



The Experiences of the Finnish Media in Countering Hate Speech

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<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>Hate speech has become a problem in society as it threatens peaceful coexistence. This research studies the experiences of members of the Finnish media in countering hate speech in Finland. This study focuses on the Finnish broadcasting company YLE and the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat.</p> <p>The questions of the research are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do Finnish media empower journalists and protect them from threats of physical violence or hate speech? • How do Finnish media develop policy statements on countering hate speech? • What tools do journalists have when encountering threats and hate speech? <p>A thematic method is used in this study, one that depends on reviewing theories and is also focused on interviewing journalists. For this study, the research category is journalists, who are most exposed to hate speech in society.</p> <p>The interviewed journalists expressed their concerns about the media fuelling hate speech by issuing biased news and articles about immigrants. The journalists hoped for more serious support in fighting hate speech and helping the victims of hate speech.</p>	
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Foreword

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, to his soul that was always my inspiration to pursue my master's degree; he was unable to see my graduation, but I am sure he will feel me. This is for him.

I am so grateful to my mother, who has always encouraged me to step forward in my education and my career. I also appreciate the guidance of my supervisor Jan Nåls

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1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the experiences of members of the Finnish media dealing with hate speech in Finland. The term 'hate speech' is used to describe a broad discourse that is exceptionally negative and constitutes a threat to societies. Hate speech can be found in expressions that spread, incite, promote, or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred based on intolerance (Nadim & Fladmoe 2016 p. 10).

Today, attacks occur against religious and ethnic minorities and immigrants with journalists sharing the experience of being attacked by hate speech (Triandafyllidou 2011 p. 8). A journalist has an essential influence on public opinion regarding immigrants or other minorities (YLE 2019A). Journalists are considered to be potential targets of hate speech. (Ministry of Justice 2020).

This study will examine the policy statements and strategies of the Finnish media with a particular focus on the role of journalists and how they counter the phenomenon of hate speech within their organisations. The aim of this research is to improve the ability of journalists, including those working for the most prominent Finnish media such as Finnish broadcasting company YLE (www.yle.fi) and Helsingin Sanomat (www.sanomat.fi). The research will provide support to journalists who may become targets and victims of hate speech. This research will use a qualitative approach (Thematic Method) to focus on the analysis of the data that were collected for this research.

1.1 Research Questions

The central study questions are as follows:

- How do Finnish media empower journalists and protect them from threats of physical violence or hate speech?
- How do Finnish media develop policy statements on countering hate speech?
- What tools do journalists have when encountering threats and hate speech?

1.2 Aim and Rationale

- Gaining a better understanding of how Finnish media work on the issue of hate speech in addition to media policies regarding the concept of hate speech.

1.3 Concept Definitions

Hate speech is defined as speech that is intended to insult, offend or intimidate a person because of some feature, such as race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. It is communication that spreads or incites hatred against one person or population group. Such communication may be speech, symbols, music, pictures, film or drawings (Nadim, Fladmoe 2016 p. 12). Hate speech is an immoral act that targets a part of society (NZ 2019). It is an oral or written expression of abuse against groups or individuals in a community (Rouse 2018) and it is an expression that spreads, incites, encourages or justifies racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or any other form of hatred based on intolerance. However, there is still no accepted definition of hate speech in international human rights law (ICCPR Articles 19 & 20, 2012).

According to the Finnish Language Research Centre, the first mention of the term “vihapuhe” dates to 2007. It is a loan word from the English expression “hate speech.” (Eronen 2013).

Finnish broadcasting company, Yleisradio Oy. The largest media company in Finland, YLE, is a national public broadcasting company which was founded in 1926. YLE plays a significant role in the production and presentation of programs, including news productions, drama and programming for children.

YLE produces broadcasts for Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking citizens on an equal basis and also delivers services in Sami, Roma and sign language, as well as, when necessary, in the languages of other language groups in the country. YLE supports tolerance, equal treatment, equality and cultural diversity and provides programming for minorities and special groups in society (Finnish broadcasting company YLE 2018).

Helsingin Sanomat (HS): The newspaper, published daily, was founded in 1889 and is the largest subscription newspaper in Finland and the Nordic countries. Its name derives from Helsinki, the capital city of Finland, where it is published. HS is currently owned

by the Sanoma Media Group, which is the largest multi-channel media company in Finland. On a daily basis, HS reaches almost all Finns through newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, the Internet and mobile services.

In their mission statement, HS states that they build cohesion, democracy and prosperity through the media. Moreover, they state that the mission of HS is to introduce Finnish media to future generations with a vision to be the most successful and vital media company in Finland (Sanoma Media Finland 2019).

1.4.1 Research Background

This study examines the experiences of the Finnish media in countering hate speech in the Finnish community. The amount of hate speech has grown significantly in the last decades in various communities around the globe. At the same time, ideological extremist groups effectively gather support using the possibilities of new media as platforms to spread hate speech content (Laub 2019).

Today hate speech appears in public discourse almost everywhere, e.g., in social media and public places, targeting asylum seekers, journalists, religious communities, people of foreign descent and the LGBT community (Kibler 2015).

