Discursive (de)-legitimation strategies in the media

A case study of Finnish co-operation negotiations during the economic downturn in 2008-2015

MSc program in Management and International Business
Master's Thesis
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2017

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Title of thesis Discursive (de)-legitimation strategies in the media - A case study of Finnish co-operation negotiations during the economic downturn in 2008-2015	
Degree Master in Science in Economics and Business Administration	
Degree programme Management and International Business	
Thesis advisor(s) Henrika Franck	
Year of approval 2017	**Number of pages** 60 **Language** English

Abstract

The broad objective of this research is to understand legitimacy and specifically the process of legitimation. The aim is to further the existing organizational literature on legitimacy and legitimation processes by researching discursive legitimation strategies used to legitimate or de-legitimate co-operation negotiation announcements in the Finnish media during 2008-2015. In addition, the study aims at finding distinguishing features between the media outlets.

This research is a qualitative case study analyzing a collection of news articles. The news articles were extracted from two Finnish media outlets, Helsingin Sanomat and Yle. To build an understanding of the legitimation process, a critical discourse analysis as a research method was applied. The analysis was divided into two distinguishing parts. First, a comprehensive thematic analysis was used to organize the news articles into specific themes based on the discussed issues and topics in the media materials. During the final step, an overall textual analysis was conducted to understand how the themes were used for discursive (de)-legitimation purposes.

The findings, based on the critical discourse analysis, support the legitimation strategies and their particular discursive features that were revealed in previous literature. The strategies, from most common to least common are: rationalization, authorization, moralization, normalization, and narrativization. All of the strategies were used in various ways to establish legitimacy or illegitimacy of the co-operation negotiation announcements. It seems that rationalization and authorization has an important role in (de)-legitimating the co-operation negotiation announcements, as two-thirds of all cases are based on those. In addition, a new connection between factual news articles and taken-for-grantedness was found. Finally, the differences between Helsingin Sanomat and Yle were highlighted and a general structure for constructing a news article about co-operation negotiations was former. The most distinguishing difference was that Helsingin Sanomat used (de)-legitimation strategies multiple times more often compared to Yle.

Tiivistelmä

Tutkimuksen laaja tavoite on ymmärtää legitiimiyttä ja erityisesti legitimoitumisprosessia. Tavoitteena on nykyisen organisaatiokirjallisuuden lisääminen legitiimiydestä ja legitimoitumisprosesseista tutkimalla diskursiivisia legitimoitumisstrategioita, joita käytetään legitimoimaan tai illegitimoimaan ilmoituksia yhteistoimintaneuvotteluista Suomen mediassa vuosina 2008-2015. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa pyritään löytämään eroavuuksia tiedotusvälineiden väliltä.

Tämä tutkimus on kvalitatiivinen tapaustutkimus, jossa analysoidaan uutisartikkeleita. Uutisartikkelit hankittiin kahdesta suomalaisesta tiedotusvälineestä, Helsingin Sanomista ja Ylestä. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin kriittistä diskurssianalyysiä, jotta legitimaatioprosessia voidaan ymmärtää. Analyysi jaettiin kahteen eri osaan. Ensiksi, kattavaa temaattista analyysiä käytettiin uutisartikkeleiden järjestämisessä erityisiin teemoihin, jotka perustuvat mediamateriaalien aiheisiin. Viimeisessä vaiheessa tehtiin kokonaisvaltainen tekstuaalinen analyysi, jonka avulla ymmärrettiin, miten teemoja käytetään diskursiivista (il)-legitimaatiota varten.

Kriittisen diskurssianalyysin perusteella löydetyt tulokset tukevat legitimoitumisstrategioita ja niiden erityisiä diskursiivisia piirteitä, jotka löydettiin aiemmassa kirjallisuudessa. Strategiat yleisimmästä vähiten yleiseen ovat: rationalisaatio, auktorisaatio, moralisaatio, normalisaatio ja narrativisaatio. Kaikkia strategioita käytettiin monin tavoin legitimoimaan tai illegitimoimaan ilmoituksia yhteistoimintaneuvotteluista. Vaikuttaa siltä, että rationalisaatiolla ja auktorisaatiolla on tärkeä rooli yhteistoimintaneuvotteluiden (il)-legitimoimisessa, koska kaksi kolmasosaa kaikista tapauksista perustuu niihin. Lisäksi löytyi uusi yhteys faktapohjaisten uutisartikkeleiden ja itsestäänselvyytyksen välillä. Lopuksi Helsingin Sanomien ja Ylen välisiä eroja tuotiin esille, ja muodostettiin yleinen struktuuri uutisartikkelin rakentamiseen yhteistoimintaneuvotteluiden osalta. Merkittävin ero oli, että Helsingin Sanomat käytti (il)-legitimaatiostrategioita useita kertoja useammin kuin Yle.

Avainsanat legitimaatioprosessi, legitimiteetti, diskursiivinen legitimaatiostrategia, kriittinen diskurssianalyysi, media, institutionaalinen käytäntö, yhteistoimintaneuvottelut

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to give a special thank you note for Olga Lavrusheva and applaud her outstanding master's thesis. It was fall 2015, when I first started to wonder if I ever would find a suitable topic for my thesis. Weeks of excruciating and futile brainstorming went by before I finally came across Olga's thesis. After familiarizing her thesis, I realized that it was precisely what I had been trying to put into words but could not. Then it hit me, like a bolt out of the blue, and I finally knew what I was supposed to do.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Some time ago, I happened to stumble upon a website that discussed some of the most profound and fundamental philosophical questions. "Can you really experience anything objectively?" goes one of the great philosophical questions on that website[1]. This reminded me of my thesis and how the media can affect our opinions and experiences. It is peculiar, how two people can write completely different news articles based on the same information. Below, I have articles from both Helsingin Sanomat and Yle about a company beginning co-operation negotiations (Finnish: yhteistoimintaneuvottelut). It is nice knowing that people experience things differently but at the same time terrifying because a piece of information can turn into any number of interpretations. The same website*, I happened to stumble upon, explained this aptly:

> This is essentially the problem of qualia – the notion that our surroundings can only be observed through the filter of our senses and the cogitations of our minds. Everything you know, everything you've touched, seen, and smelled, has been filtered through any number of physiological and cognitive processes. Subsequently, your subjective experience of the world is unique.

On this notion, I believe that even this research is somewhat subjective.

Yle news – business 28.9.2012

Isku begins co-operation negotiations about layoffs and part-timing

Isku wants to streamline its operations and cut 200 person-years of its costs.

Furniture manufacturer Isku begins co-operation negotiations to reduce two hundred person-years at most. Negotiations concerns the entire staff, about thousand people.

Isku's CEO Arto Tiitinen says that the reductions are to be accomplished mainly with layoffs and part-timings. He cannot estimate at this point, what is the final amount to make redundant.

The goal is to reduce especially procurement, occupancy, personnel, quality, and installation costs.

Co-operation negotiations begins next Wednesday.

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[1] http://io9.gizmodo.com/5945801/8-philosophical-questions-that-well-never-solve
*see the first footnote above

Isku layoffs and make employees part-timers

Personnel cost savings are targeted almost entirely to Finland.

Furniture manufacturer Isku's goal is to cut personnel costs with an amount that equals to 200 employees yearly costs. The cuts are to be carried out mainly with layoffs and transferring people to part-time work.

The nascent co-operation negotiations concerns thousand employees. The cost-reduction program encompasses entire Isku both in Finland and abroad. Over 90 percent of the personnel cost-reductions, are targeted to Finland.

CEO **Arto Tiitinen** says that instead of reductions, the company wants to use layoffs among other things because it wants to hold onto its employees for the future.

Last year Isku was scantily profitable. Its export grew 42 percent last year.

ISKU tells that the co-operations negotiations are part of a renewal program whereby it prepares for tightening competition and deteriorating market conditions.

"With the program, domestic furniture production and sales chain's competitiveness is ensured", the company reported on its release.

In addition to personnel expenses, the company saves for example from procurement, occupancy and installation costs.

Isku announced to boost sales and reform among other things its product development.

"It did not feel nice", comments, Isku's industrial chief shop steward **Harri Rummukainen**, the news of forthcoming co-operation negotiations. "Only on Wednesday, it will be seen in more detail, what they want."

Rummukainen has already been informed that Isku wants to carry out cost-reductions with layoffs, pension plans and by shortened working week, not with reductions.

According to preliminary information, Isku seems to be doing better than other companies that reduce their staff, says Rummukainen.

1.1 Research background

Legitimacy can be understood in multiple ways. Commonly it is associated with collective understanding, social acceptance, social order, sense of appropriateness, or social process (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Weber, 1978; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986, Suchman, 1995; Johnson, Dowd, & Ridgeway, 2006; Vaara, Tienari & Laurila, 2006). The process of legitimation is wherein something becomes legitimate, in other words, gains legitimacy. Norms, values and beliefs play an important role within which social order is constructed. Legitimacy is a central concept in organizational legitimation processes, and legitimacy has been an important focus in the previous research (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Suchman, 1995; Berger, Ridgeway, Fisek & Norman, 1998; Walker, 2004; Johnson et al., 2006; Vaara et al., 2006; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). Legitimacy plays an important role in day-to-day life and especially in organizational context. In organizational research, legitimacy is seen as a crucial element for organizations existence and survival (Walker, 2004; Suddaby, & Greenwood, 2005; Johnson et al., 2006). Their survival depends on legitimation of their actions and being socially accepted. Referring to legitimation as the process through which legitimacy as "a socially constructed sense of appropriateness" (Vaara & Monin, 2010, p. 3) is build. Legitimacy building occurs commonly in texts. Texts can encompass written, spoken, or other ways of expressing one's thoughts, feelings and understanding.

In the center of social construction of reality and legitimacy building, is language as an essential part in constituting social reality. (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Vaara et al. 2006. Meaning-making occurs through language and communication, and the observed everyday life becomes understandable when common language is used to interpret the experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). In this view, meanings and social reality that are continuously produced and reproduced create stable structures that are susceptible to change over time (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). A critical realist adoption of social construction analyzes the relationship between social structures, practices and events (Fairclough, 2005). Legitimation of an organization's status quo can be seen as an on-going social process between an organization and its surrounding social environment, within certain shared cultural beliefs, values, and norms (Suchman, 1995; Johnson et al., 2006; Vaara et al., 2006; Deephouse &

Suchman, 2008; Erkama & Vaara, 2010). The surrounding social structures include social actors and thus, the process is always collective (Berger et al., 1998).

The process of constructing social reality occurs in different discourses and social reality depends on a collective audience but might not be shared among individuals (Johnson et al., 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Legitimacy building is dependent on communication and scholars have lately turned their attention to examining discursive legitimation as a means for legitimacy (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Tienari, 2008; Vaara & Monin, 2010).

An analysis of the legitimation process from a discursive perspective begins with a notion that a sense of legitimacy is constituted in relation to discourses (Vaara & Tienari, 2008). Discourses are seen as sensemaking and sensegiving practices. Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) referred to sensegiving as a "process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (p. 442). At the same time, these practices constrain the actors' sensemaking and sensegiving of particular actions, but also enables them to utilize certain discourses for their own benefit (Vaara & Tienari, 2008, Vaara & Monin, 2010).

