

Media Geographies

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in Finland in the 1990s*

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Abstract

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This study investigates the ways in which differences between four Finnish regions are represented in regional newspaper texts, during the economic crisis of the 1990s. The aim is to compare how the different aspects of the economic crises are constructed discursively in newspapers texts, and how these differences shape the interpretations of the economic crises within the regions.

The study is based on three methodological bases: it is *comparative*; it leans on methods of textual analysis (*content analysis* and *discourse analysis*); and it makes pragmatic use of theories within the *critical tradition* in the interpretation of the texts. It introduces a spatial approach to media studies, combining it with the *theory of legitimation crisis* and *relational thinking* as a way to construct identity, space, region, and change.

For the study, four newspapers were selected from regions that were different, both economically and culturally. Theoretically, the regions are seen as dynamic entities consisting of different processes. The research questions were approached with the help of data collected from the newspapers between the years 1988-1997. The time-span covers the last years of the economic boom of the 1980s, the economic crisis, and the recovery at the end of the 1990s.

According to the study, among the several variables that affect the portrayal of economic crises, the economic wealth of the region, the regional policies obtained by the state, and the types of economic activity typical to the region are especially influential. Also the internal journalistic culture of the newspaper, as well as the policy-line and earlier commitments of the newspaper have an impact. Theoretically-distinguishable subsequential phases of the crises – evolving at the levels of *legitimation*, *rationality*, and *motivation* crises of the regional community – were identified. The newspapers first presented the *economic and financial part of the crisis* as the main problem. In a following phase, the newspapers presented political interventions, dealing with the economic problems, as a *rationality crisis*, based on the difficulties to construct a stable social order on an instable market economy. This was followed by a broader *legitimation crisis*, the timing and severity of which varied from region to region. In this phase, the State and the political elite lost part of its legitimacy, due to the inability to reconcile conflicting demands regarding the re-planning of the economic system. In certain areas, the competitive drive and work ethic were further weakened, leading to a *motivation crisis* which also threatened *the social integration of the region*. Every region experienced the modes of crises in a different way, constructing distinguishable periods of crisis representation. The concept of “a meaning-market” was developed as a tool for assessing how journalism interacts with other parts of the regional system.

The study reveals that the journalistic representations were not merely reflections of dominant cultural values, but also sums of equations based on the nation’s political history, the main staples of economic systems, and geographical relations between the center and the peripheries. When the central system was threatened by the legitimation crisis, the ontological security was constructed on a local scale, in a symbolic exchange of micro-economies with the help of regional meaning markets.

Keywords: *media geographies, space, regional newspapers, discourse, comparison*

Preface

In 1997, the Academy of Finland launched a multidisciplinary, problem-oriented, and applied research programme: “*The economic crisis of Finland in the 1990s.*” The mission of this research programme, the largest ever in the social sciences in Finland, was to explore the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of the exceptionally deep economic crisis that hit the country in the early 1990s. It is one of life’s strange ironies that my doctoral dissertation started as part of this project, focusing on the very phenomenon of which my generation had become a victim.

The aim of the media subproject was to analyze the public discussion of the economic crisis and the challenges this crisis created for a democratic system. My part in the project was to compare differences in media representations from the regional point of view – in more generic terms, to explore the cultural geography and identity politics of the crisis. However, my inspiration for this theme had a deeper basis. It can be traced back to those early moments of my childhood when I was listening to the family legends told to me by my grandmother.

During the last century, my grandparents lived in the Pyhäjärvi region, in Finnish Karelia. When the Winter War began, the families of the region were forced to evacuate to the Finnish side. The Karelia Isthmus, where my grandparents had lived, was turned into a military zone. According to family legend, my grandma refused to leave the old elementary school house where they lived. She had an old rifle she could not use, a shepherd dog, a fiery spirit of resistance, and a decisive attitude not to leave the territory in the hands of the enemy. When the Soviet Union air force began to drop

reconnaissance parachuters on the shores of Pyhäjärvi and into the woods nearby, she stood on the school yard, on guard, watching into the darkness. When some of them entered the house, in order to set up a radio connection to the Soviet command center, my grandmother hid upstairs with a basket containing glowing embers. As she could not handle the rifle she fought the intruders by dropping glowing coals onto their backs.

Eventually, the retreating Finnish troops forced my grandma to pack her things and get on one of the last trains that took her over what today is the border between Russia and Finland. This bitter conflict was one of the preludes to World War II. As a result of the war, the Karelia region was ceded to the Soviet Union and it became a buffer zone in the cold war period. More than 400 000 inhabitants of Karelia had to leave their homes to settle in other parts of the country.

Finland has often been perceived as a homogeneous country, both culturally and socially. Finns are supposed to share the same norms, values, and symbols. Perhaps the reality is not so black and white. Living in a borderland between East and West, the people have carried a mixture of traditions, mentalities, and identities within themselves. Geopolitical intervention is part of the history of this small corner of the world. Finnish mentality and cultural geography form a texture that takes its colors and figuration from endless family stories telling about leavings, retreats, and new starts. Our human geography is like a colorful, knitted rug. This is why my study about the differences of the regions really came to concern more profound differences in the ways we make sense of the world, depending on where we are, where we come from, and in which direction we are heading.

My grandmother's tiny figure often hovered in my mind while I worked with my dissertation. What is reproduced from the past has the limitations of an old photograph. Some qualities are suppressed and some qualities are glossed. But still, one can easily understand how the past tense of history becomes present tense in the daily life of people.

During the past five decades Finland has been changing quickly. It has been transformed from an agricultural country into an urbanized, service and high technology-oriented economy. Also, the outer reality has changed. During the last decade, Finland joined the European Union and shifted its external relations. Finland has become an open economy, part of the general trend towards globalization. However, alongside these changes, within the European Union there is also a tendency towards a more influential role for regions. One of the adventures, for me personally, has been to find out

more about the process of identity formation that maintains and moulds this feature of today's Europe.

In the course of completing my work, I have accumulated many debts, personal and professional. It is impossible to thank everyone who has helped to make my work possible, but certain people stand out. My supervisors, Professor Ullamaija Kivikuru from the University of Helsinki, and Professor Jouni Häkli, from the University of Tampere have stood by me with their valuable time and knowledge whenever I needed it. At times this may have required a more than reasonable amount of supportive understanding, for which I am sincerely grateful. I was privileged to enjoy the support of such outstanding scholars.

My external reviewers, Professor Jan Ekecrantz, from Stockholm and Associate Professor Per Jauert, from Århus, with critical eyes, gave insightful and detailed guidance. Their invaluable and perceptive comments made this work better than it would otherwise have been.

My gratitude also goes to those numerous people who have read my articles and manuscript during the process. They are too numerous to single out in this context, but I wish to mention a few, the top of this iceberg. Dr. Terhi Rantanen-Collins from the London School of Economics, with whom I have shared the good and the bad in this process: Thank you for being my close friend, sparring partner, and academic mentor throughout the years and the sudden changes in our lives, both in tears and in laughter. Professor Heikki Luostarinen from the University of Jyväskylä helped me to clarify some central tenets of this study in the earlier phase, and gave me faith to believe that the path I have chosen is worth exploring.

Professor Esa Väliverronen and Dr. Anu Kantola from the University of Helsinki have read the manuscript thoroughly and generously provided me with intellectual support and rigorous questions. From my colleagues and project co-members, Minna Aslama, Tuija Parikka, and Sanna Valtonen, I have received more in terms of discussions, written criticism and ideas than I am ever able to give back.

Heikki Tuomi-Nikula, editor-in-chief of *Lapin Kansa*, taught me more about the newspaper business during the research period than any university could ever have done. I am also indebted to Aku Alanen of Statistics Finland for providing me with the most recent statistical material, and Pearl Lönnfors who had the ungrateful task of checking my English. The University of Leuven and Professor Keith Roe offered me a hide-away when I was writing the manuscript and located in Brussels. The staff of the University

Main Library receives my deepest gratitude. I and my courageous research assistant Sirpa Aalto spent many months in this beautiful building, that at times lacked electricity because of the huge construction work that was going on under the Senate Square. The winter when we collected most of the data in the library archives was at times even colder than the freezing winter of the Winter War. When the blackouts occurred, the coded data sometimes disappeared and we were forced to put our winter jackets on.

The Department of Communication has been my Place and Community. The Head of the department, Professor Leif Åberg, and my colleagues share a sense of humor, perseverance, industriousness and guts (*sisti*) that never fails to amaze me. I also wish to thank the Cultural Foundation of Finland, The Academy of Finland and the University of Helsinki that all supported my work financially. And, not least, the young Nordic researchers, with whom I have shared (and survived) a number of summer schools, book projects, and conferences, have taught me the importance of (also) having fun when leading an academic life.

Finally, I wish to thank my family. Through my father, the incitement for scientific inquiry has been part of my life since childhood. It is sad that he never saw how his many, thoroughly-read and underlined books have been cherished. His observations, written in the margins, continue to sooth and encourage me. My mother, a refugee from Karelia in her early infancy, supported me with her great sense of humor and loving care during this process as well. My sisters, who were obviously present when the genes for the natural sciences were dealt out, never lost their faith in this project. Lastly, my deepest gratitude goes home to Tom: inspiring discussions, endurance, good cooking, and for bringing all the wonderful things into my life.

This book is dedicated to my grandmother. She taught me some important things in life: how to paint with oil on canvas, how to read musical notes, and how never to give up. “There are no truer losses in your life than the loss of your spirit and abandoning your courage,” she used to say.

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1 Introduction

“Men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.”
(Marx 1867/1968, 97)

1.1 From physical to symbolic geography

It was one of those cold winter days in 1998 in the University’s library when I read an article from the provincial newspaper *Karjalainen*. The feature story was published in the news section and dated from April, 1993. The headline read: *“In olden times hunger led to children also being eaten in Juuka”* The story reported a grotesque historical incident from Northern Karelia. During the great famine in the 17th century, one of the families living in the area was forced to eat the smallest children in order to stay alive. Perhaps it was written as an assurance to present readers that things were quite alright, despite the country’s tightening economic situation. Or it might have been related as proof that people had survived harsher periods throughout the country’s history. Whatever the reason, its narrative both haunted and intrigued me. Perhaps it crystallized too clearly the cultural values of a national heritage and people’s mentality: the instinct to survive, self-reliance, stubborn tenacity, and perseverance. Perhaps it reflected a perspective on the Finnish mindscape and history that I was part of whether I wanted it or not.

Outside the library, this cold January day at the dawn of the twenty first century, Finns were living in a time of accelerated economic and socio-cultural change. Undoubtedly, it could have been claimed that the past two decades had been a period of profound change in economic and social realms, on a regional, national and global scale. New modes of digital communication had penetrated even remote hinterlands. New rounds of economic and political instability were result of the European variant of globalization. Finland was climbing to the top of the effective economies of the Western world. Neo-liberalism had established itself politically, being one of the strongest discourses in organizing the post-industrial capitalism and European integration. As an inevitable development, political parties tended to converge, in policies and political ideologies, around an acceptance of the new order.

Flexibility had become a key word, not only in economics but in the cultural realm as well. Identities that were more hybrid and flexible had replaced earlier identity constructions that were based on the modernist idea of traditions and the nation-state. At least this was claimed by and generally believed among social theorists and intellectuals.

Despite the claims of some globalization theorists, the state had not withered away as a disappearing relic at the end of modernity. The nationstate was now more than ever dedicated to creating a good business climate for investment and high-tech industry, which meant precisely controlling labor movements in all kinds of purposive new ways. These included cutting back social security benefits, fine-tuning migrant flows from peripheries to growing centers and watching over labor-production relations.

But when one looked at the situation of economic capital relations, the picture was totally different. During the 1990s, the State had lost the power to regulate the mechanisms of allocation or competition, or at least some of it. Control over major aspects of social life, especially those areas that related strongly to the economy, was more and more beyond the reach of politicians and also outside the public discussion.

In this study, I focus on the question of how the social and cultural differences appear in relation to the economic change in the Finnish regions and how these changes were represented in the public discussion. Compared to the more heterogeneous European cultures, Finland provided researchers with almost laboratory-like conditions for the study of change in the 1990s, superimposed by a drastically changing economic and cultural context. Only a decade had elapsed since the aberrance rising from both

internal and external changes disturbed the picture of static structures of civil society.

During the years 1991-1996 the national economy of Finland drifted into an economic crisis. The crisis followed a long period of economic expansion. Partly, the Finnish variant of the economic recession was the result of the cash crisis of the 1990s that swept over the whole of Western Europe. But compared to other countries, the Finnish crisis turned out to be worse. Though nearly all European countries suffered from severe recessions in the early 1990s, “it was only in Finland and Sweden where the recession was severe enough to be called a crisis or even a depression (Kalela et al. 2001, 4).” At the time, it was difficult to judge whether the external or internal changes of the country were more drastic.

When the Soviet system collapsed in 1989 and Finland joined the European Union in 1995, the contextual conditions for the economy and politics changed. Not only did the era end that in the West was sometimes called “Finlandization,” but a deep economic crisis followed, partly caused by the collapse of the trade of the Soviet Union and the rapid internationalization of the Finnish economy. As dramatically put by the country’s front line economists (for example Kiander 2002, 1), a crisis “more serious than ever – witnessed by any industrial state since World War II” dominated the central national scene of Finland in the 1990s.¹

Partly, the common slogan under which the causes of the crisis were mapped was “bad luck, bad policy and bad banking” (Kalela et al. 2001, 4). Undoubtedly, international cycles and shocks played a major role, which is no wonder in the case of a small open economy such as Finland. On the other hand, the crisis of the 1990s gave the impetus to “market fundamentalism,” emphasizing strongly and almost solely the role of market mechanisms in economic development (Heikkinen & Kuusterä 2001, 48). Economic reductionism applied to almost every sector of the society, which eventually caused the crisis to be neatly used in many cases as an excuse for savings, cuts and trimming in the public sector.

The period between 1988-1997 was not only a crisis in economic terms. National self-esteem was also put to a test. After a decade of economic growth, the whole society was pressed on its knees.² The economic crisis created a crisis in the public sphere, the “*crisis of legitimation*.” As a consequence of the harsher economic conditions, the space for the public debate of democracy was narrowed down. This development particularly affected the public life in which citizens could deliberate together on matters of

social and political concern; the constraints of the poor state, of the national economy and the requirements of the market economy were superimposed as a straitjacket on this discussion.³

Mediated dialogue and “crisis talk” of the public sphere called society and collective identity into existence and made the citizens’ relations, as politico-economical actors, visible and amenable. Through this communication the world of the public was invested with significance and offered people models of identity as inhabitants of the changing society (Pauly 1997, 3). Strangely enough, social integration could be maintained in Finnish society through the hardest years, at least on the surface.

The economic crisis was a major media event as well. Under the word “depression” (*lama*) the crisis was constructed as an actor in the national media discourse on television and in the major newspapers, and remained so for many years. Thus, the “crisis” and “economic depression” formed the smallest common denominator in every social change of Finnish society, whether it had any actual link to the national economy or not.

It can be claimed that media was the public arena where economic and social forces were represented, narrated and interpreted. During the crisis, media’s usual role as the organizer of discourses was even more emphasized. In electronic and printed media, preferred interpretations and attributions of meanings and norms, regarding “what was going on,” were selected and circulated in an endless national and regional symbolic exchange of values and norms. They often centered on what was regarded as “*depression medicines*.” In this sense the economic crisis can be considered a test case for democratic activity, and media’s function as a channel between the people and decision-makers.

Mainstream media was the marketplace for the ideas of the decision-making apparatus to be “sold” to the ordinary people.⁴ The media acted as an arena where the legitimacy of the political elite was tested, and validity claims concerning the policies were reflected. As a co-efficient factor, the media questioned the values of priorities and scrutinized the allocation of taxpayers’ money.

National newspapers constructed the crisis as a national phenomenon and a joint hardship, equally shared by every citizen. Whereas, day by day regional newspapers documented what happened in different communities in the country, offering information about the unequal consequences of the depression when it swept over the regions.

The character of the regional crisis varied, vertically, from national to

local, and horizontally, between and within regions. The economic crisis was both a concrete and a symbolic phenomenon. Regional differences between various parts of Finland increased markedly. In this situation, voices of difference and otherness grew stronger within the otherwise quite consensual Finnish political and media landscape. *In actuality, there was certainly not only one depression but many.*

In this study, the regional worlds and newspapers during the depression are in focus. Rural areas, peripheries and the “backyards” of the country are scrutinized through the newspaper representations of the economic crisis. *This study explores the interplay between regional processes and their interpretations in the newspapers during the economic crisis.* The analysis is built on discursive representations that the Finnish regional press produced during the 1990s. The time-span included several turning points of the country (the end of the Cold War, economic depression, Finnish membership in the EU, and the beginning of recovery from the depression).

1.2 Crisis in economic terms

According to Fernand Braudel (1993, 9), an essential part of the character of society and culture always depends on the constraints or advantages of the geographical and economic situation. Thus, every landscape and region bears traces of cumulative knowledge and continuous narrative contributing to the whole. A Marxist way of describing how humanity transforms itself through “*the production of people by people*” can be modified by citing the French historian Jules Michelet (1897), who was concerned with how human history is “*the decisive shaping of self by self.*” Every era also produces specific types of thoughts, beliefs and truths, while it is forming its own individuals who have their chronotopic mindsets formed by the course of events in the material world.

When defining a crisis in economic terms, it is easiest to start from the fact that whether in a boom or a slump, economic activity almost always produces a surplus. The expenditure of such surpluses has been one of the indispensable conditions for guaranteeing the consent and sufficient living conditions for the people by redistributing the tax resources through modern welfare states. Undoubtedly, a capitalist economy is inherently unstable and prone to periodic crises. However, both neo-Marxist and neo-liberalist theories have failed to explain the causes and consequences of this

phenomenon. The economy has persistently behaved differently than what models in books on economics would lead us to assume (Habermas 1976, 24-25; Hay 1996, 91-93; Kellner 1989, 200; Held 1982, 189-93).

Though there are differences between the Nordic countries, Finland is usually described as a Scandinavian welfare state, based on social benefits for all citizens, extensive redistribution of wealth, diverse public-sector services, and universal wage work for women. During the 1980s, the opinion polls in Finland showed that the welfare state enjoyed widespread support among its citizens. The result of this development was the growth of taxation. The system was built on conditions of full employment. Other edifices of political consensus were “mixed” economy, active government, and social welfare provision, the conciliation of the trade unions, and the cult of expertise based on technocracy, managerialism, and paternalism (Kiander 2001; Kosonen 1998; see British case Kavanagh 1987, 26, 62).

From the end of the 1980s, the mainstays of the welfare state began to buckle. Following the chronological order of the crisis, trade with the Soviet Union, which had flourished in the preceding decade, shrank rapidly and the rapid liberalization of money and credit markets resulted in an overheating of the economy, the years of “casino economics.” During the 1980s, the Bank of Finland shifted the national monetary policy. Domestic financial markets were deregulated and a policy change was made allowing companies in the private sector to make monetary transactions and loans abroad, with the consequence that the domestic interest rate raised rapidly. At the same time, national fiscal policy was tied to a fixed exchange rate. Consequently, the national economy was boosted by international currency through debts (Kiander 2001, 8).

According to Heikkinen & Kuusterä (2001, 39), the deregulation of the financial markets in the 1980s led to the unexpected boom that was especially fatal to the closed sector of the economy. Stock and real estate markets were overheating. The deregulation of the capital market led to a great and deep indebtedness of the economy. The Finnish export industry had major difficulties in trying to adjust a new fixed exchange rate, and the rising overvaluation of the Finnish currency, the markka, was putting pressure on the export industries. As a consequence, the devaluation crisis between the years 1990-1993 was deeper than during any other peace time crisis in Finland.

The international cash crises entered the Finnish economy along with the fall of the Soviet Union, which again affected parts of the Finnish export

industry. The collapse of the Soviet trade wiped out about 15 percent of Finnish exports in just two years (Kiander & Vartia 1998). This involved in many cases, important employers (for example textile industry). In addition, when the growth of exports to the West came to a halt, the economy was driven in to a vicious spin. Between 1990 and 1993, the GDP dropped 12 percent leading to a significant fall in the demand for labor and a rise in unemployment (Kalela et al. 2001, 7).

The total number of unemployed persons increased by 450 000 from 1990 to 1993 and, as a result, unemployment rose from 3.1 to about 16 percent (Kiander 2001, 31). Public spending drifted into a serious crisis, due to increasing debt in the State economy. The State undertook substantial support of the banking sector. Also, rapidly rising costs of unemployment and other welfare functions of the State were adding pressure to the budget. Cuts and savings were extensive in the public sector, to cover these costs (Honkaphoja & Koskela 2001, 62-63; Kiander 2001, 45).

Economic development and the strengthening of neo-liberal thought broke the earlier consensus. The steady development of the welfare state, that had been based on agreements between different negotiators (strong trade unions, the State, political parties and the employers' unions) ran into difficulties when this consensus started to erode. In the Finnish case, serious steering problems of the political elite arose when the banking sector drifted into severe problems. The economic development was negative, foreign debt grew and the balance of payment was badly shaken, throwing the entire banking sector into a deep crisis. The corporatist conciliation secured the degree of wage restraint for many years during the 1990s, in order to stave off an impending fiscal crisis. This discipline carried out by the government was felt as a straitjacket by wage earners and eroded the trust in the decision-makers (Heikkinen & Kuusterä 2001, 41; Alestalo 1997, 326).

There was certainly a significant difference in how the economic crises affected various regions in Finland. Finland is divided into different parts, with the main cleavage occurring between the wealthy center(s) of the South and the poor peripheries of the Eastern and Northern parts of the country. Growing areas and cities were prospering, while the peripheries, rural areas, and the countryside were struggling to keep jobs and taxpayers, in order to enable them to maintain their infrastructure and welfare services. This development dramatically increased regional polarization in Finland. Suddenly the state was unable to provide enough subsidies and started to erase its previous regional policy.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the municipalities were given more responsibility for tasks that were to a higher degree paid by the State earlier. Although the broader autonomy of the municipalities was experienced as positive in the beginning, poorer municipalities soon found themselves severely in debt. The crisis of the rural areas was both an individual and a collective phenomenon, which increased a growing sense of insecurity alongside cuts in welfare state services. Public sector activities were pruned and various income transfers cut. Although there was an economic upturn, measured by the national GDP in the middle of the decade, extensive unemployment and the growth in public debt enforced continuous cuts in social security.

The citizens' crisis, caused by the depression, was mixed with the decision to join the European Union in 1994. People felt largely that their identity was threatened by the acts of political elites and the changes in political imperatives. At the same time, social problems, poverty and social differences between groups and regions increased rapidly. In Finland, in the new European context, perhaps for the first time, the region was understood as an actor that had intentions over the nation-state.

Southern Finland, Helsinki, the coastal area of Western Finland, and the Oulu region were rich regions with an unproportionally-high percentage of people within the highest quarter of the income range. The municipalities that had an unproportionally-high percentage of inhabitants within the lowest quarter of the income range had only 61-83 percent of the income per capita of the rich municipalities. The problems were seen most clearly in the countryside. The migration of the young and educated was heading towards the cities. This vast migration was transforming the demographic structure of rural areas at an accelerating speed (Statistics Finland 2000).

During the first years of the new millennium, Finland abandoned the earlier policy to keep the whole country populated (Puoskari 2002, 127). The military importance of populated border areas was fading and the emphasis of regional policies was refocused on urban centers. Migration to growing centers was speeding up and as much as 90 percent of Finland's territorial area was becoming depleted. Towards the end of the depression, the amount of deserted rural areas had multiplied and the role of traditional development areas had worsened as a consequence of the low economic tide. Also, internal disparities between provincial centers and rural areas began to widen.

The variations in the impacts of the crisis between and within regions

have been explained by structural and regional differences in production and the population between different parts of the country (Okko et al. 1998, 38; Böckermann 1998, 17; Peltola 1997). Compared to other European countries, the Finnish regional structure has been relatively even, and, in addition to enthusiastic regional policy, the setting up of the welfare state can be seen as a contributory factor in leveling out regional inequalities.

The practice of using welfare state institutions, together with traditional regional policy instruments in order to generate greater regional harmony, came to an end with the fiscal crisis of the State. Inside the country, the center-periphery polarization increased - poor regions became poorer whereas wealthier parts of the country managed to cure the damages easier and quicker (Kajanoja & Simpura 2000; Loikkanen & Saari 2000).

The whole post-war regime, based on a Nordic welfare system, was questioned in the new and changed political rhetoric. One of the biggest questions dividing people was the question of work and unemployment. This question was also relevant regionally. Not all the regions were equally lucky in creating new jobs when the economic revival started. However, it was not until the recovery of the national economy began in the mid-1990s that the inequality between the regions started to increase rapidly (Kangasharju et al. 2001, 359).

1.3 Crisis as a discursive event

During a crisis, whether economic or military, the production and management of public discussion through media is like holding the key to the process of governing meanings. According to t'Hart (1993, 41), "*the most important instrument of crisis management is language.*" Those who are in a position that allows them to define and reconstruct the representations of a crisis also hold the key to defining the strategies of its resolution. Once this has been acknowledged, it is possible to conceive the mobilization of public opinion and media discourse.

Although a crisis is a moment of economic intervention in the shaping of institutions, structures, and policies that recursively reshapes the society, it is also a discursive phenomenon. Most importantly, crisis is interpreted and partly produced through its public representations. Crisis is a media event including contested multiple processes, ideological transformations, and competing actors defining what is going on and who is responsible for

the consequences. This is why the media are in a central position in public discussion.

But “Crisis” or “Depression” is not the same, independent of location, type of medium or type of textual genre. Subtle meaning-making and interpretation processes of the situation vary, forming many specific public spheres. Inside one nation-state there can be, at the same time, spaces and places forming their own specific time-spaces, historical narratives, and interpretations where lived, imagined, and real constraints are molded through the media.

Applied solely, a structurally-conducted regional analysis, in this case, would have been inadequate. In order for this kind of an analysis to make sense, subtle meaning-making and interpretation processes of the internal approach of each studied region was needed. Why did this public discussion differ in different parts of the country? What constituted the basis of regional differences in the discussion, which often were too subtle to be detected?

In general, social, economic and political life is absorbed by media in a process of interpretation of values, beliefs, fears, propositions, and even ideology typical of the time. Simultaneously, it is indisputable that news media have an important agenda-setting function for the public debate. Willingly or unwillingly media agendas define public issues and focus what is considered common awareness within the civic society. As a result, some topics are widely debated, beyond the media in the public sphere, while others are ignored.

But media is also a player in the capitalist economy where yielding profit is one of the primary tasks. So much is already common knowledge about the mechanisms of a newspaper’s reality that we know that this “reality” is highly manufactured. Media’s reality is constructed and produced in sequences of the operations and observations of the journalistic system that is one sub-system of a larger social system (Luhmann 2000, 3).⁵ Media serve their own purposes in many ways: through the selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises.⁶ This brings mixed motives into the picture.

Sometimes media claim to act as agents carrying factual and truthful information, with aims to advance the common good as a criterion for its values. At the same time, however, they also sometimes actively take into consideration the effects of their own interventions, in some instances in

ways that may enter into conflict with their own ideals. Another thing to remember is, that mass mediated communication at all levels is not only a cultural artifact but also a commodity functioning in a marketplace. In both these capacities it is projected in to people's social and political relations.

1.4 Aims

The aim of this study is to analyze and compare trends in the regional media coverage of the economic crisis, between the years 1988-1997. The time-span was chosen to cover the last years of the economic boom of the 1980s, the economic crisis and the recovery at the end of the 1990s. The point of departure is in the examination of how the regions were constructed in media texts and how certain crucial themes were debated or ignored in a sample of regional newspapers. The approach of the study is discourse analytical.

Empirically, the focus of the study is on an examination of how the different modes of crises are constructed discursively in the texts from four selected regional newspapers, during the ten-year period, 1988-1997, and how the regional differences appear in relation to economic change in these regional newspapers. An interesting empirical question is also; what kinds of journalistic strategies and techniques were applied by the newspapers in handling the crises?

The chosen political economy approach provides the angle to explore of how both regions under scrutiny, and consequently also the newspapers, were bound to be part of regional as well as national power relations. The process, i.e. *the economic-political dialectics* between region, “the cultural grammar” of the newspaper, and the textually - produced manifestations of the crisis, is in focus studying here.⁷

The main methodological commitments of this study can be divided in to three different principles. The first is *a materialist orientation to cultural (and textual)* production and change. Cultural interaction and symbolic exchange are part of a symbolic marketplace where products (newspapers, news stories, and advertisements) as well as meanings (preferable ideological connotations of the system) are offered to the readers. This means that the press is seen as part of the logics of the market economy.

Empirical and comparative research into the cultural practice of journalism (e.g., production of editorials and news stories) is well justified be-

cause, only through analyzing these manufactured meanings for different types of communities can we increase our understanding of how the press sustains its own exchange of meanings and operates as a part of the ideological apparatus of late capitalism.

The second methodological principle is a *pragmatically-oriented use of theories within the critical tradition*.⁸ The spatial approach to media studies lies at the basis of what theories of human geography and critical tradition may also address (as the works of Doreen Massey, David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre). Crisis tendencies are studied in this context of critical theory as related to spatiality, combining it with the critical *theory of legitimation crisis*. The theory of legitimation crisis is principally associated with the critical theorists, Jürgen Habermas and Claus Offe. This theory aims to explain the origins of the crisis of “late capitalism” (see especially Habermas 1976; 1992; 1996; Offe 1984; 1985; Hay 1996).

The third methodological principle of this study could be called *relational thinking*. The aim of this enterprise is to deconstruct the binary thinking of relations as negative or as exclusions, and to re-imagine the elements of relational interconnection in constructing any kind of an identity, space, place and change-taking form in these sets of relations. It is always important to keep in mind that “local”, “regional” and “global” are positions that are constructed discursively. The positionalities are used, deployed and appropriated by specific social forces at particular times. According to Morley & Robins (1995, 117), “the local (or regional) could be seen as a fluid and relational space, constituted only in and through its relation to the global.” The local or regional in this sense does not correspond to any specific territorial configuration. Localization and regionalization can be seen as cultural metaphors that are embedded in historical time. They are also used differently for various kinds of political purposes (Smith 2001, 3). The essence of my argument that relates these themes is that distinctive and diverse places and regions are often manifestations of a deeply-felt involvement with those areas by the people who live in them.

1.5 The structure of the study

In the first chapter, I have introduced the context of this study and the socio-political background of the project. The analysis will focus on wider changes in the Finnish culture and society which are manifested in changing

media discourses.

The second chapter focuses on the theory of spatiality and regional context. The aim of this chapter is to construct the framework for spatial epistemology with the help of the concepts of *space, place, and region*. *Space* is used as a structuring and theoretical concept. It is defined as a process of particular sets of political and social relations through which a sense of region is maintained and manifested in media. The spatial order of the everyday life of human communities arises from the (social) production of space, the construction of meaningful human geographies that both reflect and configure being in the world. The relation of society and space are actualized in the framework of a region. *Region* is a specific territory or area and the product of specific processes of socio-political relations. Borders of a region can be defined differently for different purposes and are commonly sites of struggles. Region as a geographical notion becomes visible in the regional discourses. *Place* refers to lived narratives, localities from which the everydayness of the text-production is stemming. Editorial and stories of depression are analyzed in these specific theoretical contexts.

In the third chapter, the analytical conception of crisis is presented. The dynamics of crisis is analyzed in the framework of the theory of legitimation crisis. Crisis tendencies, also in the Finnish variant of late capitalism, can be divided into “*system crises*” and “*identity crises*.” A system crisis appears when society experiences the threat of a system breakdown whereas an identity crisis develops when the members of society and a regional community feel their identity threatened. Newspapers are seen as crucial constructors of communities, which in turn both economically and culturally constrain the coverage of the crisis. *The concept of regional a meaning-market is introduced to describe the symbolic exchange of values and structures of meaning within the regions.*

In the fourth chapter, methods, data and the techniques of analysis are presented. Here the question is raised as to *how regions as empirical and discursively-maintained entities can be studied*. Outlines of the comparative approach and contextual underpinnings of the study are explained in more detail.

Chapter five explores regional variation in the Finnish newspaper structure. Historical and economic constraints are explored and elaborated in order to add the dimension of the temporality of regional cultural production. The studied regions and newspapers are introduced in order to give the contextual information required to understand the interpretations made

in the analyses presented in the later chapters.

Chapter six focuses on discursive variations in news agendas that are presented as time series. The news agendas do not always follow external statistics but have their own life. The aim of this chapter is to elaborate discursive regional variation in time and space and to connect these phenomena to historically specific discursive formations of the regions.

Chapter seven is devoted to regional differences seen through the editorials. Editorials are perhaps the most clear generic form of the intentional and ideological talk of a newspaper. Their function is to address both individual citizens and commercial and industrial representatives of the region. As an institution, they also have a second function; to act as a voice of the region, which means that editorials are also written for the political elite and for other media. The chapter is devoted to exploring how different modes of crises were controlled and what kinds of discursive strategies and frameworks were used in order to make sense of the situation.

The eighth chapter explores four different discursive regions qualitatively through *stories on depression*. The frames of the texts, “primary definers” of the topics and moral values that were emphasized in depression stories, are analyzed in order to make sense of how cultural logic functions in regional news journalism.

In chapter nine, different regions are analyzed separately and the matrixes of regional discursive characteristics are presented in a structured form. Dialectics of separate “*meaning-markets*” are defined by accentuating the strongest determinants of this symbolic and cultural exchange in the studied regions.

In chapter ten, both empirical results and theoretical conclusions are presented. The interpretation of empirical findings and their link to previous theoretical and empirical works are discussed. Dynamics of spatiality, as the formative process in the symbolic exchange of regional communities and daily life, are elaborated on. The dialectic aspects of the relationship between texts and society/culture are discussed, focusing on the problem of how texts are socio-culturally shaped and how they in turn constitute society.

2 Spatiality and media

“Did it start with Bergson or before? Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, and the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic.” (Foucault 1980, 70)

2.1 Spatial dimensions in media studies

Space and time are not only basic categories of human life but also basic categories in the domination and control of the social organization of power and knowledge within societies. Within communication research, the study of space and time has been going on for half a century.⁹ Domination and control over space has been closely linked with the modes of communication and control of media in different societies. While oral cultures struggled against spatial friction and tried to conserve the wisdom and traditions of earlier cultures in stories, verses and tales, literal cultures were able to overcome space and enlarge the limits of ruled territories over vast spaces. This power to overcome space, for example, was changing the conditions for the execution of power fundamentally, as emperors could execute and deliver commands, laws, doctrines, and their interpretations in a written form to all parts of the territory.

The dominance of written forms of communication cultivated a rationalized culture that soon became linear, uniform, and infinitely repeatable. Mediating community was one of the central tasks of creating a sense of continuity for the people. Before the emergence of newspapers, telling sto-

ries played a central role in forming people's sense of social space and community, providing a sense of common history and an understanding of places they did not know. The writing down of folklore, which has been created during hundreds of years in face-to-face situations, helped communities to maintain their sense of continuity, identity and roots (see Anderson 1991; Carey 1989; Thompson 1995).

Later, print media enabled forms of cultural codes, education, and information to be circulated across nations, reaching even the most remote areas. Printing technology accelerated the development of capitalism enabling both the spread of individualism (by separating the individual producer from the tradition) and collectivism (creating communities sharing the same cultural grammar and normative codifications). Through newspapers, "imagined communities" emerged, which were a basis of modern nationalism (Anderson 1991, 33).

In terms of time, writing culture shortened human memory, because information could now be stored in a durable form. Newspapers became the diaries of communities and human communities began to live in the form of an organized society that was ruled by "deceptive time," masking sudden and unexpected crises between the past and the present (Harvey 1989, 224). Print media represented a dramatic development of the extension of human sense in time and space (Carey 1989; 1969; Ong 1977; McLuhan 1962; Innis 1950; 1951).

Electronic media has further transformed our conception of space and time. A distinctive feature of current society is that dominant processes, for example, concentrating power, wealth, and information, are organized as flows in space. The disjunction between two spatial logics – the logic of everyday living and the logic of dominating space – is a fundamental mechanism of controlling society (Castells 1997, 60). Those who are in charge can be spatially-distant but still capable of surveillance and ruling a spatial and temporal organization of social space. Our sense of time has become even shorter; now we live mostly in real-time or even in "time in advance" (time that is rushing forward). This real-time of the media is marked by discontinuity, and here the future becomes the present.

Electronic media's power as a conveyor of global narratives has been prominent as well. During the last decades of the 20th century, new forms of real-time television (for example CNNs reporting during the Gulf War, the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 in New York or the reporting on the Iraq war) and diasporic media carried by satellite have re-organized global

space. In that sense, every media masters space when telling about what is “taking place” somewhere. Media is a narrator that simultaneously masters the narrative, illustration, and *misé-en-scene on a global stage*.

Nevertheless, few would object to the claim that media reception and consumption is a *situated and located activity*. Individuals who use and consume media are situated and located in specific social, geographical and historical contexts. Also, the interpretation of media text is a creative process in which individuals use the resources available to them in order to make sense of the everyday world around them (Thompson 1995, 39). This includes their homes, the region, the area or the territory they inhabit. Media consumers as well as journalists are closely connected to cultural, material and physical geography, i.e. their social, political and economic contexts. Media audiences, distribution areas, national/regional news agendas, regional marketing strategies all have geographical limitations. Although some international newspapers, such the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal or the Herald Tribune, aim at a larger financial elite, that audience is mainly found in spatially-restricted areas, namely in global cities like London, Paris, New York and Tokyo, creating a “sense of place” in a global economy.

Spatial context is thus both a physical surrounding and a social construction that shapes the images, hierarchies and representations of everyday life. Representations of space, such as places, regions, landscapes and nations, are parts of global and local imageries that the media audiences consume daily. In this sense, the spatial/regional approach to media rejects the universalistic perspective of looking at society as a whole, as one system. Instead, society is formed in specific time-spaces in specific discursively-maintained (market) places and interpretative communities. Social relations and the social formation of citizenship are modified through mediated relations.

The cultural dimension of these mediated relations can be seen as a bank of collective memories, continuously reconstructed, and continuously in use to produce continuity in the commonly shared tradition it mediates. This process is essential to the reproduction of the tradition of control in the regionally defined community. *Homo Politicus*, the rational actor or informed citizen can be seen to operate within a given space and matrix of social and political relations that are formed between different actors and institutional constraints defined by rule implementation centers. That is why it is essential to understand the relation between regions and media texts in terms of spatial dynamics, which is inherently ideological.

There are surely multiple theoretical ways of approaching relations between the economy, communication, space and societal transformation. Print media have been studied from a multitude of viewpoints: historical, economic, political, cultural structural, textual or technological, just to mention a few of the core areas in the field. Although the agreement about the significance of the geographical understanding of the world goes a long way back in time, the study of the spatial dimensions of social life has been considered not only theoretically but also empirically problematic.¹⁰

Within social science, there have been continuous efforts to address this complex field during the latter part of the past century. Slogans like “*geography matters*” or “*space makes a difference*” are often repeated but in media studies there have been too few efforts to go deeper into the question and to begin to systematically explore what kind of geography could matter. Though there indeed is research that outlines the spatial aspects of media, human geography has not been given the position within the field of media studies it would deserve. It is not mentioned in the standard presentations of media and communication studies. Until recently, only single works stood out and still there are few organized efforts to discipline the field.

This aversion against spatiality may be due to the historical, functional or structural approaches, which all are privileged by the factor of time or social structure over space. There is also a tendency among social theorists to handle time and space as empty containers. This is quite understandable. At the same time it may explain why human geography so far has only had a marginal impact on media studies. If the main effort is directed towards exploring universal categories and structures, a more particularistic human geography approach to time and space by default will fall outside the theoretical frame.

A common claim is that the spatial boundedness of society and social practices (i.e. journalism and media practices) has been misunderstood in media studies. Referring to social science in general, Anthony Giddens situates this failure in social theory's inner aversion to environmentalism. Edward Soja has traced this problem to the anti-Hegelianism of the Marxists (Soja 1989, 43; Friedland & Boden 1994, 5). In media studies, the problem can be traced back to the blurred definitions of this field of research that have failed to give media studies a distinct place within theoretical traditions, such as functionalism, critical theory, and constructively-oriented historical approaches. Media studies are everywhere and nowhere.

In the relation to spatiality, there is a fundamental difference between the inner principles of universalistic explanation models and ethnographic studies. Universalistic explanation models, on the one hand, tend not to accept as scientifically valid such claims that regard cultural differences in modes of organizing space as formative constraints of human life. Efforts to explain ways of life on the basis of local models have been treated more as case studies or descriptions, not as ways of developing models related to the logic of locations. Ethnographic studies, on the other hand, commonly accept particular and contextual descriptions. This tradition allows spatiality to be taken into account more fully at the cost of broader contexts.

In several recent works, social scientists provide encouraging reflections on the role of geography in their field of research. Many social theorists have incorporated spatial metaphors into their thinking. Spatial concepts and notions (position, displacement, site, and field) or geographical metaphors (territory, domain, soil, horizon, geopolitics, archipelago, region, landscape and cartography) have been used in many recent works (Smith 2001; Morley 2000; Urry 2000; Chouliriaki & Fairclough 1999). Though metaphorical thinking can be seen as a vital part of knowledge production, thinking space in analytical terms, in relation to media, has remained somewhat narrow.

Doreen Massey (1999, 6) has pointed out that the original relation between social theories and constructing a certain reciprocity between “the social and the spatial” has been established in geographic research. Some geographers have started to accept that the spatial is always socially constructed. With this acceptance has followed a demand that in social theory the social should also be spatially constructed. What could the spatial approach then offer as a new contribution to theoretical and empirical considerations in the field of media studies?

In some recent human geography -oriented studies these problems are discussed in relation to the role of media in late modernity (Urry 2000; Bauman 1998; Haarni et al. 1997; Thrift 1996; Morley & Robins 1995; Relph 1976). In these studies the methodological emphasis is often shifted towards a more qualitatively oriented analysis departing from a constructivist or textual point of view (Morley 2000; Hujanen 2000; Chouliriaki & Fairclough 1999; Häkli 1994; Paasi 1986). Some recent works have also restored the tradition of a materialist analysis while maintaining an interest for the autonomy of the political and economic spheres.¹¹

There are two noticeable strands in recent cultural studies that I find

particularly relevant to my efforts to conceptually relate space and media. Firstly, the discussion of a global-local nexus in economic terms is important (Bauman 2001 and 1998; Fine 2001; Hines 2000; Storper 1997; Appadurai 1996; Thrift 1996; Harvey 1989). Secondly, the critically-oriented discussion about the role of global media in time-space compression has grounded some theoretical considerations in the field. The conceptualizations arrived at in these broad traditions have helped to cross borders between disciplines and to rework our understanding of how regions are symbolically constructed in media. None of these works however, have offered a framework or a model to understand and explore different modes of spatiality as an “*active*” *context and determinant* of human life and communication.

2.2 Space as social and political relations

Space is a fundamental concept that is central to any effort to map and analyze the geographical and social transformation of a defined area, region or territory. Crossing different disciplines and paradigms, Rob Shields (1999, 154) traces the concept of space back to medieval scholasticism. His historical perspective presents one reason why the concept is too loaded to be understood only as a technical term. An analysis of linguistic meanings of *space* in Western languages shows that space is first and foremost a concept of physical dispositions, such as distance, area or territory. But space also has social uses, such as being a place for a specific activity (social spaces e.g., leisure sites, or Goffman’s (1971) front and back spaces). Further meanings are found, for example, in such terms as cyberspace, mental space or discursive space. These all make the concept culturally loaded with connotations and different levels of meanings.

There is also a semantic dimension connected to the translation of the term “space.” For example the French *l’espace* is not the same as the English *space* or German *raum* (Shields 1999, 154; Lefebvre 1991, 31). Neither is the Finnish *tila* semantically identical with the Swedish *rum*. None of these languages have a word for Kant’s and Hegel’s *spatium* (field, region). Also, the term *extensio* (extension, pure spatiality), used by Descartes, articulates a different meaning. The Finnish word *tila* means both *space* and *a state* (for example a state of mind). This double meaning undoubtedly plays its part in the ambiguous nature of the Finnish conception of space.¹²

This partly explains why spatial dimensions can be taken into consideration in vastly different ways in social sciences. A geographer naturally adds the spatio-temporal dimension to the research setting. But, as Sibley (1995, 118) writes, “*Geography can articulate (also) feelings about space and place which have only been hinted at in the psychoanalytical theory.*” Space as a set of relations of a given community adds also a cultural dimension – structures of feelings and moral orders – to be taken into account.

Space as a concept does not denote a fixed and static object, but ongoing process within cultures, for example within a national or regional culture. Spaces (e.g., regions, territories and areas) as such are more than a background to socio-historical actions. They should be seen in a more vital role, as products as well as determinants of those actions (Lefebvre 1991; Gregory 1986; 1994; Jarvis 1998; Paasi 1986). Following the definition of Gregory (1986, 451), *Space is not merely an arena in which social life unfolds, but a medium through which social life is produced and reproduced.* In this regard, space is conceived, perceived and lived category (Lefebvre 1991).

Space and place are hard to separate from social relations and the political aspect of time. From the point of view of human geography, geographical knowledge is impossible without taking into account historical narrative. Spaces contain stories and serve as palimpsests to specific contextual narratives of people. According to Jarvis (1998, 7), that is why space has to be analyzed as sites of an ongoing struggle over the meanings and values of certain regions. The concepts arrived at through such an analysis are also represented as mental or textual constructions in relation to the codes that are embedded in social power structures. From and within this spatial “grid” or matrix of identities, regional features evolve as containers of collective imageries within territories.¹³ From a structurationist approach, with structure being reproduced recursively through everyday social practice, everything is open to social change (see Giddens 1984).

Space as a theoretical concept can be understood in different ways. David Harvey (1973, 13-14) has divided space into *absolute, relative and relational space*. Absolute space refers to geographical and material locations. Applied to media, for example, a particular newspaper can be located at a certain point on a map. (The main editorial office of *Helsingin Sanomat*, the biggest Finnish daily, can be located in Helsinki at 60 degrees North latitude, 25 degrees East longitude.) Its distribution area can usually be identified more or less distinctly – according to this point. *Relative space* examines the value-loaded and hierarchical relationships between objects. Rela-

tive space is evoked, for example, when regional hierarchies are constructed in newspapers or when the center - periphery -nexus is activating in relation to power and rule implementing organs. Values of regions and cities are quite often judged in relation to other things. *Relational space* deals with how different meanings and intentions are attached to different territories and places, and how these intentions affect the way space is regarded and valued. For example, some national landscapes have acquired the symbolic status of representing Finnish nature. Each region has its own natural heritage that is given cultural connotations and is often reflected in the regional identity dimensions in regional newspapers. Relational space is important in constructing different geographically delimited identities. Relational space, as a concept, comes close to the social space of a given community.

Social space can then be understood as human space where distance is measured by knowledge and familiarity. According to Zygmunt Bauman (1998, 27), “social space” did not occur first as a sociological concept. Social space, as we now understand it, was a metaphorical transition of the experience of physical, Newtonian “objective” space and referred to *the human understanding of social and cultural distinctions, distances and categories*. Primarily, *social space* meant that the human body was “the measure of everything.” Human beings tended to measure everything with the help of their bodies (feet, elbows, etc.). Although the human body can be used as an instrument for measurement, the idea of space being measurable had to be invented in a political sense as well. Concepts like distance (close and far away, inside and outside) affected our senses of the classification of the outer social and natural world. What was forbidden or tolerated and “normal” was formulated in dichotomies and categories, like *near-far*, *we-they* and *inside-outside* that have remained the basic components of any cultural grammar.

Social space in present sociological discourse can be defined as referring to the concept of *community*.¹⁴ Social space has to be created and maintained in cultural and also in administrative practices. Social space can then be rendered to refer to the concept of society as part of creating the life-world of the people.¹⁵ It contains class relations based on a certain mode of production and certain systems of ruling the population. Social space is also structured by certain formations of feelings typical to a specific time-space (i.e. the nation-state, region and territorially-limited linguistic community). As a concept, social space would usually refer to a cultural dimension, for

example, the identity formation of a certain region, or a cultural practice. It can, however, be extended to cover the relative space for human beings with material, as well as conceived (norms, codes and laws) and imaginary spaces.

The social space of communities is rendered to an abstract space and divided into suitable administrative units and political entities when a single political space and cartography has to be administered. Drawing maps of ruled territory was an essential step in the formation of modern nation-states. This meant forming new spatial categories and distinctions in order to entangle different regions into a unified and “natural” whole (Paasi 1998; Häkli 1994; Lefebvre 1991). In Finland as well local cultures and practices were partly subjugated and suppressed under the control of a state machinery and bureaucratic unison. Legibility of space and its transparency, in the form of maps, was one of the major political maneuvers of a sovereign state. The question of power was not only attached to the formation of administrative practices but also to the formation of the culture as a whole. Map-making symbolically integrated the pure state territory in the cultural area of a nation-state (Lefebvre 1991; Thompson 1995).

To understand that the symbolic boundaries of language, culture, and meaning-making processes are producing communities is an essential part of understanding that areas or territories are not only geographical sites. Areas and territories are always part of the cultural understandings and political power of those who inhabit the area (Morley & Robins 1995, 5). Perhaps more than that, they are also part of the understanding of those who dominate the region or area. Any space in this sense is always imagined, whether national, local or ethnic.¹⁶

2.3 Region as discursive construction

In the light of what has been said already, it is easy to understand why the concept of region is one of the central objects of the study of human societies. The concept of region comes from the Latin verb *regere*, to command. Traditionally, the concept of region refers to an internal division of a nation-state. Region has been understood as a part of a whole (system). According to Emile Bienveniste, the etymology of the word region (lat. *regio*) leads to the concept of division. *Regere fines* is an act where the limits between the external and internal are defined. The national and foreign territory is made

visible and made part of the legitimate division of the social world by *auctoritas* (Bourdieu 1992, 222).

Regions can be defined also in other ways. In the Finnish language, it usually has been related to at least six different meanings: territory; economy, culture and language, institutional and administrative jurisdiction, religion and associational life, and civil society.¹⁷

Traditionally, the regions of the geographers have been either military or fiscal and administrative areas. A province is a conquered territory (from Latin *vincere*). Field as a concept comes from the word battlefield. An exception to this is the Vidalian tradition, in which regions have been seen as cultural-geographical entities connected to the regional way of life, '*genre de vie*'.¹⁸

A circulation of these notions can be observed between geographical and strategic discourses used for administrative and political purposes (Bourdieu 1992; Foucault 1980).¹⁹ According to Bourdieu (1992, 222), it is hard to claim today that natural regions with natural frontiers exist. *Frontier or border in a sense is always produced by a symbolic classification where political power plays a central role.* This does not mean that regions could not be divided by different elements found in regions (e.g., habitat, language and cultural forms). The main argument, however, remains: these social and political classifications are not always based primarily on "reality" but are part of the symbolic struggle in which space is produced and ultimately dominated by the State. Also, borders produce as much cultural difference as are produced by it.

In contrast to understanding regions as coherent and homogeneous formations, they can be understood as open, relational constructions that are discontinuous over space and through time. Regions are not "out there" waiting to be documented. They are constructions of time-space and combinations and articulations of social relationships.

This means that regions are not simply bounded spaces on a map. Nor do they possess the same shape or the same geography over time. Regions, like places or space, as such are made and remade by social processes that impact unevenly. In this process, new lines are laid down for both social and geographical difference and division (Massey 1999; Allen et al. 1998; Häkli 1994; Paasi 1986). These processes are partly carried out as discursive social practices, for example in newspapers, educational institutions and kindergartens. In this sense, there are always territorial systems of meaning that are connected to spatial and social contexts. These systems of meaning have

their own dynamics and structural inertia that oppose sudden cultural change and create cultural continuity in form of traditions, symbolic patterns, and the historical lore of the land.

Bell and Newby (1976) relate *regional community* to three types of relationships. Firstly, region is understood in a topographical sense. This is based on geographical propinquity and the social relationships found in such settlements that do not play a crucial role in topographic definitions. Secondly, local community can be understood as a local social and cultural system where a bounded set of social and localized relationships between institutions and people as social groups can be found. Thirdly, there is a communion which can be characterized as human association through close personalized ties and belongingness. This latter brings together the idea of community, place and identity, referring to wide ranging relationships of solidarity over a rather undefined area of life and interests. Regional community can thus be understood as a local social and cultural system that creates its own meaningful dynamics, using contextual elements in a functional way, in order to maintain its stability and growth.

Usually, when we refer to regional characteristics, we are leaning on relational models of collective identity, including community in a geographical sense. These characteristics are not necessarily formed by knowledge of the history of socio-political relations, but rather by beliefs of common ancestry or experience. They also give rise to shared and inter-textually reproduced characteristics or traits. In this case, identity of the region can be defined as much by what we are as by who we are (Crang 1998, 61). Discourses about regional identity are, in this sense, performative discourses (Bourdieu 1992, 223).

Through these discourses, classifications are imposed on people and they are “trained” to know and recognize the region. Regional discourses are products of cultural, historical and institutional elements that are both structured and interrelated. *By regional discourses I mean social processes of making sense of changing regional economic and cultural environments.* Some discourses are more legitimate and “natural” than others. The order and hierarchy of these discourses, describing regional “reality,” can vary from time to time, depending on, for example, the current mode of discourses of regional policy.

The act of producing regional and performative discourses – also in regional newspapers – is an act of regional, political or ethnic power exercised by certain authorities. This power operates via revelation and con-

struction, producing the objectification of an area as a region in discourse. Region becomes an essence, territory in “reality” with “natural” frontiers, certain common characteristics and a functional role. This usually leads to essential claims of “what the region is” or what kind of cultural characteristics the habitat of the region manifests in a regional and cultural analysis. This is not in contradiction to the fact that regional representation has acted as a crucial part in the identity building of regional and national identities. The “realism” of these identities, however, is not necessarily based on the “reality.” It can also be based on the functional role of those regional discourses in certain historical periods.²⁰

Regional identity as a concept puts emphasis on spatially-delimited space or a geographical surrounding. We may talk about a *sense of place*. The sense of place is based on the need to belong to a particular place, home, not to the society in an abstract sense. In satisfying this need of roots, people make commitments and develop loyalty to localities (Sennett 1999, 15).

There are different kinds of social and personal identities that may give shape to, and be formed by, regional (e.g., geographically delimited) and cultural landscapes.²¹ In the light of the above discussed multiple layers of spatially related features relevant to the process of identity formation, the concept of identity becomes problematic when applied to analysis, because it usually implies culture (e.g., Finnishness, Swedishness and Dutchness) as an organic super-metaphor. Some central values or stereotypes of the national group – collectivism, value of hard work, self-reliance, and so forth – are assumed to apply, at least at some level, to each member of the group. Furthermore, the identity model, based on essentialism, usually tends to downplay individual human agency by focusing on the collective shaping of larger political entities. This vantage point reduces the interest of scholars to apply a comparative approach within one country, and leads to a tendency to flatten the cultural surface to one whole politically-administered entity.

This is where geography and the spatially-delimiting dimension come into the picture. The “us” and “them” are often territorially-defined groups, which need to be constructed with the help of borders. To give an example, to define the common characteristics of regional identity is, at the same time, to participate in the continuous constructing of an answer to the question “who are we.” This process consists of multiple actions of including different and usually positive features of self-representation, and handling some negative features as well, as part of the validation of the identity cate-

gory. Relations are constructed both towards the inhabited geographical site and towards other communities with different regional identities.

A normative assessment of the nature of the current discussion on spatiality and cultural identity much depends on what parts of culture or identities are in focus, and how and for what purpose these identities and cultural features are studied. Representations of national or regional identity can be studied, but when the identity category is applied in an analysis, it usually requires systemic knowledge (historical, political and economic) of a given country/region. This is essential in order for it not to become only a description of essential and usually positive features maintained, for example, for sentimental or commercial reasons.

Economic activity, for example tourism, is heavily based on the cultural distinctiveness of a certain area. Producing cultural distinctiveness can be considered as an act of *commoditization of regional tradition* for marketing purposes. Within the distribution areas of regional newspapers in Finland, it is evident that in many cases at least the cultural and economic entities are overlapping, forming a complex pattern of boundaries and constructed frontiers.

“What is a region?” is always a question of definition. In this analysis, the concept of region is defined as a system of spatial, economic and social relations. According to this definition (see for example Allen et al. 1998), regions are constructed as well as maintained in these relations. They are political and economic processes happening on different scales. These processes develop at different speeds as part of social change, and meet different varieties of counter-forces causing regional inertia.²² With these points in mind, it can be concluded that regions emerge as complex syntheses of objects, patterns, and processes derived from the simultaneous interaction of different levels of social process, operating on varying geographical scales and chronological stages (Wolch & Deverteuil 2001, 152).

In analyzing the discourses of these spatial, economic and social relations, the region should also be defined in relation to the circulation area of regional newspapers. Over time, newspapers have established themselves according to spatial limits within which the readers are interested in each other’s doings, at the same time affecting the emergence of such areas of mutual interest and their limits. In some cases, circulation and distribution areas do overlap. It could be claimed that the struggle to widen one’s circulation area is a constant activity of print media in a capitalist market economy. This, however, is not always the case. Economically, a coherent core

area with mutual cultural, administrative and economic boundaries has proven to be a well-functioning platform for a newspaper. In any case, the regional newspaper creates its own system of meanings when addressing the regional community. In this meaning system, different spheres of region (economic, social, cultural and political) are intertwined in a functional and systemic way, adding the coherence to the sense making processes of everyday life in a given community.

2.4 Marketplace and lived narratives

Place is a useful concept in social theory and media studies. It is used to express how a spatially-connected community or group of people mediates the demands of cultural identity, state power, and the accumulation of capital at a particular location on the map. More than that, the concept of place implicitly contains emotional, cultural or symbolic attachment to some location. When approached from this point of view, places exist only through constant reproduction of their social and cultural forms that are situated in social practices. According to Massey and Jess (1995, 222), place is constituted through a process of becoming and this process is historically contingent. This process is constrained by past experiences and situated or prior social practice.

In the vocabulary used in human geography, place usually connotes a geographical position to which personal feelings of belonging, security or longing are attached. Place can also create feelings like fear or dislike.²³ Mostly, places are part of constructions of collective and individual identities and shared history. Places are processes in which space is made meaningful through historically-rooted narratives of community, landscape and location. Place can also be thought of as a concentration of people and economic activity. Places have their urban or rural characteristics rendered up as special by their economic activity and demography.

Newspapers and other media are organizations that tend to strengthen the sense of place. *Sense of place* can be defined as being in the world and sensing both symbolical and material surroundings. Newspapers have strengthened the sense of dwelling or belonging to places, not spaces in general. Sense of place refers to personal feelings attached to places. The concept of region – as was already noted – can be seen as “collective narrative.” The concept of place can be seen as the experience of this narrative.

Place, in this sense, can be seen as a mix of lived personal histories, micro-realities, macro constraints and situated structures of feelings.

Modern place-making involves a search for the comforts of sameness in terms of shared identity and reduction of density. But place-making also requires a system that constantly allocates distinctions between them and us. Place-making, as a form of expression, has to offer itself to be "consumed" in order to become a part of identity production, be it national, local or regional. It has to have a common and shared daily basis that is collective in nature.

Sharon Zukin's (1991, 3-6) analysis of the relation between concepts of place and market bears relevance to the discussion about regional media. The expression *Marketplace*, as such, literally denotes a historical place. It also connotes a socially-constructed space that involves transaction of capital, products and a system of long-distance trade. Both these meanings are intertwined and bound up with local communities. While the idea of place is withering away, the idea of markets as global space is growing stronger (Zukin 1991, 12).²⁴ *In a regional context, however, places do function as marketplaces for regional newspapers.*

When connecting the concept of market to the concepts of place and space, we have to remember that there are multiple markets that all have their own domain of networks located in space and place. It has to be clear that, for example, new means of communication and networks do not eradicate from their social contexts those earlier ones. These spaces and places of markets are superimposed upon one another over the years, thus constituting the various markets at any given time (Lefebvre 1991, 86). These various markets can be defined geographically (local, regional, national or global), by the objects that are sold (market of commodities; money or capital, the labor market) or the nature of objects (market of symbols, signs, images or material things). Regional newspapers have their respective region as a marketing area, and the products that are sold are both symbolic (news stories, information etc.) and printed space for advertisers of and/or for the region.

John Urry (2000, 134) points out that the concept of community usually underestimates the role of objects, or "*the materiality of place.*" Objects, as well as interaction between people or institutions, have a role in defining the place or community.²⁵ Materiality of places is the base where the newspapers as commercial enterprises are attached. Newspapers do need both advertisers (e.g., companies and small industry), and citizen-consumers

(people who need knowledge and information of their surroundings). Journalists are part of the commercial circle producing symbolic goods (e.g., news stories, editorials and feature stories) that are sold to the regional public.

2.5 Dynamics of a meaning-market

How can geographical notions of space, region and place be used analytically in the context of this kind of a regional research setting? How can we analyze a certain set of crisis representations (region, province, territory, area) displayed in the regional media? What is the kind of dialectical process where economy, geography and communication are intertwined into one system?

As noted above, and as many theorists have claimed (Magnachten and Urry 1998; Urry 1995; Massey 1994), different localities and regional entities have some common features. Regions as such can be seen as organized through different temporalities. Regional communities carry traces of their collective history being entities of culture, stereotypes attached to different regions and landscapes, social groups who have lived in, or passed the place historically. Regions can also be marked by wealth, e.g., whether they are rich or poor, marking them as economic entities. Fast capital flow in and over places makes them more urban and flexible in some cases. Some places seem to be heavily loaded by time and inertia, reflecting their character as communities. These rural places and peripheries are slow in their change and resistant to growth and accumulation. Past memory plays the central role in reproducing the present moment.

The discursive time-space of a region is reconstructed daily as a broader discursive formation. As such, it has inertial power as well as a capacity to change. A discursive formation is defined neither in terms of a particular object, nor a style, nor a play of permanent concepts, nor by the persistence of a thematic, but must be grasped in the form of a system of regular dispersion of statements (Foucault 1980, 63). Seen in this perspective, the concept of the discursive time-space of a region can be opened as a palimpsest in which the everyday life of a community is a layered surface of historical, political and cultural events affecting the discursive formation.²⁶

Journalism, in a broader sense, is in a position to produce a certain time-space and to transform it into the form of discourse(s). In this sense, jour-

nalism is a social practice. Social practices as such are not given or natural. They do not reflect or mirror easily-objectified reality. They are economic, social, psychological and even technical accomplishments. They are produced as discursive spaces within which certain actions are sensible, accepted or even necessary. As such, they are ideological in nature – but their ideological underpinnings are not solely or dominantly only structural or political. They are more often spatial – geopolitical, national and regional. So, for example, there is not one set of journalistic practices, texts or images. Rather, there are culturally-specific sets of techniques in using language, defining the social practice of mediating space in interaction with journalistic discourse.

Structures of preferred meanings, constructed by regional newspapers and other regional practices (e.g., other media, schools, associations, and non-profit organizations, administrative organizations, and business actors) typically involve the process of cultural system-building. Messages and codes once lived or to be lived in the future are spread through media and journalism. Symbolic forms, like news items, are constituted as commodities. As such, they can become objects that can be sold in a marketplace at a certain price. In that sense, media texts are “symbolic goods” and the value comes from the amount of copies of newspapers that can be sold in a specific marketplace, and the amount of potential readers/consumers that can be sold to the advertisers.

In everyday social practice, these relations are remade and negotiated publicly in a dialogue between the community, different modes of “region” (political, administrative, cultural, and spatial), the contexts (a certain historical time-space), the public, and the respective regional newspaper. In this matrix of relations a (regional) cultural grammar is defined and maintained publicly. In this sense, the discursive (textual and symbolic) landscape of the media is relational to its nature. Representations of regions are made in a cultural and symbolic exchange process, in a *system of representations*.