Hate speech and incitement to hatred against migrants and refugees are on the rise across Europe. One report published by YLE states that the most common forms of discriminatory abuse to which minority groups in Finland are subject include verbal insults, nicknames and humiliation. Verbal attacks most often occur in public places (YLE News 2016g).

In 2015 and 2016, hate attacks in Finland increased after a growth in the number of immigrants from different countries in the Middle East (YLE News 2020c). The police have defined hate speech as a crime if one of the parties of a case suspects that one of the motives for the crime was suspicion or hostility towards a (presumed) reference group of the victim. These may include 1) ethnicity or nationality, 2) religion or beliefs, 3) sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, and 4) disability-related reference groups. They have also defined cases as hate crimes if the explanatory part of a crime report itself contains hate-based clues, such as the suspect's racist language (Rauta 2017).

According to Police University Academy 2014, hate speech cases reported to the police in 2015 amounted to a total of 1,250 (Rauta 2015) and the number of cases in 2014 was 822. Racially motivated crimes in 2015 rose by 46% while other hate crimes increased by 79.9% compared to 2014.

“The most common targets in these cases were Muslims. About one third of the crimes were assaults. The most common location of the suspected crimes based on religion or belief was the Internet” (Rauta 2016).

The annual police report in 2016 showed that 1,079 cases of suspected hate speech were filed as a crime. The majority, approximately 77 percent, of the cases were incidents based on ethnic or national origin. Claims motivated by the victim’s religious background constituted 13.8 percent of the issues. Citizens of Iraq and other countries from the Middle East experienced the highest frequency of crimes motivated by ethnic or national origin in 2016 (Rauta 2016).

In 2017, police reports mentioned 1,165 suspected offences as cases of hate speech (Rauta 2017) and 910 cases in 2018. These police reports showed how hate speech against minorities had spread in society between 2015 and 2018.

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
822	1250 / +428	1079 / -171	1165 / +86	910 / -255

Additionally, human rights defenders were targeted because of their activities supporting refugees and immigrants (Stavrinaki 2016). The broader effects of hate speech are often more significant than those of other crimes (Brown 2017).

News about minorities and immigrants usually focuses on issues of crime, violence and criminality. On the other hand, organisations with a humanitarian stance concerned with defending minorities and which could combat hate speech and help refugees and migrants did not always act and were sometimes subject to defamation (Berry 2016).

YLE News reported an increasing number of cases of COVID-19 among the Somali community. The fear that the news generated, motivated others to spread discrimination and hate speech in Finland against the Somali community. Helsinki city councillor

Suldaan Said Ahmed stated that a significant increase in COVID-19 cases in the Somali community was in part the result of class differences in Finland.

“Many Somali-background people work in low-wage jobs as salespersons, cleaners, bus drivers, nurses, and so on. They do not have the option that others have to work remotely,” Said Ahmed told YLE News.

Deputy Helsinki mayor, Nasima Razmyar said that this kind of news and information would spread more hate speech against the Somali community in Finland (YLE News 2020d). “Mayor Jan Vapaavuori understands the concerns of the linguistic minority but emphasises that even painful issues must be able to be communicated openly” (Vapaavuori 2020). Other than the perspective of Mayor Jan Vapaavuori, Helsingin Sanomat also considered the perspective of Omar Ahmed Abdi, who mentioned that Somalis have become accustomed to hatred in Finland (Kangasluoma & Salomaa 2020).

1.4.2 Hate speech against members of the media

The history of hate speech also includes attacks against journalists. In the past, hate speech was delivered by calls and letters, and today mostly through social media (Kurvinen 2019). Hate speech has left many journalists confused; some feel fear and do not know how to deal with it. Therefore, to avoid the dangers of hate speech against journalists, they must take into account the broader context of expressing sensitive topics and focus not only on what is said but on what is intended prior to publishing their articles (Nunes 2016). Journalists and media organisations are exposed to harassment by individuals or groups that wish to undermine democracy (Hybrid COE 2019). Journalists and other media workers become the targets of regular violent attacks of hate speech in addition to defamation (European Commission 2016).

The increase in hate speech against journalists and its impact on media have been of significant concern in recent years (Ministry of Justice 2018). In 2016, the Federation of Journalists of Finland (UFJ) and the Syndicate Newspaper Journalist surveyed its members to determine how many had been threatened in the line of their work. Of the 1,400 who responded to the survey, one-sixth had reported receiving some form of threat.

About 40 percent said the risks were related to articles dealing with immigration and asylum seekers in Finland (ENNHR 2019).

- Journalist Rebekka Härkönen was subject to hate speech after an article published in Turun Sanomat covering the terrorist attack in Turku in 2017. Härkönen had interviewed an 18-year-old Afghani man who had helped a person injured in the attack. Later, Härkönen became a known target of anti-immigrant extremists (Waller 2018).
- Journalist Linda Pelkonen was the target of hate speech following her reporting in Uusi Suomi on rapes in Kempele. Pelkonen asked the police why they should mention the foreign background of the suspects in the press release (Huusko 2018). The anti-immigrant website, MV-lehti, attacked her for her reporting of the rape case.
- Journalist Jessica Aro suffered online harassment in a well-known case. Aro is an investigative journalist in the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE News 2020). In 2014, Aro investigated and reported on Russian “troll-factories” and, in response, received death threats. In 2016, the national prosecutor initiated an investigation into these threats and the defamation of Aro (Niilola 2019). The final outcome was that, in 2018, the Helsinki District Court convicted Ilja Janitskin and two of his colleagues of defaming Aro and two other Finnish journalists, Linda Pelkonen and Rebekka Härkönen.

