TRACKING THE FINNISH SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE REFORM

Issue arena analysis in a major online news medium

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to track the debate on Finnish social and healthcare reform (Sote reform) in hs.fi online newspaper. The approach of issue arenas provides a theoretical framework for monitoring the debate. The model of communication in issue arenas conceptualizes the monitoring of the debate in terms of issue-related aspects, actors, places of interaction and course of the debate. The model is new and this research aims at applying it to a different context: online news media. Rather than focusing on issue arenas as a research tool for user-created content, the scope of this research is on the partly controlled media through its gate-keeping function. Articles in online newspaper and the information on sharing the article in the social media as well as commenting on it in the discussion forum underneath the article provide an interesting and fruitful platform for tracking the debate. The 98 articles that are the data of this research, dating between July and November 2014, are content-analyzed with a qualitative approach, focusing on framing of the issue and popularity of sharing in the social media and discussing certain frames. Following the model of communication in issue arenas, all four aspects of analysis are covered.

The findings indicate that the debate is for the most part concerning the political level, and the opinions of service-users do not get proportionate attention in the debate in hs.fi. For stakeholders aiming to participate into debate in the most beneficial way for them, monitoring of issue arenas via this method can provide important information on topicality of different themes and frames in the media debate as well as their popularity and relevance among the readers.

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Tiivistelmä

Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on monitoroida Sote-uudistukseen liittyvää keskustelua hs.fi online-sanomalehdessä. Teema-areenat toimivat tämän tutkimuksen teoreettisena viitekehyksenä. Malli viestinnästä teema-areenoilla käsitteellistää keskustelun monitoroinnin ongelmaan liittyviin (issue-related) aiheisiin, toimijoihin, vuorovaikutuksen paikkoihin sekä keskustelun kulkuun. Malli on uusi ja tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena pyrkiä soveltamaan sitä uudenlaiseen kontekstiin: online-uutismediaan. Teema-areenoita on perinteisesti tarkasteltu käyttäjien luomien sisältöjen näkökulmasta, mutta tämän tutkimuksen kohteena on osittain kontrolloitu ympäristö median ns. portinvartijaroolin kautta. Online-uutisartikkelit ja sosiaalisessa mediassa jakamisesta sekä artikkelin kommentoinnin määrästä saatu tieto tarjoaa kiinnostavan ja hedelmällisen lähtökohdan Sote-uudistukseen liittyvän keskustelun monitoroinnille. Tutkimusmateriaalina toimii 98 artikkelia aikaväliltä heinä-marraskuu 2014, jotka on analysoitu laadullisen sisällönanalyysin menetelmin, keskittyen Sote-uudistuksen kehystämiseen sekä lukijoiden rooliin uutisten levittäjinä sosiaalisessa mediassa ja kommentoijina. Kaikki analyysin osa-alueet mallista viestinnästä teema-areenoilla käydään läpi.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että hs.fi:ssä käyty keskustelu käydään pääosin politiikka-tasolla, ja sosiaali- ja terveyspalveluiden käyttäjien mielipiteet eivät artikuloidu samassa suhteessa osaksi keskustelua kuin politiikan toimijoihin keskittyvä sisältö. Tutkimuksen metodi voi olla hyödyllinen sidosryhmille, jotka miettivät heille parasta tapaa osallistua keskusteluun: tutkimuksen avulla voi saada selville tärkeää tietoa eri teemojen ja kehysten ajankohtaisuudesta mediakeskustelussa kuten myös sen, millaisille sisällöille keskustelussa on kysyntää.

Asiasanat issues management, monitoring, public affairs

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Muita tietoja

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Tracking public debate in the digital era

The digital age has caused changes in our perception of issues. We can follow news that touches us from Twitter and Facebook feeds and online newspapers. The selection of the media moulds our viewpoints, as it has been widely stated in the research, that we tend to choose the kind of news sources that fit our worldviews (see eg. Stefl-Mabry 2003). The interactive features of online news make it possible for news readers to share their own views on news by commenting and sharing in the social media (Chung 2008, 672).

The situation of sending and receiving information has undergone significant changes recently. We still follow major newspapers, but the online news environment provides, research-wise, interesting crossroads between traditional and social media, thanks to its quick responsiveness and interactive features that allow the issue to spread efficiently. According to the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw 1972) the media act as a gatekeeper by choosing the most newsworthy issues, potentially thus influencing both ordinary people's minds and public policies. Media coverage in the major institutional media is still highly competetive nowadays, as the audience is big in numbers.

The interpretative contexts for our perception are called *frames*. In this research, the research interest is to find the frames in which we receive information from online channels. As the quantity of news articles on the most popular issues is large, this makes it difficult for us to follow the development of these issues: who is leading the debate and what kinds of stakes are being

discussed. Who is framing the debate reported in the news and how? The situation is the same for organizations with a stake in the issue, whose major challenge is to monitor the debate and find relevant ways of participating in it. A new development in the online news media is the possibility to share the news in audience's own social networks (SNS). Facebook is the biggest SNS in terms of users at the moment, both worldwide[i] and in Finland[ii]. Twitter is of particular interest here in terms of its capacity to share opinions and information (Kwak et al., 2010). It is powerful in political communication as many politicians, journalists and other influencers are present there. 'Ordinary' Twitter users have a direct means to communicate with these influencers via Twitter, which remarkably expands the sphere of democratic debate.

The new media landscape has changed also the field of issues management, which is a function situated between organizational communication and management. Issues appear in a situation where a stakeholder views something as a problem in relation to the organization (Coombs 2002, 216). Issues managers should actively seek answers to the questions of how to prevent an issue from becoming a crisis, and find the relevant issues in the environment that may affect the organization (Palese & Crane 2002; Coombs 2002, 225–226). They should also listen to the concerns of stakeholders and create mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders as well as publics (Bowen & Heath 2005, 87-88). The issue contagion in the online world is evident: the Internet makes a private concern a public issue fast (Coombs 2002, 216). Monitoring the online environment thus becomes of great importance to the organization aiming at participating in the debate relevant for it.

The aim of this research is to apply this theoretical framework to sketch the issue by those actors who are in a leading position of the debate and get their voice heard. What kind of frames are we following when seeking information about an issue from news? The focal issue in this thesis is currently a hot topic in Finnish public policymaking: the social and health care reform. Hopefully this research enables a better understanding of the positions taken in the issue arena, frames and themes of the debate for those who follow the discussion and who have something at stake and consider participation into the debate.

In this research, a model of issue arena analysis (Vos et al. 2014, 207) will be applied in order to analyze the frames and actors of the media debate. The concept of issue arenas provides a more social and relation-centered view on PR than organization-centered and unilateral relationship management

premises (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010). It proposes a change in paradigm: in the online environment it is not anymore possible to control the public discourse, but instead it is beneficial for an organization to monitor its environment and participate in discussions in different issue arenas (ibid 2010). Needs of stakeholders may change during the course of the debate, and should thus be monitored online (Zhang & Vos 2014, 381).

The issue followed in this research

The Finnish social and health care reform is the biggest project in the government's agenda and it will bring a remarkable change in service provision of social and health care, influencing the lives of the whole Finnish population. According to Government's proposal for the law of arranging the social and health care services (HE 324/2014), in chapter 3.1, the objectives of the reform are described. Removing the sustainability gap in public finances and thus securing the financing of public services and benefits is the rationale behind the reform. In order to achieve this, services have to be integrated both at the level of basic social and health care services as well as in specialized services. Meanwhile the citizens' rights to neighbourhood services should be secured.

The desired outcomes of the reform (ibid.), in addition to savings, are

- enhancing the accessibility of services,
- making the service paths in healthcare and social services function better, reducing the unnecessary overlapping of services,
- enabling the introduction of new working methods and innovations, and
- reducing the borders of different administrative fields.