There is a need for a concept that helps us to approach this particular process of representational praxis, where life-world of the people, the regional time-space with its different actors and social practices and the structures of the economy are involved. I have solved this problem by the introduction of a market-related metaphor. The newspaper operates in a “meaning-market” where “symbolic goods” relating to economic, social as well as cultural life are produced and exchanged.²⁷ In this regard, the regional

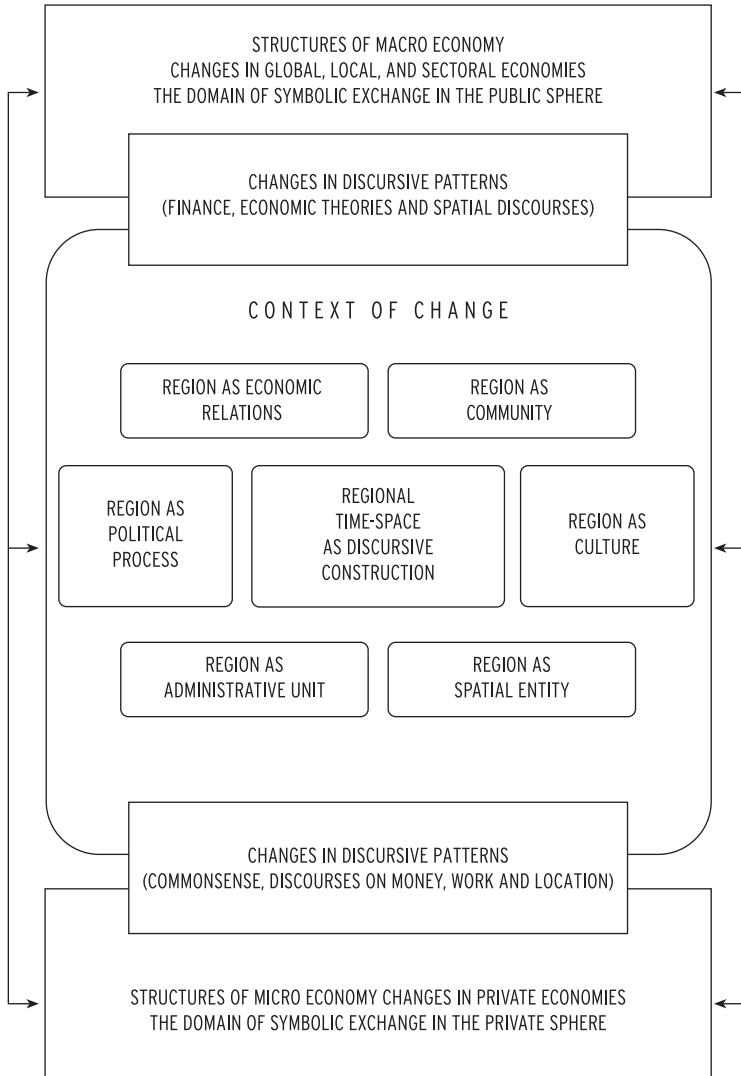
newspaper can be metaphorically understood as operating as a “market-place” where different social and political actors meet citizen-readers and this interplay is actualized through and in media texts. This concept comes close to earlier conceptualizations of newspaper as a “meeting place” or a “marketplace” (Pietilä & Sonderman 1994; Garnham 1979; Smythe 1981). The additional features introduced here relate to the contextualization of this function of the media in a regional/national surrounding.

Journalists as symbolic producers are needed for the surveillance and organizing of this symbolic exchange through their own symbolic production. At the same time they participate – willingly or unwillingly – in a process of modification of different values, democratic ideals and political aspirations, to accommodate the surroundings in accordance with the economic interests of the newspaper. In this regard, the concept of “market” is used in a dualistic sense. When market, in economic terms, does not have a moral connotation (if the product is good, the buyers, i.e. readers, are willing to purchase it), the dynamics of a meaning-market is subjected to ethical and moral principles that are adapted to the regional “good”. A meaning-market is coupled with a regional community, and the functional dynamics of symbolic exchange affects regional well-being and, recursively all market actors. But as a market, it had to adjust its own interactions as well as the regional community’s to national and even global requirements. This is why the dynamics of a meaning-market cannot simply be contextualized in terms of its surroundings. Its orientation is simultaneously towards itself (regionally) and towards the local, national and global spheres.

This type of exchange is not only material (i.e. the sold newspapers) but also symbolic (values, norms and cultural orders embedded in media texts) (Moring 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2000d; Moring 2001). A meaning-market is formed through a complex set of dynamic relations: discourses about the surrounding society, produced by different institutions, the economic circumstances of society at regional/national and global levels, the relations of production, the codes of discursive producers, i.e. journalists, and the everyday world of the people. All these different actors and constraints affect how certain ideas, values and modes of regional thinking gain their position in the newspaper.

Functionally, in terms of analysis, the concept of a meaning-market can be used: as an organizing tool in the analysis of the regions, to organize values attached to different discourses, clarifying cultural grammar in a particular time-space, and to organize preferred dichotomies (we-they, near-

Figure 1. Elements of a regional meaning-market



far, right-wrong) functionally, from a regional point of view.

A meaning-market obviously functions in the domain of collective consciousness as a system of beliefs, values and norms as well, although clarifying the cultural grammar of the inhabitants is left outside this study (see Paasi 1986). In this role, the basic principle of a market's internal transactions is supposed to yield a surplus for the symbolic exchange process within the region. Values, beliefs and norms construct relationships between actors and form identities from certain regional perspectives for regional community. The intensity of the internal transactions within a particular time-space links the system of representation to the local and private. A meaning-market operates in regional time-space(s) where juxtapositions of different values, relations and symbols prevail. At the same time, this dialectical process overrides much of the considerations of the broader locality or region within which it exists. On a larger scale a meaning-market operates through the de-materialized systems: for example, through finance, politics, the administration, the informal economy and aesthetic values.

A meaning-market would probably only appear in a regional system where people share sufficient values, language, norms and a sense of power relations. Grids of meanings, embedded in these relations and the community have a common "marketplace," that is a regional media that (usually) has a prominent position. A meaning-market integrates and articulates, in this context, the grid of values, norms, flashes of political history, and ideals of social equality and democracy that become visible in a newspaper. A regional meaning-market is itself part of the process of the circulating manufactured meanings of other regional institutions as well as symbolic commodities conceived in the journalistic process. That is to say that the *system of regional representation is a process in which crystallized meanings for example, of the political, cultural and economic spheres of the region, are distilled to be part of the newspaper coverage, media discourse and everyday life*. In broader terms, the actors in a meaning-market are all the individuals or institutions who possess the power to define and categorize things in public. One particularly influential group of basic actors is the editors-in-chief and the other (usually senior) editors writing the editorials. They can execute this power by writing about themes that produce the most cultural and economic surplus value.

The symbolic commodities of a meaning-market (values and discursive formations) are produced and developed in dialectical relationships consisting of collective memory, regional economy and market imperatives. But

like every market a meaning-market also yields a profit when the surplus value of the commodities that are circulated in the public sphere is accumulating. The public recognizes and uses these symbolic commodities as a part of their common understanding and social capital, keeping the process of symbolic exchange in motion.

One example of a typical symbolic “commodity” could be the idea of the independent and entrepreneurial mentality that is constructed on the historical idea of the wealthy farmer from the region of Southern Ostrobothnia. This characteristic is portrayed as a common belief; people of the region are portrayed as approving of this description as part of their identity in the interaction with their immediate surroundings. In this case, people are then seen to be more resistant, and unwilling to give up their business, although the market situation might be difficult. Also, the entrepreneurial spirit is supported within the region and citizens are expected to be more willing to set up their own business, if possible.

In this circulation, the primary notion of people’s mentality (independence and enterprising spirit) is transformed into a profitable economic activity (business enterprises within the region). This symbolic commodity producing surplus value forms a self-maintaining circle. The regional community benefits from functioning meaning-structures that increase the community’s internal cohesion and ontological security. Migration will diminish because people are not so willing to seek jobs elsewhere, even though the local job market would seem less promising. In this surplus-adding circle of a meaning-market every instance benefits in trading relationships: the region’s business life and municipality in the form of taxpayers and entrepreneurs, the newspaper in the form of subscribers and advertisers, and the people of the region in the form of a strengthened sense of ontological security and collective identity.

The process of a meaning-market also includes symbolic meaning structures that have been produced in negative *trading relationships*. These meaning structures are usually used as a part of political and symbolic struggle, in statements concerning regional policy. One typical example from this category might: “The South is deserting the North, and is unable to understand the specific conditions of the region.”

In this case, this primarily cultural notion is portrayed as transforming itself into part of the community’s collective resistance. This portrayal serves as a basis to question the fairness (legitimacy and rationality) of the political system. The resistance of the community is understood to strengthen its

internal social cohesion. This process transforms an economic issue into a political one.

The notion of the unfairness of the South turns into a political trading relationship in which the ability of the political system to function democratically is called into question. The legitimacy of the political system is based on the voters' support and the system must also guarantee this support regionally. In such a case, an MP from the region can bring up the issue on the political agenda and thus activate a regional policy that may be economically-favorable to the region. "South as a deserter" has become a symbolic commodity that gains symbolic and political value, and through it material and economic value.

In the trading relationships of a meaning-market, the meanings of cultural grammar are crystallized as dichotomies and certain values that are functional to the regional community. This meaning-creating process is in a constant state of flux. The previous meaning structures are slowly vanishing and replaced by new and more functional values and norms. All these elements of a meaning-market described above are in dialectical relationships with each others. That is to say, *these elements are different but not fully separate. There are moments in which each element internalizes the others without being reducible to them.*

Studied as such, temporal and spatial dimensions of the economic crises would leave the analysis without concepts to assess the complex economic, cultural and social nature of the societal development. To allow the inclusion of these dimensions, a system-analytical framework is incorporated into the analysis, mainly based on the Habermasian distinction between different systemic features of economic and societal crises.

3 Legitimation crisis in a spatial system

“In classical antiquity the earliest historians made little attempt to separate the description of land from the narration of events the scene of which was in the area described. For a long time physical geography and history appear attractively intermingled.” (Alexander von Humboldt, 1845)²⁸

3.1 Types of crisis in a spatial system

Each crisis has a particular context that defines the specific regional system of representation, i.e., a meaning-market, and through this system of representation the interpretations of the course of economic crisis are formed. As explicated in the earlier chapters, the regional differentiation is the context from which the crisis will be explored in this study. But if we think of crisis and the different theoretical approaches through which to grasp the crisis of the 1990s, we also must define *what exactly is crisis from the point of view of this study* and how the dynamics of crisis, regional newspapers and discourses of legitimation were intertwined during the period studied.

According to Hay (1996, 87), we can trace the etymology of the term “crisis” to Greek. In Greek crisis literally means to decide. “Crisis” is a moment of decisive intervention and a moment of transformation (Keane 1984, 10-13). In that sense, crisis can be described as a moment in which a new trajectory is imposed upon a system.

Habermas' concept of crisis refers to medical discourse, where it refers to "the phase of an illness in which it is decided whether or not the organism's self-healing powers are sufficient for recovery" (1976, 86). Usually, crisis is associated with an objective force that deprives a subject of some part of his normal sovereignty. But crisis cannot be separated from the viewpoint and the experiences of the one who is undergoing it. The definition of crisis, in this sense, implies that crisis is as much a lived experience as it is an objective disturbance of a system, whether it is regional, national or global.

Apart from the medical usage of the term, crisis is known from classical drama. From Aristotle to Hegel, crisis signified the turning point in a fateful process that is not imposed only from the outside. In a crisis, the participant and earlier norms and identities are shattered, unless those involved are able to form new identities and new destinies for themselves (Habermas 1976, 2). In this sense, crisis has also internal dynamics that differentiates it from persons or entities that are caught up in a crisis.

In the realm of politics, a crisis is a moment of decisive intervention, a moment of rupture as well as a moment of transformation, questioning the basis of the political legitimacy of the decision-makers (Hay 1996, 87; Hay 1994; Keane 1984, 10-13). In that sense the term refers both to the subjective perceptions of the people and objective historical and structural conditions.

All these definitions point to crisis as both *lived experience and a moment of intervention of external forces* in the shaping of institutions, structures or policies that recursively reshape the society and the State. The most relevant aspect regarding this study is that crisis will often be interpreted through its public representations. Consequently, economic crisis is a media event, including contested multiple processes, ideological transformations, and competing actors of the social scene, defining what is going on within the regions.

As all systems, regions maintain themselves by altering both boundaries and structural continuity during times of crises. This adaptation can be detected from the new concepts and frameworks through which "the reality" of the system is grasped. Not all system alterations in social systems, for example in regional systems, are crises. New forms of discourses and practices can also be formed through learning processes and change or through a dissolution process, and sometimes through the collapse of earlier political regimes. Here, crisis as an analytical term refers to *the form of disintegration of social institutions and dynamics, such as a regional meaning-mar-*

ket that can be detected from the new and diverse sets of discourses describing social reality. In terms of process, the production of regions (in crisis) reflects a historically-contingent process that emphasizes institutional and individual practices as well as the structural features with which those practices are interwoven.

Following the theorists of legitimation crisis, the larger economic context – the capitalistic system – can be seen as a system that is inherently unstable and prone to periodic crises. I here follow the usual criticism presented regarding the assumption that the internal development of capitalism cannot be seen as a deterministic science of the “iron laws” of the development and an inevitable downfall of capitalism.²⁹ Usually the nation-state tries to avoid the crises, and balance both economic regulation and societal legitimacy among the people with suitable policies. Generally, the State must balance the need for private accumulation with legitimizing the social and economic system, but the task is two-fold. The State or current government also engages in attempts to regulate the economy while seeking to maintain its legitimacy as a political actor through media and public discussion. Tools for forming policies are linked to a certain historical moment and certain premises related to doing politics.

3.2 System and identity crises

Habermas (1976) has developed an account of the different crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism that are emerging and representing themselves differently in political discourses. At the core of his theory of crisis is the distinction between *system crises* and *identity crises*. The distinction reflects Habermas’ earlier thinking that distinguishes between “system” and “life-world.”

System crisis for Habermas is a breakdown in system integration. System crises are crises that appear in external structures when the social system faces an accumulation of political “steering problems” and is unable to cope without a breakdown or dysfunctional activities. System crises can be characterized by the exhaustion of economic and administrative techniques and strategies, with the internal and external contradictions causing pressure. Of course “steering problems” cause crisis tendencies only if the wide range of possibilities and options for the resolution of a situation is not available or is used up when the situation is acute (Habermas 1976, 45-49;

Hay 1996, 88).

Identity crisis can be defined as a social breakdown in contrast to a system integration breakdown. An identity crisis unfolds when members of a society or regional community become conscious of the existence of system crises and feel that their security is threatened. In this sense an identity crisis is based on subjective perceptions and lived experiences of crises more than on conceived states of external (economic) structures. Individuals, in the context of a crisis, make their own interpretations of the state of affairs, changing their mode of living and treating their experiences as a confirmation of a crisis diagnosis.

An identity crisis appears within the life-world (or a regional system of representation), whereas system crises can be first mirrored in *external and “objective” structures* (changes in the value of the GDP, the rate of unemployment). The experiences of citizens cannot be treated as a transcendental account of “what is going on” and, consequently, it should be understood that citizens’ and journalists’ perceptions of the crisis are always partial and distorted. Individual perceptions are always attached to their immediate context and thus differing.

Habermas (1976, 45) also distinguishes between different kinds of sub-crises. He subdivides *system crisis* into *economic crises* that take place within the economic system and *rationality crises* that relate to the political system. *Identity crisis* is subdivided into *legitimation crisis*³⁰ and *motivation crisis*.

Table I. A classification of possible crisis tendencies (Habermas 1976, 45)

POINT OF ORIGIN	SYSTEM CRISIS	IDENTITY CRISIS
Economic System	Economic Crisis	---
Political System	Rationality Crisis	Legitimation Crisis
Socio-Cultural System	---	Motivation Crisis

1. *Economic crisis tendencies* appear when the economic system does not produce the requisite quantity of consumable values, and the positive development of GDP becomes negative.
2. *Rationality crisis tendencies* appear when the administrative system does not produce the requisite quantity of rational decisions.
3. *Legitimation crisis tendencies* appear when the political legitimizing system does not provide the requisite quantity of generalized motivations.
4. *Motivation Crisis Tendencies* appear when the socio-cultural system does not generate the requisite quantity of action-motivating meaning in the life-world of the people. (Hay 1996, 88.)

Economic crisis arises when the economic system becomes unstable and the acts of system regulation are not sufficient to bring the system back to a stable state. *Rationality crisis* occurs when the political system loses its credibility. Rationality crisis develops as the decision-makers fail to reconcile the conflicting demands of economic regulation and social and political cohesion. Rationality crisis refers to the rule-implementing organs disability to function and cope with the conflicting demands placed upon the institutions of the society (Habermas 1975, 68-70).

Legitimation crises emerge, as confidence in the political system is vanishing because of the rationality deficits produced by political decision-makers. In the context of the other types of crises, still greater pressures are brought upon the political system that it fails to satisfy. Consequently, the public realm is filled with unsatisfied demands, which leads to a delegimation of the political system.

Legitimation crises appear especially when steering imperatives are in contradiction, and thus endanger the social integration of the whole society or create conflicts between different groups or parts of a society. When members of the administration try to maintain the legitimacy of their acts, this end is usually served by the separation of instrumental functions from expressive symbols. Familiar strategies in these kinds of situations are the personalization of substantive issues, the symbolic use of hearings, expert judgments (managerial techniques), creating new vocabularies and frameworks, and also the advertising techniques.

Motivation crises appear when the socio-cultural system changes and their output become dysfunctional for the political decision-makers and for the system of social labor. Motivation crisis tendencies also affect the political behavior of ordinary people. The growing tendency of civil privatization corresponds to the structures of a depoliticized public realm. And peo-

ple tend to retreat from public discussion experiencing helplessness and passivity. Engaging the political activity and applying rationality in certain situations find a counterbalance in particularism, which refers to private interest and a subordinate mentality of the people towards political elites. (Habermas 1976, 75-77).

Classical political theorists, Almond and Verba (1965), assert that when the political elites are powerful and are able to make authoritative decisions, then the involvement, activity, and influence of the common people will usually be limited. In these situations, the ordinary citizens relinquish over power to the elites and let them rule. For an elite power to function requires that ordinary citizens are relatively passive and uninvolved. Social integration and consensus are often maintained through public discussion. When downturns occur, this balancing act becomes more difficult, stimulating a legitimization crisis of the State both on a wider and a local scale.

Persistent steering problems usually appear when incumbent governments seek to enact coherent policies while responding to conflicting interests, and expectations of the people (Habermas 1976; O'Connor 1973). Whether legitimations of the political elite are convincing or are believed depends naturally on empirical motives and reasons that can be mobilized at the moment. This mobilization of the public opinion is channeled through mass media.

This process can be defined as the “*logic of crisis displacement*,” within which the discourse of crisis is conceived. By logic of displacement Habermas means that fundamental system crises, originating within the economy, become the responsibility of the political system, being the supreme regulator of the economy. The crisis is thus displaced from the economy (which does not have the internal capacity to resolve it), to the political system (which might have this capacity) (Habermas 1976, 50; Hay 1996, 91). Here it becomes manifest as a “rationality crisis” if not resolved by the political system.

The public sphere and different markets of meaning are set up primarily for effective legitimation. Public discussion has, above all, the function of directing attention to topical areas, for example, silencing and pushing other themes and problems and arguments below the threshold of attention. Thus, certain themes are suppressed and cannot be part of the opinion formation. Journalism, in this equation, is seen as a social practice through which communicative rationality and action are brought to the people. In this sense, it is a resource for the actors to gain legitimation in a

contested situation, as was noted in the earlier chapter.

Habermas points out that the political decision-making system and the economy are eventually uncoupled from the life-world. Mediating structure between these two is publicity and a system of communication, and in this study through the process of a meaning-market.³¹ Systems of money and political power, based on legitimation, are built on an instrumental rationality that is the rationality of getting results (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999). On the other hand, a system of communication is based (at least partly) on democratic ideals as well as emotions, norms, and beliefs strengthening the sense of place, security, and identity in people's life-worlds.³²

The originality of Habermas' contribution lies on the emphasis he places upon the lived and experienced nature of crises. The relationship between a system and a lived crisis, between structural contradictions and the perceptions to which they give rise, are usually implicitly constructed within news stories, with actors, experts, editors and journalists' objective voice-overs. Habermas himself also stresses the importance of diachronic analysis and the detection of system transformation in terms of socio-cultural and communicative processes.

However, the system in a legitimation crisis analysis usually refers to the nation-state or civil society defined by political borders.³³ In this study, the system is explicitly a regional system, and the starting point of these considerations is the internal heterogeneity within Finland, measured by a set of contextual variables relevant to the formation of different "interpretative" borders between regions.³⁴

Theoretically, the framework of a legitimation crisis will be used as an analytical and systematic tool in the regional analysis in order to see whether a spatial context is a variable that may cause differentiation in the interpretation of an economic crisis, offered by a body of legitimation crisis theorists (see especially Habermas 1976; 1992; Offe 1984; 1985; Hay 1996). The regional meaning-market is supposed to activate different types of legitimacy and rationality questions to appear in different contexts. Also, a motivation crisis, according to the internal transactions of a meaning-market, is supposedly different depending on the cultural identity and self-understanding of the region. Following Table I, different types of system and identity crises are explored in the regional newspaper context.

3.3 Regional discourses defining crises

There is no clearly defined method to analyze (regional) discourses of crisis or to differentiate contextual variables affecting the discursive formation of this transformation of different crises. This is not surprising, given the multiple meanings and uses of the concept of a discourse.³⁵ As I have noted, by a discourse I mean a social process of making sense of a social system. Regional discourses, as any other discourses, are the products of cultural, historical, economic and institutional elements that are both structured and interrelated. Here, regional discourses refer to the social processes of making sense of changing regional economic and cultural environments. The formative process of discourses is carried out in specific regional meaning-markets. Some of the conceived discourses are more prestigious, legitimated and more preferred or obvious than others. At the same time, there are discourses that struggle to win any recognition whatsoever. That is why “silences” or non-topics of journalism can offer an interesting vantage point as well, when exploring the public discussion.

*Discourses and particularly those related to the concept of “region,” form the object of what can be spoken about and analyzed.*³⁶ Discourses on region have historically-specific rules of formation, sets of mutually-shared tacit knowledge of the past and future, differentiating pure, grammatically well-formed statements, and arguments from those actually expressed in certain times and places (Foucault 1991, 63; Howarth 2000, 7). In this sense, regions are discursive unifications in which social and economic processes, for example different modes of crises, take place. The concept discourse in this work refers to these historically-specific systems of meaning, which are crucial to the formation of the identities of both subjects and communities and provide a frame to make objects available to human perception and intervention.

Journalism, in this constellation, can be seen as a *social practice linking structures and life- worlds, producing discourses of diverse public spheres, and framing certain ways of looking at things*. Though this may sound obvious, the most important facet of this process is that external processes shape discourses, and vice versa (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). The common denominator for discourses maintaining social integration is usually some kind of sense of mutual future and equality between the members of society. If these premises are not met social disintegration is more probable. What the structures of people’s expectations are naturally depends on the social

situation and contextual structure they inhabit.

Framing as a concept refers to the different ways of organizing social knowledge and the experience of a depression, and to framing reality in everyday life in order to comprehend and respond to social situations. Journalistically, frames are principles of selecting the news and topics. Frames define the semiotic codes of emphasis, interpretation and presentation. Media producers, journalists and editors-in-chief use different techniques of framing *to organize media coverage*. The frames enable the newspaper journalist, in the context of a depression, to package ample amounts of diverse and contradictory data and information into several well-defined frames of “what is going on.” These frames also guide the audience’s expectations, interpretations and readings of media texts, as well as make the whole journalistic procedure routine to the journalists (see Goffman 1974; Entman 2001; Hall et al. (eds.) 1999; Gitlin 1999; Väliverronen 1996; Reese 1991; Tuchman 1978).

According to Kunelius (2000), journalism is “the discourse of discourses” because of its ability to translate *discourses from other social sub-systems into its own inter-textual mode*. Media discourse acts as a “super” discourse, connecting actors, institutions and citizen-individuals. Journalism molds private and public realms, using different discursive ways to address the public and reconstruct the relation between the political actors and decision-makers and the citizens.

Discourses and news frames constructing the crisis are the elements of social practices that are in a dialectical relationship with the surrounding social system. At a national level, mainstream media create their own discourse of crisis that is repeated and modified in order to apply to suitable sectoral economics and to political issues. This discursive formation of a depression is actively used in regional newspapers, but also culturally modified to meet regional needs.

Traditional analyses of journalism usually consider economic factors as mainly structural or institutional variables and treat these variables autonomously without reflecting their impact on content. This is understandable because usually the journalistic content of the newspaper and the newspaper as a business have been seen as separate phenomena.³⁷ This assumption leans on a traditional justification of journalism, where newspapers are seen as serving a democratic function, independently investigating their subject matter in order to provide full information to the public – or even take the citizens along as some public journalism -projects have done – without im-

plicit commercial intentions.

How then do contradictory elements of communication and economics interact in regional systems of representation? *The relation between these two frameworks can be seen as acting in a recursive manner.* On the one hand, communication contains and controls economics with the meanings embedded in media texts. On the other hand, economic factors – regional or national – constitute the immediate context of media organizations from which the total turnover is received. In this sense we could think that not only meanings but printed space and audiences are the (real) resources that are sold in the market.

The regional community, as for example a newspaper's audience, is also an economic entity. From the regional newspaper's point of view, this community is both symbolic and material, and it is reproduced intentionally by journalistic activity. A particular asset of the regional newspapers in this market situation is their capability to provide their readers with an "*identification frame*" of the local/regional community. As regional outlets, these newspapers have a monopoly position in their respective areas, and producing this "identification frame" (for the regional distribution area) has also been a market strategy in their struggle to gain this monopoly position.

Mostly, regional newspapers have a more or less implicit intention to act as a "*voice of the region.*" As such, they also affect regional identity, regional politics, and a self-understanding of the territorial community in all institutional ways. Confession of "the self" (e.g., defining the identity) is the immanent condition of the ruling institutions and the target of the identifying rhetoric (Hänninen 1998, 115).

The geographical inertia of organizational forms also applies to regional newspapers and their newsrooms. A newspaper itself creates a certain community that modifies identity discourses. Within the newspaper's organization there is a specific time-space bound culture constructed and maintained by a professional community of journalists, the editorial staff as well as the print staff who are paid for producing the newspaper. These modifications of identity serve as adhesive cement requiring constant reproduction. Knowledge production and the institutional activity of the newspapers condition each other. The choice of perspective or point of view is part of the classification power of institutions, such as newspapers.

The inertial nature of a newsroom is one of the features that could explain some of the characteristics of the specific meaning-markets. Organizations are not reducible to the knowledge of their individual members: the

sum is more than its parts. Nelson and Winter (1982, 134) claim that organizations have a memory. This memory stores their routine activities that are organized around professional roles, skills and codes. This knowledge shapes and defines every organization in a distinct way. A significant part of this memory is remembered by doing (Dodgson 1998, 131).

However, newspapers as textual sites reflect a variety of communities in their functional regions: not only economic, but political, cultural and administrative as well. For example, newspapers as commercial enterprises also form their own communities as employers of journalists and other staff within the media industry: producing, printing and distributing the newspapers daily. Moreover, the newspapers create a discursive system, or formation, as a background for regional discursive representations of the crisis, as defined above.

3.4 Newspapers as multifunctional regional actors

As noted in an earlier chapter, region is constructed in social, economic, and political relations and as such can be constructed discursively from different perspectives in a regional newspaper. These perspectives include different “senses of place,” i.e. how region is understood from a particular perspective, and also different practices of reconstructing boundaries between regional entities. Key processes that are maintained by the regional newspapers do differ depending from which perspective the region is constructed. Table II summarizes the different perspectives of the theoretical chapters. The rows of Table II correspond to Figure I (the elements of a meaning-market). The columns summarize the spatial dialectics that are connected with the role of the newspaper, and “key processes” of the newspaper’s meaning-market for the analytical purposes used in the following chapters, outlining the analysis.

Table II. The regional system of interpretation in the context of crisis

Region	Sense of region	Boundary	Role of the newspaper	Key processes of a regional meaning-market
Region as a community/ "Home"	Region as a community; region as a regional "people"; Finns as a nation - state, region as a collective citizen	Symbolically manifested belonging; regional and shared identity	Voice of the collective community member/ dweller	Regionalism; constructing tradition; roots, maintaining ontological security and continuity producing collective stereotypes; Inclusion/ exclusion practices
Region as a political process	Region as an assemblage of coordinated political institutions and practices	Practical: institutional reach into the private sphere of the citizens/ voters	Voice of the collective citizen/ tax-payer	Negotiation on behalf of a region, discursive defense and resistance; Border controls: discursive and political resistance
Region as economic relations	Area defined by commercial activity	Economic: region as a labor market and business area	Voice of the responsible capitalist/ entrepreneur	Reporting how the market economy is functioning; Inclusion of regional business life, maintaining positive atmosphere for entrepreneurship, image of the cities and municipalities
Region as administrative unit	Bounded area by administrative activity	Physical: administratively policed political frontier	Voice of the enlightened governor producing and governing the region	Reporting on bureaucracy; taxation and subsidization, services; Reporting on the extent of state regulation and communal funding

Region as community and home refers to the regional culture and collective identity of the people. The boundary is marked by shared identity, tradition, roots, and a sense of place and belonging. The role of the newspaper is as a “voice” of the collective member of the community, constructing and maintaining regional continuity and security. *Region as a political process* is an assemblage of ideological institutions and practices. Boundary is marked in practical ways and the regional newspaper addresses people as citizens and voters. Key processes of a meaning-market can be defined as political regionalism, i.e. discursive resistance and defense concerning, for example, regional policy matters.

Region as economic relations comprises an assemblage of commercial institutions and a regionally-located market and business life. The role of the newspaper is to activate regional economics and to act as a responsible Capitalist, controlling, for example, ecological and employment matters. It is notable that the newspaper itself acts as an economic actor within the region. In general, key processes are meant to maintain a positive atmosphere for entrepreneurship. *Region as an administrative unit* is a bounded area of administrative and governing activities. The newspaper takes on the role of scrutinizing the provincial governance and defending territorial autonomy. Key processes control the relationship between the State apparatus and the region, and regional equality on a national scale.

Different discourses, conceived through the key processes of a regional meaning-market, are socially constitutive and sometimes talked into being social and political processes.³⁸ It is important to notice that different crises and the political change of late capitalism exist both as discourses and external processes, taking place outside the discourse. Many of the social problems can be linked to the changes in discourses and use of language. Social and political life, however, cannot be reduced to a discourse. Suffering, poverty, and inequality are problems external to the use of language but always interpreted and constructed as a specific kind of problem, one way or another, in language.

However, it should be kept in mind, that meaning formation is not a political, administrative, cultural or economic act but encompasses all these spheres. News, editorials and columns are products of social practice, discourses that intervene in “the social construction of reality” (Berger & Luckmann 1966/1994). The newspapers’ coverage of the crisis is not only facts about the world, but in a general sense “ideas” and sometimes “propositions” relating to what was going on and what the communities were like.

Regional and national journalistic practice, modifying discourses of crises, interact with the regional level filtering some usable elements into its own discursive realm. This explains how knowledge of places, groups, and institutions in different communities are maintained through time.

To say something more about how a “region” is constructed as a discursive formation requires an analysis both of those historical, social and economic conditions in which specific discourses take place and, recursively, of how discourses are shaped by social and institutional practices that maintain this symbolic production. These requirements add certain elements that must be included in such an enterprise, i.e. dimensions allowing us to include a description of the overall social and commercial system in the analysis of textual production.

The history of regional social change can be then captured by the ideological uses of conceptions relating to different types of crisis and region. Within the range of these uses, economic, cultural and social dimensions take on new meanings. This understanding leans on the recognition that the production of discourses is an important facet of the activity of using power.

4 Research questions, data and methods

“Thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And, in absence of comparison, so is all scientific thought and scientific research.” (Swanson 1971, 145)

4.1 Research questions

This study examines how *region in crisis* was constructed in the journalistic discourse during the economic change of the 1990s. More particularly, the aim is to compare how the different aspects of the economic crises are constructed discursively in newspapers texts, and how these differences shape the interpretations of the economic crises within the regions. A related aim is to find out what kind of journalistic strategies and techniques are applied in handling the crises. From a theoretical point of view, regional difference and identity are not given but socially constructed. The social construction of a *region* lies on its cultural, political and economic basis. Therefore, the study also must address the problem of how the crisis participates in constructing the region. These dialectically-related processes are analyzed in regional interpretations of the crisis provided by the editorials and news stories that were published in four different regional newspapers.

The study is based on three methodological fundaments: it is *comparative*; the method for studying the texts is inspired by *discourse analysis*; and the study makes pragmatic use of theories within the *critical tradition* in the interpretation of the texts.

Comparison provides a basis for making statements about empirical regularities and for evaluating and interpreting cases relative to substantive and theoretical criteria. Although the comparative method in social research typically implies a specific kind of comparison, namely the comparison of large macro-social units, recently it has been used in more qualitatively-oriented approaches.

In comparative qualitative and discourse analytic research, cases are looked upon holistically and compared with each other. Cases are regarded as configurations – as combinations of characteristics, for example as discourses or semiotic frameworks. Comparison in the qualitative tradition thus involves comparing configurations. This holism does not necessarily contradict an analytical approach, also connected to quantitative research (Ragin 1989, 9).

This study falls within a research tradition of qualitative comparison that interprets specific experiences, discursive configurations and trajectories of specific systems (regions, institutions, regimes). I am interested not simply in relations between variables characterizing broad categories of regional journalism, but in the discursive constructions in the studied regions per se and in particular their different historical experiences. The major theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 will be used in order to analyze discursive management techniques and the interpretative frames of crises.

The qualitative and discourse analytical approach is historically interpretative. Interpretative research is used to describe a type of social science that is concerned with problems of meaning. Historically-oriented interpretative work attempts to account for specific historical outcomes (or sets of comparable outcomes or processes chosen to be studied) because of their significance for current social life. Typically, such work seeks to make sense of different cases by piecing together evidence in a manner sensitive to chronology, and by offering limited historical generalizations that are both objectively possible and cognizant of enabling conditions, while also considering the context.

The methodological approach of the present study is also explanatory. A qualitative approach is needed to describe and identify how the different aspects of an economic crisis were represented in newspaper texts, how journalistic practices affected them and how the newspapers, as profit-making organizations, entered into a relation with their respective regions.

As noted above, this approach does not exclude the use of quantitative

methods. This methodological orientation, also applied in this study, to use quantitative and qualitative approaches as mutually complementary elements, is quite a common approach in structurally-oriented media studies. Content analysis was used to examine frequencies of the appearance of some themes and topics and thus provide a longitudinal profile of the process of crisis. Quantitative indicators have also been used in the analysis of the development of the general media content during the period studied.

After addressing the broader question concerning the nature of a region (what is *region* in journalistic discourse, how is it constructed and how do the constructed regions differ), the study turns to more specific questions. These specific research questions are divided into three main questions that relate to (1) the appearance of regional differences, (2) the different modes of crises and (3) the character of meaning construction as it appears in the studied newspapers.

1. How do the regional differences appear in relation to economic change in four regional newspapers?

- (i) What kinds of discourses of crisis exist in different regions and how do these discourses differ from each other?
- (ii) How do different types of discourses of crisis follow each other and in what order?
- (iii) How do crises-related discourses evolve in regional newspapers in terms of three types of crises (legitimation, rationality, and motivation crises, see Chapter 3)?

2. How is crisis discursively formed in the newspapers?

- (i) When do different discourse types and sets of values relevant to the construction of differences between regions emerge in regional journalism?
- (ii) What different kinds of frames and scripts can be identified in constructing a region in crisis?
- (iii) What kind of journalistic strategies and techniques are applied in handling the crises in a newspaper?

3. What is the character of the regional meaning-markets, forming the key values of the region?

The features appearing under points 1 and 2 above are considered to be constitutive with the framework of regional symbolic exchange, i.e. mea-

ning-markets within which the most preferred meanings and values of each region are formed. These meanings and values are embedded in different representations of “reality” that can be studied, for example, in the form they take in newspaper texts.

This kind of approach has a critical flavor. The analysis focuses on discourse (or news framing) as a form of social practice. This implies a dialectical relationship between a discursive event and social structures that frame this event. Institutions and structures shape discourses. Recursively, discourses also shape institutions. Understood recursively, discourses constitute situations, objects of knowledge, relationships between groups of people and (their) social identities (Wodak 1996, 15).

The analysis is carried out in a *diachronic* and a *synchronic* mode. A diachronic analysis, in this sense, focuses upon the *historical development of a system over time*. This analysis is longitudinal and based on different time series of qualitative and quantitative changes in the studied system. Thus, the analysis focuses on the ways in which crises develop and unfold historically within a system or set of structures. It includes the dynamic conception of a crisis as a process. In Chapter 7, I will focus on how the historical development of the crisis is diachronically unfolded in editorials.

Synchronic analysis of crises, according to Hay (1996, 87), focuses on the contradictions and tendencies existing within a particular society, system or nation-state at a particular moment. A synchronic analysis of crisis is like taking a snapshot of the structures (cultural and social) at a specific point in time. This is the basis for Chapter 8, which is organized to allow for a synchronic reading of the news stories on the “depression,” in order to reveal common tendencies in the regions as well as contradictions between them. This kind of analysis encourages an experience of “present tense.” Despite the regional differences (both in timing and in the cultural contextualization of the crisis) that are apparent in the diachronic analysis (Chapter 7), the news frames tend to organize certain features of the crisis similarly and simultaneously in many of the studied regions.

The dual diachronic/synchronic approach enables me to develop the analysis while respecting the spatialized nature of the media, which is particularly important as the study focuses on regional media. It follows from the argumentation presented in Chapter 2 that the concept *spatialization* refers not only to the process of overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life, but also to relations between actors in a certain spatial socio-political context.

There is a considerable debate over what constitutes good interpretation in qualitative research, i.e. what are the criteria of truthful knowledge in this kind of analysis. Positivist paradigms usually apply three standard criteria for the scientific validity of an inquiry: external validity, reliability and objectivity. Such a concept of validity assesses a work in terms of its ability to generate generic/formal theory and produce findings that are generalized or transferred to other settings. Reliability in this context refers to two principal forms of repetition: temporal reliability (the same result is obtained when the measurement is repeated at a later time), and comparative reliability (the same test is applied by different researchers, or the same test is applied to two different samples taken from the same data). Objectivity, in general, refers to an attitude of mind deemed proper to a scientific investigator: detached, unprejudiced and open to whatever the evidence may reveal. The concept of validity in qualitative research is usually of a constructivist nature and thus approaches knowledge from the viewpoint of the internal and theoretical validity of a study comprising the different research practices. My study must answer to both concepts of validity, as it leans on textual interpretation as well as on a considerable amount of quantitative data. It is a task for the author to distinguish between the validity requirements raised in different parts of the study. The quantitative elements in the study must answer to standard requirements for quantitative content analysis, and provide both the diachronic and the synchronic analysis with a reasonably good empirical basis. The validity of the interpretative analysis leans on the internal coherence of the theoretical concepts and the process of interpretation in terms of authenticity, accuracy and the relativity of the analysis (Moring 1998; Moring 2001b).

4.2 Data

The primary data collected for this study consists of editorials and news items about economic and regional issues, published in four regional dailies during the period 1988-1997. Four newspapers, *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* from Southern Finland (later ESS), *Lapin Kansa* from Northern Finland (later LK), *Ilkka* from Western Finland and *Karjalainen* from Eastern Finland, were selected. This selection was made in order to study regions that are at a maximal spatial distance within Finland. The capital region was not included in the selection of the studied regions, as this region from the point

of view of its media coverage is a special case. The biggest newspapers published in this region have a predominantly national focus, and also their regional news cover geographically wider areas in comparison with regional newspapers. The media published in the capital region, however, have been included in this study from a comparative point of view, to allow for the comparison between national and regional news coverage. In this regard, the analysis leans on the data provided by other studies carried out within the research project of the Academy of Finland.³⁹ The newspapers of the selected regions are leading dailies in their distribution areas and all have the institutional position of representing their region.

The collection of data for the present study was limited to the material published in the domestic news section and editorial pages, including letters-to-the-editor and columns concerning the region. National and international news were excluded, but only if they did not have any link to localities within the region, i.e. a local perspective. This decision was based on a research-economic consideration. My aim is to examine journalistic practices constructing regional difference in relation to economic change and crisis. These are most likely to occur in those sections selected. I excluded the foreign affairs section, the culture section and sport news, not because there are no items relevant to regional distinctions in these sections, but because the frequency of such items is likely to be lower in foreign affairs coverage and the cultural and sport sections were lesser involved with the over-arching theme of the economic crisis. There is no doubt that the excluded sections might also highlight the representation of regional identity (see for example Hujanen 2000), but my decision was to focus more on regional characteristics stemming from political and economic differences than on cultural characteristics as such.

The definition of what constitutes a regional story was based on the explicit layers of the news text itself. A regional story is an item that reports issues, news or opinion concerning the region or province in question. National news was included in case some part of the story referred to a region. That was usually the case because the ambition of the regional newspapers is, by their very nature, to find a regional approach to mainstream news as well. *The regional story proper is one that comprises a regional angle or perspective of the topic that is reported.* In this case, all local, regional and provincial news was collected. News from the domestic section was collected in case it included a regional part or angle. For the news stories and editorials to be included in the selection of data for this study, the regional

angle had to be explicit.

The definition of what constitutes a text related to the economic crisis differed between editorials and news stories and other texts. Editorials were accepted in the study whenever they represented a regional economic discussion (structural or individual) or the consequences of the social problems of the economic crisis. News stories, columns and letters-to-the-editor were accepted when the word “depression” (in the meaning of economic depression, in Finnish “*lama*”) occurred in the headline. This selection method proved to secure a sufficiently large sample of texts for the analysis.

The qualitative analysis focused on two main categories of texts that were identified through the quantitative analysis according to the criteria explained above: the editorials and the news articles. The selection of editorials and news stories is based on the fact that the economic crisis affected the newspapers as a whole and had consequences for all the different aspects of newspaper production – contents, economy and size. Also, as a social process, the economic depression had many angles: political, economic, social, and cultural. To include the editorials was necessary. Editorials, as a rule, are written by senior journalists, often the editors-in-chief themselves. The writers of the editorials are under special surveillance and guidance by the journalistic management. Editorials, therefore, reflect the “official voice” of the newspapers and thus also constitute an especially important part of their official discourses. These official discourses are of special interest from the point of view of the regional and local community, and they are also read as such by others (the local political elite, MPs, and other media) as more or less official statements of a tone-giving layer in the region.

But, after all, editorials are not regularly read by very many of the newspaper readers. References to the depression might thus more often find their way directly to the readers through the news pages, while editorials are more likely to maintain a prominent role in the elite discourse and through a two-step diffusion of information. Through these processes the editorials, however, may widely affect interpretations concerning the development of the region.

News stories on the depression can be expected to develop a routine in how they describe different social and political issues connected to the crisis. Due to the long process of the crisis, a number of different discourse practices in how regional news related to the crisis could be expected to develop. Creative discourse practice is expected to be complex and multi-

dimensional in terms of a number of genres and discourses and their combinations.

Columns and letters-to-the-editor reflect the broader views from the surrounding society. However, we must keep in mind that they cannot be considered representative of such opinions, but are in many ways related to the editorial processes of the newspaper. Other texts are referred to in the presentation of the results from the qualitative analysis, when particularly relevant. But the full body of texts belonging to the column and letter-to-the-editor categories has not been systematically scrutinized for the qualitative analysis.

The material collected from the newspapers was supplemented by *interviews with the editors-in-chief* of the four newspapers studied.

In this study, the answer to the question of how regions appear and change in newspaper contexts is sought through the analysis of ample amounts of data. Empirically, but also theoretically, the focus of this research is on how mediated ideological (textual) practices have participated in the construction of spaces of economy and identity within four regions in Finland. The local editorial and news agendas of the newspapers are analyzed in order to show how the different “crises” (legitimation, rationality, and motivation) were experienced in this specific discursive landscape. Here, the main question concerns the nature of those strategies and techniques that construct a *strong regional self* (journalistically speaking) in a peripheral borderland area, e.g., how scales of space, place and financial resources were created as discursive formations within specific regional meaning-markets and what kinds of values and norms were attached to these interpretations.

A region is primarily contextual and relational as an object of study – but we cannot ignore that it has scalar and spatial features. In the latter and more advanced phase of the research I have analyzed the journalistic construction of region as a complex phenomenological quality that is constituted by a series of links between the sense of place, the networks of communication and the relativity of contexts.

4.2.1 *Content analysis*

In this study, quantitative and qualitative methods are used complementarily. Different aspects of the studied phenomenon, i.e., economic crisis, can be better captured when subjected to both types of methods. Here, quanti-

tative methods are used mainly to answer the questions related to the interrogative *what*. For example what kind of countable variables, frequencies and regularities can be found in the data?

Data for the content analysis was collected from the newspapers between the years 1988-1997. The time span 1988-1997 was chosen to obtain a sufficiently long time frame to allow for conclusions concerning the emergence and development of the economic crisis, and to allow for an evaluation of the impact of the whole recession period that started in the early nineties. The coded unit was a text unit under a separate headline or vignette (editorial, news story, feature article, column or letter-to-the-editor). The coding was based on an assessment of the content of the headline and the full text of each article. During the time period studied, every-other-day newspaper was coded.

The selection process was conducted in three phases. First a total of 37,126 texts were coded (1535 editorials, 26975 news stories, 1746 feature articles, 2011 columns and letters-to-the-editor). On the basis of their contents, a number of texts were chosen and copied for a more detailed study. Finally, 467 texts from the two first-mentioned categories (302 editorials and 165 news stories) were selected for the qualitative text analysis. The criterion for inclusion in the qualitative analysis was the actual content of the full text. The selection of the editorials was done in three subsequent steps: (1) All the editorials that were not clearly “crisis related” were excluded, (2) Those editorials that beyond a doubt represented regional discussion on the economic crisis were selected. These included those that discussed problems caused by the crisis from the structural or citizen’s point of view (e.g., unemployment, cuts in welfare services, and worsening prospects for regional business) or the consequences of the economic crisis (e.g., exclusion of the unemployed from the social life, mental problems caused by depression, and regional declination). (3) Starting by including the most clear-cut cases, one fifth of all the coded editorials were selected for further qualitative analysis. This final selection was done taking into consideration the number of regional editorials in the different newspapers.

Thus, the selection of editorials reflects the volume of crisis-related editorials in each newspaper. The number of editorials that were selected per newspaper ranges from 50 to 85 items.

The criterion for the selection of depression stories was simple: all news texts with the word “*lama*” (“depression”) in their headline were included in the sample. Items excluded from the category were birthday interviews,

columns and letters-to-the editor even though the headline included the concept *lama*. This excluded sample was analyzed alongside the actual analysis because it offered valuable information and clarification when compared to the news and editorials.

The number of observations for each newspaper is: *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* 6,927, *Lapin Kansa* 8,324, *Ilkka* 8,860, *Karjalainen* 13,015.

The aim of this procedure was not only to get a statistically-representative set of figures to allow for an analysis of the different content categories. An additional motive for this type of coding was to get an overall picture of the development over time of regional public discussion, themes and cultural grammar. The reason for selecting such a tight grid of cases was that I wanted to minimize the risk of missing out on the occurrence of any particular new discursive turn.

The analysis of content as such has a long tradition in media studies (Berelson 1952; Pietilä 1976; Glasgow University Media Group 1995; van Dijk 1991; for more recent Finnish studies, see Pietikäinen 2000; Hujanen 2000; Moring 2000d; Aslama et al. 2001b). These studies have typically sought patterns in reporting in terms of topics, participants and quotations. In general, content analysis is a method seeking to produce objective and justifiable categories out of newspaper content in order to provide clear descriptions.

The first phase of this study was based mainly on quantitative content analysis. In this phase, the regions studied were looked at as a whole. The aim of the first phase was to provide a quantitative analysis of the themes, volume, and characteristics of news agendas and stories dealing with regional matters during the studied period. In the code schema, *regional* material was defined as articles reporting issues concerning the distribution area of the newspaper (see Moring 2000a; 2000b).

There are certain criteria that the classification schema should meet. Many of these criteria, of course, are applicable to any systematic collection of data in general. A basic aim was to achieve comparability (comparison between newspapers and comparability in terms of time-series). The coding of newspapers also aimed at being comprehensive – sensitive to the many facets of the region, significant and relevant in terms of being illustrative to a regional life and society at large. In addition, the coding should be reliable, sensitive (it should indicate the change when conditions change) and give measurable results (it should be capable of showing the number and magnitude of phenomena).

In earlier studies of regional newspapers as well, headlines of regional news have been used for analytical purposes (Hujanen 2000; Paasi 1986). Although headlines have rarely been studied in their own right⁴⁰ both headlines and the lead of the story can offer valuable information. This is the case in particular when a big sample of stories has to be analyzed economically. In the kind of longitudinal study I have conducted, headlines offer valuable insights of into the *general storyline* of regional developments and interpretations. Also in the case of editorials, differing profiles were easily detected from the headlines and theme descriptions. In what follows, the results of the analysis of editorials will be presented separately for each paper (Chapter 7), and the analysis of the news stories will be presented by grouping the stories according to their discursive characteristics, i.e., their news frames (Chapter 8).

It is natural that the text units do not always easily fall within only one category. This is a well known problem in content analysis. Within one story, the story-line may cross over several content categories. Such texts were categorized depending on the strongest dimension in the headline.

Another problem encountered when dividing texts into a typology concerns different genres and article types. Forcing themes into the categories was minimized in order to maintain the richness of the material. A consequence of this was that the initial number of classes was rather large (50 categories, see Appendix I). After the first analysis, the material could be merged into fewer classes. The data was double-checked on various occasions during the coding process to ensure sufficient accuracy. A re-examination of the data covering randomly selected time periods for each newspaper was made by a trained second coder, instructed to observe the same criteria as in the original coding. The result of the re-examination revealed over 90 % reliability in coding.

In any content analysis of this type, information will naturally be lost. This could partly be compensated for in the qualitative analysis, where the lead and the text of the story were considered in their full detail and variation.

4.2.2 Interviews and Contextual Data

The editors-in-chief, acting as “key informants,” were interviewed during the spring of 1999. These interviews were theme interviews lasting from one to three hours. One of the editors-in-chief answered the questions by

electronic mail. These interviews were made in order to test some earlier premises. In this study, I will use excerpts from the interviews in a descriptive manner to clarify the overall atmosphere of the period in which the decisions of each newspaper's policy line were made.

As a secondary material I use a wide body of research published on the economic crisis of the 1990s, much of which is based on the research project on the Finnish economic crisis commissioned by the Academy of Finland (Kalela, Kiander, Kivikuru, Loikkanen & Simpura 2001). In addition, I have used statistics on the development of regional GDPs and the development of the unemployment rates in the regions studied. These trends were found to be reflected in the newspaper content in different ways. This allowed for a double gaze, a material and methodological triangulation, which enabled me to better understand the time-space of news production. Contextual data was sought from statistics collected by Statistics Finland, and survey data portraying media-use produced by MDC-Gallup Finland.

4.3 The qualitative approach of the study

The methodological approach of this study is predominantly discourse analytic, although in the synchronic analysis of the news stories (Chapter 8) the concept of frame is used in order to mark the social organization of perspectives produced within the news genre. The term *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) is far from referring to a homogeneous and clearly structured method of qualitative analysis.⁴¹ The fact that there is no clearly defined method to analyze discourses once and for all is not surprising, given the multiple meanings and uses of the concept of a discourse. While the theoretical background to discourse analysis can be outlined by basic assumptions and overall goals, its methodology can only be presented with the reference to particular approaches and their developers. The discourse analysis used here is inspired by CDA although only the most relevant procedures with respect to the research task are applied in the textual analysis (for example, linguistic analysis is left out from this study). The reason for using both the CDA inspired method of textual analysis and the concept of frame is the need to clarify the results gained from both synchronic and diachronic analysis. The concept of frame here is subordinate to the concept of discourse and reserved for a particular part of the analysis, i.e. to clarify the different perspectives or ways in which "crisis" was seen through

the lenses of news journalism.

In this study, the critical discourse analysis is inspired by the works of Norman Fairclough.⁴² According to this type of discourse analysis, (1) discourse used as an abstract noun is language use conceived as social practice, and (2) when discourse is used as a countable noun it can be defined as a way of signifying experience from a particular perspective. As I have noted in Chapter 3, by a discourse I mean a social process of making sense of a social context. Discourses emerge in a process where social, historical, spatial and institutional formations interact. The meanings that are produced, and carried by discourses interact with the reproduction of social, historical and institutional formations. Discourses are structured and interrelated; some are more prestigious, legitimated and more preferred or obvious than others. Thus, discourses form power relations as well as being part of them. Much of the sense-making of people in a (for example, regional) community is subjected to the working through of ideological struggles between discourses.

To summarize, by discourse I mean the *use of language as a form of social practice in representing experiences, beliefs and knowledge from a particular point of view*. Analytically, a discourse includes the domain of experience or knowledge and the frames within which those domains are looked upon.

I use critical discourse analysis as a method to analyze journalistic practices, with particular regard to the instances where different representations of the crisis were constructed. Critical discourse analysis as such can be used as a theory, not only a method – or it could be linked to the body of critical theory serving instead as an operational method, as is the case in this present study. According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, 16), critical discourse analysis as a method can be seen as bringing a variety of theories into a dialogue. The theoretical constructions of discourse, which critical discourse analysis tries to operationalize, can gain from various disciplines, and the concept of operationalization entails working in a transdisciplinary way where the logic of one discipline can be put to work in the development of another.

As already noted, I will use the concept of frame in the (synchronic) analysis of the news. Frame as a concept refers to different ways of organizing social knowledge and experience in selected texts. It is also used to discuss how we frame reality in everyday life, in order to comprehend and respond to social situations. By “framing” we define a situation that is built

up in accordance with the principles of organization which govern (social and/or economic) events and our subjective involvement in these events.

Media frames are principles of selecting topics and angles for news stories and editorials. Frames define the semiotic codes of emphasis, interpretation and presentation. In the context of the depression, the frames enabled the newspaper journalist to package ample amounts of diverse and contradictory data and information into several well-defined frames of “what is going on.” These frames guide as well as create the audience’s expectations, interpretations and readings of media texts, and make the whole journalistic procedure routine to the journalists (see Goffman 1974; Väliverronen 1996; Reese 1991; Gitlin 1999; Tuchman 1978; 1999).⁴³

My starting point for the analysis is that a discourse that is realized in a single story or editorial may draw from one or many discourses and practices of framing the event. It is not feasible to identify all the possible discourses or frames behind, for example, a new text or an editorial. The solution, therefore, must be pragmatic. When analyzing editorials and thematically-selected stories on depression, the most important task is to clarify the main characteristics linked to different modes of crises. This requires a simultaneous look at the actual texts, their linguistic features and contextual information, and the use of theoretical knowledge about the domain, that is, about regional experience in Finland.

In order to explicate how I have arrived at certain interpretations and results regarding the discourses and news frames, I will illustrate and discuss the interpretations arrived at together with the contextual information and content analysis of the most frequently appearing themes in the newspapers.

The approach towards the texts is multifunctional. This provides a way to investigate the simultaneous constitution of *knowledge and beliefs*, as well as *social relations and social identities* in the texts. Economic change is accompanied by cultural change, which has led some researchers to refer to contemporary societies as “consumer cultures” (Featherstone 1995, 151; Fairclough 1995, 58). Different types of crises create their own set of relations within discourses.

This approach, as noted above, is of a constructivist nature. Constructivism has been a topic of heated debate for decades, both at the level of epistemology and at the level of practical research, for example within cultural studies. It is not necessary to further discuss different strands of this debate in this context. For the purpose of my analysis, it should be sufficient

to point out that, when opting for operational constructivism the starting point of analysis is to accept that *cognitive systems are not in a position to distinguish between the conditions of existence of real objects and the conditions of their own knowledge, interpretations and prejudices* (Moring 2001, 360; Pietikäinen 2000, 64; Burr 1998, 18-20).

As noted earlier in this chapter, it should be kept in mind that CDA as such does not offer a clear framework for doing analysis in practice. The aim of textual analysis, however, is not to generalize or present representative and final interpretations of a given material. Rather, the aim that can properly be addressed when analyzing texts within this methodological framework is to highlight some basic features and styles that can add to our understanding of how the social phenomena, like economic crisis, were constructed at a given time in a given space.

5 Newspapers in regional context

5.1 Newspapers and the market context

In order to contextualize the four regional newspapers, focused on in this study, within their cultural and historical background, a short historical account of the newspapers is required. The studied newspapers all hold the position as the largest and the only regional newspapers in their respective regions, and are therefore institutions that strongly form regional (spatial) representations.⁴⁴

Traditionally, the regional press has had an important and cohesive role in regional and local communities (Paasi 1986, 1998; Hujanen 2000), and also used this power of regional categorization as a part of its commercial and political strategy. The Finnish regional press has acted both as a voice of the provinces and as a representative of political divisions of the country.⁴⁵

Naturally, some cultural differences can be found in the mental, social and physical characteristics of the population in the western parts of the country (South-western-Finland, Häme, Southern, and Central Ostrobothnia, and the Åland Islands) and that of the east (South-eastern Finland, Savo, Karelia, and Northern Finland), although accelerating migration is blurring earlier provincial and cultural divisions of the country. In this context, however, more interesting than to categorize assumed essential differences between regions is the observation that regions and regional newspapers eagerly maintain these divisions as part of their cultural capital.

Earlier, the *political press* was the core of the Finnish newspaper system. The Finnish press developed along with a multiparty system and was

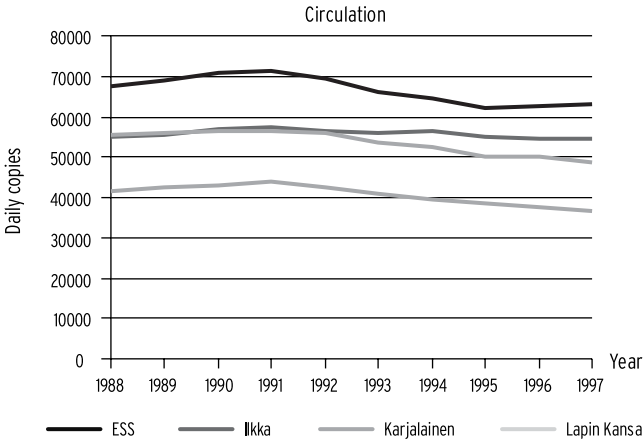
an integral part of this political development. This period ended when the parties' political "market" and audiences were no longer sufficient to make newspapers profitable. What followed was an era with newspapers competing across political boundaries. This is why, historically, the regional press developed as a structure reflecting the regional bodies of national political parties. The political press was subsidized by the state in order to maintain plurality in public expression. During the 1950s regional and provincial news content started to increase. Market development turned the regional press into regional monopolies in their respective territories and during the last decades newspapers have ushered out the political past, although not into total oblivion (Salokangas 1999).⁴⁶ Market development in Finland, during the 1980s, mainly drove the regional newspapers to give up their political allegiances.⁴⁷

Nowadays, the regional newspapers can be said to be the backbone of the Finnish press. The regional press consists of 18 to 22 dailies (depending on how the newspapers are counted, see Salokangas 1999, 83). Relations between the readership and the region are often based on ideological interconnectedness alongside geographical propinquity. In principle, *Helsingin Sanomat*, the largest Finnish national daily, is also regional. Approximately one-fifth of the circulation of HS is outside the capital city area or Southern Finland (Uusimaa). Household coverage outside the core area is approximately 5-10% (Salokangas 1999, 103).

At a macro level, however, the Finnish newspapers were affected by the recession, which could be seen in a fall in circulation and coverage, as well as in the overall share of newspapers in the media business. Several newspapers closed down altogether and the total circulation began to decline for the first time since World War II. Between 1990 and 1996, the total circulation dropped by 17 percent; between 1990 and 1999 the drop was 20%. Another noteworthy structural development was the decline of the "second" newspapers, i.e. smaller papers in towns with at least two newspapers (Finnish Mass Media 2000, 10).

Despite the economic crisis the circulation statistics have remained quite impressive and the regional press has continued functioning as the main media, in the context of the regional communities, in the cultural, political and economic sense. The readership of the regional newspapers is based on strong bonding and solidarity. Seldom is the subscription of a morning newspaper cancelled because of discontentment with the content of the newspaper.⁴⁸ Along with Japan, Norway and Sweden, Finland tops the circulation

Table III. Circulation of the studied newspapers 1988-1997



list of daily newspapers per capita in the world.

There are some simple sociological explanations for the decline in circulation, such as the economically-narrowing conditions of households due to unemployment. However, the strategies of the newspapers were at least as important. Calculating their trade-off within their circulation area, many papers soon determined the extent of the geographical space that was optimal for them to cover. This led to a trend of “turning inwards,” at least concerning the regional material and the local news agenda. The agenda came to cover a spatially narrower territory, and thus, more than ever, the newspaper was coupled with the economy of its area.

Nevertheless, as newspapers are heavily dependent on revenues from advertising, they were bound to be affected when regional and state-owned companies were forced to cut their advertising budgets during the recession. Between 1990 and 1999, there was a small decrease in the turnover of the mass media. The newspapers’ share of the total turnover has remained around 30%, despite dramatic changes during the 1990s. The newspapers are still the dominant local/regional media, with radio playing a secondary role.⁴⁹ Measured in terms of annual turnover, dailies are by far the most significant mass media in Finland.

Thinking of the media as a business links a newspaper’s success to the region’s economic development, which in turn is dependent on people’s attitude to regional living conditions and options. If we look at the rather simple example of the Finnish regional press, from the point of view of

declining revenue sources, the above-mentioned resources and constraints can be seen as linked not only with the regional but with the national economy as well. The link however, has proven to be spurious. Earlier, the trend of the newspaper economy (measured as the common turnover of advertising) was expected to follow the development of the national GDP (measured at a national level), with a slight delay. During the recession period this causal link proved to be false. Looked upon from a regional point of view, in some cases the decline of advertising was even more closely linked with the development of regional GDPs, whereas in other cases interesting deviances from this trend could be found.

During the recession, the State supported the export industry. Regions where export firms and enterprises existed dominated the economy. Due to this, the GDP developed more positively within regions where the economical structure favored state support to advance the export. Although this policy was successful in terms of economic growth, the state intervention failed in the attempt to reduce unemployment.

Consequently, the economy of an average household remained tight, affecting both the distribution and revenue sources of the newspapers. For example, in *Kainuu* (a province located in the northeast part of the country), dominated by the forest industry, the decline of the GDP was relatively smaller than in other regions. However, the high unemployment rate of the region reduced the turnover of the regional newspaper dramatically. The decline was the second fastest among the regional newspapers.

Generally, the regional newspapers proved to be economically more persistent than might be expected on the basis of the model connecting newspaper economy and national economic development. In advertising terms, the newspapers continue to dominate the Finnish media market, although they lost 12 % of their share of the advertising cake during the 1990s. The newspapers' share of the total advertisement turnover in Finland is still 50% of the whole advertisement turnover, whereas in other Western European countries the same figure was 39 percent in 1998.⁵⁰

The decline in newspaper circulation, however, seems to have also triggered off a development that increased market economy values in newspaper publishing. Apparently, this trend is more or less similar in other Western countries (Leather 1998). If, culturally, the most powerful or preferable values of the society are reflected in newspapers, this may only be because journalists tend to gang up on the political, commercial and cultural elites, according to some studies (Mancini 1993; Jacobowicz 1991).

