

Finlandisation or russophobia?

Opposing discourses on Russia in Finnish politics during 2014

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Introduction

Recently, there has been increasing debate in politics and media about the influence of Russia on Finnish politics due to an increased military presence of Russia in the Baltic area and a more aggressive attitude related to the crisis in Ukraine. Around the same time the party leader of the Finnish political party *Vihreät* (henceforward 'The Greens') Ville Niinistö mentioned the Cold War-related word 'finlandisation' in relation to the setting up of a nuclear power plant in the Finnish town Pyhäjoki, leading to a clash between his party and the rest of government, especially Prime Minister Alexander Stubb (YLE, 2014a). This third nuclear power plant in Finland will be set up as a project of the Finnish Fennovoima, but 34% will be owned by Rosatom Overseas (hereinafter 'Rosatom') (Digges, 2014), which is a daughter company of the Russian state-owned Rosatom (Fennovoima, 2013c, p.7).

Statement of the problem

The Fennovoima case has created a political crisis in Finnish parliament. After the government agreed that the nuclear power plant could be build, the Greens left the government, leaving the government with only a small majority. Ville Niinistö argued that the investment is a way for Russia to exert its influence in Finland (Tapiola, 2014b). Alexander Stubb expressed his agitation about the discussion by stating that he suspects the Members of Parliament of provoking 'Russophobia' in the Fennovoima discussion (Hanhivaara, 2014).

Specialists doubt the safety of the nuclear power plant, because this will be the first reactor of this type in Europe. There are no European safety standards for this type yet. As Professor Peter Lund, professor of Engineering Physics at Aalto University (Helsinki) explained: "There are no Western safety standards – I think the Russians have good technical skills, but their safety culture is a little different" (Digges, 2014). Moreover, Rosatom is still responsible for the Russian nuclear arsenal, which some see as an indication it is just another way for Russia to protect its geopolitical interests (Hanhivaara, 2014).

The problem is that the two opposing discourses hold on to a different evaluation of the risks related to Russian involvement in a national project and from this perspective evaluate the project. Some argue that co-operating with a Russian state-owned company is dangerous, whereas others see it as a regular business transaction. This paper aims to lay these discourses bare and see where they meet and differ. The goal of this research is to see what exactly makes these differences possible and whether there have been any large changes in the discourse between the decision to include Rosatom in the project on 21 December 2013 and the end of the next year.

I expect to find that Niinistö's discourse is much more weary of Russia's potential influence in Finland through the Hanhikivi 1-project than Stubb's, especially around the time the decision is being made in government. That this decision is made around the same time the European sanctions against Russia are being started and that flight MH17 was shot down, might have helped Niinistö in persuading the public that it is dangerous to co-operate with Russia.

Relevance of the study

The relevance of this research is that it provides us insight into the underlying assumptions concerning Finnish-Russian relations from the Finnish perspective. Moreover, it shows us how these assumptions influence national politics and the general debate. These insights are especially relevant in the light of the crisis in the Ukraine, which began in 2013. This crisis has deteriorated relations between Russia and the EU, which also has an influence on international trade and national politics, indirectly. The discussion about Fennovoima's Hanhikivi 1-project is a very good example of this.

By making the beliefs of politicians about Russia more explicit, it is possible to identify where certain politicians stand and what informs their choices. This is relevant because most of our knowledge is acquired through discourses, such as through the media and politics, and this therefore informs also the public's ideas and choices. It makes it easier to predict their political behaviour and to know what they might or might not compromise on. Moreover, it provides us insight into how discourses can change due to circumstances abroad. This research could serve as an example of how the deteriorated image of a non-EU country within the EU influences politics on a national level.

1. Theory and method

In this chapter the relevant background information is provided, starting with a discussion of Finnish energy policy and the timeline of the Hanhikivi 1-project. After this, the term 'finlandisation' is discussed in more depth. The last theory is constructivism, the theory which discusses how norms and ideas influence people's behaviour and are of large relevance to politics. In the last sub-chapter the method and materials used in this research are explained.

1.1 Finnish energy policy

A hundred percent of Finnish gas comes from Russia. However, gas only makes up about 10 percent of Finnish total energy supply, as can be seen in the diagram above (Etzold & Haukkala, 2013, p. 236). The energy question has never been politicised. When it comes to the image of Russia as an energy provider, Finland is comparable to Germany: both countries consider Russia as a reliable and largely problem-free partner (Etzold & Haukkala, 2013, p.137).

Finnish energy policy conforms to EU policy and broader international treaties on climate change (TEM, 2013a, p.14). Finland is already ahead of the plans it has set for itself and is working toward 2050, for which the EU has set even higher goals (TEM, 2013a, p.18). Most of the money invested into achieving these goals is being spent on building another nuclear power plant (TEM, 2013a, p.19). The main drivers of Finland's energy policy are security of supply, self-reliance and competitiveness. In their projections for 2030, the Finnish government aims to achieve their goals by relying more on nuclear energy and wind energy produced in Finland (IEA, 2013, p.17-25).

Some argue that a nuclear power plant is the way to achieve these goals. However, in order to be allowed to build a nuclear power plant in Finland, a company has to go through a long bureaucratic process. The first step of this process is to hand an estimation of the influence of the building of a new nuclear plant on the environment (YVA-selostus) over to the Työ- ja Elinkeinoministeriö (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, TEM from now on), after which people and institutions get the opportunity to comment (TEM, 2008a). After this, the government is presented a request for a decision-in-principle to build a nuclear power plant (TEM, 2009).