A survey in 2016 showed that 16 percent of working members of the Union of Journalists of Finland received threats in messages (Hiltunen 2019).

- Johanna Vehkoo, a Finnish journalist, had been found guilty in 2016 in the Oulu court for what she published about the local city counsellor Junes Lokka as being racist while he posted on Facebook regarding immigrants (YLE News 2019 H).

The European Federation of Journalists considered the 2016 conviction of Johanna Vehkoo and criticised the judgement which will increase the attacks of hate speech and bullying against the journalist. The EFJ president thought that the court ruling would be a reflection of right wing and nationalist political trends in Finland. On the other hand,

the president of the Union of Journalists in Finland (UJF) Hanne Aho expressed fear of the more prominent abuse of hate speech against journalists after the court statement (European Federation of Journalist 2019). Vehkoo and the Union of Journalists in Finland considered the decision to be disproportionate (Council of Europe 2020).

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This study consists of four chapters. The introduction presents the research questions, the aim of the research, concept definitions, research background, hate speech against members of media, structure of the thesis, and the methodology and analysis process, the second chapter will introduce the context of hate speech in Finnish society and discuss the role of the Finnish media, mainly YLE and Helsingin Sanomat, the theoretical framework, historical background, hate crime and hate speech, hate speech and Islam in Europe, the research perspective of the issues of hate speech in relation to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Human rights. Chapter three presents the results and discussions with journalists along with answers to the research questions. The last chapter will present the conclusions of the research and recommendations on how media can counter hate speech in the future.

1.6 Methodology and Analysis Process

This research delves into the experiences of the Finnish media in countering hate speech in Finland by choosing the most prominent media organisations (Finnish broadcasting company YLE and Helsingin Sanomat). The subject of this research will be those who have experienced hate speech most in society (namely journalists). The primary method is thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).

The thematic approach consists of two practical steps. Firstly, an examination of the official policy statements of YLE and Helsingin Sanomat. The second step is to interview journalists from YLE and HS. The second step focus on the actual work experience of dealing with hate speech in different forms in their everyday work.

The interviews followed a semi-structured pattern with a written list of questions with the possibility of adding more items. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The

participants were journalists from YLE and Helsingin Sanomat. With the exception of one interview which occurred via mail, every interview took place face-to-face. The face-to-face interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and transcribed.

Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, the identities, ages and occupations of the participants are not revealed. The interviewees were coded with the numbers 1 and 2 (Valerie 2014 p. 44).

Lastly, recommendations are presented to media organisations on how to deal with hate speech in the future.

2. HATE SPEECH IN THE CONTEXT OF FINNISH SOCIETY

Hate speech in Finnish society is an issue for both politicians and media organisations. Government and media organisations define policies regarding how to counter hate speech and use their roles to consider and comment on any legislation. For this reason, there is a need for a better understanding of how Finnish media deal with these phenomena.

Hate speech has harmful consequences not only for the victims but also for society as a whole. Finnish law does not mention hate speech. However, hate speech can constitute harassment prohibited under the Non-Discrimination Act or the Act on Equality between Women and Men (Mäkinen & Mankkinen & Nyman & Nederström 2019).

As one example, Finnish media published old blog posts of the head of the Finnish National Party, Jussi Halla-Aho, that led to his conviction for religious defamation and ethnic incitement. Halla-Aho was found guilty for a publication made in 2008 that directed some hate speech toward Somalis likening Islam to paedophilia and stating that Somalis were predisposed to stealing and living on welfare (YLE News 2018 I).

The Supreme Court saw the court's ruling increased from a 30-day sentence to a 50-day sentence for said crimes (YLE News 2019E).

The True Finns Party is one of the fiercest opponents of immigration in Finland. The role of YLE is to highlight other perspectives. Kimmo Nuotio, a Helsinki University criminal law professor, has stated regarding the posts of Jussi Halla-Aho: "I personally find this kind of discussion harmful – it is an attempt to undermine the foundation of these laws."

Nuotio highlighted the international obligation to respect the laws on defamation and that restriction of freedom of expression is based on European values and history (YLE News 2019J).

"The True Finns party policy have become more extreme. The party entered the 2015 parliamentary elections with a political program that many legal experts considered racist and anti-constitutional in that it depicted immigrants as less valuable and more problematic than the indigenous population" (Kuisma & Nygård 2017).

Media organisations are among the most potent entities through which it is possible to transmit and direct public opinion on specific issues. Media organisations have not presented a clear-cut solution on how to decrease the spread of hate speech (Titley & Keen & Földi 2014).

“Secretary-General of the Finnish League for Human Rights Kristiina Kouros explained during the program that hate speech is a manifestation of hatred, which can provoke discrimination, hostility or violence against people based on their nationality, background, sexual orientation or religion” (Kouros 2012).