Certainly, the finding that newspapers are consumer products is by no means a novelty. In general, it might be said that journalism, also in the Finnish context has aimed at the reader as a consumer, as much as a voter or a citizen. The nature of the symbiotic reality of the local and regional journalists and members of the local business community is also easily explained. Industry sources provide revenue via advertisements, sometimes even news content via press releases, and legitimacy through quotes.

Market-oriented journalism is one layer of the ideological practice of everyday journalistic work – although not the whole picture. When looking at the national daily, *Helsingin Sanomat* – or almost any other big European daily – it seems to be backing the supplements of travel, computers, personal finance and automobile and motoring sections. The transformation of newspapers towards an increasing market-orientation or commodification is becoming even clearer. News-value has a different meaning and is more or less defined by the business-friendliness. Stories can be judged in terms of their “audience-friendliness and advertiser attractiveness” rather than in terms of their information value aimed at the informed citizen (Leather 1998, 251).

There has also been a clear trend towards closer editorial cooperation, both within newspaper chains and between independent newspapers.⁵¹ This sort of cooperation tends to lead to the convergence of newspaper contents. In the debate among publicists and media researchers in Finland, both positive and negative sides of this development have been pointed out. Shared contents may add resources for content production and give an individual journalist a broader readership. At the same time, the specifically regional character of the newspaper may come under threat.⁵²

The changing content (tabloidization, commercialization, co-operation between newspapers) of the newspapers has been due both to harder competition between newspaper and to a fierce struggle for advertisement revenues. Regional newspapers must create and maintain their audience to maintain their attractiveness in the market. Presenting specific opinions and connotations favorable to the regional audience, and also to the firms and enterprises of the region, usually serve this purpose. All these tendencies in media economics have affected the studied newspapers and defined their strategies in addressing the regional public.

5.2 Four studied newspapers

The selection of the studied newspapers was made on the basis of earlier studies and research of regional identification and the cultural role of the media, in order to obtain representatives of different types of regions. Geographically, the regions were chosen to maximize the physical distance between the regions, while leaving the capital region aside. In earlier studies on the Finnish regional press, some “local” and “global” tendencies in newspapers’ content have been evident. Firstly, the regional newspaper is both a regional symbol and the carrier and modifier of regional symbols.⁵³ Secondly, in regional and local variations of media markets and audience preferences some notable differences can be found between different areas in Finland.

From the point of view of cultural geography, the stereotyping in Finnish folkloristic imagination has equipped different regions with pertinently different mental characteristics. Also, from the point of view of economic geography, the shaping influence of capital and the fundamental politicality of regional issues have equipped regional newspapers selected with quite different economic features. Thus, one region from northern, southern, western and eastern Finland was selected.

5.2.1 Southern Finland and *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*

Etelä-Suomen Sanomat (“The South Finland News”) first appeared in 1914. According to *The History of the Finnish Press* (Tommila et al. 1988, 70), the title of the first copy was *Lahden Sanomat* and *Nuorsuomalainen* united. Both newspapers were linked to the Young Finns, a Nationalist Party organ, and there proved to be too little space for the two of them at the time. The position on the liberal side of the Conservative Party field gained an advantage over the newspaper in the competition between newspapers in the beginning of the century. The harshest struggle was between the monarchist *Lahti* newspaper and the republican *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*. Republicanism was far more popular among the people, and soon *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* gained a leading position in the region. There was no competition from the socialist newspapers within the distribution area of this newspaper. After 1914, the socialist newspaper ceased to appear in the city of Lahti, and for the left-wing supporters it was easier to subscribe to a liberal than to a conservative newspaper.

Circulation began to grow during the 1940s, when readers living in Lahti started to subscribe to the paper in greater numbers. In the background of this development was the growth of the city and Lahti's position as a "*New Vyborg*."⁵⁴ In the beginning, the core of the distribution area was the eastern part of Häme and the countryside of Uusimaa. But soon the better distribution opportunities and transport connections of the Helsinki region newspapers forced *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* to withdraw from the Uusimaa border parishes.

After World War II, the policy line of the newspaper, in military and security questions was based on a support for national defense, a standpoint that this paper held more strongly than the common opinion of the country. The liberal editorial policy-line of the newspaper has remained. A written policy document, confirmed by the company shareholders' meeting in March 1971, articulates the newspaper's line as follows:

"The aim of the company is to publish and finance *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* and with the help of the newspaper defend the freedom of individuals in Finland and in the whole world, whether the individual represents private entrepreneurs, commerce and trade, science, art or whatever realm of human activity."

Nowadays, *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* is published in a common bourgeois spirit following a program of principals signed by the owners where the newspaper underlines the individual freedom and support to those who will defend it. Provinciality was not stressed in the early years of the newspaper's history, but in 1971 it was clearly articulated:

"In addition, the aim of *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* is to be the cultural bond of the province – the distribution area of the newspaper – the one that alertly follows reports and conducts the cultural life in the region with the help of the best editorial forces in the broadest meaning of the word, following the above-mentioned spirit." (The minutes of the general spring meeting of the *Esa* Printing House's shareholders, 9.3.1971)

In the publisher's and shareholder's protocol, the province is not explicitly defined as Päijät-Häme, but in practice this is the core region of the newspaper's distribution area. The newspaper is also distributed to parts of other provinces, but it is not the leading newspaper in these areas.

ESS participates actively in content cooperation with other regional newspapers. ESS and another regional daily, *Satakunnan Kansan*, have a common editorial office in Helsinki. The newspaper is also part of the *Kärkimedia Group*, which provides it with a share of the nationwide advertising.

Päijät-Häme, as a region for newspaper distribution, differs from the other studied regions because of the rapid and dramatic structural changes during the economic crises in the 1990s. A relatively large proportion of the employees in this region are employed in business related to furniture and carpentry, wood-related industries, plastics knowhow and environmental technology. Much of this industry was dependent on exports to the former Soviet Union. Coinciding with the Finnish economic crisis, bilateral trade with the former Soviet Union first diminished and then stopped totally, creating difficulties for firms exporting to the East. Consequently, there was fast rise in unemployment in this earlier quite economically well off region. This led to a dramatic change of atmosphere in this region, which had been used to a position as receiver of much of the population that moved during times when internal migration was fast in Finland.

Lahti, the city where the newspaper's editorial staff is located, is often described as a young city that honors entrepreneurship. This picture is supported by economic statistics, showing that the private business sector plays an important part in the economy of *Lahti*, with the public sector contributing a remarkably small percentage of the jobs in the city. This feature increased the impact of the economic crisis on the region.

5.2.2 *Ilkka and Southern Ostrobothnia*

Ilkka is the major newspaper of Southern Ostrobothnia. It has traditionally had a strong position in newspaper family related to the Agrarian Party (later Center Party). *Santeri Alkio* (Finnish author and politician) and his supporters founded *Ilkka* in 1906. In the beginning, the newspaper was politically independent. During *Alkio's* time, the newspaper developed into a thoroughly political and ideological "party weapon," in *Alkio's* own words. The newspaper was founded at the time of the Parliament Act reform, and it had an active role in the struggle for independence and the formation of the

independent government of Finland. In the 1930s, the newspaper sought its editorial policy in the pressure coming from extremist right wing movements, typical of that period of Finnish political history.

After World War II, the Finnish Agrarian Party established its major party organ in Helsinki. *Ilkka's* general influence was weakened because of the party's internal conflicts and the existence of a strong right wing fraction inside the party. Structurally, the Finnish press had developed to a stage in which all over the country, where there were two newspapers competing in the same region, one of the competing newspapers gained a dominant position in the respective region. *Ilkka* had to move from Vaasa to Finnish-speaking *Seinäjoki*, after having been put in a difficult competitive situation with the newspaper *Vaasa*. After the move, *Ilkka's* success was based on the fact that *Seinäjoki* was a growing urban area situated in the middle of the newspaper's core area. In the 1980s, *Ilkka* was exposed to an exceptionally long and tiring struggle over the position of major regional newspaper. *Ilkka* came out as the winner and the *Ilkka Group* eventually bought *Ilkka's* rival newspaper, *Pohjalainen*.

Today, *Ilkka* does not deny nor flag its former Centre Party commitment. A non-alignment decision was made in 1997. Partly, this was due to the fact that most of the major regional newspapers had to turn to political independence in order to better serve the region and maintain the leading position within an ideologically-diverse public. Although *Ilkka* is politically independent, political stances of the editor-in-chief, columnists and the editorial tradition still affect the line of the newspaper.

Ilkka is part of the newspaper cooperation in Middle Finland, which geographically covers the area from the south coast (Vaasa) to eastern Finland (Joensuu). The newspaper *Karjalainen* is part of this chain as well. These newspapers also have editorial and content cooperation with each other. In addition, *Ilkka* is part of the *Kärkimedia Group*.

Southern Ostrobothnia is a region in which the notion of provinciality has been traditionally attached. A network of social practices supports the strong regional identity among the inhabitants of the area. Crucial questions that were activated during the recession years were Finland's joining of the EU and political and agricultural consequences deriving from it. In Finland, as in other parts of Europe, farmers and agriculture, as a mean of living, comprise more weight as a political question than the percentages of the population involved in this livelihood would lead us to assume. During the time studied, the proportion of people who made their living from for-

estry or agriculture in Finland was 6%. In comparison, in France the same number was 5 %. (Uusitalo 1998, 12). Issues on agriculture and countryside, however, comprise much of a symbolic value that makes them politically sensitive. In *Ilkka* as well, issues and stories concerning the conditions of agriculture gained more editorial space than the share of subscribers directly involved in this sector would lead us to assume.

Seinäjoki, the location of the editorial head office, is the economic, educational, and transport center of the South Ostrobothnia region, which has 200 000 inhabitants. The Seinäjoki town area itself comprises the *Seinäjoki* and *Nurmo* municipalities, which together have a population of over 40 000. The population is increasing by about 400 persons per year. The city has identified networking and support for entrepreneurship as the keys to its future strategies. Business ranges from the construction and engineering industries to handicraft and small high-technology companies. 70 percent of the jobs are in the service sector. After the depression, there has been considerable housing construction activity (Committee for Urban Policy 1999).

5.2.3 *Lapin Kansa and Lapland*

On the first page, just below the name *Lapin Kansa*, the task of the newspaper is defined. *Lapin Kansa* is a politically non-aligned organ of the people of Lapland and the northern part of Ostrobothnia. *Lapin Kansa* was founded in 1928. The foundation was backed by strong support from the Agrarian Party. As early as the 1930s the newspaper *Lapin Kansa* had a leading position within the region when the region's other independent but right wing newspaper *Rovaniemi* fell to second place. A typical feature of the era was that the owners of the newspaper *Lapin Kansa* consisted of party activists and supporters of the Agrarian Party.

In the autumn of 1944, *Lapin Kansa*, as well as its readers, was evacuated because of the war with the Germans. The destruction of the city of Rovaniemi also demolished the newspaper building. In the harsh economic conditions after the war *Lapin Kansa* soon gained a totally dominant position in the region, and during the autumn of 1955 its competitor, *Rovaniemi*, ceased to appear. Today, *Lapin Kansa* has no real competition for the position as leading newspaper within its own distribution area. The newspapers of the Oulu region, and also *Pohjolan Sanomat* somewhat more to the south, are the only competitors of the newspaper. (Tommila et al. 1988,

71.)

The newspaper's political stance was developed through quite extraordinary historical events. In 1958, *Lapin Kansa* was denied the right to be aligned with the Finnish Agrarian Party. The struggle between the regional party organization and the newspaper lasted five years. According to the Finnish historian Raimo Salokangas (Tommila et al. 1988, 71), this event was very rare, considering the Finnish press structure and the local and national politics. Due to this decision, the newspaper became a politically non-aligned conservative/bourgeois newspaper. A similar development would have eventually occurred in any case, as the newspaper had developed into the major regional paper.

The merger tendencies of Finnish media companies have also changed the ownership of *Lapin Kansa*. The newspaper became part of *Alma Media*, the second biggest newspaper group and multimedia company in Finland. *Alma Media* publishes *Aamulehti*, a major regional daily in Tampere, the afternoon tabloid *Iltalehti*, and the business newspaper *Kauppalehti*. In addition, *Alma Media* is the majority shareholder in or sole proprietor of 19 other newspapers, *Lapin Kansa* being one of them. In addition, *Lapin Kansa* is part of the *Kärkimedia Group*.

Lapland is the geographically largest province in Finland. The most important factors explaining the negative development of the circulation of *Lapin Kansa* is the economic situation and the internal migration within the country. Within the region migration has been directed to the larger cities and some areas of the province are deserted. The unemployment rate in Lapland is still one of the highest in Finland. But in a national comparison Lapland is one of the most international provinces of the country. The profile of the region is formed by tourism, winter resorts and being the home of Santa Claus. In earlier research, Lapland has not proved to have formed tightly knit regional net, emerging rather as an areal unit composed of a number of distinct provinces. Due to the recession, the structure of commerce and trade of northern Finland has changed rapidly. The service sector and tourism were heavily affected and the growth of production has been slow. Lapland, as a cultural landscape, is also characterized by its indigenous Sámi population.

The town of *Rovaniemi* and the municipalities of *Rovaniemen maalaiskunta* (rural municipality) and *Ranua* comprise the Rovaniemi sub-region. Rovaniemi has 36,000 inhabitants and the total population of the Rovaniemi sub-region is 63,000 inhabitants. Rovaniemi is a service center

for a vast region and the University of Lapland is of great importance to the town. The economic recession cut the number of jobs in Rovaniemi by about 4,000 in just three years. However, by 1999 around 500 of these were already recovered. Many jobs were lost when the large construction companies, wholesale trading companies, and government offices closed down their premises in Rovaniemi. However, the large hospitals and the Finnish Army still provide jobs. The unemployment rate is about 22% at the moment, but the situation is better than during the darkest years of depression, though the lack of jobs remains substantial. (Committee for Urban Policy 1999.)

5.2.4 *Karjalainen and North Karelia*

The newspaper *Karjalatar* was founded in 1874. The founder, a teacher named *Henrik Piipponen*, had established a printing house in Joensuu the same year. According to the newspaper's manifesto, *Karjalatar* wanted to act as a local voice and advocate more generally the issues concerning North Karelia. In particular the ideas of the Finnish nationalist movement were an important part of the newspaper's ideological inclination. In 1917, the name of the newspaper was changed to *Karjalainen*. The newspaper became the organ of the Liberal Conservative Party (Tommila et al. 1988, 288).

After World War II, *Karjalainen* gained the position as the leading newspaper in northern Karelia. *Karjalainen* was a better news source than its competitors and its leading position, with a better economy, allowed investments in print machines and office building during the 1950s. The newspaper's circulation area expanded to the east and brought the newspaper *Etelä-Saimaa* in touch with *Karjalainen*. The expansion made it obligatory to change some of the pages in the newspaper distributed to that part of the distribution area. (ibid. 228-229.)

Karjalainen became politically non-aligned in 1997, but its politically independent editorial policy line has been colored with a general conservative flavor. The newspaper has abandoned its earlier bonds to the conservative National Coalition Party, and nowadays advocates the issues of the province – northern Karelia.

Northern Karelia as a region forms a distinct functional unit in an administrative sense, but it combines disparate cultural elements of eastern Finland. This has also been reflected in the regional newspaper, displaying elements inherited from the area of old Karelia on the Russian side of the

border, as well as elements typical to the east of Finland. The strong emphasis on agriculture and the forest industry plays a crucial role, both politically and as an element of the self-understanding of the region. Northern Karelia is on the eastern border of Western Europe, and the economic setbacks caused by the economic crisis in the 1990s affected the region profoundly turning, it into one of the poorest regions in Finland.

Joensuu has been inhabited since ancient times; the shores of the Pielisjoki River, which flows through the town center, have been inhabited since the stone and early metal ages. Early dwellings in the area date back to 5200 BC and 3680 BC. Because of its geographical position and history, Joensuu has a long and extensive experience of working with Russia and also having road, rail, shipping, and telecommunication links with its eastern neighbor. Of the 91,000 inhabitants in the Joensuu region, 51,000 live in the town. 19,000 of these are students, which make the educational level of Joensuu one of the highest in Finland. The population in the city is also young in comparison to the national average. The structure of business in Joensuu has undergone many changes: traditional smoke-stack industry has given way to modern technology and research (Committee for Urban Policy 1999).

6 Constructing regions in time and space

6.1 Regional news-making practices

Media texts do not merely reflect external “reality” or social processes, such as unemployment, dismantling the welfare state or cutting the public expenses. These processes are constructed and seen through the lenses of journalistic practices and tacit knowledge of news-making. The news, not to mention editorials, not only report but also *make and construct* “reality.” What news will be chosen depends on the news criteria. How the news is told depends largely on the characteristics of the system of representation, i.e., the meaning-market of a region.

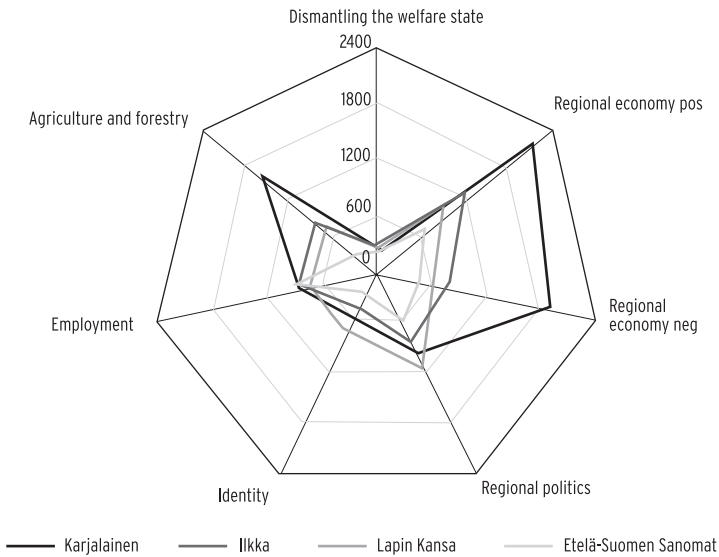
The concept of news-making practices usually refers to the daily work of journalists when they are covering the news-agenda and manufacturing the news.⁵⁵ News-making practices are part of social practices that are linked to broader institutional, economic and ideological contexts. The ecology of knowledge differs when comparing different modes of monitoring the environment. According to Tuchmann (1999, 296), the news media naturally divides its surroundings into areas of territorial responsibility. Each newspaper has its own space to master and borders to draw geographically. The spatial organization and constitution of news can be called “*the news net*” (ibid.). The news net imposes itself on the social world because it enables news events to occur at some locations but not at others.⁵⁶ There are always occurrences that remain hidden to journalists because they occur outside the net of the geographic locations that are covered, and therefore are left

outside the agenda.

One, and perhaps the most important, feature of the regional (or any other) media, during the time studied, was their ability to set the news agenda. Some topics were widely discussed in public whereas others were silenced – either intentionally (see for example Mörä 1999; Kantola 2002) or because they did not meet the traditional regional news criteria.

Different themes and the magnitude that they were given in the regional newspapers also reflected different phases of crises on the public agenda. Within the regional newspapers the crisis coverage proved to be different concerning both temporal concentration and themes. The following content profile of the regional newspapers is based on a choice of eight themes of a regional coverage. These themes were chosen because of their pertinence to the regional profile of each region. On the lower side of the profile there are those themes that most distinctively define the region, (1) regional identity and (2) regional politics. News on regional economy was divided into two categories: (3) positive and (4) negative news on regional economics. Other themes that were chosen to characterize the regions were (5) stories on employment, (6) agriculture and forestry, and (7) depression and the dismantling of the welfare state.⁵⁷

Figure II. Regionally-profiling themes in the studied newspapers 1988-1997.



An analysis of the general occurrence of the regionally-profiling themes would lead us to believe that the newspapers were quite similar in terms of their contents.⁵⁸ Only the volume of themes shows variation between newspapers. If the interpretation of regional journalistic differences would be left at this level, claims about a changing cultural grammar would be left unsubstantiated.

The quantity of coverage between different newspapers did not differ much regarding the coverage of employment or stories on dismantling the welfare state. Regional politics and regional identity are themes that created some differences between the papers. The coverage of *Lapin Kansa*, in particular, differs from the others, with more stories on regional identity and politics. *Lapin Kansa* was also the most active in monitoring the relationship between the State and the region during the studied time-span. Stories on agriculture and forestry divided the newspapers clearly. Almost half of the stories written on these themes were published in *Karjalainen*, whereas *ESS* clearly covered this theme less than the other newspapers. *Ilkka* and *Lapin Kansa* fell in-between these two extreme positions.

Characteristic of *Ilkka* is the broad coverage of positive news on regional economics. One explanation for this could be that historically entrepreneurship has been a highly valued cultural characteristic of the region. Core values of the cultural identity are attached to the independent farmer or entrepreneur who is both self-reliant and industrious.

Despite the biggest distribution figures, *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* seems thin regarding more cultural regional coverage of local and regional identity issues. Partly, this could be due to the journalistic policy line that aimed at a more national than regional scope in topics.

The volume of news production is greatest in the category “positive” economic news of the region. Also, the category “negative” economic news of the region is quite large. Economic news of the region is definitely the back bone of the regional coverage in the studied newspapers. Regional business life and big firms naturally offer to the newspapers easily accessible news material on a daily basis. Another news source is the regional consumer industry selling goods such as furniture, clothing, and food. In addition to being a news source, this industry also relies on advertising in the regional newspapers to promote branded goods. This business is linked to major advertisers, such as department stores, super markets, and groceries.

It can be claimed that negativity usually is the typical feature of news. A common slogan of journalists is: “bad news is good news.” Also in econo-

mics, bad news is usually favoured ahead of good news because “negative” news usually meets traditional news criteria. Disputes, conflicts, and arguments are newsworthy despite the reason for or the nature of the conflict. Conflicts in a regional context are typically connected to the State’s regional policy and implementations of policies made by the decision-making elite. In a regional context, cuts and savings can also be seen as conflicts. The balance of the daily news-agenda, however, is a matter of composition. An item will be more or less newsworthy depending on what else is available that day.

The equation of positive – negative coverage of regional economics brings the two-fold relation of the newspaper and the regional business life to the fore. The well-being of regional economics reflects on the advertisement revenues of the newspaper. Regional companies offer news items to the newspapers. The companies are also big employers, from whom many of the subscribers of the newspapers receive their income. Therefore, there are several reasons for regional “reality,” as constructed in the newspapers, to be quite focused around regional economics from a positive angle. Bad news for regional business could recursively be bad news for the newspaper, in terms of advertisement revenues. Therefore, *the tone and angle* of the news is an important factor in regional journalism. News conceives interpretations of the future of the region, and concretely speaking, modifies, for example, the expectations of the prospects of starting a business, and thus the availability of jobs within the region.

According to the interviewed editors-in chief, the creation by the newspapers of a positive atmosphere was regarded by the regional business life as highly important. Regional companies can react quite strongly if the news production is mainly negative in tone. Positively-framed news increased the positive expectations and was seen as binding the region with positive future predictions. In terms of collective trust for an economically-positive future, this was seen to help, in a concrete manner, the business life of the region.

The interviews of the editors-in-chief show that the growth of positive reporting on economic issues was actually partly explained by a conscious decision on the policy line, made by the newspapers. All of the newspapers studied at some point made a conscious decision to actively emphasize positive development within the region, and also, to report all positive signs. Regional investments were included among the concrete goals that the regional newspapers wanted to promote and encourage.

“We reacted by taking a side. Though we were on the side of commerce and industry, we took the people’s side, those who lost their jobs. So we received complaints because our news was always about negative effects, and the biggest news was that, this or that firm has fired so and so many employees and we asked those people “how do you feel now?” We got severe criticism from the companies of the region. This was clear, and I don’t remember the year when we understood that there was no sense in saying that there are again one-hundred-and-fifty new unemployed people, or that a certain company went bankrupt. At that time we tried to turn to something positive, if there was something positive to tell about our regional business side, and even exaggerate a bit about these positive sides. Although, at times it was almost impossible. But we decided that we would make a big story of positive things and these negative sides we would just report according to its own weight.” (Jaakko Koskela, Editor-in-chief, *ESS*, 15.3.2000.)

Perhaps we have here found one of the reasons, apart from cultural factors, why reporting regional economics received such salience: the companies and the business life of the regions had severe problems. In a regional meaning-market the dynamics of economic relations and the publicity of the economic institutions have their own semiotic realm. Important institutions, in defining this realm, are the export sector, the regional (often middle-ranged) companies, the local entrepreneurs, and the public sector. Every group participates from its own vantage point. Publicity was considered good for the economic life when it created positive expectations, but with the economic crisis the outcome had more often than before turned in the opposite direction.

“We ended up during ‘95-‘97 with small firms and workshops, consisting of ten people or so, that had developed one special product – business had gone well although the relation with subcontractors was a bit problematic. We tried, through our economy section, to do some stories on them, but this article series dried up. They were afraid, I believe, of

some kind of jealousy and envy.” (Pekka Sitari, Editor-in-chief, *Karjalainen*, 22.4.2000)

The trend of positive reporting of the regional economy was fluctuating and this fluctuation cannot be explained when the trend is compared with the development of the regional GDP (see Moring 2000). The news on regional economics is thus not simple a reflection of the regional GDP. Instead, according to the editors-in-chief, *their newspapers helped and actively manipulated the representation of the crisis in the regions*. The representation of the economic crisis was affected through positive news production, in order to boost positive mentality in the regional publicity. This was then believed to be helpful and profitable for the development of the investments, consumers’ trust, and overall readiness to function as taxpayers and citizens. The newspapers were actively participating in the efforts to control the mentality of crisis within the studied regions by interventions into the symbolic aspects of the economic system. The function of news was also understood as a *consolation of the community*. There were, for example, efforts to prevent or control unemployment, or at least its psychological effects, with the kind of active techniques described above. Further examples of this will be presented in the following pages. In this sense, the internal transactions of the meaning-markets served important functions, from a regional point of view.

6.2 Stories on depression - crisis in life-worlds

Regional newspapers use the regional discourse to reinforce a regional community, whereas national media usually address their audience in a national context - national identity, nationality, and a common cultural heritage. As a communicative moment, the depression began when some indicators – i.e. fluctuations and changes in the economic structure – were called an economic depression in a national context. In this sense, it was interesting to compare the national and the different regional “ecologies of news.” Interesting similarities were found (see Chapter 8), but there were also differences.

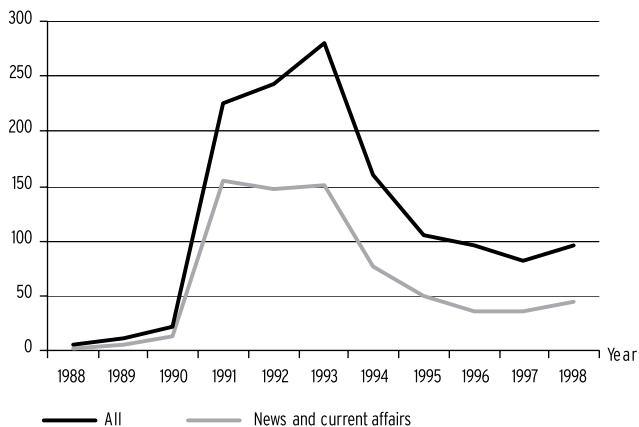
Journalistically speaking, processes (for example, economic cycles or a “depression”) are hard to follow and cover because the classical questions – Who? Where? When? Why? and With what consequences? – are generally

left unanswered. Processes often lack a clear beginning and an end, actors, and scripts. The outcome is moot and the problem-solution structure is often blurred.

The emergence of *depression* as an umbrella concept in mainstream media coverage can be reasonably well described through an analysis of the television output of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). The TV programming of YLE provides an overview of the period studied, from one mainstream media angle. YLE has historically enjoyed the position of being the “official national medium,” because of its public service role and long history. The relevance of the analysis of YLE to this analysis, however, is that as a news medium, it was one of three main daily media institutions with a national scope: YLE (radio and TV), the commercial MTV3, and the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*.

Figure III shows the results of a word search for the word *lama* (depression) in the theme descriptions of the television programs, as they appear in YLEs archives. The figure gives us an impression of the chronological progress of the economic crisis in the national discourse.

Figure III. Number of YLEs depression stories (Aslama et al. 2002, 14)



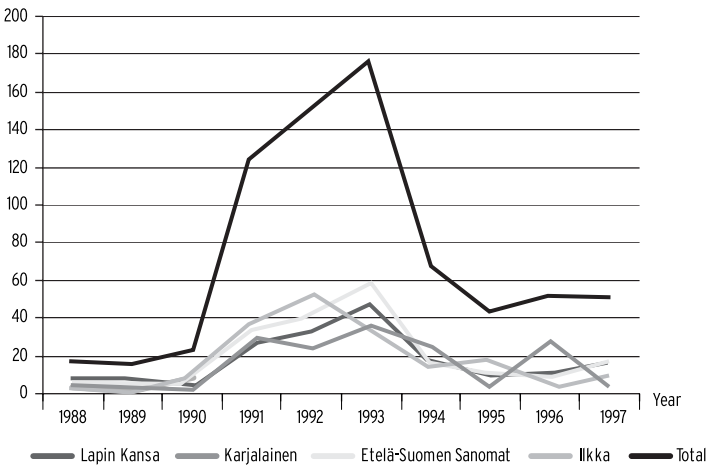
The use of this word appeared on the national scene in early 1990: it peaked and faded considerably after only three years. The use of the word increased suddenly in 1991 and reached its peak in 1993. A search was also conducted in the archives of the commercial television channel, MTV3. This search shows quite similar results, thus adding credibility to the periodicity

portrayed in Figure III (Aslama et al. 2002, 14).

Spatially speaking, the regional angle of the economic crisis tends to be absent within the national mainstream media agenda. The national level appears as the main scope of *YLEs* news at 8.30 p.m. According to Aslama et al. (2001, 442), the largest part of the news items concern domestic and foreign affairs. Only a few items take a global outlook, and local issues make it to the national newscasts in merely 6 percent (130) of the stories. When local matters are covered in national news, the topics are usually related to private businesses, accidents, culture, and crime; only one story explicitly addressed the crisis.⁵⁹

It would appear when looking only at the surface of the development, that the regional newspapers coverage was almost identical to national media. The national viewpoint on the stories of *depression* was not drastically different from the regional point of view.⁶⁰ Neither did the timing differ, when measured on the scale of frequency of use of the word *depression* in the newspapers (see Figure IV). This observation, however, leans one-sidedly on the emergence of the notion of depression as an organizing concept for the discourse on the economic crises. As will be further explored in Chapter 7, an analysis of the content in regional newspapers reveals regionally-distinct representations of social and economic reality, where much of the phenomena that later came to embedded under the *depression discourse* were observed and reported several years before that concept came into use.

Figure IV. Number of depression stories in the four studied newspapers



As in the national media, the notion of *depression* as an organizing expression for the economic crisis broke through in the studied newspapers in 1990. As is often the case in the diffusion of discourses on social problems, the *depression* first had to be defined as some kind of a dysfunction, then as a crisis, i.e., threatening signs of the system were observed and reported before the term depression appeared as a topic of normal journalism. For a phenomenon to be established as a social problem in journalism, it usually has to be pointed out concretely. Social problems need examples, speakers, and discursive mobilization. There has to be something that has happened – an act or an event – something that is easily defined and grasped by news journalism as well.

In the regional newspapers, some stories using the notion of depression had appeared as early as 1989. If not overly saliently, the notion had persistently, been a part of the discourse in *Lapin Kansa* and *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* and *Ilkka* for three years before it started to take off in 1990. The peak in news on the depression (*lama*) can be located to the years 1992 and 1993. The overall amount of depression stories remained on a higher level towards the end of the studied period than before the crisis.

Though the early writings were not numerous, in *Ilkka* the rise in depression stories started slightly earlier than in other newspapers. Also, the peak of the stories in *Ilkka* can be located a bit earlier, compared to other newspapers where the peak is during 1993. In *Karjalainen*, the amount of depression stories was more limited than in the other newspapers, despite the newspaper's otherwise broad regional content. According to the editor-in-chief, this was a result of a conscious choice of their journalistic policy line.

“We were trying to keep up the spirit. I myself at least was trying to avoid the term *depression* and used *recession* (*taantumaa*) instead. Depression as a word has a bad echo. We were trying to gather some positive news.” (Pekka Sitari, Editor-in-chief, *Karjalainen*, 22.4.2000)

The development of the coverage of depression stories also reflected the trend of the GDP. Looking at the figures of the regional GDP, we can notice that the economic indicators of the depression were at its most severe at different times within different regions. Also, the recovery did not start at the same time.

Table IV. Regional GDP per inhabitant 1988-1997
Whole country = 100 (Aluekirjanpito 1999; Statistics Finland)⁶¹

Year	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Uusimaa South Finland	132.7	131.8	132.8	135.2	133.2	133.7	134.2	133.0	138.7	137.8
Päijät-Häme Lahti region	92.1	93.2	91.9	89.7	89.2	88.7	88.9	87.2	87.3	85.8
North Karelia	77.6	78.1	78.1	78.7	78.4	76.4	78.2	78.0	73.8	74.6
South Osthrobothnia	77.6	78.6	79.4	78.8	77.0	75.1	75.9	75.0	75.6	75.4
Lapland	93.8	92.8	88.4	90.0	90.7	91.9	90.7	95.3	83.7	82.8
Whole country	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

In Table IV, the regional GDP is presented in relation to the development of the whole country. The table must be read against the development in absolute figures. From 1989, the Finnish economy started to retard and fell by 10 percentage points by 1993, when the economy started to recover.

Compared to 1989, South Finland was a relatively successful region if we look at the entire studied period. Relatively seen, South Finland lost ground to other regions in 1992 (133.2) and again in 1995 (133.0). The region started to recover hastily in 1996, when it also gained further wealth compared to the national average (138.7), and it continued to grow, though at a somewhat slower pace in 1997, when it fell back marginally from the earlier year, in comparison with the national average (to 137.8). South Finland came out of the depression as the winner, in relation to all the other studied regions.

In the Päijät Häme region (the distribution area of *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*), the development of the GDP follows the general development of the depression, starting in 1991. In Päijät-Häme, however, the depression was relatively deeper than in the country as a whole. Compared to the national average, Päijät-Häme fell 4.5 percentage points (from 93.2 in 1989 to 88.7 in 1993) when the economic crisis began to tax the export-oriented regions. Unlike other regions, Päijät-Häme did not start to recover. The relative level of GDP continued on a negative track, leaving the region on a level that was considerably lower than the starting level ten years before. In 1997, Päijät-

Häme was more than 6 percentage points lower in relative GDP, compared to the situation ten years earlier (85.8 compared to 92.1).

The starting level in North Karelia (*Karjalainen*) was relatively low (77.6 in 1988). Also North Karelia ended up on the losing side, compared to the national average. Relatively speaking, however, the development was rather even. The economic crisis followed the rhythm of the national economy, though there was a low water-mark in 1993 (76.4). North Karelia had a relative gain when the national figures began to recover in 1993, but was again left behind when the recovery of the Finnish national economy accelerated towards the end of the studied period. After a short recovery in 1994 and 1995, the region began to regress in comparison to the national average, and was at a somewhat lower level in 1997 (75.1), compared to 1988 (77.6).

The development in South Ostrobothnia (*Ilkka*) was quite similar to the development in North Karelia. The starting level was low (77.6). The initial relative loss to other regions leveled out in 1993 (75.1), after which the position of the region within the Finnish economy was remarkably stable, and remained at this level (75.4 in 1997). In South Ostrobothnia, the economic development did not either keep up with the pace in the national growth of the economic production that started in 1993. The relative level of the GDP remained at a 2.2 percentage point lower level than at the end of the 1980s.

Except for a dip already in 1990 (88.4), Lapland (*Lapin Kansa*) survived the depression years remarkably well. The depression development of this region, within the Finnish economy, is different from the other regions, and also from the country as a whole. In the light of the relative GDP there is a peak in 1995, after which the region rapidly lost ground when South Finland took off in 1996, leaving Lapland more than 10 percentage points behind its position before the economic crisis (from 93.8 to 83.7). The fall became even greater in 1997 (82.8).

The table shows how sensitive the economic balance in Finland is, from a regional point of view. Finland is divided economically, but also demographically and culturally, into distinctively different Finlands – the growing centers of the South and the provinces' and regions' Finland that are trying to keep up their pace in rather different ways. Economic polarization is not so simple that “the border of poverty” would divide the country into the wealthy south and the poor north. Within and between the regions there were polarization tendencies that were, on the one hand, accelerated by the

urbanization and concentration and, on the other hand, by migration from the outlying rural areas.

The national poet Runeberg put it bluntly: “Our country is poor and poor it will remain.” In the background there was quite a strong cause for this development – the broad structural transformation of rural areas that is strengthened by the regional policy of the European Union. All these dimensions, broadly speaking, affected how the cultural grammar, regional public discussion, and meaning-markets were formed

6.3 Regional identity framing content production

Regions and regional newspapers have spatial boundaries, and their existence is somewhat characterized by administrative and social goal values. Usual goal values are to maintain the community vital, in the cultural and economic sense, and to be part of the economic and symbolic production and exchange where the regional newspaper is also a commodity sold daily in a regional market. Regional newspapers are part of the structuration process in which the economic system and life-worlds of the people are connected.

The identity category, i.e., stories on regional identity, tradition, and culture, is interesting in the sense that these stories contain something that regional newspapers can offer exclusively. For example, the national newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* almost totally lacks this kind of material covering locations outside its own core area. The symbols and narratives of the region can resonate in a homely milieu, where the ideas of home and place protection are reinforced. The regional newspapers are institutions or mechanisms through which the region is constituted. This is usually a quite conscious and strategic act, as revealed by the following excerpts of the editor-in-chief of *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*:

“The province of Päijät -Häme is young and was born around the newspaper *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*. We have supported the same line all the time, but we have not been fanatics. The news comes first and then opinions. Somewhere else, in other newspapers, there is this regional and provincial voice and there is perhaps this fanatic weight on it. We have been

reasonable in the sense that there is not this provincial pathos.” (Jaakko Koskela, Editor-in-chief, *ESS*, 14.3.1999)

Etelä-Suomen Sanomat is the only newspaper of the studied newspapers that distinguishes itself from the definition as a province newspaper. One reason for that is that the province Päijät-Häme is not perhaps a clear entity in people’s minds and therefore stereotypes and traditions attached to the region are rare and not so powerful. This does not mean, however, that the newspaper does not associate itself with the role as a representative “voice of the region.” But the province, as defined by this newspaper, is manifested more as an economic entity, where regional identity construction is a less important task.

Your relation to the concept of province?

“We have an exceptional relation to it because *Ilkka* has been perhaps the most notable creator of this social economic entity called Southern Ostrobothnia. It did not exist when *Ilkka* moved from Vaasa to Seinäjoki in 1962. We have consciously manufactured it with the help of the business life of Seinäjoki.” (Kari Hokkanen, Editor-in-chief, *Ilkka*, 13.3.2000)

“*Karjalainen* was a supporter of the National Coalition Party from the first independence day until the 1990s. The detachment from the party had been discussed already for many years, but the final cut did not happen until 1994. The detachment was seen in the beginning as an over-emphasizing of the political non-alignment that has now leveled out. Now *Karjalainen* is mainly a provincial newspaper according to its own policy lines. This still does not mean cliquishness or factionalism.” (Pekka Sitari, Editor-in-chief, *Karjalainen*, 15.3.2000)

“The construction of the identity of the Lapps is the guiding star for the making of this newspaper. We are trying to strengthen the assumption that the Lapps are as good as the other Finns living in other parts of Finland. This is why we pick every good example of successful Lapps living around the world. The reason for this is that one should not forget

one's background but be purely proud of the fact that one comes from here." (Heikki Tuomi-Nikula, Editor-in-chief, *Lapin Kansa*, 16.3.2000)

The symbolic and also political elements of regional identity present the expressive and also enduring aspects of regional culture. These elements are strongly emphasized in making the newspaper. In this way, basic values of the regional culture are transmitted from one generation of readers to the next. Basic values and preferred connotations concerning this very form of collective regionalism are apparently quite stable, and do not change much over time. Collectivism is underlined in contrast with individualism; the projection of "we" as a regional entity is strong. In this transmission process journalism can be seen as one of the key carriers of expressive components of the identity.

Collective identity also determines how a given society in a given geographically limited area demarcates itself from its natural and social environments. The symbolic boundaries of a social system are formed primarily as the horizon of the actions that members reciprocally attribute to themselves internally. Collective identity also regulates the belongingness of individuals in the social system (both exclusion and inclusion).

Struggles to establish collective identities in regional discourses can also entail an *aestheticization of place and of politics*. Ironically, the resources for struggles to establish identities are those provided by the regional cultures themselves, one example being traditions that are constructed for market purposes. Also, the outcomes of these struggles are immediately open to market appropriations (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, 78). This can be seen, for example, in the market strategies of regional newspapers where regional identity, as a framework, was usually constructed as an overall marketing tool when newspapers abandoned their earlier political ties.

6.4 Crises of unemployment

One of the most central topics of the economic crisis was undoubtedly employment and unemployment (see Valtonen 2002; Pehkonen & Kangasharju 2001; Böckermann 1998). Work and the ways of talking about work have been deeply rooted in the economic structure of the country, dominated until recently by agriculture, forestry, and the wood-processing indus-

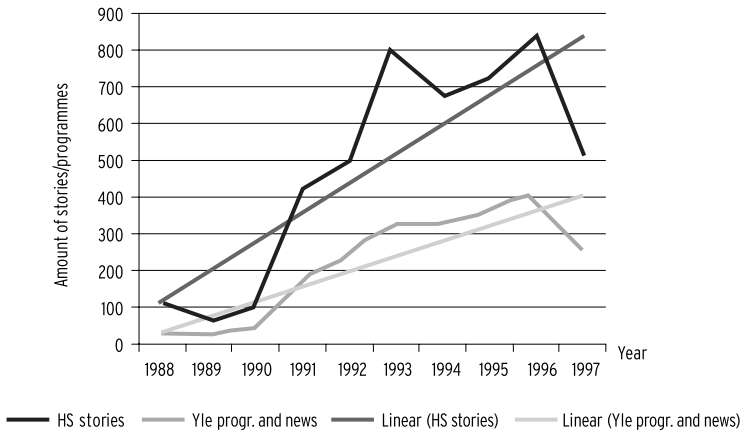
tries. The work ethic in Finland still bears traces of the logging-camp and farming life of earlier generations. Extreme *tenacity (sisu)* was required to perform strenuous physical work facing all the hardships nature can offer: cold weather, long distances, and an almost impassable terrain. In the light of national history, the value of work is easier to understand as a journalistic phenomenon as well.

Employment as a topic in regional newspapers differs greatly from the national newspaper's news agenda.⁶² In *Helsingin Sanomat* the unemployed were sometimes given a face and a voice in certain journalistic genres during the economic crisis (see Valtonen 2002). Oddly enough, when comparing stories on the depression and stories on employment in the regional newspaper context, the former category included multiple genres and types of stories whereas the stories from the latter category typically presented a one-dimensional narrative structure with few exceptions. In the regional newspapers, unemployment as a social phenomenon was described as a quite abstract trend that was increasing or decreasing. The story-line was supported with statistics and numbers. The world of unemployment was abstracted and alienated from the everyday life of the people of the region.

One reason for this kind of news manufacturing could be the shock effect of mass unemployment that paralyzed people and journalists when the collapse of the economy resulted in a 12 percent decline in GDP over the years 1991-1993. As noted in the first chapter, while the demand for labor declined nationally by almost 20 percent, the number of unemployed fell by 450, 000 and the rate of unemployment rose from 3.1 percent to about 16 percent.

A comparison of how the amount of stories on employment developed over the 10 years period shows that the timing of the increases and decreases in coverage in the regional newspapers, at an aggregate level, resembled that of *Helsingin Sanomat (HS)* and the *Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE)*. In spite of the fact that there were different methodologies used and also the data samples differed, the general figure comes out as astonishingly uniform. The curves picturing media coverage of employment in *HS* and in *YLE* look very much alike (Figure V), and the graph resembles that of the cumulative results from the regional newspapers (Figure VI).

Figure V. Number of employment stories in HS and YLE (Aslama et al. 2000)



The theme began to appear and grow from 1991, reaching its peak in 1993 in *HS*, as well as in the programs and news of *YLE* and in the regional newspapers.

Unemployment as a national problem met well traditional news criteria. The consequences of unemployment were great for a considerable group of people in the immediate surroundings that the media covered. These are all measures that are considered important when defining what “news” is. The reporting about the unemployment rate, however, did not follow another classic news criterion, the principle of *continuity*. According to that criterion, once something has hit the headlines and has been defined as “news,” it continues to be defined as such for some time, also if the amplitude of the event itself is reduced (Galtung & Ruge 1999, 30).

The national media coverage first followed the development of the rate of unemployment, but a bifurcation of media coverage and the rate of unemployment occurred during 1994. There was a slight decrease in coverage in television, whereas the unemployment rate at a national level still remained at its peak level in 1994. A similar contingency also occurred in *HS*. There are multiple explanations for this. One explanation is that the news item was worn out. Another likely explanation is that there was a shift in the news agenda, due to the EU referendum. (Aslama et al. 2001, 441.)

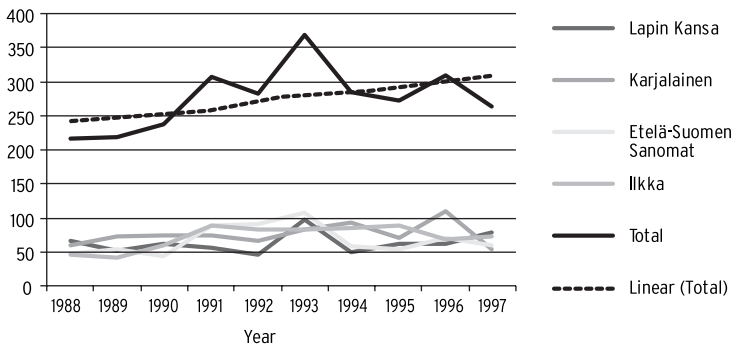
As noted above, in the regional newspapers, at an aggregate level, the profile of the curve picturing the amount of coverage during the studied period is quite similar to the profile picturing the development in the na-

tional media. There are, however, several quite important differences that should be noted. First, the number of stories in *HS* rose from an average level of around 100 per year before the crisis to 844 in 1996. In the *YLEs* programs, the amount of programs and news rose from less than 50 to 408 during the same period. The increase in the number of stories/programs was 8-10 times greater over a 6-year period.

The regional newspapers – compared to their size - had written quite actively about employment already before the crisis. Each had between 41 and 74 stories, per year from 1988 to 1990. The increase to the peak-year 1993 was considerable – the number of stories doubled – but much less dramatic than the increase in the national media. Also, in contrast to the national media, after 1993 the coverage fell to a permanently lower level.

There are also considerable regional differences behind the aggregate figures: *Ilkka* and *Karjalainen* show smaller variations than the other two newspapers in their number of stories, between 1991 and 1995. As the only regional newspaper, *Karjalainen* wrote more about employment in 1996 than in 1993. Unemployment in the North Karelia region also peaked in that year. *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*, by and large, first followed a similar curve, as did the national news media. But suddenly in 1994 (when unemployment was marginally decreasing in all the studied regions, see Table V) it dropped the theme to half, compared to 1993, and maintained a low profile throughout the rest of the period. *Lapin Kansa* doubled its employment coverage in 1993, but the coverage fell back to earlier numbers by the following year, starting gradually to increase again by the end of the period.

Figure VI. Number of employment stories in the studied newspapers



According to the editors-in-chief, stories on employment and the negative development of the regional GDP had to be handled in a humane and comforting way. At the end of the 1980s, employment was referred to as a shortage of labor in certain professions in some regions. During the year 1990, unemployment and related sub-problems and their consequences began to grow as news topics. Towards the end of the studied period, stories on the shortage of labor re-appeared in some growth centers. In the regional newspapers, employment and social exclusion remained as topics throughout the period. The linear trend-line, picturing the development in the total number of stories, however, was less steep than the trend-lines picturing the development in the national media.

As noted above, the theme “got tired” already during the years 1994-1995, although the statistics showed only a marginal change in unemployment figures (see Table V). Looking at the national GDP, industrial production, and unemployment, 1992 was the hardest year during the studied period. Consequently, the export-oriented recovery treated different parts of the country differently, and also lead to a growing differentiation between regions in the unemployment rate between 1993-1996 (Böckermann 1998, 12).

The peak in employment stories in *Lapin Kansa* in 1993 coincided with the time when the employment rate collapsed in the Rovaniemi region. In 1995 and 1996 the Rovaniemi region still suffered from high unemployment. Partly, the decreasing number of employment stories was also due to an active policy line of the newsroom. Here, the aforementioned effort by the regional newspapers, to actively maintain a positive strategy of the image of the region, could be seen in practice. Marketing meanings and selling functional approaches to face the growing social problem was one way to try to control and govern its escalating effects.

“Of course the number of stories on unemployment grew. And all these survival stories, there has been plenty although they sell badly...people don’t want to read about these things, they don’t care. Anyway, we have done a lot of that kind of stuff, because only one fifth of Lapland’s population is out of work. We haven’t made the kind of categorical decision (of making positive news) but of course I urged that some positive approaches to things be found and I myself, for example, have focused positively on 90 percent of the matters in my

columns. A newspaper is also the one giving hope and consolation.” (Heikki Tuomi-Nikula, Editor-in-chief, *Lapin Kansa*, 16.3.2000)

Lapin Kansa and the other studied newspapers here follow the same policy line. The newspapers did not want to join in “blowing the bellows of a depression mentality,” which, according to the editors-in chief, they would have done if they had been writing solely on the negative development. During the interviews, the reasons for the qualitative change in the content of the stories were clearly explained:

“In the beginning we took the ‘human suffering’ side in our news, and that policy went through the whole newspaper. We are all human beings and when everyone’s neighbors and acquaintances and family members lost their work, it was such a concrete change compared to the time when everything went well and money could have been borrowed from the banks, and now people lost their dwellings and everything. But when we positioned ourselves on the side of these people, the entrepreneurs regarded us as having negative attitudes towards them. So, we tried to adjust even before this reproach was cast on us.” (Jaakko Koskela, Editor-in-chief, *ESS*, 15.3.2000)

The problem of unemployment was first handled at the level of the economic system but when the depression continued, even *Ilkka* began to report the issue from a human and individual angle. The attitude towards unemployment, as portrayed in the newspaper, started from the system level turning to a collective worry about the situation. *Ilkka*’s representation of the region was affected by a strong regional spirit. That is the same spirit that *Ilkka* recursively manufactured actively in its symbolic exchange through the news production. This collective joint spirit is quite opposite to, for example, *ESS*’s attitude of individualism, which is reflected in representations of the risks and responsibilities of the individuals.

“First we approached unemployment as an economic problem. But when we realized how huge it was going to become, at that point we started to handle it as a human tragedy and

started to express these understandings and positive stories about the unemployed. We really discussed about this and there was also the point that a big part of our readers lost their jobs, and we were thinking that if we did this they would remain as subscribers. Some remained, some did not.” (Kari Hokkanen, Editor-in-chief, *Ilkka*, 17.3.2000.)

Ilkka's relation to the unemployment was also manufactured more through party and regional politics in comparison with the other newspapers. In the other newspapers, the strategies of survival were sought from cultural history, Finnish tenacity (*sisu*), and the ethos of survival and self-reliance.

“We definitely described (the unemployment) as dark as it was, also because of political reasons, but now when this development actualized, we consciously tried to give a bit more of a positive picture of the situation than it really was. And that was only because this impression could encourage someone who is on the verge of deciding whether or not to start a new enterprise. Setting up a business, all this was presented a bit broader than the actual news worthiness would entail and consequently a bankruptcy was presented as a bit smaller. Everything was said, but nonetheless we had this above-mentioned general goal. It (this goal) was given particularly to our economic section, and people were striving consciously for this positive business journalism.” (Kari Hokkanen, Editor-in-chief, *Ilkka*, 17.3.2000)

The theme of employment showed an interesting development on the agenda of the newspaper *Karjalainen*. It started to show signs of “tiredness” as early as 1993 and 1994, when the unemployment rate, for example in the Joensuu region, was greater than 20 percent (23.5% and 23.0%). During 1994, the employment situation in Joensuu was worsening and the newspaper reacted quickly. The coverage of employment began to increase. First the economic crisis was mainly seen as a crisis in national economics and the unemployment was not given “a face,” as a phenomena it was not persona-

lized. When the tendency of a growing unemployment rate continued, the group of unemployed persons was defined. The news agenda began to follow the unemployed as individuals and their survival strategies were clarified.

“Depression lifted the unemployment, with all its problems, into focus within the society, and thus took up space in the news-agenda as well. The unemployed wanted to have their own column page that even functioned for a while. Obviously it was too much of an effort because it dried out in a year.” (Pekka Sitari, Editor-in-chief, *Karjalainen*, 22.4.2000)

“During the worst depression, reductions and bankruptcies were daily events and the depression was seen in the advertisement section as forced auctions and notices of bankruptcy proceedings. But when the depression continued, stories about what is happening to the unemployed, the problems of mass unemployment, does one have to accept work, and the question of migration started to appear. And we have taken a critical stance to the migration. It is not so simple to leave one’s home and move to the other side of Finland – everyone is torn up by their roots.” (Pekka Sitari, Editor-in-chief, *Karjalainen*, 22.4.2000)

There is a correspondence between the magnitude of the employment coverage and public discussion and growing trend of the unemployment. In the development of unemployment in the studied regions, the year 1993 seemed to be the most difficult in all regions, whereas unemployment in the capital city, Helsinki, still continued to increase, and the national average also remained at its peak until the following year. Employment usually reacts with a one-year delay in the changes in total production. But the magnitude of news on employment does not directly follow the fluctuations of unemployment. And even if the number of stories on employment shows variations similar to the development in employment statistics (Table V), the variation in the number of stories is much greater than the variation in the underlying employment statistics.

Table V. The percentage of unemployed between the years 1990-1997 in the biggest cities within the studied regions. (Statistics Finland 1999)

City	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Helsinki	1.9	8.5	14.1	17.8	19.9	16.1	14.9	12.1
Lahti South Finland	5.7	14.3	21.0	26.6	24.3	22.9	22.9	19.3
Joensuu North Karelia	8.3	13.5	19.4	23.5	23.0	23.6	24.3	21.9
Rovaniemi Lapland	8.5	15.0	22.5	27.2	26.5	26.7	26.4	23.5
Seinäjoki South Ostrobothnia	5.7	11.5	17.0	23.0	20.2	19.7	18.5	15.3

In general, the regional differences in unemployment in Finland were notable and quite stable. The rate of unemployment tended to fluctuate similarly in all regions and employment areas. According to Böckermann (1998, 74), the biggest absolute difference was the increase in all regions during the 1990s. Unemployment thus increased regional inequality and polarization.

Typical examples of the regional differences in unemployment were that the unemployment in the northern and eastern parts of the country partly reflected a measurable long-term unemployment, whereas in other parts of the country the policy to support export-oriented areas stimulated employment. The export-oriented recovery has meant an emphasis on industrial production within the total production in Finland.

In a journalistic reality, pictured by the interviews and exploration of the headlines, the mass unemployment, however, was described as a monolithic and an apolitical process. There seemed to be no actors and no one responsible for the phenomenon in the formulations that we find in the headlines of that time.

6.5 Editorials as community talk

Editorials are generally quite popular objects for content studies (for example Heikkinen 1999; Alasuutari 1996; Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994). There are several reasons for this. The editorials of regional newspapers, as a ge-

neric form of journalism, can be understood as collective statements of the newspaper. Compared to the news material, the editorials epitomize the newspaper's relation to the broad social and political changes.⁶³ In a regional context, their function is to operate as a voice of the region. They are public statements and sometimes judgments where usually in a relatively small textual space, quite large lines of policies are drawn. In that sense, they are written with at least four different groups of recipients in mind. These recipients are the regional public, the regional business life, other media, and the political elite. Consequently, editorials are simultaneously constitutive of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief. Editorials as texts shape these aspects of society and culture in their own regional sub-system. This is why the language in editorials is often ideologically motivated.

Editorials have an important systemic function as a genre. They implicitly crystallize the social semiotics of certain social systems, form a consensus, and apply discursive "tinkering" in the case of economic and legitimization crises. They are "obviously filled with compromises and banalities," as one of the editors-in-chief bluntly described the hardship of writing editorials. But they also carry a form of discourse that has been called "homely racism" (Morley 2000, 217), which allows the readers to imagine that they do not have to share their space with anyone else, unless they are of exactly their own kind by virtue of consanguinity. This kind of transmission of values and patrimonies, into a fixed sense of home, can be understood as one part of the editorial's community making activities.

What themes the editorials address depends on the newspaper, the structure of regional economics, and the structure of a regional meaning-market. In Table VI, the internal diversification of editorials is presented. The columns of the table show what salience different issues were given in comparison to other issues. The rows show a comparison between the regions.⁶⁴

The emphasis that editorials gave to regional issues highlights some features of this above-mentioned fragmented understanding of the crisis. When looked upon from this point of view, the editorial as a genre stands out as a hybrid form of regional politics and publicly expressed values within the region. Editorials can be analyzed in order to interpret the development of discourses through time and the diffusion of culture - the spread of ideas, techniques, and practice. They are interpretative packages of the cultural diffusion within a region and also sites of ideology of everyday practice.

Editorials can also be analyzed longitudinally which enables the "socio-

logical gaze” to spot formative disjunctures and ruptures in the transformation of the economic crisis. In this sense, the temporal but also quantitative distribution of the themes of the editorials studied can be informative about the transformation of new dimensions in regional (territorial and geographical) identity and in the political framework (local, national, European).

Table VI. Variation in themes and number of editorials in the newspapers studied 1988-1997.

Selected themes (N=1146)	Southern Finland Päijät-Häme ESS (N=136) 100%	Western Finland Ostrobothnia Iikka (N=158) 100%	Northern Finland Lapland Lapin Kansa (N=306) 100%	Eastern Finland Karelia Karjalainen (N=547) 100%
1 Regional industry and commerce	25 18%	13 8%	51 17%	138 25%
2 Agriculture and forest industry	4 3%	13 8%	35 11%	73 13%
3 Relative development of the region	33 24%	23 15%	37 12%	116 21%
4 Employment	15 11%	4 2,5%	12 4%	27 5%
5 Europe and Finland's neighbor regions	4 3%	16 10%	20 6%	17 3%
6 Statements in regional policy	31 23%	58 37%	61 20%	77 14%
7 Regional identity	0 0%	4 2,5%	21 21%	17 3%
8 Center-periphery axis	12 9%	25 16%	64 21%	66 12%
9 Depression and dismantling the welfare state	12 9%	2 1%	5 2%	16 3%

In Table VI, we see that the editorials reflect the diversification of the regional means of living and economic structure. The agriculture and forest industry are not the primary issues in Päijät-Häme in southern Finland, whereas the issue is quite salient in Lapland in the north and Karelia in the east. *Karjalainen*'s editorials focused strongly on the worrying future of the agriculture and forest industry. Its part of the primary production of the GDP is highest in the region, and therefore this was reflected in the editorials.

Regional industry and commerce get much attention in Karelia and in Lapland, as also tourism, and alongside this the importance of the service sector was actualized, especially during the first half of the 1990s. The issue gets relatively much attention in Päijät-Häme in the south, but for reasons related to the transformation of the old economy.

In light of the quantitative content analysis of the editorials, *Karjalainen* has the strongest provincial spirit. Only in *Karjalainen* is the relative development of the region a regular theme in the editorials.

Ilkka was very active in EU matters. Though the number of editorials on this theme was not as high as in *Lapin Kansa* or *Karjalainen*, *Ilkka* was quite outspoken in its criticism. Agricultural issues concerning the taxes, subsidies, and means of living of the farmers increased in editorial space during the time-span analyzed. *Ilkka* made strong and critical statements on behalf of the farmers and their way of living throughout the studied period. It is notable that employment issues were rarely raised on the editorial agenda of *Ilkka*.

In comparison with the other newspapers, *ESS* on the whole did not focus much on regional matters, except for employment issues. It mostly preferred national issues and followed a national agenda in the editorials. The category "depression and the dismantling the welfare state" was quite strongly present in *ESS*. One reason for this was an acute cash crisis in the poorer municipalities in the Päijät-Häme region.

The dimension of regional identity was strongest in *Lapin Kansa*. Partly, this can be explained by the ongoing discussion of the rights of the Sámi population. Also, the center-periphery axis was strongly present in *Lapin Kansa*. It was characterized by the conflict dimension in relation to the "South," that is Helsinki. As noted above, the regional economic structure comes through clearly as well. The agriculture and forest industry, regional development, and the center-periphery nexus define the main poles of this discursive landscape. The importance of tourism and the service sector be-

came acute, especially during the 1993-1996. This could be seen most clearly in the editorials reflecting upon the decline of the region's tourist value and the consequently declining number of jobs in the branch.

The editorials selected for this comparison can be seen as the core of the ideological everyday practice. The textual construction in these editorials has its origin in the regional news agenda, the journalistic culture, and the economy of the region. The connected regional entities, that were attached to specific regional constraints and displayed different power structures in relation to the State, were transformed into a set of values and key concepts of the time in a regional meaning-market.

Perhaps one of the most important and principal achievements of the regional newspapers is in the way they link the "biography" of an occasion or event to the "geography of situation" of its regional public. Reading a newspaper becomes an everyday domestic routine, and in a way the domestication of public utterance is part of sensing oneself as a fully-equipped citizen and member of a certain community in everyday life. It could, however, be an exaggeration to conceive this kind of cultural citizenship as a simple binary in/out mechanism, linked with the reading ritual of a regional daily. In this instance, instead, we are observing a vehicle that is in a crucial position in constructing regional discourse.

The analysis presented in the editorials can be seen as reflexive, or as an effort to define spaces for a regional identity practice. This practice is shaped by internal and external geopolitical and economic factors – and is not so much linked with metaphysical, mental and "regional" identity ingredients. The practice of constructing a regional identity at the editorial level is more of a political, geographical or an administrative act – but the standpoints taken are shaped by the economic and cultural landscapes.

This set of active journalistic actions could be seen as an effort to govern the "regional public sphere." The regional economic structure was clearly reflected in the different ways that the economic crisis was interpreted. Depending on the region, different balances were found in how the main poles (agriculture, wood industry, regional development and the center-periphery nexus) defined the regional publicity.

6.6 Summary of the characteristics of the newspaper contents

To define the economic recession of the 1990s as a media event would be an exaggeration, not only in epistemological terms but also in relation to the salience of the recession in the content of the media. The economic recession was a painfully long and contingent historic process, not an occasion or a cultural performance that lasted over a decade. However, the newspapers also covered other issues, and the position of “depression stories,” or editorials related to this theme, easily stand out as more salient than they actually were within the newspaper content during this period. But the different characteristics of the newspapers, which were found in the analysis of the news themes and editorials of the studied newspapers, do show features that may be considered as generally valid.

The regional newspapers served their own purposes in many ways: through the selection of topics, filtering of information, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, emphasis and tone, editorial standpoints, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises. This brought mixed motives into the picture. Although media claim to act as agents carrying factual information, with aims to advance the common and regional good as a criterion for their values, at the same time, however, they also actively took into consideration the effects of their own interventions on an economic and political sphere.

Compared to the content in national media, the regional media, socially as well as culturally, reflected issues from the local vantage point. This is, of course, self evident. But the picture becomes more interesting when we analyze *how* this is done. From this perspective, the spatial organization of the news in regional newspapers has the function of a community builder and a constructor of the cultural grammar of a certain territory. The newspaper is a political organ speaking for the region but not in a traditional party-political sense. Political ideologies are not in the forefront, nor are regionalism in a traditional sense. Regionalism is a mixed form of “homely racism” and economic functionalism that is flavored with the newspapers’ own ideas of building a community. In this sense, regionalism in the studied newspaper is not only historically determined cultural and political project.