Halfway through 2010 the government and parliament approved of the plans to build the nuclear power plant. During 2012 E.on withdrew from the nuclear project. E.on owned 34% of the company and therefore the nuclear power plant, due to the *Energiewende*, the turn-around of energy politics to renewable energy in Germany (Turtola, 2012). Voimaosakeyhtiö SF, a Finnish limited energy company, purchased the remaining shares, making it a completely Finnish-owned company

(Fennovoima, 2013a). In 2013, Rosatom took over E.on's share of 34 percent (Fennovoima, 2013b). Thereafter the project got the name 'Hanhikivi 1-project' during the autumn of 2011, when it was decided the plant was going to be built on the peninsula Hanhikivi in Pyhäjoki. After the initial proposal had been accepted the plans changed, such as the type and supplies of the nuclear reactor and Rosatom as the supplier and large new investor. The Greens claimed the project had changed so much that Fennovoima had to produce a new application. A new application would be against the government programme. Opponents of the Greens, mainly Kokoomus (National Coalition Party, Alexander Stubb's Party) and Suomen Demokraattinen Puolue (SDP, Finnish Democratic Party) claimed that the main design was still the same and therefore an updated application would suffice (HS, 2014b). In the end the updated version was accepted.

After the updated YVA had been offered to the government the financial insecurity continued, because the promises that were made by contributors were not final and some Finnish investors backed out. This made it harder for Fennovoima to maintain a Finnish majority in the financing of the nuclear power plant. One of the reasons for the backing out was the involvement of Rosatom and the crisis in Ukraine (HS, 2014d). Rosatom promised to take over the final shares if these would not have been bought. However, Minister Jan Vapaavuori (Employment and the Environment) wanted to keep Rosatom's share at a maximum of 34% (Arola, 2014).

A decision-in-principle was made in September 2014 with the requirement that at least sixty percent of the project has to be owned by Finnish companies by the time Fennovoima applies for a building permit (TEM, 2014). This was the moment the Greens decided to leave the government. The next step for Fennovoima was to get a decision from parliament, which it got in December 2014 (Nieminen, 2014c).

1.2 Finlandisation

Ever since the Continuation War between Finland and Russia, which ended in 1944, Finnish politics towards Russia has been about balancing. A case in point is the treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance (*YYA-sopimus*) of 1948, which ensured Finnish protection in the case of a German attack through Finland and mutual protection of Russia and Finland in the case of a threat to its territorial integrity (Kirby, 2006, p.239, 240). Especially president Urho Kaleva Kekkonen during the 1970s has been credited with maintaining effective balancing politics. This policy limited interaction with the eastern neighbours to a minimum, but while still maintaining relations. This also meant, however, that Finland was not able to get much closer with the West, resulting in non-membership of NATO (Kirby, 2006, p.246-247). This policy is often described as

finlandisation.

Finland has always had interests in Russia, especially in trade. Until 2008, Russia was the largest trade partner of Finland. During the financial and economic crisis, Russia fell back to the third place (Etzold & Haukkala, 2013, p.236). The EU's sanctions on Russia as a result of the crisis in Ukraine have also had a negative effect on Finnish businesses (Tanskanen, 2015).

Finland has active political interaction with Russia. Finnish top political leaders visit their counterparts at least once, but often several times a year (Etzold & Haukkala, 2013, p.137). Finnish-Russian relations are, however, still fairly technical and a political component seems to be lacking. Some blame this on the politics of finlandisation of the Cold War period, but vice versa Russia doesn't seem to have a coherent 'Finland policy' (Etzold & Haukkala, 2013, p.137). Some argue that not having political relations with Russia is a way to prevent Russia's potential interference and this strategy is therefore a part of the finlandisation policy (Etzold & Haukkala, 2013, p.138).

Finlandisation is a term from the Cold War period. The term was described for the first time in Finnish magazine *Ulkopolitiikka* (The Finnish Journal of Foreign Affairs) by the Finnish Institute for International Affairs (FIIA) in 1974. There are several definitions of finlandisation. One definition of finlandisation is “the possible intimidation of Western democracies by Soviet military power” (Quester, 1980, p.33). According to this definition, the world must always fear that “things will fall off the track, that the pace of change may frighten the Soviets into a violent reaction or may lead to some other forms of violence or non-liberal development” (Quester, 1980, p.34). It is in this context that the policy of finlandisation came into being. It is a rather sceptical view of (in this case Finnish) politics. This definition is criticised for being a slogan, because the superficial meaning of the word is highly paradoxical: it would suggest that Finland was not yet 'finlandised'. In practice it meant that foreign and national policy was being adapted to the pace of the USSR while maintaining the foreign marks of independence (Huopaniemi, 1974). It has been shown that the term 'finlandisation' has often been used as a kind of character assassination by using the term “to denote supine submission to Soviet domination.” (Jakobson, 1980, p.1035). In this way of defining the Finnish-Soviet relations, the Finnish independence is made illusory (Jakobson, 1980, p.1040). Jakobson struggles to remove this image of Finland as powerless and left to the mercy of Russia, such as described by Thorsten Kalijärvi: “Finland's independence will depend, according to present signs, entirely upon its consistency with Russian security and interest in world affairs” (Kalijärvi, 1948, p.).

Huopaniemi describes six conditions for finlandisation, whereby nations can lose their right to self-determination to the USSR, which can also be applied to Russia today:

1. Insular position with a shortage of effective help from other states,
2. Impossibility to prevent invasion and occupation,
3. Common borders or otherwise impossibility to prevent military involvement,
4. Lack of national unity and national goals,
5. Existence of a strong communist or other left-wing oriented political party and
6. Economic dependency. (Huopaniemi, 1974).