The issue in this research is monitored in the timeframe of July 2014 – November 2014. A small timely distance to the issue makes it interesting for those who have something at stake, to grasp the earlier developments of the issue and similarly motivates to make comparisons against today's situation. The timeframe is interesting because it includes the statements sent to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, as well as discussions that preceded that. The storyline of the selected timeframe ends with an agreement between the political parties, although at a later stage it becomes clear that the new law an arrangement of health and social services is not compliant with the constitution and the process gets postponed.

Research problem

The issue is highly complex and it is rather difficult to follow the debate. This is why it is interesting to follow the debate and make sense of it with qualitative research method. The reform will affect all the Finnish citizens, which makes it a relevant and topical issue for research. In addition to citizens, those who have something at stake – either in politics or business, would need more information in order to track the course of the debate. This links the research to the field of lobbying and public affairs in addition to monitoring the debate.

The interest to do research in the field hails from an Organizational Communication and PR course, where the task was to track the debate and public sentiment related to Sote reform in different social media. This research will take one step further in terms of gate-keepers: how is the debate in an online newspaper, where journalists choose their topics and frames.

The objective of this research is to track the debate in an online newspaper (Helsingin Sanomat, hs.fi) by following the sub-themes discussed, and frames used in the debate. Who get visibility in the major Finnish news media, and what kind of articles related to the reform do the readers of online news share in the social media?

Earlier developments

In order to understand the nature of debate in 2014, it is needed to take a quick look into the history of the Sote reform. Sote' is a contraction of the Finnish terms for 'social affairs' and 'health care'. The related legislative process has taken many years [iii]

In 2011 three different models to re-organise the social and health care services were proposed by a working group led by chancellor Kari Välimäki. One of the models proposed included an idea of core municipalities (max. 20) that would be responsible for service provision, both basic and specialized services. In 2012, a working group on the structure of services proposed three different models, out of which the working group of ministers selected a model where municipalities would be responsible for services including also a major part of specialized healthcare services. Some 'strong' municipalities would both arrange and finance the services, while other municipalities would be part of Sote regions of joint municipalities – or become part of 'strong' municipalities. Specialized healthcare would be administratively organised

under regions ('erva') that would for example co-ordinate centralized and services of special groups. In 2012 there was another working group preparing a declaration of differences in municipalities based on regional and linguistic issues that would have an effect when preparing the reform.

The working group of municipality and Sote reform coordination outlined on 8th May 2013 that the responsibility of arranging the services would be determined by the same criteria all over the country: by the number of inhabitants of municipalities. It was also agreed that services can be arranged by either municipalities or two different levels of Sote regions (where there would be a municipality with responsibility to arrange the services), and that both municipalities and private companies could produce the services as before. Later on in 2013, the working group for law preparation started its work. The preparation to dismantle the multi-channeled finance of the services started also in 2013, in collaboration with parliamentary representation, financers and different organizations. The declaration on the different alternatives with regard to this was published in March 2015.

New model

In 2014 a parliamentary committee was founded, led by minister of basic services Susanna Huovinen, which formulated a law proposal for the arrangement of social and healthcare services and some laws with respect to that (ibid.). When writing this research, the law is not yet ready.

According to Ministry of Social Affairs and Health[iv], service provision and arrangement of services will be separated in the new model, with a consequence of new administrative units, *joint municipal authorities*. Service provision and arranging of services will be arranged by maximum 19 joint municipalities. Joint municipalities can continue to provide the services themselves as public services, or procure them from private companies or NGOs (ibid.).

A lot of political and lobbying pressure will be directed to these new administrative units, as the service provision will be open to competition. The legislation process for the new law regulating the organization of social and health care reform has been described as difficult and controversial with multiple lobbying interests. It has remarkable effects on many levels of public administration as well as private companies, organizations and citizens. These are some major sub issues of the reform presented in the media:

Changes for municipalities. In comparison to other European countries, Finland so far had an exceptionally big number of small units, municipalities, which were responsible for the arrangement and finance of social and health care services (THL 2013, 18-19). It has been investigated that the bigger the population base of an entity responsible for arrangement and finance of health care services, the better possibilities it will have in ensuring the universal access and effective administration, as well as durable finance of the service (Thomson, Foubister & Mossialos 2009). The need for reducing the power of municipalities within the reform has caused a new administrative context of re-organizing the arrangement and production of social and healthcare services, which has been subject to many political disagreements.

Lobbying interests. The reform has been said to be one of the most lobbied issues in the Finnish political history[v]. High numbers of stakeholders are involved in lobbying related to the decision, both from public entities, private companies and civil society. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has asked for a statement for the new law on arrangement of social and health care services from more than 520 parties – municipalities, health care districts, employer and employee unions, political parties, ministries and both private sector and NGO providers of social and health care services. The interests and reference groups of these organizations are multiple, and according to preliminary findings the statements have focused on many different aspects of the forthcoming law (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2014).

In addition to multiple lobbying interests, the knowledge about the issue creates different contexts for policy-making. The issue has been subjected to different public discourses, for example:

Compliance with the constitution. Parliament's Constitutional Law committee stated in their report published in the early 2015 that the reform is not in line with constitution as there are issues rising from the administration and financing models of the new system. (YLE 19th February 2015.)

Power of municipalities. The reform has been critized for the lack of democracy: in the new model the municipalities wouldn't be able to decide on their taxation and a major part of a municipality's revenue would be directed at federation. (YLE 19th January 2015.) Simultaneously, municipalities would need to organize themselves as joint municipalities, which would make the local influence small especially in the case of small municipalities, and pose challenges to neighbourhood services (see eg. YLE 18th December 2014).

Consequences to the employees. There has been a concern about what will happen to social and healthcare employees as unlike in case of municipal mergers, in the proposed reform a five-year protection period against job termination will not be provided to employees. (YLE 14th February 2015.)

A deeper understanding of the issue will be developed in research, as the Finnish online news articles will be used, which are greater in number. In the following chapter an overview on issues management and public affairs will be provided and later on followed by methods and analysis part.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theory in this research focuses on organizations practicing strategic communication in the issue arenas. The theoretical part will provide an overview on how the organizations can manage the issues that are strategically relevant for them, in terms of framing and lobbying. This theoretical part presents different approaches to issues management, both from organization and issues focused viewpoints.

Organizations can adapt to their social environment or try to co-construct it. They can follow the trend or set it, with the help of listening to different interests, norms and expectations surrounding them (Sahlin-Andersson 2006, 606). Issues management is a way to monitor developments and possibly also influence the circumstances in which an organization functions (Miller 1999). In this chapter issues management will be further scrutinized. It is natural that if an organization has something at stake, they pursue publicity for their view on an issue so that they can add it to the news agenda, bring their frame to the debate, and develop the issue perception according to their specific needs and interests. This activity can be strategic communication that an organization practices according to organization's overall strategy, to actively participate in agenda setting and framing of an issue.

If it is accepted that organizations wish to enter the debate through an institutionalized media, two roles of acting in public can be expected: organization can strategically pursue the target media and transmit their message, or media can ask an organization for expert comments to support an argument of an article. The next section discusses public affairs and lobbying as well as strategic communication as strategic choices of organizations on how to participate in debate and create a favourable environment by good relations with strategically important actors.

The question of dominant actors of a debate is crucial when researching framing and agenda setting. Who has the power to set the agenda and frame

the issue? The media tend to use established professionals for certain questions requiring expert knowledge (Motion & Weaver 2005). They may ask, what the organization they represent thinks about different developments in the field. The experts speaking for different organizations represent different interest groups, and without a critical evaluation we do not grasp the power of different lobbies. By participating in the debate in the media, these actors – often spokespersons and politicians - take different positions in the debate. The development of an issue influences the visibility of actors in the debate, and makes some organizations more powerful than others. It is also worthwhile noticing that the prevalence of some sub themes of an issue can lead only few organizations to comment on issue (Meriläinen 2014). The most dominant actors have the power to contextualise the issue, make their interests heard and get a leading position on the issue.