In this thesis, I have studied the practice of restructuring the employment situation by starting co-operation negotiations (hereafter, CONs). This is deeply set institution in the Finnish society, and is a prerequisite for large-scale layoffs or terminations, as specified in the Act on Co-operation within Undertakings[2]. As the practice of CONs has become generally accepted in society, it can remain stable and maintain a taken-for-granted status quo (Johnson et al., 2006). Institutionalization is the process of establishing a practice or activity as an institution, convention or norm through language in an organization or culture (Phillips, Lawrence & Hardy, 2004). Although, CONs have gained a taken-for-granted institutionalized status in the Finnish society, it does not necessarily make the practice legitimate.

Legitimation represents creation of understandable and acceptable actions in a specific surrounding environment (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara & Tienari, 2008). Traditionally, research has focused on certain issues that need to be legitimated but a critical realist perspective deals with social practices and power relations in a broader societal

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[2] http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/2007/en20070334.pdf

context (Fairclough, 2005; Vaara & Tienari, 2008). The power behind discourse focuses on how social orders of social institutions are shaped and constructed by relations of power within an order of discourse (Fairclough, 1989, p. 43). According to Hellgren et al. (2002) and Vaara and Tienari (2002) top managers have a stake in the public discussion to gain acceptance and legitimacy for their actions and talk. Mazza and Alvarez (2000) argued that media is an arena wherein the legitimacy of ideas and practices are produced. The role of media is not the mere diffusion of information but also the co-production and legitimation of information. Vaara et al. (2006) argued that "media as a sensemaking and legitimation arena" (p. 806) has received only a little attention.

Although, the fundamental nature of legitimacy is understood quite well, actual discursive practices and strategies in the legitimation process in the media can still provide fruitful opportunities. Mazza and Alvarez (2000) were studying the diffusion of management practices in media whereas Hellgren et al., (2002) and Vaara and Tienari (2002) were researching media's role from the mergers and acquisitions point of view. Vaara et al. (2006) and Vaara and Tienari (2008) examined discursive legitimation strategies in the context of industrial restructuring.

1.2 Research objective

This thesis aims to further the existing organizational research and literature by examining discursive (de)legitimation practices and strategies in the legitimation process, through which legitimacy is constructed. The broad objective is to understand the process of legitimation, rather than the (re)construction of the sense of legitimacy or illegitimacy.

To form an understanding of the legitimation process in establishing legitimacy or illegitimacy of co-operation negotiations in the Finnish Media, it is vital to see legitimacy as a key concept in constructing social acceptance and taken-for-grantedness (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Tienari, 2008). Legitimation process creates understandable and acceptable actions in a specific surrounding environment (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara & Tienari, 2008). Traditionally, research has focused on certain issues that need to be legitimated but a critical realist perspective deals with social practices and power relations in a broader societal context (Fairclough, 2005; Vaara & Tienari, 2008). According to

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A critical realist adoption of social construction analyzes the relationship between social structures, practices and events (Fairclough, 2005). By adopting a critical discourse analysis perspective, the research is able to depict how co-operation negotiations are legitimated or de-legitimated in the Finnish media (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Tienari, 2008; Vaara & Monin, 2010). The research is focused on the announcements of co-operation negotiations in Finland during the economic downturn 2008-2015 in different media outlets. Specifically, the goal is to understand the legitimation process in which the institutionalized practice of announcing co-operation negotiations is (de)-legitimated in the media.

Research question:

- How were discursive legitimation strategies used to legitimize or de-legitimize the announcements of co-operation negotiations in the Finnish media during the economic downturn in 2008-2015?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This study has six separate chapters. The first chapter introduces the research background and provides a quick review of the literature to the topic, states the research objective and question, and outlines the structure of the thesis. The second chapter is a thorough literature review related to the research. The literature review is separated into five parts: first, building an understanding of legitimacy in general; second, illustrating the legitimation process in which legitimacy is build; third, legitimation is depicted from discursive perspective; fourth, specific discursive legitimation strategies are explained; fifth and the last part covers media's role as a sensemaking and meaningmaking arena.

The third chapter outlines the methodological framework in this study. Firstly stating the ontological and epistemological standpoint, after which the research approach is explained and research site is presented. Lastly, critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method and theory is explained and used for the actual analysis process in this study. The analysis process consists of thematic analysis and textual analysis.

The next three chapters include the findings of the study, discussion of the findings, including practical implications, limitations of the study and future research suggestions. The final chapter concludes this thesis.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I address legitimacy and legitimation literature and theory. First, I build an understanding of legitimacy to comprehend the multidimensional processes of legitimation. After examining general legitimation processes thoroughly, I present more specific discursive legitimation literature, and show concrete strategies for legitimation. Finally, I scrutinize the intertwined relationship of action, text, discourse, and power in media.

2.1 Legitimacy

It is vital to understand legitimacy and how it is socially constructed to gain general social acceptance. The use of semiotic practices, language, and more specifically discourses within some cultural framework of beliefs, norms, and values play an important role in constructing legitimacy. The concept of legitimacy has been an important focus in organizational studies and many definitions have emerged along the years (Berger, Luckmann, 1967; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Suchman, 1995; Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Johnson, Dowd & Ridgeway, 2006; Vaara, Tienari & Laurila, 2006; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). In organizational research, legitimacy is seen as a crucial element for organizations existence and survival (Walker, 2004; Suddaby, & Greenwood, 2005, Vaara & Monin, 2010). It is a key concept in linking authority, ideology, and power in social structures, institutions, and practices (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bourdieu, 1990, Vaara & Monin, 2010).

Johnson et al. (2006) explained that the Weberian view associated legitimacy with social order wherein most people accept prevailing norms, values, and beliefs. Johnson et al. (2006) explained that individuals recognize others' support for this social order, thus the order is perceived like a genuine, objective social fact. Therefore, the individuals conduct themselves in accordance with that order, although they may privately disagree. In accordance with Johnson et al. (2006) explanation of the Weberian view, legitimacy can be seen as a structure that constrain and enable action but is also created and recreated by the actions (Jarzabkowski, 2004). Broadly shared institutionalized structures are often taken-for-granted, reproduced in everyday action and treated as legitimate (DiMaggio, 1997) In this sense, culturally embedded co-operation negotiations are seen as institutionalized structure and practice in Finland that is produced and reproduced in everyday practices and actions. As the practice of CONs has become generally accepted in society, it can remain stable and

maintain a taken-for-granted status quo (Johnson et al., 2006). Johnson et al. (2006) explained that "institutions are linked to a broader cultural framework of beliefs […] presumed to be so consensually accepted that they are objective social facts" (p. 56).

Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (p. 574). Thus, legitimacy can be seen as "a socially constructed sense of appropriateness" (Vaara & Monin, 2010, p. 3) wherein the role of social audience is acknowledged.

The sense of appropriateness is defined by different types of organizational legitimacies and it involves multiple dimensions within some social environment. According to Suchman (1995) legitimacy is divided into three dynamics; pragmatic, a straightforward value-adding and self-serving calculations of an organization's immediate audience; moral, a normative approval of organization's activities; and cognitive, build on comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness. All three types are generalized perceptions that organizations actions are desirable, proper and appropriate within a socially constructed cultural framework of norms, values and beliefs (Suchman, 1995).

Pragmatic legitimacy is divided into exchange, influence, and dispositional legitimacies. Within this view, legitimacy is seen as straightforward value-adding and self-serving judgments based on organization's stakeholders. Exchange legitimacy is seen as benefits addressed to the direct audience of the company and how this audience perceives these benefits. Influence legitimacy is perceived as support - not because individuals necessarily favor it - but for their greater good. Dispositional legitimacy depicts organizations as persons or individuals that shares actual individuals' values and are dependable. (Suchman, 1995).

Moral legitimacy manifests a normative assessment of an organization's operations, also whether it is doing morally acceptable things and improving societal prosperity. Moral legitimacy is divided into consequential, procedural, structural, and personal legitimacies. Consequential legitimacy explains that organizations should be judged based on their achievements. Procedural legitimacy acknowledges that organizations can gain legitimacy by adopting socially agreeable procedures. Structural legitimacy dictates that an organization is seen as valuable because its "structural characteristics locate it within a morally favored

taxonomic category" (Suchman, 1995, p. 581). Personal legitimacy is based on the acts of charismatic leaders and is seen as a temporary and distinctive phenomenon. (Suchman, 1995).

Cognitive legitimacy is divided into comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness, which rests on cognition instead of emotion, personal interest, or opinion. Comprehensibility depicts social environment as chaotic, wherein actors struggle to organize their thoughts and experiences into logical, comprehensible explanations and accounts. Those descriptions act as explanations of cultural models validating the existence of an organization and its undertakings. Taken-for-grantedness in contrast elucidates legitimacy as instilled institutions imprinted into audience's subconscious, which they do not question, or challenge. Taken-for-grantedness is the most discreet and the most potent source of legitimacy as stated by Suchman (1995, p. 583).

Suchman (1995) also introduced two approaches to legitimacy: the strategic, and the institutional approach. Strategic legitimacy is seen as "an operational resource … that organizations extract … from their cultural environments and that they employ in pursuit of their goals" (p. 576). In contrast to the strategic approach, institutional legitimacy is seen as "a set of constitutive beliefs" (p. 576) whereby "external institutions construct and interpenetrate the organization in every respect" (p. 576).

Strategic legitimacy is related to a managerial perspective in which organizations objective is to gain societal support for their actions by manipulating its cultural environment. Strategic legitimacy is a malleable resource that can be controlled to obtain certain organizational outcomes. Institutional legitimacy, on the other hand, is related to organizations' cultural pressures and social order that transcend organizations' purposive manipulation. Organizations are defined by the environment and cultural definitions rather than extracting legitimacy from them. According to the institutional approach, legitimization is synonymous to institutionalization. (Suchman, 1995). While, Johnson et al. (2006) conceptualized institutions as legitimate conventions.

2.2 Legitimation

Legitimation has been recognized as a fundamental process that acts as a basis for social organizations' existence and survival, yet the underlying general process has remained somewhat obscure (Berger et al., 1998; Johnson et al., 2006). According to Johnson et al. (2006) legitimation happens in a collective construction of social reality wherein parts of a social order are perceived as a consonant with norms, values, and beliefs that individuals acknowledge, and are broadly shared, whether or not individuals personally share them. Deephouse and Suchman (2008) generalized that (de)legitimation is the process wherein legitimacy of a subject is changed over time. Berger et al. (1998) argued that legitimation is

> "a process by which cultural accounts from a larger social framework in which a social entity is nested are construed to explain and support the existence of that social entity, whether that entity be a group, a structure of inequality, a position of authority or a social practice" (p. 380)

Legitimation of organization's status quo can be seen as an on-going social process between an organization and its surrounding social environment, within certain shared cultural beliefs, values, and norms (Suchman, 1995; Johnson et al., 2006; Vaara et al., 2006; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Erkama & Vaara, 2010). The surrounding social environment includes social actors and thus, the process is always a collective one (Berger et al., 1998).

Legitimation is also closely linked to institutionalization as shown in multiple studies (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999, Phillips et al, 2004, Vaara et al., 2006). Vaara et al. (2006) explained that legitimacy is a prerequisite for institutionalization, while simultaneously institutionalization contributes to legitimacy - thus, recognized and well-known practices and ideas are usually considered legitimate and specific legitimation is no longer needed.

Legitimacy is the result of this process and can be depicted as a general assumption that organization's actions are appropriate within socially constructed beliefs, values, and norms (Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy plays an important role in organizational institutionalization of specific practices, thus is a prerequisite for legitimation of co-operation negotiations. Institutionalized practice or idea is generally accepted in society, and it can remain stable and maintain a taken-for-granted status quo (Johnson et al., 2006; Vaara et al., 2006).

