anatomy of Power in Finnish State Media Reporting

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Abstract: This case study covers the period from Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24.2.2022 to the Finnish Parliament's decision to apply for membership on 15.5.2022. The Public State Broadcaster (Yle) is regarded as the most trustworthy institution in Finland. Legislation is in place to ensure that pluralism in the newsroom is assured and that reporting should not convey bias. However, Yle's reporting showed that it failed to comply with these professional stipulations when covering Finland's decision to join NATO. Using Galbraith's conceptual framework - *The Anatomy of Power*, this research shows how different sources and instruments of power were used to promote a pro-military agenda. Thematic analysis was used to identify the different power nexus in agenda setting and reporting. Groupthink, expert opinion and an information cascade coalesced around a pro-militarisation narrative. Opposition voices were seldom heard and when addressed, either the messenger or the message was critiqued. This level of critical awareness and professional due diligence was not applied to the pro-militarisation coverage. The anatomy of power revealed in Yle's reporting showed a Machiavellian astuteness by media power to promote and protect their interests. Finland's media brand image is internationally acclaimed, but this case study raises questions about Yle's professionalism and impartiality in their reporting on the NATO question.

Keywords: Yle, Power, Groupthink, NATO, Bias, Pluralism, Finland

1. INTRODUCTION

In May 2022 Finnish MPs voted for a paradigmatic shift in Finnish foreign policy by applying for NATO membership. 70 years of successful military non-alignment was rejected within three months of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This case study examines the reporting of the Finnish Public State Broadcaster Yle's online English language platform *Yle News* (<https://yle.fi/news>) from the day of the invasion - 24.2.2022 until the date of the Finnish parliament's decision to apply for NATO membership - 15.5.2022.

Yle's English language platform attracts 200,000 readers per month which is small compared to the Finnish language platform which is the most trusted media source and the standard bearer of Finnish media (Yle, 14.6.2023). Yle is governed by the Act on the Finnish Broadcasting Company which should support *democracy, promote freedom of expression and media pluralism* (Finland Ministry of Transport and Communications, 1380/1993). The case study highlights the failure of Yle to adhere to these legal stipulations.

Since 1945, Finland has been caught in a vortex of competing foreign policy developments, the conundrum being *Finlandisation*. This required a foreign policy sensitive to the reality of bordering a neighbouring superpower, juxtaposed with the rationality of domestic policies that did not provoke a negative reaction from that neighbour. This was achieved through a Machiavellian astuteness of policy-making that allowed them to refine a *designer neutrality* in foreign relations (Rentola, 2000; Arter, 1996).

However, *Finlandisation* was subject to critique. It was seen as a series of paradoxes (Majander, 1999) and a concept lacking objective delimitation (Hjelm & Vaher, 2018), and since the 1990s there has been an incessant erosion of the utility of *Finlandisation* by Finnish scholars (Aunesluoma & Rainio-Niemi, 2016). They have presented the opportunities EU membership brought by greater integration with the West and possible alignment with NATO (Penttilä, 1994).

According to Forsberg (2023), The end of *Finlandisation* and the pathway to NATO have been on the same trajectory. The decision for Finland to apply for membership was a culmination of change processes that had been initiated years before (Arter, 2022).