The conceptual framework used here to track the debate, issue arenas, is new and requires a prior examination on theories on framing, agenda setting and issues management, as they are integral processes in the issue arenas approach. After giving an overview of issues and issues management, a brief introduction on the power-related aspects of issues management will be provided. These are public affairs, lobbying and strategic communication, concepts that will be fruitful in the analysis of an issue and the actors involved in the political debate.

2.1 Issues management

2.1.1 Issues and societal issues

An issue evolves and gets meaning in public debate. According to Coombs (2002, 215), issues emerge from private concerns, and become issues at the moment when they become recognized as problematic and communicated in public. Hallahan (2001, 28) emphasizes that issues are constructed socially, in interactions between people, and they may exist independently in different contexts of interpretation. This makes people perceive the same issue differently and focus on different aspects in expressing their views on the issue (Meriläinen & Vos 2013, 119).

Issues and discussions of them have become the point of interest in organizational communication today instead of organizations as such (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010, 323). Depending on their environment, issues can be categorized as corporate or societal issues (Bridges 2004). According to Jones and Chase (1979, 12), an analysis of an issue starts by identifying the source of an issue that may originate from social, political or economical trends, forces

and events. Understanding the often complicated context of an issue is necessary for identifying related actors and their needs.

In this research, the case issue is both social and corporative as the stakeholders are public entities, NGOs and private companies. By nature it is a political issue with consequences to every Finnish citizen. What comes to organizations with a lobbying interest in the reform, the big picture of the issue becomes complex as there are both public and private organizations, and NGOs as stakeholders. In addition, social/public issues are more likely to finish the issue cycle without resolution, which requires work to maintain the issue on the public agenda (Bridges 2004, 63).

Public opinion formation and the complexity of political issues

The environments, in which socio-political issues develop and grow, are highly complex as multiple processes as well as people affect them. Political issues can be defined to exist in the context of institutional political decision-making (Jaatinen 1999, 31), or they can been seen in a larger context of politicization, where a high issue salience makes actors to put more effort to reach their goal (da Conceição-Heldt 2006, 284).

Public opinion gets constructed in debate between people and it weakens by silence (Kim et al. 2015, 206). People may take various positions in the public opinion formation. Although the visible drivers of social change may be so called influencers and thought leaders, it is in fact the easily influenced people affecting other easily influenced people who play a major role in driving that change (Watts & Dodds 2007, 442). Activation of critical mass of early adopters is required for cascades to occur (ibid. 2007, 445).

In mass media communication research, the influencers often include institutional influencers such as politicians and government officials, and the 'ordinary citizens' play a more passive role in the process of public opinion formation (Kim et al. 2015, 207). Also the political parties bring their own rationale to the development of socio-political issues. According to Leeper & Slothuus (2014, 138), parties "*shape citizens' opinions by mobilizing, influencing, and structuring choices among political alternatives*". Thus, those people who choose to receive information from political sources may have a predefined ideological set of sense-making in relation to an issue. The organizational policies of parties and the political situation clearly have an effect on what kind of issue positions a party chooses to take.

The social media has brought more power to the group of 'ordinary citizens'

in relation to holders of institutional power. Another important development is that people interact in online groups and communities of their choice, and share thoughts with like-minded people, which create more polarized opinions and fragmented publics (Kim et al. 2015, 207). This leads to change the perspective of seeing the public as *many* instead of one. Due to this fragmentation, true debate with cross-cutting political discourse may be difficult to find. There has been research that also fora that are primarily focused for apolitical talk on hobbies and interests should be considered as relevant sources of information in the tracking of online political discourse as they potentially include debate from diverse political ideologies and are used for casual political talk (Wojcieszak & Mutz 2009, 50).

The institutional holders of power have become challenged by new rationale of interaction and communities born around issues. The active online citizens who follow politicians in the social media may for example wish to engage in discussion with them or a party or meet other supporters, or simply get exposed to information on what they say (Karlsen 2015, 309). The interaction undergone in the peer to peer networks such as the social media can be more meaningful and accurate to the participants, as there is a direct connection between individuals (Westwood 2015, 523). In order to adopt an issue position, different motivational factors and interests drive people to interact and participate in the debate. The role of the public(s) should not be underestimated in the co-creation of issues.

2.1.2 The purpose of issues management

Issues management sees issues as a strategic concern of an organization. The way of thinking became popular in PR in 1970s, as civil activism had strengthened, which made the fitting of expectations of stakeholders and public opinion to corporate strategies and policies necessary (Heath and Bowen 2002, 233). The rationale behind issues management is monitoring of emerging issues in order to lessen the negative effects that issues might have on the organization (Jones and Chase 1979). Issues management thus gives attention to changes in facts, values or policies in the field where the organization operates (Heath & Bowen 2002, 236).

Today, the issues management approach has become a strategic management tool in major corporations. Firms such as Coca-Cola, IBM, Pfizer and Shell have employed issue managers, and have an established issue management function. Also in many other corporations 'issue meetings' are organized regularly, where top managers review the identified issues and newly

identified issues are attributed to trained and equipped middle managers. (Harris & Fleisher 2005, 482). Issues management was originally a corporate communication approach, but it can be benefited in the public administration as well. Also, it can be taken from the management level to concern different levels of an organization so that networks and knowledge of an organization would be better used (Brønn & Brønn 2002, 248). For example, Moore (1989, 240–243) proposed that issues management could function as a mechanism for continuous down to top organizational communication, providing the management knowledge on issues identified by 'issue teams'.

Issues management suggests that an organization should be involved in the public policy discussion as early as possible (Regester & Larkin 2008, 47). Issues management is about anticipation of issues and prevention of possible crises. Managing issues involves understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders, and therefore issues management often is about balancing the organization's interests with the stakeholders' (Heath & Palenchar, 2009). Public affairs and management functions of the organization can be strategically linked with the help of issues management so that organization can enhance their stakeholder relations and act as more outer directed and reflective (Heath & Palenchar 2009, 12). Gathering opinions on issue and managing information related to an issue can be a social or competitive advantage for an organization (Regester & Larkin 2008, 45).

Issues management includes theories of issue life-cycle theories, expectancy gap theories and stakeholder theories (Näsi et al. 1997). It is important to understand the different theoretical frameworks to manage the issue before moving to the idea how issues are constructed and debated in the issue-arenas.

Issue life-cycle theories. According to different issues life-cycle theories, different logics in the issue development phases occur. The mainstream of these theories includes issues evolution approaches (Mahon & Waddock 1992; Sethi 1979) and issues forecasting approaches (Heath & Palenchar 2009). For example, Sethi (1979, 70) states that with the help of an issue life-cycle model, it is possible to predict the effectiveness of an organizations's response, and in general, how the social conflicts develop. This approach of 'phases of an issue' has also been applied to social issues.

According to an evolutionary model, public issues have been suggested to follow four stages (Post 1978): (1) Changing public expectations, (2) Political controversy, which appears in the phase of politicization of these expectations

and expectation for a policy response, (3) Development of legislation and finally, (4) Government litigation, which incorporates transition issues of the new legislation. These theories, however, have been critized (see eg. Brønn & Brønn 2002) for their evolutionary, natural science based thinking that has not proved to be applicable to research of social issues. This is why, in this thesis a model for public issue evolution is presented instead, which can either follow a linear path, get interrupted during its life-cycle or be enduring and long-lasting.