As legitimacy is a key concept in constructing social reality and taken-for-grantedness (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Tienari, 2008), the process of constructing social reality happens in different discourses. In addition, social reality depends on a collective audience, but may not be shared among individuals (Berger at al., 1998; Johnson et al., 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Legitimation is dependent on communication, thus many scholars have turned their attention to examining discursive aspects as a means for legitimation (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Tienari, 2008; Vaara & Monin, 2010). Our understanding of legitimation processes has seen numerous advancements along the years (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Johnson et al., 2006,) and discursive approaches have gained popularity in social science and organization studies but more specific discursive processes in legitimacy building are not well-known and the literature is scarce (Vaara et al. 2006).

2.3 Legitimation in discursive perspective

Discursive approaches have seen a proliferation in social science, organization and management studies (Knights & Morgan, 1991; Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Fairclough, 2003; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Tienari, 2008; Joutsenvirta & Vaara, 2009; Vaara & Monin, 2010). Discourses are seen as central social practices wherein interdiscursivity, material conditions, and other social practices in discursive social analysis are emphasized (Vaara & Tienari, 2008, p. 986). Thus, texts and language should be considered in their social context as they both shape and are shaped by social processes within society.

The concept of discourse lies at the heart of this research. Knights and Morgan (1991) conceived discourse "as a set of ideas and practices which condition our ways of relating to, and acting upon, particular phenomena" (p. 253) whereas Phillips and Hardy (2002) defined discourse as "an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being" (p. 3). Thus, discourses are always constructed in particular social contexts and once they are recognizable, social practices emerge which reproduce the understanding of discourse as 'truth' (Knights & Morgan, 1991, p. 253). In this sense, "a discourse is the way an issue or a topic is 'spoken of'; furthermore, discourses produce objects such as 'globalization' " (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 230).

In other words, a discourse is always embedded in social practices and legitimation as discursive practice constructs social phenomena (Knights & Morgan, 1991; Joutsenvirta & Vaara, 2009; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Broadly, discourses figure in three ways in social practices (Fairclough, 2001; Fairclough, 2003). Firstly, it is a part of the social activity constituting genres. Genres refer to a particular way of framing discourse, using language and diverse ways of acting; examples include e.g. interviews, news pieces and speeches etc. Genres provide a framework for an audience to comprehend discourse. In addition to genres, Fairclough also distinguished discourse as representations of social world that is a crucial element in evaluating the ways by which supposedly identical parts of the world can be understood from various perspectives and they can create different meanings. In a way, practices are recontextualized. Lastly, styles are the ways of being in which discourse constitute identity, e.g. style of business manager or Finnish prime minister are both partly semiotically constructed. (Fairclough, 2001, p. 2; Fairclough, 2003, p. 206)

According to Fairclough (2003), social practices linked in a particular way constitute a social order and the discourse/semiotic aspect of a social order is what Fairclough called an order of discourse (p. 206). Order of discourse is the way wherein diverse genres, discourses and styles are connected together (Fairclough, 2003, p. 206). It is a "social structuring of semiotic differences – a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning, i.e., different discourse and genres and styles" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 206).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) concisely explained:

> CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

In contemporary society there are a plethora of discourses which actors can draw upon, and through which the power effects of discourses are reproduces (Knights & Morgan, 1991). Fairclough (1989) saw two critical aspects of power, power *in* discourse and power *behind* discourse (p. 43). Power in discourse focuses on the actual exercise of power in face-to-face communication, and the hidden power of the mass media. The power behind discourse focuses on how social orders of social institutions are shaped and constructed by relations of power within an order of discourse (Fairclough, 1989, p. 43). The possibility for numerous, intricate and conflicting interpretations introduces the question of power (Vaara & Tienari, 2002, p. 280). This can be understood through the notion of voices constituted in various discourses; whose voice heard, whose is marginalized and whose is not heard at all (Vaara & Tienari, 2002, p. 280).

Legitimation in a discursive perspective is that the sense of legitimacy is constituted in relation to discourses (Vaara & Tienari, 2008). Discourses are seen as sensemaking and sensegiving practices. At the same time, these practices constrain actors' sensemaking and sensegiving of particular actions, but also enables them to utilize certain discourses for their own purpose (Vaara & Tienari, 2008, Vaara & Monin, 2010). These pre-constructed boundaries influence, guide, and dominate actors, but allows actors to produce meaningful texts vis-à-vis to other texts.

To understand how this reciprocity occurs in texts, one has to analyze other texts and discursive actions. Intertextuality plays important role because one cannot completely understand texts and discursive actions without linking them to other texts and discourses (Hellgren et al., 2002; Vaara et al., 2006). Texts are more likely to influence discourses if they evoke other texts, while intertextuality enables texts to draw on other texts for legitimacy and meaning (Fairclough, 1992; Phillips et al., 2004).

2.4 Discursive legitimation strategies

Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) described four general categories of legitimation that can be used to legitimize and de-legitimize certain actions in texts (Van Leeuwen, 2007). These categories are part of discursive practices and called strategies by Vaara et al. (2006). Actors can utilize these strategies to convince and persuade audience through different semiotic practices. In this sense, legitimation strategies can be seen as "specific, not always intentional or conscious, ways of employing different discourses or discursive resources to establish legitimacy" (Vaara et al., 2006, p. 794). According to Van Leeuwen & Wodak (1999) these categories are authorization, rationalization, moral evaluation, and mythopoesis.

According to Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) in the authorization category, legitimation occurs by reference to authority, regulation, law, tradition, or person in whom institutional authority is vested. Rationalization is legitimation by reference to the utility of the social practice or action, and to the knowledge of what is considered normal in society. Moral evaluation is legitimation by reference to abstract and oblique value systems. Mythopoesis is legitimation through narratives and storytelling.

Vaara et al. (2006) utilized Van Leeuwen and Wodak's categorization to further develop legitimation strategies that are used in the media. Vaara et al. (2006) separated normalization from 'conformity authorization', linked to customs and traditions, and from 'theoretical rationalization', linked to moral values and social prejudice as common-sense facts (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Van Leeuwen, 2007). According to Vaara et al. (2006) normalization requires special acknowledgement of rendering something normal. In addition, mythopoesis is renamed as narrativization due to the particular focus on dramatic portraying of winners, losers, and heroes in their prior research material (Vaara et al., 2006). Discursive strategies are depicted in table 2.

Table 1. Discursive legitimation strategies (Adapted from Vaara et al. 2006, p. 804)

	Individual texts	**Intertextual totality**	**Power implications**
Normalization	Exemplifies 'normal' function or behavior	Establishes recurring examples	Institutionalization of specific examples
Authorization	Authorizes claims	Establishes recurring authorizations and authorities	Institutionalization of specific authorities and marginalization of others
Rationalization	Provides the rationale	Establishes recurring rationalities	Institutionalization of specific rationalities
Moralization	Provides the moral and ideological basis	Establishes recurring moralities and ideologies	Institutionalization of specific moralities and ideologies
Narrativization	Provides a narrative structure to concretize and dramatize	Establishes recurring narrative and drama structures	Institutionalization of specific kinds of narratives and dramas

2.5 Media as a sensemaking and sensegiving arena

According to Mazza and Alvarez (2000), media is an arena wherein the legitimacy of ideas and practices are produced. The role of media is not the mere diffusion of information but also the co-production and legitimation of information (Mazza & Alvarez, 2000). Mazza and Alvarez (2000) were studying the diffusion of management practices in media whereas Hellgren et al., (2002) and Vaara and Tienari (2002) were researching media's role from the mergers and acquisitions point of view. They have all concluded that media texts in contemporary societies are constructing meanings, and promoting certain versions of 'reality' while excluding others. Thus, it is apparent that media's practices hold great meaning and significance in society.

Although, the decision to begin co-operation negotiations is made by the company executives, the phenomenon occurs in a wider social environment and societal context wherein various 'realities' (interpretations) are possible (Hellgren et al., 2002). In this context, the media provides an arena for both a sensemaking and a sensegiving (Hellgren et al., 2002; Vaara & Tienari, 2002). Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) referred to sensegiving as a "process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (p. 442). Hellgren et al. (2002) argued that media texts are amidst in constituting and reconstituting organizational change.

As media – or more concretely journalists – are promoting certain versions of 'reality' in media texts in different ways, the question of power arises (Hellgren et al., 2002; Vaara & Tienari, 2002). According to Vaara et al. (2006) journalists act as gatekeepers of messages and "have a great deal of power to decide what issues to raise, which perspectives to take, whom to give voice to, which voices to marginalize, and what to leave unsaid" (p. 794). In contrast, this power position should not be overemphasized, as the journalists are dependent on their sources and audiences (Vaara et al., 2006). Consequently, different discursive strategies can become actualized in media texts. Therefore, the media is not a neutral sense-maker and sense-giver (Mazza & Alvarez, 2000; Vaara & Tienari, 2002; Hellgren et al., 2002).

According to Hellgren et al. (2002) and Vaara and Tienari (2002) top managers have a stake in the public discussion to gain acceptance and legitimacy for their actions and talk. In addition, the media tends to focus on managers' actions, and for that, they become gatekeepers of the information discussed in public (Hellgren et al., 2002; Vaara & Tienari, 2002). Consequently, a peculiar power position is created for the managers vis-à-vis other actors (Hellgren et al., 2002; Vaara & Tienari, 2002).

> If the media reports and reproduces the managers' thoughts concerning a need for industrial restructuring and a demand for creation of competitive strength, this easily convinces the reader of the necessity of the merger […] in turn, if the media focus on the employment concerns and emphasize the loss of jobs, the image may become negative (Vaara & Tienari, 2002, p 281).

Researchers then have to locate discourses in media texts, and make account for and expose which voices become dominant, which are marginalized and which are absent in these discourses as different discourses enable various (Hellgren et al., 2002; Vaara & Tienari, 2002).

3 METHODOLOGY

The broad objective of this research is to understand legitimacy and legitimation construction. On that account, a well-defined and constructed methodological approach is needed. The following chapter is built on the premise that Finland has been in an economic

downturn since 2008. Finland's GDP per capita (2010 PPPs) was still in 2015 less than it was in 2008 (OECD statistics)[3]. Group terminations of employment and news about co-operation negotiations have grown abruptly. Between 2008 and 2015, the average number of companies announcing co-operation negotiations grew drastically compared to previous two years; 2006 and 2007.

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology used in this research. The chosen methodological approach is based on its appropriateness in relation to the research objectives. According to Merrian-Webster definition, methodology is "a set of methods, rules, or ideas that are important in a science or art". Thus, a methodology is a broad system of methods, ideologies, ideas, and ways of interpreting and analyzing the data in an appropriate manner. Following this definition, the chosen methods and prevailing ideas will be explained and justified in this chapter.

To begin with, I form an ontological and epistemological standpoint based on Berger and Luckmann's social construction of reality. This forms the basis of the whole research and acts as core ideological approach. After the fundamental premise of this study is built base on social construction, I conducted a thorough walkthrough of the general research approach. The next parts include an investigation of research site and data collection in which I conduct a quick analysis of Finland's economic situation and co-operation negotiations. The research site combines a short history about co-operation negotiations, an introduction of the chosen media outlets for this research, and an elucidation of the nature of the empirical data. Finally, critical discourse analysis as a research method is exemplified and discussed in depth. The critical discourse analysis is the core of this research and the basis for the findings and discussion.