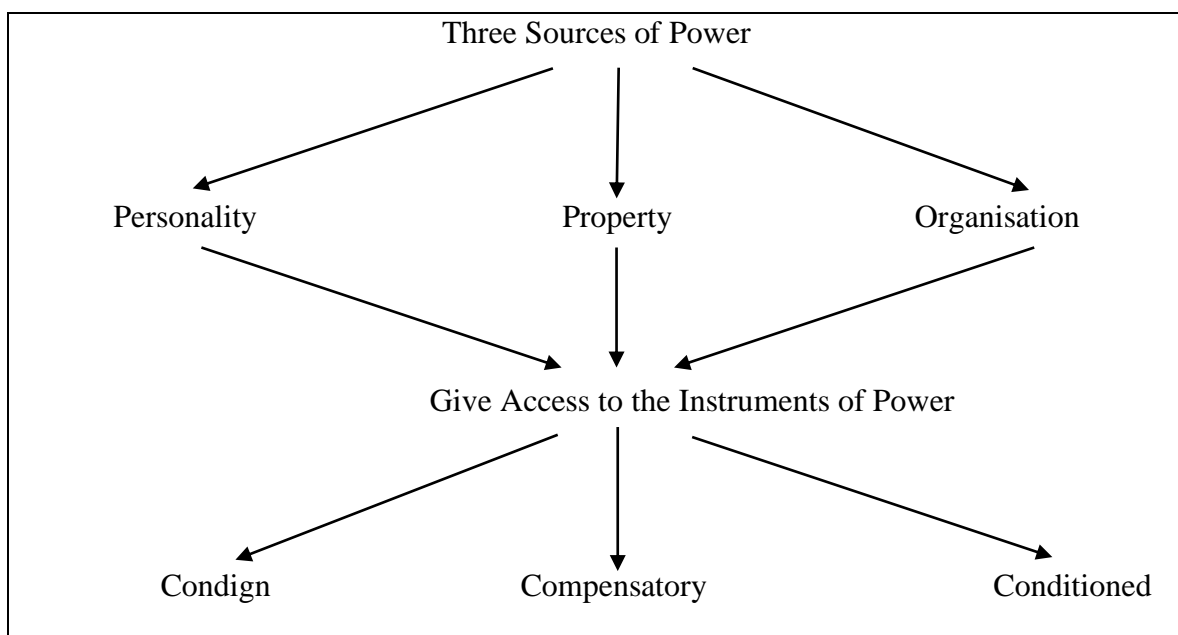
Despite the academic attempts to dilute and divert attention away from Russian influence on Finnish policy decisions, it is clear that Russia’s foreign policies were pivotal in Finland’s evolution. Night Frost (1958), the Note Crisis (1961) and the Kohver Case (2014) demonstrated how Finnish politicians navigated crises with a dexterity of rationality and allowed them to build up an intellectual capital that relied on diplomacy and not force of arms. This was rejected in 2022 when Finland decided to join NATO.

Theoretical Framework – Anatomy of Power

The puzzle of media power and the influence of the elites has been extensively explored and how it has been used as an agent of change (Freedman, 2014 a). In the Nordic countries, there has been an awareness of how important the role of public service platforms has become (Skogerbø, et al., 2020). However, concentrated media power has the potential to be undemocratic because unelected organs are given primacy over the acquisition, analysis and exchange of information (Freedman, 2014b; 2015). This becomes even more acute during periods of crisis when media dependency rises because citizens have restricted access to information. Such information can then shape the perceptions of the audience and possibly escalate or inflame the crisis by forming the audience’s collective understanding of what is going on (Van der Meer, et al., 2022).

The media’s intrinsic role in the socio-economic-political power nexus is brought into sharp focus when the media do not raise timely questions about contentious government policies, especially during times of crisis and this is when the press fails (Bennett, et al., 2007). Yet the media only has symbolic and persuasive power, it cannot enforce physical actions but rather impacts on the reader’s minds. Nevertheless, if the audience is unwavering in blind support and trust in the narrative being presented, then the influence or manipulation of the target group is significantly enhanced (Van Dijk, 1995) and the belief system held by that group becomes more compliant to the needs of vested interests.

John Kenneth Galbraith’s (1985) insights into Western Society are incisive, and in his work *The Anatomy of Power* he cogently sets out the fundamental characteristics embodied in the nature and operationalisation of power. Adopting a Weberian definition, he conceives synergy between the sources and instruments of power. Three sources of power can be used in isolation or in relative combinations with the other sources by a party wishing to exercise power, allowing them to have access to one or more of three instruments of power:



The rapidity with which the NATO application process was instigated was striking. How were those powerful forces pushing for NATO membership able to prevail within an expedited time frame? If

Yle's English language reporting is dissected and a multidisciplinary perspective adopted drawing upon the theoretical lens provided by Galbraith, then it gives an insight into how those promoting NATO membership exploited the different anatomies of power. The narrative themes that underpin these anatomies in the reporting revealed how and why Finland decided to follow the descent into a military alliance.

Yle's English reporting on the crisis provided a *petri dish* of how the different anatomies of power merged together, revealing how different forces expertly set the agenda, instilled fear, stigmatised opposition and indoctrinated the population into embracing the NATO agenda.