Within finlandisation, Russia is considered a very real security threat, even in recent times. The degree of the threat differs between different definitions. The words of Jyri Hakamies in 2007, then Finnish Minister of Defence, are exemplary: “Given our geographical location, the three main security challenges for Finland today are Russia, Russia and Russia. And not only for Finland, but for all of us” (Vinayaraj, 2011, p.257-258). Vinayaraj examined the ways in which Finland has tried to maintain its national identity. He stresses a cautious approach by Finland in conflicts with the Eastern neighbour. Finland has had to adapt to the demands of Russia. This was all part of Finland's self-defence strategies in the face of a volatile and powerful neighbour. He stresses that these relations are not all hostility and war, but the proximity of the other is a fact of everyday life. This creates dependencies on both sides, which has taught them to co-operate (Vinayaraj, 2011, p. 276). The influence of Russia is not very direct, but rather manifests itself as a sort of 'self-censure' (Laqueur, 1977, p.37-38). The conflicting interpretations of finlandisation show why it is a sensitive subject.

1.3 Constructivism

This thesis is written from a constructivist perspective. The variant of constructivism that is not just a philosophical theory uses empirical analysis as a basis and argues that normative and ideational structures just as material structures have an influence on the behaviour of actors, but at the same time are constituted by those actors. These structures shape identities of political and social actors by defining the perspective from which reality is observed (Reus-Smit, 2005, p.195-197). Empiricists argue that the material world can be objectively perceived by our senses. Constructivists, on their part, say that perception is always coloured by our own knowledge, norms, values and experiences. Constructivists therefore challenge the idea of value-neutral knowledge

(Reus-Smit, 2005, p.193). So understanding these structures helps us understand why actors act in a certain way. Structures inform interests which in turn inform actions (Reus-Smit, 2005, p.197). Whereas neo-realists and neo-liberalists do not care where these structures come from and assume that actors enter into social relations with their interests already formed (Reus-Smit, 2005, p.192), constructivists are especially interested in how interests come into being and how they change. Constructivism is about the how-question, whereas conventional approaches are about why-questions, so with explaining what the reasons are for an actor to act in a certain way. Post-positivist approaches explain how certain constructions have come into being (Doty, 1993, p.298). In Doty's words: "How-questions, so posed, go to an important aspect of *power* that why-questions often neglect. They go to the way in which power works to constitute particular modes of subjectivity and interpretive dispositions" (Doty, 1993, p.299). This type of power is not the type of power that social actors possess, but rather a power that produces meanings, identities and relations between people and objects (Doty, 1993, p.299). Constructivists argue that political actors rely on structures to justify their behaviour. They add to that, that norms and ideas can only function as rationalisations if these already have some moral force and if the behaviour is in accordance with the norms and ideas it is being based on (Reus-Smit, 2005, p.198).

This thesis uses a Foucauldian approach, since it focuses both on the social power that produces discourse and on discourse as an expression of social power, assuming that discourse has a degree of autonomy (Larsen, 1997, p.14). According to Foucault, ideology is a part of discourse (Larsen, 1997, p.16). Knowledge is not just a cognitive process, but a question of power. "Power and knowledge are mutually supportive, they imply one another" (Devetak, 2005, p.162). It is important to find out how modes of interpretation and operations of power influence each other (Devetak, 2005, p.162). In this thesis the same assumption is used. Certain ways of thinking are reproduced through the media, history books, political statements etc. In this way, an ideology is internalised by the people, who will consider this the natural state of things. This also affects decision-makers, who reflect these thoughts in their (foreign) policies. This is nicely described by Fairclough (2003, p.9): "The way people talk about themselves and others, both positively and negatively, reflect deeply ingrained power relations, and the texts they produce can serve to sustain or change ideologies."

From a linguistic perspective discourse is therefore inherently political. When choosing words to describe a certain phenomenon or when choosing the order of the words in that sentence or any grammatical construction, one makes a choice on how to portray this phenomenon. These choices have the effect of creating a certain perspective which has implications. When writing a text, one is creating an identity for themselves. This even goes for a text which seems to be objective and

value-free (Gee, 2014, p.3-4). This thesis aims to uncover what types of discourse are actually being created by focusing on the arguments and whether or not 'othering' words are being used, that create a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' (Devetak, 2005, p.163).

1.4 Method

The method employed in this study is political discourse analysis. This method is the result of an encounter of politics and media. In the modern world, politics have become more mediated due to the increasing global nature of the world. This also has an influence on the production of politics itself and on its presentation. The public has become both larger and wider. In order to make the message attractive and comprehensible for this diverse public, the politician has to adapt their discursive tools (Fetzer, 2013, p. 10-12). On the other hand, new media also provide the public with a voice. Reactions are made possible, but also recontextualisation of earlier statements by politicians (Fetzer, 2013, p.13). This has a transforming influence on the form and content of political statements. Another result of this increasingly mediated political culture is that political statements more easily reach people (Fetzer, 2013, p.11). Since these statements reflect the values and beliefs of the politicians, they more easily and directly exert their power over the people's belief systems.

To make this more concrete, I would like to refer to a quote by Boulding. He points out that we must be aware decision-makers don't just react to the objective facts, but to their image of the situation at hand. Therefore what we think the world is like, not what it is really like, informs our behaviour (Larsen 1997, p.9). Through policies and the argumentation behind it, politicians try to persuade the public that their representation of the situation and therefore their policy is the (only) right one. Research into what exactly politicians argue is therefore relevant (Larsen 1997, p. 21).