Finland has signed the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Article 10 of the Convention reads:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.”

According to Keen & Georgescu, freedom of expression will end if used as a tool of hate and slander against other people (Keen & Georgescu 2016). The Finnish constitution does not recognise hate-speech as a criminal act, even where users might justify written texts or verbal abuse stating hate speech as a matter of free expression (The Criminal Code of Finland 2015).

One report from parliament, covered by Helsinki Sanomat, expressed solidarity against the increase of hate speech with Member of Parliament Nasima Razmyar stating “The motivation for the debate stems from the climate of intolerance and an increase in hate speech” (HS 2015).

2.1 The roles of journalists and media organisations in countering hate speech

Journalists in media organisations provide news to the public and are expected to be objective. Objective journalism means that a journalist must present all aspects of an argument fairly while reporting information about minorities and immigrants (Kumar 2011 p. 25).

Media organisations provide resources to raise awareness of the impact of hate speech in communities and they provide training to journalists on how to analyse hate speech and report criminal acts committed in this context (Rabat 2017).

“Protecting online and offline journalism from surveillance overreach and widespread censorship and promoting press freedom and journalist safety will ensure the public’s access to impartial and quality information” (UNESCO 2016).

In 2016 in Helsinki, UNESCO held an event to promote freedom of information worldwide as a fundamental human right while ensuring the safety of journalists working in the media industry and focusing on countering hate speech in the media (Amelan & Lankinen & Mäenpää 2016). Finland has an effective system for protecting journalists and media institutions in addition to the strict rule of law and institutions to help guarantee the freedom of the press (Weaver 2016).

Journalists’ roles focus on two aspects of journalistic intervention, namely the importance of setting the policy statement with regard to influencing public opinion and advocating for social change to counter hate speech (Thomas & Folker & Corinna 2016).

“Journalists should dare to denounce and confront hate speech publicly. They have the ethical responsibility to counter racist and discriminatory messages and comments that incite hatred, violence or insult on other people in the public sphere” (Gutiérrez 2015).

This study agrees with EFJ General Secretary Ricardo Gutiérrez about the responsibilities and the roles of journalists in society with regard to countering hate speech.

Media organisations and journalists can play a critical role in influencing the policy and social opinion on immigrants and refugees in Finland. As hate speech and stereotypes targeting migrants are increasing, fair and balanced reporting by media organisations is needed more than ever relating to hate speech attacks (European Federation of Journalists 2018).

Finnish media organisations are some of the most highly trusted in Finland and around the world. The Reuters report focuses on issues of trust and misinformation in media organisations in the world. Nevertheless, the confidence in Finnish society is higher than in any participating country (Reuters 2018).

“The human dignity of every individual must be respected. The ethnic origin, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, convictions or other similar personal characteristics may not be presented inappropriately or disparagingly.” (Guidelines for Journalists.26, 2014)

Article 26 of the 2014 Guidelines for Journalists emphasises the respect for the human dignity of every individual regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or gender.

Rules 4 and 5 of the Journalist Guideline in Finland state: (Guidelines for journalists 2014).

1. The journalist must not misuse his/her position. The journalist may not deal with issues that may lead to potential personal gain nor demand or receive benefits that might compromise his/her personal independence or professional ethics.
2. Journalists are entitled to refuse assignments that conflict with the law, his/her convictions or good journalistic practice.

More precisely, these two articles above provide the foundation for journalistic work; however, they require a mechanism to protect journalists from being harassed and experiencing hatred during their work.

“The Finnish media has found new ways of protecting journalists. YLE’s CEO Merja Ylä-Anttila announced that a new support fund is intended to assist journalists with legal costs, for example, in seeking redress in courts of law” (Merja Ylä-Anttila 2019).

This initiative is supported by the Union of Journalists and was an invitation to everyone who wanted to help journalists in Finland to stand up against hate speech. Ylä-Anttila encouraged any journalists who are exposed to hate speech not to hesitate to report a problem to the police (YLE 2019F).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter seeks to provide background and a theoretical framework regarding the importance of combating hate speech in media organisations. Media has the power to spread hate speech to a broad audience by transferring the views of politicians toward a specific group in society (Mohan & Barnes 2018 pp. 19-21).

Hate speech is a complicated concept with no internationally accepted definition. Therefore, international, regional and national level efforts have been made to address the problem and define the concept (Pálmadóttir & Kalenikova 2018).

2.3 Historical Background

The philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was the most famous and most influential British philosopher of the nineteenth century. Mill believed that the principle of harm was the only legitimate basis for restricting individual liberties (Brink 2018).

“The harm principle is not, in fact, Mill’s only principle, because we cannot decide whether regulations that would prevent harm should be adopted without appealing to the principle of utility. But even if harm prevention is not sufficient to justify restricting liberty, Mill does appear to claim that it is necessary.”

Philosopher Jeremy Waldron also attempted to define the concept of hate speech. Waldron strongly argued that there should be an international organisation to reduce hate speech as part of our commitment to human dignity and the inclusion and respect of members of vulnerable minorities (Waldron 2012).

This researcher agrees with the theory of Jeremy Waldron and Ronald Myles: it is necessary not to use hate speech under the pretext of free expression. This study suggests that restricting free expression is a necessity in order not to harm others.