2. METHOD

To comply with the bounded requirements of case study (Stake, 1995), *Yle's* English language platform was chosen as it was defined in time, space and activity. 131 articles related to the crisis in Ukraine published by *Yle* were reviewed over the period 24.2.2022-15.5.2022.

Thematic Analysis (TA) was utilised to identify, analyse and report patterns in the articles (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). This was compatible with the theoretical framework linking the narrative themes to the anatomy of power. The TA initially had a qualitative inductive approach and reflected the guidance set down by Braun and Clarke (2022) that goes beyond word/phrase counting to an evaluation of implicit and explicit ideas. The attraction of TA is the relative absence of being tied to a specific theoretical or disciplinary standpoint and allows the researcher to adopt a “coding process that is unstructured and organic, with the potential for codes to evolve to capture the researcher’s deepening understanding of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2021:39). This evolutionary process is what they term ‘Reflexive Thematic Analysis’.

During the research period, the methodology moved from the inductive core thematic concept during the initial stages of the study to a deductive approach in which central themes were discerned that underpinned the six anatomies of power. It was also evident that multiple themes could be broached in any one article.

Braun & Clarke (2016) are critical of this approach which they term ‘Coding Reliability Thematic Analysis’ because it relies on a pre-determined coding frame to ensure inter-coding reliability scores. It implies themes are self-evident in the data and the researcher takes on the role of a prospector mining for *thematic diamonds* scattered in the sand. Such an approach is aligned more with ‘content analysis’.

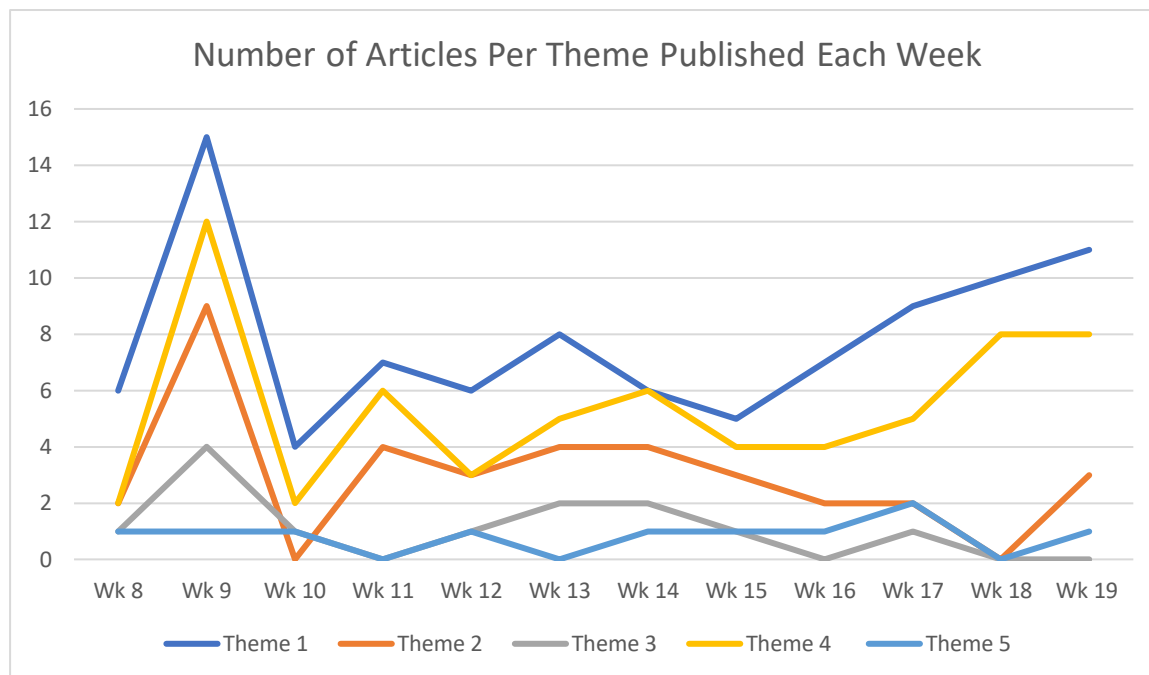
Elements of both content analysis and thematic analysis were used during the evolution of the research. Whilst recognising there are differences (Vaismoradi, et al., 2013), I wanted to ensure that the subjective interpretation of the unfolding events and how they were being reported should have an explicit evidentiary base. Neuendorf (2002) sees the fusion of an inductive and deductive approach as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. This was especially important to counter possible confirmation bias in the research.