This research will look into the discourse created in the media. It will especially focus on the discussion between Ville Niinistö, party leader of The Greens and Prime Minister Alexander Stubb on whether the discussion about the building of the nuclear power plant in Pyhäjoki is an example of finlandisation or whether it is a perfectly rational decision on a project shaped by free market economics. The focus will be on whether or not Russia poses a threat to Finland through participation in the Hanhikivi 1-project. Stubb and Niinistö are located on opposite sides of the debate. It is therefore interesting to contrast these opposing views, to see what the rationale behind them is and what the main differences between the discourses are.

The materials used are quotes from interviews, press conferences and complete interviews (also videos) taken from the online articles by news outlets Yleisradio (commonly referred to as YLE,

national broadcast company) and Helsingin Sanomat (HS, newspaper of Helsinki region). Links to these articles can be found in the appendix. These are Finnish newspapers which are considered to be the most reliable. According to a Gallup of 2014 YLE was found very or quite reliable by 87% and HS by 66% of all respondents (KAKS, 2014, p.1). YLE is the national broadcast company which broadcasts the news daily on television and which publishes news articles on its website, whereas HS is a regional newspaper of the capital, which is also read outside of Helsinki. The articles used are found by using the search string 'Fennovoima'. I have filtered these results manually on statements by Ville Niinistö or Alexander Stubb. The decision to include Rosatom in the project was finalised in December 2013, so I used results from the 21st of December 2013 until the end of 2014.

3. Competing discourses

In this chapter I start by examining Ville Niinistö's discourse by going through different articles which feature opinions by Niinistö on the subject matter, specifically focusing on quotes about Russia. After that, I did the same for Alexander Stubb. The results are categorised by general subjects in sub-chapters.

3.1 *Ville Niinistö*

Updated decision-in-principle

The first article was published on 1 March. Already then did the president of the parliamentary group of the Greens, Outi Alanko-Kahiluoto, start to suggest leaving government because of the Hanhikivi 1-project. At that time, there were discussions going on whether Fennovoima should re-apply for a nuclear power permit and have it approved by the government and parliament or whether an updated version of the current application would suffice. Alanko-Kahiluoto threatened to leave government if the request were to be brought before parliament again. The argument for this was that the current government programme states that no decisions-in-principle for nuclear power plants will be taken (HS, 2014a). YLE reported drily on this event, without any words that signal conflict. However, it mentions that if the Greens were to leave the government, this would result in a governmental crisis (YLE, 2014b). Also the title is quite sensational: “The Greens threaten with a governmental crisis in the Fennovoima case”. It is not an outright lie, however, it is only indirectly what they threatened with.

A day later Niinistö himself weakened the claims: “There is no political process in force. The government programme clearly states that new building proposals [for a nuclear plant] will not be brought before parliament.” (Nieminen & Pohjanpalo, 2014, own translation). And: “We assume that the government will respect the programme” (Nieminen & Pohjanpalo, 2014, own translation). To confirm his words, he pointed out that nothing is happening yet with the project, nothing is sure and it is a long process. He does stress that the project needs to remain Finnish and urged investors to moderation: “Public entities should consider very well whether they want to invest their money into national investments or foreign nuclear power investments” (Nieminen & Pohjanpalo, 2014, own translation).

On 4 March, Niinistö said in a press conference about the updated permit application that this application is a new one and that this is also how it is described in the procedure: legally, there is no such thing as an 'updated' application (YLE, 2014c; Junkkari, 2014). In this context, he also claimed that the government programme states that Fennovoima's permit cannot be transferred to another

actor. While the actor applying for a permit has not changed, a major actor in the project has changed. On this he builds his argument that taking this application into consideration would be illegal. He did not want to comment the rumours that the Greens might leave the government: “The voters will see surely what we do in case the government programme is broken against our will. It will not remain unclear” (YLE, 2014c, own translation).

Project is not feasible

YLE has provided a video of a speech by Niinistö (YLE Areena, 2014). Niinistö mentions the large Russian share in this project, but this does not form a problem because it is Russian, he says, but because it is foreign and creates dependence of the Finnish energy market on another country. He would prefer to have a larger share of Finnish owners to decrease insecurities and to provide more chances of economic growth and larger employment. Another point that he stresses is that the project has become run by the public sector, instead of driven by commercial interests. Only at the end he discusses that there are worries for Finland's international position and dependency because of the co-operation with Russia. He mentions that Finland should consider this, especially in the light of other energy-related issues with Russia: “During the last few weeks it has also become clear that energy politics with Russia is not merely energy politics. In the Czech Republic a project by Rosatom has been criticised at the government level because of the situation in Ukraine and it is clear that in Finland as well, during the next couple of months, the situation should be constantly and considerately evaluated also from this viewpoint” (YLE Areena, 2014, own translation).

Niinistö stressed throughout the debate that it would be unlikely the Hanhikivi 1-project would even succeed. Around March 2014 he focused on the fact that the government is not allowed to accept a new decision-in-principle and that the previous plans had changed too much to be able to have it accepted as an updated version of the previous plans (Hakahuhta, 2014). Also, he kept mentioning the fact that Finnish companies only had a small majority in the ownership of the project and therefore the project was “in a confusing state and could be aborted as a whole” (Pohjanpalo, 2014a, own translation). Moreover, according to Niinistö the whole ownership base is worrying, since one of the greater owners is Rosatom, which is a company producing nuclear power as well as nuclear weapons which “functions close to the Russian political leadership” (Pohjanpalo, 2014a, own translation).