American philosopher Ronald Myles Dworkin (1931-2013) argues that freedom of expression mainly serves the idea of equality. Dworkin further claims that freedom of expression is a necessary right to equality. On the other hand, the free word may be exploited to spread hate speech that impacts society negatively (Brunn 1992).

Countering hate speech does not mean prohibiting freedom of expression, it is a process of preventing hate speech from escalating into something more dangerous, especially incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, which is prohibited under international law (Guterres 2019).

There are many traditional ways, which have not yet disappeared, to spread hate speech. Moreover, there are new ways of communicating hate speech after the development of new technology, mainly through the Internet and on social media (Kari 2019).

Media organisations platforms share a place to spread hate speech through chat rooms. However, it can be difficult to track down and identify producers of such hate speech (Latour, Perger, Salaj, Tocchi & Oter 2017)

2.4 Hate Crime and Hate Speech

Hate crime is an expression of hostile behaviour towards others and linked to prejudice, discrimination, and violence (Boeckmann & Petrosino 2002). There is a link between hate speech and hate crime such that when there is an increase in hate speech, it raises the risk of hate crime.

The differences between hate speech and hate crime are the manner of using hate as a hostile utterance against others. The offence is motivated by prejudice or hostility towards the victims, which has a significant effect on the social and cultural rights of the victims (Ghanea 2012).

The role of YLE is essential as a platform of diverse ideas and dialogue. The best solution to a number of problems and a way to stop spreading hatred is to enhance the values of co-existence and dialogue between religions and civilisations (YLE Strategy 2020).

“YLE seeks information from diverse sources in an unprejudiced manner to ensure that our journalism is impartial, independent and reliable. YLE takes all relevant facts and different perspectives into account, and we give parties who receive criticism an opportunity to be heard as soon as the criticism has been presented. We are not afraid to ask questions and question the accuracy of information” (YLE Strategy 2020).

The Helsingin Sanomat policy statement is committed to protecting data provided by the user and observing the use of online services and deriving the analytics of the data.

“Our privacy policy is divided into three parts: the processing of personal data in Sanoma’s services, the processing of data by partners and third parties, and your rights as a user.

HS processes personal information for legal purposes, such as accounting, abuse prevention and ensuring the continuity of HS services (such as by storing backups and auditing records) (Data privacy policy 2020).

This study argues that the terms “hate speech” and “hate crime” are linked and used interchangeably but should be distinguished. Both terms have connotations of intolerance and prejudice, yet most “hate crimes” do not involve the exercise of freedom of expression.

Although the term “hate crime” is widely used and the evocative use of the word “hate” may lead people to believe that any aspect of “hate” – including “hate speech” – is a criminal offence, this is not the case. While all hate speech is a cause for concern, it does not always constitute a criminal offence, and therefore it is not necessarily a hate crime.

2.5 Hate Speech and Islam in Europe

Media organisations have a responsibility to reduce the effects of Islamophobia in Europe and reduce the risk of extreme right-wing parties gaining popularity. Many link these trends to widening social gaps, which may be a factor in the increase in hate speech (Awan & Abbas 2015).

Islamophobic hate speech is a growing concern in contemporary Western politics and society, and it can also seriously damage any targeted victims, creating a sense of fear and exclusion and influencing public discourse and stimulating other forms of extremist behaviour and hatred (Sponholz 2016).

Policymakers, NGOs and media organisations have expressed concerns about the prevalence and frequency of incidents targeting Muslims being insulted and their experiences of hate speech in many European Union member states. Data from the Fundamental Right Agency (FRA) show that many of those affected arrived in the European Union in 2015 (Pavlou 2018). Media organisations realise that hate speech has become a serious problem, especially since it has been challenging to create barriers in new media to prevent the spread of hatred across countries (Einzinger 2003 pp. 142-149).

According to the University Police College of Finland, there is much evidence on how the issue of hate speech in Finland has increased with suspected hate crimes having risen by 52% in 2015 (YLE News 2017). Prosecutor General Raija Toiviainen claims in the news that there has been an increased spread of hate speech content and confirms that we must realise its effects on society and its threat to peaceful coexistence in Finland (Tessieri 2017).

An essential mission of media institutions is to draw up regulations that maintain the independence of said institutions regarding the selection of topics that spread across the media (Palmer 2001).

Journalists and media organisations are exposed to harassment by individuals or groups that wish to undermine democracy, so occasionally, journalists become subject to hate speech (Hybrid COE 2019).

The strategy on countering hate speech in media organisations is insufficient and there are compelling reasons to believe that free expression and the application of ethical journalism are essential aspects in order to reduce hate speech (White 2012).

2.6 The Issue of Hate Speech and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

This study presents references to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights concerning hate speech. The Covenant is an essential tool for the development of human rights regulations. Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights emphatically asserts prohibitions of hate speech.

“Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law” (Article 20 – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

Article 19 asserts the provision of free expression, which permits the publication of any content in a variety of modalities.

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice” (Article 19 – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

This research clarifies the relationship between Articles 19 and 20, including any confusion and apparent contradictions between the two articles. Article 19 propagates complete freedom to publish any content and Article 20 prohibits and prevents hate speech.