3. RESULTS

The following themes were identified during the research period:

<i>Power Anatomy/Theme</i>	<i>% of Yle Articles:</i>
<i>1. Conditioned Power/ Pro-Militarisation Sentiment</i>	72
<i>2. Conditioned Power/ Polling and public support initiatives supporting Pro-Militarisation Sentiment</i>	28
<i>3. Property and Compensatory Power/ Enhanced Military Expenditure/Sales Actual and Potential Sentiment</i>	10
<i>4. Personality Power/ ‘Expert’ sources (excluding the President and Prime Minister) referenced with Pro-Militarisation Sentiment</i>	50
<i>5. Anti-NATO Sentiment</i>	8

The distribution of articles was:



94 reports highlighted pro-militarisation sentiment. This peaked in the first week in reaction to the February invasion and continued upward toward the decision in May. Polling and public initiatives supported this perspective which were recurrent features throughout the period, reinforcing the pro-military sentiment. This was integrated with expert opinions calling for a pro-military alignment strategy. In addition, there was periodical reporting of enhanced military spending as seen in 13 articles.

Key signposts in the timeline of the membership process included the citizen’s initiatives to Parliament calling for NATO membership (*Yle*, 27.2.2022; 3.3.2022). The assertion by President Niinistö that “NATO membership would be the ‘most sufficient’ security for Finland” reported on 26.3.2022. The report published on 13.4.2022 by the Finnish Government on changes in the security environment (Finland Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 13.4.2022). After this, there was a continuous increase in support evidenced by more politicians willing to state publicly their preferred position. Before this publication, there had been hesitance by politicians to reveal their position. And Boris Johnson’s visit on 11.5.2022, when President Niinistö stated that the Russians should “look in the mirror” behind Finland’s decision to join NATO (*Yle*, 11.5.22).

Yle’s reporting accessed emotions and contextualised the military question by domesticating the conflict, drawing on the possible implications of the crisis in Ukraine for Finland, even though at the time there was no military threat to Finland posed by Russia.

The key feature of the reporting was the relative absence of an anti-military sentiment or promoting the status quo.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Conditioned Power – Influencing Belief

Conditioned power recognises the need to persuade and establish belief – “Once belief is won, whether by explicit or implicit conditioning, the resulting subordination to the will of others is thought to be the product of the individual's own moral or social sense - his or her feeling as to what is right or good” (Galbraith, 1985: 48). The core thematic concept underpinning this conditioned power was that of *militarisation* – “the cultural, symbolic, and material preparation for war” (Bickford, 2015: 484) which became the dominant belief during the period.

Supporting this sentiment was polling and public initiatives. Polling was a particularly successful strategy because trust in traditional media companies has revealed lower levels of scepticism towards polling outcomes (Tsfati, 2003). Throughout the period, collective *Gallup Democracy* contributed to

the inculcation of a ‘we’ mentality that was instrumental in creating a belief system sympathetic to NATO (Kanniainen, 2022).

The existence of an opinion does not necessarily mean that the news produced is biased and there are significant definitional challenges when it comes to media bias. Although the distinction between content and decision-making bias might be a useful analytical tool (Entman, 2007).

Yet media bias involves intentionality and needs to be sustained over a period of time (Williams, 1975), and this was evident in *Yle*'s predisposition towards a pro-military approach. It was accelerated after the first citizens' initiative for a NATO referendum was submitted to parliament (*Yle*, 27.2.2022). This is particularly important because when news is consistently biased, those parties that receive preferential treatment are empowered to act in a manner to meet their agenda without the potential for negative repercussions. Those who lose this contest become weaker and restricted in what they want to say/do (Entman, 2007).