This feature will be explored in more detail in Table VII. The table builds on a synthesis of the regional contents of the newspapers, that is, their discursive time-spaces. The four categories (or spheres) organizing the table have been chosen in order to make evident the particular profile of each

newspaper and its symbolic lines of demarcation. The four spheres are:

- 1) The region as a political process
- 2) The region as its economic relations
- 3) The region as a spatial entity
- 4) The region as a community and culture

The description of the *profiles* is arrived at by filtering the material (the result of the quantitative content analysis and the qualitative content analysis was assessed against the background material concerning the development of the region and the interviews with the editors- in-chief).

The four newspapers studied are profiled by a clear consciousness of, on the one hand, their regional role and, on the other hand, the ties between this role and the economy and future development of the region. In a political dimension, all the newspapers are characterized by a right wing stance, over which the regional policy aspect, however, dominates. The strategies of reflecting the decision-making system of the national center and its political decision-making system, however, vary according to geographical position and regional characteristics.

The profile of the economic sphere in the region is built partly on how the region is placed with respect to the transport routes, and partly on the degree to which the region is networked. The strongest impact on the sphere of regional economy, however, comes from the traditional livelihoods of the region.

In the newspapers that were studied, the regional sphere was not dominantly characterized by administrative issues, but rather by cultural issues. The concept of province is still attached to strong emotions, through which matters are presented. The cultural sphere is the layer in the empirical material that most strongly profiles regional consciousness and identity. The awareness of the uniqueness of the region and its nature and the significance of the particular national landscapes to the characteristics of its inhabitants, traditionally assigned to each region, are frameworks that maintain the established images. Also, themes and issues that link the region to larger normative contexts are filtered into the cultural layers. Examples of this are the concentration in *ESS* on order keeping forces and crime. An example of the same is *Ilkka's* concentration on productive farming or modern peasant culture.

ESS's description of the region was colored with liberal and right wing

attitudes. A positive angle in the news manufacturing was maintained in order to boost regional business life. The analysis of the headlines shows that *ESS*, also in its news coverage, was positive towards the EU and reacted sensitively to the changes in export and trade. The spatial image of the region is based on the relation with the capital city, Helsinki. The Päijät-Häme region is the place where the urban and the rural meet. Nature is not reflected as a “national landscape,” being a resource on the base of which the cultural identity of the region is defined. The themes on the news agenda were typical to the urban center: traffic, crimes, police forces, and the multiple risks of everyday life.

Ilkka strongly supported the agrarian sector and mostly followed the political lines of the Center Party, for example in its EU statements, where *Ilkka* was critical towards EU. As a spatial entity, Southern Ostrobothnia stands out as a coherent provincial entity. The cultural self-image of the region that was reflected in the newspaper was based on the nature; flat lands and spring floods seasonally entered the news agenda. The newspaper’s relation to its readers was based on a traditional identity of the agricultural society.

Karjalainen’s apolitical attitude is bourgeois. It took a positive stance towards EU issues. The notion of provinciality was attached to *Karjalainen’s* news agenda and content, but the concept of development region was often used. Transport routes between east and west and the logistic position of the region were reflected in the news. As a spatial entity, the region came out as culturally strong but threatened by demographic changes and the desertation from outlying villages and areas. The Karelian people were usually attached to cultural stereotypes of a certain mentality: a liveliness and cheerfulness that can also be found in identity stories describing the cultural life of the region.

Lapin Kansa’s apolitical attitude is bourgeois and regionalistic in relation to the national decision-making elite. *Lapin Kansa* took a positive standpoint toward the European Union. Typical of the biggest news events among those studied was that they addressed the clashing interests between the region and the State (the *Natura 2000* program and the *Vuotos* artificial lake project). The regional identity of the newspaper came out as building on the exotic, which is the basis of the tourism industry and on the division between the northern and the southern parts of the country. In the descriptions of nature, the aesthetical dimension was emphasized, as well as the harsh living conditions of the people in the North.

Table VII. A synthetic profile of the regional newspapers

Region as	ESS Southern Finland	Ilkka Western Finland
Political process	Liberal, right wing orientation; supportive of regional business; the border towards rural Finland; positive towards EU; urban population; self conscious South-Finnish orientation	Center party orientation; supports agrarian sector; critical towards EU; strong role in regional politics; conflicting relation to recent governments
Economic relations	Small and middle size industry; sensitive to changes in export trade; history of wealth; traditionally good employment; the economic choke increased through the structural negative development of the region	Small size entrepreneurs; comparative wealth; agriculture
Spatial entity	Regional image builds on the equation of transport routes and geographical position; relation to the capital Helsinki; urban and rural meet; urban vs. rural, the geographic ambivalence of an intermediate region; the important role of the main city (Lahti); lushness of nature	Regional image builds on strong-felt perception of provinciality; village communities and activities; South-Ostrobothnian orientation; agrarian dominance, role as food store house; West vs. East; we-rhetoric
Community and culture	Nature less important; no university; no characteristics; themes: traffic, networking, crime, order keeping forces, military veterans; alienation; individualistic rhetoric concentrated on risks; liberalism	Nature: the flat lands, spring floods; entrepreneurship; the region's role as a granary emphasizes patriotism; taciturnity; pride; independence vs. dependence; emanation; music (Violin- Ostrobothnia); sports; construction work; relation to the region builds on peasant identity

Region as	Karjalainen Eastern Finland	Lapin Kansa Northern Finland
Political process	Right wing orientation; The regional policy dimension non-conflicting; positive towards EU; passive in relation to government composition	Right wing orientation; regional policy oriented; economic and cultural regionalism and separatism; positive towards EU; conceptualizes the region as exploited
Economic relations	"Under- developed region;" close to eastern border; vision of possible role in east-west transport and trade; developing tourism	Regional and state interests clashing; the Natura 2000 environment program a threat; conflict on the Vuotos artificial lake; critical to the role of the National Board of Forestry; considerable international tourism
Spatial entity	Regional image builds on strong self-image; Karelianism distinct symbolic category; underdevelopment; emigration; villages being deserted; village activities; ageing population; relation to Karelia on the other side of the border	Regional identity builds on division between North and South, this division is tense and emotional; stronger emotional relationship to the northern parts of the neighboring countries; Norway, Sweden, the Northern dimension
Community and culture	Nature: hills, lakes, forests; population stereotypes: cheerfulness, liveliness, periphery, reticence, enviousness; borderland between East and West, health surveillance program; soldiers, war, veterans, national defense; closeness to border; long term unemployment	Nature: esthetical dimension emphasized, mountains, reindeer, barrenness, coldness, darkness; people of the North vs. people of the South; building identity for self-confidence; endurance; pride; immediacy

7 Four Finlands

“In an ever more insecure and uncertain world, the withdrawal into the safe haven of territoriality is an intense temptation; and so the defense of the territory – the safe home becomes the pass-key to all doors which one feels must be locked.” (Bauman 1998, 117)

7.1. The official voice of editorials

Editorials, in general, are a rewarding source for a researcher doing critical discourse analysis. Usually there is *a social problem* at the core of the texts. These problems may be in the activities of a social practice, or in the representation of social practices. In this chapter, I explore the temporal development of different modes of crises and discourses through a qualitative analysis of texts. Editorial discourses are understood as ways of signifying different social problems or representations of the regions, from a particular point of view. Key values and concepts are crystallized in specific regional meaning-markets, from which each studied newspaper offers a diachronic portrayal.

One focus of the textual analysis of the editorials, in general, is naturally to look at the wider changes in society and culture that are manifested in changing media discourses. The important contrast focused on is between the *flux of the ever-changing contents* of the regional editorials (and daily life itself on which media report) and the relatively *unchanging nature of the stable structures which frame these events*. Some areas of society show *sta-*

bility despite current political, cultural or economic moment, some areas of social practice correspondingly reflect *instability*. Whether texts present stability or instability, the basic vocabulary to describe the society is constantly in a changing process. Sometimes these subtle changes go unnoticed for a while and become part of common sense, the normal way of conceiving and interpreting things.

I have taken the view that the editorials conceive and form politically and economically motivated ideas and beliefs of the world, rather than state facts. The traditional dichotomy, “news versus views,” describes the role of the editorials as opinion-forming material of the press. Other terms can be used as appropriate: beliefs, values and theories, propositions, and ideology are part of the editorial writing. Editorials can be seen as ideological constructions in the sense that they usually focus on broader structures of a given society, social inequalities or political issues in which they take a normative or an intentional stance. They represent the *chronotopic ideas* of the time.⁶⁵ As a “voice of the region,” editorials provide *the ontological security by providing a sense of continuity and roots for the community*.

It can be said that the crisis is also constructed and *narrated* in the editorials with the help of certain discourses. *The narrative or script* of an editorial usually includes the *primary definers* (i.e. major participants and actors who have access to define the problem in public) of social problems, basic linguistic features of the editorials, the choice of vocabulary, and the *key values* that are manifested and formed in the specific regional system of representation. The audience is usually familiar with a particular pre-constructed “script” that is being evoked when a social phenomenon or a problem is described. The ideal interpreter is relied upon to fill in the gaps and construct a coherent and preferred meaning of the text.

Editorials are quite *genre-specific*. They follow the rules of editorials. Editorials have an important symbolic function, being at the core of the opinion component of the paper and implicitly supporting the claim that other sections, in contrast, are pure fact or report from reality. This strong symbolism of the editorials is often supported by layout and typology, usually being printed in the same position on the same page every day. Sometimes a special, eye-catching layout can be used or a suggestive logo may be printed above the editorial (Fowler 1991, 209). Editorials in the newspapers were usually not signed but the names of the editors-in-chief responsible for the section were printed above the editorials.

Editorials are also *multi-functional* in addressing multiple audiences.

They not only address the readers of a newspaper but also the national and regional political elite and decision-makers, other regions and also other media. They are widely read in ministries and the other editors-in-chief closely follow their colleagues and their opinions. In this journalistic triangle, meanings are targeted in quite definite manners to multiple recipients and readers.

The analysis of the editorials is based on three components: *description, interpretation and explanation*. In the analysis, linguistic properties are described, the relationship between interpretative processes of discursive practice is explored, the text is interpreted, and the relationship between discursive and social practice is explained.

Editorials can be quite diverse in their styles and textual strategies, and that is part of the point of this chapter, namely to suggest that they are to be seen as a distinctive voice for the newspaper. Therefore, I try to avoid unwarranted generalizations on editorials as a genre and merely focus on the “different voices” of the regions. I start by identifying a number of key questions in order to analyze discursive management techniques of crisis tendencies in regional newspapers:

- (i) How did different discourses and sets of values relevant to the construction of differences between regions appear in the studied editorials?
- (ii) What different kinds of frames and scripts can be identified in constructing the region in crisis (legitimation, rationality and motivation)?
- (iii) Are there region-specific elements constructing the discursive formation “depression?”

The analysis of the editorials is presented in a chronological and thematic order. This decision of presentation was pragmatic, and was made in order to give a contextualized picture to the reader of the studied time-span. A chronological and thematic presentation of each region separately also corresponds to the finding that the editorials displayed regional differences rather than similarities. The editorials, contrary to the news texts (see Chapter 8), appeared to be first and foremost the distinct voices of the region. These selected excerpts of key texts were seen to represent different “moments” of the crisis, where a discursive turn or typical features of certain discourses were apparent. The editorials are presented in their tempo-

ral order, which makes it possible to recognize different repertoires referring to system and identity crises.⁶⁶

7.2 South Finland: Risks and regional development

The representation of the economic crisis in the editorials of *ESS* can be divided into four fairly distinct phases. These phases were distinguished in the analysis by tracing new sets of concepts and key values emerging in the major discourses of the studied editorials (the title of the sub-section where each phase is discussed is included in parentheses). The first phase lasted from 1988 to 1989 (*First signs of the dysfunctions of the system*), the second from 1990 to 1992 (*From the logics of displacement to legitimation crisis*), the third from 1993 to 1995 (*The ditch-feeling and sensing the crisis*), and the last from 1996 to 1997 (*Crisis of collective identity*).

The earlier chapters provided some starting points for a more detailed analysis of the cultural grammar of the region. Päijät-Häme was profiled as a modern and urban milieu. The main themes on the news agenda were related to employment, regional economy, and regional politics. However, *region*, in relation to *ESS*, should be understood in another sense than in relation to the other newspapers studied. Important topics on the news agenda were urban risks, traffic and networks, refugees, and education (see Chapter 6). Also, the newspaper's spatial and symbolic structuration was powerfully formed by the region's proximity to Helsinki, as the editor-in-chief pointed out. The distance between the Lahti and Helsinki is only approximately 100 kilometers. This sometimes complicated the relationship between "the satellite city" Lahti with the capital city, Helsinki being one of the most observed themes throughout the period. A clarifying description describing this condition was the editor-in-chief's comment on the spatial location of *ESS* and Lahti:

"I would say that this is where Väyrynen's Finland begins.⁶⁷ I have used this description when we have had foreign guests and guests from Helsinki. When we are standing on top of the *Suurmäki* ('Big Hill') and first look to the south, the distance is one hundred kilometers. Everyone is staring towards the south and thinking how awfully far away Helsinki is. Then I turn around 180 degrees and say that from here on-

wards there is one thousand kilometers of Finland. And at this very point is the border in an EU referendum or presidential elections or whatever. Here is where traditional Finland or rural Finland starts.” (Jaakko Koskela, Editor-in-chief, *ESS*, 15.3.2000.)

The newspaper *ESS*'s manifestation of its spatial identity could be defined through the terms *political borderland* or *satellite identity*. On the one hand, the nearness of Helsinki created an effect that could be defined as a satellite conflict. During the earlier decades, when agricultural Finland was the target of regional policy, the Lahti area was “overlooked” because it was too close to the capital area. This is why the relative space or the distance between Helsinki and Lahti is usually represented through two different perspectives. On the one hand, Lahti is represented as a place that has an advantage by being close to a rapidly growing metropolis, Helsinki. On the other hand, “too close for comfort” -feelings are manifested in stories of inequality in regional politics. According to the newspaper, the political decision-makers were blindfolded and unable to see the region as a province, or that the region should be subsidized equally with those more peripheral regions.

Generally, regionalism and localism had begun to displace political ideology as early as in the first part of the century, but not until the 1980-90s had an accentuated regionalist role, effective in marketing the newspaper, followed the role of an ideological inclination in a majority of the regional newspapers. According to the editor-in-chief, *ESS* was not “regionally fanatic” in provincial issues, but preserved its commitment to regional business life and the well-being of the community.

Perhaps this is why *ESS* as a newspaper focused on urban questions, and more particular on questions concerning the city of Lahti. Perhaps that is why, throughout the studied period, urban problems were more on the agenda compared to questions concerning the countryside and rural problems.

7.2.1 First signs of the dysfunctions of the system

In 1988, while *ESS* was describing a quite static regional world, the first signs of disturbance began to emerge. The first social problem that appeared on the pages of *ESS* was the question of reductions and savings in public and health services. At first the reductions and cuts were not seen as prob-

lems of the society or the economic situation at large, but rather as being more situational and context-bound, i.e. as the problems of the city of Lahti and the financial difficulties of the municipalities.

First reductions (ESS, 14.2.1988)

This editorial linked to the discussion of the reductions of health services in Lahti.⁶⁸ The headline was typically declarative, but later in the text the rationality of the administration was questioned by questioning the rightfulness of priorities in savings and cuts. “*Have savings started from the wrong end? Or could there be reasons for similar decisions in other places without a deterioration of the services?*” were questions asked.

This interrogative editorial concluded with a consensual judgment that the recent changes are functional, if they do not cause trouble to the people of Lahti, and therefore perhaps there was need for more reductions in the public sector. Welfare services were seen as fatally important but the public sector was known to be inefficient. The argumentation was consensual and aimed at rational conclusions – *rationalization and the efficient use of resources*. After this editorial, it took almost a year before the public sector re-entered again on the editorial agenda of ESS.

Emergency help for day care (ESS, 21.6.1989)

In this early phase, *the script of the region* was based on assumptions of a functioning welfare system. During the first years studied, only a few actors were presented in the editorials, they were the State, municipal civil servants, authorities of the municipalities, and the people of Lahti. During that time, the first signs of a *system crisis* began to emerge. The economic system did not produce the required quantity of consumable values and the earlier positive development of the public sector became negative. The central ideas of the newspaper, promoted as solutions, were to *improve general conditions, restore economic soundness, and eliminate the weak spots*.

Rational thinking and rationalization – *how to make services more efficient and streamline the welfare structure of the State* – formed the edifice of the discourse attached to the problems of savings in the public sector. Management and reorganization was needed, but the issues of touching on the basic services were new, and therefore highly sensitive political issues. In one year, the consensual ethos of the newspaper had shifted to descriptions

of an “emergency” situation.

As early as 1988, the traditional notions of “the South and North” as definers of spatiality and politics were found on the editorial agenda. “Southness,” or the location of the region, was not attached to the idea of regional identity and traditions, but more to the discussion on cuts, regional economics, and dismantling the welfare state. This meant that South and North were defined in terms of welfare, and also the “borderland identity” of the region was at stake in the editorial:

The old notion revisited (ESS, 3.7.1988)

The country had traditionally been roughly defined as two blocks: the rich South and the poor North. The old idea had been consolidated through regional politics and common rhetoric. In the north there were still more problems in the form of unemployment, a shortage of housing and low income rate, whereas in the south the problems were insecurity and the number of crimes. These latter problems could be typically connected to the self image of the studied region, Päijät-Häme: a sense of insecurity and risks felt in the urban milieus. Richness and poorness were now defined anew and the question of regional inequality entered the picture.

The traditional notion of the wealthy South and the poor North has proved to be outlived. This conclusion was reached when welfare, for the first time, was measured with the help of meters measuring individuals’ welfare. Earlier, the basis that was used for comparison was the rate of industrialization and the demographic development. (ESS, 3.7.1988)

The newspaper presented regional policy as something that did not concern this region, as traditions did not either. The identity of the region was built on the self-portrait of a growing urban area, whereas regional policy was something that concerned regions in “rural Finland.” However, the rhetoric of the welfare state remained strong in the editorial.

The border between rural and urban was not as politicized as in other studied newspapers.⁶⁹ Problems of the countryside were only reflected in four editorials between the years 1988-1989. This type of discussion mostly drew on social and welfare consent, thus conflicting positions between the region and the capital were not constructed.

Typically, the headlines of *ESS* continued to be quite short and declarative.⁷⁰ At the beginning of the studied period, editorials as texts *were not explicitly in a dialogical position with the regional community*. The position that was reserved for their readers was most often defined as the role of municipal inhabitants, consumers or taxpayers. The voice of the editorials was declarative and the society was described in abstract terms mostly forming an administrative point of view on the issues.

All in all, the city of Lahti was the topic in most of the editorials, whereas rural issues were handled in only four editorials. Image marketing of the city was part of the marketing of the urban milieu and entrepreneurship. These were also the leading ideas in the newspaper's policy line and official program. *ESS* did not manifest "regional sentimentality" as the editor-in-chief pointed out in his interview (see Chapter 6). The city of Lahti was seen as an area bound by commercial activity and the good image and atmosphere had to be maintained and manufactured. *Efficiency in defining "right" priorities, market economy, success, economic thinking, vitality, and development* were key expressions of the vocabulary formed in the meaning-market.

Perhaps this is why within *ESS* and the Lahti region, *the urban society with its risks* was manufactured towards the end of the 1980s. The risk scenario of *ESS* included several different threats and risks of the region. The newspaper addressed its readers, strongly emphasizing self-reliance and the activity of the people. The community – and thereby region – that was described in the editorials was fragmented and based on individualism, whereas other newspapers at the time largely flagged collective values. Risks and threats described were usually related to individual threats as well; for example, they were diseases (e.g., contagious sexual diseases, cholesterol, and depression), drugs, crimes, and the lack of education. The urban milieu seemed to lack the continuance based on collectivism and traditionalism.

As a collective entity, the region was competing for the declining resources of the State. The administrative system could not be trusted and values were based on individualism and competition.

Without asking nobody offers (ESS, 4.11.1988)

A clear sign of the conflict with – and the loss of trust in – the political decision-makers appeared in October 1989. The tax of food created an outburst.

The State is eating from your table (ESS, 30.10.1989)

For the first time the conflict at the editorial level was constructed between the taxpayers and the State. This is notable, because legitimacy in a Finnish context has usually been based on trust between the regions (the citizens) and the ruling elite, situated in the capital (the government and political decision-making apparatus). This trust is based on a collective understanding that the interests of the regions and the citizens are heard in a rational discussion, and if a conflict is about to emerge these interests are reasonably in order to reach rational political consensus.

For a compromise to be justified in the Finnish context two conditions must be met; a balance of power among the parties involved should exist (in this case the citizens, the regions, and the State) and the negotiated interests should be generalizable throughout the society. The unity of interest is manifested more deeply, if the implication of more abstract values is included, such as cooperation, hard work and material equality among parties involved.

Editorials manifesting the loss of trust in the established consensual culture appeared as early as in 1989. The economy of Lahti had drifted into an economic confusion which was unknown to this region. With the appearance of functional weaknesses in the market and dysfunctional side effects of the political steering mechanisms, the basic ideology of fair exchange seemed to collapse. Re-coupling the economic system to the political system created an increased need for legitimacy and trust on the region's side was at stake.

Shame on you, decision-makers (ESS, 24.10.1989)

Economics in confusion (ESS, 24.10.1989)

Roughly speaking, the reason for this situation is that the city has lived beyond its limits during the entire 1980s and spent more than the taxes have taken in. In principle, the culprits are all citizens entitled to vote. They have the decision-makers they have chosen, and these again on their behalf, have chosen those who hold office according to their preference. (ESS, 24.10.1989)

The voice of the editorials was judgmental, and it was calling for the democratic responsibility of the decision-makers of the municipalities. The modality of the editorials was authoritative.⁷¹ In the economic system, there were clearly defined borders within which every citizen or collective (for example, the city of Lahti) should remain. The first editorial openly blamed the decision-makers whereas the second editorial was the first example of *logic of crisis displacement*: according to the editorials' line of argument, the culprits were in principle "all citizens entitled to vote." It was not the system that had failed but the voters were the ones to be blamed.

Key values expressed in the first two years and linked with the economy and administration, were *efficiency, profitability, urbanism, and internationalism*. General values referring to the people and mentality were *openness, vitality, development, and marketability*. Key concepts of the time were: *structural transformation, ability to compete, future development, and discipline in economy*. The mode of the dialogue of the newspaper was both managerial and paternal, in relation to the region and regional community.

The region was seen from the perspective of Lahti as an economic entity and the bound area of commercial activity. The newspaper took the role of a manager, governing the economics of the city. In this way the city of Lahti had a strong material and symbolic position in the newspaper's world.

7.2.2 *From the logic of displacement to legitimation crisis*

The year 1990 begun with news about the darkening economic front. One side of the discussion of well-being concerned the polarization between different groups of people. Alarmism was not yet let loose, but growing expenses of the municipalities caused fears that were manifested in the editorials.

Dysfunctions in welfare (ESS, 9.4.1990)

Cities in predicament (ESS, 9.4.1990)

Real Savings (ESS, 3.6.1990)

Painful elimination (ESS, 9.9.1991)

During the year 1991, discussion on trimmings, cuts and eliminations continued. Society was seen more and more as a system that had severe dysfunctions. The new concepts were included in the vocabulary of the

crisis: *financial accountability and realism in finances*. Rationality and pragmatics of the decision-makers was strongly emphasized and the mode of the editorials was mostly declarative and not dialogical. The dysfunctions of the system were monitored and reported, sometimes positive options were scrutinized, but usually the future was seen as threatening. Cities and municipalities rose as participants in the discussion about dismantling the welfare state.

The welfare state discussion was linked with the values of humanity. On opposite sides were, on the one hand, the public services that were expected to function and, on the other, the administration that was usually condemned as ineffective and expensive. Emotional and metaphorical expressions were more common and the region was formed and presented as a system with senses and feelings.

The legitimacy of the local authorities and administrative organs was harshly questioned and the value basis of the decision was questioned. The style of argumentation was more emotive than it had been a few years earlier. According to the editorials' line of argument, savings should be made by decreasing the number of people working in administration. Signs of a *rationality crisis* emerged in the judgmental argumentation concerning the back-and-forth – strategy of political decision-making.

Time of backing out (ESS, 23.9.1991)

When Finland had already stumbled into a hectic economic growth at the end of last year, many municipalities, Lahti and its neighbors among others, further developed their local benefits. The municipalities decided to pay a local addition to the small children's home care support. (ESS, 23.9.1991)

The first paragraph described the situation, in which the wrong decisions had been made. Tightness of the finances forced the municipalities to postpone the appropriated benefits. This was interpreted as a political fraud by the newspaper. Later in the fourth paragraph the newspaper wrote:

Cutting benefits and losing previously appropriated benefits is always more difficult than being without the benefits in the first place. (ESS, 23.9.1991)

This moral statement referred to *the rationality of cut downs*. The style of the editorial was argumentative and the “logics of cuts” was mainly focused on the relation between the State and the municipalities. Usually the key values attached to the early *legitimation crisis*, concerning State actions, were responsibility-irresponsibility, justice-injustice and realism-unrealism. These were activated when questioning the rationality that emerged in the editorials. The rhetoric of the welfare state revealed its perseverance by being the body around which the argumentation evolved with the start of the savings and cuts started at the municipal level.

In 1992, *ESS* continued the above described rhetoric by issuing the structure dismantle and savings of the public sector. The regional world then consisted more of psychological processes than of system dysfunctions. The definition of *crisis as a process* was manifested through metaphorical expressions of lightness and darkness. At first the crisis was framed as a mental process, in which the economic crisis could be sensed and felt by the people of the region, as well as by the region itself, rather than in terms of abstract elements of state economics and financial constraints. A typical example of this was that a vocabulary describing sensing and feeling was immersed in the editorials in 1992.

Some light in sight (ESS, 3.8.1992).

In the whirlpool of the deepest depression even the smallest glimpse of light *feels good*. Towards the end of the past week this piece of good news was received in two copies during the same day when recent statistics revealed that the tendency of starting new enterprises in Lahti had again turned upwards. At the same time, bankruptcies had also decreased in the entire Päijät-Häme area.

Fortunately, people that *dare to trust* entrepreneurship - and themselves can still be found. Although by starting up an enterprise one can only employ oneself, it is certainly a more meaningful option than to be depressed on the dole waiting for somebody to come and offer you a job. (*ESS, 3.8.1992, emphasis by the author*)

This reflected a certain turning point in framing the economic crisis, i.e., how the economic crisis was interpreted. When the process continued its abstractness disappeared, and it was presented as an identity crisis felt collectively or through experiences of individuals. New key words attached to entrepreneurship and depression were manifested as *mental and psychological processes* such as: feel good, be depressed or dare to trust. The script of crisis had turned to emphasize the collective identity where *trust and distrust* and *security and insecurity* were the key values of the community. Economic crisis was now about feeling and sensing the crisis as much as it was an issue of material resources.

The shift from emphasizing passivity and helplessness towards activity in the modes of writing emerged during 1992. Editorials began to highlight new values like *responsibility*, *self-reliance*, and *industriousness*. The editorials began to address people in a new way, encouraging pragmatism in the sense of adapting to the situation. The claim that taxpayers had been living over their budget represented a form of managerialism and logic of displacement, which also could be seen as a way to govern the public discussion. At this time, two discourses were struggling with each other: one referring to the value of self-reliance in the form of individual activity in contrast to passivity and the other one based on regional equality (relating to the trust in equal help from the State, the government and decision-makers). The lack of such trust was directly related to the emergence of a legitimization crisis.

The Finnish *markka* was allowed to float during 1992. This was a controversial act that received both praise and criticism in the editorials. The following editorial was typical of the time:

Time for action (ESS, 10.9.1992)

Unfortunately, there are no signs of new thinking. In the budget discussion that was started in Parliament, the parliamentary groups of the government parties claimed that international development is the major reason for the economic difficulties of Finland. This kind of statement raises the question of whether there is any hope of change of politics. Are Finnish politicians really disclaiming all responsibility, when culprits are being sought for the country's state of bankrupt-

cy? If this is so, much needed structural renovations can not be foreseen – because no mistakes have been made.
(ESS, 10.9.1992)

In this excerpt, the social and historical circumstances are no longer stable, and “*new*” *political thinking* is contrasted with “*old*” *political thinking*. Questioning sensibility in the behavior of the politicians and accusing short-sightedness in their actions indicates a loss of trust and marks the emergence of a rationality crisis. The use of the word “culprit” is noticeable. The realm of the crisis consisted of those participants who were bound to suffer and those who were culprits responsible causing the suffering of innocent people. A new demand for responsibility was part of the legitimization crisis. The citizens were seen as powerless, and what was even more threatening; the politicians seemed to be powerless as well, or at least reluctant to act.

7.2.3 *The ditch, feeling and sensing the crisis*

In the light of national as well as regional GDPs, economically the year 1993 was one of the most difficult years of the depression period. During this year, the voice of the editorials was that of a collective citizen. This marked a discursive belonging to the community that was strengthened with a new set of values – joint responsibility and discretion towards the excluded groups, for example the unemployed.

Discretion is needed (ESS, 10.1.1993)

In 1993, the lay-offs in the public sector reappeared on the news agenda. This phenomenon was new and strategies to reduce municipal workers had not been thought through until the situation became acute. The editorials raised questions about how the lay-offs should be handled and on what grounds decisions related to the reductions of the personnel should be made. They also emphasized discretion and sensitivity in relation to those who were employed. Work, as a core value of Finnish society, was strongly manifested. The fate and the future of the public sector were questioned intensively. The former ethical tone in the discourse concerning those excluded (the unemployed) was replaced by a more pragmatic discourse drawing on

the efficient use of resources. However, against the background that pragmatism now became accepted as a mode of action, consensus over policy could be reached and needed no discussion:

In Lahti, a common consensus that the city should reduce its personnel costs supposedly prevails. There also seems to be general agreement that, during the past good years, the city's organizations swelled more than was necessary. Now this is necessary and possible to disentangle. (ESS, 10.1.1993)

Economic scarcity had become a reality, and the issues were too complex and sensitive to address through earlier welfare state rhetoric. *The pragmatism linked to the dismantling of the welfare state and the consensual attitude towards the obligatory cuts was replacing the earlier rhetoric of conservation and preservation of the structures.*

A willingness to preserve the rhetoric of the welfare state still prevailed and the mode of rhetoric outlived the actual services, at least to the same extent as earlier. It seemed as if the economic recession had offered an ideal and "natural" reason or "excuse" to carry out changes that had been planned much earlier, but were hard to justify politically. At this time, the editorials gave an impression that there was ambiguity between accepting the necessity of such changes and the attempts to restore the old order on the basis of arguments about the need to save the welfare state and its basic services, despite its problems. The argumentation could be divided into emphasizing *flexibility* and the argumentation emphasizing *resistance*. The first can be exemplified through the following editorial:

From depression to rapid growth (ESS, 30.3.1993)

(...) Without a doubt, it is right that someone far-sighted enough is able to reflect upon future development, and is even able to see positive signs in it. Between the improvement dimly visible on the horizon and the present economic crisis, there are many possibilities for errors. The government, the heads of the trade unions, and the decision-makers in firms do not have much room for action. Even small failures can push the economy into an even worse state.
(ESS, 30.3.1993)

Although in the editors-in-chief – as noted in Chapter 6 – were willing to paint a more positive picture, at least *ESS* was careful in its future projections. The dominant mode of thinking was still that society was a system that could be managed through the right kind of government, and mistakes that had been made were due to unprofessional management and short-sightedness. The emphasis on flexibility was based on neo-liberal thinking and could be seen as part of the discourse on the efficient use of resources. It was claimed that the Finnish labor market was too inflexible and caused mass unemployment. Flexibility in the work force was offered as a medicine.

Elements of the *resistance drawing from the discourse of regional equality* against neo-liberal thinking were again detected in the following editorial. Although *ESS* was strongly on the side of regional business, the resistance against neo-liberal thinking and the backing up of the rhetoric of social welfare was stronger at times.

Alternative to lay-offs (ESS, 28.6.1993)

The last paragraph of the text reads:

The management of the Office motivates the avoidance of lay-offs with the argument that the employed should be kept on reserve so that there would be enough people in the future, when the city can afford to continue construction in the old way. (*ESS, 28.6.1993*)

During 1994, Finnish export began to rise. *Signs of joint responsibility* could be linked to these first economic signs of a brightening economic future. The unemployment rate, however, was still high, though the Lahti region had reached its peak in 1993.

The State had begun to stimulate export firms with subsidies, and the common belief was that a growing export would decrease unemployment. The temporal orientation was towards the future and prospects seemed better. Lahti as a community was in focus, representing the regions as whole.

Soon there will be jobs (ESS, 27.2.1994)

The years of torment in Lahti (ESS, 1.3.1994)

Nothing for Lahti (ESS, 8.9.1994)

Signs of joint responsibility (ESS, 18.9.1994)

A discourse of *joint responsibility* emerged as part of the collective ethics of the region. The ideology of the editorials was based on a dichotomy between “responsibility” and “irresponsibility.” The *discourse of joint responsibility* included solidarity, willingness towards unified efforts, the common good, a sense of community, joint responsibility, joint liability, joint interests, a sense of solidarity, and a feeling of being allied. “It is in our mutual interest” became a slogan to realize the common goodwill within the region. The city of Lahti was seen as the heart of the community. Soothing belongingness to the urban milieu was part of the boosting of the community spirit.

In describing the *legitimation crisis* of the time, it should be kept in mind that it was impossible for the State to take over the cultural system. Before the economic crisis, State planning was extended to social areas that had earlier been taken for granted. Now most of the State’s task in the Finnish context had been re-directed to the municipalities. These actions were legitimized by scarce resources which were becoming ever scarcer at the administrative level. The emergence of a legitimation crisis shows that the success of the civil and welfare society, in the last instance, was connected to values and moral orders (norms) that were linked to the success of the (welfare) system. These values and moral orders were formed in several distinct regional meaning-markets.

In 1995, the *motivation crisis* became acute. We can speak of a motivation crisis when the socio-cultural system changes in such a way that it becomes dysfunctional for the State and for the people. In 1995, the worst had passed unemployment still remained high in the region. One interesting detail in constructing the legitimation was the *discourse of joint responsibility*.

The State had transferred the responsibility of maintaining and providing welfare services to the cities and municipalities. The capital area was identified as the “governmental area,” that was the fastest growing area in the European Union, whereas other cities and regions were competing within the system. This trend went along with privatism and fading citizenship. The editorials expressed worries over social exclusion and decreasing stability among the young people.

Unemployment does not ease off (ESS, 19.1.1995)

In December, well over twenty percent, that is every fifth, of working age Finns were unemployed. The situation in Lahti was even worse: according to the statistics from December, every fourth person of working age was unemployed. The numbers are serious, so serious that it has not yet been understood.

(...) The unemployment is reducing tax income and is augmenting the expenditures of the State. In the long term, the money is not the crucial problem. The topmost worry will be how to maintain the social stability when a big part of the young graduated people will remain without a steady job. Life after studies will not begin as they expected. The society promised but did not produce. The perspectives will become gloomy and mental virility will diminish. Life will become the life of an outsider; one's own means of control are felt to be few in number. (ESS, 19.1.1995)

The motivation crisis was seen as a failure of social engineering. Social consent was lacking among the people. Growth in the economy had diminished and the region was suffering from the backlash that was presented in the editorials. The social system was also letting down the young people. The editorial cited above clearly stated the fact that prevailing ideologies did not offer consolation or support to those facing risks related to their basic means of existence.

The implicit assumption of the editorial was that individuals feel a need for wholeness, and ideologies that can not offer clear future prospects are disconsolate. The fragmented view of the future that the editorial described presented no intuitive access to relations of solidarity within groups or between individuals.

The last paragraph of this editorial reads:

The traces of the whirlwind, which began in the national economy at the turn of the decade, will not be cleared for a long time. The nature and number of the greatest problems will only be seen after many years.

The world of the crisis was described in terms of natural catastrophes (whirlwinds, safe from the brink of the precipice). Problems caused by “natural” forces were things that could not have been avoided.

During 1995, the threats and risks that were felt also began to relate to other players in the system. Helsinki had been looked upon with ambivalence, but during this year the capital was seen clearly as a threat that was absorbing people, money and social capital from the other regions. Rarely was there a reflection of the general situation of the region, from a regional policy point of view, in the editorials of *ESS*. The gaze was introverted and other regions were hardly mentioned in the editorials. Only the biggest and most important city, Lahti was monitored intensively.

Saved from the brink of a precipice (ESS, 22.3.1995)

Helsinki is also a threat (ESS, 21.5.1995)

Scantiness continues in Lahti (ESS, 5.10.1995)

Key expressions of the time were *saving, discipline, social consent, sharing the work, citizen's responsibility and poverty. Social inclusion and belongingness* were emphasized as positive scenarios in contrast with the negative scenarios of *social exclusion and alienation*.

7.2.4 Crisis of collective identity

At the end of 1995, some events occurred that evoked collective shame as part of the motivation crisis. *ESS* reacted surprisingly strongly to food-help received from the European Union. The provincial pride in Southern Finland has historically been based on the wealth and productivity of the region that was based on industry and handicraft. It is perhaps against this background that support from the EU was seen both as degrading and shameful.

Food-help to Päijät-Häme (ESS, 18.12.1995)

Finland, and especially Päijät-Häme, are now officially poor. The rest of Europe is sending wheat, milk powder, butter, and meat as food-help to Finland.

[..] Finland was the only one of the new member countries that applied for food -help from the Union's charity funds.

On the basis of the unemployment rate and gross national product, Päijät-Häme is among the poorest in EU. Food-help was felt as degrading. The wealthy North is receiving grain from Europe to face their hunger! It feels like after the war, when care packages containing marbles were sent from America. (*ESS*, 18.12.1995)

Identity crisis was strongly felt and emotionally expressed in this particular editorial. The self-reliance of the nation had failed and the poorness of the country was an official fact within the European Union. The identity crisis was broadened to describe the whole national being and its collective shame. This was felt especially when the wealthy North began receiving food from the EU. In other newspapers as well this event recalled memories from the past and was compared with the hardship just after WWII. An interesting detail was the notion that, when the nation was not doing so well, the individuals and citizens were constructed as a *we-as-a-nation* entity. This would easily lead to assumptions that the collective faith in the nation-state – though not in the administrative and political system functioning as a part of the State – was strong throughout the ten-year period. The newspaper *ESS* was also an active actor and a sensitive modifier of the meaning-market of the region's business and trade.

During 1996, the discourse of collective shame and pride continued. Collective forms of identity construction included discursive aspects of nationalism, in the frame of a regional/European dialectic. But this struggle also included the calculated collective and individual constructions of a regional image, which was more or less pervasive in the contemporary consumer's society. Finding an identity might be crucial to ontological security, but it was also needed for business purposes.

You can't get any lower (*ESS*, 20.1.1996)

Tight times are back? (*ESS*, 21.4.1996)

Four- years' wait (*ESS*, 15.8.1996)

One has to dare (*ESS*, 11.10.1996)

The logics of displacement, that emerged from time to time, were notable. Again the citizens and voters were blamed, not the decision-makers, system or institutions. This could be interpreted as a part of normative and

moral behavior. The newspaper acted as a role of responsible citizen, harshly judging the neo-conservatism of the public.

Return to the Old Good Times (ESS, 6.11.1996)

Obviously the memories of both citizens and politicians concerning the last decade have already grown sweeter with time. Perhaps there is the hope attached to these memories that when the old decision-makers are chosen, the good old times will return as well. (ESS, 6.11.1996)

During 1997, the discussion focused almost entirely on economics. The invisible hand of economy formed the conditions and constraints of political actions, and therefore the key values were more pragmatic than ethical or moral in nature. It was as if every other social domain would have been put aside and the economic problems in the province, city, and region were at the fore. Using resources effectively and acting for one's own luck were the two themes along which the reconstructing or dismantling of the welfare state was presented in the editorials. A discourse of efficient use of resources (competition, structural competitiveness, labor market flexibility, supply-side intervention to enhance competitiveness, subordination of welfare to the exigencies of competitiveness and flexibility, stimulation of flexibility and skills/technology diversity, workfare state) was gaining space in the regional meaning-market.

Towards the end of the period the issues of the re-allocated and decentralized responsibilities of the State strengthened as a part of public argumentation. The crisis no longer had a position within the political realm. The discourse was purely economical, drawing attention to the importance of financial discipline. When the arguments at the beginning of the year were still fiery, the last half of the year was filled with hopeful and positive messages.

Harsh awakening to reality (ESS, 27.2.1997)

Hopefully unnecessary fear (ESS, 3.2.1997)

System-oriented headlines now changed into literal and metaphorical expressions of a "reality" that was full of threats and fears. The external world was described as reality and the past was a dream – or more likely a

nightmare. The nodal point in *ESS*'s case was clearly the city of Lahti. Lahti as a marketplace was seen as important, not only to the people of Päijät-Häme.

The success of Lahti affects the whole country
(*ESS*, 7.8.1997)

The visit of Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, in Lahti on Friday shows that the future of the Lahti region is not solely an issue of the people of Lahti. With its own share, the state is willing to promote a development that helps Lahti to solve its exceptionally big structural problems.

Prime Minister Lipponen noted that the problems of Lahti are exceptionally difficult – the structural transformation of industry has wiped out more jobs in Lahti than in many other cities. In addition, since there are exceptionally few administrative state jobs in Lahti, softening buffers have not been available. Not even now are there any factors in sight that would bring new big employers to Lahti. The casting of a new industrial basis is a difficult and time-demanding job.

The message at the end of the editorial is clear:

With its own share, the State wants to participate in a development in which Lahti successfully solves its exceptionally great structural problems (*ESS*, 7.8.1997)

Activity had replaced passivity, which was a typical way of thinking in the earlier era. Individuals and actors – whether they were communal actors, cities or citizens – were competing in the same market selling themselves, their services and their labor force.

Päijät-Häme has to take its chance right now
(*ESS*, 1.10.1997)

The legitimation crisis did not cease towards the end of the studied period, although for a while the politically-motivated resistance had been un-

der the surface. On the contrary, the fierce resistance and questioning of the rationality of the decision-makers continued. The relation between the region and the State became more in conflict.

The State picks even the berries from the ground
(ESS, 15.11.1997)

The State is both brisk and thorough with regard to making the poor even poorer. A good example is a case recently published in *ESS*. The State applied a rule put in force in August, concerning the consequences of short term jobs on homecare support and unemployment benefits. (ESS, 15.11.1997)

In these editorials, elements of the rationality crisis surfaced. The editorial mixed elements from both the administrative and bureaucratic perspectives referring to the current unemployment policy. The political administrative system had limited planning and action capacity at the time and this capacity as used for reactive crisis avoidance. There were efforts to maintain the general consensus in political life, but the constant crisis of public finances caused severe suspicion in relation to the political decision-makers' ability to master the situation.

Such peculiar and expensive tricks have been invented to promote employment that it should not be impossible to put oneself in a lower-income family's position and allow at least short-term jobs without negative income effects.
(ESS, 15.11.1997)

The choice of nouns and adjectives, like "peculiar" and "tricks," is a discursive act of providing choices of meaning, potential to the readers that question the rationality of decision-making. *The rationality crisis* became visible because of the selective increase of taxes, the discernible pattern of priorities in their use, and the administrative performances related to this matter. The administrative performances were constituted to secure legitimacy, but the allocation of the available taxes did not help to avoid the crisis-ridden disturbances of economic growth.

Towards the end of the period positive future visions gained space in the editorials. Central themes were employment and exclusion from work life.

The responsibility of the State in helping the regions to return to economic soundness was also raised. Values that were lifted to the forefront were fairness in savings and openness in political decision-making.

Ice is melting in Päijät Häme (ESS, 19.4.1997)

The prospects of small and middle-range firms have been better than ever during the last decade. This is what April's business barometer indicates. This result is also significant because the last decade contained one of the most enormous booms in Finland's economic history. As was seen later, this was a mere bubble swelled by debts. The depression followed as a consequence of its bursting. This time the basis is more solid. Over-indebtedness is not threatening.

Self-reliance and independence were now assessed as almost universal values, in order to set a solid basis for future growth. Winter had passed, both literally and economically speaking, and the metaphorical headline indicated that the growing season had finally come.

7.2.5 Characteristics of the regional meaning-market in Etelä-Suomen Sanomat

In *ESS*, consensus in public spending was sought by appealing to quite a small range of values. These values were principally *an efficient use of resources, freedom of individual choice, and regional self-reliance*. In the editorials, consensus as such was usually expressed in terms of beliefs or values rather than facts.

The unity of interest of the regional readers was expressed as a set of values including, for example, co-operation, hard work, and adjusting to difficult circumstances. The regional script and continuity of everyday life was usually based on this set of values, provided by the regional system of representation actualized in the regional newspaper. For example, freedom of individual choice can be evoked to legitimize ranges of statements about public services, such as education in schools, hospital and healthcare services, and postal services.

In the following table, the key values and discourses drawn upon are linked with the key expressions that were used in connection to these values

and discourses. The table thus presents a summary of how the regional meaning-market is constructed in the editorials in *ESS*, according to the discursive elements, key values, and key concepts found in this analysis.

Table VIII. Key values and discursive elements of crises in *ESS*

Type of crisis	Key values (positive/negative values)	Discursive elements	Key concepts
Economic Crisis	Responsibility - irresponsibility (of the system)	Dismantling/preserving the welfare state	Financial crisis of the cities and municipalities, restoring economic soundness, managerialism
Legitimation Crisis	Legitimacy - illegitimacy; Compromise - conflict; Equality - inequality	Efficient use of resources; regional equality	Dismantling the welfare state; cuts and savings; "new political thinking"
Rationality Crisis	Rationality-irrationality; Realism-Ideology	Financial discipline; community spirit	cutting the public services; reorganization of administration; efficiency; result responsibility
Motivation Crisis	Trust-distrust; Firmness-weakness; Industriousness-idleness; Security - insecurity; Freedom of choice - uniformity	Self-reliance; individual and collective choice; Joint responsibility; collective shame; national whole	Poverty, security, shame and envy, culprits, trust in the future, alienation, risks, exclusion, common effort, social and political consent, community spirit

The editorials in *ESS* tended to be both argumentative and declarative. The vocabulary was often emotive and filled with opinions and moral judgments. Usually one or two paragraphs were included where the writer took a moral stance on the issue that was handled. These paragraphs often contained moral judgments, ideological statements, beliefs, hopes, and propositions for future strategies. From an interpretative point of view, these paragraphs were naturally the most interesting part of the editorials.⁷²

The legitimation crisis' first phase consisted of the failures and blunders

of the taxpayers. When the process continued, the culprits were found to be the political decision-makers. The economic system was seen as irresponsible and dysfunctional. The region was seen as an active economic actor and, mostly, the region (Päijät-Häme) as compared to other European regions, not to other Finnish regions. This can partly be explained with the change that took place in spatial categories during the 1990s. Perhaps for the first time regions were seen as actors in Europe, not only as sub-categories of nation-states.

The new political thinking comprised elements of the “efficient use of resources.” Although the voice of the newspaper was not openly in conflict with the Finnish State, the compromises the region was obliged to make were condemned as political failures at the national level.

ESS was constructing a depoliticized public sphere where the need for legitimation was basically reduced to two residual requirements. Civic privatism of the people had to be secured. Civic privatism, in this respect, could be defined as abstinence from political and public life, combined with an orientation to work ethics, leisure, and consumption that promoted suitable rewards within the system (for example security). These ideas were synthesized in the concept of freedom of individual choice.

The problems were not only seen as created by a failure in the mode of policymaking. The hard times were also a result of the steering problems of the regional and national administration. The region itself had to take the responsibility to steer the system back on track.

The responsibility of financing public commodities was re-allocated and put on the shoulders of the municipalities. Consequently, this resulted in the municipalities taking loans in order to fund the welfare structure. The ideological elements of neo-liberalism, at the beginning of the period, pointed in an individualistic direction, as values like freedom of choice, self-reliance, and adjusting oneself to duties and rights as a taxpayer and citizen were given particular salience in the editorials.

Over time, the neo-liberalistic tone of the editorials became transformed towards a tone of joint responsibility, emphasizing common spirit and system failure instead of responsibility and failure of the individual.

The basic elements of the regional meaning-market consisted of a set of values that were connected to certain discourses. These discourses were evolving mainly in the ethical domain, for example around the rhetoric of conserving the welfare state. An interesting detail was the strongly and collectively felt shame related to food support that the newspaper manifested

at the end of the studied period.

The city of Lahti and its development were in the core of the script or narrative of the editorials of *ESS*. Monitoring the development of the city broadened to describe the fate of the whole region. When defining problems, *ESS* mostly handled the problems of the public sector and the business life of Lahti. When offering new possibilities, the future was regarded as quite dark and the law of necessity was made a virtue by the newspaper.

The positioning of the readers varied in the editorials. Sometimes the readers were part of a “we”-position – the regional community, but more often the readers were referred to as citizens, taxpayers and consumers of the public services. There was no strong sense of regional tradition in the mode of addressing the readers. Following from this, the mode of addressing the readers was usually not dialogical. The tradition was more based on day-to-day pragmatics and on representations of obligations and compromises. The writer claimed control over the situation, and in this capacity spoke on behalf of the region. The position implies that the writer has total and definite knowledge of the state of affairs and its consequences.

7.3 West Finland: Farmers and entrepreneurs of Southern Ostrobothnia

In Southern Ostrobothnia there was no flagging of the economic boom of the 1980s, as could be seen in the Capital Region. On the contrary, already by the end of the 1980s the worsening economic prospects began to be highlighted in the editorials of *Ilkka*. On the editorial agenda there were traditional issues, like generation-shifts on farms, how to get money for elderly care, and how farmers would get along in the future. If we would not know that the headlines were from the end of the 1980s, it would be difficult to guess what time they reflected.

The discourse on the economic crisis also developed in *Ilkka* through four distinct phases. This could be detected in the editorials from the emergence of new values and choices of key concepts (the title of the sub-section where each phase is discussed is included in parentheses). The first phase lasted from 1988 to 1989 (*The legitimacy of the government*), the second from 1990 to 1993 (*Farmers are afraid*), the third from 1994 to 1995 (*Threats of the province: losing identity and motivation?*), and the last from 1996 to 1997 (*Ilkka in Eurolandia- regional re-definition*).

Throughout the crisis, the overall atmosphere was not totally pessimistic. The newspaper was tried to construct a hopeful atmosphere, although the editorials did not shy away from taking standpoints opposing the government policy lines. The news agenda in *Ilkka* can be grouped around four bigger themes that frequently entered the agenda. These were the regional economy, regional politics, employment, and agriculture, as was noted in the earlier chapter.

Some notable starting points for the analysis were presented in Chapter 6. First, in *Ilkka* provinciality was a contextual determinant that strongly constrained “everydayness.” *The concept of province* included regional people as a specific group with certain characteristics that were different from the other three regional communities. Province was also largely manifested as a physical space with the borders to which traditions and roots, i.e., ontological security, were attached.

Compared to *ESS*, *Ilkka* lacked the focus on urban problems and risks. In *Ilkka*’s world, no special place existed as Lahti was in *ESS*’s world. The topics and issues concerned all the people of the regional community.

7.3.1 *The legitimation of the government*

In *Ilkka*’s case, the legitimation crisis was already apparent in 1988. Regional policy evoked arguments against the political decision-making system. *Ilkka* identified itself as an opponent who was questioning the legitimacy basis of the government’s regional policy outlines. The conflict-ridden relationship with the government was not a surprise. The government was led mostly by social democrats, until the parliamentary elections of 1991 when a “blood stopping” electoral victory brought the Centre Party into power. The opposite roles in this legitimation crisis were positioned as Southern Ostrobothnia’s way of life (including business and trade) and the State’s policies that were decreasing these traditional means of living.

The government prepares cuts in subsidies to municipalities
(*Ilkka*, 16.5.1988)

The government mistreats the county of Vaasa
(*Ilkka*, 16.1.1988)

The relationship between the region and the national government was politically colored and in conflict. The implicit assumption, concerning the

nature of the relation, was that the State tried to subordinate the region and the region naturally resisted such efforts. A certain essentialism concerning the cultural identity and its basic features was expressed in the editorials:

The municipalities of South Ostrobothnia are stingy in allowing subsistence supports (Ilkka, 1.5.1988)

The myth of South Ostrobothnians being independent and getting along by themselves still persists today. Unfortunately, this impression has been also imprinted on the minds of the nation's decision-makers, who have society's wealth under their thumbs. An "independent person" usually gets less than the neighbor tribes that are in the same economic situation, but push themselves more to the fore.

...

There is nothing wrong in getting along on your own. An unfortunate feature, though, is that the exaggerated emphasis of this idea may produce difficulties for those who have problems in supporting themselves. (*Ilkka, 1.5.1988*)

I find particularly interesting the line of argumentation, that the characteristics of regional identity (presented in essentialistic terms) affect regional policy. This kind of discourse constitutes a "regional we" in terms of essentialism, emphasizing an ideological orientation towards political regionalism. The editorial states that the cultural climate of the region is not able to approve poverty, and confesses to the existence of poor people in the region.

The concept of an "independent person" (here emphasized by being expressed in the Ostrobothnian dialect as "*ittellisyy*") is rooted in an old cultural norm that is often associated with this particular region. The self-reliant personality type that gets along on his own has a distaste towards asking help from or trusting authorities. In *Ilkka*, this *discourse of self-reliance* was drawn on when handling a wide range of topics.

In general, the language in the editorials was not based on an abstract structure generating similar repertoires and discourses. On the contrary, the language in *Ilkka* was close to social practice where a "*collective subject*," referring to the people as a creator of a certain perspective, was formed. Regional discourses were active carriers of the etymological and socio-sym-

bolic development of a region (or the social system in general). This “*collective subject*,” people as carriers of a symbolic “map of sense and meaning,” needed some kind of coherent and collective identity. One sub-group of this collective was the farmers who were often referred to in the editorials’ projections of the regional meaning-market.

The deep dissatisfaction with the regional policies – and above government with the politicians of the – demonstrated a potential susceptibility of the regional public. It was clearly a part of the editorials’ discourse to identify and account for such experiences in terms of crisis.

The farms in turmoil need society’s support
(*Ilkka*, 12.5.1988)

The farms that are heavily indebted are a global problem. In Finland, the situation has come to a head during the last years. So-called crisis farms are estimated to have reached one tenth of all farms, that is five thousand farms. The compulsory auctions of farms are no longer rare and, for example, in South Ostrobothnia there is a fear that 150 farms will eventually have to be auctioned off. (*Ilkka*, 12.5.1988)

The turmoil of the farms was defined as a global, not only a regional problem. It should be kept in mind that the positionalities of global and regional are always constructed discursively. In *Ilkka*, these positionalities were used, deployed, and appropriated by specific social forces at particular times for several purposes.

The particular problem of the province was made global in order to emphasize its political and regional weight. The region was seen as an economic entity that was a bounded area, also because of its agricultural activity. The idealized image prevailed of the farmers as the last warriors of the countryside.

The province itself was usually presented as the container of perfectly unified people living in (often mistreated) communities where there was a global solidarity towards the farmers. Solidarity, based on group belonging, was a sub-category of a strong sense of regional community and its way of life.

The values that had been precious for the region throughout its entire history – patriotic feelings, the Jaeger movement of the Civil War, willing-

ness to defend the region, entrepreneurship and advocacy of the rural way of life – were circulating as symbolic commodities of the regional meaning-market represented in the editorials. The general policy line of the newspaper towards the cabinet of the time was outlined in the following editorial:

Money cannot be found for the provinces
(*Ilkka*, 30.12.1988)

Although the cabinet tries to create an impression of being a ruler, that thinks equally of the whole nation's good, even with the best will its actions cannot be considered to stand by its words. It is well known that restraining the growth of the Capital region would be important primarily from the point of view of the provinces' revival, but actions in this direction have been quite modest. The demands from the red-black civil servants in Helsinki have been given more weight than the wishes of developing areas.⁷³

In such a situation, when bankruptcies are causing strains on society, more than one hundred municipalities have been forced to increase their tax rate, and the continuously growing migration takes people South, society should create possibilities to change the development. That has not been done. (*Ilkka*, 30.12.1988)

The rationality crisis was based on the dichotomy between the rulers and the ruled – and the issue was the fairness of governance. “The red-black body of civil servants” was a term that constructed a frontier between “them” (the politically unreliable administrative elite in the Capital) and “us” (the regional community), whether this applied to every member of the public or not.

These kinds of editorials were not hybrid textual compounds. Mostly, the editorials drew upon well-defined discursive elements of regional equality and fairness. What is notable is that *Ilkka* was speaking on behalf of all provinces against the prevailing focus on growth centers instead the on provincial development. The most common position of the editorial voice was a reference to the region as a “province”. Provinciality was a compound of political regionalism that was quite strong in *Ilkka* throughout the studied

period. Education and safeguarding the traditional means of life were seen as common political goals of the regional community. Farmers as a group were the ones whose future seemed most gloomy.

In *Ilkka's* case, the pre-constructed script was partly organized around the conflicting and oppositional relationship between the State and the province (region). Here we can follow a predictable sequence of events from rural poverty (problems in municipalities' budgets) to the cabinet's unfairness with big problems as a consequence. Evidently, the ideal provincial reader was supposed to fill the gaps and make implicit meanings explicit. Collectivism was a key value, and it was strongly emphasized over individualism and urbanism. Based on this construction, a coherent and meaningful moral order was provided by the regional meaning-market and it was constructed in *Ilkka*.

This script was usually taken for granted and the readers were positioned as an interpretative community within which it was easy to arrive at certain conclusions. The conflicting relationship of the newspaper towards the State and the political decision-makers demanded that the legitimacy of the rulers be constantly questioned. The axis passivity – activity took turns with more consensual ways of addressing the political elite, focusing more on the regional issues as economic or cultural entities.

*Also South Ostrobothnia needs to become internationalized
(Ilkka, 23.3.1988)*

“In the international market, success cannot be based solely on handicraft,” Lassila noted. Although the structure of the province's economic life is still, on the one hand, in primary production – in agriculture, specialized animal husbandry (dairy farming), fur farming – and on the other hand in the wood and metal industry that leans on traditional handwork, much else has developed in addition. (*Ilkka, 23.3.1988*)

The implicit realm of meanings related the development to the international markets. Structural transformation was required in order to adapt to the global market. The contextual variables of a region were reconstructed from the physical and economic context of the region. The key values related to collectivism in the form of pride in regional tradition. Thus, Finnishness was both static and undergoing change. The overall theme, both na-

tionally and regionally at the end of the 1980s, was internationalization.

The traditional resistance towards fast development and the eroding of values was strongly emphasized. In its strongest form, the province was understood as an organic entity that was able to sense and feel. The province and the provincial community were identified with one another and the discursive border between mentality and the physical region became blurred.

The province has confidence in itself (Ilkka, 19.10.1988)

The editorial's last paragraph reads:

South Ostrobothnia will not give in to a structural transformation. It wants to defend itself and say to those in power what kind of development the province favors. Although immediate changes will not come, the result of the election gives plenty to think about, both nationally and provincially, especially for the bourgeois parties of the government.

(Ilkka, 19.10.1988)

The vocabulary in this editorial reflected the era's regional policy in broader terms. "Structural transformation," provinces of development regions, export and marketing responsibility, and controlling the agricultural production were key concepts of the new policy lines of the government in power, that *Ilkka* opposed.

A certain provincial pride could be noticed in editorials where the region was defined and produced. The State was seen as an active actor that was "(mis) treating" the province. The regional tradition that was manifested in the editorials built on a quite stable structure of norms and values that consolidated the basis of the "regional script." The dialogical "we" that the newspaper provided to its readers constructed positions from which the readers could easily reach regionally constructed interpretations of the causes and consequences of the economic crisis.

Legitimation crisis theories often link questions of education with the people's motivation. In *Ilkka*, the question of education was more a question of the equal regional development of the country. In the late 1980s, questions of dispersed university education was a major issue. The existence of higher education in the region has traditionally been an important

tool of regional policy in order to activate and accumulate social capital within the region. As a heritage of this policyline Finland had a broad net of “province universities” that have had a major significance in developing their hosting regions.

Only education can dispel the gloomy outlook of the province (Ilkka, 30.11.1988)
Shortage of GPs can be removed only by increasing education (Ilkka, 4.1.1988)

One of the commodities of the regional meaning-market was certainly the self-development from which the value of education was one of the edifices of the national culture. One complaint of the newspaper was that the region lacked higher education of a magnitude similar to what, for example, made Joensuu in Northern Karelia and Rovaniemi in Lapland, to university cities with the vitality that a university and its students bring to the region. The labor market at that time was also sharply divided. There was a shortage of specialists with a university degree within the region, and at the same time the rate of unemployment started to rise.

7.3.2 “Farmers are afraid”

In 1990 and 1991, the re-allocated responsibility of the welfare services appeared on the editorial agenda. Municipalities were forced to take more responsibility for public services and the question of maintaining the welfare structure became acute.

The budget adds tax pressures in already poor municipalities (Ilkka, 26.8.1990)

Again a global framework evolved, now in describing the farmer’s position:

Farmers are afraid (Ilkka, 15.11.1990)

All over Europe and even in distant Japan, farmers have a great fear for their future. If the governments decide to remove the fences for the trade of agricultural products or es-

entially diminish them, the result will be the biggest upheaval in history. The countries that can maintain “supportless” production of food are scarce. Traditional European family farming can not manage this.

This type of a discursive dialectic, constructed through the opposite positions of globalization versus localization, was played out as part of a struggle between globally and nationally oriented states, institutions, and organizations, and particular groups within them. The province was seen as a collective actor that had feelings and worries concerning open competition and the global markets. Protectionism was part of the ideological basis through which the whole issue of agriculture and its future was seen in the newspaper.

In 1990, the shortage of highly educated labor was a fact in certain sectors (engineers, medical doctors) in Southern Ostrobothnia. Consequently, education was a constant theme in the editorials. The lack of educated labor was part of a broader issue relating to the need for more higher education in the region; in the literature of Finnish culture, reading and self-betterment through education has always played a crucial role. As already noted in the earlier chapters, questions relating to preferred themes were preferred and to values to be promoted in future projections were defined within the regional meaning-market.

Labor shortage forces new solutions (Ilkka, 8.6.1990)

When cuts and savings in the public sector had already gained space in *ESS*, *Ilkka* still focused on agricultural issues. Strong and emotive statements were frequently in use when *Ilkka* defended the farmers’ means of living. More than conserving the past, the active insistence of the editorial writer was projected against the changing political conditions due to EU integration. Farmers were seen as one group forming the conflict-laden relationship against the cabinet.

Does Finland need its own agriculture and food manufacturing production? (Ilkka, 16.5.1990)
Agriculture cannot be sacrificed to integration (Ilkka, 4.2.1990)

Vital agriculture is important to the provincial center
(*Ilkka*, 19.8.1991)

Economically, the relative position of South Ostrobothnia within the Finnish regional economy peaked at the beginning of the 1990s. A new economic rise began in 1994. The city of Seinäjoki was the only growth center within the region and was responsible for 40 percent of the total production within the region. Questions relating to the economic growth of the region were highly important to the newspaper, which was also one of the important actors regionally also from the vantage point of the business life.

During the first years of the 1990s, *questioning the rationality* of the decision-makers gained more space in the editorials. The depression was regarded as more than just a sectorized phenomenon of the economic system. It was also a threat to the historically and traditionally strong entrepreneurship of the region. Questions concerning the rationality and priorities of the cuts in the public sector were emphasized. In *Ilkka*, the rationality crisis usually concerned the question of irrational and rational political decisions – whether the decision-making center was able to make rational decisions in savings, cuts and so forth.