Even if the Covenant recognises the principle of combating discrimination and hate speech, the right to equality may restrict freedom of expression and allow states to do so lawfully in certain circumstances. Here it can be seen that there is no consensus on when freedom of expression is considered hate speech.

This study presupposes that states should protect people from being subjected to hate speech under the pretext of free expression or that they should create the conditions to advance human rights.

3. RESULTS

The interviews with the journalists showed how important it is to counter hate speech. This can be done by protecting the journalist, something which must be stipulated in YLE's policy statement. Moreover, YLE is knowledgeable and experienced in dealing with the threat of hate speech against journalists. On the other hand, Helsingin Sanomat (HS) has been motivated to counter hate speech; however, HS has not planned to improve the policy statement regarding hate speech. Instead, they focus more on data analysis.

3.1 Responsibilities

Journalist 1 mentioned that prior to publishing, the regular basis for processing data depends on the nature of the purpose of processing and monitoring content to modify or delete it, should it contain any hate speech.

Journalist Code 1 explained that for comments made with real names or in anonymity, it is possible to present hate comments as long as there is no legal deterrent to hold those responsible for these sites accountable. Journalist 1 believes that the words "that broadcast poison" are a picture of what is happening in homes and in closed rooms. For this reason, YLE has begun to monitor comments and analyse any data prior to sharing.

Journalist stated that YLE has several ways to protect and empower journalists against hate speech, harassment and the threat of violence. YLE has clear guidelines and well-researched instructions for situations of harassment. Journalist 1 also pointed out the YLE guidelines that emphasises the responsibilities of those in charge, such as supervisors, in harassment situations. An individual in charge needs to ensure that YLE formulates the help to suit the personal needs of the harassed individual and to ensure that victims of harassment do in fact experience having been taken seriously. Such individuals need to feel that they have been adequately heard and have received the help they need.

Journalist 2 said that there is no particular policy statement or limitation on coverage of news and articles in his workplace regardless of what might lead to fuelling hate speech in Finnish society. The HS journalist said that they had no plan to change the policy statements after 2015 when the number of refugees increased in Finland.

Journalist 2 said that the policy statements for the media have, for example, a compulsory registration for people who want to debate on their websites and that they did not allow anonymous comments on the website or in the print newspaper. Journalist 2 pointed out that they noticed that hate speech had been linked to a number of political groups. The responsibility to confront the discourse of violence and hatred is a collective responsibility that begins with the family and is transmitted to school and embodied by modern media. Both popular and official efforts are needed to broadcast powerful and influential messages through the media as there is systematic and inflammatory speech aimed to give negative messages to society about minorities to serve political goals and serve specific interests.

3.2 Journalist Performance

Journalist 1 pointed out that confronting hate speech required participation in media discourse. He said that we must differentiate between hate speech and aggressive speech and that we have the right to mobilise and fortify society to confront hate speech. Journalist 1 requested the creation of laws and reference controls regarding hate speech, establishing a proper definition of terms of this speech, along with raising awareness of the system of values by which we are governed, and the activation of civil society institutions to monitor all violations of public morals and to address hate speech in society.

Journalist 1 shared the experience of hate speech on the Internet when he published an article about the Turku terrorist attack in 2017. He said that this article was not of the same opinion as everyone else and then received a message from one person who had stated a desire for the entire YLE editorial team on the ylilauta.org forum to be killed.

“One of the participants in the Ylilauta thread says that they would enjoy it if an asylum seeker were to stab my family to death in Turku Market Square. Attached to the message is a cartoon image in which the murder of my family is being celebrated with coffee and cake” (YLE journalist).

Journalist 1 shared what he felt while being under this threat of hate speech and how it was difficult to tell even his family about what he received on the Internet. This led him to purchase security cameras for his home.

Journalist 2 said that a number of entities interfered with the dialogue on the pages of social media sites and created a discourse of hate. However, the role of the journalist must be to call for reconciliation and harmony between individuals for society in its religious, social, and political categories.

Journalist 2 stressed the importance of not using any material, no matter how simple, that contributes to spreading hate speech against a minority, or against the defenders of minorities. Journalist 2 called on those working in the media to avoid using terms and phrases that would contribute to exclusion, marginalisation or the reinforcement of hate speech. The HS journalist mentioned that the media constituted public opinion and contributed to changing attitudes within the community. Journalist 2 warned of the danger resulting from the shift in social media from the goal for which it was established, which was to promote positive values and social cohesion, some of which have become factors of destruction and division in societies. Journalist 2 also mentioned that journalists and media workers are not to be subject to any physical assault, unlawful arrest or murder as a result of pursuing their legitimate activities.

Journalist 2 pointed out that the media have an essential role in this issue, calling for a distinction between freedom of expression and comments that included hate speech every day in societies.

Both journalists that were interviewed agreed that the Finnish media are one part of society and that they needed to take more responsibility for the phenomenon of hate speech. There has been a great amount of misreporting and exaggeration in the Finnish media about asylum seekers, especially in 2015 and 2016. However, after the occurrence of many hate attacks, the news would cover these attacks. The statistics from police about the hate speech attacks show evidence of an increase in hate speech with journalists saying that they did not cover hate speech content directly but would rather cover past occurrences of hate speech, the perspectives of relevant organisations, the reasons for the hate speech or what politicians had thought about it.