3.1 Ontology and epistemology

The very nature of this study is based on social constructionism and more concretely on the critical realist social ontology (Fairclough, 2005). The roots of social constructionism as a first cohesive concept found its hold in Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of*

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[3] http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=PDB_LV

Reality book in 1967. Some fundamental doctrines within social constructionism culminates to the reciprocity between people and the surrounding environment:

> People make their social and cultural worlds at the same time these worlds make them […] and […] taken-for-granted realities are produced from interactions between and among social agents […] furthermore, reality is not some objectifiable truth waiting to be uncovered […] rather, there can be multiple realities that compete for truth and legitimacy. (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 173-174).

In this view, meanings and social reality – or rather, realities – that are continuously produced and reproduced, create stable structures that are susceptible to change over time (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), knowledge is developed, communicated and preserved in social situations in a process through which a taken-for-granted reality congeals for the public.

In social constructionism, language is an essential part in constituting reality. Meaning making occurs through language and communication, and the observed everyday life becomes understandable when common language is used to interpret the experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). According to Fairclough (2001) "language is a part of society […] language is a social process […] and language is a socially conditioned process" (p. 22) in which properties of discourse are determined by social conditions. Fairclough (2001) also argued that all linguistic phenomena are social but not all social phenomena are linguistic.

The fundamental role of language is well understood and many organizational and institutional studies have taken a linguistic turn to examine discourses in different organizational contexts (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; van Dijk, 2001; Fairclough, 2003; Phillips et al., 2004; Fairclough, 2005; Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Monin, 2010). Most extreme social constructivism and postmodernist ontological views reduce the study of organizations to the study of discourse (Fairclough, 2005). On the other hand, critical realist social ontology adopts less extreme view for analysis of discourse. A critical stance analyzes the relationship between social structures, practices and events. "The concern in research is with the relationship and tension between pre-constructed social structures, practices, identities, orders of discourse, organizations on the other hand, and processes, actions, events on the other" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 923).

This study follows a critical realist approach in which realism acknowledges that a real world and a real social world exists in their own right, with or without or knowledge of it (Fairclought, 2005, p. 922). Fairclough (2005) explains that the social and natural worlds differ in that the former but not the latter is dependent on human action for its existence and is socially constructed (p. 922). Thus, there is a common social world for any human being but how it appears differ from people to people, based on what kind of social practices and discourses people have been part of and have taken part on.

Social practices are "more or less durable and stable articulations of diverse social elements, including discourses" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 922) and act as mediating constituents between processes, events and structures of social world. According to Fairclough (2005) social practices are entwined together in obvious and changing ways by institutions, organizations and social fields. In critical realist approach, human agency is an important entity that reproduces or transforms existing structures and practices (Fairclough, 2005). The approach aims "at explaining social processes and events in terms of the causal powers of both structures and human agency and the contingency of their effects" (Fairclough, 2005, p.923).

3.2 Research approach

This research is a qualitative case study, which examines social life and phenomena in the real instances. A case study is an appropriate way to approach the research question under scrutiny. Case study research has long-standing roots among diverse academic disciplines (Gerring, 2004; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Eriksson & Koistinen, 2014). A case study is defined as "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (Gerring, 2004, p. 342).

A case study is characterized by clearly defined boundaries and the emphasis is on the production of elaborate and holistic knowledge (Tellis, 1997; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). This research is characterized by both intensive and extensive features in their traditional sense. Intensive, in a sense, that the focus is on profound understanding of how discursive legitimation strategies in a specific co-operation negotiations phenomenon are used. Extensive, in a sense, that the focus is not a single case but on multiple cases. In other words, the nature of this qualitative research is more towards a descriptive research and it attempts to explore and explain 'how' something is, rather than 'why' it is.

Qualitative research tends to be mostly exploratory research to gain an understanding of underlying reasons and a systematic generation of new theory based on the data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). This study is not focused on building a cohesive theory but on expanding the extant literature and understanding of discursive strategies in a specific context. Although, it is imperative to explore the underlying reasons of discursive legitimation strategies, the bottom line is to be able to explain how the strategies were used. For that reason, this study takes an abductive approach to gain and further the current understanding. Abduction is based on a logical inference of the empirical data (hence sensible and scientific), and on profound insight (thereby produces new knowledge), (Reichertz, 2004).

The aim of this research is to explore discursive legitimation strategies in the legitimation process, which is used in the construction of legitimacy or illegitimacy of the co-operation negotiations in Finland. In such case, a descriptive multiple case study coupled with abductive reasoning is optimal for producing logical and innovative inference of different social phenomena, such as the relations between discourses, social structures, practices and events.

This research's ontological nature views social phenomena as "socially constructed, i.e. people's concepts of the world they live and act within contribute to its reproduction and transformation; and that social phenomena are socially constructed in discourse" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 915-916) which is the basis of social constructionism and critical realism as Fairclough (2005) illustrated. In general, social practices and the use of language are interconnected, which may be imperceptible in social life. This acts as the foundation of critical approach and the goal of critical analysis is to infer the mediating role of discourses in (re)producing beliefs, values and norms – and in this case, legitimacy.

In general, society cannot avoid this setting but the same goes for researchers. The research is conducted and empirical data is gathered and analyzed in a larger societal and social environment in which different practices, power structures, norms, beliefs, and values affect the researcher. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasized that "researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments" (p. 84) which is also true in this study

The objective of critical discourse analysis is to study the relations between discourse and other elements of society, "including how changes in discourse can cause changes in other elements" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 924). This reciprocity is at the very core of the critical approach. CDA allows one to study the power relations and the consequences between social structures, language, discourse and human agency (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997) language is a social practice. The context where language is used is a crucial notion that can be divided into two: verbal context, referring to the text at hand, and social context, referring to the immediate physical and social setting in which the text is produced. Thus, cultural meanings are conveyed through language and semiotic practices; therefore, discourse analysis is not focused on the study of language per se, but on social action mediated through language (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this research, the power effects of discourses are acknowledged but it is emphasized that the person can do otherwise which changes discourses as people change and adapt the requisites of the reproduction process (Knights & Morgan, 1991).

This study will follow a critical discourse perspective, which is an important part of organizational studies (Fairclough, 2005; Vaara, Tienari & Laurila., 2006, Vaara & Monin, 2010), as this will allow an investigation on discursive legitimation strategies used to achieve legitimacy or illegitimacy (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara, Tienari & Laurila, 2006; Erkama & Vaara, 2010). The research will adopt a critical realist approach to study whether or not there is a relation between legitimation strategies and media outlets. Thus, to see if each media outlet is prone to use a certain legitimation strategy. This multi-methodological approach will be the framework of this study.

3.3 Research site and empirical data

In order to study legitimation strategies, the research is focused on co-operation negotiations between 2008 and 2015 in Finland. This research is a case study that focuses on Finnish media outlets between 2008 and 2015. During the observation period, Finland has been in an economic downturn while co-operation negotiations and personnel reductions news have been abundant. The research setting provides an interesting and broad set of unique cases, which can be investigated.

Co-operation negotiations are held, according to the Act on Co-operation within Undertakings, between the employees or their representative and employer with a minimum of 20 regular employees. CONs have a relatively long history in Finland and the presence of labor unions is strong. The labor force is extremely unionized and trade union density is close to 70 percent (OECD statistics)[4] which is the second highest in the world after Iceland. Third being Sweden and fourth Denmark according to the latest available data.

Historically, the emphasis on co-operation negotiations was in the interaction between employees and employer. The image and perception of co-operation negotiations used to be positive. However, Finland was hit by one of the worst economic crises in its history - the early 1990s recession. The unemployment rose from 3% to 20% (Honkapohja, Koskela, Gerlach & Reichlin, 1999) and GDP plummeted drastically. Since, co-operation negotiations have had negative associations, and generally equated to personnel reductions and layoffs.

The collected articles represent the very first pieces of news about a specific co-operation negotiation case that was announced by a company and covered in both media outlets. The intent is to analyze specifically how media introduces the news in the first story that was written about the co-operation negotiation announcements, and how discursive strategies are used in those articles.

The information about companies' co-operation negotiations (Finnish: yhteistoiminta-neuvottelut) since 2006 has been collected by the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, (Finnish: SAK, Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö). The statistics are based on public announcements of co-operation negotiations and their results. The statistics is accessible through their website[5]. The file is open to the public and the information is gather into an Excel file. It contains thousands of CON announcements with exact dates, names of the companies, and personnel reduction concerns and needs. This compilation file enabled an easy access to look for five unique cases for each year between 2008 and 2015. Thus, a total of 40 unique CON situations were chosen in which case companies have decided to make redundant some of its employees.

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[4] https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=UN_DEN
[5] https://www.sak.fi/aineistot/tilastot/yt-ja-irtisanomistilastot/irtisanomisia-lomautuksia-ja-yt-neuvotteluja-2006-2011

The chosen companies and their need for personnel reduction were above average during the 2008-2015 observation period except for one case. The average for personnel reductions during the observation period was between 70 and 80 persons according to the file compiled by SAK. Within the chosen 40 cases, the average need for reductions were slightly over 400 persons. Thus, 39 cases had a major impact compared to the average while the only exception had significant local impact because the size of the municipality is extremely small in which the reductions took place.

Between 2008 and 2015 the average number of co-operation negotiation announcements were approximately 400, whereas 2006 and 2007 together had only 289 announcements, see figure 1 for each year's announcements. This is a clear indication of Finland's prolonged and worsened economic situation and provides an intriguing opportunity to research media's legitimation practices.
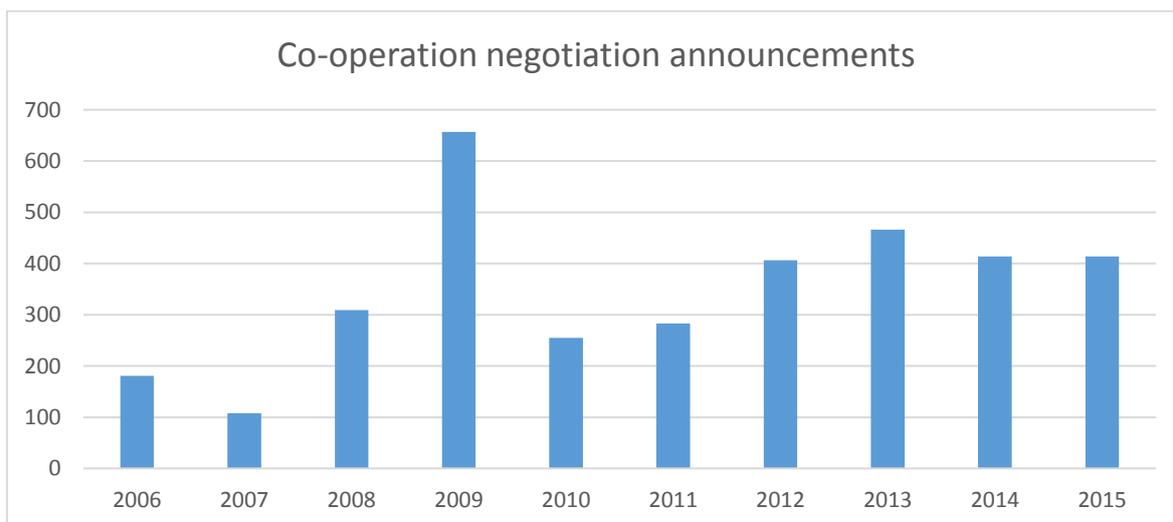

Figure 1. Yearly CON announcements in Finland

For gathering data/media material, two different media outlets were chosen. The chosen daily media outlets are Helsingin Sanomat (HS) and Yle. These media outlets were chosen because of their underlying differences and each respective news source is owned by different media group. Helsingin Sanomat is privately owned and regarded as the most prestigious print media in Finland. Yle is state-owned national public-broadcasting company without daily print.