The sustained calls for increased militarisation took on viral characteristics that resembled the *cascade effect* (Kuran & Sunstein, 1999). The *Availability Cascade* is a self-perpetuating collective belief formation that is enacted when an expressed perception promotes an escalation that reinforces the plausibility of that perception due to its predominance in the public domain. The expanded coverage in *Yle*'s positive embrace of NATO membership supports this *availability cascade* interpretation. This effect is enhanced when there is an *informational cascade* when people develop their beliefs on a particular issue based on the beliefs of others. Such an interpretation feeds into the reliance on expert opinion and the polling results utilised in the pro-military articles.

Interestingly, some of the polling during the period was conducted by the polling company *Taloustutkimus*. Their client list included *Yle* itself, the Advisory Board for Defence Information (Ministry of Defence), and the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA) whose CEO was the former Defence Minister Carl Haglund and was funded by the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK). The integrity of the polling is not questioned, nor is the fact that Finnish media outlets often commission polling to give weight to their arguments. What is not made explicit is the network of players sponsoring the polls who have a vested interest in the outcome of the polling and this questions the validity of *Gallup Democracy*.

If bias persists over time, then “the media may be systematically assisting certain entities to induce their preferred behaviour in others. That is to say, the media may be helping to distribute political power to particular groups, causes, or individuals” (Entman, 2007: 166). This *partisan media bias* (Groeling, 2013) consistently promoting militarisation, was indicative of the emergence of groupthink in *Yle*. It was revealed when decision-makers failed to identify the potential opposition from Turkey to Finland's NATO aspirations. Groupthink is a way of thinking that people access when they are involved in a cohesive in-group and they strive for unanimity which overcomes their desire to realistically and intellectually evaluate other courses of action (Janis, 1972). It is not new to the Finnish landscape. It was evident during the 1990s economic recession and Finland's application to the European Community. A crucial element was how important it was to be a member of the elite or be seen to be supportive of it where conformity was essential, even though one might have reservations about the policy pursued (Forsberg & Pursiainen, 2006).

To address groupthink, *internal pluralism* in the newsroom should represent a diversity of perspectives with a lower threshold for public service media (Núñez-Mussa, et al., 2022). However, this is a contested concept and there is variation in which journalists and editors interpret internal pluralism in practice. The problems are compounded when reporting on conflicts impacts the degree of balanced coverage of issues (Baum & Groeling, 2009). This has implications for enhanced groupthink and compromised internal pluralism in the newsroom and this was evidenced when the overwhelming sentiment in *Yle*'s agenda-setting was pro-militarisation.

4.2. Personality/Expert Power

Personality as a source of power is synonymous with leadership which denotes a level of competence or expertise and has a primary association with conditioned power. “The effective personality wins submission by persuasion- by cultivating belief, by exercising leadership” (Galbraith, 1985: 53).

In 1993, research into the anatomy of the Finnish power elite revealed it was cohesive and unanimous creating an interactive power network elite. The institutions holding this network together were the mass media, private business companies and the banks (Ruostetsaari, 1993; 2022).

The recourse to ‘expert’ opinion in the pro-military reporting was a recurrent theme in *Yle*’s reporting. This was evidenced by Savolainen in his investigation into the credibility of information sources. He noted: “in the particular context of the NATO membership project, the strongest expert power and informational power are associated with political-decision makers and researchers” (2023: 47). But the source pool for accessing expert opinion is limited in Finland, and whilst internal pluralism in the newsroom idealistically looks towards sourcing practices as a diversity issue by garnering different perspectives, the lack of diverse opinions was evident in the sources used by *Yle*.

If the arguments put forward by decision-makers are fused with a semblance of expert input, then the submission of the Finnish population is guaranteed and this has not only been restricted to the NATO ‘project’ (Ruostetsaari, 2010). Interestingly, experts outside Parliament, such as Mika Aaltola, the Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs were referred to in the pro-NATO *Yle* articles. Lounasmeri (2020) notes the consensual lineage that is attached to many Finnish think tanks. Interestingly, expert opinion was not as prevalent or outspoken in those wanting to preserve military non-alignment; there was little consideration of Russia’s rationale for its actions in Ukraine.