3.3 Awareness of the Issue

The interviews indicated how online and other public places were exposed to hate speech, such as face-to-face threats and aggressive hate speech. After having completed the interviews with the journalists, they would share the extent of the psychological impact on victims of hate speech. Often their sense of insecurity and isolation increased, in addition to the lack of confidence. Measures taken by government institutions, most notably by police and the judiciary, were not sufficient,

Journalist 2 stated that journalists start with what the United Nations and other relevant human rights organisations have said in this regard to hate speech. We have in mind a fundamental concern to take the information from Helsingin Sanomat on how journalists deal with the dangers of hate speech and provide advice to them on how to monitor and combat it and protect themselves. Journalist 2 further mentioned that hate speech has left many journalists confused. Some feel fear and do not know how to deal with it, and some of them lack tools to monitor it.

Journalist 1 and 2 were both accustomed to these types of pressures, threats and hate speech through their publishing of stories and sensitive topics. In some cases, the journalists received support from their respective media organisations in the face of threats.

3.4 Plans to counter hate speech in the future

Both interviewees demand that there should be a law to criminalise hate speech, especially in the media. They also stated that social networks and the so-called “new media” had a major role in the spread of the phenomenon of hate speech.

All the information collected from the interviews points out how, overall, hate speech actions have increased with the recent influx of migrants to Europe after 2015. Included are refugees as one target group in all fields of action and not as a separate society.

Both journalists agreed with the aim of making Finland a more inclusive country where hate speech and other social ills are eradicated from Finnish society.

The interviews with journalists concluded that there is a necessity to create a discourse to correct any misconceptions, to confront hate speech in the media, and to promote a culture of dialogue and promote acceptance of the differences of others.

3.5 Discussion

The aim of this research was to cover the experiences of hate speech among Finnish media professionals, and to find solutions to the issue of hate speech, including the development of policy statements. This chapter will present and discuss the results of the research, answer the research questions and analyse how the results relate to existing research.

This study agrees with the theory of Jeremy Waldron and Ronald Myles, to not use hate speech under the pretext of free expression. This study has mentioned many cases of hate speech against the category selected, journalists. It is argued that hate speech against journalists and media workers emphasise the limits in media organisations to protect media professionals.

Journalists should be trained in methodologies and mechanisms to monitor, avoid, and counter hate speech. Moreover, they must study how to report news of minority groups and restrict any harmful voices that spread hatred that may undermine peace and threaten the dignity and lives of others.

This research explored the following question:

- How do the Finnish media empower journalists and protect them from threats of physical violence and/or hate speech?

According to journalist 1, YLE never leaves any media worker with the experience of being harassed alone with these experiences. In a harassment situation, it is of utmost importance that the employer act promptly. Professionals in YLEs security and risk management departments help journalists and other YLE personnel in many ways if they are harassed, whether it is risk analysis, gathering and saving harassment data and evidence, or contacting the police, and so on.

YLE's legal department help victims of harassment in many ways, and the Ethics Office, the Head of Journalistic Standards and Ethics, and the Head of Audience Dialogue, help victims of hate speech attacks in any way they are able.

One of the critical questions related to helping journalists in harassment situations pertains to whether a journalist is a freelancer. Legally speaking, employers are not required to provide the same support systems for freelancers as they do for employees. This legal situation notwithstanding, YLE has always striven to help freelancers in the same manner as it would help their employees whenever possible. This also includes support provided by YLE's health care if any harassment is linked to the work a freelancer has done for YLE.

Today harassment is a very complex hybrid and an ever-changing phenomenon. To begin with, it is not always easy to recognise harassment let alone gauge its longer-term effects on an individual or his work. Thus, journalists and other staff members are educated on several levels about these phenomena through YLE's own Academy of Journalism. Open discussion about these phenomena in the workplace is also regularly encouraged. Journalist 1 mentioned that discussing these issues is always a better option than remaining silent and attempting to determine courses of action individually. Journalist 2 stated that hate speech can threaten the safety of some members of society, such as journalists working in conflict and war areas. In fact, hate speech has left many journalists confused. Some feel fear and do not know how to handle it, some journalists lack the tools to monitor it, while a few may even use hate speech as a part of a broader national or party plan.

- How do Finnish media develop policy statements on countering hate speech?

Journalist 1 referred to the importance of guidelines and directions for different harassment situations, which allows all information to be available to journalists and other media workers regarding the countering of hate speech and other harassment-related phenomena.

Journalist 1 mentioned the principal guidelines for the public in order to inform anyone who might need to benefit from them at the following web address:

<https://yle.fi/aihe/sivu/yleisradio/ylen-turvallisemman-vuorovaikutuksen-ohje>

Journalist 1 referenced the importance of a policy statement and how to deal with different harassment situations. The policy statement provides journalists and other media workers information regarding the countering of hate speech and other harassment-related phenomena.