All of the Yle news articles were found with Google's search function by searching the organization name, date and Yle, e.g. '*Aalto University 10.11.2015 Yle'*. Helsingin Sanomat

has its own archive for searching print media news pieces. Yle media's publications are only available on the internet and Yle does not have a print newspaper. The chosen Helsingin Sanomat articles are all based on the actual print newspaper. See table 2, for summary of the media.

Table 2. Description of the chosen media

Media	Description	Articles
Helsingin Sanomat (HS)	Leading daily newspaper by circulation - Printed articles, privately owned	40
Yleisradio Oy – Yle	Finnish national news media - Online articles, state-owned	40

3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis as research method

Critical discourse analysis (hereafter, CDA) is a method as much as a theory (Fairclough, 2001) which stresses power relations and the consequences between social structures, language, discourse and human agency (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The CDA analysis is the core of this research and discourses are seen as central social practices wherein interdiscursivity, material conditions, and other social practices in discursive social analysis are emphasized (Vaara & Tienari, 2008, p. 986).

The method of critical discourse analysis "allows one to shift attention from established legitimacy to the discursive sense making processes through which legitimacy is established" (Vaara & Monin, 2010, p. 5). Simply put, this means that particular actors attempt to convince and persuade others through different kinds of semiotic and rhetorical moves (Vaara et al., 2006).

The very nature of CDA is abductive; it requires a logical approach to theoretical and empirical data, yet innovative inference of the findings (Reichertz, 2004; Vaara et al., 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). CDA requires a constant assessment and reassessment of both theory and empirical knowledge (Wodak, 2004). Furthermore, there is no single uniform application of scientific research of how CDA should be conducted, thus, a precise definition of the analysis method is challenging. According to Fairclough (2001), CDA should be seen as a theory or theoretical perspective, rather than a transferable skill or method as such it can be easily understood. This study follows Fairclough's perspective that

CDA is as much a theory as it is a method, and it has to be connected with a specific context to produce meaningful interpretations. In this study, the context wherein discourses will be critically analyzed is Finnish co-operation negotiations between 2008 and 2015.

Critical perspective links legitimation to current political struggles through power relations of the actors involved in particular societal and organizational contexts (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara & Tienari, 2008, Vaara & Monin, 2010). Therefore, the critical perspective in discourse analysis examines socially constructed power relations and domination in present-day society (Vaara & Tienari, 2008).

According to Vaara et al. (2006) five essential features of CDA can be distinguished. First, the aim of CDA is at unveiling "taken-for-granted assumptions on social, societal, political, and economic spheres and examines power relationships between various kinds of discourses and actors" (Vaara et al., 2006, p. 793) Second key issue is contextuality in CDA. Fairclough explained that discourses should be studied from textual, discursive practice, and social practice levels. Third feature is intertextuality, which refers to the interrelation between texts through references such as quotations and citations (Fairclough, 2003; Wu, 2011; Koskela, 2013). These elements are explicit textual features.

> The most common and pervasive form of intertextuality is reported speech (including reported writing and thought) […] Reported speech may or may not be attributed to specific voices, and speech (writing, thought) can be reported in various forms, including direct (reproduction of actual words used) and indirect report (summary) (Fairclough, 2003, p. 219).

Fourthly, discourses are not neutral as they are linked with ideologies and hegemonies. "Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9).

Finally, an interdiscursive approach is to be taken to understand the discursive construction of social phenomena. Interdiscursivity can be defined as a mix of various discourses (ways of representing aspects of the world), genres (various ways of discursively interacting), or styles (ways of being) related with social events and practices in a single text (Fairclough, 2003; Vaara et al., 2006; Bhatia, 2010; Wu, 2011). CDA aims to

systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power (Fairclough 1995, p. 132).

Although, there is no straightforward way of implementing CDA, two important steps are taken from Vaara et al. (2006) and Van Leeuwen and Wodak's (1999) models for the media context. To begin with, a thematic analysis, the news articles are analyzed and presented based on the discussed topics and issues. This ensures in depth understanding of the articles and themes. After the thematic analysis, a textual analysis of the legitimation strategies is carried out. It was necessary to understand how specific themes were actually used for legitimation or delegitimation purposes.

3.4.1 Thematic analysis

A critical media analysis is optimal to start with thematic analysis as this allows the identification of specific topics in the texts (Vaara et al., 2006). With the analysis, a broad set of news articles can be organized into specific themes, based on the discussed issues and topics. Thematic analysis is used for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The provided analysis is the core of the whole research because it leads to a general understanding of what themes have been discussed, and reveals the most common and prevailing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A couple of different dimensions characterize thematic analysis: inductive versus theoretical analysis, and semantic versus latent themes according to Braun and Clarke (2006). In the inductive approach, the themes are strongly linked to the data themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). The data have been collected specifically for the research and the themes may bear little relation to the research questions of the study. Thus, inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into researcher's analytic preconceptions, or a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006). On the contrary, researcher's theoretical or analytical interests drives theoretical analysis and it is more analyst-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theoretical analysis usually provides less rich

description of the overall data, but more detailed description of some aspect of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The second dimension between semantic and latent themes distinguishes at which level the themes are identified. A semantic approach identifies themes with explicit meanings of the data. Usually, the analysis process progresses from simple description to interpretation of the themes, to understand their meanings and implications (Braun & Clarke, 2006). On the contrary, the latent approach "goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – and ideologies – that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke, p. 84).

In summary, this study is characterized by what Braun and Clarke (2006) called, inductive analysis but also a straightforward semantic approach during the thematic analysis and later on continues to develop an understanding at a latent level to understand meaning between the themes and legitimation strategies.

3.4.2 Textual analysis

The final step of the analysis process is an overall textual analysis to understand how distinguished themes were utilized for (de)legitimating co-operation negotiations and layoffs decisions. To understand the used (de)legitimation strategies, a textual perspective is inevitable for analyzing and interpreting the meaning of the distinguished themes in media texts. The focus is on the texts written and authored by the journalists and on the discursive legitimation strategies used to construct the texts. The focus is not on the strategies used and employed by other social actors to whom a voice is given.

An analysis of the legitimation strategies used - intentionally or unintentionally - in the media texts was done, and a categorization is based on their frequency in the material. Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and Vaara et al. (2006) articles' seminal work on discursive legitimation strategies, made it possible to analyze the textual material from their perspectives but at the same time look for distinguishing new features. Concretely, the previous research enabled the comparison between Helsingin Sanomat and Yle news articles. Without predefined frame for analyzing the articles, it would have been difficult to form a coherent categorization of the used legitimation strategies for comparison. However, rather

than simply searching for predefined legitimation strategies per se, I tried linking them with journalistic practices as Vaara et al. (2006) did. This led to a new discovery between so-called factual news and taken-for-granted institutional practice in case of co-operation negotiations.

3.4.3 The analysis process

I started the analysis process by reading the articles and immersing myself into the data. I approached the media material systematically on a yearly basis starting from 2015 Helsingin Sanomat news articles and continuing the analysis year-by-year until 2008. During the immersion of the data, I took preliminary notes based on the discussed issues and topics. After I had waded through all of the HS articles, I conducted the same approach for Yle articles and took preliminary notes. Thus, the first phase revolved around familiarizing the empirical material without a specific outcome.

The second phase of the thematic analysis involved re-reading the articles and generating initial codes based on the previously taken notes. I defined a code as "a label attached to a section of text to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data which the researcher has identified as important to his or her interpretation" (Symon & Casell, 1998, p. 119). The coding phase was conducted in an inductive manner in which no pre-existing coding frame was utilized. During the coding phase, I first coded interesting and meaningful features of the data set into summarized captions of each news article. For example, I coded the following vignette into 'centralization of operations' and 'selling of business operations':

> The company centralized already earlier this year its operations, for that reason the number of personnel shrank by 55. The group wound-up tableware production Kerman Savi and sold its building stone business. (Helsingin Sanomat, 23 December 2011).

After I had generated the initial codes (summarized captions), it was possible to form a rough categorization of the codes by bundling up all similar captions. After I had acquired a general idea about the discussed topics and issues and formed a rough categorization, it was possible to begin collating the codes into potential themes. The preliminary themes stem from the coded empirical data by gathering all relevant codes into each potential theme. For example,

I labeled the following codes: 'recession' and 'tightened competition' under the same theme because of their similar aspects in regards to the Finnish economic situation.

The next step was to review the themes in a relation to the coded extracts. The final part of thematic analysis consisted of defining and naming the themes. The final part is an ongoing process and takes meticulous attention in refining the themes. The process revolves around the initial notes, coded data and the preliminary themes within the whole data set of Helsingin Sanomat for example. For the sake of clarity, it was best to separate Yle and HS themes and codes from one and another. In addition, the codes vary between HS and Yle, although the themes were more or less the same. Table 3 shows the phases which can be identified to clarify the thematic analysis process.

Table 3. Phases of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts
5. Defining and naming the themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme

At this point of the analysis, a certain level of dichotomy between legitimation and de-legitimation was clearly noticeable. I divided the identified and analyzed codes and themes between legitimation and de-legitimation to the best possible understanding and recognition, see Table 4.

Each legitimation theme consists of multiple codes, and usually each code was recognized in several articles. For example, the 'environment' theme of HS comprises five separate codes: industrial transformation, internet age, government action, 3rd party involvement, and stock market. Each of these codes were found in several HS articles. Thus, each theme is a bundle of few codes, and each code is a bundle of few similar events. On the other hand, the

themes for de-legitimation is a bundle of few codes but a specific code was, in most cases, only found once among the data set.

Table 4. Identified themes

	HS	Yle
Legitimation	Environment	Company
	Company	Organization
	Economic	Environment
	Organization	Economic
	CSR	CSR
	Finland	
De-legitimation	Emotion	Emotion
	Finance	Other
	Moral	
	CSR	
	Other	

Each theme has certain distinctive attributes but the meanings may be somewhat obscure. If looking at the 'company' and 'organization' simply as words, their definitions are partially overlapping, thus there is a need to define the themes. As noted on Table 3, the defining and naming of the themes is an ongoing process, and by no means were the definitions predetermined while reading and re-reading the empirical material for this study. I formed the themes after rigorous and meticulous analysis of the data. For instance, if the news article clearly said that the profits had plummeted or the company had made losses, or in some other way mentioned profits/losses as a reason for CONs, then those were labeled under profits code. The issues and topics were coded similarly between HS and Yle articles, in order to understand and analyze the different legitimation strategies. A bundle of different codes became a theme that consists of similar topics and issues.

Themes for legitimation

Company

Under the company theme, I gathered various topics and issues that are directly related to the company announcing the beginning of CONs in each article. The news article clearly

addressed some concrete action behind the CONs that the company is planning on taking. The most frequently found codes were: Centralization & streamlining of certain operations, Viability, and Profits. The company wants to increase viability or the profits have plummeted, thus the CONs are taking place.