On 5 April Niinistö stated: “Fennovoima is desperate” (YLE, 2014c, own translation). He bases this on how the talks have been conducted. He states that the project is economically unprofitable. He believes the project will not be realised and that the company at that point doesn't know what it's

doing yet. That will result in energy companies in resigning from the project, which was exactly what happened later on (YLE, 2014c)

Securitisation of the issue

On 8 March Niinistö spoke in the political talkshow *Ykkösaamu* and HS reports that Niinistö said that the Hanhikivi 1-project is for the largest part geopolitics for the Russian state-owned Rosatom. Niinistö keeps referring to Rosatom as Russian state-owned. He also reminds us that according to Finnish law, strategically important possessions cannot be owned by foreign companies. If that were any other company, it might not have been such a problem, but there are some problems surrounding Rosatom: firstly, its financial situation is secret and secondly, it has a lot of tasks that are connected to Russia's geopolitical strategy. Due to its large share in Fennovoima and because it's delivering the nuclear reactor, he believes Rosatom will have a large decision-making power in Fennovoima. He believes that the project is not economically viable, which was the reason for several Finnish companies to withdraw from the project. The reason for Rosatom to remain interested and even willing to buy a larger share of the company is its geopolitical interest in the project (HS, 2014c). To him, that is the only logical conclusion To this he added that if there would be economic sanctions against Russia, this project would most likely be on that list (Raeste & Pohjanpalo, 2014).

YLE wrote that the government would be accepting the updated application in autumn of the same year. Niinistö reacted to this: “We reject this. If we cannot persuade our government partners that the government programme needs to be adhered to and that new permit processes are not brought before parliament, the situation will be assessed at that point” (Talvio, 2014a, own translation). He said once more, that they trust the government will respect the government programme. The article is made more confrontational by quoting then prime minister Jyrki Katainen: “Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen has stated that he cannot be rushed by the breakdown of the government” (Talvio, 2014a, own translation), even though Niinistö has stressed all the time that there is no reason to speculate about this and has not made any such statements. The quote of Niinistö that “now we're not talking about power politics, but about Finland's future” (Talvio, 2014a, own translation) makes it even more emotional. During the same week, Niinistö stressed that “strategically important possessions should stay in Finland” (Talvio, 2014b).

More finlandisation

Only in September of 2014 Niinistö started to actively play into people's distrust of Russia. He claims the project has an unstable base, which is caused by the large support of the Russian state

leadership on which the project lives (YLE, 2014d, own translation). On 15 September, 2014 Ville Niinistö announced that if the government were to accept the application for the Hanhikivi 1-project, the Greens would leave the government. He stressed that this project is especially bad, since it increases Finland's energy dependence on Russia. "It is especially particular, that a rationally thinking human being can think that this project is profitable" (YLE, 2014e, own translation). Niinistö called it a "project of the public sector realised with tax money, which adds the risk for Finland from Russia", thereby referring to his previous job as a researcher of Russia's foreign policy. He claims that the whole project, designed to be realised together with German company E.ON was supposed to decrease dependence on Russia. Now this whole argument has been forgotten and he criticised the current government for this (Arola et al., 2014).

Two days later was the first time Niinistö actually used the historically loaded term 'finlandisation' in an interview with Financial Times. According to Niinistö Finland is placing Russia's interests before its own values in its foreign policy: "We give the Russians exactly the power of influence that they would like in their relations with the west and the EU. This places us in a very vulnerable position" (HS, 2014e, own translation). In his opinion, it is unfathomable that the other governing parties are willing to let the Finnish energy dependence on Russia, and thereby Russian influence, grow. He sees the spirit of finlandisation in the government policies: "We actually give Russia the kind of leverage they want in the West and the EU. This puts us in a very dangerous (literally: endangered) position" (YLE, 2014a, own translation). "As a result of this our values no longer guide our foreign policy, but our caution [guides us] in trying to do what Russia wants us to do. [...] This brings us back to the 1970s" (YLE, 2014a, own translation). This is the first and most important instance in which Niinistö referred directly to the fact that Finland is trying to do what Russia wants with the goal to be prudent and not provoke the neighbour. YLE calls the term 'finlandisation' belittling.

Niinistö defended himself by saying that some politicians of the older generation have a problem with the usage of the term, but they "have not been able to question the content with any word at all" (Tapiola, 2014b, own translation). He argues Finland creates a strange image for itself if it stresses a large investment in a nuclear power plant in order to increase its dependence on Russia when there are joint sanctions against Russia going on in the EU. This can and is already being used by Russia to show that not all EU member states consider Russia's actions as reprehensible. He also thinks it is strange that the Fennovoima-project is being portrayed as the only possible solution. "If we cannot speak about this in Finland, there is something really strange going on in this country's political debate. They are doing it themselves" (Tapiola, 2014b, own translation).

On 19 September in the talkshow Aamu-tv Niinistö got the chance to comment on his earlier statements in more depth. He admitted the Greens had made a mistake in staying in the government in 2010, when the first decision-in-principle was accepted (Hanhinen, 2014). They should have stood their ground in opposing nuclear power. He argued that parties should remain true to their goals and values. He adds to that: “It is really quite sad that Finland has become prisoner of solutions of this sort of centralised energy politics in the spirit of the old 1970s” (Hanhinen, 2014, own translation). He was asked what exactly he meant when using the term 'finlandisation'. To this he answered: “One of the main characteristics of this phenomenon, is that people do not dare to talk about some things openly, they do not dare to talk about foreign policy openly. I believe that it's in the benefit of Finland and it shows the West that we're an open, Western democracy that an open discussion is being held about this and its foreign policy consequences and that problems relating to Russia can be dealt with in public and that Rosatom is a Russian strategic state company functioning directly in subordination to the Russian state leadership, that has geopolitical tasks and tasks to promote the national interest also when functioning abroad. When we can talk about this openly, it shows that these worries are taken seriously” (Hanhinen, 2014, own translation). He made also very clear that he does not believe the government takes on this project in order to straighten relations between Finland and Russia.