According to the model of Rakich & Feit (2001, 25), especially at the first, anticipatory phase, it is possible for an organization to develop "a sense" of how certain concerns and/or outcomes may be interpreted by different stakeholders. Still, in the emergency phase, an organization can act proactively by communicating the information relevant on the issue and build stakeholder relationships (ibid., 26). Enactment phase can be managed by political strategies such as lobbying, and in implementation phase, when legislation has been changed or regulations promulgated, an organization can use a considerably narrower set of means to influence the issue (ibid., 26). Issues can develop without interruptions, in cyclical forms or restart after a pause. They do not develop in isolation, as other issues, changes in facts and stakeholders may change the issue path.

Issue Movement Through Stages of Life Cycle
(Anticipatory, Emergent, Enactment, Implementation)
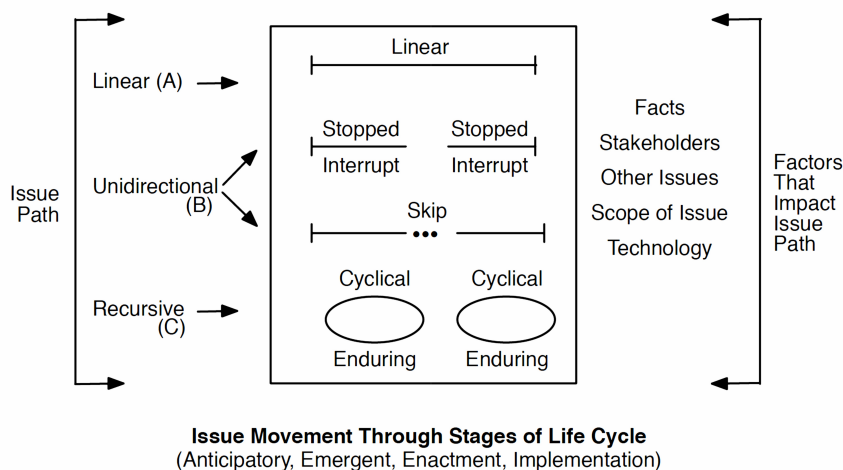
Figure 1. Typology of Public Policy Issue Evolution (Rakich & Feit 2001, 28)

The issue path though is not simply following the 'standard path' as the environment of an issue such as facts or technology around the issue may change. Nor are the stakeholders and the course of other issues expected to stay stable. This is where issue management and expectation management meet, and the long-term relationship management becomes vital in the issue

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cycle.

Expectation gap theories propose that a gap can exist between the perception of an issue and expectations related to it. Expectations in organization-public relations, according to Olkkonen and Luoma-aho (2014), can be examined either on desired state of issue (positive/negative performance) or the level of confidence in the organization (based on prior experience of fulfilling the expectations or 'blind faith' into an organization). It has been argued that divergence between societal expectations and performance of a company can harm its reputation and legitimacy (Zyglidopoulos 2003, 75).

Each expectation gap does not lead into a crisis, but an organization has to map their stakeholders based on how important they are for an organization: who has most potential to initiate crises. Organizations also have to differentiate between mild and serious threats. (Coombs 2015, 55.)

Performance Gap: Organizational actions do not match stakeholder expectations.

Organizational Actions   Stakeholder Expectations

Perception Gap: Organizational actions do match stakeholder expectations, but stake-holders do not see the match.

Organizational Actions

Stakeholder Expectations

Figure 2. Expectation gaps (Coombs 2015, 56)

Stakeholder theories focus on the 'who' aspect of issues management. They focus on organizations rather than issues. Although in recent theories in PR and issues management the centrality of issues has been highlighted, also some organization-focused stakeholder management should be practiced so that organizations would know who their stakeholders are, understand their demands and expectations as well as maintain the relationship (Roloff 2008, 246).

One of the most prominent theories in the field is the stakeholder identification and salience by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), which proposes that stakeholder's power, legitimacy and urgency determine the level of its salience to managers. For the managers of the focal organization this implies that an interaction strategy has to be chosen case by case for each stakeholder, depending on the power, legitimacy and urgency of the stakeholder (Roloff 2008, 236).

De Bussy and Kelly (2010, 300–301) argue that in politics, there is a difference between stakeholder identification and salience, as politicians can say to take into account certain stakeholders while they actually might not make an effort to hear them. That is why, researching issues management from the viewpoint of who has ownership of the issue, becomes significant. It raises also ethical questions as PR practitioners should consult also powerless, even unorganized groups with legitimate interest or claim in an issue (ibid., 301). In current research (Sederviciute & Valentini 2011, 233), it has been suggested to map relevant stakeholders in the social media by analyzing the intensity and frequency of participation in discussions concerning particular issues together with the relevance of the content shared and positions that different network members hold. This may help in finding new stakeholders for an issue who are influencers and/or hold different stakes in relation to the issue in the online debate.

2.1.3 Issues monitoring

Issues monitoring is a part of a strategic process and it includes the scanning, identifying, analyzing and tracking of issues (Heath & Bowen 2002, 235). This research is mostly about issues tracking. Issues tracking is about monitoring the issue, a defined phenomenon, in some timeframe, following its development (Zhang & Vos 2014, 372).

Monitoring, according to Regester and Larkin (2008, 131), means for organizations to monitor what is said, written and done by public, media, lobbies, government and other opinion leaders. Strategic issue monitoring helps management to find out what issues exist, who supports and opposes them, what they mean for the future of the organization, what is the level of support and how the issues develop and change (Heath & Palenchar 2009, 28). In addition to focusing on the environment, the issue itself has be analyzed for example by thinking of its rationale, the motive of its proponents, its evidence-base, the thinking that supports it as well as the threats and opportunities included in it (Heath & Bowen 2002, 235).

Issues management requires knowledge about the phase of an issue. The issue awareness phase requires comprehension on how the issue matures, mutates or dies. Maturity phase includes development of an issue into legislation, regulation or litigation. (Heath & Bowen 2002, 235.) Heath and Palenchar (2009, 88) pose important questions for issues managers on the question 'how' to participate, which depends on the phase of an issue:

> Has the dialogue reached a point at which certain issue positions have become ossified, or is there still chance for change for or against some specific issue position? Can the change be created by adopting new organizational policies and/or by responsible advocacy and collaborative decision making?

This is worth analyzing for issues managers, as the organizations participating in the debate considering different issues have to find strategies for appropriate participation in the issue arenas. Appropriate participation should be adopted after analyzing the environment and its actors, taking into account the phase an issue is in.

The Internet has made a significant change for the framework of issues monitoring as an issue's priority for an organization can be easily altered by enhancement of both issue legitimacy and issue manager power (Coombs 2002, 225). The Internet can spread issue contagions, which requires vigilance from organizations as this can change the priorities of an issue (ibid., 227–228). Issues monitoring online is an evolving field. Present methods for issues monitoring include keyword search, thematic and sentiment analysis, analysis of search patterns and mixed methods. Issues monitoring in the social media includes many challenges to overcome, as possible misinterpretation of metrics, methodological constraints, ethical constraints in terms of privacy, and high costs combined with unclear ROI may occur. (Zhang & Vos 2014, 378–379.)

2.1.4 Public affairs and lobby

In issues management, organizations having stakes in relation to an issue, can choose to participate in the political debate in different ways. The concepts of public affairs and lobbying are presented here, as well as their possible roles in issues management.

Public Affairs. Public affairs is an organizational function that consists of community relations, corporate communications and public relations,

corporate philanthropy, image and reputation management, issues management, legal affairs, media relations, political influence efforts and business-government relations as well as stakeholder management activities (Windsor 2005, 402). It works as an interface of these functions, which all focus on relations with the external operational environment of an organization (ibid. 2005, 403). The role of public affairs increasingly is to help an organization to deal with external issues including potentially operational and reputational consequences, especially those that include a significant regulatory or political dimension (Moss et al. 2012, 58).