Environment

The reasons and causes for CONs within this theme are due to some outside force in which case the company has no control over, excluding economic factors. Most common environmental reasons: Industrial change, Internet age, Competition, Digitalization and 3rd party actions.

Economic

This theme is similar to Environment in which case the company's announcement for CONs are out of its hands because of the ongoing economic reasons. Most common economic reasons: Economic situation, Recession, Decreased demand, and Economic growth.

Organization

Organization as a theme is similar to Company theme where the reasons for CONs are related directly to the company but are abstract in nature. There is no clear line between abstract and concrete but the reasons for CONs are obscure and could be seen as management jargon or business jargon in Organization theme. Such themes as Organizational re-structuring, Renewal program, Competitiveness and Savings plan were amongst the most commonly found topics and issues. These can be seen more like a strategic level decision that have led to the CONs whereas within the Company theme, the reason are more concrete.

CSR

CSR stands for Corporate Social Responsibility and within this theme, the coded topics and issues revolve around making the CONs as smooth as possible by letting go of part-timers, early retirements, or also cutting costs from IT and not just by terminating employment. Overall, the purpose is to show that the companies are doing their best to maintain corporate social responsibility.

Finland

The Finland theme is a combination of issues and topics that are similar to the Environment theme but are specifically focused on Finland. For example, unemployment in Finland, Finland's attractiveness as a market or a place to do business, or most commonly the cost competitiveness of Finland.

Themes for de-legitimation

Themes that were discover for de-legitimation purposes differ from themes that were labeled under legitimation. Similarities between the two were found but only CSR could be named for both legitimation and de-legitimation.

Emotion

As the name indicates, the coded extracts refer to emotions at different levels by either giving voice to a person, or portraying the future gloominess. For instance, a union representative were given voice, and he is quoted saying that the reductions surprised and people are shocked. For example, the articles mention the upcoming hard times that are making people frightened or the youth have lost faith of better future. Most common code referred people being shocked.

Financial

Financial arguments denounce the plans for CONs by contradicting the need altogether or demanding other solutions than just personnel reductions. Half of the codes emphasized that the companies are profitable and there should not be a need for CONs.

Moral

The company actions were seen in a morally questioning light in the articles. Typically either by reaping cost-savings from employees' skin or by questioning the previous actions of the companies. The previous actions were seen as measures only to ensure the current situation, e.g. using a political figure to ensure that job cuts would be avoided but now CONs are

occurring, thus giving false information or hope just to pull the rug from under employees' feet.

CSR

A complete opposite to CSR in legitimation side. Union leaders, employee representatives or employees disparage the companies by clearly stating that there is not much left of corporate social responsibility or employer image. In addition, corporate social responsibility is undermined by voicing that Finnish labor is not appreciated or people trusted the company.

As I have depicted above, the thematic analysis as the first phase of CDA provided a clear indication towards legitimation and de-legitimation. The themes are a combination of the issues and topics that the journalists have decided to address. Finding the codes and themes provided a strong basis to analyze concretely, how the discursive legitimation strategies were used.

In the second phase, I conducted an overall textual analysis to see how the themes are used for legitimation purposes. The textual analysis allowed me to compare the distinguished codes and themes to different discursive legitimation strategies. The first phase of the analysis process only provided a preliminary dichotomy between themes for legitimation and themes for de-legitimation. In the second phase, I was able to connect the dots between the codes, themes and legitimation strategies.

Based on the preliminary dichotomy of legitimation and de-legitimation themes, I was able to connect the issues, topics and themes to each discursive legitimation strategy by re-reading the articles and by comparing the results of the thematic analysis to legitimation strategies. Thus, an overall textual analysis is indispensable.

In addition, in the previous research, Vaara et al. (2006) narrowed down their material by removing so-called 'factual' news pieces. These articles provide little or no value according to the authors. Among the chosen articles in this study, these purely factual and general pieces of news account for almost a fourth of all articles. This requires thorough analysis to

understand what practical implications this might have and what potential future research aspects it could generate.

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present the results of the critical discourse analysis. Based on Vaara et al. (2006) categorization, all five types of discursive legitimation strategies were found. I organized the strategies from most to least common: Rationalization, Authorization, Moralization, Normalization, and Narrativization. In addition to previously discovered categorization, I made a new connection between so-called factual news and construction of legitimacy as taken-for-granted institutional practice in case of co-operation negotiations. In the last chapter, the differences between the media outlets are highlighted.

It is also important to note that majority of the analyzed news articles contain multiple strategies based on the distinguished themes, thus the total number of discovered strategies exceed the amount of the articles. See figure 2, for a detailed breakdown of the discovered discursive legitimation strategies.
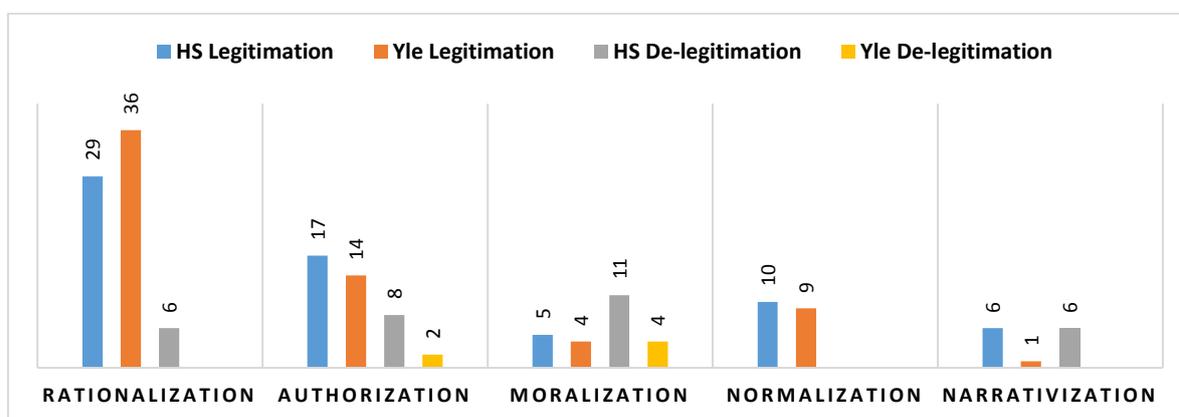

Figure 2. Discursive (de)-legitimation strategies discovered in the media

It is clearly shown in figure 2 that rationalization and authorization alone account for two-thirds of all cases recognized in the articles. The prevalence is noticeable in many articles in a way that most of the articles contained several different strategies. In the following part, I will explain each strategy and include clear examples of how legitimation or de-legitimation are used.

After the legitimation strategies have been brought to light, the newly found connection between general or factual articles and construction of legitimacy is explained. The previous research dismissed and removed factual news-like pieces from the empirical material for being irrelevant (Vaara et al. 2006). However, this study is highlighting the possibility that factual articles have a role in construction of legitimacy that in turn leads to social acceptance and taken-for-grantedness.

In addition to above-mentioned findings, on a side note, a general frame was found for construction a news article. A typical article begins with clear justifications are constructed in following fashion. Firstly, in the first couple of sentences, it is stated that CONs are taking place, the amount for the personnel reduction need is given, and a primary reason for legitimation is provided. Secondly, an explanation of company's upcoming actions and what ramifications this will have is discussed. Lastly, a larger arena for different legitimation or de-legitimation strategies is provided. Although, a rough structure can be depicted, it is by no means a comprehensive illustration. In addition, the articles are usually juxtaposing CONs with various nouns or expressions, e.g. savings plan, personnel reduction, job cuts, reduction need, layoffs – thus, the first few sentences may not mention CONs per se.

Rationalization

Rationalization is legitimation by reference to the utility of certain actions or practices. Rationalization appears as a straightforward and logical justification of the purposes, reasons, benefits, or outcomes that follow the co-operation negotiations, and can be referred as 'instrumental rationalization' as pointed out in previous research. This strategy legitimates the actions and practices by reference to the purposes and reasons, or the positive benefits and outcomes they may have. (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al. 2006, Van Leeuwen, 2007).

Rationalization is by far the most common discursive legitimation strategy found in this study. Approximately three-fourths of the articles stated some reasons and rationale behind CON announcements. Majority of these articles explicitly justify the CONs based on specific

rationale and is complemented with various other strategies. Articles purely based on rationalizations were also factual in nature - see 4.1 for further discussion.

The rationale and justifications are usually expressed through explicit explanations. An unequivocal reason or reasons are given which has led to co-operations negotiations at hand. The texts commonly use phrases like, 'the purpose is', 'a result of', 'the aim is', and the following examples clearly demonstrate this.

- "The university justifies the savings…" (Helsingin Sanomat, 10.11.2015)
- "The personnel reductions are a result of organization restructuring" (Helsingin Sanomat, 13.10.2015)
- "The background of co-operation negotiations is Sanoma's aspiration to…" (Helsingin Sanomat, 27.8.2014)
- "The reason is a decline in demand for printed matter…" (Yle, 11.1.2010)
- "The purpose is to improve price competitiveness and profitability." (Yle, 20.3.2013)
- "CONs' aim is to adapt the university's…" (Yle, 9.11.2015)

In addition to the explicit explanations, some of the texts implicitly rationalized the CONs. Implicit explanations do not clearly state the cause and effect that is seen amongst above illustrated examples of explicitness. In despite of missing a clear causal link, the implicit rationalizations virtually leave no room for interpretation. The following examples of implicit rationalizations clearly depict this unequivocalness:

- "In March, the entire Stockmann group's revenue fell by just under five per cent compared to last year." (Helsingin Sanomat, 16.5.2014)
- "New planes require heavy maintenance less frequently than the old planes, and Finnair cannot sell maintenance to outsiders because the work costs more in Finland than elsewhere in the world." (Helsingin Sanomat, 5.2.2011)
- "Due to the economic crisis, sales prospects at Tulikivi's primary market area continues to be challenging." (Yle, 31.10.2011)
- "Sanoma Media's plans include reorganization of delivery process, centralization of telecom sales operations to Vantaa and Oulu, as well as centralization of customer service operations to Vantaa in Magazine Media." (Yle, 26.8.2014)

These explicit and implicit phrases are often linked to economic and financial type rationalizations, which supports Vaara et al (2006) findings. In addition, the changes in the company's business environment are frequently used rationalizations. Factors such as, 'government actions', 'internet age', and 'industrial transformation' were the most commonly used among rationalizations based on business environment.

Authorization

Authorization is legitimation by reference to authority. The authority may be a person, perhaps the journalist or someone in whom institutionalized authority is bestowed on – a corporate representative, an expert, a professor, a union leader, etc. On the other hand, the authority may be inanimate, e.g. laws, conventions, or regulations. (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al., 2006, Van Leeuwen, 2007). In the material, by far the most common authority is a corporate representative.

In many cases, authorization was formed by either quoting or giving voice to CEO or other high-ranking company representative, union leader, or shop stewards. Labor union representatives and shop stewards were mainly given voice for de-legitimation purpose. In the texts, professors or experts were seldom utilized. In fact, only three times authority was formed by reference to an expert or professor. Interestingly, inanimate or impersonal authorities were a rarity amongst the rationalizations. Positive stock market reaction was mentioned twice and the law also twice by a person.