Clearly, the impact of journalists’ belief systems and organisational predispositions is realised in news selection choices. The *Gatekeeping bias* shown in the selection/non-selection of news items is the “bias caused by prioritisation of particular sources” (Watanabe, 2017) and this reflects corporate bias when the individual opinion of journalists is not always evidenced. This might be related to an ideological predisposition that journalists and news outlets hold to influence reader opinions (Mullainathan & Shleifer, 2002). Such an approach can be couched within the framework of Herman & Chomsky’s (2002) *Propaganda Model* which identified filters extending beyond the media/reader interface into societal power relations. If media is reliant on information provided by government, businesses and experts funded by the primary sources and agents of power, then this will impact on the decision-making and content bias of the reporting. Accordingly, such reporting will tend to be “politically and ideologically advantageous to the interests of power” (Klaehn, 2009: 46).

If the access to an expert resource base pre-disposed to a certain agenda is synergised with an ideological orientation that negatively construes the *other*, then a belief system can be refined that reinforces the persuasiveness of the experts’ voices. The ideological challenge of the *other* in today’s context is realised in an *anti-Russian* fervour. This was reflected in *Yle*’s coverage, which referenced the rise in *anti-Russian* sentiment in Finland (*Yle*, 8.3.2022).

4.3. Organisation Power

The power of the media is derived largely from organisation, and if combined with social conditioning it is seen as one of the great modern instruments of power (Galbraith, 1985: 169). It has *bimodal symmetry* in which its ability to influence outside the organisation is related to its capacity to ensure internal submission within the organisation. Brand image and reputational capital reinforced by recruitment from a specific university cohort ensure that *Yle*’s power is exercised internally so that there is a collective voice in which dissent is not heard. The conformity to the pro-military agenda was inscribed in the predisposition of the organisation, journalists and editors - there was simply no consideration of countervailing perspectives from without or within.

Respect for authority is endemic in Finnish society and the power of an organisation like *Yle* is integrated into the high level of trust the population has in governmental and public institutions (OECD, 2021). *Yle* as the state public broadcaster is an extension of state-inspired control and takes precedence on all media platforms upon which the population relies for their information portal into domestic and foreign news. There are private media platforms, but it is *Yle* that is pre-eminent. Integrated with the *availability* and *information* cascades is a *reputational cascade* (Kuran & Sunstein, 1999) when people do not question what they see as the dominant belief. This *cascade effect* is especially pertinent to the Finnish context where trust is intrinsic to the media and institutional landscape. Reuters (Reunanen, 2021) observed Finland has the highest trust in media with *Yle* getting the highest brand trust score of 85%. It has been elevated to such a level “that the media (especially *Yle*) has traditionally found itself to be trusted – possibly even more so than the government, political

parties or the church” (Jungar, 2019). This gives *Yle* a clear competitive advantage over rival news outlets and gives significant barriers to entry for news reporting that contradicts and questions the *Yle* template.

4.4. Condign Power – Fear and Domesticating the Conflict

Condign power is exercised when a group uses the threat of negative sanctions or repercussions against another group. This can involve the use of overt force or can be exerted by the inculcation of fear that if the target group does not pursue x then y will ensue. If high levels of organisational efficiency are combined with condign power, then the potential for dominating the belief system and setting the agenda is amplified. This is intensified when conflict and fear are domesticated.

Even at the height of Finnish acquiescence to Russian overtures during the last century, Finnish academics replaced the term *Finlandisation* with *media logic* which entails the *domestication* of news (Hjelm & Vaher, 2018). This involves “making *foreign* news more familiar, more comprehensible and more compatible for consumption by the domestic audience” (Gurevitch, et al., 1991: 206). This was achieved in 2022 through different modalities when the reporting accessed emotions and contextualised the military question by domesticating the conflict drawing on the possible implications of the crisis in Ukraine for Finland.