He broadly criticised the Finnish way of doing business: “We have a somewhat old-fashioned trade political way of thinking that 'if we can just do business, we are quiet about any problems'. But the situation is now so, that we cannot afford such a way of thinking. We need to make sure there will not be such a stress-inducing spiral between the EU and Russia in which the law and the principles of rule of law are broken down, because that is not in the interest of the markets nor business in the longer run.” (Hanhinen, 2014, own translation)

Government involvement

In December Niinistö commented on the introduction of Fortum in the project, according to HS “in a more sour way”: “This is quite a strange combination. A traditional eastern trade tied selling, in which echoes of the past don't lack” (Nieminen, 2014c, own translation). He thinks it is clear this is just a way for Fortum to get ownership of profitable hydroelectric power plants and that this is the only way for Fortum to get their hands on nuclear power (Nieminen, 2014c). On 3 December the talks in Parliament about the permit began. Niinistö commented: “This project has nothing to do with market economy” (Raeste, 2014c, own translation). He calls it the government's pet, which is financed with funds from the state and the municipalities (Raeste, 2014c). He believes, due to the odd timing of the decision, just around the time parliament was to talk about the

decision-in-principle, that the government has been involved in advancing the matter. Even though this increases Finnish ownership of the plant, it “only raises more questions than it answers” (Nieminen, 2014c, own translation). It does not remove his worries about the Russian ownership: “Finland only deepens the dependence on Russia, even if in other places they act the opposite way”, while referring to Forum's activities in Russia.

Both EU- and Russia-oriented

In a discussion hosted by HS with amongst others an anti-Fennovoima activist, the CEO of Fennovoima's Finnish branch and two politicians, Niinistö stressed once more that many aspects of the project, such as the costs and ownership relations, are unclear. He also claims that in Finland the image of Rosatom is being “washed clean” and Rosatom is presented as a safe producer. He points out that Rosatom is unreliable, because the delivery to India was paused 14 times (Peurakoski, 2014c). He wonders how it can be that Finland just builds closer relations with Russia, while the rest of Europe is trying to keep its distance: “The rest of Europe has put up sanctions against Russia due to the crisis in Ukraine. Finland only intensifies bilateral trade through state-owned companies. We are getting close to Putin's armpit. Rosatom is Putin's company” (Peurakoski, 2014c, own translation).

The last reaction by Niinistö on this case during 2014 was given on 5 December, when Parliament gave a decision-in-principle for the Hanhikivi 1-project. He replied that he was particularly disappointed. “I am especially surprised by the big majority of Keskusta (Center Party) that chose this solution. This slows the building of a durable energy economy in Finland.” (Sundqvist, 2014, own translation). He added to that: “Parliament has expressed its opinion and this is the will of Parliament. The project is, however, also in the future problematic due to the fact that there is still vagueness in the safety regulations, costs and questions related to ownership, that could later cause problems from an economic base as well” (Sundqvist, 2014, own translation).

3.2 Stubb

Reactions by Stubb are less numerous and extensive than those by Niinistö. Stubb replaced Jyrki Katainen as prime minister at the end of June 2014 (Kähkönen, 2014). But even as prime minister his reaction in the media was quite limited. At the moment Ville Niinistö called the Fennovoima-decision an act of finlandisation, he wasn't available for comments (Nousiainen, 2014h).

Democratic procedures

His first reaction to the project was given on 26 March, 2014. In this article he reflected on the worries people have about Russia: “Nuclear energy, Russia, security and energy. All such questions, that get us talking and concern us” and “Of course we'll be listening [*to the people*]. Political decisions aren't made in some sort of vacuum. Because of that influence estimates are being made and the situation will be looked at again in autumn” (Nykyri, 2014, own translation). Large focus is put on the importance of democratic procedures. People are allowed to comment on the case and these comments are taken seriously when the decision is being made. On 22 September Stubb stressed that it is important to discuss the case openly (Hirsimäki, 2014). The timing is interesting: he was quoted to have said this merely three days after Niinistö said the exact same thing in a television interview. He never reacted to Niinistö's accusations that some things are not talked about, such as the role of Russia and its alleged geopolitical goals in Finland.

A day later, a press conference on the departure of the Greens and the acceptance of the changes to the permit application was held which Stubb also attended. During this conference he made very clear that the whole process is being conducted according to Finnish law. He paid attention to the ownership question and understood the worries people have, but YLE reported on no words or actions on his behalf to lessen these worries (Virtanen, 2014). In another report by YLE on the conference Stubb is stated to have said that “We live in an open economy, so a company can have foreign ownership. I don't see Russian ownership as a problem” (YLE, 2014f, own translation).

Merely business

Only on 7 October did Stubb react: “The global political situation – not in the least Russia's activities in Ukraine – has emphasised deliberation with regard to energy solutions also from a foreign and security policy point of view.” (Kauhanen, 2015, own translation) About the Fennovoima case he specifically said: “It is a plant operated by Finns, which is located in Finland. This is how it decreases Finland's dependency on Russian energy, even though many people intuitively think otherwise. The Fennovoima-initiative would, once it is finished, decrease the demand for import energy. Of course in this way it also decreases energy dependency on Russia” (Kauhanen, 2015, own translation). While the first comment signals that Stubb is aware of the role energy policy can play in a country's security, when talking about the Fennovoima case, Stubb seems to think this case is somehow different. He sees Rosatom as 'any other Russian company with which Finland could do business'. Even though Russia will own a major part of the nuclear power plant, he doesn't raise the point and doesn't seem to regard it as relevant.