For example, the following quotes exemplify direct quotes:
- " 'It's reflecting the whole Finnish printing industry's competitiveness …', Ketonen said" (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 14.4.2010)
- " '…in order to adapt the university's finances with the new economic situation,' Kola says" (*Yle*, 17.9.2015)
- "Digital media is eating print media, and in addition, there is a structural weakness in Europe's economy…" (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 19.6.2013)
- " 'Market situation does not look like a turn for better would happened soon.' …CEO Leena Saarinen tells" (*Yle*, 31.3.2009)

Another way is to rephrase what the person said to fit the text without a direct quotation. This has more or less the same purpose as direct quotes and express personal authorization in the articles. For example, the following quotations demonstrate rephrased words in the texts:

- "According to Ketonen, the regression has shaken the industry severely." (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 14.4.2010)

- "According to Seppo Hämäläinen, the proposed legislative amendment has 'dramatic effects'…", (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 16.12.2010)

- "According to Hämäläinen, A-Katsastus' market share has fallen considerably." (*Yle*, 15.12.2010)

- "According to director general Kuisma Niemelä, SOK Corporation's service operations' income has been negative for several years…" (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 27.3.2013)

Among the articles, in which authorization for de-legitimation purpose was noticeable, the texts usually described the opposition or comment unexpected news in a straightforward fashion. Commonly, the voice was given to union chairman or shop steward.

- "…IAU's occupation section's chairman Jukka Korhonen believes Finnair's intentions to be alarming." (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 5.2.2011)

- "Itella's staff reductions threatens to jeopardize the statutory five-day mail delivery throughout the country, PAU's director Esa Vilkuna warns." (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 24.1.2014)

- "According to him, instead of reducing personnel the company should review critically for example its pricing" (Helsingin Sanomat, 16.12.2010)

Normalization

Normalization is legitimation by exemplarity. In Van Leeuwen and Wodak's (1999) categorization normalization is not a separate legitimation strategy. They considered *conformity legitimation* another form of authorization that dealt with customs and traditions as in 'everybody is doing it', and *the facts of life legitimation* a part of rationalization that seeks to find a truth as in 'the way things are'. (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al.,

2006, Van Leeuwen, 2007). Vaara et al. (2006) presented normalization as a primary category and the data in this study supports this classification.

In the texts, three distinct ways to render the CONs normal by exemplarity were found. First and foremost, the articles commonly referred to previous actions that the company had undergone in a similar fashion, or that the current CONs happening in Finland are no exception and the company is also cutting staff in other parts of the world. For example,

- "Ahlstrom will also stop manufacturing hybrid wallpaper materials at Turin plant in Italy. In addition, the operation in German Osnabrück factory manufacturing special papers will face streamlining. Both in Turin and Osnabrück co-operation negotiations will be held." (Helsingin Sanomat, 19.10.2011)
- "Last fall the company shut down its factory in Romania because the production was transferred to Asia." (Yle, 8.2.2012)

Secondly, some of the texts referred to similar events or phenomena taking place in Finland, other parts of the world or within the field. The following examples use authority to boast the case but those comments are clearly meant to render the company actions normal and acceptable because 'everybody is doing it'.

- "…Jouko Malinen believes that Digia's co-operation negotiations will not be the last of its kind. He reminds multiple IT companies have started co-operation negotiations this spring." (Helsingin Sanomat, 14.5.2011)
- "According to CEO Heikki Malinen, Finland is facing the same structural change that has happened in other Western countries previously" (Yle, 23.1.2014)

Lastly, the most distinctive but least used practice renders the case at hand normal by explicitly chosen similar cases. This is a clear way to build conformity, which leads to legitimation.

- "Earlier this fall, The University of Helsinki also announced the start of co-operation negotiations." (Yle, 8.11.2015)
- "In February, Kesko announced the closure of every third Anttila. Previously, Sokos Hakaniemi and Tapiola were shut down." (Helsingin Sanomat, 16.4.2014)

Moralization

Moralization is legitimation by reference to moral values. Usually, moralizations are linked to specific discourses of morals and values (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al., 2006, Van Leeuwen, 2007). In some cases, morality is simply expressed as 'good' or 'bad'. In addition, emotional elements, such as fear, disappointment or confusion were often combined with authority in case of de-legitimation. Moralization is also the only strategy used more often for de-legitimation than legitimation purpose in this study.

In case of expressing something as good, the texts usually explain that the company is doing everything to minimize job reductions. For example, looking for other savings targets, such as IT costs, rented premises, layoffs, or centralization of procurements. On the other hand, companies offer 'help' and bluntly say that they are doing everything they can to maintain corporate social responsibility, thus they are legitimated as good.

- "In addition to personnel reductions, the university strives to create other saving targets, reformation projects and means to generate new income. Savings are sought, among other things, by streamlining space utilization, reducing IT costs and centralizing procurements." (Helsingin Sanomat, 17.9.2015)
- "We maintain corporate social responsibility. We employ 28 000 people. To provide bread and butter for the majority, it means that something must be reduced." (Yle, 18.6.2013)

In contrary to legitimating the CONs as good, they are more often seen as bad. The company actions are de-legitimated by giving voice to union representative or company employee who declare the actions unjust and disappointing. Emotions play a large role in de-legitimation purposes and thus the actions are seen as bad.

- "Shop steward Sami Sallmén described the feelings as thunderstruck…" (*Yle* 21.10.2010)
- "According to Palola 'a group that has made huge profits for years is reaping again additional profits from its personnel's back' " (Helsingin Sanomat, 16.12.2010)

In few cases, the journalist him or herself took a stance against the company actions to begin CONs.

- "The unions' dread comes true – It is interpreted that mobile phone company Nokia outsourced massive job reductions to a consulting company" (Helsingin Sanomat, 1.11.2012)
- "Around three hundred people's jobs will be transferred to lower cost Poland." (Helsingin Sanomat, 6.3.2008)

It was unexpected that only a few articles showed clear opinions of the author.

Narrativization

Narrativization is legitimation achieved through story-telling (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al., 2006, Van Leeuwen, 2007). Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) referred to narrativization as mythopoesis but Vaara et al. (2006) categorization is more illustrative. Narrativization is the least common and utilized discursive strategy in this study as seen in figure 2. Narrativization is found both for legitimation and de-legitimation purpose. For legitimation purpose, narrativization is hard to distinguish and only noticeable in short sentences inside some of the longer articles. Usually, the article is focused on other strategies but happens to a small narrative element or elements. One article also puts a famous CEO on a pedestal and narrates his accomplishments during his tenure, and thus legitimates current actions. In one of the articles, the staff is seen for two short sentences as the heroes.

- "Stockmann's shop steward Rita Löwenhild wonders, how service and personnel reduction will be reconciled … 'It is a difficult equation', she says. 'But we have great staff' " (Helsingin Sanomat, 16.4.2014)
- " 'The university has seen a lot in its 375 year history. It's clear that we can manage this, too,' she says" (Yle, 17.9.2015)

On the contrary, for de-legitimation purpose, the articles are written more like an actual story, not just few sentences here and there. The only two articles that did not have a single word for legitimation were long articles mainly focused on narrativization based on past-future projections and winner-loser setup as Vaara et al. (2006) found. These two articles are highly moralized as well. They present the employees as clear losers of the CONs and company as a winner by doing morally questioning personnel reductions. (See appendices 5 and 6).

4.1 Factual news pieces construct taken-for-granted reality

Previously, Vaara et al. (2006) removed general and factual articles from the data set. In this study, I found those articles meaningful under scrutiny. Factual articles typically copy and repeat parts of company's press release or other announcement in which the planned CONs are confirmed for the public. The news article usually states the estimated need for personnel reductions and reasons for launching the co-operations negotiations. This structure is rather similar to how most of the articles begin, but these factual news pieces do not have contradicting voices, opinions nor clear legitimating or de-legitimating efforts.

Berger and Luckmann wrote in their seminal work *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967) that knowledge is developed, communicated and preserved in social situations. In this case, CONs are partly developed, communicated and maintained by factual news pieces. Although, these texts are considered uninformative (Vaara et al. 2006), their role in constructing taken-for-granted reality cannot be neglected. Factual texts are taken-for-granted as reality and they appear rational for the man in public. The media has an important role in the process wherein developing, transmitting and maintaining of the information occurs. According to Mazza and Alvarez (2000), media is an arena wherein the legitimacy of ideas and practices are produced. In a sense, co-operations negotiations are being treated as 'neutral' within this journalistic practice of creating factual articles, and the practice of CONs has become generally accepted in society, it can remain stable and maintain a taken-for-granted status quo (Johnson et al., 2006). Taken-for-grantedness is the most discreet and the most potent source of legitimacy as stated by Suchman (1995). It is evident that such a large number of factual news pieces will affect the discourse(s) revolving around CONs in the society.

4.2 Differences and similarities in the media

The data and analysis generated significant and interesting findings on organizational level. The differences between HS and Yle were notable in a way in which the articles were written and the CONs presented. Yle articles leaning towards taking a role of an information broker and a voice for companies – plain and objective in a sense. On the other hand, HS articles were providing general information about the CONs, but also, providing an arena for contradicting opinions – colorful and subjective in a sense. Mazza & Alvarez (2000) argued

that the role of media is not the mere diffusion of information but also the co-production and legitimation of information.

The main differences were found comparing the sheer number of factual articles and articles presenting discursive legitimation strategies for de-legitimation purpose. Close to half of all Yle articles has some factual tendencies, whereas similar articles account for a bit over one-fourth of HS articles. The way in which the articles were written also differ between the media. Each factual Yle article were rational and legitimized the CONs with rationalization, whilst HS articles also used different legitimation strategies. Another substantial difference were seen in de-legitimating the co-operation negotiations. Only a handful of Yle articles provided space for de-legitimation and for voices contradicting the CONs. On the contrary, more than one-third of HS articles included de-legitimation strategies. (See figure 3).

Interestingly, re-legitimation after de-legitimation occurred approximate in the same ratio between HS and Yle. In addition, only a bit less than half of the texts were countered by re-legitimation efforts, contradicting Vaara et al. (2006) findings that de-legitimation often encountered re-legitimation strategies. For example, a text discussing about personnel reductions in a consulting company, finished by quoting a labor union president condemning companies for reducing jobs too easily instead of looking for other solutions.
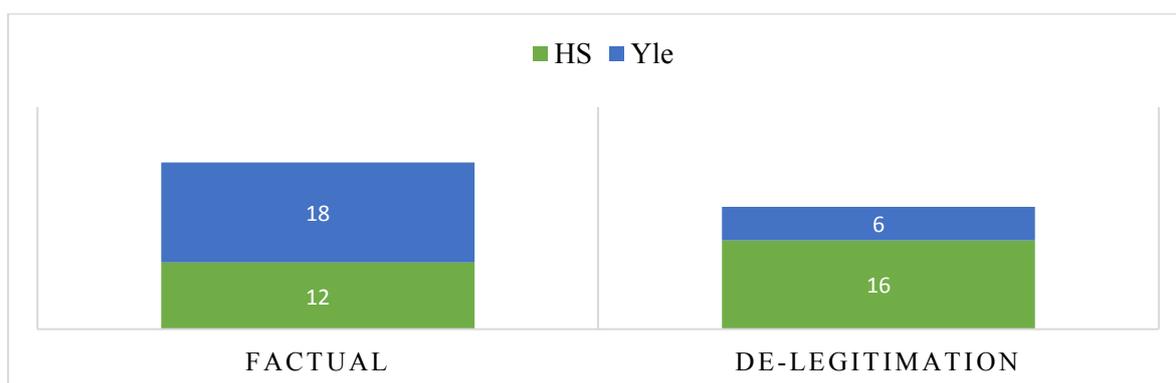

Figure 3. Number of factual and de-legitimation based articles between the media

5 DISCUSSION

This thesis has shed light on how co-operation negotiations are legitimated or de-legitimated in the Finnish media after an organization has announced the beginning of the co-operation negotiations. The research methods support the investigation of the research data that provided answer to the research question.