Public affairs is closely related to issues management in terms of addressing strategically the political-governmental environment in which the organization operates now or in the future (de Lange & Linders 2006, 131). It aims at influencing stakeholders, including government and media, both through performance and communication activities (Windsor 2005, 406). In the long run, public affairs is about creating and maintaining good relations to different governmental levels and external stakeholders such as NGOs and other interest groups (ibid., 402). All these may have a role in the development of issues affecting the organizations.

Similarly relating public affairs to issues management, Public Affairs Council already in year 1978 proposed an issues management model that would consist of

a) monitoring the public policy arena to determine what trends will demand a reorientation of corporate policy and communication process,

b) identifying those issues of greatest potential importance to the organization,

c) evaluating their operational and financial impacts through issues analysis,

d) prioritizing and establishing company policy positions by coordinating and assisting senior management decision making,

e) creating the company response from among a range of issue change strategy options, and

f) implementing the plans through issue action programming. (Heath & Palenchar 2009, 14.)

According to Heath & Palenchar (2009, 14) the old model in its definitions for role of issues management is significant as it proposes a variety of response options and makes a connection between strategic issues management, public policy and reputation.

Lobbying. By lobbying in this research, a conflict accommodation perspective has been adopted: *"lobbying is influencing political decision making by*

communicating with publics relevant in the political processes of a certain issue" (Jaatinen 1998, 24). In the definition, it is assumed that political processes often include conflicting interests of many organizations in the society and this communication is thus strategic and competitive by nature. The influencing of political decision making requires information on political processes, and a lobbyist should pursue targeting the right power holders at right times in order to be effective.

Lobbying is a part of both communications and strategic functions of an organization, and advances strategic objectives of the organization as a whole. Depending on lobbying strategy, an organization seeks different advocacy strategies towards political issues and embodies both its values and general principles in its communication strategy.
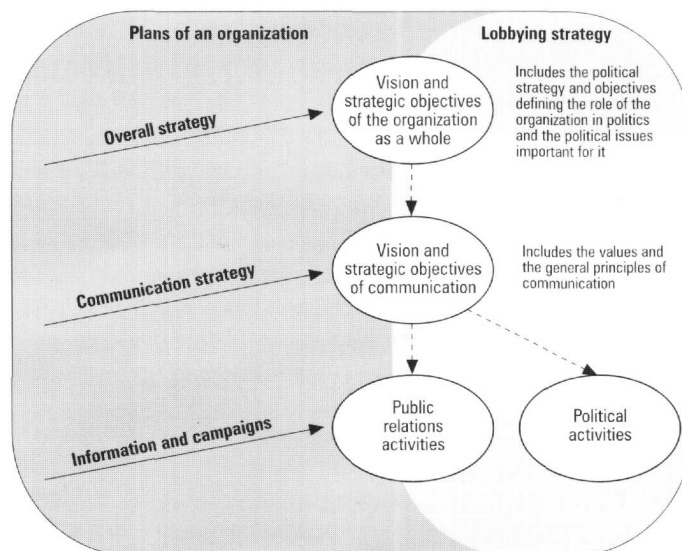
Figure 3. The plans of an organization and the lobbying strategy (Jaatinen 1998, 25)

Goals of lobbying activities are strategic choices decided by executives of the organization in question, including eg. the pursuit of legitimacy, better image or reputation, future harm-prevention or acquisition of benefits to the organization, or the public interest (Windsor 2005, 409). According to the research in the field, it is mostly large and powerful companies that have a tendency to operate as political actors (Getz 1997; Schuler et al. 2002, 667–668). A quantitative research by Godwin et al. (2013, 190–191) got results indicating that companies more likely lobbied in case of 1) valuable goods, 2) decreased competition as a result of lobbying, 3) maintenance of status quo, and 4) the desired outcome of the lobbying was a private or an intermediate good, not public.

Lobbying is also a means of strategic issues management as organizations have an interest on public policy developments and have a view on a desired outcome of a political process (Heath & Palenchar 2009, 9). Issues management can be used for promotion of lobbying interests by actively monitoring political trends and forthcoming legislative initiatives, so that organizations can participate in the political process more purposefully and effectively (Heugens 2005, 485).

2.1.5 Strategic communication as a part of issues management

Issues management can be seen an integral part of strategic communication. Strategic communication has been defined as purposedful communications for an organization to advance its mission (Hallahan et al. 2007, 4). It has been viewed both in positive and negative light: while critical voices state that strategic communication is manipulative, its practitioners see it pragmatically as a way to reach the strategic goals (Holzhausen 2010, 75). Strategic communication promotes the mission of the organization in each communicative action of an organization, which reflexively shapes the organization itself (Overton de-Klerk & Verwey 2013, 370).

For organizations, strategic communication is about producing mutual understanding for decisions made by organization, although it is not possible to make others think in the way an organization would prefer (Hallahan et al. 2007, 26). Communication can be strategic creation of meanings, which has been suggested to be the *"whole way in which we understand, explain, feel about and react towards a given phenomenon"* (Rosengren 2000, 59). Similarly for Mahoney (2011), strategic communication helps organizations to achieve or enforce legitimacy towards publics, institutions or stakeholders. Therefore, it can be viewed as strategic action of an organization, which means the convergence of management and communications functions.

Strategic communication can be viewed in terms of organizational policies related to issues management. An organization can adopt different roles in its stakeholder relations and PR: an organization can ask itself, whether it wants to be *"a passive environmental adapter"* or *"an active public policy and stakeholder opinion influencer"* (Windsor 2005, 409). Strategic communication can provide an organization with different positions in the participation to the debate. The issues management approach promotes an active participation in the construction of an issue. Although it has been argued that issues are not these days very manageable, monitoring the social media environment can offer an organization new opportunities, and important information for balancing

organizational policies (Zhang & Vos 2015). This is why an organization should see issues management and monitoring of online environment pivotal for its strategic decicion-making and communications.

2.2 Issues presented in the news media: traditional and virtual environments

Media coverage for issues is highly competed as the size of public space is limited compared to the number of potential issues (Hilgartner & Bosk 1988, 59). Media coverage is competed for several reasons. It can (a) provide legitimacy for the issue when discussed in mass media communication according to the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw 1972), (b) provide a framework of interpretation for an issue, discussed in mass media communication as framing (see Entman 1993), (c) attract opposing groups that provide conflict, which generates additional coverage (see Van Leuven & Slater 1991), and (d) keep the issue in the public mind (Bridges 2004, 61). Mainstream media tend to be attracted to issues covered by other media (Lee 2007).

Online news, according to Sundar (1999), is valued high as a type of online content due to e.g. its timeliness, relevance, objectivity, and importance. These criteria are similar to traditional news in print. The major difference between the offline and online environment in issues management is that in virtual environments of communication the role of the audiences becomes crucial. For stakeholders, the Internet creates awareness of an issue and makes it possible for them to communicate about the issue horizontally, between different stakeholders (Coombs 2002, 218). For Hallahan et al. (2007, 10), impressions and experiences of organizations for its audiences are based on the sum total of the people's experiences, and thus no single communication activity can be examined in isolation (Hallahan et al 2007, 10). For monitoring of issues in the online environment, it is important to find the social media influencers who can be either case or organization specific, or both (Kumar & Mirchandani 2012). The power of engagement by the publics makes online news different from the traditional media.

Those online contents that go viral have been proposed to be (1) likeable: emotionally and intellectually stimulating and engaging, and (2) sharable: a user of social media thinks that a content will have these stimulating and engaging effects in their social network (Mills 2012, 166–167). Contents in the network of micro blog followers as Twitter, matter most if they are shared by highly connected users, who work as hubs (Borge-Holthoefer et al., 2012). Also

the characteristics of using the different social media should be taken into account as for example Facebook has been used more for strengthening of friendships whereas Twitter, which links people with weak ties, is better used as a tool for exchange of facts (Zhao et al. 2010).