In December 2014 Fortum, a large Finnish state-owned energy company, announced its participation in the project on the condition that the establishment of a company for water power together with Rosatom would go well. Stubb and Niinistö commented directly to HS. Stubb was all in favour of the arrangement, saying it is a good thing for the Finnish nuclear power plant building and Finnish nuclear power possession. He stresses that the company was not pressured from above and that the project is a Finnish project. He also mentions that it is a good way to maintain for Rosatom to maintain a certain distance from the project.

Russophobia

On September 17 Stubb commented on Niinistö's use of the term 'finlandisation'. He stated: "The term 'finlandisation' is a sensitive subject and it is strange when coming from a Finn's mouth" (Säävälä, 2014). He encouraged people to "keep their heads cool and take it easy" (Säävälä, 2014, own translation). YLE said about this matter that Niinistö's statement 'was too much for Alexander Stubb' (Säävälä, 2014).

On 14 October Stubb gave a longer critique. The article by YLE tells how Stubb thinks the discussion about the Hanhikivi 1-project has gone partly 'onto wrong tracks'. In the discussion the role of Rosatom is being emphasised too much, according to Stubb: "What annoys me the most in this discussion is a certain attitude, even russophobia, that comes to the fore in several speeches. This is done especially in that sense, that people try to incite fear of Russia in the energy political solution. We should be talking about energy as energy" (Hanhivaara, 2014, own translation). This article makes especially clear that Stubb does not see a Russian business partner as problematic and that he does not consider it a risk that a Russian company would try to further the national interests of Russia. HS reported that Stubb had said: "It is dangerous and misleading to stir up fear, so that the co-operation would be broken off" (Nieminen, 2014b, own translation). He stressed that a third of Europe's energy comes from Russia and that Europe in that sense is strongly tied to Russia. In that sense Finland is not unique. He reminds us that Fennovoima is a Finnish company, which has a Finnish leadership and that the plant will be located in Finland. Rosatom is only the producer of the reactor (Nieminen, 2014b).

4. Analysis

Just like with the results, first the results for Niinistö's discourse will be analysed, then after that the results for Stubb. This is an overview of the most important values and ideas he reflects in his arguments and what means he uses to build those arguments. A broad line can be determined, which will be discussed more in the conclusion.

Niinistö

Niinistö considers the risks of an accident happening with a nuclear power plant and the harm that is done to nature in case that happens. He argues that sustainable energy yields much more energy with less risks and smaller investments. However, when a state-owned Russian company got involved, the environmental worries increased even more due to distrust of the Russian safety measures.

Another factor Niinistö was concerned about is that it will increase Russia's influence in Finland. Some fear that the Russian leadership would abuse the power it gained by owning such a large part of a Finnish nuclear power reactor. They see proof of this in the facts that Rosatom functions in close co-operation with the Russian leadership, keeps its financial situation a secret and is responsible for Russia's nuclear arsenal. This is seen as an indication that this co-operation is pure geopolitics for Russia. Especially in the context of the crisis in Ukraine this is a problem for Niinistö. He is disappointed that this problem cannot be openly talked about, which is the reason he refers to the Cold War by using the word *finlandisation*. Other options are not considered. This discourse is reinforced by the fact that proponents take offence in the term without actually discussing the contents of his argument. He calls for more democracy in this discussion. He feels that people are afraid to talk about the Russian involvement in this project and therefore just talk about it as if it is 'merely another business transaction'. Niinistö argues that Fennovoima is desperate and will therefore accept any investor that is willing to invest. This is not trade typical of a market economy, but a government-funded project, risk-taking with the people's money.

The question is not just one of power, but also of values. By starting co-operation with Russia, Finland does not stay true to its values, Niinistö argues, but lets itself guide by fear of Russia. Niinistö fears that will send a strange signal to the rest of the EU when, during the times of economic sanctions against Russia, Finland starts a co-operation with that same state. He wishes the EU remains united and is worried about the identity Finland creates for itself by co-operating with Russia in this project. He also blames this on the current style of doing business: "If we can do

business, we will remain quiet about any problems” (Hanhinen 2014, own translation). This can cause more problems later on. During the time he argued this, the sanctions were already in force and a stronger discourse against co-operation with Russia can be witnessed.

Juha-Pekka Raeste argues that it was impossible for the Greens to stay in the government when it once more accepted the application for the decision-in-principle. Since the first application the situation had changed. Whereas first Fennovoima and the plant were owned by a large Finnish majority, now Finnish companies only owned slightly more than half of the shares. Raeste argues that in 2010 the fact that the Greens didn't leave the government already led to an electoral defeat, but doing the same in 2014 would have been practically impossible (Raeste, 2014a). Niinistö left little to no action space for himself when creating the discourse. When things took a turn for the worse and the government did not regard his advice the only thing he could still do, was to leave the government.

Raeste also argues that welcoming Russian investments during a time in which Russia plays a dubious role in the crisis in the Ukraine might be seen as choosing sides. Before that, the choice to involve a Russian player in the process of building a nuclear power plant had been purely economic. Now it had become a part of foreign and security policy. During the same week Defence Minister Carl Haglund had cancelled a meeting with his counterpart Sergey Shoygu in St. Petersburg. The reason was that he did not want to make it seem towards the rest of the world, that Finland approves of Russia's activities in Ukraine (Raeste, 2014a). When such a small, but symbolic action can already be seen as co-operating with Russia, what does the Hanhikivi 1-project together with a Russian state-owned company look like?