Discontinuation of a village school is rarely real savings
(*Ilkka*, 27.1.1992)

The last paragraph in this editorial reads:

In the municipalities and in the whole province people are worried about how the future of the countryside will turn out. At least at the moment municipalities should avoid reaching the kinds of solutions that will worsen the services and also the atmosphere. An empty school is usually a sign of the end of a decision-maker's faith. (*Ilkka*, 27.1.1992)

In the newspaper's world, the center of power, the government and the political elite, was Helsinki and the conflict situation gravitated between the capital area and the region. An ideological border between the rich people in the south of the country and the poor people of the provinces was con-

structed in the discussion of unfairness and the inequality of national governance.

Not enough State money for the province of Vaasa
(*Ilkka*, 10.12.1993)

(...) the rest of Finland supports the Capital region annually with billions and billions, because the central administration of the state is situated there, with offices and civil service departments funded by all taxpayers, whose employees pay their taxes to the municipalities in the Capital region.

(*Ilkka*, 10.12.1993)

This discourse of regional (in)equality was directed strongly against the tendency of centralization and the regional politics of the government, that started to move the focus towards urban areas and growth centers.

In some of the scripts, social and economic processes were presented without agents. In these processes, the poor get poorer, life gets harder, and things just happen (like natural disasters). *Ilkka* frequently took this position as a basic presumption, whereas the newspaper itself was presented as an active warrior resisting the evil cycle of things. This kind of script presented causally-linked events, devoid of human agency and beyond human control. However, once again, administrative divisions and political discussion of the self-governance of the province was given the broadest coverage on the editorial agenda.

7.3.3 *Threats of the province: Losing identity and motivation?*

The year 1994 was the moment of political decision-making for the whole nation. During that year, both the EU referendum and the presidential election took place in Finland. *Ilkka*'s point of view was clear. The newspaper took a strongly stance on behalf of the Centre Party's candidate. The entire region was seen to be under great threat and the presidential election was described by the newspaper as a fateful hour. The question of membership in the European Union was also linked with the presidential election. Only the Centre Party's policy line was not a threat to the country. The relations between the region and the government were no becoming overly political and, Finland's position in the new Europe was discussed in terms of domes-

tic politics.

The attitude towards European integration and cooperation was more than reserved. This could be easily explained by the typical cultural features describing the region: persistence against pressure from different systems (the State, the European Union) and a strong sense of independence. Other preserved features of the region were different kinds of community movements: a strong patriotic spirit, the religious dimension that originated from the evangelical crusade, the spirit of neighborly help (*talkoohenki, kökkähenki*), and a willingness to take part in different kinds of mass events (everything from revivalist evangelical meetings to tango music festivals).

The Province is threatened (Ilkka, 3.3. 1994)

The result of the EU integration negotiation is almost the worst possible for Southern Ostrobothnia. The result that was conceived will create confusion and insecurity among the farmers and those employed in food production. Before the national decisions are clear, thousands of southern Ostrobothnians do not know their future. (*Ilkka, 3.3. 1994*)

The “Province” as such was understood to exist both as a historical and a cultural construction in the consciousness of the inhabitants. In the discourse of the newspaper, the organization of the “province” was part of a symbolic structure emitting the operating power of linking all the entities of the region. By rhetorical techniques the province was constructed as a combination of regional people and the physical surrounding. The shared regional identity was constructed on a regional tradition that maintained collective stereotypes. Inclusion and exclusion practices were based on a combination of political and spatial inclusion of the regional public into one homogeneous entity.

The identity crisis of the time was partly projected through the themes of the future and the fate of agriculture and EU integration. In this sense, journalistic practice was laden with temporal inertia and traditions of the region, which broke away from functioning totally in the present tense, in “nowness.” The regional agenda and knowledge production evolved around different symbolic structures that were intertwined with the past and the history of the regions. In comparison with *ESS*, the lack of different modes of crises in *Ilkka* was notable.

Unemployment in the region reached its peak in 1993 and in 1994 the unemployment rate had already begun to decline. The government suffered from a loss of legitimation and the employment policy was condemned as a failure.

Unemployment starts to ease (Ilkka, 20.5.1994)

Now the struggle against unemployment must be made more effective. The resources of society have already increased slightly, unless thoughtless taxation populism is allowed to ruin the economics. It is time for considerate and focused revival actions, that is, investing in education and in better conditions for productive activities, for example by decreasing indirect labor costs. Pumping money into unfocused consumption, as suggested by the National Coalition Party with its agitation against income taxes, does not strengthen one's own basis of production and therefore does not create stable, healthy work. *(Ilkka, 20.5.1994)*

Although Finland was still struggling with massive unemployment, national pride and one of the formative values, independence, was manifested and attached to the discussion of the European integration. In *Ilkka's* EU statements one could detect manifestations of the stereotyped image of independence and the stubbornness of ordinary Finnish people, and their unwillingness to submit to authority, in this case to EU authorities.

The Union is bullying Finland, even during the very last meters (Ilkka, 15.10.1994)

Tomorrow the Finns will vote on the biggest issue during the history of their independence, joining the European Union. It is both grotesque and frightening that it is still not known what the conditions of Finnish integration are.

The most difficult problem has been agriculture. The question is a major topic because the future of the whole chain of food production and the service structure of the countryside, especially important to employment, depends on the solution of this question. *(Ilkka, 15.10.1994)*

Also, in the regional meaning-market, the dichotomy between the new and the old era (before and after depression) was visible. Although the tone was positive and the editorials emphasized political consensus, reflection, and presence of mind, they criticized the revitalizing policies supporting the export firms because these policies were not able to reduce the unemployment of the country or the regions. In the editorials of *Ilkka*, the culturally positive development had two possible dimensions: a healthy and an unhealthy dimension.

In *Ilkka*, more often than in the other newspapers, people were referred to as voters and citizens. This was done in connection with traditional and ideological textual devices. Region, solely as an economic entity, however, rarely entered the editorial agenda.

Unemployment is easing surely but slowly
(*Ilkka*, 17.11.1994)

The last paragraph of this editorial reads:

The basis of the economy is now in good shape. With consensus and presence of mind it would be possible to see the birth of new, healthy jobs considerably faster. Consequently, evil powers are now in a position to destroy the results of many years of efforts and turn the unemployment rate back to rising again. The ball is with (Prime Minister) Paavo Lipponen. (*Ilkka*, 17.11.1994)

Ilkka acted as a defender of the countryside. The newspaper was able to activate and mobilize larger societal and political sentiments of the society and political intentions. Matters relating to the countryside and agriculture were highly political issues, and one of the main tasks of the newspaper was to lift these issues onto the national political agenda.

An important appeal for the countryside
(*Ilkka*, 21.12.1995)

An appeal for a living countryside was given to President Martti Ahtisaari on Tuesday. The Appeal was signed by a group of influential people from different walks of life. The appeal was delivered by a delegation that was led by former

Foreign Minister and long-time director of MTK (The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners) Heikki Haavisto.

The appeal, initiated by the Centre Party, states that the fading vitality of the countryside would damage all of Finland. Nobody benefits from an emptying countryside. On the contrary, the birth of a new migration wave would add to the otherwise big problems of the big centers.

As the appeal indicates, the attitude towards the countryside is becoming more positive. But solely beautiful talk and appeals of the elite will not save the countryside and the people living and working there. Now is the last opportunity to wake up to notice that, alongside the vanishing countryside, a part of Finnish culture and way of life is also disappearing.
(*Ilkka*, 21.12.1995)

It has to be kept in mind that the political weight of the regions within the Finnish system was decreasing due to the migration. This is why, in a regional meaning-market as represented in *Ilkka*, the countryside was now defined as a central part of Finnish culture and way of life.

7.3.4 *Ilkka in Eurolandia – regional re-definition*

In *Ilkka*, editorials relating to the big social problems caused by the unemployment rate culminated in 1996. The editorials took the stance of the individuals, focusing on citizens' conditions and placing the responsibility of the phenomenon on the political elite. Industriousness of the individuals was not a solution to the problems of the system. This was clearly manifested in the following editorial:

Blaming the unemployed is wrong and dangerous
(*Ilkka*, 27.4.1996)

One of the worst mass unemployment situations in Europe is tormenting Finland for the fifth year in a row. Without essential improvement in employment, the vicious circle of the national and state economy cannot be

broken. Huge unemployment expenditures force the taxrate to remain high and this in turn prevents the recovery of the economy.

The severe danger of a deep and permanent polarization of the people into fortunate and unfortunate groups, is getting more real all the time. As the greatest part of the people have kept their jobs and even got significant wage increase – the higher the income, the more significant increase – many people can see no change in their environment. The unemployed are experienced as a distant burden on the economy, which only prevents an even bigger growth in the welfare system. (*Ilkka*, 27.4.1996)

The third paragraph of the editorial states:

First, no one can be held responsible for being unemployed. The explanations for the situation is broader; in addition to the errors of the domestic monetary policy, there was the end of the cold war, rapid integration into a Western free trade system and the present technological transition rolling all over the world. Southern Ostrobothnia and its center are especially hard hit by the reduction of agricultural production, that is speeding up because of the EU membership, the demands for cuts in the public sector forced by the EMU criteria and strong centralization that has been felt concretely by the center of the province through the disappearance of wholesale trade.

The responsibility of the individual was erased and transferred to the political system. This technique was part of a strongly emphasized collectivism and common responsibility that was grounded both on the idea of regional equality and the citizen's right to work irrespective of dwelling place.

In 1997, the economy had begun to recover in Southern Finland. In *Ilkka* editorials were also optimistic. The depression had been beaten but the relationship to the State and public funding was still problematic. *Ilkka* continued to scrutinize the Finnish set of values in its editorials.

Critical judgments on the European Union were frequently written and the preservation of agricultural livelihood was a constant source of worry.

In the editorials, the EU was constructed as a threat to Finnish rural areas in many ways. For example, through *the Natura -Program* (the program of environmental protection in European Union member states), landowners in the region and the Ministry of Environment were in conflict regarding to the European ideals of environmental protection. Although the value of the Finnish countryside was understood in general, the actions taken to preserve these values were far from the everyday life of the region.

The problems of the countryside begin to gain understanding – but actions are missing (Ilkka, 23.8.1996)

The major newspaper of the country, *Helsingin Sanomat*, has been seen as one of the most negative media in its attitudes towards agriculture and the countryside. From its ivory tower, the newspaper has presented Finnish agriculture as a pig kept for breeding with taxpayers' money, having no right to live. The influence of the newspaper in forming negative attitudes towards the countryside has been considerable during the past few years.

Recently the attitude of the newspaper, both on the news and editorial pages has become more neutral. Last Sunday, *Helsingin Sanomat* published a broad feature article presenting to the readers of the capital the daily life of remote rural areas.

In the story, the atmosphere of the countryside was presented as follows: “The countryside is required *Euroshape*, reforms and dynamism. Still at the same time, the blind machinery is cutting away the basic services necessary for everyday life because it is unable to see the whole picture. And this is not happening only in the rural areas, but also in the municipalities on the front lines.”

The argumentation relating to the countryside changed towards the end of the studied period. The countryside was seen more and more as a national problem that could not be left solely to party politics. According to the implicit line of argumentation, the capital area and the people from Southern Finland were thinking of the countryside as a parasite, although it was a cruel structural transformation that was deserting the outlying areas and

affecting the Finnish identity and its precious values and traditions. The discourse of the rural problems had shifted towards a discourse of collective choice – to restore the countryside and the national identity.

It is notable that the example above was quite conciliating in relation to the capital newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*. The biggest national newspaper was usually considered to negatively affect the overall political atmosphere related to the regions. That assumption also frequently evoked dissatisfaction among the regional newspapers. *Helsingin Sanomat* was believed to disseminate a negative image of the provinces and rural areas in order to dismantle the regional policy and shift the focus towards urban centers.

Values have softened – the countryside now appeals to everyone (Ilkka, 26.2.1997)

Optimism is coming back and the values of the Finns have softened, according to EVA's (*Centre for Finnish Business and Policy Studies*) report on Finnish values published yesterday. The insecurity that prevailed at the beginning of the decade is fading, and with that also the hegemony of the market forces. The report includes strong criticism towards the market economy. The majority of the respondents think that a market economy has been functioning too much at the mercy of big corporations and has placed money as its highest goal. But entrepreneurship is honored and the countryside is a resource. (*Ilkka, 26.2.1997*)

Somehow, the economy had recovered from the depression that had affected the whole nation, but when the “rug of depression” was pulled away, regional polarization and a structural transformation of the countryside, in the form of migrating people and vanishing jobs was uncovered. Regional differences were a new problem, but the problem belonged to the regions, not the state or the political system.

7.3.5 Characteristics of the regional meaning-market in Ilkka

Ilkka's editorials contained strong ideological and political elements. The concept of ideology could here be understood as “meaning in service of power” (Thompson 1995, 213). In this sense, ideologically laden meanings

were propositions that were voiced through implicit or explicit assumptions in texts. In *Ilkka's*, case they contributed in producing resistance and questioning the legitimacy of governmental decision-making.

The basic feature characterizing *Ilkka's* editorial style was *the problem-solution structure*. The problems were usually seen as consequences of actions that had been taken up by the State or cabinet. Explicitly, this structure of the editorials includes a critical stance towards the official policy line. The editorials were usually structured according to the following scheme: the problem (the obstacle in regional or social life) + the consequences of that problem + an evaluation of the actions. In the texts the complete picture of the province is usually seen in a political light.

In Table IX the key values and discourses drawn upon are linked with the key expressions used. The table presents a summary from the analysis of the editorials in *Ilkka*.

Table IX. Key values and discursive elements of crises in *Ilkka*

Type of crisis	Key values (positive/negative values)	Discursive elements	Key concepts
Economic Crisis	Equality - inequality	Regional (in)equality	Regional politics; poverty of regions; future of countryside and agriculture
Legitimation Crisis	Co-operation - confrontation; Compromise - conflict; Fairness-unfairness	Resistance; Displaced responsibility; consensus	Structural transformation; developmental areas; faith in politics; polarization; development projects; protest; dictation politics
Rationality Crisis	Rationality - irrationality; order - chaos	Fair governing; logics of cuttings; political priorities; collective choice	Problem municipalities, rationalization of administration
Motivation Crisis	Industriousness - idleness; collective ideology - privatism; firmness-weakness; self-reliance - dependency; traditionalism - anomies; security - insecurity	Value of self-reliance; joint efforts; rural problems; community spirit and regional 'we'	The poor of the regions; meaningful future; insecurity; lip service of the elite; distrust; migration; cultural identity; development lagging behind

The central principles of regional conservatism can be summarized as a centrally imposed moral authoritarianism enforcing the return to “traditional” values. This tradition must be naturally re-invented from time to time. The re-ascertainment of certain values in the “leading” discourses of the editorials concerns respect, discipline, and moral decency. The internal contradiction, related to the discussion on the dismantling of the welfare state, also emerged in the editorials of *Ilkka*. In this case, however, more prominence was given to the importance of regional equality than to the kind of individualistic argumentation that was found in *ESS*. The counter argument in *Ilkka* was related to the dependency culture that regional supports spawned, and to the traditional value of the self-reliant people of the region.

At a textual level, in *Ilkka* the representations of social and historical circumstances remained quite stable throughout the studied period. The editorials did not seem to be open to regional or national transformations. Verbs used related to dynamic actions, and the overall voice of the editorials was active but also conclusive. The mode of the editorials was mostly interrogative. Economic crisis had already been placed in the political domain and the legitimacy of the Government’s/State’s actions were questioned.

In *Ilkka*, the editorials can be seen as reflecting a *practice of “moral behavior,”* including reflexivity towards the region and society. Moral behavior can be defined as: reflecting upon regional circumstances, emphatically relating to the social problems that became acute in the form of mass unemployment, looking for the primary context of the problems, responsibility through forming options for development, and resisting political decisions that were seen as harmful to the collective.

This mode of “moral behavior” makes the texts highly emotive and argumentative. The *vocabulary* is often emotive, dramatizing the writer/speaker through strong feelings, judgments, and opinions. Evaluative adjectives and adverbs were frequently used, for example, *difficult, hard, and irresponsible*. The editorial narrative was based on the assumption that the State is threatening the independence and self-reliance of the region. This conflict between decision-makers and the region was based on a highly ideological and political assemblage of values and norms. The argumentation was based on the cultural history of the region and the political history of the newspaper.

The newspaper's editorials aimed at a dialogue with their readers; but even more, a dialogue was sought between the regional and national political decision-makers. In *Ilkka's* case the triadic relationships characterizing editorials as a genre was apparent. Generally, editorials are written for their public, as well as for other media and especially for the decision-making elite of the country. *The discourse of consensus* in *Ilkka* narrowed and hardened the discursive scope, taking the alleged interests of the people of the region as its point of departure. This discourse also saw regional interests as culturally and economically valid, but as threatened by a motley of antagonistic groups, such as the Helsinki area, other regions, idle and ignorant civil servants, and administrators.

The headlines in *Ilkka* were somewhat longer than in the other studied newspapers. The temporal mode was most often "now," using a present or future-oriented tense. The typical headline was declarative. For example "society" is responsible for helping the farmers out of a particular situation. The State is responsible for the faults made in monetary policy. The elements and actors in the headlines were usually sub-systems of the society (markets, administration, banking sector). A dialogue was sometimes constructed at a global level. *Ilkka* spoke on behalf of the region but also on behalf of agriculture as a livelihood globally.

Modality as a linguistic form denotes the insistence of a writer who has positioned him/herself as an authority. The writer/authority claims to forecast what will inevitably happen if his/her words are not taken into an account. This authority warns and leads the political decision-makers. Modality usually goes together with an ethical or moral vocabulary. *Generic statements* are typical in this connection. The statements are based on descriptions which are supposedly true portrayals of the entities they refer to. Editorials based on such generic statements claim total knowledge of a topic.

Stereotypes used in a newspaper are often based on social classifications of particular groups and people, using highly simplified and generalized signs. Implicitly or explicitly, these signs represent a set of values, judgments, and assumptions concerning the behavior and mental characteristics of the groups.

Ilkka frequently used stereotypes to identify shared and distinctive features of the regional people, as opposed to many other differences the people might have. Whilst these stereotypes may vary widely in terms of emotional appeal and intensity, they describe groups as committed to particular values and motivated by similar goals. This is how stereotypes encourage an

intuitive belief based on the underlying assumptions and thus play a central role in organizing common sense within a certain region and its regional meaning-market. This circulation of stereotypes naturally affects the ways in which conventions and codes of editorials are displayed.

This application, within the realm of regional newspapers, of regional tradition was often transformed into a cultural commodity. The function of this fragment of tradition and collective memory, for example, can be the usage of some kind of commemoration and its symbolic representations in media in order to create a sense of continuity. Through this ritual act of uniting an imagined, regional community, people are expected to lean on tradition in order to strengthen their ontological security and create continuity in their everyday lives. This discursive strategy was typical of the discourse apparent in the *Ilkka's* editorials.

7.4 East Finland: Northern Karelia and cultural borders

The editorials of *Karjalainen* can be divided into three distinct phases that could be detected from the emergence of new values and choices of key concepts (the title of the sub-section where each phase is discussed is included in parentheses): the first phase lasted from 1988 to 1990 (*Before crisis: the controlled structural transformation*), the second from 1991 to 1993 (*The darkening years: development areas and export-led growth*), and the last from 1994 to 1997 (*Slowly evolving economic growth*).

The overall atmosphere was not aggressive towards the ruling elite or policy implementing institutions or actors, i.e., the cabinet, the president or the party elite. Neither there was any clear dichotomy made between the wealthy South and the “development” regions. As a region, Northern Karelia reflected a strong provincial spirit. This spirit was easily detected, in the first years of the economic crisis, in editorials relating to administrative and policy questions that were manufactured through such concepts as “home province,” “roots,” and “cultural traditions.”

One explanation for this relatively consensual approach and “avoidance of depression mentality” could be the strong historically motivated provincial spirit that was often expressed in combination with the old stereotypes of “karelianism.” This public use of history was not totally a privilege of North Karelia – also other regions, especially Southern Ostrobothnia and Lapland, frequently used history to frame the present situation. Another

explanation for the consensus spirit of the newspaper could be the fact that the economic conditions were never fully “boosted” in this region. The “casino economy” that was seen in other parts of the country, and especially in Southern Finland, never reached Northern Karelia.

7.4.1 Where is the boost?

In 1988, the dominant overall theme in the editorials of *Karjalainen* was the uneven regional development of the country. The central social problem was the migration flow to the South. The project of “moving back home” was seen as a positive future prospect that could be actualized when the Helsinki area became saturated.

The future of outlying areas and territories was connected to a normative demand addressed to the “State” and the cabinet to take responsibility for the equal regional development of the country. The vocabulary chosen emphasized the position that was expressed by using the frame “development” region. Northern Karelia was seen as a periphery and a development area. Key values of the meaning-market were the equality between regions in the development of the public sector, taking care of the employment, and valuing traditions.

The vocabulary included terms like flexibility, activity, centralization, and effectivity. A reduction of the growth of Helsinki was seen as a medicine to allocate wealth in more equal and ethical manners. The newspaper’s voice was that of the collective citizen demanding a democratic policy-line for the region and the county. The newspaper maintained a “one nation” ideology, seeking consensus in relation to Helsinki.

*With flexible adjustments towards regional balance
(Karjalainen, 27.1.1988)*

The centralization of economic and administrative activities to the Helsinki region has biased the national balance in a way that is well-known and has caused problems in the Capital region relating to jobs, lodgings, and traffic. Some of the activities that have sought or seek to locate themselves in the region have obviously done so in order to maximize the profitability of the activities. Certainly many units located in the

Capital region would also succeed in other parts of the country, at least at the present level. (*Karjalainen*, 27.1.1988)

Equality was sought in developmental strategies between the regions, and centralization tendencies of the national administration were fiercely resisted. The first signs of a rationality crisis were seen in the newspaper during the summer of 1988. The regional newspapers, in general, are in a double position, guarding the interests of the region and at the same time also being a watch dog of the internal affairs of the region. *Karjalainen* carried out this latter task, as part of an active role of the newspaper, to eliminate the enemy within.

The newspaper, for example, was judgmental towards entrepreneurs of the region who had not reported subsidies they had received from the State. This negligence was defined as a tax fraud and was seen to damage other, honest entrepreneurs. In an editorial, *Karjalainen* expressed worry concerning the “misspent and wasted money” of the State. Tight financial discipline and managerialism were key ideas of the time. Also, regional development was expected to apply a tight line in financial matters.

Neglecting causes harm to many people

(*Karjalainen*, 19.6.1988)

A tight economic policy line is a condition for development

(*Karjalainen*, 9.11.1988)

Features in economic matters, such as discipline, self-control, honesty, and solid decisions coupled with a financially sound way of thinking were strongly emphasized in the editorials. Negative values, characteristic to the regional meaning-market as it appeared in *Karjalainen*, were dishonesty, intentional failures, and frauds that harmed the self-esteem of the provincial community and its faith in the future. In comparison to *Ilkka*, for example, the legitimation crisis was not very visible in the editorials of *Karjalainen*. Typical of the times was an emphasis on individual activity, the right attitude towards work, efforts, and discipline.

For decades, the agriculture and forest industry has been the backbone of regional economics. A great concern appeared throughout the period when these traditional means of living were described. Agriculture was seen as the basis for a strong spirit of entrepreneurship that was an essential feature of the region. This spirit was encouraged by the newspaper because

it was one of the most important symbolic commodities of the regional system of representation. This spirit was linked with the pride and cultural resourcefulness of the regional community.

Declining (agricultural) productivity affects employment
(Karjalainen, 15.7.1988)
Agricultural production must prepare for difficult years
(Karjalainen, 18.11.1988)

Agriculture and fur farming were the sectors of regional economics that evoked the first signs of economic crisis. In an editorial in 1989, *Karjalainen* suggested a new solution to the narrowed down regional conditions. The media took on the role of adding visibility to important regional issues. This could be understood as a form of seeking communicative consensus within the regional community, as well as in the national system, by pushing important topics to the mainstream news through the editorial agenda.

Big publicity as a (regional) resource (Karjalainen, 4.7.1989)

As was seen in Chapter 6, national mainstream media rarely used a regional angle in their news items. On the contrary, from the Capital vantage point the regional aspect was probably seen as politically hazardous. If it was not totally avoided, it was used quite sparsely. Generally, public discussion, in the national media related to the regions revolved around the declining population of the regions (migration to Southern Finland) and the failing generations shift on the farms.⁷⁴ Although the Helsinki area still enjoyed wide and flourishing expansion, the peripheral regions and provinces had entered a time of threatening economic visions.

The structural transformation, that had begun slowly in the southern parts of Finland, turned values (the importance to keep the whole country populated and served by a functioning infrastructure) from a geographical democracy to urban development of the (economically) fittest (the Helsinki area). During the “boost” of the late 80s, different values, such as internationalization, urbanization, Westernization, “yuppification,” and commodification of cultural traditions were, highly valued, at least in urban centers. Rural or peripheral romanticism did not arouse feelings of sympathy, as it did some years later, during the mid-90s.

In 1989, themes revolving around the attitudes towards the countryside

and agriculture began to take up more space on the editorial agenda. The employment situation was improving and the government was reflected positively in the public discussion. The competitive ability of the regional economy and marketability of the province and provincial products followed the spirit of the 1980s. For the first time, the privatization of public utilities and services of State-owned companies were openly suggested in the editorials.

In *Karjalainen's* writings about public services, the welfare state rhetoric evolved around the concept of the *consumer society*. “Consumption peaks” of human activity and social life were too much for the system that had been narrowed down.

Consumption peaks must be taken into account
(*Karjalainen, 14.3.1989*)

In Northern Karelia, early this spring, we have also seen that an insufficiency of social welfare services is not only the curse of Southern Finland. Even a small “balance dysfunction” can stir up the home help service system, that otherwise functions relatively well.

In human activity “consumption peaks” must also be taken into account, because they cannot be cut or the service output leveled according to an average or minimum level.

(*Karjalainen, 14.3.1989*)

The welfare and health services were seen more as commodities, that should meet the needs of the consumer’s market, than as the traditional “nanny state’s” safety net that guarantees social welfare when civic society does not function as expected.

New terms were included in the vocabulary, such as “image marketing” and “the commercial enterprise principle” (in Finnish, *liikelaitosperiaate*). The image of the province, when marketing the region as a tourist resort, and the image of the city of Joensuu gave strength to these types of argumentation, based on consumerism. “Image economy” was part of the heritage of the early eighties, when advertisement and market vocabulary slowly spread to almost every layer of social life.

The sentiments in Northern Karelia have always been largely patriotic. It was typical of Northern Karelia for culture to be conceived as a strong

proof of the vitality of the region. This kind of editorial “boost” of cultural resourcefulness was quite typical to these three studied newspapers that were published in the more peripheral parts of the country.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, the geopolitical situation changed, affecting the atmosphere in the border areas of Finland as well. The theme of the East border question was activated in *Karjalainen*. A bigger change, however, was the growth of a new mentality that this transformed power-balance nourished. The end of Finlandization triggered off many topics of discussion that had been banned earlier. The Karelia question was one of them. This kind of openness in discussing the Eastern border had not been possible earlier in Finnish newspapers.

Karjalainen was balancing regional insecurity by creating visions of Great Karelia, e.g., reconnecting geographically-ceded areas (The Soviet Republic of Karelia) to the Finnish nation-state. The discussion faded as the economic consequences of the incorporation with Finland of the poor Russian Karelia and its mainly Russian-speaking population became clear. The interest to continue this discussion faded even more as the economic situation on the Finnish side also grew worse.

In 1990, the big neighbor created fears. Plans to build nuclear plants on the Russian side, near the border, were felt collectively as a threat, and values like ecology and citizens’ will were strongly emphasized. The eastern neighbor was known historically to disregard such minor obstacles.

Honoring citizens’ will and ecology
(*Karjalainen*, 24.2.1990)

However, for the first time in Finnish post-war history, the public discourse was opened to statements concerning the Eastern border. *Karjalainen* nourished the spirit of the Winter War and kept up the discussion concerning the ceded areas. At a national level, the political elite tried to downplay the discussion, and it barely expanded from *Karjalainen* to other media. In those few cases when it did happen, arguments regarding the economically and catastrophically bad state of the Republic of Karelia (non-existing infrastructure or services) were put up front while referring to “*Realpolitik*.”

Karjalainen also reflected the commercial interests and ideas of tourist cooperation beyond the border that were invoked in the region. Karelia was still portrayed through the lenses of the Finnish culture’s birth cradle and

this cultural heritage was frequently evoked when possibilities for the region were described.

Karelian knowledge must be exported to the West
(Karjalainen, 28.5.1990)

The last paragraph of the editorial reads:

Old Karelian tradition and developing modern technology must be tied into one package that will be offered smoothly in all languages around the world. There have always been plenty of salesmen in Karelia. This could be a kind of forging of *Sampo* in modern times.⁷⁵

At that time the situation was quite confused in the Soviet Union. Finnish academics were offering to help their colleagues. The editorial attempted to restrain the enthusiasm.

Research cooperation cannot be “import dumping prices”
(Karjalainen, 6.9.1990)

The first symptoms of the new trend, transferring responsibility from the public sector, to the private sector, appeared as a harsh criticism of the efficiency of the public system. The newspaper promoted market discipline and efficiency. The voice of the newspaper was one of a responsible capitalist in a market economy. Public administration was required to meet the standards of results and profit responsibility of the private sector.

Public administration is lagging behind the development
(Karjalainen, 22.7.1990)

“Tsarist concept” of the public sector (a metaphor referring back to the times when Finland was under Russian rule) was compared to the “new concept” or “modern service-oriented concept.” Public administration and how civil servants were acting were considered out of date. The emerging values were creativity and a renewal of the society in which tendencies of privatizing public services and transforming the public sector in a more service-oriented direction were linked.

Already in this early phase, the rolling back of the frontiers of the welfare state, by increasing local responsibility in the care of the elderly and the elementary education, was clearly manifested in the editorials.

Individual initiative is an excellent feature
(*Karjalainen*, 14.10.1990)

The seeds of privatization and the importance of the third sector and individual initiative were realized in the regional meaning-market of *Karjalainen*. This was quite extraordinary and did not happen as clearly or as early as in the other studied newspapers. The scenario was approaching the consolidation of a new type of thinking in welfare rhetoric. Stressing individual initiative, shifting practical tasks of elderly care from the public sector to the semiprivate “third sector,” and – much later – the erosion of belief in the social system resulting in people taking private retirement pension insurances, began as a cultural shift as early as in 1990.

The withdrawal of the State from the public sector was seen as a positive trend. As in the other studied newspapers, though later, in its editorials, *Karjalainen* presented ideological justifications for introducing market discipline to promote competitiveness, efficiency, and modernization.

Karjalainen's attitude towards the State was not hostile, however. Here it differed from some of the other regional newspapers. A *neo-conservatism* that stemmed from strong cultural and national values prevailed, and the newspaper maintained a more fragile balance in its relationship with politicians, producers, and taxpayers than other newspapers.

The social reality of Northern Karelia was linked more to the changed situation in the Soviet Union than was the case in the other regions. Also, in its regional news, *Karjalainen* constantly covered its neighbor after the regime collapse. In other newspapers, the upheavals of the Soviet Union were documented as foreign news, not as domestic or regional issues. In *Karjalainen*, the EU was not at all an issue at all in 1990, whereas the other dailies in Finland had already entered the EU era. At that time, *Karjalainen* was still scaling the Northern Karelia region as a rural area within the nation. This area was assessed in relation to other areas in Finland. It was fading, as economic expansion and employment could not be secured for its people.

The potential of gaining logistic position in a future network for Eastern imports opened up speculations on national investments and new possibilities for the region as a node of communication routes between East and West.

Northern Karelia shows interest in Southern firms
(*Karjalainen*, 28.7.1990)

In addition to the discussion on privatization, commercial cooperation and new possibilities for the outlying territories within the region, the editorials presented a region suffering from the same problems as villages in Lapland. Faith in the future was deteriorating when cuts in public services were made in the outlying villages of the region.

Faith in the future should be maintained in the villages
(*Karjalainen*, 17.12.1990)

The political nature of territory of Northern Karelia was evident – the economic crisis was interpreted with the help of the changing geopolitical situation. Agricultural production and forest-based industries were generally seen as backward and low-productive sectors compared to high-tech industry, tourism and the service sector. The first signs of a legitimation crisis in Northern Karelia were evident – the crisis was interpreted with the help of a changing rhetoric, related to its neighboring relations with Russia, as well as with the internal structural transformation of the country.

7.4.2 Recession inhabits the mentality

In *Karjalainen*, 1991 was the turning point, as the newspaper began to reassess the development and planning concerning the area. A feeling of disparity and undemocratic regional policy could be identified in the editorials. The new vocabulary contained terms such as *projects*, *the accumulation of knowhow*, *the level of high tech* and *consultancy* – terms that were typical of the new mode of thinking where, due to the government's export driven politics, the concept of "one nation" began to be redefined into "several Finlands."

The county's development subsidies should be re-evaluated
(Karjalainen, 8.4.1991)
The dimensions of the strategy of the province
(Karjalainen, 3.6.1991)

An interesting transformation in interpreting the situation was the change from regarding the crisis as a purely economic phenomenon to regarding it as a “mental crisis.” The discourse that began to take up more space was about the privatization of the welfare services and displacement of the responsibility to the local level, although the nostalgia for the “old welfare state” remained. The economic crisis entered the regional level at the same time the State was moving responsibilities to the local level, transferring the growing pressures of responsibility to the administration of the municipalities.

At this time, the proliferation of the term “debt” and its synonyms entered the public discussion of crisis. Municipalities were *imprisoned in debts*, *debt relations* defined social relations, citizens entered *debtor's prison* and communities were *heavily indebted*. *Indebtedness* was temporally linked with the future, future plans, belief in the future, and future problems. This process revealed the bottom-line aversion towards being indebted, that was contrary to the basic cultural values typical of Finnish culture that of being *self-reliant* and *sovereign*. In some cases, the tone in *Karjalainen* was even more pessimistic:

Municipalities in the circle of debts - where do we get help?
(Karjalainen, 3.6.1991)
We cannot allow belief in entrepreneurship to be broken
(Karjalainen, 15.7.1991)

But, by the end of the year, a more hopeful tune won terrain:

With ambivalent feelings to new harvesting
(Karjalainen, 27.8.1991)
No specific reasons for Doomsday trombones
(Karjalainen, 12.9.1991)
Towards a life after recession (Karjalainen, 26.10.1991)
More effectiveness in regional politics
(Karjalainen, 15.11.1991)

The emphasis was laid on hope, visions, planning, and re-evaluation of the situation, mixed with a concrete concern for the financial problems that communities and municipalities faced, due to scanty trade and declining subsidies. Trust in national monetary politics and politicians, however, was decreasing.

The urge to *keep up the spirit* was a crucial part of the mentality in *Karjalainen*. This spirit was largely coupled with rural and countryside “free peasant” connotations. At a regional level, the double link to the addressees was easily read. Editorials were addressed to the subscribers, e.g., to the geographically-limited main distribution area – but to the political elite situated in the country’s capital as well. Economically, the year was a hard setback to the region. The rate of unemployment rose steeply. National budget cuts in regional infrastructure, alleged decreases in regional subsidies, a darkening horizon in regional business – all these were variables that contributed to a discursive “turning inward” process within the newspaper. Even the overall share of local material and news items decreased (see also Moring 2000d).⁷⁶ The greatest concern was the economy of the municipalities and the developmental backlash that the recession had created for rural development.

A natural remedy will be found for the recession
(*Karjalainen*, 26.10.1991)

A central component of how the crisis was constructed was a description of the national economy. The economy was also seen, in regional newspapers, purely financially, as entering an era in which earlier regional policy had become too costly and unaffordable for the State. The same argumentation was seen in other regional newspapers. Regional or provincial values were not in fashion as such – sympathizers were rare, although the Centre Party with its agrarian roots was in power. The Centre Party -dominated national politics faced severe difficulties that certainly did not help to maintain empathy for expansive regionalism.

Karjalainen – textually and metaphorically – treated the recession as a *disease* or a *natural catastrophe* that could be *cured* if only the *right remedy* could be found within the region. The economic crises and the region were mixed when symbolic meaning and interpretations of the economic crisis intertwined, juxtaposing economic events with overall mentality.

The economic crisis was seen *as a lesson* that forced people to reconsi-

der their values and priorities, and perhaps to abandon old and distorted values (e.g., greediness and pressures of constant performance). In *Karjalainen*, as in other newspapers, the rationality crisis (seen in the regional policy-making and a steering system that did not function), however, did not erode the collective regional unity and strong belief of common endurance.

Statistically speaking, the year 1992 was the darkest period in the national economy. The regions tried to manage with decreased subsidies, as well as with less sympathy towards agriculture. Also, the bank crisis became part of the discussion.

Reductions should not be made with eyes shut

(Karjalainen, 19.2.1992)

Banks must help those heavily in debt

(Karjalainen, 6.3.1992)

We should understand reductions but suppress them

(Karjalainen, 26.3.1992)

Partly, the regional discussions revolved around bigger questions and, for the first time, the depression was also seen as a “national” crisis, not only an economic crisis. Questions of how to administer regions and what the priorities of saving are, were common topics in the public discussion. It may seem paradoxical, but the discussion was linked with the economy of the State. The regional system of governing administrative provinces changed, partly because the old system was considered too ineffective.

When Finland was preparing its application for EU membership, the process was considered to be one of the most crucial ones during the history of the independent nation-state. The transformation of Finland into a “Europeanized” nation was raised in all regional newspapers. In *Karjalainen* this discussion grew stronger in 1992.

The discussion took on different critical shades in the studied regions, whereas the national daily, *Helsingin Sanomat*, flagged in favor of membership, almost without journalistic criticism (see Mörä 1999). In *Karjalainen*, the EU was seen as giving hope to transform the geopolitics between East and West, and once again the border question was activated in public discussion for a brief period.

Changes in Europe support a discussion of Karelia

(Karjalainen, 7.2.1992)

*Talking about Karelia reflects a new kind of openness
(Karjalainen, 4.7.1992)*

A clear difference, when compared to the other regions, was that for *Karjalainen* the EU, depression, and the question of the eastern border were linked. The political shift of Finland towards the West gave new justifications for statements in this direction, after a long period of Finlandization. The East and West within Finland also reflected differently the threats and possibilities of the EU. *Karjalainen* was strongly in favor, linking older foreign political questions to the EU option. In 1992, *Karjalainen* leaned on a national scale once again – but from a patriotic vantage-point. Nationalistic statements were mixed with hopes, visions, and fears concerning the European Union. In the discussion about the depression and its “remedies,” *Karjalainen* followed a consensual policy line and did not chase the “scapegoats” of depression.

*The depression will not ease up by blaming but with
efficient cooperation (Karjalainen, 12.11.1992)*

The strong nationalistic sentiments, manifested in the 1992 Independence Day editorial, well described the atmosphere and the script the depression coverage was based on.

*The value of national independence is emphasized in times
of turmoil (Karjalainen, 6.12.1992)*

The second paragraph reads:

By the end of the 1980s’ boost almost everything was for sale. The buyers had their pockets full of borrowed money. At that time, one imagined that money could be made without working and entrepreneurship was without risk and taking responsibility. Easily received foreign and domestic credits drove too many Finns into a vicious circle from which they are looking for an escape today.

In the daze of the boost, nationalism and Finnishness changed from an everyday reality into stately words in ceremonial speeches. We lived at a time when internationalizati-

on and selfishness were over-emphasized. The leading figures were yuppies moving capital in the world, not the slaves of everyday life – those who are mockingly called “rednecks” (*juntit*). The sudden rupture of the boost has forced every Finn to examine his values of life. (*Karjalainen, 6.12.1992*)

The depression was “a lesson to be learned” – a kind of development story of national unity and the people. In this story, old values are tested and new values are conceived.

In 1993 there was a slight rise in the national economy. In regional economics, the rise was not seen. The discussion on the EU membership gave a boost to lightening visions. Northern Karelia and *Karjalainen* were filled with strategic developmental openings in various areas. Dismantling the welfare state had had its consequences and they were easily seen in the area. Closing down schools, post offices, and stores in villages caused images of rural areas being deserted. *Karjalainen* was returning from the national scale to the regional scale, bringing problems of the periphery into the discussion. The EU was still positively seen, in terms of Europeanization, as strengthening Finland’s Western connections.

Closing the school doors has multi-dimensional effects
(*Karjalainen, 15.8.1993*)

Unemployment rose to a level in the region not experienced earlier. Simultaneously, the GDP reached its lowest level – relative to other regions – during the ten-year period. Compared to the whole country, the outlying regions felt the consequences of the downturn more markedly. Long-time planning and presence of mind were emphasized in the editorials.

Hard everyday life in Depression-Finland is more marked in provinces (*Karjalainen, 24.9.1993*)

The dreary everyday life of Depression Finland appears gloomier month by month throughout the country. Its toughness is even more pronounced in the provinces, among others in Northern Karelia. The number of the long-term unemployed is growing. Lay-offs continue and are more frequent. In addition to firms, reduction activities in civil service departments

and consolidations of local government areas are darkening the forecasts for the near future. (*Karjalainen*, 24.9.1993)

A distinct feature in *Karjalainen* was the turn inwards – cures and tools were now sought within the area. During 1993, people were considered not only as part of the region, but also as part of the larger geographical community, with their own specific needs and strengths.

7.4.3 *Slowly evolving economic growth*

In *Karjalainen*, the new European options brought hope to the regional discussion - they were seen as facilitating a stronger economy for the national economy, but also as a supra-national tool to maintain the balance between urban centers and rural areas.

Northern Karelia should benefit from options of EU membership in (Karjalainen, 3.3.1994)

General figures in the GDP showed signs of a positive upturn. Employment in the region was improving slightly. This loosened up the atmosphere and reflections on the future in the region.

*Spring lights in Northern Karelia (Karjalainen, 3.3.1994),
Finland is entering a new period of growth
(Karjalainen, 16.4.1994)
The signs of new growth should be nourished in Northern
Karelia (Karjalainen, 1.5.1994)*

As in the other dailies, EU issues appeared strongly on the editorial agenda at this time. However, *Karjalainen* saw the European Union as an option, not as a dystopia. The difference, for example, between *Ilkka* and *Karjalainen* - though both are to a great extent provincial – is in their spatial outlooks. Southern Ostrobothnia has not been a geopolitically sensitive territory. Thus, the EU was seen mainly as a deadend for those areas of agriculture that could not produce effectively enough. Northern Karelia mentally kept an open door to Europe, and the autonomous position of the Karelian farmer was never questioned by the newspaper.

The European scale fitting with the strong patriotic and provincial spir-

it, gave new credibility to the old vision of Finland as a borderland linking Western countries and the East. More than ever, Finland was part of the West. The State had patronized Northern Karelia earlier and due to this regional potential was seen in the “Europe of the Regions,” and thus was highly welcomed. The EU was also seen purely in economic terms – possibly giving more support to this specific area.

The will of public discussion should be guided to reflect upon Finnish action in the European Union (Karjalainen, 5.1.1994)

Representation of Northern Karelia in the EU and in the Republic of Karelia (Karjalainen, 4.1.1996)

Following a referendum in the autumn of 1994, Finland became a member in the EU in 1995. Consequently, interpretations of the future, within a larger context dominated by the European Union, entered the regional meaning-market. Northern Karelia was part of the nation, but more than that, it was a region that could get back-up from other regions in Europe. More than a national question, the question of life in rural areas was framed as a dichotomy between the center where the political elite and decision-makers were, and the rural areas and peripheries, with their people brought up in a peasant tradition. In *Karjalainen*, the opposition to budget cuts rose as well. The nation as an organic super-metaphor was now economic, not cultural by nature.

It should be kept in mind that social systems, such as regions, can build collective identities, as well as lose them. When this happens, the interpretative systems that continuously construct identities lose their social integrative power. In addition to the effect on the social system itself, this serves as an indicator of a collapse of the social system. In *Karjalainen*, the region was often described as an organic whole, a cultural and social unity that felt and sensed in a human way.

*Difficult for border regions to find sympathizers in budget negotiations (Karjalainen, 7.9.1994),
Rural areas will fade if decision-makers do not become acquainted with research results (Karjalainen, 13.1.1995)*

Northern Karelia must build a positive atmosphere towards development (Karjalainen, 13.12.1995)

The editorials in *Karjalainen* framed problems more as “Finnish”, on a “national” scale, whereas regional issues were framed as developmental questions. Paradoxically, in *Karjalainen* this strengthened expressions of patriotic nationalism. The relation between the region and the State (in regional policy and center-periphery issues) was activated as an issue in the editorials of *Karjalainen*. In this context, the State, though not the nation itself, was seen in a negative light. Financial support to other regions, dominated by export companies and firms, was greater than to Northern Karelia, that was dominated by the forest industry and farming. Forests, historically the backbone of Finnish trade, were losing in importance and facing transformation, as the result of the new technology (for example, Nokia) on the economic structure of Finland. New technology was becoming the flagship of Finnish industry and manufacturing, instead of pulp, cellulose, and paper.

In its discourse on economic questions, *Karjalainen* followed the same line as the other regional newspapers, calling for tight discipline and managerialism in accounting and finances. The key expressions of the time were: *healthy savings, the South exploiting the East, structural transformation of Eastern Finland*, and the *inequality between regions*. The discourse of the legitimization crisis was based on active resistance and questioning the policy-lines of the sitting cabinet.

The economy of municipalities is getting better, tolerance for cuts is not (Karjalainen, 2.3.1995)
Precise account keeping is also the savior for Finnish agriculture (Karjalainen, 21.12.1995)

In 1996, the national economy recovered. Administrative expenses and welfare services in the municipalities, however, had been cut and the fact that there was no way back to the golden years before the recession was quite clear. The uneven regional economic structure had created a feeling of regional disparity, a feeling for which national policy was seen as being unresponsive. Discontent with the decision-makers was aired in *Karjalainen* and a stronger political opposition emerged.

A balanced development of the nation-state requires new thinking by decision-makers (Karjalainen, 13.1.1996)

Give power for rule implementation from central agencies to regional and local levels (Karjalainen, 8.2.1996)

Polarization between the rich (areas) and the poor (areas) was getting stronger. This rhetoric was based not only on ideological premises that the newspaper kept alive, but also on the statistics based on national accountancy (see Chapter 6)

Transferring regional subsidies to wealthy areas should be stopped (Karjalainen, 14.8.1996)

Rural projects should be launched nationally (Karjalainen, 3.5.1996)

The development of Eastern Finland will not advance (with a back-and-forth strategy) (Karjalainen, 15.5.1996)

Karjalainen strongly questioned the value-basis of the power implementation centers after the recession. Rusticity had publicly gained more sympathy and traditional values were more in fashion than earlier. A similar development was also seen in South Ostrobothnia. For the first time, rusticity was seen in connection with the European scale. That strengthened regional self-esteem and loosened the stigmatized image of the rural backwardness of the Finnish countryside. In the Finnish film industry, for example, there was a revival of the countryside and rural life that for the first time since the 50s, became a core subject for domestic production. However, this romantic rediscovery of folk culture, which was mobilized once again in the interest of creating a national identity and nationalism, was hardly seen in the regional newspapers. The regional newspapers, especially *Karjalainen*, were reconstructing and reframing the geographical area politically more than culturally. This meant that regional identity was intertwined with questions of provincial administration and the European Union, more than with the people or the preservation of “regional culture.” Popular culture, however, used nostalgia and folk culture in TV serials and films.

Economically, the upturn continued during 1997. The GDP showed fast growing numbers of imports and employment opportunities. Declined industrial sectors (trade in wood products) were also recovering. During the

last year of the time-span studied, *Karjalainen* voiced a new kind of (regional) autonomy in Northern Karelia. Issues in the editorials were framed from the inside (from the region) as well as from the outside (looking at the area in a broader perspective).

Welfare covering the whole country is not solely a transfer of income (Karjalainen, 8.3.1997)

Northern Karelia will rise only with the help of positive activity (Karjalainen, 11.7.1997)

The State no longer administrates Northern Karelia (Karjalainen, 1.9.1997)

Joint effort in savings solves the heritage of the welfare services (Karjalainen, 9.19.1997)

Improvement of the national economy should also be trusted in Northern Karelia (Karjalainen, 7.11.1997).

The editorials' declarative voice was mixed with a new sense of independence, and faith in the future was one of the key values. The editorials called for the "spiritual leaders" of the province to advice people to stay and stop the migration and depopulation of the region. The mental atmosphere and the region's social and cultural capital – considered by the editorials to be the most precious values – were closely linked. It is notable that towards the end of the period the legitimization crisis turned into a more collective mental crisis of the regional community, and thus approached an identity crisis.

While in the other regional newspapers, the tone towards the State was often quite harsh, in *Karjalainen* the approach was now more cooperative and understanding. Issues were framed both nationally and regionally, but not in adversarial terms. The framework was not exclusive but inclusive. *Karjalainen* took positions on region-nation, region-Europe, and region-region questions. The State was no longer so strongly criticized for its patronizing power. Also, future visions were quite positive.

7.4.4 Characteristics of the regional meaning-market in Karjalainen

Karjalainen was quite conservative in its tone towards the central rule implementation system. More than seeking conflict, the collective voice of the

newspaper was trying to restore authority and respect for the State. Concerning the region, the newspaper tried to eliminate the enemy that might dare to “hold the region as a ransom.”

The difference between Karelia and the other areas was basically seen as a threat to the rural Northern Karelian way of life: agriculture in villages, a lively cultural landscape, and the maintenance of “Man and Nature,” i.e., the balance between an agricultural way of life and a rustic peasantry. Agriculture in rural areas and the farmer population in Northern Karelia had enjoyed support from the State and had been valued culturally and historically. In spite of its peripheral geographical position, Northern Karelia was considered to have maintained the core assets of Finnishness.

In Table X, the key values and discourses drawn upon are linked with the key expressions used in connection with these values and discourses. The table presents a summary of the analysis of the editorials in *Karjalainen*.

Table X. Key values and discursive elements of crises in *Karjalainen*

Type of crisis	Key values (positive/negative values)	Discursive elements	Key concepts
Economic Crisis	Submitting - resistance; order - confusion	Resistance against the State; questioning the policy of the State	Cuts; savings; priorities
Legitimation Crisis	Consensus - confrontation: conform-conflict Responsibility - irresponsibility	Consensus; regional pragmatics; privatization of welfare services	Mental and material impoverishment; depopulation of the countryside
Rationality Crisis	Fairness - unfairness; constructiveness - destructiveness; realism - unrealism	Regional equality and fairness, displacement of responsibility	Border regions; new culture of administration; centralization and de-population
Motivation Crisis	Security - insecurity; collectivism - privatism	Hopelessness; regional “we;” cultural identity as a resource	Desertion; alienation; migration; selfishness

In the editorials of *Karjalainen*, the economic crisis was reflected in the political system through the “reactive avoidance activity” of the newspaper. That is to say, the newspaper tried to play down the most harmful effects of the weakening economic situation by boosting the positive core values of the region in the public discussion. As the nation had a strong legitimacy, based on trust in the regional system’s core values, the government was sometimes able to compensate for the deficits of rationality. At other times,

the crisis tendencies were more apparent in the editorials, showing the newspaper's distrust with the governmental authorities in the ongoing situation.

The "we" discourse was typical when using the regional community as a point of reference. The tradition of maintaining collective continuity and identity in the region was one of the crucial horizons of the meaning-market of the newspaper. The collective identity secured the continuity and recognizability of the region through a kind of coherent system of meaning construction that was helpful in maintaining motivation among citizens. The temporal mode varied according to how the newspaper, in any particular instance, was able to specify the requirements for maintaining this cultural conservation.

The *vocabulary* in the studied editorials was emotive, but not dramatical. Evaluative adverbs and adjectives were prominent, but usually they were not used in a hostile way.

The *modality* reflected the insistence of a speaker who assumed the position as a speaker for the region. *Generic statements* were frequently found. These were affirmations of obligation or necessity, usually in the form of descriptive propositions that were presented as true representations. The generic sentences were inevitably authoritarian, claiming a total and definitive knowledge of a particular topic; they offered the comfort of closure as against the openness of enquiry.

In nature, the editorials tended to be argumentative although consensual. The narrative and logical structure of the exposition was highlighted with textual signposts. Arguments were often dramatized using dialogic devices, such as rhetorical questions or declarations.

Important elements of the discourse on cultural identity as a resource were: *community spirit, roots, tradition, security, dwelling, sense of history, and regional mythologies*. Values attached to these positions were usually attached to traditions and emphasized continuance and security in the regional means of living.

The way in which identity and especially the aspects concerning the history of a region were illuminated in the editorials is interesting. The history of the territory, according to the newspaper, seemed to be significant to the population. The interest in the lore of the land ranged from different kinds of commemorations of past events and their celebration, to rituals that act at a micro-level in socializing people into an ideology congruent with the objectives of the nation builders.

The editorials tended to emphasize working programs that included

strategies, material support, and funding for initiatives. This tendency can be seen as part of how the culture was understood instrumentally, within the discourse of the editorials. It is typical to appeal to cultural identity in times of external threat. Actors and institutions, claiming cultural distinctiveness as a way to economic success, seem implicitly to maintain the belief that these two realms are closely connected. In the background, there is an implicit notion of social and cultural capital as a device for regional coherence, trust, and a positive atmosphere.

7.5 North Finland: Lapland and discourses on North

The newspaper *Lapin Kansa* covered the crisis differently from any of the other studied newspapers. It is evident from the writings in *Lapin Kansa* that the first signs of the depression were already apparent, if not in full bloom, in early 1988. The studied ten-year period can be divided into four different phases, distinguished by new sets of values, and a changing vocabulary (the title of the sub-section where each phase is discussed is included in parentheses). The first phase lasted from 1988 to 1990 (*Waiting for the worst*), the second from 1991-1994 (*Years of hardship*), the third during 1995 (*Spaces of hope and backlash*), and the last between 1996-1997 (*Lapland as a Northern frontier to Europe*).

As was noted in the earlier chapters, the spatial identity of the region has been quite stable in its manifestations in the newspaper. *The North, Lapland, The province/county of Lapland* – all these spatial categories are largely based on the geographical location up in the North. The constructions of collective identity of the people and geographical identity of the region are closely intertwined, forming a capsule where the cultural and the spatial are hard to separate.

7.5.1 Narratives of the North

Already in 1988, discussions began about the cuts and savings that were made by centralizing the services of the post offices. The end of the decade – in terms of regional policy – was characterized by the concept of “three Finlands:” the rural, the industrial, and the high technology Finland. Lapland was certainly placed within rural Finland – with a few industrial centers and the large wilds of the region. Migration was speeding up the de-

population of large parts of the region. Lapland was suffering from a shortage of educated labor, mostly in hospitals. The crisis that appeared first related to the unequal spread of highly educated specialists, a typical sign of rural areas that are unable to attract educated people.

At the end of the 1980s, clear signs of a legitimization crisis were seen in the editorials of *Lapin Kansa*. The dialogue between the readers and the newspaper was clear-cut. The “we” were the Northern people that were suppressed and deserted by the South. Although the nation-state was seen as the framework for citizenship, the borders towards the East were reflected and friendship between the nations (the former Soviet Union and Finland) was promoted strongly.

A time of seeking in the North (LK, 8.4.1988)

Focusing on how the newspapers relied on a rhetorical appeal to the people, complex permutations of this appeal can be detected during the period.

Voting as such was still an active way of protesting and questioning the legitimacy of the political regime. As in other regions, Lapland’s “own” MPs were known to promote the political issues of the province. This explains why mobilizing voters is of major significance.

Lapland protests (LK, 18.10.1988)

Cuts and saving in public services – or reorganization as it was called at the time - started quite early in the region. Instead of the earlier plans of the central administration to relocate public activities, growth in the development regions could only be attained if peripheral areas could improve their skills level and utilize their own strengths. This led to savings in public services (e.g., postal services, security and police force).

Ever since the early 1960s, the growth of the public sector had been noticeable, especially in the peripheral regions. The vast expansion of the public sector ceased by the early 1990s and employment in the public sector came to a halt. Consequently, the recession hit in the public sector of most of the regions in 1991. Between 1991 and 1995 the number of public sector employees fell dramatically as a result of rationalization measures.⁷⁷

Chronologically, the crises were developed in the editorials of *Lapin Kansa* as follows. Already during the first years, between 1988 and 1990,

the crisis tendencies were quite strong. The discourse of reorganizing the public services, however, had not (yet) assimilated the economic jargon of centralizing services in order to minimize the cost. The post office was seen in a traditional way as an important node within the communication grid of a vast region.

The Post reorganizes (LK, 22.1.1988)

The Post had an important role as a servant of the people, especially in the rural areas. The post offices, together with the village stores, had traditionally been providers of life and continuity. The post office was described as an extremely important sign of life in small villages. Post offices naturally gained symbolic value in the struggle against the streamlining of the services.

The countryside needs its Post (LK, 28.4)

Life in rural Lapland was based largely on agriculture. Agricultural production was also seen through other essential functions. The roots of the livelihood were the basic element on which the community spirit discourse was constructed. The choice of a biological metaphor, roots, was not surprising in the immediate context of the region. In the editorials, references to tradition and even expressions referring to rural rusticity and romanticism were used when demographic changes were discussed.

Root treatment is required (LK, 26.7.1988)

There has been good reason to be worried about the question of depopulation of the countryside. The stronger the development, the weaker the roots of life have become. Fortunately, people have woken to strengthening their roots, not solely here in Finland but also elsewhere.

But we act in quite contradictory ways in this necessary activity of consolidating our roots. While there have been various efforts to stimulate the countryside, the possibilities for life have been taken away. And the taking away activities seem to bite more effectively than those promoting a revival. (LK, 26.7.1988)

The first editorial that took a standpoint against the reorganization of state-financed services used a discourse from the cultural realm: a sense of shared identity and belongingness to rural areas and regional politics were emphasized, as well as negotiations of legitimacy and the responsibility of the State to keep rural areas populated.

On the one hand, a neo-liberal State project, where the State-economy relationship was based on deregulation, free market mechanisms, privatization, laissez-faire, and the night-watchman State, was imposed upon the traditional rhetoric of regional policy. On the other hand, the rhetoric of the traditional way of living molded different elements of a typical administrative jargon of regional politics and the rhetoric on the region's cultural and historical heritage.

Downsizing of public services was linked to the fact that the conditions of a secure and ordered everyday life were deteriorating at the same time. Ontological security was affected along with a rising sense of physical insecurity. The editorials commented on the fact that number of policemen was declining in the region.

Security to outlying villages (LK, 22.7.1988)

The countryside became an object for projects, campaigns, and organized activities by the end of the 1980s. The countryside was now commented as a "European problem," and this project-based attitude undoubtedly, in part, prepared the region for European project-based regional subsidizing politics.

Work for the countryside (LK, 14.11.1988)

The campaign for the revival of the countryside, comprising the whole of Europe, has ended. The best result of the campaign is probably that the attitudes towards the countryside – this is at least what is believed – have become more positive. The overall atmosphere has been successfully in change in favor of the value of small villages. The roots of life are still in the countryside. This is easily forgotten in the urbanizing of society. (LK, 14.11.1988)

In this editorial, the social system and regional identity were strongly connected, emphasizing the revival of the countryside. The countryside was now an object of preservation and revitalizing acts. Tradition, roots, and collective identity were emphasized and strong symbolic elements of traditional identity were in the forefront. A conflict laden axis was presented between “rural Finland” and “rush Finland.” The structural change that the countryside was undergoing was seen as politically motivated and deserving to be stimulated. According to the editorial, “the whole society has to carry the responsibility” of the countryside.

In 1989, the first clear sign of the start of the legitimation crisis was manifested in an editorial:

The occult Science of state subsidies (LK, 3.1.1989)

A real example of contradiction between decision-making and reality was seen at the turn of the year. Cabinet, of which the northernmost minister comes from Jyväskylä, made a decision concerning extra subsidies to primary schools that is a loss to the municipalities of the first bearing capacity. In practice, this decision means that the poor and small municipalities of Lapland pay the bill for this reform.

Apart from the fact that the decisions are straggling badly behind, they are model examples of the decisions that emerge when knowledge of a region – Lapland – is lacking. The Cabinet is most guilty, but also the Ministry of Education and its civil servants, having the task of presenting this proposal, will not get off completely. (LK, 3.1.1989)

In the editorials of *Lapin Kansa*, the legitimation crisis was mixed with the collapse of the collective basis of motivation. On opposite sides were: the north and the south, the poor and the rich, the deserted and the privileged, and the forgotten periphery and the center of power. As the other regional newspapers, *Lapin Kansa* tried to play down the rationality crisis that the administration was facing. Finnishness was constructed on an amazing common loyalty, a sentiment of the people that had been there since the era of national romanticism, both as a resource and as a device of the political elite to manipulate the people.

Usually the statements made in the editorials of *Lapin Kansa* were “needs-based.” Lapland or the North (the geopolitical position) was usually represented as a subordinate, deserted, and misunderstood region.

The North has been forgotten – again (LK, 14.1.1989)

The Working Programs approved by the Cabinet showed that construction work is concentrating more strongly on the south of Finland. Working allowances are decreasing by approximately fifteen percent in the northern work force areas, whereas they are increasing in the southernmost work force areas by up to thirty-four percent.

This policy line is almost impossible to comprehend. It is totally against common sense for the money of the Working Program packet to be allocated to the regions of high employment at the expense of the most difficult unemployment regions. Is it not supposed to be the other way around?

The worst treated regions in the distribution of the Working Program are Lapland, Oulu, Northern Karelia, and partly Kainuu – exactly those regions where, for years, the unemployment situation has been the worst in the country. When at the same time the added money is allocated to southern Finland, it is more than difficult to understand the aims of the Working Program packet of the Cabinet. This kind of money allocation has a taste of sheer stupidity.

(LK, 14.1.1989)

This excerpt is a typical example of the basic premises on which the line of argumentation of the newspaper was quite often constructed. There is an understanding and an internal hierarchy of the geopolitics of the country that forms this line of argumentation. The basic assumption was that regional equality was a fundamental value that could not be shaken. In spite of a general downplaying of the rationality crisis, a “partial rationality crisis” emerged, as the rationality of such political decisions was questioned in quite a critical manner.

The culprits were easily found – the State, which was the central decision-making center, and its techniques of re-allocating the responsibilities.

The municipalities are broke (LK, 24.10.1989)

If one wants to point a blaming finger in any particular direction when scrutinizing a situation, the address is clear. Without hesitation, claims can be directed towards the state power that for a long time has put new responsibilities on the shoulders of the municipalities. At the same time, there has been no advice given concerning questions where the money can be found for carrying out the new responsibilities.

(LK, 24.10.1989)

But what kind of relationship does the editorial voice construct in relation to the other discourse participants? In relation to the reader the link is dual, and thus it embodies a latent contradiction. On the one hand, the editorial voice claims the authority to explain an argument and to persuade the reader of its correctness. The rhetorical form of the editorial, though oral in tone, is more like a lecture than a conversation which would presuppose a dialogue with the addressee. Yet, on the other hand, the editorial claims solidarity by invoking consensus within the regional community. “People of Lapland and the North,” referring to the regional community and regional people, appear frequently. The consensus is also political, in that it is represented as regional. The image impressed on the readers is a regionalist one. Most often, the pronouns are inclusive, referring to the community and its values, that the newspaper claims to express. This defines the consensual “we” being appealed to, to the core of pathos, anger and shock. The consensus, from which the newspaper starts, concerns regional equality within a nation.

All of Finland's Christmas Land (LK, 27.1.1989)

Service province (LK, 23.11.1989)

Lapland was presented as a national property in editorials that clearly reflected the pride of the province's extraordinary cultural and economic value in international relations. To the urban centers of southern Finland, it was also “*the holiday and recreation province.*”

The discourse of community spirit was evoked in the discussion on keeping the villages alive. The internal activity of the villagers was emphasized, and industriousness in employment activities was encouraged. Enthusiasm

and faith in the future were seen as the only conditions to keep the outlying territories alive.