The reporting used a plethora of emotionally laden lexis that created uncertainty and raised the spectre of escalating crises. These ranged from raising the nuclear scenario (*Yle*, 26.2.2022), war plague (*Yle*, 7.3.2022) and referencing other conflict catastrophes in Grozny/Aleppo (*Yle*, 2.3.2022). It also served to heighten fear by referencing brutality (*Yle*, 16.3.2022), cruelty (*Yle*, 3.4.2022) and evil (*Yle*, 4.4.2022). This was exploited by some to propel strident emotions when Jussi Halla-Aho, the Chair of the Foreign Affairs committee referred to assassinating President Putin (*Yle*, 2.3.2022). President Niinistö had already identified the invasion was a shock to everyone (*Yle*, 24.2.2022). Defence Committee member Erkki Tuomioja cautioned there was an *ingrained fear* exacerbated by a *psychotic media* (*Yle*, 24.4.2022). The discourse of shock, fear and crisis was a notable facet of *Yle's* coverage of the conflict.

Western media coverage of crises and disasters has been seen to be complicit in shaping “local and global audiences’ engagement with distant suffering and how they are implicated in maintaining or challenging social hierarchies and power relationships” (Pantti, 2018: 4). All the resources available to those promoting the NATO agenda were made available. During the push for the invasion of Iraq, the Blair government commissioned and published an assessment of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction that was critical to their argument to invade Iraq and influence public and political audiences. The weapons did not exist. Similar parallels were pursued by the Finnish government and eagerly reported by *Yle*. The Government report (Finland Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2022) on 13.4.2022 concerning changes in the security environment after the invasion of Ukraine was pivotal. After this, there was a continuous increase in support evidenced by more politicians willing to state publicly their preferred position as they perceived the increased legitimacy of pursuing a military alignment strategy (*Yle*, 19.4.2022). Before this publication, there had been hesitance by politicians to reveal their position (*Yle*, 8.3.2022).

These processes are encapsulated in the *Shock Doctrine* in which crises push populations into collective shock. During these “malleable moments, when *people* are psychologically unmoored and physically uprooted” (Klein, 2007: 21), they relinquish principles and policies that they had previously seen as important. The sudden change in policy direction that ensues - changes expectations and closes the door on history with signals “to the public that the rules of the game have changed dramatically” (ibid: 82). The Finnish Prime Minister claimed: “The Russian attack has completely changed the security environment [...] There is no going back” (*Yle*, 3.5.2022). Under the shadow of shock, Klein advocates that the political and corporate elite use it as a catalyst for change and to reinforce their power base.

Few *Yle* articles voiced concerns about the militarisation mood music. When reported, it was concentrated into specific time frames and came later in the process in April. This was in the shadow of the government report sanctioning NATO membership which effectively de-legitimised the arguments for retaining Finland’s non-alignment status.

This content bias was related to the agenda-setting strategy employed by *Yle*. The default position of the journalists in the anti-NATO articles was characterised by narratives questioning the message or the messenger presenting an anti-militarisation standpoint. This included critical counterarguments that pushed an alternative and/or highlighted deficiency in those wanting to preserve the status quo. Often the polling results were used as vindication to question those who opposed military alliance strategies and thus by extension isolate their arguments. Such a narrative style was not evidenced to any appreciable degree in the articles promoting military alignment.

An initiative by leading Finnish politician, Paavo Väyrynen to use an anti-NATO platform in his bid to become the leader of his party was conditioned by referring to other leading members of the party who had earlier called for his expulsion from the party (*Yle*, 7.4.2022). When veteran MP Erkki Tuomioja said that Finnish media is in the grip of *war psychosis*, the narrative was conditioned by reference to the Foreign Minister stating there was no point in delaying NATO membership and that a *Yle* analysis of MP's found the majority supported membership (*Yle*, 24.4.2022).

When Anna Kontula of the Left Alliance was reported as saying 'no' to NATO this was conditioned by reference to a counterargument in another article by fellow MP Hanna Kosunen and supported by a *Yle* report implying Kontula was in the minority (*Yle*, 25.4.2022).

Yle's reporting on public demonstrations of opposition was virtually non-existent. It could be argued that these were infrequent during the period. Yet given the sense of crisis prevailing and the harnessing of public support for NATO membership, for members of the public to voice opposition was always going to be risky. Especially when it could be seen how even prominent members of society were criticised if they aired their reservations. This was evidenced by the strategy against Green Party MP Heli Järvinen who was labelled *dishonest* because she opposed membership (Arter, 2022).

In an article that reported Somalis in Finland were wary of NATO membership, this was conditioned by reference to the community being susceptible to fake news and lacking knowledge about the subject (*Yle*, 27.4.2022).