As opposed to what was expected, the discussion about the project only really started in March 2014, when Fennovoima applied for an updated version of the application in order to get a decision-in-principle. At that point, the discussion mostly touched upon whether or not it is possible to do this, according to Finnish law. Some other arguments were included, such as that the project is not economically viable. A good example is the interview with YLE in which Niinistö does not take a position on whether Russia's involvement is good or bad from the perspective that it is Russia. He merely stresses it is important this point is publicly being discussed in the light of current happenings between Russia and Ukraine. The way in which he frames it is that we need to be careful of Rosatom due to Russia's involvement in Ukraine. It is not explicitly russophobic, but well-argued and supported by facts and recent happenings. The discussion got most heated around the time the actual decision was taken in parliament, which was also just after the crisis in Ukraine turned for the worse and strict EU-sanctions against Russia had been imposed. Only during

September was the Russian investment more securitised. It had been mentioned before, but the focus was not on only that argument. Until that point, Niinistö mostly talked about other factors and about foreign ownership of the power plant in more general terms, but only during September 2014 did it become more 'russophobic'. It is possible it was merely an argument that came in handy and that Niinistö knew would speak to the people. Either way it did serve in his purpose of actively opposing nuclear power.

Stubb

The basic arguments in favour of a nuclear power plant are mostly based on the plans for the future, namely, that Finland needs to become less dependent on other states for its energy supply and that the energy Finland uses needs to be of the type that can be produced regardless of scarcity of natural resources. The largest part of the discussion has been about the large share of foreign investments in this economically important project, which is supposed to make Finland less dependent on foreign energy supplies. The reduction of energy dependence was something both parties considered important, however, not all parties felt threatened by the large share that Rosatom holds. This changed somewhat in the summer of 2014, when the crisis in the Ukraine took a turn for the worse when Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was shot down. After this, worries about a Russian investment in Finland got bigger and the discourse got more emotional. However, still a large group of politicians, of which Stubb is one, argued it should not be a problem for a Russian company to invest in a Finnish project. This group calls the other group of people, that fear for an increase of Russia's influence in Finland, russophobes. The russophobes rely too much on the assumption that Russia does everything from a geopolitical motivation, according to Stubb. Stubb discredits it as Cold War talk that is not applicable in this case. Stubb tries to get people to be less afraid of Russia by discrediting Niinistö's claims about Russia and Rosatom. He highlights that Rosatom is the producer of the reactor and that its role should not be overestimated. However, very real arguments for why Russia should be trusted are not provided. It seems to be based rather on a gut feeling.

Stubb argues that the project decreases Finnish dependence on other countries because it is a project realised by a Finnish company, within Finland, according to Finnish law. He argues that the 34% ownership by Rosatom makes no difference. Being afraid of Russia is dangerous. He urges people to see energy politics and security politics as two different things. And therefore the people should regard the project as an economically profitable and useful project that came into being through a procedure which is fully legal and which is market-funded. In this, he is not alone, but as Finland's prime minister he does not have the party to rely upon as Niinistö does. It makes it harder for him to maintain the discourse, since he has less moral arguments to build his discourse upon than Niinistö with arguments taken from the party discourse.

Comparison

Interestingly, these discourses, while they clash in essence, hardly ever clash directly. In the articles and talk shows it has become clear that Niinistö is ready to enter into discussion. Stubb only reacts directly to Niinistö when the latter mentioned 'finlandisation' directly. Otherwise little open political

dialogue has existed between the two. That is peculiar, since at the time the Greens left the government, Stubb was the Prime Minister. The result of this is that the two do not openly challenge each other, leading to tensions which remain unresolved for the public. At the same time the arguments are highly dependent on the image people have of the world and of their eastern neighbour.

After the crash of MH17 the discussion became more securitised and people got more worried. Also around this time, Niinistö's discourse got more serious and reflected a deeper suspicion of Russia's intentions. Around the time Europe started to impose serious economic sanctions against Russia, Niinistö mentioned 'finlandisation'. This was when Stubb felt he had to react. Tensions had grown to the point where he could no longer ignore it. He still did not challenge Niinistö's discourse very thoroughly, he mostly kept repeating that co-operation with Russia is important in order to become more independent of other states in energy supply and that Niinistö draws the wrong conclusions from the aforementioned facts.

Conclusion

Niinistö's discourse is cautious of Russia's intentions. Through his discourse, energy policy is securitised. This makes the issue of vital importance to the state. Whether or not this was done with a deliberate goal remains unclear, but what is clear is that it served his purpose of opposing a new nuclear power plant. At the other end, Stubb tried to limit this cautious attitude by treating the project as merely another business transaction with no political consequences that is supposed to stimulate Finnish employment and economy in general. A large part of the discourse is clearly influenced by personal beliefs of how the Russian leadership functions, not on actual facts. The facts about Rosatom and the project are clear and openly accessible. What the discourses of both sides differ on is what the implications of these facts are for Finland's energy dependency and whether or not the project is a way for Russia to further its geopolitical interests. This shows that actions are very much influenced by both material as well as ideational structures, which is argued by constructivists. At the same time it proves that finlandisation is still active in the sense that some people let their actions be guided by caution for Russia and its intentions. Whether or not the decision to co-operate with Rosatom is an act of finlandisation is not even relevant in this regard, the protests by Niinistö prove that finlandisation is still active in the minds of politicians and should be considered as a factor influencing decision-making.

This study has clarified that caution of Russia's involvement in a national project increased after the

MH17 crash and the subsequent economic sanctions on Russia. Before that, the discourse was more general and problematised rather the fact that a foreign company would own a part of a project that is supposed to decrease energy dependence on other countries. Russian ownership specifically became problematic only after the sanctions were applied. This shows how international crises have an influence on national politics. EU membership is shown to have an influence on this. The sanctions have worried Finnish politicians that they are seen within the EU as opposing the sanctions or supporting Russia.

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