The social media bring a new dimension for researching online news media as the audiences can customize their news choices and interact with others (Chung 2008). High-expertise source and number of recommendations in the social media make online news more credible (Go et al. 2014, 362). It has also been researched that contents that are expected to benefit the receiver personally, are more likely to be shared in the social media (Borge-Holthoefer et al., 2012). Lee and Ma (2011, 336–337) researched the motives of sharing news content in the social media, and found out that prior social media sharing experience and socializing were two most salient factors of intentions to share news, together with status seeking and accessing relevant content.

Note: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p <0.001
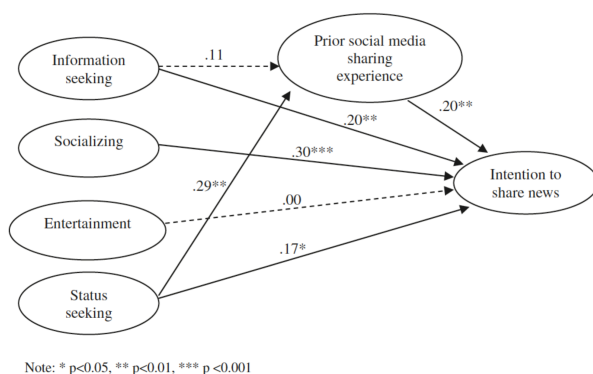
Figure 4. Structural model (Lee & Ma 2011, 336)

2.2.1 Agenda setting in news media

The logics of agenda setting and framing of an issue in the media are traditional models to explain the relationship between mass media and political agenda. What is written in the media, is often also in the agenda of public opinion in terms of an issue (McCombs & Shaw 1972), and simultaneously, visibility in the news media affects the political agenda (Meriläinen & Vos 2011, 296; Thesen 2014, 185). The media in agenda setting theories act as a gatekeeper for what the media agenda consists of. They are affected, in turn, by the perceived importance of an issue, both by publics and what is on the policy agenda (McQuail & Windahl 1993). The logics of traditional agenda setting can be summarized as follows:
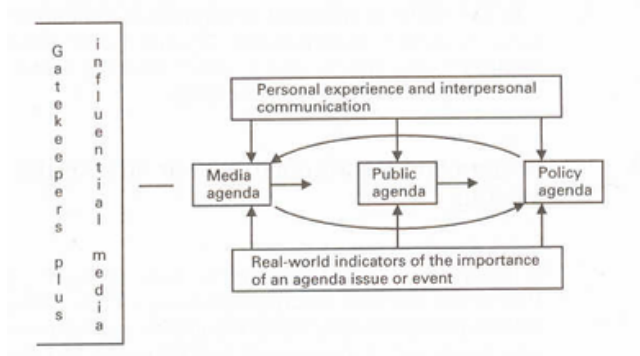
Figure 5. Agenda-setting model (McQuail & Windahl 1993)

In agenda setting both media and policy-makers play an active role: the media have a capacity of triggering political attention and directing the discussion, but political actors have the power to choose which contents they want to politicize (Thesen 2014, 196). Different lobbying interests of organizations are negotiated in the agenda setting process, as the media chooses the themes of the public discussion: whose themes become salient and whose remain in the margins.

Agenda setting is an actor based theoretical framework to get a grasp on how public issues are taken into, or removed from an agenda. However, the theory has been accused for its causal explanation of publics' behaviour: it does not take into account a receiver's role in media broadcasting as it assumes that a certain media treatment of an issue will lead to changes in public opinion or behaviour (Kosicki 1993, 106). In the era of social media the public agenda has a remarkable effect on the news media agenda, and the traditional model of agenda setting gets challenged. The advocacy done in the social media by organizations can also mould news media agendas, as well as advocacy practised via other channels. The organizations can, in addition to earned media meant in agenda setting theories, use their own channels as well as bought visibility in the social media and Internet, which can have drastic effects on traditional agenda setting. The social media and other online spaces give organizations a new set of tools to participate in the debates relevant for them.

Lately, agenda-setting theory has advanced in terms of taking into account properties describing news objects and their tones (positive, negative, neutral). While first-level agenda setting examines the issue salience in the mass media, the second-level explores the quality and essence of the news coverage of an issue. (Wu & Coleman 2009, 776.) The second-level agenda setting provides the interpretative context, transmitted through the media,

on how to think about an issue (Moon 2011, 699). The public will finally decide if they accept the tone of the news content and pay attention to those characteristics that the journalists select into the news agenda (ibid., 712–713).

Further, an important development in the field of agenda-setting theory is considering the centrality of different objects and attributes in the network relationships, the Network Agenda Setting Model. In order to better understand the dynamics between media and public agendas, researchers may track the interconnectedness of different issues and attributes with the help of data visualization as well as find the actors that have actually set the media network agenda. (Guo 2012.)

The agenda setting in this research is taken as one important starting point as the target of the research is the news media. From an agenda setting perspective, it is possible to examine, which sub topics and aspects of an issue are selected by the media, further influencing agendas of political decision-makers. How this is done, is explained in framing theories introduced in the next chapter.

2.2.2 Framing of issues

An important process in the production of public opinion is the framing of issues. Framing presents an issue in the media in a certain way by choosing the language and ideas that define the debate, and contextualizing individual issues to larger story lines (Bengston et al. 2009, 377). It can include alternative valencing of information, which puts information into either positive or negative light (Hallahan 1999, 207). Framing creates a selective narrative originating from elements of perceived reality for an issue on how it becomes understood by the audiences (Entman 2007, 164). As a difference to agenda setting, framing instead of making us think about certain issues, makes us think about an issue in a particular way (Blumler 2015, 428).

According to Hallahan (1999), seven types of framing can be identified depending on their focus on situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibilities, and/or news. Framing of news is claimed by critical researchers to be capable of promoting certain worldviews by choosing an ideological framework of definition (ibid., 223). Framing of news has been described as a process of value and policy based frame-building in the newsroom, followed by issue-level and generic frames in the news and finally the interplay of media frames with predispositions of the audiences (de Vreese 2005, 52).
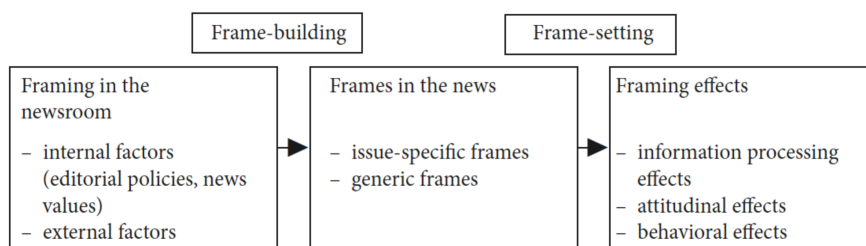
Figure 6. An integrated process model of framing (de Vreese 2005, 52)

There are multiple actors who participate into frame building and setting, including journalists, organizations and other influencers. Journalists have the final control over the framing of news stories, but also other actors participate in the framing of news as proposed in the agenda setting chapter.

For an organization practicing PR, framing can be benefited in the debate for creating an interpretative context that is favourable for them (Meriläinen 2014, 34). This can be done via different communication channels, with a direct contact to the media or participating into the debate elsewhere. It is helpful for an organization to understand the framing processes better, so that decision-making in issues management and communication strategies concerning the participation into public debate become more evidence-based and strategic (Meriläinen & Vos 2013). Framing of an issue, once done successfully, can be beneficial for organizations in future interactions on an issue, as the actors have an established position and better chances to influence the direction of the debate (Meriläinen & Vos 2013, 123). Framing, however, is not under an organization's control as the original message can be put to different contexts by different actors, such as journalists and social media users. Meriläinen (2014, 64) described framing in a debate as a move in a game situation: *"As a result interactions, negotiations of meanings and causal relations, and competitions, as well as the disregarding of issues, frames and actors, all occur"*. Framing literature includes also practical proposals for organizations' enactment. For example Dahan (2009, 115) advises organizations to define the issue quickly, do the framing according to values, experiences and concerns of the target audience as well as build it according to diagnostic, motivational and prognostic components.