- How were discursive legitimation strategies used to legitimize or de-legitimize the announcements of co-operation negotiations in Finnish media during the economic downturn in 2008-2015?

The research findings illustrate how discursive legitimation strategies were used in different settings with clear examples. The analysis revealed the most common features of each discursive legitimation strategy, a connection between factual news articles and the construction of taken-for-grantedness, and finally the differences between the media outlets.

A specific timeframe of 2008-2015 was chosen to gain insight whether prolonged economic downturn has clear effects on legitimation practices or not. The number of articles chosen for this study is simply too small to derive any significant findings. Sample size should be multiple times larger if the findings were to provide statistically relevant information. In addition, the research methodology should be different if the aim is to find out how prolonged economic downturn has affected the journalistic practices of using discursive legitimation strategies.

The intended historical meaning of co-operation negotiations is to promote cooperation between employees and the employer, so that the employees have better opportunities to influence their work and working conditions. Now it has a negative connotation in general because the negotiations usually starts when a company wants to cut its personnel. Co-operation negotiations can be seen as a legitimate practice because broadly shared institutionalized structures are often taken-for-granted, reproduced in everyday action and treated as legitimate (DiMaggio, 1997). In this sense, culturally embedded co-operation negotiations are seen as institutionalized structure and practice in Finland that is produced and reproduced in everyday practices and actions. As the practice of CONs has become generally accepted in society, it can remain stable and maintain a taken-for-granted status quo (Johnson et al., 2006). According to Johnson et al. (2006) legitimation happens in a

collective construction of social reality wherein parts of a social order are perceived as a consonant with norms, values, and beliefs that individuals acknowledge, and are broadly shared, whether or not individuals personally share them. It is interesting to see how media use different legitimation strategies to either legitimize or de-legitimize organizations' decisions to start co-operation negotiations, which usually equals to massive staff reductions and layoffs. In short, when companies announce co-operation negotiations, the media and public associates that practice with personnel reductions and layoffs. Although, the practice of CONs is deeply set institutional practice in Finland, the media can still generate fundamental discussion around the announcement made by a company.

Taken-for-grantedness plays an important role here because beliefs, norms, and values might go unnoticed which in turn, can lead to established practices that goes unquestioned. For example, journalistic practices and how media employs consciously or unconsciously different discourses to (de)-legitimate co-operation negotiations. Such conventions and norms constitute and contain certain impersonal institutionalized authority and media for example can utilize that. (Vaara et al., 2006). According to Wodak (2004) "texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance" (p. 199). It is rare among the researched and studied news articles that the journalist would clearly have an opinion to legitimize or de-legitimize the CONs. Usually, the journalist him or herself would write the article based on the company release and comments given by company representative, union representative or the employees. This style of writing seems to be a taken-for-granted practice among journalists and usually falls into rationalizations and authorizations. This might be due to the journalistic practices and due to the hegemony, which is dominating the Finnish media industry. According to Vaara et al. (2006) journalists act as gatekeepers of messages and "have a great deal of power to decide what issues to raise, which perspectives to take, whom to give voice to, which voices to marginalize, and what to leave unsaid" (p. 794). This power position should not be overemphasized, as the journalists are dependent on their sources and audiences (Vaara et al., 2006). This complex social structure allows journalists to stick with their practices or jump out of the comfort zone, but the same goes for the audience, when making sense of the news.

In that sense, HS articles were more versatile compared to Yle articles and most of the articles consisted several discursive legitimation strategies. Although, the articles lean towards legitimation efforts, rather than de-legitimation. Articles It seems to be a rather common journalistic practice to simply inform and rationalize what the company release states but also give voice to a company representative. These rationalizations and comments given by company representative falls into a neoliberal ideological perspective as seen in Vaara et al. (2006) article. In this perspective, the CONs are rendered acceptable, good and legitimate if the actions serve the company and if 'the markets' are doing the same. This view has become a taken-for-granted norm in our society and everyday life in which we barely have any reason to question the company actions. From this study's ontological perspective, this means that knowledge is developed, communicated and preserved in social situations in a process through which a taken-for-granted reality congeals for the public as Berger and Luckmann (1967) depicted. In this case, the knowledge that media produce by writing about the CONs is mostly presented as neutral to the reader, although it is full of assumptions, taken-for-granted 'truths' and mostly companies voice.

Taken-for-grantedness is the most discreet and the most potent source of legitimacy as stated by Suchman (1995). This is the case with factual news articles. They help the construction of taken-for-grantedness in Finnish society about CONs. Although, a connection between factual news articles and taken-for-grantedness was found, I would not overemphasize its power implications. Vaara et al. (2006) also explained that journalists' own practices can be reduces by corporate level communication.

The findings could also be understood accordingly with Suchman's three dynamics of pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. For example, pragmatic legitimacy depicts legitimacy as straightforward value-adding and self-serving judgments based on organization's stakeholders. In this sense, the media has to take into account who their audience is and properly address them, in order to seem legitimate in the audiences' eyes. From a media's point of view, cognitive legitimacy means that journalists are likely to copy an existing journalistic practice, rather than experiment with a new one. From the public's point of view, cognitive legitimacy means that people are knowledgeable about CON practice.

There are still multitude of questions that cannot be answered based on the data gathered for this research but it can be argued that the media is not an omnipotent totality in (re)producing social order and acceptance.

5.1 Practical implication

This study illustrates how discursive legitimation strategies are used for legitimating co-operation negotiations. In addition, the prevalence of each strategy is shown between legitimation and de-legitimation purposes. Also, a general layout for the news articles were found and a majority of the articles followed the same structure which is a clear journalistic practice, and that structure in itself can promote legitimation regardless of the content.

It was shown, that rationalization and authorization account for two-thirds of all cases. It is clear that the journalists can utilize these finding in the future if they want to construct a news article that is in line with common journalistic practices. In addition, businesses should utilize rationalization and authorization if they specifically need to legitimate their CON plans.

5.2 Limitations of the study

This study is limited in various ways, but most pervasive problem is related to CDA and to the research method. For this study, I gathered a broad set of articles to be analyzed for the purpose of finding how were discursive legitimation strategies used to legitimize or de-legitimize the announcements of co-operation negotiations, and it worked relatively well. However, some researchers (Widdowson, 1998) have argued that CDA should include the producers and consumers of texts into the analysis process. It should be empirically established what are the writers intentions and how did the consumers understand the text. On the same token, the journalists writing the articles cannot know for certain, what were the intentions of the people interviewed. Thus, the media articles are already interpretations of various voices and texts.

In addition, this study is focused only two media outlets, which do not represent the whole media sector. There are plethora of other media sites in Finland that report about co-operation negotiations. All of those should be included, to have a comprehensive data set.

Furthermore, the results between HS and Yle are not completely comparable because HS articles are based on print media whereas Yle articles are online-based. There might be limitations on how long a print article can be, or online article might seem less prestigious, which is why it is not important to include multiple voices and contradiction opinions in the article. Finally, this study is utilizing a pre-existing categorization of discursive legitimation strategies, which guides the analysis process heavily. The results might have been completely different, if such strategies did not exist.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

There are multiple potential aspects for further research. One of the original unwritten research objectives was to find out whether the prolonged economic downturn affects the media, and how the news articles write about the CONs based on different years. As this study was unable to answer those guestions, they still remain open. The sample size of 40 unique co-operation negotiation cases or five per year, turned out to be too small to determine if the downturn has any significant effect. This study was a qualitative one, but to provide an answer to whether the downturn had any effet or not, a quantitative study is in order. It could be possible to build an algorithm that automatically is searching for certain words, topics, issues, themes etc. and that way increase the sample size from 40 to every single case between 2008-2015.

Another interesting case would be to compare the data and results of multiple different industrial restructing cases. For example, Vaara et al. (2006) examined throughly how the media covered the merger between the Finnish Enso and the Swedish Stora, in other words they explored legitimation strategies in a single case. It would be a tremendous effort to find the data and analyze for instance five to ten similar cases, and then compare the results. The results would definitely provide keen insights.

In addition, as mentioned in the limitations part, it would be highly rewarding to conduct interviews and hear what the journalists were thinking, what are their ideological backgrounds, and what were they trying to say. Also, the study should include similar observations about the readers of the texts authored by the journalists.

6 CONCLUSION

This thesis revealed how discursive legitimation strategies are used to legitimate or de-legitimate co-operation negotiations (CONs) in the Finnish media. A specific timeframe from 2008 to 2015 was chosen to explore the effects of prolonged downturn on legitimation process in the media but no discoveries emerged because the data set is too small for statistical analysis, and the methodological approach is not suited for exploring the effects. To examine the legitimation process in this setting, an understanding of legitimacy in organizational research was formed based on existing organizational literature. Legitimacy has a central role in social and organizational action. In fact, legitimacy is socially constructed and it plays an important role in social acceptance and taken-for-grantedness.

Weber associated legitimacy with social order wherein most people accept prevailing norms, values, and beliefs. Johnson et al. (2006) explained that individuals recognize others support for this social order, thus the order is perceived as an objective social fact. Therefore, the individuals conduct themselves in accordance with that order, although they may privately disagree. This social order is clearly seen in case of CONs as the media rarely questioned that practice. Some of the news articles gave voice to contradicting opinions to undermine the legitimacy of organization's actions.

Legitimacy is a sense of appropriateness that is socially constructed which was categorized by Suchman (1995) into three types: pragmatic, moral and cognitive, which was further explained by Suchman's (1995) categorization of different types of legitimacy; pragmatic, moral and cognitive. After a basic understanding of legitimacy was formed, it was possible to concentrate on the process of legitimacy building.

Legitimation is a social process in which legitimacy is build. Legitimation is closely linked to discourses and discursive practices as shown in multiple studies. Vaara et al. (2006) explained that legitimacy is "a discursively created sense of acceptance" (p. 793), thus, recognized and well-known practices and ideas are usually considered legitimate, and specific legitimation is no longer needed. Co-operation negotiations have a taken-for-granted role in the Finnish society and is considered legitimate by default.

Legitimation of organization's status quo is an on-going social process between an organization and its surrounding social environment, within certain shared cultural beliefs,

values, and norms. The media provides an arena wherein the legitimacy of ideas and practices are produced, thus, media texts are in the core of constituting organizational change. That is why it is important to understand how discursive legitimation strategies are used to legitimize or de-legitimize the co-operation negotiations in the media.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to analyze YLE and HS articles to gain concrete understanding of how exactly the media uses discursive legitimation strategies in legitimating CONs. Previous literature has found five different strategies: rationalization, authorization, normalization, moralization, and narrativization that are used for legitimation or de-legitimation purposes. This thesis confirmed previous literatures' findings and provided clear examples of how discursive legitimation strategies were used for (de)-legitimating the CON announcements in the Finnish media.

In addition, a new finding between factual news articles and the construction of taken-for-granted status of CONs in the Finnish society was highlighted. Because of the limited scope of this study, additional research is needed to confirm these new findings. On a side note, a general structure for constructing media articles about CONs were also derived from the analysis process. Although, a general structure was found, it is not a comprehensive one.

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