Work to the villages (LK, 23.5.1989)

Kittilän Alakylä (a village) has correctly realized that with common efforts, issues of real importance can be advanced. In the Alakylä village it has been realized that the most important condition a living village is the activity of the villagers and the community spirit. The activity of the village committee in Alakylä village's case, has brought jobs to many villagers.

7.5.2 Years of Hardship

In the beginning of 1991, the atmosphere in Lapland was hopeful, although the unemployment rate was increasing quickly. The State was subsidizing small firms, giving "risk money" to them in order to develop "knowhow" in the region. This was seen as a positive turn in regional policy.

The worsening problem of a shortage of labor in health care services was no longer a problem solely in southern Finland. A shortage of general practitioners was a concrete problem in Lapland's health care centers. A two-fold legitimization crisis was experienced in Lapland. First, the people experienced a shortage of academic labor that after several years later this was combined with mass unemployment in other sectors of society.

Health care and money (LK, 21.1.1990)

But by May, the first editorial manifested the darkening atmosphere in the region.

Terminal care over the depression (LK, 12.5.1991)

The State was subsidizing firms in crisis, allocating money directly to them. The editorial put the policy line rather bluntly:

The solution shows that those who practice regional policy have a cupboard that is not totally emptied, although it some-

times may have seemed so. Ideas are born when one experiences enough anguish. Perhaps regional politics have been watered down because the will of those in power to practice it has dried up. (LK, 12.5.1991)

There was an apparent conflict between the decision-makers and those hoping for stronger means for regional politics. The legitimation crisis of the region grew from the assumption that the region was totally neglected in regional decision-making, although the means for better policy-making was available. The will to execute a supportive regional policy was lacking, and that was largely a political question.

European integration created an ambivalence that was seen in multiple emerging discourses about the topic. Geopolitically, Lapland was on the periphery of Europe and internationalization was seen as a key to future success. Marketing, visions, and the risk taking of regional enterprises were seen as basic elements in the trade and information campaigns that were carried out in order to compete with attractive regions in other European countries. The region was once again an object of marketing and selling – *the discourse of commodification* of the region was part of boosting the regional self-image in the regional meaning-market.

Lapland into Euroshape (LK, 7.9.1991).

Lapland does not want to be left in a distant periphery, in the outskirts of Europe. Therefore, a year-long internationalizing campaign has been begun in the province, the aim of which is to get the business world of the province into Euroshape.

The campaign is indirectly a continuation of the campaign, “I am responsible of Lapland,” four years ago. The earlier campaign had a domestic focus. Now, target groups, aims, and goals are focused on the chances and options that a rise from an integrating Europe. (LK, 7.9.1991).

The metaphor “Euroshape” was referring to sports and fitness. Being in shape is being at the peak of one’s capabilities. An ambivalent feature is that the target of the campaigns was still a domestic audience. Migration was a

constant problem of the region. According to the editorial, this reflected on the possibilities of immigrants living in Sweden to move “back home,” back to Finland.

Back home (LK, 11.7.1990)

During 1991, the economic crisis in industry became acute, and this was reflected in the editorials. The basic elements of Finnish industry comprised the forest, metal and a slowly developing high-tech industry. The region comprised big state-owned companies that were hit by the overall European recession. The paper and pulp markets were affected and the annual turn-over of the companies declined.

Threats in the sky of Lapland (LK, 10.8.1991)

Finland is standing solidly on its wooden legs. Everyone knows that when the wood industry is doing well, the whole country is doing well. Now the wood industry is doing badly and Finland is tortured in the grip of a depression. Lapland is also part of Wood-Finland. The well-being of the province is based largely on its forests. That is why recent menacing pictures of Lapland’s forest industry have been a threat to the well-being of the Lapps.

One of the basic assumptions on which the narrative of the North was based was the alleged exploitation of the North by the South. This narrative comes out clearly in the following excerpt. The voice of the editorial was interrogative and addressed to the regional public.

Is Lapland the object of exploitation? (LK, 24.2.1991)

Throughout its history, Lapland has felt itself as an object of exploitation of the South. This assumption traces back to the beginning of the millennium, when the colonization of Lapland began. The development was called the settlement of Lapland. Even today, many people experience that the South,

from time to time, finds itself living at the cost of nature, Lapland's and from time to time at the cost of the people of the region.

This generation still remembers the 1960s when people were forced to leave their homelands. In that decade, the population of Lapland decreased by ten percent. One may ask if this development was an exploitation of social and material capital carried out by the South. Or was it an inevitable social transformation that all the other provinces suffered from as well, not only in Finland but also elsewhere.

The self-esteem of the Lapps has been put to the test for decades. Nevertheless, the belief in one's own ability to accomplish things is the basic condition of everyday life. The stimulation of the faith and self-esteem of the Lapps will not work if we are still subordinated to perceiving Lapland as an object of the exploitation of the South. This is not even the case, because otherwise material living standards would not be at the same level as in South. (*LK, 24.2.1991*)

It is notable that the editorial manifested a strong belief in the importance of the regional meaning-market and its functions. Self-esteem and trust in the future should be nourished, and the historical notion of being the object of exploitation and subordination should be banished in order to stimulate the atmosphere in the region.

But the region needed more than just mental stimulation and new mental frameworks. The unemployment rate was rising towards the end of the year. The following editorial strongly questioned the legitimacy of the government.

The budget is forgetting the unemployed (LK, 15.9.1991)

The situation was worsening, especially in the rural areas. Regional differences, measured with the help of the unemployment rate, were in contradiction considering the policy line of the government. The rationality of the decision-makers was put to a test with modal clauses, such as "the mass unemployment threatening Lapland must be prevented." Key words of the

time were: *the worst unemployment in history, crisis program and all time high unemployment figures.*

In 1992, the question of mass unemployment became acute. The script questioning the equality in governing the country became obvious. The crisis in Lapland had not been fully recognized and the conditions for working within the region had been destroyed.

Lapland is longing for work (LK, 8.4.1992)

Work for Lapland (LK, 18.6.1992)

The decision to build *the artificial lake of Vuotos* was seen as a way to employ people from the region, but *the Vuotos project* was a political case in which many participants were involved (politicians, landowners, environmentalists etc.)

*Unemployment as a curse for the country and the province
(LK, 28.4.1992)*

The curse of unemployment, strangling the whole country, is felt most painfully in the northernmost province of our country, Lapland. The rate of unemployment of the province is threatening to reach the 20 percent level, while the rate for the whole country is 13.6 percent. Approximately 18,500 individuals in Lapland are unemployed and in the worst municipalities every fourth inhabitant is out of work.
(LK, 28.4.1992)

Normative clauses were used in critical ways (such as, “this cannot be right”). The government had to find “flexibility.” The worst regions of unemployment should not be the hardest hit as was happening at the time.

There would be enough work (LK, 24.7.1992)

The unemployment rate of Lapland is disastrously high. There is no work, they say. A lacking work to be done is not the question, even in times of mass unemployment. The question is about money that is scantily available.

The crisis of legitimation was expressed as a loss of trust in the political system. This system was seen as being responsible for work opportunities. The right to work was seen as one of the basic rights of a citizen.

During 1993, the unemployment rate reached its peak within the region. The undertone of the editorials was to urge the people to keep up their spirit and “readiness to fight for the livelihood of the region.” The welfare of the region was seen as dependent on optimism, resistance, reason, and trust. Tourism was seen as the savior of the region, and readiness for service-oriented attitudes of the people was emphasized.

The pilot of one’s own luck (LK, 4.7.1993)

The province will show off again (LK, 23.5.1993)

Provisions of a living countryside (LK, 22.10.1993)

The editorial, *From ideas to real work (LK, 12.6.1993)*, was a typical example of an editorial that reflected the means by which the countryside could be kept populated. Tourism on farms was offered as a remedy for the unemployment crisis.

In the light of most of the editorials of the time, the region was a victim of a blind and undemocratic system. The region, as a sensing and feeling entity, reflected the motivation crisis of the people. The conversation floated between consensus and conflict. The speaker/writer manifested hope and consolation in the midst of hardship.

The tight line will continue (LK, 8.9.1993)

Lapland is suffering most (LK, 8.9.1993)

The editorial, *How long is “immediately” (LK, 20.6.1993)*, was an open political and moral condemnation targeted towards Prime Minister Esko Aho. According to its argumentation, the system had lost its legitimacy and a re-structuring was needed.

The fifth paragraph of the editorial reads as follows:

The moral in Lapland evolves from the fact that promises must be kept. It cannot be right that while Lapland is suffering from the harshest unemployment of the country – every fourth person of working age is out of work – the realistic and feasible employment program that has finally been

put together is placed at the bottom of the pile, despite many different discussions. There is really a reason for astonishment regarding the softness of the promises of Prime Minister Esko Aho.

The statement was a manifestation of total loss of trust. This was especially notable because Lapland has traditionally been one of the strongest provinces voting for the Centre Party, that is the former agricultural party and the party of Prime Minister Esko Aho.

The newspaper also strongly questioned labor legislation and the government employment policy. The government's activities to increase employment did not meet the labor markets' demands and were inflexible. Punishment for being active (traveling, taking short-term jobs) was criticized harshly. A motivation crisis became apparent, and the exclusion of unemployment from society and the life of its citizens were threatening visions that the editorials underlined.

The unemployed are driven into a corner (LK, 6.10.1993)

First of all, the public sector was in the grip of a depression and under the veil of a depression had also started to reorganize its public organizations at such a speed that it was seen as an excess of justifiable defense. *Crisis of public services* and *an excess of justifiable defense* were also key words in the editorials. The crisis was mental and needed the *right attitude, hope, and perseverance*.

The request for "rationality" expressed and manifested by the newspaper was based on the set of key values of the region. The values attached to the region were not instrumental, and it was not seen as a sub-system of a larger social system. In the newspaper, it was described as a living, active, and feeling organism, a collective citizen, representing the inhabitants of the North.

Difficulties are also felt in Lapland (LK, 4.2.1994)

Lapland is exerting itself to rise (LK, 3.1.1994)

The second paragraph of this editorial reads:

If old experiences from changes of economic fluctuation are to be believed, Lapland will be among the frontrunner regions in the economic development. But one cannot be totally sure of this, especially when the positive prospects have been over shadowed with incomprehensible and threatening visions of the partial dismantling of Lapland's forest industry presented during the end of this depression year. For the time being this looming threat has been prevented with good arguments. Hopefully also for the good – the forest industry is just one of the strongest, most important and most employing backbone of the business life of Lapland. (LK, 3.1.1994)

7.5.3 *Spaces of hope and backlash*

The year 1995 did not start rosily. The unemployment rate reached its peak, although the GDP per inhabitant was rising. An affiliated company of Nokia, *Salcomp*, closed down, and this affected the overall atmosphere. The reason for this was an insufficiency of skilled labor.

Backlash to the development of Lapland (LK, 24.1.1995)

A new sign of recovery (LK, 27.3.1995)

The urban center, Rovaniemi, began to recover. The future of the companies was now linked with the supply of a suitable work force. The economic and industrious activities of the city of Rovaniemi were seen as an example of a more positive future.

Lapland is still the most worth in the County

(LK, 5.9.1995)

As in other newspapers, the re-organization of the public sector, transferring duties from the State to the municipalities, boosted discussion about the relation between densely populated southern parts of Finland and outlying regions. This reform was seen as a mindless business of the administrators of the South that were largely ignorant about the living conditions in the provinces, especially in Lapland. The partial rationality crisis that grew from this local government reform was displaced in the realm of politics, although it was part of the economic crisis and the economic realm where

the national government was quite helpless in the course of events.

The tendency towards centralization continued. The people of the region, and especially the young, were heading towards the southern urban centers.

The growing migration wave should be stopped
(LK, 20.8.1995)

Although there is no work in the South, the people of Lapland are moving there at a growing pace. Last year the province's loss of population through migration was the highest in seven years. Whole families are forced to pack their things and leave their home areas and leave for the South or the center of the province, Rovaniemi.

It is really worrying if the people have no other option than to move to be available on the labor market of the South, where unemployment is almost as hopeless as in Lapland.
(LK, 20.8.1995)

Leaving home was one of the constant themes. Having a home and roots was the essential ingredient of feeling ontological security, but the politics practiced in the country seemed to be forcing people to leave their home areas. This position included much symbolism that was actively evoked in the discussion on the rationality and priorities of regional policy.

As the municipalities had to take over some of the responsibilities earlier reserved for the State, the taxation of inhabitants living in sparsely populated municipalities increased and this mechanism added to the difficulties of the already poor municipalities and their inhabitants, compared to the southern municipalities.

Municipalities face even harsher times – examples are
Tervola and Rovaniemi (LK, 9.11.1995)

7.5.4 Lapland as a northern frontier of Europe

During the last years of the period, Finland seemed to have passed the test of depression, developed a new open global economy, and restructured the welfare state. But the problems in Lapland continued and a new rhetoric of

Europeanization emerged. There was an effort in the editorials to arouse a community spirit – when referring to emptying villages, the uniqueness of the region was actively emphasized and seen in a European perspective. The discussion of Europeanization and the effects of the integration were seen both through the discussion of cultural politics (the uniqueness of the region) and through the perspective of the structural transformation of Finnish agricultural production.

Finnish agriculture squeezed by the European Union

(LK, 25.1.1996)

The Lapland of Finland is the Lapland of Europe

(LK, 31.5.1996)

Polarization in the labor market was now a reality in the regions. The jobs that had disappeared during the depression were difficult to reestablish. Editorials created an image of two Finlands, polarized into “Service-Finland” and “Production-Finland.”

Jobs must be created evenly throughout the country

(LK, 31.7.1996)

Once again the conflict-laden axis was cities contra rural areas. Regional polarization was growing and – according to the newspaper – one of the reasons was the cuts in the public sector. Also, the conflict between cities and peripheries became acute during 1996. Juxtaposing outlying areas with prospering cities rose on the agenda. The ambivalence of the democratic system was creating a situation in which taxpayers and voters were deserting the region and leaving the region without “a vote.”

Juxtaposition does not help anyone (LK, 25.3.1996)

The second paragraph of this editorial reads:

When Finland has faced big national questions, the provinces have almost always been in a deciding role. Now the migration to the big centers in the south of Finland’s is changing the situation. The population living in these centers comprises a majority and at the same time the voice and

influence of the provinces are diminishing.

Recently this was seen in the EU referendum. Finland became a member with a clear majority, although in most parts of the country, there was opposition to membership.

The politics of the urban centers was in contradiction with the priorities of the provinces. According to the editorial, the juxtaposition of the South and the North was obsolete. The power of the ideological position of the North being exploited by the South was worn out. The idea of a nanny-state was replaced by the more active perspective of individual consumerism. The editorial was boosting a campaign for the employment of young people. The perspective, mainly reflecting a regional position, changed towards a more pragmatically-oriented perspective.

Clinging to work even by force (LK, 174.1996)

It is clear that employment cannot be left as a task solely for the government. Everyone who is capable must join this joint effort. Best of all is that all of us can help. It works simply by buying domestic products when shopping. The greater the demand, the more labor is needed to meet the demand. (LK, 174.1996)

Towards the end of the studied period, the countryside found more sympathizers. “Real concern” for the conditions of a “living countryside” was now more general, and this position began to lose its shade of regionalism and regional policy. The earlier clause of the regional policy, that the country and the border areas should be populated, was now part of the history of the Cold War. The obvious consequence of this was that the role of the rural areas was also changing.

*The countryside is becoming a vacation resort
(LK, 11.10.1996)*

During 1997, the recovery was already visible – in the South. The polarization of the regions was also seen in discussions on how recovery took off differently in different parts of the country. Partly, this inequality was con-

nected with the politics of the government that had boosted areas with export oriented companies. Migration also boosted construction of buildings and roads in areas where people were concentrating,

Construction work already creates jobs – in the South

(LK, 21.7.1997)

The Cabinet offers to kick us out (LK, 24.1.1997)

The new policy line, to strengthen the growth centers, was now widely known, though not necessarily accepted within the regions. *Lapin Kansa* emphasized *resistance and the readiness to defend the right to live in regions that were not as productive in purely economic terms*. The government was accused of “turning its back” on the region, and its “sanctimonious statements” were contradictory to the regional reality that the newspaper represented.

People are moving into the centers (LK, 11.7.1997)

The employment of the region, however, started to recover although the migration continued. But the recovery was not fast compared to the whole country or the other regions, especially in the southern parts of Finland. The identity crisis revealed itself after the depression had passed. Lapland was described as a unanimous and beautiful province where traditions and regional identity were strongly alive.

Northern provinces are searching for their identities

(LK, 9.2.1997)

The verb “search” in the title was used to sting the Minister of the Interior, who had pushed through a reorganization of Finnish counties into bigger entities. This type of development was felt to be in opposition to the general sentiment in Lapland, where people felt belongingness to different parts of that huge region (e.g., to Tornio, South Lapland or The Valley of the Tornio River)

It is suitable to end the study of key texts in *Lapin Kansa* with the following editorial that was more or less similar in its argumentation to earlier texts appearing during the ten-year period. This “back to square number one” editorial returned to the declining service of the state-owned postal

services. While post offices were dismantled in the North, the southern parts of the country enjoyed longer opening times of their post offices. The people in the scattered settlements were left without sufficient services, that were supposed to be basic rights for citizens of the country, despite the geographical location of their place of residence. The legitimation crisis was still acute in its manifestation.

The North is subsidizing the South (LK, 11.3.1997)

The key values of the region remained surprisingly similar, in comparison to the beginning of the period. The dichotomy between North and South, and the discussion of regional equality, constructed the basic script on which the usually interrogative or declarative argumentation was built.

7.5.5 Characteristics of the regional meaning-market in Lapin Kanssa

Generally, in the editorials of *Lapin Kanssa* the legitimation crisis was molded by the collapse of a collective structure of the motivation of the people. Usually opposite sides were: *North and South, deserted and deserter, and forgotten periphery and the center of power*. Declining rationality was boosted with interrogative claims and clauses, and sometimes with bitter words. But towards the end, Finnishness seemed to survive on the basis of an amazingly deep-seated mutual loyalty; this was the will of the people which had been both a resource for unity and a device for the manipulation of the people by the political elite from the times of Fennomania.

In Table XI, the key values and discourses drawn upon are linked with the key expressions used in connection with these values and discourses. The table presents a summary from the analysis of the editorials in *Lapin Kanssa*.

The legitimation crisis was mostly presented as a failure of regional policy. The system was deserting some parts of the region and favoring others. The political elite were not involved in the rational decision-making process in allocating state subsidies, but were seen to exercise an “occult science” with the taxpayers’ money. The political system was moving beyond the line of rational action. The discourse drawn upon was a “socially and regionally excluded region,” where the region speaking through the newspaper was a collective citizen of the North, having a vote like every other region.

Table XI. Key values and discursive elements of crises in Lapin Kansa

Type of crisis	Key values (positive/negative values)	Discursive elements	Key concepts
Economic Crisis	Moral - immoral; order - confusion	Regional exclusion from the system	Scattered settlement; development areas
Legitimation Crisis	consensus - confrontation; submitting - resistance; conform - conflict	declining regional politics; reorganization of public services; regional resistance	revival of the countryside; depopulation; future of the province; negligence; South vs. North
Rationality Crisis	Fairness - unfairness; constructiveness - destructiveness; responsibility - irresponsibility	priorities in policymaking; responsibility of the State	credibility of politics; the slowness of development; regional inequality and discrimination
Motivation Crisis	Activity - passivity; security - insecurity; self-reliance - dependency; collectivism - privatism; traditionalism - anomism; industriousness - idleness	Right of choice (work); hardship; cultural shared identity; tradition and community spirit; commodification of tradition	Right to work; hopelessness and exclusion; origination vs. tourism; exotism vs. common place; European Lapland, tourism

An interesting detail in the editorials was their mode of representing the people. The citizens were a geographically-defined group that was named according to its geographical position (e.g., the People of the North, the People of Lapland). This regionally-limited group was not referred to as citizens, entrepreneurs or taxpayers. The location even defined the unemployed as a distinctive and separate group from the overall group of those unemployed in the rest of the country. The unemployment in Lapland was a consequence of the negligence and ignorance of the South. The system was blind to regional differences. The collective basis of motivation was disappearing, which could be seen as passivity, privatism, alienation and withdrawal into one's shell, and farther up North – away from the exploitation of the South. Consequently, the legitimation crisis was geographically defined.

The vocabulary in the editorials was largely emotive, dramatizing the speaker with strong feelings and opinions. Evaluative adverbs and adjectives were prominent, and particularly noticeable in the opening paragraphs (“impossible to comprehend,” “sheer stupidity”).

Modality had the insistence of a speaker who assumed a position of

authority. Authority includes a claim to know what is inevitably going to happen. The modal auxiliary “must” was a crucial word in the editorials, claiming that the source or editor-in-chief had the right to specify obligations. This modal goes with an ethical vocabulary.

Generic statements were also found. These are affirmations of obligation or necessity, but also descriptive propositions that are supposedly true at any instance of the entities they refer to. The use of generic sentences was authoritarian, claiming a total and definitive knowledge of the topic; they offered the comfort of closure in contrast to the openness and insecurity of inquiry.

An editorial tends to be argumentative. First, the narrative and logical structure of the exposition is highlighted with textual signposts. Often the argument is dramatized by the use of dialogic devices, such as rhetorical questions (“Is it not the other way around?”)

In general, a vast range of political decisions and proposals to cut public spending have been legitimized by appealing to a cluster of consensual values that were different in different regions. The editorials often leaned on discourses of a prestigious and official public style. Editorials were also tinged with an official ideology, because they were usually written in a formal and authoritative style, including rhetorical figures of a type that politicians or experts habitually use. The editorials were inter-textual as a consequence of their stylistic (and therefore ideological) dependence on other texts, based on official or other prestigious sources.

The editorial material discusses a great number of issues and topics, but whatever the particular subject was, the editorials simultaneously referred to more general themes connected to reflecting different modes of crises in the region.

These higher level-abstractions of the characteristics and activities of how society should work, and what were the relations between citizens and decision-makers, were reflections at the textual level of some interpretative repertoires. These interpretative repertoires, or certain systems, values and ideas, are conceived in the dynamics of the regional meaning-market. These certain systems of concepts and values 1) occurred frequently in the material; 2) seemed relatively stable from one instance to another; 3) each contained some specific interpretation of an economic crisis or some aspect of it, and 4) together they suggest some composite and regionally-coherent dynamics of interpretation.

At this abstraction level, stories that at first may seem quite different,

may sometimes be reduced to carriers of the same message. Thus, interpretative repertoires, conceived in regional meaning-markets, kept some interpretations alive and on the agenda, even though the changing topics and issues may only have had a brief existence in people's consciousness.

8 Discourses on economic depression

8.1 Regional realities and the framing of the crisis

Is not an easy task to capture the characteristics of how news journalism grasped the economic depression. In the selected depression stories, this subject finds its reportable form in multiple ways. In order to get a richer picture of what was going on, it was necessary to identify different types of themes and genres, and thus to accept a certain methodological pragmatism. This pragmatic orientation was guided by these research questions: How were the different forms of crises intertwined? What questions did the economic depression bring to the public agenda? How did the term *depression* enter into the regional newspapers?⁷⁸

The news beat of a regional newspaper can be quite chaotic when it is followed through a long process, such an economic crisis. Manufacturing and producing regional daily news involves the continuous reproduction of the temporal structure of daily life. We can refer to the production of a sense of dailiness, which re-temporizes time in a continuous narrative of days. Following some researchers (Swales 1990; Fairclough 1995, 90), this narrative or script can be seen as a pre-genre to construct an “everydayness” on which the manufacturing of news and editorials is based. Within this pre-genre, language is associated with a particular category of social practices. Everything that happens in our everyday life is constructed through cultural perspectives and frameworks that are embedded in spatial, temporal, and social contexts.

Although the economic depression seemed to be quite a chaotic process

with multiple sub-processes, nonetheless, as a journalistic process, it showed many of the features of a “media event.” The media did not have the power only to insert messages into social networks. They also participated in the creation of these networks. Economic depression as a media event created its own constituencies. Conquering not only social space but also time, depression as a media event, had the power at times to play the role of the smallest common denominator of a regional community.

To analyze the news stories on economic depression includes the scrutiny of the kind of news frames encapsulating and defining different forms of crises.⁷⁹ Only such an analysis allows us to see what a news story says. Only after this stage is completed are we in a position to see what it does not say. Sometimes news stories do not regularly say what they seem to say at first glance. Even though taking the analysis through these different stages may seem overly detailed, this kind of a multi-step process is useful, as it makes us more aware of the complexity and ambiguity of media texts. It enables us to examine, for example, whether the headline fairly represents the article it accompanies.

The concept of *framing*, however, also becomes valuable when analyzing how the news stories about the depression grasped the social situation. As was already noted (Chapter 3), by the frame of a news story we refer to the *fixed conceptions and news angles that are favored at the expense of others* (Väliverronen 1996, 19; Fowler 1991, 14, 43, Pietikäinen 2000, 98).⁸⁰ In general, media frames enable news journalists to process and package a large amount of diverse and often contradictory information, quickly and routinely. The use of frames can be seen as an important institutionalized part of the encoding of media texts.

The news frames transform over time, thus reflecting changes in the social and economic spheres of a given society. The frames also guide the audience’s expectations, interpretations, and readings of media texts, as well as make the whole journalistic procedure routine to journalists (see Tuchman 1978; Gitlin 1980; Väliverronen 1996; 1980; Reese 1991)

In this sense, the practice of framing news texts that relate to the economic depression is part of the shaping of the self-understanding of a regional community. There is a conserving as well as a dynamic aspect to this process. According to critical discourse analysis, the discursive practices of a community – its normal ways of using language – construct the “orders of discourse” of that community.

8.2 Manufacturing news on the economic depression

When analyzing news stories on the economic depression, it soon became apparent that these stories were produced within certain frames that were similar in different regional contexts. These frames, however, were slowly transformed, according to their own pace. At the beginning of the economic crisis, the stories followed a fixed schema through which more particular modes of crises slowly evolved. These more particular modes became visible, for example, through a confrontation between the vocabulary relating to the economic depression and the established regional discourse. Unlike in the editorials, in the analyzed news items the economic depression was quite often given the role of *an active actor causing things*. Structures, political decisions or decision-makers were mostly absent from the headlines and the news texts.

It should be kept in mind that when something is represented through language – events, actions, relationships and states, the people and objects involved in them, the time and place and other circumstances of their occurrence – there are always choices available. As was seen in the earlier chapter, these choices are partly a matter of a certain *vocabulary or vocabularies*. If one vocabulary is more familiar, it easily provides sets of pre-constructed categories. Representation always involves deciding how to place and locate different events and phenomena according to these categories (Fairclough 1995, 70-71).

In this sense, certain categories, ways to represent the world or ways to frame the economic depression as a social problem eventually gain a dominant position in describing a state of affairs. For example, the difference between an *action* (with a causal actor) and an *event* (without a causal actor) represents a difference in language but does not always indicate a difference in reality, in the nature of things – at least not in simple sense. When something is represented in journalism, the journalist must decide whether to present it as an *action* or an *event*. This may not seem to be a big difference, but actually representing depression as an *event* without causal *actor* seems to indicate something that just happens without anything or anyone contributing to it happening through some kind of political, economic or cultural *actions*. Figure VII portrays the dominant pattern of how stories on the economic depression encode a view of the world (see also Fowler 1991, 142-145).

Figure VII. Action scheme of Crisis (adaptation of Fowler 1991, 143)

Agent	→ Action	→ Patient or affected
Depression		People, Organizations, Community

The agent (depression) is actively doing (e.g., causing, harming) something to “a patient” or “affected” part (e.g., society, people, community, organizations, business life) In this kind of news story, structural or political causes or consequences are not visible and the depression *acts* as if guided by the natural laws of economics, not by human agents.

Usually, the organization of news texts relating to the economic depression began with an “action scheme,” where an action involves both the participant-type actor and the patient. The actor (depression) does something to an affected part (e.g., a city, people, health center, or library). The typical clause had a transitive structure (*Subject+Verb+Object*), especially in those cases where the subject was *depression*. The articles foreground a type of causality where the economic reality, *depression*, is understood to underpin every aspect of human life and social space. The economic depression entails a fractionized view of the world and its transformation, in which “the iron laws” of economics reproduce a reductionist view of social practice. More profound assessments of different structural causes and consequences are usually erased from the news texts.

Several types of actions may be found within the same news story. Alongside *concrete actions* (expressed through words like *do, make* and *finish*) there are *speech acts* (expressed through words like *say, answer, tell, assure, declare* or *point out*). Speech acts is a quite simple category of actions. We also find *mental processes* in the texts. Rather than referring to states these involve judgment or reflection upon different social groups and policies (e.g., *expect, seek, believe, decide*). Expressions relating to processes are also present in the texts (for example, *action, event and state*, also expressions related to mental or verbal processes). All these processes involve at least two participants (a person and something affected by an action).

It should be kept in mind that an analysis of representation is usually an analysis of what there is in the texts. To analyze the absences of things that

might have been in the text requires sensitivity to a given area of social practice or acquaintance with the journalistic culture of a studied newspaper. At the beginning of the studied time period, the news stories were predominantly about the sectorized economics of the region: how different branches and fields of the economy were affected by the economic recession.

In the regions studied, news production and manufacturing of the economic depression was triggered off as early as 1988. Depression grasped through news production had its own profile, which had regional differences. At first depression was only sectorized to an economic phenomenon. From this it slowly began to cover cultural, and finally mental aspects of social life. Temporally, the depression stories were found mostly between the years 1991-1993 (see Chapter 6). The total number of depression stories in the newspapers varied. The sample of *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* contained 129 items, *Lapin Kansa* 158 items, *Karjalainen* 82 items and *Ilkka* 155 items. Typical of the sample was that the articles on economic depression drew upon many genres, voices, and discourses. The intertextual nature of the economic crisis as a social phenomenon was articulated through different frames of crises.⁸¹

8.3 Manufacturing depression

In the newspapers studied, the economic crisis first occurred in terms of *depression* in the North Finnish newspaper *Lapin Kansa*. The headline, *The depression most painfully hits young fur farms*, was found in *Lapin Kansa* on February, 1988. Not long after this, the same notion was found in the South Finnish newspaper *ESS: The previous year that was besotted by depression was only a passing phase* (*ESS*, 11.3.1988). Then it occurred in Northern Karelia in *Karjalainen: The fur projects of Rääkkylä will be delayed because of depression* (*Karjalainen*, 9.6.1988). The last of the newspapers to introduce this notion on its pages was *Ilkka*, in Southern Ostrobothnia: *The deep depression of the fur trade will continue during the coming season* (*Ilkka*, 4.11.1988). Except for South Finland, the notion of *depression* was first applied to fur farms that were struggling to keep up their earlier results.

According to common news criteria, media events that are selected by the news production machinery should be relatively unambiguous. How-

ever, as Fowler has noted (1991, 14), unambiguity is self-explanatory. It is important for news stories that the storyline, the peaks, and the roles of actors are well defined and restrict the number of possible interpretations. Events are newsworthy if they can be related to cultural stereotypes or persons that are easily identified by the audience. This also concerned *depression stories*.

Depression as a notion became a discursive phenomenon once it was linked to the everyday life of the region. This required that the social production of the “reality” of the crisis should take place in particular concrete localities. Furthermore, this “reality” had to be mediated through news stories to the regional public. Finally, the notion had to adhere to some cultural stereotypes particular to the region.

Once the notion of *depression* was clearly sectorized and defined as an economic phenomenon, it was ready to be picked up by the journalistic machinery. As to other news, the criterion of *cultural proximity* also applies to depression stories. A regional vantage point, i.e. cultural proximity and relevance for the regional public, was usually found in practice. In the regional newspapers, the maps of meaning favored closeness. Stories that strengthened the sense of “we” had a great probability to pass as a news item. The newspapers, quite naturally, followed the preferences of their spatially-defined audiences.⁸² The *depression* of fur farming, being one of the livelihoods within three of the regions studied, was a natural news item in these regions.

In the first news stories where the notion occurred, *depression* was only understood as “a depression of fur farms.”⁸³ Thus, the first stories portrayed depression more as a slight dysfunction or error in part of the economic system, not as an overarching state covering all sectors of life.

It should be noted that the notion of *depression* was already used in the regions studied when other parts of Finland, especially the southernmost parts and the Capital Region, were still enjoying an economic boom at the end of the 1980s. In *YLE*s output, the notion was hardly used before the year 1990 (see Chapter 6).

8.3.1 *Continuity of depression*

Once something has hit the headlines and has been defined as “news,” it will continue to be defined as news for some time even if the amplitude is

drastically reduced (Galtung and Ruge 1973, 62-72.). In the beginning, the economic crisis was understood as a passing state. But the continuity and variation of the crisis soon became a routinely reflected topic of the regional newspapers.

As I noted in the theoretical discussion, regional and local communities are places for consumption, i.e. marketplaces of products, services, and raw materials. The same communities are also marketplaces for the newspapers. As such, places provide real settings in which services, products, and ideas are purchased, used and compared. It can even be claimed that in news texts, places themselves are consumed. They help to constitute a part of experiences that are central to regional identity formation. Consumerism, and its link to regional economy, was a legitimate frame of regional news because the well-being of regional business affected the social and cultural well-being of a regional community.

At the outset, the regions did not recognize the economic crisis as a *depression*. The trends of industry and trade were followed, but *depression* was not used as a news angle. The reason for this was clear – the impact on regional business life and investments would undoubtedly have been negative, as the editors-in-chief noted in the earlier chapter.

In the first article where *depression* appeared (ESS, March 1988), it was understood “as a passing phase.” Depression was conceived as bad weather – something more or less oblivious to the political structures or actions, an unhealthy state of affairs being a nuisance for the people.

The previous year that was besotted by depression was only a passing phase (ESS, 11.3.1988).

By the end of 1989 the conception of the depression as an unhealthy but temporary state of the system had also spread to other regions:

We will not get through this but through a depression (LK, 31.12.1989).

The new decade of Finnish economics has not started rosily. Ending the 1980s is leaving a confusing and unhealthy heritage. The country will not pull through the problems except through a depression. The depression, which cannot be cir-

cumvented, will also measure if the new firms in Lapland have been able to base their business on the solid ground of market economics. If they were only conceived with the help of subsidies and regional supports, the near future does not look bright. (LK, 31.12.1989)

Typical of the news texts was that the portrayal of the development of the depression was based on quotations from certain participants, usually representing business life, or actors within the administration. Thus, for example, the above cited excerpt was from an article based on an interview with the director of *Kera* (a Finnish regional funding authority).

The journalists tend to *give a face* to the economic events they write about. Actors, sources, and individuals were found to be more interesting than faceless structures, institutions, and trends. Also when covering the depression, journalists needed individuals that were able to form some kind of perspective that could be transformed into a news angle.

A typical temporal mode that emerged was the dichotomy of an unhealthy past versus a healthy future. The depression marked a boundary between the economic eras. Where the editorials questioned political decisions, the news questioned the legitimacy of business principles. Regional cultures themselves, over the decades, had built the traditions of livelihood on the scanty and harsh struggle with nature and seasonal shifts of crops and herding. The culturally preferable interpretation was that hard work was “healthy,” whereas results gained through debts and subsidies, i.e. “easy work,” was a sign of “unhealthy” activities. The consensus that had been built around neo-liberal principles of the free market prevailed.

Also, during the following year the use of the word depression was scarce. Only one story used the word in its headline:

The depression does not discourage a Finn – December will multiply sales (ESS, 28.11.1989)

(-) The depression will not discourage the Finnish customers this Christmas either. The tight financial market only causes that instead of a car bought on debts families will purchase for example a baking machine. “Because borrowed money is costing so much, it will not be used. Instead people purchase

luxury that they can afford from their pocket money,” told sales manager Esa Yrjölä from Kylmark. (ESS, 28.11.1989)

In the next phase, the duration of the economic crisis became a common news angle. In different regions slightly different perspectives were presented concerning the duration and the future development of the crisis. It was gradually understood that the duration and depth of the economic crisis had been underestimated.

As a cultural and economic phenomenon, *depression* had now hit the news and its persistence could be observed not only in stories on major macro economic events (budget cuts and the reorganization of big companies) but also in stories which touched the personal daily life of the people in the region.

Depression will continue in the real estate/housing business
(ESS, 13.5.1990)

The Industrial Directors of Lapland do not confess to depression, only recession – “The situation is serious but not hopeless.” (LK, 11.10.1990)

Depression has come to a head (Ilkka, 3.3.1991)

An atmosphere of deepening depression also in North Karelia – Depression is a strain especially to the construction and forest industries (Karjalainen, 18.4.1991)

Industry forecasts a deepening depression. Downhill production will continue (ESS, 18.4.1991)

Depression had come to stay. Bankruptcies, lay-offs and notices to leave shaded the news in 1991
(Karjalainen, 27.12.1991)

As can be seen from the quotations above, *depression* as a news item did not have a clear beginning or end. It lacked structure and only gradually found its way into the headlines. But once it had been established as an item in its own right, *depression* was seen as inevitable, not as something that can be affected by human actions. Typical of the news texts in this phase was that analogies from weather forecasts and seasonal shifts became more common.

In the following phase, starting from 1992, the first signs of a change towards a more active instead of reactive frame occurred. The depression could be actively prevented or controlled.

Depression will not end while waiting (ESS, 9.8.1992)

8.3.2 *Depression as an actor in a dysfunctional system*

Once *depression* as a headline concept became normal, it started to be seen as an actor in its own right in a dysfunctional system. *Depression* was seen as a subject, capable of concrete actions. The term depression was used as a noun. In general, nominalization is the presentation of a process as a noun. Various aspects of processual nature in social life were portrayed as having been imposed upon society by the economic crisis in the form of a *depression* (“depression sweeps the society”).

Characteristically, nominalization as a process means vagueness in representation. There is no specification of exactly *what* is sweeping or *who* is an agent behind the process over *what period of time*, and so forth. A consequence of this nominalization was a shift towards a passive agency where responsibility could easily be obfuscated.

The textual organization of depression stories was mostly that of a narrative where dysfunctions of the society were caused by the depression. Much of the narrative was compressed into metaphoric expressions, where verbs referring to violent actions were used (depression knocks down, paralyzes, bites). Other metaphors portrayed the depression as using force towards or treating an affected part of, for example, a “patient.” Such verbs cast strong negative connotations and emotions on the issues and topics that are covered.⁸⁴

Metaphors can be seen as a way to grasp unfamiliar events in the natural world. Through metaphors, beliefs and desires can change. As Rorty writes (1991, 13), “a metaphor is, so to speak, a voice from outside logical space.” The importance of metaphors was their ability to change the conversation in interesting ways. By coining a new metaphor, the conversation was pushed in a certain direction that could not be seen beforehand.

As an actor, depression was characteristically presented as an uncontrolled force that took control over individuals, business life, provinces, and finally society as a whole. There are numerous examples of instances where

metaphorical vocabulary was used to describe the force and strength of the process.

Forest industry is diving into the half decade depression of
(LK, 20.11.1990)

Fur depression knocks down Pello Food (LK, 10.1.1990)

Golf business holds its breath in the grips of the depression
of holiday apartments (LK, 1.10.1990)

Lapland is sliding into the depression (LK, 30.12.1990)

Depression is paralyzing Thursday's auction
(LK, 28.2.1991)

Depression darkened the budget speeches in Lahti
(ESS, 3.12.1991)

Depression is also biting into social vacations
(Ilkka, 28.4.1993)

Depression takes control of everyday life – Those not in
control drift back to the streets (ESS 13.6.1995)

Metaphorically, the *depression* was causing illness, injuries, confusion, and dysfunctions to the system. One form of discourse, where control over the life of individuals and the regional community was given away, constructed an analogical relationships between the *depression* and natural disasters and contagious diseases. Typically, *depression* was adding new elements to the processes that were causing unhealthy (dysfunctional) effects and errors in the social practices.

Some of the verbs in the headlines connoted violent physical actions. The reader is lead to accept these expressions because they may be understood metaphorically. The words in the headlines and texts, and their connotations, however, were not always limited to metaphorical expressions. The wordings of the newspapers, more or less consciously, indicated that different sectors in society and in the regional community were subjected to violent physical manipulation by the economy.

Depression was “able to do” both good and bad things, although by 1992 the discursive representation of things caused by the depression shifted towards predominantly negative news. News journalism was describing risks in central functions of the social system such as health care and hospitals, legal help, and the labor market.

Depression brought a new feature to job seeking. Work is increasingly sought all over Finland (ESS, 6.8.1991)

Depression brought a backlog to legal aid offices (ESS, 18.11.1991)

The depression has caused a pile up of work in legal aid offices in the municipalities. For example, in Lahti people have to wait in line for approximately one month in order to get legal aid. In Heinola, the waiting time is approximately the same and in Hollola, three weeks. Depression has also brought new kinds of problems to legal aid offices, among those problems relating to the guarantee of debts. (ESS, 18.11.1991)

8.3.3 The system is slowing down

Expressions signifying reduction, slowness, disappearing, fading and decrease took on a central position in describing the consequences of the depression. The “healthy” social system was normally seen as a lively organism with a vivid output and input activity. A subcategory of the actor-based understanding of the depression was found in a common news frame in which the depression was understood as an actor operating in social and economic systems. The system was slowing down as a consequence of the effects of the depression. It was also a reason to slow down activities.

Depression is slowing down the treatment of epilepsy (ESS, 27.9.1991)

Depression gives a reason to slow down the development of social security (ESS, 21.5.1992)

Depression and a chilly early summer have decreased the desire to buy, summer clothes are still in the shops (ESS, 15.6.1991)

Depression has reduced bread eating (Karjalainen, 6.10.1992)

Depression has reduced children’s custody cases most in North Karelia and Vasa provinces (Karjalainen, 19.12.1993)

Depression takes the jobs of the young

(Karjalainen, 17.3.1991)

Depression has taken environmental secretaries from the municipalities (Karjalainen, 6.2.1995)

Typical of regional news items was also the emphasis on the collective basis of social living and community spirit. Values that appeared in the analysis of the editorials emphasized tradition as a source of joint effort and shared common values. News texts as such were not totally free from these kinds of key values. The value-laden components appeared in headlines and in news texts, where they were attached to stakeholders' public appearances or quotes from interviews, freeing the journalist as a producer from the responsibility of taking stances and forming opinions.

Depression forces communes to seek voluntary workers

(ESS, 27.2.1992)

Voluntary social work is more sought-after now during the depression than for decades. Municipalities are forced to cut their expenditure and pressures to take care of undone work are rising all the time. Efforts to draw people into voluntary work have usually been suffocated because of the lack of interest.

“In Finland there is still an old and solid tradition of doing a job together but perhaps it broke down during industrialization and urbanization. Perhaps we became urban too quickly,” says Toukoaho. (ESS, 27.2.1992)

The range of the power of *depression* was unlimited. As an agent, it was able to affect different entities, from business sectors to whole provinces (or the entire nation). The tendency, however, was that the *depression* operated from clearly sectorized sub-systems and the effects spread to larger entities.

Typical of the news genre, the news texts concealed history presenting events as autonomous, instantaneous, and rapidly emerging. Depression was seen as an inevitable condition of human life that forces people to do different things. Thus the structural context of events was erased (see Galtung & Ruge 1999, 30). As was the case in the analysis of the editorials, an

important task for the news analysis was to diachronically retrieve change and thus detect causal relationships. Change over time and causation was revealed, for example, in the analysis of how the news frames were transforming when the process of crisis became steeper and more continuous.

The spatial scale used in the depression stories was interesting. Sometimes the province was represented as an organism grieving the consequences of the depression. The province was metaphorically presented as a victim that was an object of violent actions. The province was a *sensing and feeling entity* that was capable of grieving and suffering. Provinces had the characteristics of a living organism and they were exposed to different forceful actions.

Depression wrung the entire province (Ilkka, 27.12.1991)

Economic depression is putting pressure on of South Ostrobothnia (Ilkka, 28.12.1993)

The province of Häme grieves the consequences of the depression (ESS, 6.6.1995)

Päijät-Häme suffered most from the depression (ESS, 18.12.1995)

Depression has treated different parts of the country differently when measuring the development of the GDP. Coastal provinces have recovered with less damage than the inland provinces. The worst sufferings seem to have been caused to Päijät-Häme, Pirkanmaa, and Häme.

...

According to the three last years' mean value, there are six provinces in Finland that do not come up to "the poverty line" used by EU countries, i.e. the GDP per capita is less than 75 percent of the mean of EU countries. These provinces are South Ostrobothnia, South Savo, Kainuu, North Karelia, Middle Ostrobothnia, and North Savo.
(ESS, 18.12.1995)

Unlike the editorials, the news did not contain ideological statements on regional policy. News stories on regional inequality were based on statistics. According to the regional script or narrative, each region was in the "worst"

or most “unequal” position in comparison to other regions. For example, in Lapland the dichotomy *South* vs. *North* was used.

Again the depression cannot be seen before it is in the South
(LK, 1.9.1990)

Finland is going into the most recent regression with its eyes half shut. As in the past, once again the pattern is repeated: the downturn that started in the outlying areas of our fatherland will only be admitted as real when it can be detected in Helsinki. (LK, 1.9.1990)

The worst effects of the depression are still on their way to Lapland (LK, 27.12.1995)

It is easily understandable why these items ended up as news stories. Negativity is a general news value. Negative changes are usually more newsworthy than positive changes. Regional newspapers were bound to report perceived inequalities between regions, especially when they concerned their own territory. This attitude was earlier called “homely racism,” but it could also be defined as *regional ethnocentrism*.

Especially in the beginning of the economic crisis surprisingly few news stories concerned with the structural inequalities of the nation were found in the sample. Typically, in the news texts structures were absent, as were reflections on larger societal constraints and conditions. If structures were reflected, they were usually seen through the lenses of “someone,” i.e. a source who was defining the situation and quoted in the news text. In particular, when depression was used as a noun, the relationships between causes and consequences were erased. Consequences of the depression were represented as natural laws and beyond the reach of human activity.

When more structural articles began to emerge, the usual regional script included a spatially-defined dichotomy between *us* and *them*. *They* (e.g., the Cabinet, politicians, administration) are trying to subordinate *us*. However, it is notable that when the depression reached its peak in 1993, the national consensus also appeared on the regional news agenda. Regional newspapers began to refer to a national entity (e.g., Finland, the whole country, and society).

Consequently, due to the generic rules of the news genre, signs of a

legitimation crisis were not so visible in the sample of news texts. News journalists usually avoid political and ideological connotations in their outspoken form, for example, when requesting the legitimacy of the decision-makers. However, where expressions of legitimation and motivation crisis were found, they followed a common pattern with the editorials. In the news sample, legitimation crisis comprised two categories. The first category included stories related to structural inequalities and the transformation of the nation-state. The second category comprised stories about the displacement of political responsibility, often questioning the legitimacy of the decision-making apparatus.

Depression-Finland allocates livelihood subsidies on varying grounds (ESS, 10.11.1991)

The depression is dragging Finland into a meritocracy (LK, 11.1.1993)

Structures of society must be changed after the depression (ESS, 12.7.1993)

“We cannot build a similar society in a changed environment. The present whirling society can no longer guarantee anything solid or stable. We must create new values for this society. These values must be feasible,” stated Rahkonen. (Päivi Rahkonen is the director of the municipality of Pukkila) (ESS, 12.7.1993)

Notable here is the pronoun *we*, which was used in these news stories. Usually, the *we*-discourse referred to Finns in general, the national entity, and not only to the regional community. A typical feature of the Finnish culture was that the national *we* was becoming stronger than the regional *we* during the most severe time of the economic crisis. This observation coincides with other research relating to Finnish identity. Some researchers (Therborn 1998; Saukkonen 2000) even claimed that the Finns are the only people among the Nordic countries who identify themselves more with a national entity as compared to a regional or local identity.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the sense of *we* was based on common values, not on material conditions or a political regime.

Finland is rising from its edges. The depression treated different parts of the country differently (LK, 18.12.1995)

8.3.4 *Who is to be blamed?*

Peoples' motivation in times of crisis according to Habermas (1976, 95), is shaped through the internalization of symbolically-represented structures of expectations that are in part collectively formed in public. In news texts, certain participants and individuals form these structures of expectations. The State, in general, cannot establish the identity of a society or the identities of regional entities, nor can it on its own, through administrative policies or decisions, carry out social integration through values and norms. Political sub-systems, such as regions with their coherent set of values can, be seen as taking on the task of protecting society from disintegration. The development of news stories gives some support to this conceptualization by Habermas of the motivational aspects of the crisis.

The *participants* and *culprits* of the depression were not frequently mentioned or referred to. The avoidance of this question may have been due to a conscious emphasis of a discourse of consensus in the newspapers. The news stories reflecting regional ethnocentrism usually only emphasized inequalities between regions and left out other types of manifestations of social exclusion. When such manifestations occurred in the news stories, they reflected statements by politicians. Here, the news agenda followed the agenda of the editorials: the longer the crisis continued, the more frequent the moral and ethical claims. One began to ask: *who is to be blamed?*

Was it really we who caused the depression? The feelings of the wage earners are heated (LK, 27.9.1991)

“Can't SAK (The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions) state that those who have money should pay? They could cut one half away from the biggest salaries in the country so that there would be no need to touch people with low incomes,” insisted a worker participating in SAK's action meeting yesterday in Tornio. (LK, 27.9.1991)

For moral reasons it was demanded that, the “culprits” take the responsibility for what had happened. Usually a division was made between the rich and the poor, between the upper-middle class and the underdogs. This frame was clearly based on a politically-motivated questioning of the legitimacy and rationality of governance. Interestingly though, the claims evoked class divisions of society, and was not a quest for political responsibility.

The priests of Lapland: the culprits of the depression must be pointed out (LK, 14.10.1992)

“The upper middle-class in power is used to such a selfish life and growing welfare that it will certainly not propose cuts in their own income. Children, the sick and the old have to carry an unreasonably large part of the joint effort to overcome the economic crisis and depression. This is a question of morale, says clergyman Rundgren.” (LK, 14.10.1992)

In these news stories, we can already observe the economic crisis moving into the political system. In the news stories, this was portrayed as an avoidance of the government to take responsibility. The strong legitimacy of the government that had been based on trust in the system, had compensated for a perceived deficit of rationality in the government’s political behavior. This trust was now consumed and the confidence in the government evaporated. Instead, hopes to solve the crisis were placed in the private sphere. The crisis tendencies that had grown from below, from the voters’, citizens’ and active social actors’ (representatives of congregations) distrust. The question *who is to be blamed* was hard to answer.

Who started the depression? (ESS, 6.3.1992)

Also in Soini an unemployed person ponders whether it is his own or someone else’s fault (Ilkka, 18.10.1991)

Depression is so wrong (Ilkka, 28.11.1993)

Depression of the yuppies (Ilkka, 27.5.1991)

8.3.5 Depression as a mental phenomenon

As could be expected from what was said earlier about the logic of a meaning-market system, the formation of news frames and the formation of news

values were reciprocal. The frames and values were formed in a dialectical process in which culturally significant values gained importance. It is interesting that the values that gained importance, as the crisis continued, were notably from the mental and spiritual spheres.

The development over time of the news stories and the news frames marked different phases of the economic crisis. First structurally and sectorally-framed business dysfunctions extended to other parts of social life of the regions. Then it “leaked” into the individual and micro level, turning into a mental process. People’s values of were normatively portrayed as positive: a willingness to change (adapt, adjust and transform) under the new conditions. Medical vocabulary was based on “the remedies” that were sought to cure the state of mental unbalance of the regional community. It was no longer a question of a “sick society,” but also of a “sick people.” Medicalizing the crisis led to seeking psychological causes that encompassed the regional community.

In 1991, the news stories about the depression turned towards portraying it more as a citizen’s and an individual’s matter. The “depression” caused fear and mental disorder. It was squeezing people and making them mentally depressed. The value of work, traditionally an essential part of the Finnish culture, rose once again to be defined as the purest value. Paradoxically, the rate of unemployment began to rise, while work ethics and the value of work became more precious.

Arja Palokas believes in three words: Change, a positive attitude and development will save us from the grip of depression (ESS, 18.8.1991)

“Nobody should throw in the glove and give up. Rather, people should take every chance that comes along: educate and develop themselves. When this depression fades it will be important to know the beat of the time.” (ESS, 18.8.1991)

This discursive mode of addressing the reader was a source of consensual *we*. *We* as a consensual pronoun claimed to speak for the people. How *we* were supposed to behave was exemplified in the regular news reports, quotations, statements, and interviews, which illustrated such qualities as patriotism, empathy, perseverance, and the “right” attitudes.

Depression is already squeezing entrepreneurs to seek medical treatment (Ilkka, 13.2.1991)

The fear of depression is biting – New business premises are not selling (Ilkka, 11.2.1991)

In a depression but not depressed (Ilkka, 15.9.1991)

The entrepreneurs of Ilmajoki will not be depressed (Ilkka, 18.9.1991)

Depression in North Karelia has also been a depression of ideas (Karjalainen, 29.12.1991)

Those injured by depression (Karjalainen, 14.10.1992)

Depression can be mourned away (Ilkka, 5.10.1992)

Few keep their heads cool – Depression and mental health on the agenda in Vaasa (Ilkka, 1.10.1992)

“Willingness to become retired has also increased, as well as stress, depression, insomnia, and a sense of losing on one’s self-esteem, not to mention alcohol and drug-related problems. Others are trying stay at work, even when they are ill, because they fear they will lose their job. Also, the need and quest for medication for mental problems has increased violently,” lists Latva-Nevala. (Ilkka, 1.10.1992)

Adjustment and constant self-improvement certainly stemmed from the Finnish culture that values industriousness, activity, and perseverance above all. Adjusting to external conditions was obligatory for people in the early history of the country. Consultation in form of statements and interviews were now sought from health care specialists, psychiatrists, priests and psychologists. Specialists from the economic sphere were not consulted as frequently as earlier.

Entrepreneurship is a game of survival during the time of depression (Ilkka, 4.9.1992)

The unconscious can be used as an assistant, even to beat the depression (Ilkka, 10.11.1993)

Esa Jaaksi believes that the Finnish people will rise up from the depression with the help of innovations. The future of Finland is now in the hands of sensitive citizens. Even the taciturn Ostrobothnian shows his sensitivity in relation to nature. Even purposeful self-reliance may be a salvation; if work cannot be found in a village, then it can be found at home. You can always come up with something.”
(*Ilkka*, 10.11.1993)

The specialists that were consulted usually made statements or gave public advice on how to survive the depression. The news stories based on such statements and interviews were often formulated to guide moral and normative behavior. Thus, they provided a basis for such attitude formation among the people in regional context that was most preferable from the point of view of a regional meaning-market. The frontier between an economic phenomenon at the societal level having consequences on the individual psychological level, and mental depression at the individual level affecting negatively on the economic and social structures of a society, became blurred. Depression was framed ambiguously as a mental and psychological phenomenon, in addition to being an economic phenomenon.

The mind is shaking in the grip of depression
(*Ilkka*, 11.10.1994)

Depression was seen as a learning process, a development story, a narrative whose basic lesson was that something is learned from hardships and old failures and errors will not be repeated. “Easy solutions” were seen as political populism and were harshly condemned.

This learning process and development story of the depression was presented as one that eventually would have positive outcomes as well. Old values were demolished and new functional values, considered to have positive impacts on the life of the regional communities, were consolidated.

Depression opened the road to mental health
(*Ilkka*, 2.10.1995)

The depression restored values and opened the nooks of the mind. This is the most important reason why suicides have clearly decreased in number compared to the action-packed 80s. This does not mean that anguish has decreased. It has only changed its form. (*Ilkka*, 2.10.1995)

A notable and interesting detail is that the role of the church and congregations also increased. This was seen particularly in letters-to-the-editor in some regions. Also in the news, in the early 90s, the church and the employees of the church became a new group of participants. This included priests, clergymen, and employees of the congregations. A spiritual and mental turn in feeling and sensing the depression probably caused the rise of a new group of actors, or recursively new groups of actors made their way into the media and caused this turn.

A typical feature of regional journalism was to give voice and access to other players and withdraw the traces of journalistic activity from the texts. Professionals with positive values and morals were emphasized. In some regions, notably in Southern Ostrobothnia, the Church played an important role when advice was sought to help survive alienation and to support the depressed.

It is time for the church to help the spiritually depressed
(ESS, 8.2.1993), says bishop Voitto Huotari.

Congregations ready for a change of course: Depression calls for voluntary aid workers (ESS, 10.11.1991)

A national survey made among the employees of the Church, shows that there is a readiness to shift the activity of the congregation towards concrete help. Pressure to this end is created by the insufficient societal caretaking of people in debt and refugees. (ESS, 10.11.1991)

A seed of blessing is found in the depression
(*Ilkka*, 21.4.1992)

A strong undertone of religious movement, presenting the Lutheran Church as an active element in the cultural life of the region, came across in

some stories. Lost ideals and moral values were sought from the Church and clergymen.

*Bishop Yrjö Sariola in Vaasa: Society in the grip of crisis
(Ilkka, 29.4.1992)*

“Is our society heading towards a serious moral crisis?” asked the bishop of Lapua’s diocese, Yrjö Sariola, when speaking on Monday at the National Veterans Day commemoration in Vaasa. According to Sariola, the situation has become serious,
“As if our whole society were turning into one big economic enterprise, functioning according to cold capitalistic realities.” (Ilkka, 29.4.1992)

8.3.6 Hardship will teach us a lesson

The depression was seen as a moral lesson that clarified basic values for the people.

The cultural frame of many news stories placed the depression in the position of a test of the system and a *correction coefficient* of the malfunctions of the system. Economic hardship was seen as an active cause of a positive outcome. A request for joint responsibility was linked with reports about the tightening economic circumstances of the households. The newspapers reported on the social consent that was secured when people carried their responsibility, sharing with those who were less privileged. The depression was adjusting to circumstances and changing conditions.

In this sense, the depression began to be portrayed as a moral lesson within the community. It reached a motivational crisis level. “Finnishness” and national identity were manufactured partly through stories on historical hardships glorifying the poverty, scantiness, and harshness of living in Finland. These narrow living conditions were treated as proof of the perseverance and exceptional characteristics of the common people. The discursive construction *hardship will teach us a lesson* became part of regional meaning-markets, being emphasized multiple times and in multiple forms in the newspapers. The basic logic of this construction was elegantly revealed in a letter-to-the-editor published in Karjalainen:

Depression makes people more humble and closer to each other (Karjalainen, 18.10. 1992)

The entire depression was a huge misunderstanding. A series of unsuccessful experiments led to a huge boost and then collapsed. We have all been stupid. However, trying to find the culprit is in vain. Now is the time for a total clean-up!

All in all the depression is a lotto prize for the Finns. It makes people more humble and closer to each other. It puts first things first. It (depression) cuts out the unnecessary and that what is necessary is left. Indeed, it demands a thorough cleaning, both internally and externally.
(Karjalainen, 18.10.1992)

The same basic idea was reflected in numerous news stories mostly by interviewees and other “key persons” of the region.

Depression brought joy to the arts (ESS, 1.5.1992)

Depression did not snuff out joint responsibility (ESS, 27.5.1992)

One's own depression seems only to increase a sense of responsibility (Ilkka, 14.2.1992)

Depression brings the entrepreneurs of Laihia together (Ilkka, 18.10.1991)

Depression reduced crimes in Lahti (ESS, 27.1.1993)

Depression brought new values to the fore (ESS, 7.8.1996)

The depression had educated people to carry the responsibility for the common well-being and reduced selfishness. Discussion about social values continued until the end of the studied period. It is worth noting that the positive portrayals of the depression increased over time in the newspaper stories, being most positive in the years 1995-1996.

Depression brought patients' relatives to participate in the care work (Ilkka, 11.3.1993)

The depression augmented the joint spirit of the youth work (LK, 19.1.1994)

The depression as a lesson was portrayed as teaching not only new moral values but also practical skills to customers, citizens and firms, and forced people to seek self-improvement through education. The discursively-constructed frontier of before vs. after the crisis was a watershed through which new superior values were ground into the vocabulary (e.g., humanism, utilitarianism, joint responsibility).

This idea was summarized in a column by the former Center Party Minister, Eino Uusitalo, who wrote about how hardship has clarified the moral values of the people:

The positive sides of the depression (Ilkka, 13.7.1995)

“The depression has taught us to adjust expenditure to income. The depression has taught responsibility. The depression has taught us that no permanent result will be created without work and sacrifice. The depression has conceived new ideas that will improve sources of income and welfare. The depression has taught us to reflect on what is right and what is wrong. Before the depression, the border between right and wrong was too easily blurred. The depression has taught us to relate ourselves more sensible towards the services offered by the society. The depression has taught us humanism.” (*Ilkka, 13.7.1995*)

The same idea was reflected in numerous news stories.

Depression time forces people to study (Ilkka, 27.7.1993)

Depression has taught people to be more observant

(Ilkka, 7.9.1993)

Depression time educates the consumer to be careful

(Ilkka, 21.12.1991)

Depression gives time - education serves firms, workers and customers (LK, 16.6.1992)

In spite of the regional differences, the newspaper stories also related the depression to a mutual frame, the perceived *Finnish way of life*, which for example Kortteinen (1987) has characterized as “the ethos of survival.” According to Kortteinen, the Finns experience the world as a hard place in

which survival requires accepting hard conditions. In the news stories, the traditional values of the Finnish rural society were given new actuality in the light of the increasing pressures that met the new urbanized living environment due to vanishing working opportunities. This brought back the core values of the Finnish way of life. In this survival game, those who survive could feel a great deal of pride.

A discursive link was built between work and sacrifice. Dichotomies, like right and wrong, were common. The discourse of joint responsibility was typical of the time.

*Depression does not decrease the willingness to help
(Ilkka, 1.12.1991)*

8.3.7 Depression as a disease of the system

The medical discourse of depression was very revealing. Discourses about diseases are also cultural phenomena and the metaphorical use of medical vocabulary in journalistic discourse is not a novelty. Diseases, especially those where healing methods and medicines are not easily known lend themselves to portray threats to the community. In the news stories on the depression the medical discourse was a typical way to interpret the crisis.

Compared to metaphors borrowed from the realm of war and conflict, that were presented in earlier chapters, the metaphors of sickness and well-being were in dichotomic roles in describing the depression.

In the discussion of depression a new vocabulary borrowed from the medical field was coined. One of the consequences of continuing the conversation by coining new metaphors is that eventually those metaphors that had been used earlier became dead ones. The new metaphors cleaned up and systematized the discourse, and at the same time unpacked and form a new vocabulary of the crisis.

Through medical metaphors, the depression was described as a disease of the social organism. Typical to the Finnish culture was that work was seen as the most suitable cure in the situation. In the discourse of the regional newspapers, work and the right values relating to the traditions of the region were seen as the best cure fore the disease.

More depression medicines (Ilkka, 21.4.1994)
Tango is a depression medicine (Ilkka, 9.7.1994)
Terminal care over the depression (LK, 12.5.1991)
Construction is a depression medicine for the budget of Kuusamo (LK, 21.11.1991)
Medicines against depression from North Karelia (Karjalainen, 15.3.1993)
The depression medicines of the influential people of Päijät-Häme: Those who talk about strikes should shut up and the unemployed should go to work (ESS, 29.8.1993)

A strike threat is insane and paying unemployment subsidies for nothing is money thrown waste; these are views that the influential people of Päijät-Häme agreed upon when a treatment for the depression was discussed. (ESS, 29.8.1993)

It is not hard to detect the key values of this frame. Industriousness, activity, responsibility, and cooperation were emphasized. The values offered were strikingly similar to those in the editorials.