There was no vigilance in *Yle's* reporting to ensure that undue influence did not infect their reporting. *Yle* could legitimise their bias by reference to the dramatic shift in public sentiment that they were reflecting. After all, research showed on some media platforms that the crisis in Ukraine depolarized the Finnish NATO discussion bringing together hitherto conflicting perspectives (Xia, et al., 2024). But Twitter as with other media platforms is not constrained by legislation to ensure pluralism in reporting. The question then is who or what acts as the filter to determine the extent to which the news meets the requirements of domestication and obviate bias? Was *Yle* merely meeting the needs of its audience, who, through different mechanisms like polling and citizens' initiatives were showing a desire for increased military alignment with NATO? Or was *Yle* as the most trusted media flag bearer acting as an *agent provocateur* instigating the forces of change and direction that the audience should follow?

4.5. Property and Compensatory Power

Property as a source of power is seen as the accumulation of wealth and is associated with the instrument of compensatory power to achieve the acquiescence of a target group. Compensatory power offers a reward or other inducements to achieve the submission of that target group. This is exemplified in the fusion of property and compensatory power of the military-industrial sector that exerts significant leverage in Finnish society.

Herman & Chomsky's *Propaganda Model* was directed toward the private corporate sector where profit maximisation and advertising are relevant. In *Yle's* case, a public ownership profile that relies on compulsory taxation of all citizens to fund the public service broadcaster replaces private equity shareholders. This reliance on public funds ties *Yle* to the prevailing governmental agenda and indirectly to business stakeholders to try and ensure that the Finnish economic model is sustainable. This linkage is reinforced by the high level of trust in public institutions.

The convergence of public sector broadcasting and corporate interest has invariably been assured, especially when it comes to business and economic affairs. It was evident when *Yle* promoted the alleged economic advantages of NATO membership.

Yle articles in Spring 2022 referenced military procurement/sales with a 2.2 billion euros increase in military spending (*Yle*, 6.4.2022) as well as other military purchases and relaxation of license requirements e.g. from Israel. Kongsberg owns 49.9% of the Finnish defence security provider – Patria and 2022 set new financial records (*Financial Times*, 20.4.2022; *Forbes*, 23.5.2022). Before the crisis in Ukraine, Finland had agreed to procure F-35 jets from the USA costing over 8 billion euros. In June 2023, Patria signed a deal to become an integral member of the F-35 global supply chain (*Yle*, 19.6.2023).

5. CONCLUSION

Anu Kantola's *Warriors for Democracy* evaluates the 2008 Finnish election finance scandal. She framed her analysis by portraying the reporting of the scandal as a rite of passage for aspiring journalists seen as *young monkeys* who had a watchdog ethos holding the political elite accountable. This term was used to contrast with the *older lions* of the previous generation. Intriguingly, she concluded – “In ten years' time the young monkeys of the election scandal might become the old lions of the system with their well-established source relations and firm positions in journalism” (2012: 85). Her article was published in 2012. Ten years later the warriors for democracy had become the warriors for war. This was a realisation of the prospects for generational change that Fittante (2023) identified in the decision to join NATO. It was epitomised by *Yle* journalist Jessika Aro who was a key architect of the second citizens' initiative to Parliament calling for NATO membership (*Yle*, 3.3.2022). Instead of reporting the news, *Yle* was creating it to protect the media power base.

There was nothing comparable to risk-taking or performing their central role as watchdogs when it came to *Yle's* endorsement of NATO membership. This was *institutional activism* challenging the status quo. The non-alignment strategy that had served Finland so well for so long was rejected. There was no risk-taking by *Yle* journalists as they felt they were conforming to the wider societal views that NATO membership was the only way forward. Whether they were leading or following in the wake of this change is impossible to conclude. They were, however, using the sources and instruments of power to ensure the consolidation of the Finnish media power elite in Finland's foreign and security policy.

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Citation: *Graham Wood " Finland & NATO - The Anatomy of Power in Finnish State Media Reporting , Journalism and Mass Communications(IJMJC), vol 10, no 2, 2024 p.29-40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2454-9479.1002004>*

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