It is important to recognize the role of a journalist in the framing process, as they hold a role of a gatekeeper on what will be published and broadcast in the media. Political news frames can be viewed according to journalist's role in the framing of an issue: *politics as a game* frame, where a journalist is controlling the course of an issue by focusing on politicians' personalities, strategic positions etc. traits not related to a political issue, or *issue frame*,

where a journalist reports on political issues and events in terms of issues and issue positions (Falasca 2014, 586; Shehata 2010, 129). According to findings of Falasca's research (2014, 592), journalists tend to act more as observers in 'routine-like' tasks, but in election and financial crisis related journalism they are required to make interpretations and analysis on the course of events. The opportunities for an organization in framing thus depend not only on choices of a journalist, but also the nature of issue. Further, a *conflict frame* can be used. Its idea is to focus on disagreements, different voices of stakeholders of an issue, thus making different viewpoints of an issue heard (ibid., 586). As disagreement often is a news criterion, conflict frames are commonly used (Lengauer & Höller 2013).

Framing of issues in the research has been widely focused on issue-specific frames that are unique only for the issue in question (Berinsky & Kinder 2006; Chong & Druckman 2007; Pollock 1994; Rose & Baumgartner 2013). A two-tiered model for framing, for both issue-level and general frames, was developed in 2013 by Boydstun and Glazier. They argue that by using the model researchers can test hypotheses on general level of policy-making and its consequences on public opinion and public policy without losing an issue-specific level of each issue debate (Boydstun & Glazier 2013, 707). Similar two-tiered approaches have been used in research to some extent, for example by de Vreese (2005) and Lengauer & Höller (2013).

Following the hypothesis of Boydstun and Glazier, two key framing paradigms are used: (1) gain versus loss (based on prospect theory) and (2) self versus other (based on social identity theory). These categories reflect both distinctions made by journalists and news consumers (Boydstun & Glazier 2013, 710). In prospect theory, losses tend to be seen larger than gains (Baumeister et al. 2001; Levy 2003). This has been important information for framing studies, which have provided evidence that news can reach more readers by benefiting the emotion of fear (see eg. Altheide 2009, Iyengar 1991). In the self versus other framing paradigm, self-referential frames in turn explain the ways an issue affects the "self" or the "in-group," while other-referential frames reveal the implications of an issue for the "other" or the "outgroup." (Boydstun & Glazier 2013, 712). Loss-based frames combined with focus on implications of an issue for the self or in-group may have greater personal and political impacts (ibid., 724). Further, these frame types are classified into hope frames (gain and self-referential), fear frames (loss and self-referential), charity (gain and other-referential) and shame (loss and other-referential) groups following the typology of Boydstun and Glazier (2013).

This is an example of how Boydstun and Glazier conceptualized the generalizable frame types into self/other-referential and gain/loss frames in their research (Boydstun & Glazier 2013, 719):

	Self-Referential	Other-Referential
Gain	*Hope Frames* Fighting terrorism abroad will keep the United States safe on the home front Spreading freedom will give the United States more democratic allies There is no better economic investment than fighting to keep America safe and secure The best way to keep the United States safe is to withdraw The patriotism of the American people will help us recover Improvements in intelligence will make the country safer	*Charity Frames* Fighting terrorism to keep the world safe is America's duty as the world's leader The United States can bring democracy and peace to the Middle East U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq are making us proud—they're winning the war on terror The best way to help the Iraqi people is to withdraw Pakistan needs the help of U.S. intelligence to improve border security The women of Afghanistan are happy to have more freedoms
Loss	*Fear Frames* If we don't fight terrorists abroad, we will be forced to fight them on U.S. soil WMDs are a threat to the U.S. and the world—we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud Too many U.S. soldiers are being killed The war is costing too much money, taking resources away from needs at home, and putting the U.S. economy at risk The September 11 attacks weren't prevented because of intelligence failures The hubris of the United States makes us less secure	*Shame Frames* Without U.S. intervention, Iraq will destabilize and other Middle Eastern countries will suffer The torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib is an embarrassment to the U.S. Life for the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq is worse now than it was before the United States invaded The United States has no right to impose its form of government on foreign nations Drone attacks are resulting in civilian casualties The Iraqi people are less secure now than they were under Saddam

Figure 7. Generalizable frame types with example arguments, Boydstun & Glazier (2013, 719)

This model will be used in the analysis in order to map the frames used in the debate.

2.2.3 Influence of credibility, legitimacy and power in framing

When researching framing of an issue, it is important to understand why people and news media adopt certain frames. These three aspects help the actors not only to frame the issue but also establish their position in the debate, influence the course of the debate and create ownership for an issue (Meriläinen & Vos 2013, 122–123):

Credibility. For Druckman (2001, 1061), perceived source credibility is a prerequisite for successful framing source credibility. Brooks (2012, 79) supports the argument by stating that in marketing of ideas, the success may depend significantly on whose face, voice and public persona are linked with the idea.

Legitimacy. Issue has to be recognized as a public concern and issue manager as a legitimate actor — which means having a right to speak on the issue — in

order to get legitimacy. Also, the policy proposal that an organization offers, has to be legitimate in the public eye. Legitimacy is beneficial for an organization as it makes their messages accepted and listened by the publics. (Coombs 1992.)

Power The central actors in the network are called hubs and smaller organizations often need to co-operate with them to be able to influence issue salience (Carpenter 2011). Also the ability to access the other stakeholders as well as the number of linkages an organization has to other stakeholders, matter as they enhance the possibilities of an organization to communicate with the other relevant actors (Coombs 2002, 219–220).

The actors that are more credible, legitimate and powerful are more likely to become the owners of the issue in the debate (Meriläinen & Vos 2013, 122). This makes it important for organizations practicing PR to think how to participate the debate, who are dominating the issue-arena (see next chapter) and with whom should they collaborate in order to make their voice heard.

2.3 Issue arenas as a framework for a more social comprehension on the debate

Issue arena debate has been described as *"interaction among stakeholders on an issue in the public debate in the traditional or in virtual media"* (Vos et al. 2014, 210). In the research, the news media will not be treated from a traditional 'sender' perspective (Shannon & Weaver 1949) but instead as a playfield of different advocating organizations. These organizations represent their lobbying interests in the media, and according to agenda setting and framing logics, media select the aspects of an issue being discussed as well as gives space to different organizations to express their view on the issue. In addition, issues are nowadays debated in different online media platforms including the social media (Coombs 2002, Bengston et al. 2009). Due to this major change in the media landscape, now grass-root and decision-making level are directly connected so that information can be shared and spread quickly on the web, and issues that didn't get attention in the traditional mainstream media such as printed newspapers, can be discussed online (Meriläinen & Vos 2011; DeLuca et al. 2012, 500–501).

An online newspaper, which provides the empirical material for this research, can be situated between traditional and social media by its nature. It is managed by the newspaper, but works more real-time and has an important trait of social media as the articles can be shared via social media channels and

commented at the web page of an online newspaper (see eg. www.hs.fi). The social media connection of an online newspaper is a new source of information for PR practitioners: it is possible to track the contents of the issue arena that receive more attention by the audiences.

From an organization's point of view, it is important to monitor issue arenas to benefit from the information provided by the new social and online environment. Organizations should approach the theme strategically, and ask themselves: *"Which issue arenas are relevant for the future of the organization?"* and *"Which issue arenas provide opportunities for interaction with specific groups?"* (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010, 316) It is also a strategy to keep silence on some issues, if they are unfavorable, too expensive or difficult to solve for an organization (Meriläinen 2014, 70).