We will get rid of the depression by working with might and main (LK, 2.1.1992)
Finland will not rise from the depression without work (ESS, 1.8.1993)

The CEO from Nastola, director of the city council and single father of three sons, Erkki Puolakka would like to relieve the Finns of one disillusion. “People still seem to think that the depression will be slipped through without work. If less work is done in a company, its situation gets worse. The same applies to society. Finland cannot rise if 20% of the labor force is not on the line,” says Puolakka. We can find work anywhere. Cleaning the environment, for example, in “this Russian look-alike country” would offer much work to be done. (ESS, 1.8.1993)

Besides work, education was another cure for the situation that was offered in the news stories. The value of self-development and education has been highly emphasized in the Finnish culture for decades. Part of that can be explained by the fact that Finnish culture is quite young compared to European civilizations. Thus, the Finns are feeling lower self-esteem in comparison with their fellow Europeans.

Depression time should be used for education

(Ilkka, 15.10.1990)

During the depression one should invest in self-development

(Ilkka, 21.1.1992)

One of the constant themes in the newspapers was to present education and knowledge as survival strategies for individuals. Two core values were self-reliance and industriousness. The individual was seen as responsible for him/herself and the strategies to survive hard times were to work and constantly improve oneself. Structural dysfunctions could be beaten through hard work and individual perseverance.

Depression can't bite knowledge (Ilkka, 10.4.1992)

With work against the depression (Ilkka, 2.1.1991)

Fending off the depression was also framed as a “joint effort.” Hardship invokes collectivism and joint spirit. This viewpoint was presented in a column in Ilkka:

With joint work against depression (Ilkka, 18.9.1992)

At present, many Finns have to worry about their life, means of living and daily work. It is the main problem for us Finns at this very moment.

But if we are honest, at the same time we have to admit that this problem is going to deepen the more selfishly the good-fortuned – and this state concerns many people – are pushing their priorities and are not ready to give up anything for the sake of others.

To blame others, search for others' faults and shortcomings, and boost oneself by honest or dishonest means is part of

today's picture of Finnish life. Usually it is even so that, the higher the branch people are sitting on, the more openly they struggle for their own benefits. It is depressing to follow this kind of activity, for example through television.
(*Ilkka*, 18.9.1992)

The same perspective appeared in the news stories.

Even families with children must take part in joint efforts of the depression (*ESS*, 7.10.1992)

Depression will not ease off by blaming someone but through effective co-operation (*Karjalainen*, 12.11.1992)

8.3.8 *History as a resource*

Regions are not only produced in contemporary social, economic and political relations. Interpretations of the past are important in order to maintain comprehension for continuity and even “development” of human life.

Therefore, the past can be understood and interpreted anew in the present historical situation. It can be lived through symbolic forms of media content and thus it can be analyzed through this symbolic formation as well. In this sense, most of the past events are understood via mediated forms of knowledge.

The world is always represented from a certain ideological point of view, including certain power-relations between actors and between institutions. History is used as a resource in understanding the present change of society. Sometimes the readers are assured and consoled when learning that in earlier phases of history people survived worse hardships.

The recession in the 1930s and 1990s were born from the same ingredients – Depressions almost like brothers
(*ESS*, 6.12.1996)

The one who had work was even envied – Our time is a small recession compared to the big economic depression
(*LK*, 8.2.1992)

Several news stories were built on comparisons between historical crises and the present crisis. This frame suddenly gave the older generation authority in interpreting the present time. This was one of the few instances where (older) citizens were used as sources in news and feature stories.

“At least until now, the present recession has been a small recession when compared to the first years of the 1930s. Even the post-war years in Finland were worse than today.” This is how Mooses Piispanen, who is as old as our independence, assesses the much-spoken-of current state of affairs of the nation. (LK, 8.2.1992)

Comparing the periods of depression is difficult. Economic depression has to be distinguished from shortage of products (LK, 8.2.1992)

The real eras of depression (LK, 1.2.1993)

Depression regularly repeats itself (LK, 23.3.1992)

We survived the war, so we will survive the depression time as well (ESS, 8.12.1993)

Besides the old, even the young people were given access and a “voice” in evoking the ethos of survival. History and historical events were often used as a cultural resource to assure people of the changing periods and people’s capacity to survive. The dynamics between generations was rarely evoked in other contexts.

According to Kirsi Tuikelahti, in order to recover from the depression the culture, art, creativity, and empathy towards those in a weaker position is needed. The young also need support from the older generation for the tradition of equality in Finnish society to continue.”(ESS, 8.12.1993)

Common history as a resource for survival stems from the consensual features of Finnish ideology and its strength to consolidate the national community. This approach to the depression comprises the theory that a society shares all its interests in common without regional or any other division or variation. Consensus is expressed in appeals for “one nation”

and for people to “join in the work against the depression.” Usually these kinds of appeals were made in the name of the common national history.

8.3.9 *Seeing beyond the depression*

Depression balloon bursts! (Karjalainen, 20.8.1994)

The first signs of a relative economic recovery were seen during the years 1994-1995, when the GDP per capita in the studied regions increased in comparison to the national average (see Chapter 6). However, this development did not prevail. Compared to the national average, the years 1995 and 1996 were the darkest in terms of relative regional GDP in these four regions.

When the regional newspapers covered the regional economy, they faced problems of a cultural nature. When writing about the firms and industry of the region, the effects of the stories on the economy was not unproblematic. News coverage of the economic development is part of the regional meaning-market. Texts about this sector are closely followed by the business life of the region, including the export sector. As noted in Chapter 6, usually publicity for the firms created positive expectancy values and was thus positive. The effect however, could also be the opposite if the news as negative. As also noted in Chapter 6, the newspapers were aware of that what they wrote could affect expectations, and thus the economic development of the region.

In some regions, news stories reported signs of recovery as early as 1991, but these stories were rare. Partly they were the results of the documented policy line of the regional newspapers to give higher priority to positive news. Partly this frame could be linked to overly optimistic forecasts of the continuance and development of the depression at the beginning of the 1990s.

*Banks already see signs of recovery from credit depression
(Ilkka, 18.7.1991)*

More realistic reporting of an economic recovery, however, had to wait until the mid 90s.

Brightening, though depression is still punishing municipalities (Karjalainen, 14.10.1994)

The people of Lahti are already looking beyond the depression (ESS, 3.9.1996)

A quite interesting example is an article in Lapin Kansa, where irony is used as a part of the argumentation.

The end of the depression (LK, 8.2.1994)

The Prime Minister of the Finnish government, Esko Aho (Centre Party) has declared that the depression has ended. According to Aho, the depression already had ended in early autumn. (...) The reason for Enchanting-Aho (Ex-depression-Aho) not to tell about the end of the depression until now is that the fact had been drowned in other governmental business. The busiest of the ministers, the Minister of Employment, Ilkka Kanerva (the National Coalition Party) regrets the incident. (LK, 8.2.1994)

During 1997, the tone in the news stories changed drastically. Depression was something that was in the past. Reminiscences and memories from the depression were fading, but constant problems and quite a high rate of unemployment were still part of people's life-words.

Unfinished houses as reminiscences of the depression (ESS, 5.9.1997)

Depression was forgotten in the municipalities in 1996, fast increase in expenditures (ESS, 28.12.1997)

The municipalities obviously had the impression that the depression was over and people could return to their normal agenda. This could be seen in a strong increase in expenditures. (ESS, 28.12.1997)

There was a visible suspiciousness towards the new economic boost, and a “new depression” was expected at the same time. The depression had left a mark on the collective consciousness and shattered the sense of ontological security. The loose use of money in the form of increasing communal expenditure was condemned harshly. The social welfare rhetoric vanished from the news stories.

Is there a new depression ahead of us? (LK, 7.11.1997)

The existence of an economic ontology was apparent in every corner. The spiritual and material realms however, were mixed in journalistic discourse. Although its origin was financial, the process of the economic crisis had caused collective mental symptoms in the people, also in the form of a new insecurity. The direction from which moral support was sought was highly dependent on the cultural characteristics of a region. For example, the following article in Ilkka portrays the future as if constant insecurity had come to stay, and the spiritual and material realms were connected when giving advice to the regional community:

*People wake up from the depression to a hard world
(Ilkka, 2.10.1995)*

“We are now getting out from under the grip of depression. Tonight there is great cause for gratitude in this church. The gross national product is increasing briskly and our national currency account balance shows a surplus. Inflation is low and the number of jobs is increasing. It seems that the recently made two-year income policy agreement will succeed,” CEO Matti Pekka reminded us, speaking at hymn singing evening for the Northern People in Ylistaro. He emphasized that now we only have to break the high mental wall in front of us that prevents us from trusting the future.”

“We are going to wake up from the depression to a totally different world. It is hard, even merciless. The depression mercilessly divided our people in two. On the one hand, into those who are well-off and experience the depression mainly

through the newspapers or television screen, on other the hand, into the victims of depression, the unemployed, their families, people who are trapped in the corner with their debts, entrepreneurs that have slid into bankruptcy and victims of the transformation of the countryside.” (*Ilkka*, 2.10.1995)

At this time the internal differences within the regions began to attract notice as well. Also, within the regions the urban centers had survived the depression better than the outlying areas.

Seinäjäki region slipped through the depression like a dog through a gate (Ilkka, 4.6.1997)

8.4 Displacement and Tolerance - The crisis tendencies in depression stories

Depression brought an interruption of people’s routines, experiences, and sometimes equality in their immediate environment. Some news items used national history as a resource. In these stories, the depression was linked to expressions of a neo-romantic desire, recalling collective heroic actions of the past in which the present reality was rooted. Reminiscences from the nation’s past (the Winter War, the depression of the 1930s) were displayed side by side with the ongoing experiences. The reality of the depression was happening simultaneously at different places, on different scales, and could not be apprehended as a whole.

The analysis of the headlines and texts of the news stories shows that the *depression* was in most cases represented as a dramaturgical concept. The crisis signified a turning point in a fateful process. In spite of its objective existence in the form of measurable economic parameters on a national scale, the *depression* did not simply impose itself from outside the region. The crisis did not remain external to the identity of the persons, issues or firms that are caught in it. The depression, in most cases, was also seen as mental depression, and a lack of ideas and initiatives.

In the *discourse of depression*, the economy was represented as unstable, recessive and threatening. Within this broader discursive formation of crisis other sub-discourses were conceived. To define something as part of the economic crisis was a joint activity between the regional collective and the

Table XII. Journalistic representations of a region in the context of crisis

Region	Sense of region	Boundary	Possible crises tendencies	Regional key processes
Depression as an actor affecting region and community	Bounded organic area that is grieving and suffering; history and cultural identity as resource	Region as organic entity and regional community; shared identity	Agents and structures mostly erased	Regionalism; constructing borders; maintaining sense of place and continuity; producing collective stereotypes; Inclusion / exclusion practices
Depression as a political failure and cause of change	region as subordinate in regional system; Culprits and scapegoats of depression	Illegitimate reach of the State into the citizens private and local sphere	Legitimation crisis; rationality crisis	Negotiation on behalf of a region; discursive defense and resistance; border controls: discursive and political resistance
Depression as an actor in the economic and administrative sphere	Area bounded by commercial activity that is driven into chaos by "depression"	Economic administrative: region as a labor market and business area	Economic crisis; legitimation crisis	Reporting market economy and communal administration as a functioning part of State regulation and communal funding; inclusion of regional business life; maintaining a positive atmosphere to entrepreneurship
Depression as a mental phenomenon	Area bounded by characteristics of the people; depression as a mental hardship	Mentally administered frontier between the past and the future	Motivation crisis of the people	Reporting on social services and on the psychological perseverance of the community

media: readers and journalists.

Regional news aims at experiencing the immediate surrounding of a given community. In that sense, the news frames of what is going on are attached to the physical and material dimension as well as to the representations and conceived interpretations of the situation.

This is why the depression was seen firstly as a sectorized phenomenon of regional economics. Only afterwards did it "leak" into the private and individual spheres, turning into a mental phenomenon. Both in the editorials and in the news stories on the depression the route from a legitimation crisis

to a motivation crisis for the people was quite similar. The motivation crisis was apparent in the news sample in stories portraying changes in the socio-cultural system: the system output was seen as becoming dysfunctional for the State and for different sub-systems, for example, of social work; in the news stories this was framed as a problem for the individuals or citizens.

A fundamental finding was that the emergence of socially and culturally-constructed frames of the depression stories were part of a creative process. Through the *discourse on depression*, categories which were projected on the world in order to make sense of it were created. This was also how regional newspapers constructed the world of economic crisis.

Table XII, the basic characters of the most frequently-used frames are presented in four dimensions: their regional dimension, boundary, possible crisis tendencies, and key processes.

The depression was seen as an agent and the region as an affected part or a patient. In producing the interpretations of what was going-on, this was the most common news frame. The frame functioned through an action scheme (Depression-Verb-Affected). This *discursive model* also consolidated the regional community. A *region* was understood as an organic community sharing a joint spirit and group solidarity. There is no doubt that this discursively-engineered group solidarity also had commercial motives. In this frame, possible political reasons for the crisis have mostly been erased. Depression is used as a noun and thus represents regional/national economics as a powerful agent that is able to violate a region.

Provinces and regions were represented as organic wholes. The symbolic landscapes were able to sense and feel and contained inertia and the aversion to change. This was manifested as utterances of fear, insecurity and different forms of rejection and preservation of cultural forms (e.g., nationalism, separatism, fundamentalism and racism)

Key processes at the textual level emphasized the sense of place and clarified the frontiers between regional/ national, we/they, and here/there. These are quite common inclusion practices. A sense of continuity seemed to be important in its own right, in times of hardship as well. Sudden ruptures in the negative development were portrayed as even more threatening.

Depression as a political failure and a cause of political change. News items rarely contained straightforward criticism towards the political decision-makers. It is notable that “legitimation crisis” as such appeared only in a small number of depression stories. In the news stories, the crises tenden-

cies were portrayed from a “bottom up” perspective more often than from a more critical “top down” perspective. What happened at the local level, in the firms, communities and the public sector, was the foreground.

This rings true with the generic rules of news. Using oral speeches, interviews and statements, participants other than journalists were given a voice when the legitimation crisis tendencies appeared in the textual level. *Region* was understood as a political negotiator in a regional system, and the function of the newspapers was to defend the rights of the regional community in this political system. Key processes were political resistance and regional defense within a national system. The topics and issues raised were mostly about the financial crisis of the municipalities and the causes and consequences of the unemployment.

Depression as an actor in the economic sphere slowing down the system. Debts and insurance frauds frequently ended up as news items describing illegitimate values leading to societal dysfunctions. *Region* was understood as a mechanical system in which the errors caused the system to slow down (reduce, decrease and cut the activities).

The economy, in a regional context, meant production, and production was portrayed as a machine, meshing the regional community as it turned out goods. This kind of economic system needs care takers – technicians and engineers to make whatever adjustments were necessary to ensure the most efficient cooperation of the parts. When this specialized system seemed to become dysfunctional, it created confusion, and positive signs to boost the entrepreneurial spirit were reported whether they had a basis or not in the external reality.

Among the key processes was the reporting of how the regional economic system functions and keeps up the positive spirit to boost economic transactions.

Depression as a mental phenomenon and psychological dysfunction. Depression as a disease and its medicines were at the fore in this frame that appeared more frequently towards the end of the studied period.

Metaphors are helpful in organizing experiences, and one should speak about them sensibly in cognitive terms because through their very definitions they are in a central position in the agreed-upon market of meanings. *Depression as a disease* and *depression medicines* transformed the economic sphere into a biological organism, which was subjected to the same physical laws as the human organism. Economic laws, in this case were converted into something that was closer to human life and thus culturally more com-

prehensible. This could explain why metaphors were used in journalistic practices when the nature of the economic depression was translated into common knowledge.

The motivation crisis syndrome can be traced to increasing civil and familial-vocational privatism. Citizens no longer had an interest to take part in the legitimation process of the political system. They withdrew from political activities and even the voting behavior altered and became more passive. This corresponded to the structures of a depoliticized public space and to how the newspapers addressed the political topics. Issues and topics on the agenda were no longer political in a traditional way. They were more concerned with the life politics and mental health of the community. This may explain the fixed generic mode of how the topic of unemployment was described.

To summarize, *crisis avoidance* can be schematized as one of the action goals of the regional newspapers. The character of the decision process was portrayed as lying in the twilight zone between, on the one hand, unplanned and nature-like crisis development and, on the other hand, a development according to a political plan or strategic action line. The mode of justification that the administrative system and its negotiating partners followed in this situation was not portrayed as coherent but rather as reactive, on an ad hoc basis. Crisis in this context is both a complicated situation in which social practices of the economy, politics, and culture to a great extent are losing their legitimacy, and the basis of actions drift into a situation where emergency actions are called for, both by politicians and the common people.

A typical feature of the depression stories thus becomes a constant search for a common consensus. During the period, the process of the *region* came out as a vicious circle of people getting poorer and life getting harsher. This was not only based on facts that could be measured through statistics. Side by side with economically-oriented depression stories, there was news about migration, the deteriorating health of the people, and negative tendencies threatening the culture built around traditional livelihoods.

9 Sameness and difference

9.1 A matrix on regional culture

The focus of this study has been on the character of the crisis and its portrayal in regional newspapers. The media coverage of the crisis in regionally profiled newspapers was analyzed, asking how the “stories of the crisis” were brought to the people in a local setting and what kinds of journalistic strategies and argumentation were applied in handling the issues. Empirically, the focus of the study has been on the different modes of crises constructed and represented in the texts of four newspapers during a ten-year period. In addition, the types of journalistic strategies and techniques that were applied in handling the crises in the newspapers were explored.

Cultural studies have caused us to reflect, not only on our interpretations and comparisons but also on the logic of forming these interpretations and comparisons on which our results are based. As the Finnish sociologist Raija Julkunen has noted (2001, 13), narrating the decade of the 1990s provides an ample amount of versions depending on the interpreter. Furthermore, regions have their own narratives and frames of the depression. Theories and concepts naturally define the aspects that will be brought up, however the position taken by the researcher herself, also plays a role.

The analysis presented in this study shows that the journalistic representations of the crisis were different. Through these representations, the crisis seems to have been experienced differently by the communities in the studied regions. Regionally, there were variations in the scale and nature of the strategies for handling and reporting the crisis in the newspapers. The new

“project of Finnish neo-liberalism,” or “shift of direction in welfare rhetoric,” accentuated certain social qualities at the expense of others and revealed how newspapers were part of the process, openly promoting meanings in their meaning-markets.

The regional crisis was a process, i.e. an *economic-political dialectics* between a region, its cultural grammar, and the textually produced manifestations of the newspaper. When the society became economically-dysfunctional and persistent steering problems led to – in Habermasian terms – a legitimation crisis within policymaking – the result was not a revolution from below, a new State regime or even a fierce public discussion in the mainstream media.

In this process regional newspapers played their part by offering a sense of security and continuity. They soothed the community with positively “designed” pictures of the course of events and they fiercely defended the regions’ right to question the legitimacy and rationality of the political elites. As a consequence of this process, economic crises differentiated the cultural grammar of the regions.

The regional newspaper’s basic dimensions are: accountability to the public, responsiveness in terms of content of the stories, and reflexivity and monitoring the values and identity of the community. From this perspective, the newspaper had a function as a community builder and a modifier of the cultural grammar. Newspapers function as mediators of symbolic elements and collective ceremonies of a region. In addition the socialization process within regional culture is largely accomplished with the help of a system of representation that offers suitable discourses and identification poles for reconstructing communities. When *region* is understood as a community, the question of identity, the mentality of the people and cultural traditions are brought up in the interpretations and conclusions made in the public discussion.

It is not clear, whether regional disparities increased permanently or how the economic inequality between regions will develop in the future. One thing is quite clear, however: the structures of democracy and the legitimacy of the political system were discussed actively in regional newspapers. This study shows that there were variations in the reporting of the crisis in regional newspapers. *The northern, eastern, western and southern parts of Finland were living in their own social realities.*

First, I will summarize the findings related to how the region was represented in the selected texts, answering to the question: *How did the regional*

differences in relation to economic change appear in the four regional newspapers? The main discourses of the crisis and key values of the regions are presented in order to clarify temporal and discursive differences between the regions. Secondly, I will summarize the findings related to the question: *How was the crisis formed discursively and journalistically in the newspapers?* Thirdly, I will summarize the findings related to the question: *What was the character of the meaning-market forming the key values of the region?*

9.2 Sameness and difference of crisis

At first glance, mainstream media coverage seems to have remained as usual for the most part: only bad news is good news. The economic crisis was portrayed as a hardship with no choices. Studies of this period have claimed that, in the wake of the crisis, a vanishing space of open democratic discussion marked the decade of the '90s – at least in the national media.

However, in the regional newspapers, the style and frame of journalism changed notably during the economic crisis. Regional journalism was full of emotion, anger and resistance that aimed to change the course of the ongoing structural development of Finnish rural areas and the regional structure as a whole. Social, economic and cultural hierarchies between the town and the countryside, rural and industrial areas, the North and the South were fiercely discussed in order to make clear what was happening to the peripheral “backyard” and outlying areas of the country.

The economic crisis surely challenged both mainstream and regional journalism and their ability to capture transformations in central areas of society. Values that had become traditional (mutual understanding or social contract) did not remain unaffected. Cuts in welfare provisions and evolving regional disparities put the alleged functions of the media to a test. An analysis of this process requires both a contextual understanding of the situation and an analysis of the production of meanings, interpretation and larger frameworks of what was going on.

A closer look at different media, serving different audiences in different spatio-temporal surroundings indeed showed a variation. The content of the “depression” was not the same, independent of location, type of medium or type of journalistic genre. In spite of differences in genre, each regional newspaper was building a coherent and distinctive representation of

society. By doing this the newspapers were acting as interpretative communities within the democratic system. Different positions in the regional system gave rise to different representations and visions.

The main differences between these *interpretative communities* could be detected from the different kinds of cultural grammars organized within the regional meaning-market that were then displayed by the regional newspapers. Cultural grammars of the regions were organized as journalistic constructions in which the regional moral order was realized as pre-constructed scripts that were already familiar to the readers. The line of argumentation, certain participants (e.g., the Cabinet, the South, the farmers) and the changes of the “plot” contained certain values, concepts, and dichotomies of the cultural grammar. The story elements of the regional scripts raised certain issues and actors answering the questions of who is representing what on behalf of a region and how the history of a specific region is retold.

Scripts usually did not bother to spell out what was taken for granted. These kinds of scripts addressed the ideal regional readers and interpreters who were already familiar with the pre-constructed script of a regional editorial. The difficulties of the communities were already the subject of public discussion, and the difficulties were consolidated as social facts. On the other hand, cultural identity as a resource for surviving and comprising of valuable assets was also treated essentially as a social fact.

Theoretically distinguishable forms of crises – evolving at the levels of *legitimation*, *rationality*, and *motivation* of the regional community – were identified in the newspapers. First, the *economic and financial part of the crisis* was presented in the newspapers as the main problem. Shortly after, political interventions, dealing with the economic problems, produced manifestations of a *rationality crisis*, based on the difficulties to construct a stable social order on an unstable market economy. This led to a broader *legitimation crisis* that varied from region to region and in which the State and political elite lost part of its legitimacy, because they could not reconcile the conflicting demands posed upon them in the form of requirements to re-plan the economic system. In certain areas, the competitive drive and work ethic were weakened leading to a *motivation crisis* which also threatened *the social integration of the region*. However, every region experienced the modes of crises in a slightly different way, constructing clearly distinguishable periods of crisis representation.

The core discursive contradictions coming out of my analysis of the four

Table XIII. Variation of the meaning-markets in the studied newspapers

Meaning market	South ESS	West Ilkka	East Karjalainen	North Lapin Kansa
Economic Crisis	Depression as a sensitively reacting disease; crisis as an active actor; responsibility - irresponsibility of the system; dismantling the welfare state	Depression as a political process; equality - inequality; regional inequality of the system	Depression as an unfortunate hardship imposed upon the people; submitting - resistance	Depression as a curse; inclusion - exclusion; negligence of the State
Legitimation Crisis	Political failures, searching of culprits; political life as a game; compromise/ conflict; inefficient use of resources	The State as undemocratic ruler; harsh criticism towards neo-liberal policy; the State is tinkering with statistics; cooperation - confrontation; resistance	Social consent and intentions to cooperation; unrealistic hopes and failures of the system; consensus - confrontation; cooperation	Lack of democracy of the system; desertion; ignorance of regional differences; regional inequality
Rationality Crisis	Errors and stupid decisions of the system; short sightedness; the geographical ambivalence of a urban-rural border region; rationality - irrationality; financial discipline	Basic values are forgotten in the political system; criticism towards administrative renovations; central administration as a threat; request of fair governing	Regional welfare not only budget allocation; greediness of the South; passive State, activity of the region; regional policy as unfocused business; fairness - unfairness;	"The occult science of state subsidies"; irrational unemployment policy; rationality vs. irrationality of the system
Motivation Crisis	Risks and crimes of the life-world; rhetoric focused on individualism and emancipation; borderland identity; security insecurity; collective shame; alienation of the people; the failure of dynamics between generations in the labor market: "Society promised but never fulfilled;" trust-distrust; individual choice vs. collective obligation	Unemployment a structural, not an individual problem; migration and diminishing population; people as unequal groups; self-reliance - dependency; community spirit, farmers vs. administrators; European Union vs. sovereignty; we vs. the others; forgotten countryside; industriousness - idleness; collective effort	Periphery vs. center; displacement; border and reminiscences of war; migration; dying countryside; collectivism - privatism; cultural identity; hope vs. the trumpets of doom; failure in the dynamics of the change of generations in farming and forestry; securityinsecurity; hope - hopelessness	Forgotten North; South deserting North; depopulation of "last villages," self reliance- dependency; identity as resource; ambivalence towards the region; exoticism vs. harsh everyday life; fragmented housing structure; activity - passivity; hardship

newspapers' editorials are summarized into a picture of four different representations of different types of crises. These representations are presented in Table XIII.

Southern Finland. The discursive landscape of *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* was characterized by a politically-significant border between the traditional rural Finland and the southern part of the country, undergoing processes of urbanization and concentration. The themes of the meaning-market focused on (personal) security, order, traffic, environment, and risks that may challenge the lifestyle. The rhetoric and style of addressing the readers build on individualism, liberalism, and urban jargon. The countryside scarcely defined the newspaper's relation to its readers.

It could be claimed that *ESS* constructed the future of a region as a risk scenario. That scenario included multiple external and internal threats and risks of a social system.

These risks were most often threats projected towards individual citizens, for example diseases, drugs, crimes, and lack of education as origins of individual misery. Even the generation shift was seen as contributing to the dysfunction of the labor market, not the traditional failure of continuance in traditional means of living, as in other newspapers.

In *ESS*, stories on depression and economic crisis were part of experiencing the legitimization crisis. The discursive representation of the economic crisis included the failures and actions of the political elite. The system had failed and actors in power within the system had made mistakes. Actors in the political system were experienced as irresponsible and decisions were condemned irrational.

National and global economies were seen as sensitively reacting diseases that had an uncontrollable force over people. Tight financial discipline and management, exercised by families, municipalities, and the nation, were the only ways to control the damages. The motivation crisis was experienced especially through the alienation of the people and the failure of dynamics between generations. The young, the poor, and the unemployed were excluded from the social system. The region was seen as an active economic agent, and in many cases southern Finland was compared to other European regions, not to the other Finnish provinces.

The motivation crisis was broadened to include the whole national being and was shaded with collective shame. The degradation of "Finnishness" was revealed, especially when "the wealthy North" got help in the form of food from the European Union. This shame recalled memories

from the past, from the war-time and earlier history. An interesting observation was that when the whole nation-state was experienced as being in misery, the regional individuals suddenly were pictured as joining into a national group, the Finns. This observation revealed that faith in the nation-state itself, although not in the dysfunctional subsystems, remained strong during the ten-year period. At the motivational level, manifestations of insecurity, especially in relation to the future, were displayed. The newspaper *ESS* was also an active and sensitive regulator of the meaning-market in relation to the business life of the region. The newspaper was well aware of its role as a controller and a regulator of meanings, as has been shown in the excerpts of the editorials (Chapter 7), in the news (Chapter 8), and in the interviews with the editors-in-chief (Chapter 6).

Western Finland. Ilkka's relation to its surroundings is farmer-oriented, independent, and active (the last point can also be observed in the views presented in the letters-to-the-editor, columns and editorials). In *Ilkka's* journalistic and editorial content, an image of people as active entrepreneurs prevailed, and could be considered as a particularly West-Finnish feature. This image also intertwined with the (historical) profile of the wealthy farmer. The image was particularly evident in connection with political events, such as elections. The population of the province was the collective "we," as the Southern Ostrobothnian identity is a distinct category, which is continuously being actively developed with positive characteristics.

In comparison to the other regional newspapers, in the editorials of *Ilkka* the deepest legitimization crisis was seen as a function of the political situation (who was the Prime Minister, which were the major parties in the current government etc.). The economic crisis was about the failures of a regional policy that was regionally unequal. The State was seen as an undemocratic ruler and the political decision-makers were confronted openly. The motivation crisis was given its clearest expression in active policy lines taken by the editorial staff of *Ilkka* in order to re-include into the social system those that had been excluded (e.g., the unemployed, the farmers and the young). The entrepreneurial spirit was boosted by reporting every positive sign of new business activity within the region and displaying it in the newspaper.

Ilkka's editorials took strong stances trying to reach beyond the regional system and to be heard by the current government, and even representatives in European Union. *Ilkka* often defined Southern Ostrobothnia through party politics, whereas the newspapers in other regions defined their re-

gions more as “development regions” or rural territories. *Ilkka* also defended common values, such as patriotism, nationalism, and a provincial identity as part of the region’s cultural grammar and the Finnish way of life. This way of life included traces of collectivism and social welfare, although self-reliance and getting along with oneself were attached to the edifice of the greatest values of the regional meaning-market.

The fact that the means of living in Southern Ostrobothnia is more dominated by agriculture than in other regions must be kept in mind. This dimension colored most of the statements. According to the newspaper, entrepreneurship was one of the traditions of the region that people were proud of, also in agriculture. That is why the State’s engagement in the spheres of the region and its citizens is reflected ambiguously. A right-wing and collective ethos of the people was strongly emphasized and defended against State subordination.

The journalistic policy line of the newspaper *Ilkka* was quite clear, as noted in the interview with the editor-in-chief (Chapter 6). One official policy-line affecting the newspaper content was that journalists should be recruited from the region. In this way some kind of “natural partisanship” could be secured and a strong relation to the province could be maintained. This is how editors engage journalists whom they think reflect the readership’s mindset and whose general opinions and predispositions naturally match those of the regional public. Journalists stand inside the political and regional community. Although they have a distinct role in reporting to the public about its affairs, they should not have a distinct identity that removes them from that very public.

Eastern Finland. The nearness of the border with Russia fundamentally colored the content of *Karjalainen*. The proximity of the border also brought the peripheral nature of the region to the fore. Because of the border and its past history, the pages of *Karjalainen* are still greatly influenced by national history and the common past. This can be seen in the memories and recollections from the war and the frequent appearance of soldiers and veterans in the newspaper stories. The Karelia behind the border and the territories lost to the Soviet Union are still strongly present in the meaning-market of the newspaper. This can be seen in how the newspaper covers projects of cooperation and economic aid to assist the Karelian areas behind the border. From the point of view of the region and regional policy, how the province is reflected in relation to a national level, the newspaper’s style is crystallized in the *developing region* and *periphery* rhetoric that constantly

pinpoints suffering from the greediness of the South.

The editorials of *Karjalainen* reflect a region that bases its interpretations and judgments more on historical tradition, lore of the land, and symbolic events of the region. Finland's joining the European Union was presented in *Karjalainen* in a positive light, and the integration process was not covered in terms of a questioning of the legitimacy of the political decision-makers. This was perhaps the result of the region's geographical position and its closeness to the Russian border. The newspaper described a region that has for centuries been a meeting point between east and west, feeling collectively that the integration secured and consolidated the region's and Finland's position in the west.

As a borderland, Northern Karelia represented a quite distinct and clearly-structured symbolic world. The Winter War and World War II undoubtedly remain in the collective and historical memory of the people. These reminiscences colored the EU statements of the newspaper. *Karjalainen* had its own distinct and quite coherent relation to the center – that is to the Helsinki area. For a whole decade, Helsinki had enticed young taxpayers to leave their home territories. This could be seen in problematic relations where cultural belonging to the nation-state and to the region were intertwined in *Karjalainen's* pages. Northern Karelia as a region is represented as a home territory where cultural regionalism combines nationality and citizenship with the idea of a bounded, compact, distinct territorially-located, and rooted cultural heritage.

The legitimization crisis in *Karjalainen* was mostly experienced as an unfortunate hardship imposed upon the regional people. Unrealistic hopes were placed on the social system that was unable to function, and the collective spirit eroded when the State was unable to cater for the needs of the people. Very typical of the newspaper *Karjalainen* was a strong and emotional attachment to a region through which the legitimization problems were experienced. Northern Karelia was seen as a cultural Home and featuring “tribes” and Karelian mentality. The homeless nomad, the figure usually described in the recent cultural studies literature describing the identity politics of late modernity, was far from this cultural human type living in the shadows of tree-covered hills and closely attached to the forest and soil. Stereotypes, described already by Topelius in his time, were living their strong life in a regional newspaper and regionally-special features were emphasized. The strong regional identity was experienced as a resource in times of hardship. Perhaps this was why an attempt was made by the region-

al newspaper to repel the legitimation crisis with the help of consensus and a cooperation mentality.⁸⁶

Evidently, consensus is sought in order to strengthen the mentality of cooperation and consensus and thus trying to avoid the motivational crisis. Usually, *Karjalainen* promoted *the ideology of consensus*. The ideology of consensus was built on the assumption that, for a given group of people (in this case a regional community) it is a matter of fact that interests are undivided and held in common. This was how the production of a collective identity was secured in an institutional way. This ideology of consensus also assumed that people acknowledge this fact by subscribing to certain sets of beliefs and values. These values may have differed from time to time, but they are picked up and manifested in the meaning-market as soon as needed in order to re-secure the mode of governing and to re-establish regional coherence.

The territorial and symbolic (conceptual) vision transformed clearly from a history-bound agricultural region to a more active actor in national politics. The script of constructing a regional identity changed, but this transformation, however, did not go through a long hostile period of conflict between the State and the region.

Northern Finland. In *Lapin Kansa*, Finland is represented as divided into South and North. The Northern dimension, however, is not only a geographical positioning. The concept of “North” comprises understandings of the lifestyle of the people living in Lapland, harsh conditions, and the unique character of the region.

Lapland is one of the internationally best-known regions in Finland, and, as could be expected, tourism and traditional life came into conflict in the newspaper. The idea of being the last wasteland in Europe did not necessarily stimulate such regional policies that would make people stay in the region. On the other hand, many stereotypes concerning the Sámi, reindeers, and other perceived features of Arctic life also found their way into the newspaper stories as part of a tourism-rhetorical marketing of the region. This ambivalence, in turn produced the fear that the northern way of life cannot survive solely on a single, economically-vulnerable field of activities provided by tourism.

In the editorials of *Lapin Kansa*, the legitimation crisis was mixed with the collapse of the collective basis of motivation. Opposite domains of the cultural grammar of the newspaper were: north and south, subordinate and powerful, the forgotten periphery, and the center of power. The newspaper

openly confronted the political decision-makers. The sentiment of rationality disappearing from society was controlled and warded off by scolding people when traces of a rationality crisis emerged. The political governance of the country was experienced as unfair. The motivation crisis of the people was warded off by warning against an idleness that, according to the newspaper, was typical for the Lapps. Although Finnishness was constructed on a common loyalty, at times the subordination and the position of being neglected by the political elite were strongly manifested in the key concepts and values that were formed in the newspaper's meaning-market.

Lapin Kansa can be characterized by its strong involvement in regional policy matters. Usually the social problems presented concerned state actions in relation to Lapland. Editorials often use the power of metaphors and analogies. In the editorials and news stories, Lapland is described as a hermetic universe up in the North, an almost mystical region that was neglected and misunderstood by the Southern politicians, but an active and capable actor. A mythical ethos was supposedly needed in order to make the regional discourse of community spirit even stronger.

The regional consensus expressed by *Lapin Kansa* – and typical also of other regional meaning-markets – assumed and sometimes actually affirmed that within a regional group there was no disunity or difference in the interests or values. This content of the consensual assumption could be spelt out as a series of propositions and interpretations that described the regional reality during the crisis, emphasizing unity and coherence in the norms and moral orders. The interesting point was that the consensus was mostly posited on a set of beliefs or cultural values, not facts. The experienced depth of the crisis regionally depended on the contextual elements, such as the economic and social structures of the region, logistics of the location, numbers of big cities, universities, and so forth, but – more than that – it depended on the coherence and unity formed by the regional meaning-market.

Each newspaper, however, is dominated by relativistic tendencies that construct the region. First and foremost, the region was constructed in spatial social relations, and discursive formations and narratives that relate to these relations. Within these relations – and the newspapers were part of this process – the social and collective identities and their representations were formed. Secondly, the region was always built and described from some point of view. In this sense, the regions and places had no independent existence, they were not “really somewhere out there,” as clearly defined objects of description waiting for the journalistic machinery. Thus, they were

looked upon from several perspectives, leading to the different pictures of a region. Region – as an object of journalistic practice and as an object of research – was thus a part of cultural, economic, and social discursive formations rather than quantifiable facts. Thus the region was both process (also in the newspapers), and the symbolic product of this process in a specific regional meaning-market.

9.3 Journalistic strategies manufacturing the crisis

When looking at the specific journalistic practices and techniques of representation of how regional journalism represented the crises, it was interesting to notice that in the news texts the economic crisis was interpreted through quite stable sets of news frames (see Chapter 7). Though there were regional differences between news stories in different regions, interestingly enough, the dominating frames found in the news were quite similar in the studied newspapers, despite the notable differences that were found in the analysis of the editorials.

The four frames of the news could be defined as:

- 1) *Depression as an agent and region as an affected/patient*
- 2) *Depression as a political failure and the cause of political change*
- 3) *Depression as an actor in the economic sphere, slowing down the system*
- 4) *Depression as a mental phenomenon and a psychological dysfunction at the collective community level.*

This sameness in news production would lead us to the conclusion that the norms that had usually been applied to news journalism proved to be quite powerful in the studied sample of news stories, whereas the editorials presented more distinct regional profiles. Standardization of things and issues was typically-organized according to certain frames. The journalists used distancing when describing social problems in their contexts. Objectifying things usually led to the fragmentation of the picture of the economic crisis. Textual devices, that made producers free from responsibility, were used routinely. Mediated knowledge of “the regional reality” was thus closely attached to the social norms, values, and beliefs which constructed the

most preferable representations of political issues, different groups, and institutions.

Although the basic feature of the news frames was negativity (from the point of view of the regional community) they were obviously functional from the point of view of the regional meaning-market. Even the negative frames provided readers with a security of continuity and commonly-shared meanings stemming from the cultural basis. The unknown future became predictable as a part of a *mutual understanding of how the phenomenon should be framed*, i.e., how the surrounding territory was organized when the environment was in change.

Using metaphors to describe the depression was a common textual device. Generally, the depression was understood metaphorically as a contagious disease that was contracted through external influences on the regional system. Only the newspaper *Ilkka* defined the economic crisis primarily as a political phenomenon. Naturally, the final goal of a region (or a nation) was a development towards a more functioning and healthy state. The depression and its deviations affected this normal state of balance. When the metaphors were embedded in a regional discourse, depression as a disease threatened the regional community, home territory, and its people.

Depression was often described as a natural force or a hardship. The machinery of normal news production was unable to see the economic depression either as a cause of political decisions or a manufactured phenomenon of human actions. The invisible hand of economics was following the iron laws of the economic system that mostly remained invisible and unpredictable for the regional people and for the journalists themselves.

Sometimes the depression was metaphorically transformed into a human-like actor and a physiological vocabulary was used to describe the process of crisis (e.g., “the back of depression has been broken,” etc.). Clause combinations of the news were much simpler than of the editorials, and usually sentences were linked through their vocabulary, though quite restricted. *Talking about the different frames and discourses, the choice of metaphors was socially significant.*⁸⁷

Using nominalization in describing the depression was another typical textual feature in the sample of news texts. In general, nominalization is the presentation of a process as a noun. *The term depression was frequently used as a noun*, for instance in describing the process in which various aspects of social life are imposed upon reality and an agent is defined as simply a crisis or depression (“depression sweeps society”).

Nominalization characteristically leads to vagueness in the representation of a process. There is no specification of what is sweeping or who is an agent behind the process, over what period of time, and so forth. One possible consequence links nominalization to passive agency. Thus responsibility can easily be obfuscated. The active mode of describing depression as an agent was frequently used, especially in the news stories.⁸⁸

Typical of news items was that the news genre concealed history and presented events as autonomous, instantaneous, and rapidly-detached from their structural context. As in the analysis of the editorials, it was important in news analysis to retrieve change and causation diachronically. Some examples of change and causation were revealed when analyzing how the frames were transformed when the crisis became deeper and persistent.

This sometimes led to a *proliferation of certain themes and genres* in the newspapers. This proliferation process concerning themes was evident in themes like unemployment, regional policy, and, for example, future prospects for the regional economy. One theme suddenly began to increase in numbers as well as in generic forms broadening the scope and involving multiple journalistic techniques.

References to elite persons and institutions were favored at the cost of the common people of the region. Peripheries and outlying areas were more visible in the regional newspapers than in the national media, and the subordinate position in the system of these areas was used for ideological purposes. As always, journalists on regional newspapers gave priority to the highest person in the hierarchy as their source of information in a regional context. Usually ministers on provincial tours, local civil servants, deans of universities, and the most prominent representatives of the business life of the region were sources gaining the highest status and thus access to public space.

Ordinary citizens or individuals were not actors in the editorials. The distance between the system and the individuals is probably the most evident feature of this genre. Editorials reflected the society as a system and the region as a part of that system. They also criticize false representations that have been given about issues and conditions concerning the region.

The citizen's point of view was more frequently present in the news stories on the depression where the scope was broader than reporting solely on unemployment. Stories on the depression favored ordinary citizens and the common people only as a source of the mental stress of the time. Naturally, citizens have always been considered specialists on everyday life, but

usually commenting or presenting only secondary information about mental processes, i.e., “how does it feel to be unemployed?” and thus, being consequence-experts of the crisis. They are not supposed to answer questions about economics, the political structure or what the government should do.

One function of regional journalism, both news journalism and editorials, is to be a form of public conversation. My study of the newspapers does not provide much evidence of the use of a dialogical mode of journalism. Ordinary citizens as specialists rarely gained access to the agenda. The voice of the citizen could be heard in letters-to-the-editor or birthday interviews and the like. In the depression stories, however, a large number of reports were based on the speeches, statements, replies to questions, and other individual utterances and writings. These formats provided a rich selection of sources in the form of personal utterances by people that are considered individually-important in relation to a region that is the regional elite.

In the analysis of the headlines some interesting details were found. A *typical feature of the regional newspaper headline was that it was not very dialogical*. Sometimes the headline was an assertion which itself contributed to its non-dialogical character. The style of making assertions and asking questions could be created without drawing the reader into the dialogue. Assertions were not always based on evidence and their mode was more declarative.

The verbs in the headlines were often intransitive. This was the case in particular during the deepest crisis. The language used in headlines often implied verbs referring to being and having. Transitive verb structures referring to action were not as typical. Sometimes the declarative mode with the absence of modalization conveyed the impression that regional politics or solutions offered to regional problems were not difficult to solve nor controversial. The only problem was the acting organ – the State – that is unable to carry out necessary actions. Transitive features of the clauses contributed to this process of describing reality. Many of the processes manifested in the editorials were described more as mental than as concrete processes.

Although the news format was a key organizing element in the news stories, in any case, regional partisanship found different ways into the news texts. The regional perspective was certainly a feature that colored regional material. *Basic key values were also repeated in the news texts, although they were manifested in quotations, speeches, and interviews*.

The journalistic texts did not build on didactics, as one would expect if

the intention was to increase the reader's political knowledge. The didactics would rather point to the regional market imperatives given, the aim of the journalists to build a regional community for the readers. During this process the journalists defined what might be called the realm of knowledge for their readers, that is, the type of knowledge that they believe will be within their reader's understanding reach and willingness to digest. This also concerns preferable ways of representing things from a regional horizon and attaching suitable values to these vantage points.

Consequently, during the studied time-span, a slight transformation in orientation towards regional self-reflexivity occurred. This reflexivity of regional journalism was displayed in ways that revealed the growing interest towards regional characteristics as such. Part of this regional identity production was based on the stereotypes of the cultural characteristics of each region. These characteristics have been kept alive in the regional press (also in cultural and educational praxes) as a part of the ideology of everyday practice. In part this regional self-reflexivity could be explained through the growing importance of the contextual variables of the regions, affecting the regional communities and their everyday life. Within every studied region, economic, geographical, and demographic structures faced severe internal and external tensions and setbacks due to the economic crisis; and as spatial systems they had great difficulties to re-establish a new state of balance.⁸⁹

It should be kept in mind that journalists are always "discursive producers" who are placed in a certain market environment. Within this material and symbolic environment, organized by a specific regional meaning-market, whether it is national or regional these producers produce objects that can be understood as commodities. Commodities aimed at the regional public are commodities that are added to the exchange value in this process.

9.4 The role of a meaning-market

What was the character of regional meaning-markets in general when the key values and moral order for the regions were formed? From the analysis of the newspapers, we can conclude that the meaning-markets within which all the studied newspapers operated were built of such events, stereotypes and conceptualizations of the region and regional population that were instrumental for the signification of the life-world in a particular way. In the

meaning-market, interests of the regional community, the regional economy, and the regional newspapers were combined into a joint effort to “survive” the crisis and keep up the cultural legacy of a region.

When the crisis appeared in the discursive context of the newspapers, a meaning-market took up the theme as part of its internal transactions. The dynamics of a regional meaning-market was part of a complex interplay of a multitude of disparate processes, mental trajectories and political struggles within the studied regions when new vocabularies and “ways of thinking” were conceived. Crisis, as Debray has described (1973, 103), brings to the surface – to the level of open political and public struggle – a break that spreads outward, a split that soon extends to all the levels of the social totality it touches. This is how the crisis process evolved in this case, and this explains why a new vocabulary and concepts were adopted at a varying regional pace in order to – eventually – re-establish a balance in the spatial systems.

It should be kept in mind that there is no discursive production or any other kind of production without an expectation of profit, whether it be symbolic, political or economic. This is the basic rule of the regional meaning-markets. The dynamics of a regional symbolic exchange is also based on profitmaking goals, whether they are in the form of an increased sense of security, growing faith in entrepreneurship or political mobilization of the regional public.

The transactions in a meaning-market are processes of symbolic exchange where the most important symbolic commodities of the regions (e.g., key values, norms of behavior, preferable ideas, and new metaphors) were circulated in media texts, despite the topics discussed or the current political moment. Thus, the concept of a regional meaning-market, that was defined earlier as the symbolic exchange of political, cultural, and economic structures of a region, can be now broadened to include *the specific dynamics of regional identity politics*. This is concretely the process of combining the attaching poles of regional identification, the people, and those regional instances that are capable of being actors in a meaning market (business representatives, politicians and cultural figures), and who act in different roles in the newspapers as part of the regional public space.

In the studied newspapers, significations from the political, cultural, spatial, and economic regional entities were mixed together to form parts of the system of *representation of a moral order in a regional meaning-market*. In addition, the compositions of political sympathies, regional policies, and

the economic development of the region contributed to the formation of this moral order that was represented as a code for collective behavior. The meaning-market thus defined discursively the *time* and *place* aspects of the relational system through which the newspaper built a system of the values of the region.

Generally, the meaning-markets functioned in the domain of collective consciousness and as a system of beliefs and values of the studied regions. The key set of values and concepts were displayed in the regional newspapers that were themselves part of a meaning-market exchange. The meaning-markets' internal transactions were supposed to yield a surplus of symbolic exchanges within the regions. Values, beliefs, and norms, constructing relationships between actors and forming identities, also provided certain perspectives on the different modes of the crises.

In some cases, this circle naturally led to a manufacturing of a collective consensus by strengthening already created stereotypes, assumptions, beliefs, and values. Meaning-markets had an inertial structure that was strengthened by journalistic activity. The regional newspapers' ways to produce meanings differed in accordance with specific regional features. These symbolic key values and concepts were conceived in trading relationships between different entities of a region (e.g., business life, the people, associations, other media, national media)

But the dynamics of meaning-markets can also be understood as being part of constructing "new" regional identities, "selling" them to the regional public and reworking them with those "older" elements that might suit this "new" identity politics. When, for example, *ESS* promoted values of neo-liberalism and managerialism, displaying the same values that the political elite of the time was producing in their interpretations of the crisis (see for example Kantola 2002), in *Ilkka*, *Karjalainen*, and *Lapin Kansa* the old, local resistance was more visible. *Ilkka* was strongly opposed to neo-liberalistic elements based on individualism, and struggled in order to keep the regional livelihoods culturally alive. *Lapin Kansa* also defied the "new way" of thinking claiming that the system was to be blamed. The region was a victim of the system and the ignorant politicians of the South. *Karjalainen* represented a strong resistance at times, but in general the relation between the central decision-making apparatus and the region was more compliant and cooperative than that of *Ilkka* and *Lapin Kansa*.

One value-based commodity in all the studied regional newspapers was the strong belief in regional identity as a resource; this comprised the perse-

verance, tenacity, and instinct of survival of the regional community which itself created positive expectations projected towards the future, even during the darkest times of the economic crisis. These sentiments, that were also expressed in public, actualized in a set of key values: activity, self-reliance, joint spirit, industriousness, positive attitudes, and financial discipline. What varied strongly between the newspapers was how much emphasis was put on collectivism versus individualism or the public sector versus the private sector as an employer. These features of a certain meaning-market were built on the immediate social experience of the journalists and the population itself.

Besides the ideology of consensus, a second typical example of the meaning-market's internal transactions was the notion that the overall representation of the economic crisis in the newspapers was explicitly affected through a *positive angle in news and editorial production in order to boost a positive mentality into the regional public space*.

The role of the regional newspapers proved to be a role of resistance, skewing the representation of the crisis towards regionally-distinct and overly-positive discourses. The resistance was projected against the central decision-making apparatus (the government, the Cabinet, leading politicians, and ministers). The administrative and political system in general was blamed for being blind, ignorant, and negligent in respect to regional cultural and economic differences, that is, to ignore what Finland really is. At the same time, newspapers tried to "keep up the spirit" and boost industriousness and faith in the future to the regional communities.

Concretely, this meant, for example, that the regional agendas did not mechanically follow the regional development of the economy (as measured by the regional statistics on GDP and unemployment). Regional newspapers actively and sometimes consciously constructed their own agendas that differed from the mainstream agenda of the national media or the trend of the statistics. This analysis provided some evidence for the observation which was further elaborated in the qualitative analysis, that newspapers also played down the communities' real problems or sensitive issues. *Regional stories were monitoring the region from a "positive" vantage point, sometimes giving a brighter picture of the situation than would have been expected, according to normal news criteria or in the light of statistics*. Apparently, the situation of crisis created new journalistic ideals that were more suitable for the new situation. The newspapers seemed to adopt new concepts and a new vocabulary, and mold them with older ways of making

sense of the regional context. These kinds of identity politics created ideals for the newspaper's policy line. What was good for a region seemed to be good for the newspaper, also journalistically.

This positive future-oriented projection was believed to be helpful and profitable for the development of investments, consumer's trust, and overall readiness to function as taxpayers, and citizens – as well as subscribers to the newspapers. The function of news was understood as consolation of the community. Stories on unemployment and the negative development of the regional GDP had to be handled in a humane and comforting way. An effort to control the regional public space, by defining “welfare issues” strategically, presenting the region in a more positive light, occurred almost simultaneously and in similar ways in all the four studied newspapers.

Editorials in particular, by definition, were generally loaded with value judgments and norms prescribing preferable and good moral behavior. They took on the role as a moral guide within a meaning-market of a region. Making changes in the culture meant making changes in the language. People had to be made to understand and internalize the right and preferable discourses concerning, for example, employment and education by digesting the new concepts and vocabularies that were introduced by the newspapers. When people began to think using the preferred concepts, such as responsibilities, duties, and rights referring to self-reliance or industriousness, the new policies and activities were much easier to impose upon the system.

The specific regional meaning-markets indeed showed some internal differences when compared to each other. The regions that were dominated by the forest industry and agriculture (especially North Karelia and Lapland) produced more rhetoric based on organic solidarity and agricultural values, like collectivism, value of roots and traditions, and a common history. Their relation to the State (the center-periphery axis) was colored by resistance but also by dependency and subordination. The regional press confronted the role of the political elite and the rule implementation organizations, but at the same time maintained its legitimacy by emphasizing the activity of the people as citizens.

An industrialized, export-oriented urban area, that was affected quickly and suddenly by the recession, produced a rhetoric based more on the values of a risk society, i.e., individual life politics and choices (Southern Finland, Lahti area). In this area, the relation between the region and the State did not appear as crucially important. Regions that traditionally had a strong

provincial spirit produced more politically-critical rhetoric towards the State and rule implementation organs. For example, in Southern Ostrobothnia the center-periphery relation was described with some pride in terms of negotiation and political statements. When needed, political mobilization was activated in the newspaper, for example during Parliamentary elections or the EU referendum.

The inertia of the collective representations of the meaning-markets can be easier understood if we see it as a collective and mental archive of a region. The collective memory of a social community can be considered as a cumulative archive. New sets of key values were formed through the relations between current practices and this archive. The awareness of the historic archive of the region becomes particularly important when analyzing how the community was defined and constructed on an everyday basis, as well as over time as discursive and social practices. This cumulative archive defined how the people of the region were addressed in the newspaper.

If the cumulative archive, for example, is built on the self-understanding of a people who are proud, hard-working, independent, and responsible, the mode of addressing encompasses certain features that tend to strengthen this mentality as a social and cultural fact. If the characteristics of the people of the region comprise negative features such as idleness, weakness, and irresponsibility, the mode of addressing the public includes warnings and judgments in order to keep the symbolic trading in a preferable circle.

It is easy to identify certain *rules of exclusion and inclusion* codified in a meaning-market. These rules are in the form of procedural rules of administrative genres and representations of important issues and topics that are produced mostly in the administrative genres. These rules and the norms of journalistic practice themselves codify how the genres and discourses are linked in different domains of social life. These rules of exclusion and inclusion are the key practices through which new perspectives and concepts will be adopted or rejected in a specific meaning-market. It is unclear how much these kinds of modifications of meaning-markets were the consequence of the “new political thinking” that was imposed upon the leading civil servants and the politicians of the time. This “shift of direction” in discourses and conceptualizations (see Julkunen 2000), for example about public services or the future of the welfare state, certainly created an impact on which the regional communities and regional newspapers were obliged to take a stance. The “identity work” and politics re-organized the administrative idea of the three Finlands: the rural, industrial, and high tech Finland. The

mental map of Finland produced by the newspapers represented more heterogeneous areas that resisted definition or characterization founded on the administrative division-based regional stage of production. The “mental map” produced by the newspapers was not about production, it was about the cultural and mental characteristics of a national identity as a whole, and regional identities as part of it. The cultural cradle of Finnish values was found to be part of the daily discourse in Northern Karelia. The basic values of work and entrepreneurship were modified as a central part of the Southern Ostrobothnian way of living. In Lapland, the huge wastelands were represented as characteristics of Finnishness, reflecting the close relation between man and nature. This depicted the endless struggle and also the harmony that Finns were able to experience because of their close and even intimate relation to nature.

In this sense the concept of a meaning-market at some point approaches the concept of *social capital* (see Fine 2001). A meaning-market, though, refers more to the process in which the most valuable and functional values are sorted out from the multiple points of view of a region, and this signification process is carried out in a *public discussion*. The meaning-market is a dynamic process, not a stable and abstract concept that can be found or not in a regional system. The meaning-market forms the rules and norms of morals and a preferable collective behavior, and provides a set of key values attached to both individual and collective actions. Consequently, a meaning-market is part of a dialectical process of making sense of a certain time-space/place. In this equation the newspaper acts as a super actor, combining different discourses of various regional entities into a functional whole, and distilling the key values and norms on which the moral order is constructed.

The concept of a meaning-market, however, should be understood more as an organizing tool for the interpretation than as an analytical category. As an interpretative and systematizing tool, it guides the analysis to focus on the journalistic texts in a dialectical relation, not only with regional culture but also with the economy. The concept provides a deeper framework for understanding the intrinsic laws of forming the publicity of social phenomena in a regional or spatial context. It also allows us to outline a system of relations that emerges through the empirical analysis of the texts, the interviews, and the critical close reading of the set of values and moral orders conceived.

10 The meaning-market as cultural dynamics

10.1 Surviving a Legitimation Crisis

Regional cultures are characteristically the intermediate space between economic production and political communities. Cultural and regional research can be described as being on a journey from one mindset to another. Finnish mindscapes can be linked to concrete territorial and regional mindsets described in art, culture, everyday talks – and journalism. The development of cultural and political mindscapes can be explored through discursive shifts in the system of representation and by exploring the symbolic exchange of cultural values in regional meaning-markets.

The analysis related in the earlier chapters, illustrate how the economic crisis of the 1990s – when viewed through journalistic representations – employed multiplicity of voices, discourses, and genres. But the economic crisis was not, of course, only about discourses. As a consequence of the economic crisis of the 1990s, the Finnish society faced a set of new problems: a large-scale, long-term unemployment sensitized the better-off southern regions to the crucial question of the sustainability of advanced welfare provisions. Having been a nation-state with a rather narrow layer of elite, the monolithic Finnish national identity was put to the test. This shift could perhaps be described in terms of a shift from Hegelian state domination to a Herderian “*Kulturturnation*,” giving room for the regional voices and putting up with a growing differentiation (see Joenniemi 1998).

The process of the economic depression and depression discourses

turned into a narrative and, as such, they even at times had an intrinsically-liberating function. Sometimes the rhetoric of depression was emphasized as a purifying event for the community, as a moral lesson. Sometimes consolation was sought from the national history and the hardships, and served as proof of the people's capacity to survive. Where the diachronic analysis of the editorials saw long-term deterministic processes, a synchronic analysis of the news revealed that journalism tended to prefer villains, culprits, and heroes – sometimes the political elite, sometimes lazy individuals living on social welfare – in order to keep a functional symbolic exchange in action.

Theoretically, the course of the economic crisis in a Finnish context could be described in terms of a legitimation crisis, although some clarifications and corrections should be made. The basic assumption of the legitimation crisis theory is based on the assumption that a capitalist economy is inherently unstable and prone to economic crises. Also, in Finland the State (the political elite and current government) engaged in attempts to regulate the economy when the downturn occurred, while at the same time the decision-making apparatus naturally sought to maintain its societal legitimacy. The adopted policy lines were dependent on the general consensus of the people, other relevant negotiating partners (e.g., trade-unions, domestic and international firms, communal civil servants), and on public opinion in general.

The administrative system (the State, government, political decision-makers), however, rarely entered into compromise-oriented negotiations with the regions or other parts of a society on which the legitimacy of the system depended. "Bargaining" was applied under pressure of the reciprocal adaptation of collective expectations and value systems. At this point the meaning-markets of the regions had a significant role in maintaining the coherence of the system.

The rationality crisis of the regions developed as the governments failed to reconcile these conflicting demands expressed by the multiple partners in negotiation with each other. The legitimation crises began to emerge regionally when confidence in the political system was undermined by these rationality deficits. Greater pressures were brought upon the political system when it was constantly failing to satisfy the growing demands of the society in a regional context. In the context of crisis, a vicious circle of loss of trust and suspicion of the people was thereby initiated and manifested in the regional newspapers.

This circle was broken by the government's failure and the forming of a

new rainbow coalition in 1994, coupled with the slow economic revival that began shortly thereafter. The decision-making apparatus underwent a structural transformation in response to the economic crisis, without compromising its politics or the rhetoric of a Nordic welfare state. However, the rhetoric of a welfare state apparently survived longer than all the actual structures of securing the public services of the welfare state.

In a Finnish context, the crisis of a particular state regime was able to secure its legitimacy, sometimes with only minor modifications – changes in dominant discourses – and resecured legitimacy without in any way changing the organization principles of the State. At least this was how the national scene appears from the horizon of the regional newspapers. However, according to my analysis, the studied Finnish regions were witnessing a consolidation of a new discursive set up that reflected the return of consensus politics, the de-politization of the public space, and the corresponding re-politization of individuals and cultural collectivism. Some of these tendencies were emerging in the public discussion in newly-formed discourses.

The new economic thinking of the era was a chronotopic form of thought and action that united society around one goal and divided it in many ways in aiming to reach its goal. The major goal of this new settlement was economic accountability. Economic reason was a dominating form of action in relation to the life-world of the people and to the society as a system. This mode of thinking both strengthened and adjusted to the changing system of a market economy. At the same time, “economic reason” was undermining other forms of social organization, such as citizens’ democracy, equality or a public discussion of political choices. The one major failure of this new settlement was a fact that went unnoticed – it is not a normal state within a democracy for there to be only one goal at a time.

Usually, the government was seen to promote and favor the free operations of the market against any demands from the regions. Regions usually relied on the rhetoric of neo-conservatism, defending the sanctity of cultural collectivism and traditions from an encroachment of the market. Restoration of the national economy was, however, one of the goal values which created the basis for the vocabulary. Improving general conditions, restoring economic soundness, and eliminating the weak spots were the central ideas of the 1990s.

Whereas, according to the regional newspapers, goal-based instrumental rationality was the effective mode of thinking within the political elite and no other values than instrumental reason were acknowledged; the re-

gional mode of addressing the situation was pragmatic. Insatiability and greediness in social activity, in order to maintain economic growth, was seen by the regional newspapers as acceptable and even encouraged by the governing system. This in turn was rejected and morally condemned in the studied newspapers. Instead, collectively-defined moral values were strongly emphasized.

Thus, societal change during the crisis can be seen through its representations, in the first instance, of changes in social consciousness related to changes in inter-subjectivity and the communicative representations of a given region. The newspapers reported traces among the population of an “identity crisis” that referred to a breakdown of social integration. Identity crises arose when members of society became aware of the existence of the system crises, for example the economic crisis in a regional context, and felt that their security and identity were threatened. Failures in political decision-making led regional public discussion towards a rationality crisis. Interestingly enough, in the beginning political resistance was more regional than national, but when the crisis deepened national unity was emphasized.

10.2 Regions as objects of study

When the economic crisis imposed itself on the regional system, multiple representations of the phenomena were possible. This nature of crisis was undetermined and could not be predicted in advance. When the economic, legitimation, and motivation crises became enshrined in regional contexts, their discursive nature was both dynamic and differed from each other in the various contexts.

Methodologically, the most difficult problems connected with this kind of a regional research setting were, naturally, how to tackle classical traps of both inductive and deductive explanatory models. In textual analysis this problem concerns how we can interpret the life-worlds that media products reflect without falling into cultural essentialism by finding “regional” characteristics or profiles as an overall explanatory factor at the social, strategic, and commercial levels. In a structural analysis we face the problem how to arrive at explanations derived from different structural factors (for example, economic, political or social factors), at the same time avoiding ecological fallacies. In other words, how can we analyze rationality crisis, legitimation crisis and motivation crisis without reducing them solely to regional

characteristics and thus to simple descriptions of, and notes in, the texts?

In my analysis, within which the concept of a meaning-market forming the cultural grammar has operated, the dynamics of regional meaning formation has become more than just a spatial metaphor. A meaning-market, as a regional system of representation, is the analytical perspective through which the region can be seen as multiple and simultaneous processes, and also as a product of these processes. Regional cultures are seen as literally embedded in the web of signification of space that is bound to territorial identity and moral structures. More importantly, these different elements of a regional system of representation have their own institutional structures (administration, political parties, business actors, spatial components, and other mediating institutions like schools, associations, museums, and libraries) that in any point of time operate by adding their symbolic and also material input to the regional life. I do not claim that these constructed regional patterns of values, norms, and conceptual sense-makings have an ontological essence as such – but I do claim that these regional meaning structures do differ. And even more, they are textual containers of the historical conditions of the regions. They are socio-spatial codes used implicitly for ideological purposes when offering hermeneutical devices for the habitat in changing times.