“Threats and inappropriate approaches to employees should be reported to YLE’s occupational health and safety without delay. This is primarily the job of the supervisor; the employer has the primary responsibility of ensuring the safety of the employee. Of course, for example, a person who has been threatened may, if he or she so wishes, contact the security department directly, which will be in contact with the police if necessary. Contact information can be found in YLE’s internal versions of this guide.”

“Taking care of mental well-being is important. Occupational health care can help you to deal with harassment experiences if you contact them. You can contact occupational health care both when the situation is acute and when you need aftercare, or if you want to discuss possible harassment situations in advance.”

Finnish media institutions do not depend on their rhetoric regarding the language of hate speech, and it is not possible to generalise when discussing hate speech, noting that discourses of discrimination may exist in some institutions that fall outside the framework of rules and foundations of media work.

To counter hate speech, the process must first and foremost come from society, which strongly condemns hate speech.

- What tools do journalists have when encountering threats and hate speech?

Journalist 1 mentioned his point about how to counter hate speech, with which this researcher agrees, as it is important for the community to provide proper legislation and sufficient resources to those encountering all forms of hate speech. People also need to be able to trust the police and the justice system. Unfortunately, that is not always the case and there is no guarantee that officials will objectively view a very complex harassment case. However, without making any kind of political statement, Journalist 1 stated that he has seen that this government has a great deal of willingness to both develop

legislation and support the police force in better understanding different forms of harassment.

From the perspective of Journalist 1, media workers need to discuss such issues with people they can trust. People need to understand the basics of hate speech and other harassment-related phenomena.

It is most important for any journalist and other media workers encountering hate speech and other forms of harassment to ensure that those perpetrating the harassment do not achieve their objectives. The aim of such individuals is to silence the journalist. Those expressing hate speech desire to limit freedom of speech, which should not occur. It is recommended that journalists and other media workers are able to discuss any harassment with people they can trust. With the help of other people, one can learn to view harassment for what it is, a crime that, from time to time, needs to be punished.

Journalist 2 mentioned protecting journalists and receiving support through a fund established to provide people working in the media sector the means to respond quickly to unexpected attacks or other threatening actions. Such a fund would be available to all journalists, be they contract workers or freelancers.

Moreover, journalists need to train in the methodologies and mechanisms of monitoring, avoiding and countering hate speech as they must study the speech of others on a daily basis, especially when there is a fine line between reporting the news and amplifying harmful voices that may undermine peace and threaten the dignity and lives of others.

Finally, this researcher desires there to be more opportunities for journalists to participate in this research to discuss and to listen to their demands about protection from hate speech. The aim of this topic is to discuss ideas on how to improve the role of the journalist in a media organisation and provide more protection for journalists in the Finnish media.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Journalists and immigrants are the primary targets of hate speech in Finland. This study has focussed on the experiences of the Finnish media in countering hate speech. The case studies were the Finnish broadcasting company YLE and the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat (HS), both of which have been giving attention to policies which protect, monitor and analyse the data. The interviews indicated clearly that the journalists wanted to continue to counter hate speech.

Further research recommendations for the Finnish media would be to work in three directions. There is a desperate need to counter hate speech in the media and protect journalists, by offering greater support for journalists from violence and threats. An example is a protection and freedom centre for journalists that could provide legal support to those who have been threatened by hate speech. The second direction would be to foster the awareness of selecting topics, articles and news with regard to immigrants being presented and/or depicted negatively and to start publishing more success stories about immigrants in Finland. The third direction would be for policymakers to consider how to enhance the significant role the media have in countering hate speech and by providing debates on the policy statements which would allow all media organisations and corporations to participate, share ideas and experiences to overcome obstacles together, and also to present a concrete approach for a policy statement to prevent all forms of hate speech against journalists.

The researcher believes in the value of launching a campaign to highlight the principle of co-existence and tolerance. An idea generated by this study is to set aside one day per year for schools to celebrate an event called 'Day in the Life' to combat hate speech. Such an event would be conducted with the participation of public figures in Finnish society, including journalists, human rights activists, singers, artists, influencers on social media, and politicians. Experiences would be shared to present positive images of multiculturalism and the importance of co-existence in a peaceful society. Moreover, it would support how we are the same even if we are different. Such a day could be covered by the Finnish media to share the idea of this project, which would give the right message to everyone to stand up against hate speech.

APPENDIX – JOURNALIST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Have you received any hate speech content messages through your work? If yes, what was the first step you took to protect yourself?
2. How would you discharge, as a journalist, your responsibilities towards the community on countering hate speech?
3. How does your employer take a stand in occupational safety issues?
4. How do you determine hate speech that can be restricted and distinguished from protected speech?
5. What positive measures can journalists and other media workers take to become aware of being a victim of a hate speech attack?
6. What types of speech should be prohibited by media organisations in order to prevent hate speech and under what conditions?
7. Have you been a victim of hate speech, including physical or oral threats, regarding an article about immigrants?
8. What is the role of the journalist regarding professional standards, primary objectivity, accuracy, credibility and impartiality when publishing articles that pertain to immigrants?
9. Do you think that your media organisation implements policies that protect the health and safety of permanent employees and independent contractors?
10. As a journalist, do you routinely practice self-censorship due to the fear of punishment, harassment or hate attacks?
11. What is your plan as a journalist on countering hate speech in the community in the future?

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