Regional identity, for example, did not come out as a container of stereotypical and essential features, but as a cultural and communicative relation. It is linked partly to how the *region* was defended in the discourses of regional politics – but it has also other dimensions. This communicative relation was actualized in regional newspapers and at the same time kept alive the ideological system of spatial relations. This regional Finnishness included characteristics that made every region unique. In this light it would be hard to believe that regionalism or localism would be losing their significance as determinant factors forming people's life-worlds.

Regional symbolic exchange of values and norms consisted of small and quite invisible processes functioning on a daily basis in the discursive production. The fate of the regional people and the formation process of the new identities were revealing conflicting and dysfunctional norms that were soon replaced by more functional modes of thinking and behaving in a changed situation.

In addition, the discursive approach to social change proved to be quite a motivated strategy in this type of research setting. The advantage of the written text is that, as a research object, it represents a foreign and unknown

horizon that is clearly focused without confusion caused by the multiple psychological interactions of different groups and people. Printed text permits scanning, reading, and re-reading. Newspaper stories construct the edifice of a consolidated basis of a chronotopic set of meanings. This basis is not stable or immovable. It is a dynamic process defined, molded, and reformed constantly in time and in symbolic exchange.

Furthermore, regional meaning-markets are also dynamic textual and historical carriers of “the lore of the land,” They comprise socio-spatial codes that can be latent and unnoticed, only to emerge again, sometimes used implicitly and sometimes explicitly to advance ideological purposes. Symbolic regional formations concerning history and the past are a place of memory, emotions and temporality. Such temporal and spatial inter-penetrations revolve around the social practices of any environment. These formations also revolve around the textual production of newspapers. Regional time-spaces are constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left behind something of themselves.

There are “official memories” of societies like that of institutional commemorations. These can have the effect of silencing some alternative memories of places, regions or groups of people. Analyzing the regional archives of the years of crises was an exercise in detecting contradictory memory practices and political interpretations. These memories and interpretations were organized around bits of landscapes and folklore, dichotomies, sudden exclusions, moral orders, and reminiscences of the past.

This kind of juxtaposition of different surroundings and environments can stimulate our understanding and remind us of the capacity of the reminiscence of the past, or what the past could have been. Regional variation also shows how vividly but differently the past is always present, and how history is always written in spaces and places and resists the universal (in this case national) or official codes.

10.3 Methodological considerations

The present study is multidisciplinary. Three theoretical and methodological fields of research (human geography, research on legitimation crisis, and discourse studies including news studies) were all considered important in the examination of how regional differences are constructed in the newspa-

per coverage.

In the study, two basic types of triangulation were used in order to answer the research questions and meet the different methodological and theoretical validity requirements of this type of research setting. Firstly, data triangulation (a variety of data sources) was used in order to approach the research questions from both micro and macro contextual levels. Due to the data triangulation, the analysis became more sensitive to some specific features (media and regional economics, mainstream media impact and the historical condition of the studied newspapers) that are not usually incorporated into these kinds of textual approaches.

Secondly, theoretical triangulation was applied. Multiple perspectives were used to interpret the result of the study by putting different theoretical traditions into dialogue. This served to increase the theoretical sensitivity in the conceptual construction describing regional systems of representation, i.e. the regional meaning-markets, and allowed us to grasp the broader picture of the regional dynamics during the economic crisis.

There are some specific problems related to the use of triangulation. The main problem is that it requires the researcher to be explicit regarding different types of inference used, in order to clarify what kinds of conclusions can be drawn from different types of data and different theoretical starting points. When different theoretical traditions are put into dialogue, it may at best reveal new perspectives, both analytically and theoretically. However, each of the theoretical approaches has its own underpinnings, and sometimes the paradigmatic relations formed require more theoretical and methodological support than a condensed theoretical part of a study is able to offer.

For this reason, data triangulation also requires transparency in the interpretation process. There are well-known problems regarding transparency in textual analysis. As a matter of fact, the problems are embedded in the very methods of textual and content analysis. CDA inspired textual analysis, in general, is a quite heterogeneous enterprise. It usually gives perspectives to the texts through time-consuming, inductive, and hermeneutic interpretation processes. Sometimes, in this type of analysis, it is difficult to document all the steps of the analysis. Reporting requires different and condensed ways to display the basic results stemming from the analysis (tables, figures etc.), that at times may reduce the richness of qualitative data.

Even at its best, content-analysis is by necessity quite rough because of the large amount of data gathered. Therefore, in this study, an analysis of

discourses was conducted to complement and deepen the content analysis. A combination of these methodological choices allowed me to approach the material from a holistic perspective that offered a more thorough empirically grounded picture of the newspaper coverage during the time-period studied. The multi-method approach also included a close-reading of the interviews with the editors-in-chief, and interpretations of available media- and social statistics. All in all, this combination of methods allowed me to approach the research problem with an arsenal of complementary devices. Admittedly, however, the methods do not always fully overlap, though they do provide complementary strength.

The methodological solution was quite laborious. A more defined strategy, with respect to data gathering, could have offered a more economic solution for the quantitative part of the study. It is, however, doubtful whether such a method would have provided a sufficient tool to detect the inner dynamics of a regional meaning-market. Particularly, the sublime time-space relations would probably have remained undetected if only a smaller sample of the material had been analyzed.

In qualitative research, the validity discussion can be roughly divided into three different strands: internal (theoretical), external, and pragmatic validity. The *internal* and *theoretical* validity of this study is based on defined relations between different theoretical concepts. This includes a constant checking throughout the research process that the theoretical concepts used meet the requirements stemming from the operationalization of the data.

The *external* validity of the observations was checked in two ways. The interpretative community, which in this case was the editors-in-chief, was confronted with the observations made. My own results were also continuously assessed in dialogue with the results from the large body of analysis acquired by the scientific community, parallel with my research, in the large crisis project launched by the Academy of Finland.

The third, *pragmatic*, type of validity relates to the pragmatic and analytical value of the research; in this case, the regional perspective presented in this study. If pragmatic validity is fulfilled, the study should create a new and innovative perspective in regional policy-making and theoretical work. Though the pragmatic validity of this study is still to be proved, I can al-

ready conclude that the perspective used in analyzing regional dynamics proved to be analytically fruitful.

Political economy, in its broadest sense, is the study of the social practices that shape and give meaning to the material conditions of a studied society - and not only the study of these material-constraints themselves. When referring to *locality* or *regional studies*, we should try to avoid the trap of equating the micro (or local/regional) with the merely concrete and empirical, while equating the macro (or global) with the abstract and theoretical. The common conflation of these terms often follows from the confusion of the specific with the concrete and empirical, and the general with the abstract. Nor should the study of the local/regional be assumed necessarily to be “only” descriptive, as opposed to “theoretical work” on global or universal issues (for example, the global economy) which are no less concrete phenomena than the locality, even if they may be more widely dispersed in a geographical sense (see Massey 1994, 124-136).

Furthermore, the economy can be studied in cultural terms. There is a common academic myth of an impersonal macro economy working either at an ethereal level or at a base level. As Boden (1994, 20) pointedly writes, this usually refers to the fact that academics have forgotten that “society does not happen at different levels, research does.” The social character of the economy, as represented in the discourse of regional newspapers, can be defined more as a diachronic category than a synchronic category, especially since the many social practices are intertwined with material constraints that develop in time.

Despite all limitations that follow from this type of research, I believe that multidisciplinary work using both data and theoretical triangulation offers fruitful angles to study broad socio-economic changes. A pragmatist approach to research strategy forces us to commit ourselves to the research questions themselves, leaving methods and types of data secondary to these questions. The benefit of this kind of a research setting is that it stimulates the analysis of wider patterns of values, norms, and vocabularies that occur in newspaper texts. More important than this is, however, that regional newspapers can be seen as systems within the larger dynamics, transforming the discourses stemming both from peoples life-worlds and from macro structures of national and regional economics into common-sense projections.

10.4 Empowering the regional voice

“Fate is fulfilled in the revelation of conflicting norms against which the identities of the participants shatter, unless they are able to summon up the strength to win back their freedom by shattering the mythical power of fate through the formation of new identities.”
(Habermas 1976, 2)

One of the presuppositions for this study has been the anthropological notion that people are craving for meaning. We are congenitally compelled to impose a meaningful order upon reality. This order, however, presupposes the social practices of ordering the construction of reality in a functional and meaningful way. According to Habermas (1976, 118), the fundamental function of world-maintaining interpretative systems is the avoidance of chaos. The legitimization process of societal orders and norms can be understood as a specialization of this meaning-giving, and furthermore as a dynamic of meaning-market functions as a whole.

People are not banks of cultural memories, although analyzing newspapers as cultural documents could lead us to assume so. As a consequence, the analysis of cultural practices may replace the analysis of cultures in the future. In addition, “identity practices” may replace the defining of national or regional identities. But these practices, however skillfully defining the stories stemming from cultural studies, will still have spatial constraints.

Thus, even in the mobile, late modern world, the places we come from and those we pass through shape our sense of who we are. It might be possible to create an active civil society around local and regional communities. This could be one way to bypass the tendency towards a de-politicized public space and passive citizenship. When bourgeois ideologies of late modernity offer no support, when facing basic risks such as guilt, existence and death to interpretations that could overcome contingency, a regional community with an active internal communication structure might be able to: face the needs for wholeness and offer consolation, reject the objectified nature of social relations, permit relations of solidarity within groups and individuals, and offer real political ethos and basic guidelines to citizens to accommodate an objectivistic self-interpretation of acting subjects with communicative ethos.

Perhaps the most fundamental contribution that the regional newspa-

pers could make is in taking measures to encourage and facilitate real dialogue and debate. In a real dialogue citizens and their agenda have easier access to public space through newspapers. The equality of opportunity exists to contribute and disagree, and differences of opinions are recognized.

Regional discourse could also be made more open to difference – by avoiding the language of consensus (a vague and bland *we*-discourse) which disguises differences by avoiding polar divisions that are also apparent within regions.

Perspectives and opinions that question the legitimacy of the political decision-makers should be given access to the public agenda in order to maintain the vitality of democracy. It is often claimed that legitimacy problems of political institutions and actors are a permanent problem today. Only political orders can have and lose legitimacy; only they need legitimation. Multinational corporations or the world-market are not capable of legitimacy (Habermas 2000, 248). This is why public discussion should not be suppressed when the legitimacy of the power elite or state regime is at stake. On the contrary, a lively discussion is a sign of a vital political community, whether regional or national, and should be encouraged. Furthermore, the quest for legitimacy should be broadened to include multinational corporations to restrict their damaging impacts in the regions.

On this basis, some ideas for future research in exploring political culture in spatial systems can be put forward. Interesting issues for further research would be to explore:

- How can legitimacy be secured in the realm of de-politization of regions;
- How can social security and welfare, accumulated in the transactions of a meaning-market, be affected through policy interventions?
- What kinds of interventions would they be?

Such questions can only be addressed if the regional cultures are given their intrinsic role as valuable edifices and regulators of the national culture within a vital discussion about political legitimacy. As Friese and Wagner (1999, 144) pointed out, the relation between political and intellectual positions is never stable. Thirty years ago the term “structure” had a rather critical and emancipatory flavor, and “culture” a conservative one. Now

this relation has been almost reversed. Current studies of cultural cartographies emphasize the fact, that the very concept of a homogenous national culture is in a state of profound redefinition (Bhabha 1994, 5) It strengthens the argument of Appadurai (1990, 295-310) in the sense, that cultures are not holistic ways of life – but instead are composed of “people assembling and reassembling fragments from around them.” (Crang 1998, 175). There are always different scales in use to understand what is going on around us.

Northern Karelia, South Finland, Lapland or Southern Ostrobothnia are perhaps not the most interesting spots in the world – most readers outside of Finland would probably not even know where they are on the map. But as an example of the specific time-space in the midst of an economic crisis, the study of differing regional realities raises broader questions on identity practices. If interpretations of an economic situation can vary within one nation-state as much as described, how can common issues concerning for example larger scales be addressed differently when comparing nations? Is it possible to gain a mutual understanding if we are living in different discursive cartographies? What kinds of challenges will the next crisis offer to regional and national communities?

I would like to conclude this journey with a reference to Anaïs Nin’s insight on making interpretations: “We don’t see things as they are, we see things as we are.” This sentence can be applied to a regional context with a slight rephrase: “*We don’t see things as they are, we see things where we are.*” Having just begun to count how many Finlands there are, I find myself wondering how many Europes there might be.

Endnotes

- 1 The economic recession, or its causes and consequences in Finland as such, is not the object of this study; it has been extensively researched elsewhere (Puoskari 2002; Honkapohja & Koskela 2001; Kiander 2001; Loikkanen & Saari 2000; Julkunen 2001; Pekkarinen & Vartiainen 2001; Kalela & Kiander & Kivikuru & Loikkanen & Simpura (eds.) 2001).
- 2 The national self-analysis became a project of the national intellectuals in 1990s, and State and other institutions funded the project. On national self-analysis see, for example, Alasuutari & Ruuska 1999; Häkli 1999; Löytönen & Kolbe (eds.) 1999; Moring 1999; Saukkonen 1999; Alasuutari & Ruuska (eds.) 1998; Hänninen (ed.) 1998; Keränen (ed.) 1998; Hannula 1997; Kantola 1997; Paasi 1997; Alasuutari 1996; Laaksonen & Mettomäki (eds.) 1996; Kivikuru (ed.) 1996; Alapuro 1994; Häkli 1994; Korhonen (ed.) 1993; Vihavainen 1991.
- 3 By legitimacy I refer to the worthiness of a political order to be recognized publicly. Claim to legitimacy is related to the social integrative preservation of a normatively-determined social identity. Legitimizations serve to make good this claim, that is to show how existing institutions are fit to employ political power in such a way that the values constitutive for the identity of the society (and its spatial organization) will be realized (see Habermas 1996, 249).
- 4 Although this may appear as a cynical starting point, the history of Finnish journalism is not stainless in this regard. During the post WW II era, the Finnish media is mainly known to have remained loyal to the Finnish foreign policy (Salminen 1996). When this policyline changed after 1989, the media followed. During the campaign, before the referendum to join the EU in 1994, journalists acted primarily as active promoters of an elite policy line regarding the question of whether they wanted to join the EU or not. Most editors-in-chief implicitly or explicitly supported this policy line. This kind of partisanship was not understood as an ideological struggle but as advancing the common good (See Mörä 1999).
- 5 In this study I use the words “production” and “construction” as synonyms. Regions as cultural, social or economic entities can not be constructed out of nothing. They are products of historical and economic circumstances that have shaped the regional “voice” of newspapers.
- 6 It is hard to draw a line between entertaining and factual journalism, even in so-called “news journalism”. Commercialization and tabloidization, with the high status of the news genre have created new textual formats that are blurring the border. In this study, however, I concentrate mainly on factual news journalism and editorials, excluding other newspaper material. But even when focusing on editorials and news stories on the depression must be kept in mind the fact that economic news will

sometimes be selected because of its entertaining value. The growing importance of market criteria in news selection has also taken place in other Nordic countries (see Ekecrantz 1997).

- 7 Cultural grammar can be defined as a set of spatio-temporal, social, cultural and economic dichotomies (countryside-city, center-periphery, past-future, before-now, change-stability; also wealth-poverty, me-the other) through which the epistemic and representative sense-making of the living world is partly constructed.
- 8 The term “critical” is used because the approach used in this study is not an economically-reductionist one, although it draws largely upon neo Marxist-inspired modes of analyses while also recognizing that these kinds of analyses alone are not enough. There is an anxiety in geographical and cultural theorists’ approaches to avoid economic or class reductionist forms of analysis, and a willingness to acknowledge other autonomous power relations and fluidity in using power in these relations.
- 9 This tradition is based mainly on classical texts of cultural theorists, like Innis (1950, 1951), Ong (1977) and McLuhan (1951, 1962, 1994), McLuhan and Fiore (1967), and a more recent strand of discussion in works by, for example, Carey (1989), Goody (1977), Harvey (1989), Giddens (1990), Stevenson (1995) Thompson (1995), Castells (1997) and Fornäs (1998).
- 10 See methodological discussion, for example, Massey 1999; Allen et al. 1998; Bird et al. 1993; Paasi 1997; 1991; 1986; Thompson 1995; Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994; Soja 1996; 1989; Anderson 1991; Harvey 1989; Alexander et al. 1987; Meyrowitz 1986; Lintz & Miguel 1966.
- 11 The role of time and space has been essential within some theoretical frameworks of recent theorists, (see Crang & Thrift (eds.) 2000) namely Pierre Bourdieu (1992), David Harvey (1989), Ulrich Beck (1988) Anthony Giddens (1984) and Michael Foucault (1980). For example Bourdieu’s concepts habitus and field locate individuals in dual roles of space and time in all social organization. Habitus is an analytic device, which sediments cultural distinctions and identifies individuals by their taste and action in space. Field, for example can be understood as a spatio-temporal organizing system of social classification.
- 12 Anecdotically, it could be noted that the Finnish conception of space in architecture, according to Pallasmaa (2000, 296), originates in the multiform and multirhythmic topological spatial formations of the forest landscape. The clearly delineated geometry of urbanized European cultures is in sharp contrast to this conception. In a forest culture, built space, for example, is not the opposite of nature, instead the architecture reflects the spatial structures of the landscape.
- 13 Linz & Miguel (1966, 267-319), in their classical study *Eight Spains*, operating through ecological variables, found eight different ways to divide the nation into regional subsystems. Alexander et al. (1987, 135,195, 237) tried to link the gap between micro sociological and macro structural phenomena. In their work, the question of universalism versus particularism was one of extreme importance. Henri Lefebvre’s *Production of Space* (1986/1991) explored “social space” that was born in dialectic relations between reproduction and physical, material space. In this dialectics mental and imaginary space, as well as the understanding of the environment and the surrounding were constructed and maintained in different social and political practices. David Harvey (1989) reworked Lefebvre’s ideas, transforming them into a spatial matrix through which different modes of capitalism and the relation of these modes to space was organized. Edward Soja (1989; 1996) tried to bridge the cleavage between geography and social sciences making spatiality a socially-constructed dimension of human understanding and science in general. Allen et al. (1998), in their book *Rethinking region*, studied the success and prospering economic development of South East England as an empirical question that was researched via political discourses attached to the region at the time studied. Classical phenomenological studies of the spatial living world are also found in de Certeau (1984); Relph (1976); Tuan (1977) and Bachelard (1969). A Nordic example is the Nordrefo project *Kultur och medier i regional utveckling* (1989), that represents an effort to explore the relation between physical environment and communication from an analytical point of view as well (see also Jankowski & Prehn (eds.) 2000 and Jankowski, N. et al. 1992). In Finland in particular, Paasi (1986; 1991;1997), Häkli (1994; 1998; 1999) and

- Hujanen (2000), have analyzed regional identities and regionalism as discursive processes.
- 14 The concept of community usually refers to a particularly-constituted set of social relationship based on something which the participants share – usually a common sense of identity. One difficulty in community studies is that there is no clear and widely accepted definition of what are these characteristic features of social interaction, that constitute solidarity in relationships and a common sense of identity between community members - or how the empirical identification of people's belonging to a certain community could be measured. (Marshall 1994, 72)
 - 15 Life-world (*Lebenswelt*) was first used by Husserl to refer to the world as given experience, prior to the operations of science and phenomenological philosophy. Habermas draws in particular on Husserl's usage, and extends the concept further to refer to relatively informal ways of life, contrasted with a market and administrative system, as well as to a cognitive "horizon of meaning". (see Berger & Luckmann 1966/1994)
 - 16 Anderson's (1991) conceptualization of the human capacity to create *imagined communities* is one theoretical elaboration stemming from the constructionist vantage-point. The concept *imagined community* has since then been widely used in media studies (Meyrowitz 1986; Morley & Robins 1995; Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994) and was one of the catchwords of the 1990s' social science. That is probably partly due to the fact that it metaphorically circumvents the above-mentioned theoretical problems. It replaces the classical dichotomy "agency-structure" with imagination.
 - 17 In the strongest sense of the word, "region" may be defined as a relatively confined network of production, interaction and culture. This definition in which regions are taken as quite coherent wholes and self-sustained entities, excludes many geographical areas.
 - 18 See, for example, Claval (1987, 159-172).
 - 19 A good example is how the concept of region, as a political entity, has changed with the EU. Firstly, the Union possesses powers to constrain individual societies. Regulations concerning competition, trade, exchange rates, science, technology and research are typical examples. The new Europe would be an "organised space" between its nations and the global market (Lash & Urry 1994, 282).
 - 20 One major contribution to nation building in Finland was the work of Z. Topelius, *Maamme kirja* (The Book of Our Land) published in 1875. The strength of the cultural power of the book was also partly due to the need to create and unite the nation-state and regional cultures in a literary style. While the book described the land and landscape in such a way that the people could identify with it easily, it also displayed regional differences praising different folkloristic codes by inventing the regions and their "tribes" culturally – and presenting them not as separate entities but as a part of a whole nation.
 - 21 National identity is a particular case of identity because it is usually formed with political aspirations (Saukkonen 1999; Häkli 1998; Gellner 1997; Hobsbawn 1994). In this sense, the national imagined community was born with the literacy and the press had an important role in this process (Anderson 1991).
 - 22 Inertia has a structural character. According to Dodgson inertia helps to define structure that contains those aspects of societal order that change slowly or which resist easy change. An analysis of inertia must start from deep structures of society, or in Bourdieu's term from its symbolic and cultural capital (Dodgson 1998, 104; Bourdieu 1992, 97-108).
 - 23 Topophilia and topophobia are terms used to describe the process in which people attach meanings to different locations (see Tuan 1977).
 - 24 Technology and a globalized market reinforce the idea that local communities are archaic relics from the past. Electronic media in particular seem to destroy the idea of social and geographical distance.
 - 25 Community as a concept contains powerful discursive and metaphorical meanings. The usual claim of lost *gemeinschaft* and communion-like features of social life in western societies has been part of the criticism against globalization. The other side

of the coin is the fact that most local communities hide the highly unequal power structures and social relations that characterize the relationships between social groups and institutions. These power relations are inherently part of the orders of discourse and representations through which region is constructed in everyday journalistic practice.

- 26 The term palimpsest originates in medieval writing. It meant a writing tablet that could be re-used many times and every time for a new set of material. However, the tablet could never be rubbed totally clean. Over time, layers of prior scripts would build up, over which the current one was written. The term has been taken as a metaphor for landscape change, where current uses do not completely erase the marks of history (Crang 1998, 192).
- 27 In this market, the regional media (in Finland particularly the regional newspapers) can be seen as serving the function of a “marketplace”.
- 28 In Orleigh, John (ed.) (1965) *Land and Life: a Selection from the Writings of Karl Oertwin Sauer*. University of California Press, Berkeley
- 29 Neither is this the case with revolutionary practices that come to the surface when class-consciousness reveals itself, especially, when “class” as a concept is treated nowadays primarily as a forgotten category. Instead, these economic downturns and crises occur according to recurring cycles, waves and rhythms of global markets and national economies, that are becoming even harder to forecast.
- 30 To remain truthful to Habermas, the term legitimation crisis is used here where it immediately relates to Habermas’ conceptualization. In other parts of the text the term legitimacy is preferred.
- 31 Habermas (1984) uses the word media referring both to the “mass media” and to “steering media” – which Talcott Parsons called “symbolically generalized media of communication”, such as power and money. (See *The Theory of communicative Action, vol. II*, 165,154 and 279; Outhwaite 1996, 369)
- 32 Habermas himself does not see this solely as a negative development. Rather, this could be seen as part of an inevitable development of modern and specialized societies. If societies were constantly expected to reach a consensus over everything through argumentation, they could not function.
- 33 See also David Harvey’s discussion on “structural coherence” and region as a system (Harvey 1985, 1987).
- 34 The study of “territorial” or regional readings of an economic crisis in a developed country may be considered cumbersome, as these types of (Nordic welfare) countries are considered more homogeneous, both socially and regionally, than developing countries. On the other hand, a study of differences in relatively homogeneous settings gives credibility to interpretations of the variation found in terms of differences. Put into more formal words, *ceteris paribus*, differences can be expected to reveal variances on observed independent variables.
- 35 The term *discourse*, can be derived from the Latin *discurrere* (to run to and from) or from *discursus* (running apart, giving information on something). According to Vogt (1987, 16), in medieval Latin *discursus* also meant orbit or traffic, in addition to conversation, animated debate and talkativeness. Thomas Aquinas introduced the term in philosophy and contrasted discursive, “by reasoning”, with *simpliciti intuitu*, “(by means of simple intuition). In this sense, discursive means the mental sphere where recognition takes place through concepts and thinking in concepts (Eisler 1927, 286; Titscher et. al 2000, 25).
- 36 The earlier “archeological” writings of Michel Foucault’s (1972) on the concept of discourse, have been extended to cover a wider set of contextual social phenomena and structures. He stresses how discursive practices form and construct objects and subjects under surveillance as discursive formations, generating their own orders of discourse and symbolic dynamics.
- 37 A notable exception to the rule is the economic history approach of media development in Robert Picard’s project (2003).
- 38 According to Harvey (1989, 160-161), flexible accumulation, for example, was first a discourse that was talked into being. A very good example of “talked into being”

- was the Finnish referendum on joining the European Union, in 1994. Most journalists mobilized behind the positive outcome of the referendum, whereas the critical opposition was silenced; journalists with a critical attitude were mocked and treated with suspicion even in their own newspapers (see Mörä 1999). Though I do not claim that this was only a discursive exercise, I would maintain that multiple discursive exercises of the media in part conceived the outcome of the vote.
- 39 Aslama, M., Kivikuru, U., Parikka, T. Salovaara-Moring, I. & S. Valtonen (2002); Aslama, M., Kantola, A., Kivikuru, U. & S. Valtonen (2001) and Aslama, M., Kivikuru, U., Parikka, T. Salovaara-Moring, I. & S. Valtonen (2001)
 - 40 For studies on language in and attitudes of headlines, see for example Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994; Freimuth et. al 1984; Kauhanen 1997.
 - 41 The term *critical analysis* implies a systematic methodology and a relationship between a text and its social conditions. The term refers to the ideas of the Frankfurt School, in particular those in the works of Jürgen Habermas. According to Habermas, critical science has to be self-reflective, which means that it has to reflect the interests on which it is based. It also has to take into account the historical contexts of social and economic interactions.
 - 42 This theoretical approach is derived from Louis Althusser's theories of ideology, Mikhail Bahtin's genre theory and the broader philosophical traditions of Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt school. Michel Foucault's work has greatly influenced to Fairclough's mode of analysis, as well as Michael Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (Pietikäinen 2000; Titschler et al. 2000, 144).
 - 43 In sociological literature, such framing effects have been observed as a result of issues being defined as aspects of the economic rather than non economic spheres of life, the perceived time horizons involved, and the definition of the imputed goals that are imagined to be the objectives of particular interactions (see for example W. Arts et al. (1991) "Income and idea of Justice; Principles, justice and their framing", Journal of Economic Psychology).
 - 44 Naturally, some cultural differences can be found in the mental, social and physical characteristics of the population in the western parts of the country (South-western-Finland, Häme, Southern, and Central Ostrobothnia, and the Åland Islands) and that of the east (South-eastern Finland, Savo, Karelia , and Northern Finland), although accelerating migration is blurring earlier provincial and cultural divisions of the country. In this context, however, more interesting than to categorize assumed essential differences between regions is the observation that regions and regional newspapers eagerly maintain these divisions as part of their cultural capital.
 - 45 From afar it is possible to characterize Finland as a single cultural and even homogeneous area. This widely held assumption can also be seen as part of a cultural subjugation that goes further back in the nation's history. In his book, *The Diary of an Opportunist*, the Finnish poet, Paavo Haavikko, polemically claims that the Western Finns conquered the Eastern Finns. The method of this cultural pilgrimage was astute, and based on the method of cultural standardization by symbolic elements, like literature, myths, tales and folklore. Establishing internal differences united the Finnish nation. The regional landscape formation was grounded on the myth of a Finnish identity and its subcategories (see also Häkli 1999).
 - 46 In many newspapers the political past can be seen through the editorials that are written nowadays along earlier political lines. Some studies (Hujanen 2000; Carlsson 2000; Mörä 1999) have even shown that newsrooms are quite well informed of the "policy line" of newsmaking, though this is also a constant issue causing conflict between the journalists and the editorial staff.
 - 47 One of the studied newspapers, *Ilkka*, offers an example of a daily in which the political (Centre Party) background is visible, although the executive board of the newspaper declared its independence from the party as early as spring 1997. According to the editor-in-chief, Kari Hokkanen, "*Ilkka* has grown too big to be in the section of the party press. The stamp of a partisan newspaper gives a wrong impression of the number one regional newspaper. This is a question of classification and will not otherwise affect the policy line of journalism."

- 48 Jorma Miettinen's dissertation (1980) was an analysis of readers' preferences in eleven regional and local newspapers. In his study, Miettinen pointed out that people living in rural areas are more interested in local news, whereas in southern Finland the national and global framework of the news is more important. Generally, newspapers in South Finland emphasized national news and issues on commerce and trade, whereas newspapers from the northern and eastern parts of the country focused more on local and regional issues, such as agriculture, regional politics and the local business life. This same tendency has been indicated in the more recent Regional Media Research carried out by Gallup MDC.
- 49 Mervola (1998) has pointed out that regional newspapers nowadays compete with television. Newspapers' relationship to their audience is changing along the structural transformation of media markets. Local newspapers are becoming more important, whereas regional newspapers are losing their audience to television. Television, however, is not divided into regional programming in Finland, except for some minor programming distributed on local cable networks.
- 50 There may be several explanations for the relative strength of the regional newspapers. One pointed out frequently is that Finland is one of the few countries in Europe where the delivery of newspapers and periodicals is based primarily on subscriptions. It is estimated that some 80 percent of magazines and up to 90 percent of newspaper sales are based on subscriptions, and the newspapers are delivered to the consumer's door.
- 51 One trend that has been characteristic of the Finnish print media industry and may be expected to continue is the growth of newspaper chains. As a result of company takeovers and mergers the market shares of the biggest newspaper houses (as measured in terms of circulation) have experienced a relatively rapid growth. There is also a clear trend towards a closer editorial cooperation both within newspaper chains and even between independent newspaper houses. This sort of cooperation is bound to lead to a convergence in terms of newspaper contents.
- 52 The economics of the region and the newspaper itself are important determinants of the practices and texts of the newspaper. Economic realities among newspapers have not merely changed the journalists' considerations in the process of news selection but also modified the way journalists relate to reality. A competitive commercial environment surely affects and shapes media practices and the commodities it produces.
- 53 The style of regional journalism, however, can have certain new features, according to recent studies. In her study on "*Regional Journalism*" Jaana Hujanen (2000) stressed that when journalism expresses the character of the region, it is based on the "abstract" reporting of figures and statistics of politics and regional government. Following her argumentation, both cultural and regional discourses represent regions as abstract spatial entities from the viewpoint of politics and administration. Representing regions as part of a citizen's life-world and environment plays a minor role in the newspaper texts. Usually, citizens are represented as bystanders and are seldom given an active role in regional news. This might lead to the conclusion that mainstream media and regional media reflect the society in similar ways and journalistic modes.
- 54 The city of Viipuri/Vyborg was founded in 1293 on the shores of the eastern Gulf of Finland, and was, after Turku, the second most important city in the ecclesiastical life of the country. It was one of five medieval cities in Finland. Viipuri area of Karelia, ceded to Russia in the peace treaties of 1721 and 1743, and formed "Old Finland", which remained distinct long into the 19th century.
- 55 I am not trying to explore "primary definers" of the news agenda or news sources, but simply to show how the amount of news items and stories produced for different topics can vary considerably between different newspapers. This gives us an idea how regions lived through crises in a differing time-space that was filled with different topics, themes, and of potential meanings.
- 56 An analysis of the local and regional issues of the national newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*'s Sunday coverage showed that stories with a local and regional angle made up 25.5 % of the stories, whereas a national scale was used in 70.7 percent of the stories. Local stories comprised crime, accidents, and fires. Only 15 stories (5.6 %) took a

- regional outlook. One explanation could be that the regional level implies a regionalism that is connected to regional politics and thus was not brought to national public discussion because of the politically-sensitive angle. In general, national public discussion focused on the State as a system of institutions. (Moring 2000c, 156-167)
- 57 The coverage of *regional economics* was divided into positively-framed news items (positive development and/or growth or a hopeful vantage point concerning regional economics) and negatively-framed news items (the threat, negative development in regional economics). One category comprises *general economics* where the vantage point is moot or includes several angles of the news topic. *Regional politics* comprises three different themes. These are items of center-periphery relation, regional subsidies, and statements concerning regional politics. The *regional identity* category includes stories on regional identity, history, traditions, and cultural characteristics. The *employment* category comprises everything written from the working life (e.g., employment, unemployment, labour shortage and strikes). The *depression and dismantling the welfare state* category comprises stories written on regional cuts to and savings in the public services. Also, stories including the key word "depression" in their headlines are included in the category, if the main content of the story does not motivate classifying it within another category.
 - 58 It should be kept in mind that the overall coverage of region-related stories in *Karjalainen* is approximately one third greater than in the other studied newspapers.
 - 59 According to Aslama et al. (2001a, 173), both the political elite and the citizens emphasized the importance of the public discussion of crisis. But the public discussion can be unpredictable and hard to control by the political decision-makers. Consequently, the elite tended to see the media in a rather negative light. Public discussion in the media was seen as irrational and even dangerous for the efforts to solve the crisis. When opinions can be manifested freely, unguarded values and "wrong" assumptions may also enter the arena. The people were seen as actors creating emotive and even hysterical reactions to issues of minor importance (Aslama et al. 2001a). The citizens, on the other hand, did not see the media as a place for discussion; rather, they experienced a suffocating overflow of media output as threatening and even distancing themselves from the arena of political activity and discussion.
 - 60 For instance, when searched with the keyword depression, combined with the key word citizenship, the few matches found pointed towards the fact that the two concepts have not been linked in the media's agenda. Only a handful of stories connected the life-world of citizens and the depression. In regional newspapers, the key word citizen was not popular either. In *ESS*, the analysis resulted in 7 matches. In *Lapin Kanssa* there were 13 matches, in *Ilkka* 10 matches and in *Karjalainen* 19 matches.
 - 61 The numbers were provided by researcher Aku Alanen from Statistics Finland, and the numbers were received in an electronic mode as Excel-sheets.
 - 62 The term *employment stories* is used here to cover all news stories related to the sphere of employment and unemployment, as these two words are also used as substitutes in the news stories on the development in this field.
 - 63 Editorials have been analyzed from many points of view. When Heikkinen (1999), for example, analyzed Finnish political editorials, he came to the conclusion that newspaper editorials typically constructed a world consisting of ideological opposites of different kinds. These were normally organized upon quite traditional cultural grammars and their dichotomies, like *us* and *them*, of *good* and *bad*, and *right* and *wrong*. In so doing, editorials also tended to naturalize existing social power relations. As a consequence, editorials tended to strengthen the conventions that those in position of power apply in their language use. Alasuutari was able to construct different eras of societal regimes in Finland. The development that led Finnish newspapers to cut their attachment to political parties was not sudden. Perhaps because of this, political sympathies could also be read through the editorials, as Tom Carlsson (2000) noted in his thesis. Although none of the studied newspapers is politically committed, earlier connections can be traced from the editorial style.
 - 64 The selection of categories to be compared in Table VI has been made on the basis of their relevance to the depression theme. As some categories have been excluded, only part of all editorials that were coded has been included in the table. Editorials can be

seen as a highly political and ideological domain of the newspaper content. As such, they express opinions of the state of affairs in the society. This could be understood as normative statements of how society should be functioning. Like Max Weber, also Pierre Bourdieu sees the evolution of modern society in terms of a differentiation of different fields (the economy, the State, the legal system, religion, and culture). At some point, social practices in public discussion seem to be exclusive one another. For example, newspaper sections - economics, domestic issues (covering domestic politics, social policy etc.), in regional newspapers regional news, foreign news, and opinionated writings (columns, editorials, letters-to-the-editor etc.) - are examples of this categorization and differentiation of various fields.

- 65 Regarding the analysis of temporal aspects, I use, on the basis of the Greek term “*chronos*” (time) and “*topos*” (place) a related term “*chronotopic*” to emphasize that time and space share structural intimacies in their conceptualization and production as presented in the texts.
- 66 The selection of the key texts for a more detailed linguistic analysis is a choice that had to be made. Because of the nature of textual analysis, it is impossible to use large amounts of data. When using both qualitative analysis and quantification for description of the data, questions of representativity of a sample and generalization of the results are often brought up (Pietikäinen 2000, 146). In this study, the texts for analysis were chosen from editorials and the stories on depression in the four studied regional newspapers. The total number of selected editorials was 302 (*ESS* 56, *Lapin Kansa* 71, *Ilkka* 79 and *Karjalainen* 96). The criteria for the selection were that chosen editorials directly described the social problems linked to the economic crisis, and their scope was regional and/or national (unemployment, savings and cuts in welfare services, regional economics and regional policies).
- 67 Paavo Väyrynen is a prominent and disputed figure in Finnish politics. He is a well-known Centre Party politician who has been in different political positions for thirty years (as a minister, MP of the European Parliament, MP in Finland) He is famous as a speaker for rural Finland and regional equality. Coming from Lapland, he has profiled himself as a strong opponent to joining the European Union.
- 68 Quite interesting is the definition of a “first reduction,” implying that more reductions and cuts would come in the future. This pictures a typical development of the editorials; they started to be more future-oriented than reflecting upon the past. The same trend has been noted in the news (see Ekecrantz 1997; Manning 2001).
- 69 The frontier between rural and urban was not expressed strongly in *ESS*, compared to other newspapers. There were only a few editorials that touched upon the traditional and agricultural issues of the region: “*Options of the countryside*” (*ESS*, 16.4.1989); *A people of dry standing trees* (*ESS*, 3.11.1989)
- 70 The grammatical modes of Finnish are: declarative, interrogative, and imperative. Every sentence is in one of these modes. Systematic preferences can be socially and ideologically significant. For instance, the headlines of editorials are usually declarative. Interrogative or imperative modes are less frequent. There is more “telling and happening” than asking. Expressions are modalized as statements, such as “in our view.”
- 71 The modality of a particular sentence is the speaker’s or writer’s level of commitment to the claim it makes or the obligation it expresses. There are mainly two aspects of modality. The first one has to do with truth, such as “roughly speaking the reason for the situation is that the city has lived beyond its limits during the whole 1980s and spent more than the taxes have taken in,” the second modality has to do with obligation, such as “cities should not have lived beyond their financial limits.”
- 72 Usually, the text structure of the studied editorials roughly following the same structure: 1) framing the issue or topic, 2) describing the context or circumstances, 3) discuss issue from the citizen’s/region’s point of view and 4) making moral/ideological judgments/questions and proposals for the problem-solving. This is quite typical of the systemic-functional genre of the editorial, in which the analysis focused mainly on the last part of the editorial (moral and ideological judgments and proposals).
- 73 “Red-black civil servants” refers to the government’s political coalition between the Social Democratic Party and the National Coalition Party. The choice of definition is

- strongly pejorative and carries a connotation of the unity of Fascists and Communists. Usually, this type of government is referred to as a “blue-red” coalition.
- 74 The discussion of migration had clear historical roots. One part of the State’s military policy had been to keep border areas populated on the Finnish side, whereas the Soviet Union had treated Karelia as a military buffer area, and because of this the area had been kept largely unpopulated. The emigration from Northern Karelia was compared to the transformation in the 70s, when approximately 400,000 people emigrated to Sweden in search of jobs.
 - 75 Sampo was the famous money spinner in Kalevala. Kalevala is an epic recorded by Elias Lönnrot in the 1830s and 1840s from ancient Finnish poems, the most central source for Finnish culture and Finland’s most important contribution to world literature. Kalevala was also a central source of identity for a nation that was awakening to a self consciousness.
 - 76 During the deepest economic turmoil, between 1991 and 1994, the regional newsrooms of Karjalainen were reorganized and some of them were closed down. In the regional offices of Outokumpu and Middle-Karelia, the number of journalists was reduced and the offices of Juuka and Liperi were closed down. The journalistic staff was reduced by five. Savings from the reorganization were not instant, but seen with a delay in the turnover of the newspaper. The regional coverage of the newspaper diminished and material from the national news agency, STT, was used more than in a normal economic situation.
 - 77 In Lapland, public sector employees had increased from 21 percent of the labor force to 35 percent between 1976 and 1995. Another indicator of the importance of welfare state institutions to the regions is the proportion of GDP produced via public sector activity. From the early 1960s, the share of the public sector also increased dramatically in Lapland. Public expenditure per capita increased from 9,491 FIM to 40,406 FIM in Lapland between the years 1978 and 1994.
 - 78 The selection of stories was based on the headline of the story. If the headline included the word *depression*, (in Finnish *lama*, in the economic meaning of the word), the story was chosen. This methodological decision was made in order to enable a more focused analysis of the news frames through which the depression was brought to people, and of how news practices handled this process.
 - 79 The *story* is a central concept of news media. Journalists write articles, but even they themselves call them news stories. These news stories have a certain structure, order viewpoint and values (Bell 1998, 64-65). But the process of journalism is more complex because journalists usually interpret, explain and make causal linkages between events. Through the lenses of journalistic texts, *stories*, people are invited to see those events in a certain light and from a certain perspective. A substantial proportion of a newspaper (as also of other media outputs) consists of such narrative structures.
 - 80 The research on news management and framing has been conducted from different angles, partially because of different research objects. In some cases, framing has been identified as intentional, for example when it has occurred in some phases of deliberate societal transformation. In Tuomo Mörä’s dissertation (1999) on Finland’s decision to join the European Union and the referendum of 1994, framing was analysed as part of a process in which most of the dailies actively promoted a certain outcome. Similar approaches can be found in certain works based on discourse analysis. Thus, for example, Anu Kantola’s dissertation (2002) on political elite decision-making and their mode of communication during the 1990s found the minimizing of information leaks to the public to be a deliberate policy in order to avoid anxiety and restlessness on the financial markets.
 - 81 It should be noted that news stories are commonly hybrid intertextually with mixtures of genres and discourses, and that such hybridity is manifest in the heterogeneous linguistic features in a text. One story can blend, for example, institutional, administrative and citizens’ voices, or private discourses and public discourses on personal experience. Intertextuality, in general, means that one text is marked by all the other texts available, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged and which the text can assimilate or contradict (Fairclough 1995, 30-33; Chouliaraki & Fairclough 2000, 119; Fairclough 2000).

- 82 According to Jorma Miettinen (1980), news values vary within the country. The further north we go, the more local and regional issues gain priority among newspaper readers. Also, according to the annual Regional Media Research, there is a relatively higher preference for regional and local news in the peripheral parts of the country, whereas in South Finland national and international issues gain priority.
- 83 *Depression of fur farming discards the entrepreneurs of the field (Karjalainen, 31.7.1988), Fur farming fends off depression by reducing the trade (Ilkka 4.11.1988) and Depression is emptying farms (Ilkka, 14.12.1988).*
- 84 The concept of metaphor is used here for such representations of an image that are cast in emotional terms and form an autonomous sub-image, with its own space of meanings and connotations connecting the image to some other discourse.
- 85 A strong desire to belong to the national community has also created negative results in terms of how media have represented immigrants, linguistic minorities, and some ethnic groups (see for example Pietikäinen 2000).
- 86 Christian village people had to lead a blameless life in balance with their environment. According to historians (for example Klinge 1982), identity building in Northern Karelia is relatively young. The history of the region remained uncharted until the 1950s. As a consequence, the Northern Karelian self-image does not build on strong self-assertion or pride in the province but more on the notion of humble folks who do not need much to satisfy themselves. Some good examples could be found in the Finnish literature, such as the personality types in the novels of Matti Pulkkinen and Heikki Turunen.
- 87 For instance, it is usual that animals bite when they are scared or aggressive. If depression is represented as biting, it is treated as having qualities of a living being. The metaphors' reflect the activities and responsibilities of human beings that are biting in a state of aggression.
- 88 Finnish sentences with transitive action processes were either "active" ("Depression is emptying farms") or "passive" ("Agriculture can not be sacrificed to the integration"). Passive constructions can occur with or without agents. These were rarely used. Agents can be omitted for various reasons – sometimes they are obvious, but sometimes perhaps this is a way to obfuscate agency and responsibility.
- 89 There has been a sort of undisputed "common knowledge" that regional material in general would have increased in the newspapers throughout the last decades. This conclusion has been a result of the development of the newspaper structure. Newspapers as market leaders in their distribution area are supposed to have shifted their focus more towards regional affairs. The data shows, however, that the proportion of regional material in the studied newspapers has been quite stable. When one within the categories at the articles themselves, it can be seen that certain themes and topics (for example, unemployment, EU issues and regional subsidies) are now more at the fore than before the economic depression.

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Appendix I

Coding schema for regional newspaper coverage

Description of categories

DATE

A = Year (1988=1, 1989=2, 1990=3,
1991=4, 1992=5, 1993=6, 1994=7,
1995=8, 1996=9, 1997=10)

B = Month (January=1, February=2, etc.)

C = Day (1 to 31)

D = Newspaper

1 = Lapin Kansa

2 = Karjalainen

3 = Etelä-Suomen Sanomat

4 = Ilkka

E = Genre

1 = Editorial

2 = Columns and letters-to-the-editor

3 = News

4 = Interviews

5 = Feature stories and articles

F = Temporal mode of the headline

1 = Future tense

2 = Present tense

3 = Past tense

G = Themes of the regional coverage

Regional economics and livelihoods

10 = regional livelihoods (entrepreneurship, service sector, regional economics in general)

11 = regional livelihoods (agriculture and forestry)

12 = construction (dwellings)

13 = construction (public and business localities)

14 = postal and banking services

15 = regional enterprises

16 = construction of communication routes

Employment

20 = jobs and vacancies (number)

21 = unemployment (number of people)

22 = employment activities

23 = employment subsidies and service

24 = labor legislation

25 = general employment in region and national comparisons

26 = strikes

27 = shortage of labor

Regional demography

30 = migration

31 = mortality

32 = fertility

33 = refugees

34 = special groups (demographic notion, for example retired people)

Regional dwelling

40 = residential property

41 = rental flats

42 = price level of apartments

43 = rental level of apartments

44 = homeless

45 = settlement (depopulation)

46 = residential environment

Regional media

50 = local radio

51 = local/regional newspapers

52 = local news rooms

53 = cable television

54 = Internet, information society

Region and nature

- 60 = nature and immediate surroundings (pollution, threats)
- 61 = nature protection (environmental activities and policies)

Regional relations to neighbors and the capital area

- 70 = regional growth/decline
- 71 = region-capital area -relation
- 72 = regional comparisons, statistics and regional development
- 73 = regional subsidies
- 74 = transnational cooperation
- 75 = foreign notions affecting a region
- 76 = regional aspect concerning Russia, the European Union and the Nordic countries

Regional politics and elections

- 90 = regional candidates
- 91 = regional political ecology
- 92 = the EU referendum

Regional Identity

- 100 = regional identity of the people

Welfare state

- 101 = welfare state and economic crisis in general (decline of the system, future prospects, ideological stances)

H Headline/story indicating a change in the state of affairs

- 1 = positive development, change or increase in number (from the regional point of view)
- 2 = negative development, decline or decrease in number (from the regional point of view)
- 3 = static situation/ different and opposite perspectives of change
- 4 = impossible to detect/ change does not appear at a textual level

- G The headline(s) of the story
(Written form)

Appendix II

Interviews of the editors-in-chief

Themes and methodological implications

Chronological narrative was the genre chosen for the interviews and the editors-in-chief were asked to recall the time and depression period, from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. All the concrete examples from that period, concerning the policy line of the newspaper, personal memories from work, and national/regional and media economics, were welcomed and the interviewees were encouraged to tell, in their own words their stories of what had happened at the time.

The interviews were used as background material and the interpretations made from the texts were tested against their answers, memories, and opinions.

General themes

Your own work during the economic crisis (recollections)

- When did you first come across the signs of the economic depression?
- Where and in what way did the depression affect your own job?
- What kinds of stories did the depression produce/make you and your staff write (in editorials, in different sections)?
- What were the greatest problems or the most serious defects (obvious social evils) of the time?
- Who were the best sources during the time (politicians, civil servants, experts and specialists, other journalists)?
- On what grounds were the sources selected? Who were the most used and reliable sources?
- Who do you appreciate as a source/expert in economic issues?

- What were the greatest problems in getting information about the economy and the state of the affairs of the country (withholding of information, the complexity of economic issues, the relation between public and non-public information)?
- How did the journalists succeed in finding out what was happening?
- Do you remember some specific and illustrating editorials, stories, articles from the period?
- Who is your audience? For whom do you write (different recipients)?

The policy line and economic situation of the newspaper

- Was there a change in the newspaper's policy line/working routines during the period?
- How did the changes in the government's regional policy affect your editorial/journalistic policy line?
- How would you define the political orientation of the newspaper? How does this affect the stances taken in political/economic issues?
- What are the biggest threats in respect to the newspaper/your distribution area? (migration, environmental threats, regional politics etc.)
- Where and in what way do you recruit your journalists?
- Who are the most important advertisers?
- What is the relation between advertisers and the journalistic coverage of the newspaper?
- How does the owner affect the newspaper's policy line?
- Did the size/number of pages/number of journalists of the newspaper change during the studied period?
- What is the role of *Helsingin Sanomat* as an actor in regional politics?
- What have you/your staff as a newspaper house/publisher learned from the depression?

The region

- What is your relation to the concept of province?
- Do you see the newspaper taking part in the identity-constructing of the region? Do you think this is the newspaper's task?
- Tell me about the region and how you see the people from the regional identity point of view?
- Describe how the newspaper's location affects the newspaper coverage and stances taken in everyday journalistic work (center-periphery, east-west, south-north axis)?
- Have you seen polarization tendencies (in terms of unemployment, wealth in Finland during the studied period)?
- What is the political ecology of the region?

What are your views/impressions on the depression and economic policy?

- Did the depression appear as a complete surprise?

- Where were the biggest mistakes made?

- What is your view of a reasonable economic policy/ regional policy in Finland?

- What is your view of the current situation? Does the depression still have an effect? Have we learned our lesson? Is the depression used as an excuse?

- What is the journalists' relation to the decision-makers (on opposite sides, agreeing or disagreeing)?

Appendix III

Principles of content and textual analysis

A textual analysis, inspired by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, Norman Fairclough), of 302 editorials and 165 news stories, published between 1988 and 1997 was made for the qualitative part of the study. These texts were selected on the basis of a quantitative content analysis of the whole material. Thus they were coded with respect to a number of features, of which the central feature for this study was the regional journalistic construction of the economic crisis of the 1990s. The unit of analysis in this study was the editorial or the news story. The category of “depression stories” also contained letters-to-the-editor, interviews, and longer articles.

The first phase of the analysis was to define the semiotic aspect of the social problem. These types of problems concern how different communities are represented in the newspapers during the crisis. All editorials touching on subjects related to the economic crisis were included in the qualitative sample. Stories of depression were selected if the headline included the word “depression” (*lama*). All the texts were closely analyzed with respect to more detailed features that are shown in the tables above.

Excerpt from the table of textual analysis of the editorials

Editorials (examples from the beginning of 1992)

The *Topic* illustrates the social problem in a regional context. The category of *Participants* examines instances and individuals who are given access in the texts. Being a participant opens up the possibility of being heard and seen, and to be able to present a view of the issues at hand. *Preferred words and key expressions* refer to the range of expressions and vocabulary used in

respect to certain topics and participants. *Identifying, valuing and representing key values* in the texts examine what the key values were, expressed in argumentation. *Mode of dialogue* examines the style of the editorial and how the text addresses the readers. *Positioning readers* examines the writer's intention to define the regional public or some sub-groups of the public in the text. Analyzing *Discourses drawn upon* in the texts was a complex procedure, because a single text might draw from many different discourses. In this study, analyzing discourses meant simultaneously looking at the actual texts and at some of their linguistic features, using background and theoretical knowledge about the domain (Finnish society, the press, economic and social conditions of the time and the data) that might be used to approach the domain. The analysis of discourses is data driven, although some ideas are drawn from previous studies and other research that was done on the economic crisis of the 1990s. As it is not possible to analyze all the discourses in the data, I concentrated on discourses that seemed to have a role constructing and forming the regional experience of the economic crisis.

Items Date Headline Newspaper	Topic	Participants	Preferred words and key expressions	Identifying, valuing, re-resenting key values	Mode of dialogue	Positioning readers	Discourses drawn upon
1) 02/09/1992 It came eventually/ESS	banking crisis affecting the regional banks	ex-bank directors, Rolf Kullberg, banking group Saastöpankki	economic fluctuations, casino economy, boost, hype	responsibility, confession of being guilty, competence	interrogative	regional people, culprits of the banking crisis	seeking culprits, confessing errors
2) 03/08/1992 Slightly light in sight/ESS	increasing the opportunities for entrepreneurship in the region	the region of Pajät-Häme, enterprises and firms, bankruptcies	self-employment, deaths of the firms, the gloomiest depression	entrepreneurship industriousness, positive economic development	statement	entrepreneurs vs. people employed by the public sector	employment and the importance of entrepreneurship
3) 13/04/1992 Cry of help from Nastola/ESS	middle-ranked firms require the demolition of public sector	small and middle-ranked firms of the region, public sector, Association of entrepreneurs	demolition of the public sector, effective remedies	in defense of entrepreneurship, self-reliance, profitable activities	argumentative, critical	employees, entrepreneurs	neo-liberalistic defending entrepreneurs against the public sector
4) 10/09/1992 Time of action/ESS	the devaluation of the Finnish marka, regional economy	Ministry of Finance, national economy, middle-ranked firms, regional MP	new economy and social policy, lack of credibility in policy-making, vicious circle of bankruptcies	justice, competitiveness, sense of responsibility of politicians	emotional argumentative	taxpayers, the people vs. politicians	defending competitiveness and the transfer of income
1) 18/06/1992 Work to Lapland/LK	construction of the Vuotos reservoir	the government, the enterprise Kemijoki Oy, the people, Prime Minister Esko Aho, Lapland	the province overrun by the unemployment, psychological and concrete impact, welcomed of energy	courage, faith in the future, security vs. insecurity	argumentative, encouraging	people of the region	Vuotos reservoir project as an employer
2) 24/07/1992 There would be plenty of work/LK	high unemployment rate in Lapland	State, labor district of Lapland, the unemployed, Prime Minister Esko Aho	depression is mental during the service level, supporting the unemployed, excluded	sensitivity, reasonable employment policy	argumentative, critical	the unemployed	the employment benefits of the State
3) 05/03/1992 The thread of life is cut/LK	cutting down the telephone lines in outlying areas	national telephone operator TELE, wastelands of Lapland,	emergency calls, lowering the service level, services of the society supported by taxation	prioritizing, legitimacy of decision-making	argumentative, critical	not specified	the decline of services
4) Lapland is longing for work/LK	the unemployment problem of Lapland	municipalities of the region, labor district, Council of State	municipalities with high unemployment rate, development subsidies, the most northern province of the country	reasonable and justifiable decisions, need for help	argumentative, critical	people in the municipalities with high unemployment rate	the unemployment problem of Lapland has not been realized by politicians

1) 19011992 No sympathy for the European Union/Iikka	the meeting of the Centre Party	discussing democracy and ministers, agriculture, food manufacturing production, the National Coalition Party	role of the people, public discussion, the danger of EU membership, "euro-parties", national consensus	independence, sovereignty, impartiality, fear vs. intimidation	critical, judgmental	the inhabitants of the region, the voters	the future of agricultural production in the European Union
2) 27011992 Closing a village school is rarely real savings/Iikka	village schools under threat of closing down	village schools, civil servants, decision-makers	economic reasons as a whip, access to services, modest savings	losses, vitality of villages, uncertain future	argumentative	students, people of the region	schools as a public service
3) 29031992 There is space for 19 provinces in Finland/Iikka	administrative division of the provinces	civil servants of the Ministry of the Interior, Parliament, Sweden, Norway, Finland	requirements of the integrating Europe, small population, the future of the provinces	unclear division, functionalism, cultural values	argumentative	not specified	regional governing and independent provinces
4) 16051992 The division of provinces cleared up/Iikka	ministers, accepted 19 provinces	the Committee of Ministers, The Swedish People's Party	cooperation, development projects of provinces, the solution of administrative division	sensible decision, prevent threatening future prospects	argumentative, complimenting	not specified	provincial administration
1) 07021992 The change of Europe supports Karelia discussion/Karjalainen	how to get back the cleared areas	President Veltin, Finland, the Baltic countries, Moldavia	new political structures, border questions, CSCE Final Act	initiative, carelessness	critical, argumentative	regional people	Finnish initiative in Karelia discussion
2) 19021992 Reductions should not be made with eyes shut/Karjalainen	reductions in State administration	North Karelia, Ministry of Traffic, executor, road network system	closing down the regional organization, lay offs, the development of Finland,	declining public services, effectiveness, sensibility	critical, judgmental	regional people	declining public services
3) 06031992 The banks should help those who are in debts/Karjalainen	the situation of indebted people	the people, "the payers," banks making losses	loose money, casino economy, transferring difficulties to the future, normalizing banking sector	trust, moral obligation, aching decisions	critical, judgmental	people in debt	culprits of banking business
4) 26031992 Understanding reductions but not suppressions/Karjalainen	unpredictable style of administration's decision-making	decision-makers, the province, garrison, brigade of North Karelia	internal and external economic crisis, negative phenomena, savings	understanding, patience, unhealthy reductions	critical, judgmental	not specified	province is suffering because of bad politics

Excerpt from the table of textual analysis of the depression stories

(Examples from the beginning of 1992)

The *Topic* illustrates the social problems that the “depression” caused in a regional context. The category of *Participants* examines instances and individuals who are given access in the texts. Being a participant opens up the possibility of being heard and seen, and to be able to present a view of the issues at hand. Analyzing *Preferred words and key expressions* refers to the range of expressions and vocabulary used in respect to certain topics and participants. *Genre* can be recognized as paradigmatic sets of *form and structure* media texts. It is hard to isolate the precise characteristics of a given genre, although, for example, news genre is quite distinct in its style and conventions. It is analytically more important to understand that genres are agents of ideological closures because they limit the meaning potential of a given text as well as guide reader’s expectations and interpretations in regard to a text. *Type of crisis* illustrates the perspective in which the topic and an economic crisis is represented by a journalist.

Frames (of the news stories) illustrate the point of view from which certain events and phenomena are constructed in the texts. Researchers that have used the concept of frame (Välvirronen 1996; Gitlin 1980; Tuchmann 1978) emphasize the nature of journalism as constructed and manufactured representations of reality. From this point of view, frame is the basic idea or perspective that leads the interpretation and representation of a certain social phenomenon or event by journalists. Frames are mostly unconscious, unexpressed, and tacitly used as a part of journalistic routines. They are like “mental maps,” according to Dunwoody & Griffin (1993, 12). By framing, media organize events or social problems so that they are explainable in terms of causes and consequences. Frames define how social problems and events can be discussed at a given time. Political questions are often represented as

a conflict or a struggle that creates an antagonistic situation between a defendant and an opponent. This picture of social and political questions is offered to a reader, giving him/her certain tools and perspectives that are already written into the role that is offered.

Gamson (Gamson & Lasch 1983, 398-399; Välvirronen 1996, 110) defines the result of framing as an interpretative package. How successful and naturalized these different interpretative packages will become depends on the marketing and media skills of political and social actors, and how they succeed in marketing their own definitions of certain events and processes. In order to succeed, the actors must be able to link their own interpretations to the most preferable values and norms of a given society. How intentionally frames are produced or manufactured is naturally questionable. The concept of frame is used in my analysis as an organizing tool of the news analysis in order to clarify the understandings and interpretations of the economic crisis as a social phenomenon.

Items Date Headlines Newspaper	Topic	Participants	Genre
1) 10071992 Information about Finnish depression has successfully reached the people/ESS	immigration informa- tion to an empty auditorium	civil servant responsi- ble for immigration issues, labor district executives	news story
2) 09081992 Depression will not end while we wait/ESS	CEO Antti Vaahto requires political decisions	CEOs, government, municipalities	news story+ photograph
3) 29081992 Depression increases temptations/ESS	the mafia of Estonia is recruiting couriers from Finland	central criminal police, police inspector	news story
1) 14101992 Culprits for the depression must be pointed out/LK	the clergymen of Lapland seek culprits for the depression	clergymen of Kolari, priests	news story
2) 18051992 Depression signals already signs of the 1930s' slump/LK	good-willed people who backup loans are losing their money	firms of accountants, the accountables, guar- antors	news story + photograph
3) 06041992 The women of Lapland beat depression mentality in Tornio /LK	design-production of women clothes	the entrepreneurs of Kemi-Tornio, Germany, Central Europe	news story
1) 21041992 The seed of a blessing is found in the depression/Iikka	spiritual meeting in Kurikka	priests, members of the congregation	news story+ photograph
2) 05101992 Depression can be mourned away/Iikka	clergyman Kuronen as a family-specialist	family counselor, center of family counseling	news story
3) 01101992 Depression and mental health on an agenda in Vaasa/Iikka	conference organized by "Mental health" project	specialists of health care, medical doctors of the region	news story+ photographs
1) 29121991 North Karelian depression is also a depression of ideas/ Karjalainen	signs of industrious- ness and activity is eventually found in the province	the secretary of the province, province of northern Karelia, poly- technic of Joensuu	news story
2) 24101991 Depression is still gloomy and deep/ Karjalainen	gloomy depression of industry	middle ranged con- struction firms, execu- tives of industry and business	news story+ graphics
3) 18041991 In northern Karelia deepening atmosphere of depression as well/ Karjalainen	review of business conditions	The Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers, firms of the region; Abloy, Perlos, Enso Gutzeit	news story

Preferred words, key expressions	Type of crisis	Frames
no interest in moving back to Finland, housing and employment are worrying, lousy employment situation	unemployment crisis	economic depression makes people afraid
export, competitive ability, devaluation, distortions of economy, firm will not grow	legitimacy crisis of the government's economic policy	depression as an excuse for the distortions of national the economy
drugs, those who are not careful will get hooked (by drugs), depression increases attraction	crisis increases social problems and deviance	depression increases crimes
clergymen as warriors of justice, sense of responsibility, the generation in power, selfishness	legitimacy crisis, those in power should take the responsibility	greediness and emphasis on material values as a cause for depression
conditions of repayment, don't guarantee more than you can repay, the personal guarantees of firms	motivation crisis of people in debts, crisis in the historical context	depression as a system dysfunction
unemployment in clothing industry, beautiful clothes are also needed during a depression	economic crisis affecting middle ranged firms	depression is an economic and mental phenomenon, positive attitude beats depression mentality
Eastern sermon, agony and the message of hope and forgiving	motivation crisis, mental and spiritual crisis	depression can be overcome with a joint effort
depression, poverty, hatred, grief, fear, gaiety, pseudo-truths, upheaval of values, depression prioritizes life values	mental crisis	social and mental crisis will be overcome by mourning together
only a few keep their heads cool, depression clinic, depression experience, crisis groups are organized, mental depression, insomnia	mental and psychological crisis	depression affects human psyche and demolishes individuals
silent work, depression year silenced ideas, construction projects, State administration	motivation crisis	depression as a mental and psychological phenomenon
depression in the construction business, financing as the biggest problem, review of business conditions, competitive ability	economic crisis, crisis of entrepreneurship	depression as a seasonal hardship
depression, dismissed workmen, tightening competition, some positive experiences	economic crisis, unemployment crisis	depression as a seasonal hardship