The actors of the issue arena are not in an equal position when entering the issue arena. The most powerful actors, gatekeepers, have better chances to lead the debate by defining the issues and their contexts (Meriläinen 2014, 17). This fact has to be taken into account when monitoring the issue arena. The same actors do not, however, hold same amount of power in different issue arenas, but different actors may be more or less central in different networks and have different amount of direct communication channels to different actors in the field. That is why the organizations should seek to enter the issue arenas that are most suitable for them in order to advance their strategic goals, and where they can interact with the most relevant stakeholders.

Issue arenas differ by issue, the actors involved and the course of the debate (Vos et al. 2014, 206). The preliminary model applied in this research is called Analytical model of communication in issue arenas. It is a dynamic tool for analysis as it can provide a surplus to an analysis by not only describing characteristics and context of an issue, but revealing the roles that actors take in course of the debate (ibid., 207).
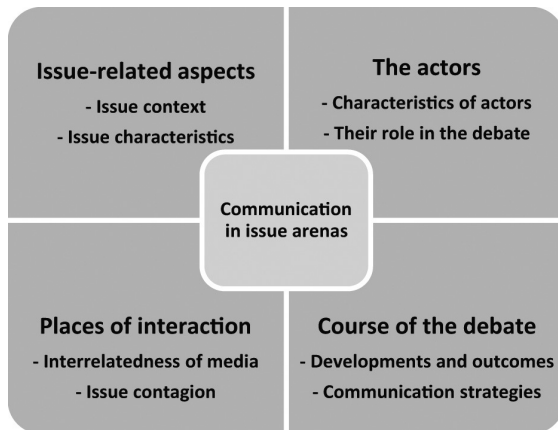
Figure 8. Analytical model of communication in issue arenas (Vos et al. 2014, 207)
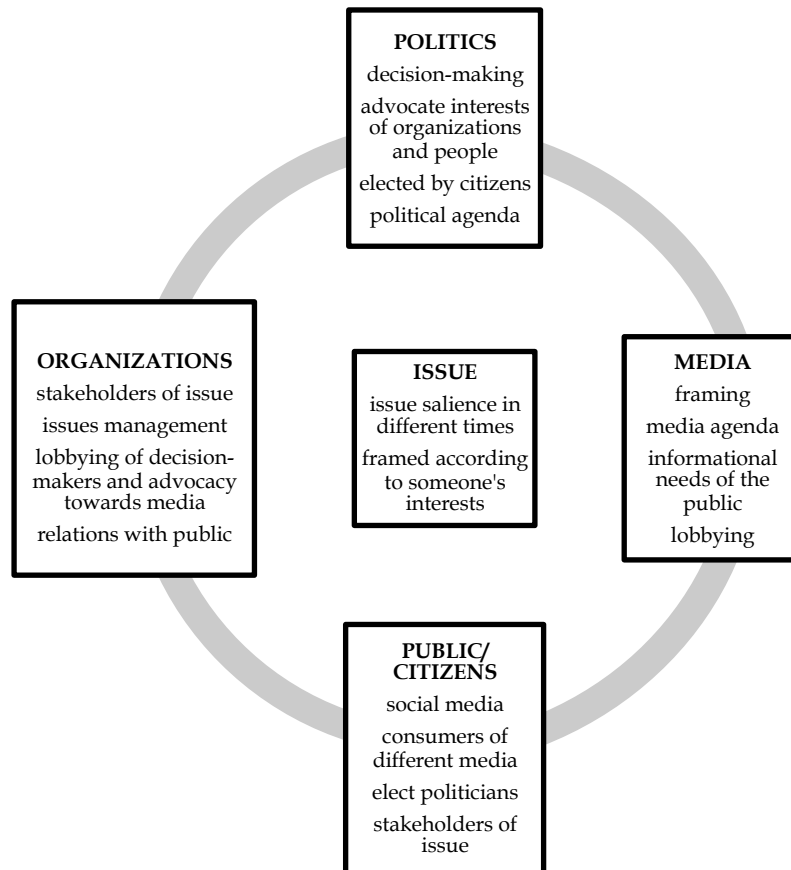
With the help of this model, it is possible to examine the debate, focusing on various elements (see Vos et al. 2014, 210):

1) *Issue-related aspects.* Characteristics of different aspects of an issue present in the debate and their emotional appeal. Which aspects of an issue are dominating the discourse?

2) *The actors.* Who is talking as an expert about the social and health reform in the news media, is a conflict of opinions, needs or interests expressed, is there inter-relatedness about those who give their comments, and are there any intentions to block other people's views.

3) *Places of interaction*. What is the type of article (news, interview, commentary etc.) and how long it was, tone (positive/negative). Is there reference to other places of interaction, such as other media, social media, political arena or public arena?

4) *Course of the debate.* Can some communication strategies be observed? How do actors in the article relate to what happened before and what others have said earlier?

2.4 Conclusion of the theoretical part

The field of issues management of today is complex and out of organizations' full control. With the help of monitoring the environment organizations may track the debate, and aim to influence on framing of issues in the media. The publics get more power in the social media, which also may affect the agenda setting of traditional media by raising issues that

originally got attention in the social media. The publics may also affect the traditional media by different channels of giving feedback and participating in the framing process. This has been visualized in Figure 9.

POLITICS
decision-making

advocate interests of organizations and people

elected by citizens

political agenda

ORGANIZATIONS
stakeholders of issue

issues management

lobbying of decision-makers and advocacy towards media

relations with public

ISSUE
issue salience in different times

framed according to someone's interests

MEDIA
framing

media agenda

informational needs of the public

lobbying

PUBLIC/ CITIZENS
social media

consumers of different media

elect politicians

stakeholders of issue

Figure 9. Field of issues management

The role of politics remains important between media, organizations that are stakeholders in the issue as well as publics who review politicians' accountability in the elections. An organization wishing to track the debate should take diverse aspects of issues management into account in order to strategically contribute into the debate. Who their stakeholders are, online and offline, and what are their expectations and needs in terms of an issue? With the help of issues monitoring an organization may find other organizations with similar interests to advocate, opponents, or choose to act alone. Any strategy it chooses, it has to map different stakeholders and their interests to frame the debate, as well as find the relevant media channels and journalists that define the contents and their tone to be broadcast to the public. In the field of issues management there are many possible actors who can frame the debate and take an ownership of it. Some actors may possess more institutional power, but also legitimate requests of the publics or

organizations can have a remarkable effect on the course of the debate if the message resonates and gets distributed.

3 RESEARCH MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this chapter the research questions are presented as well as the methods and data used. The course of the research is reported and the limitations discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

3.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of the research is to apply the *Analytical model of communication in issue arenas* (Vos et al. 2014). It is recommended to use it for covering all the aspects of an issue issue arena (ibid., 209), which means an analysis of issue-related aspects, actors, places of interaction and course of the debate. Researchers may choose the relevant research questions for applying the model and so limit the topic. The research is conducted by using an abductive approach. As the aim is to apply the analytical model, the theory will frame the interests of the research. The model, however, needs to be applied to the specific research context to cover the different aspects of an issue-arena. In this research, the emphasis is on framing of the issue.

The role of the theory is to support the form of the research, but the categories of analysis are derived from the research material, which then are abstracted to more general categories. The analytical model encourages tracking the debate by finding relevant themes of the discourse, taking into account the social aspects of news consumption. The themes are tracked inductively from the research material.

An approach of qualitative content analysis was chosen as the most convenient method of analyzing the data. Qualitative content analysis is an appropriate method for summarizing and describing what is important in the research material (Schreier 2012, 37). Qualitative content analysis aims at finding the meanings provided in the text (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013).

Categories used in qualitative content analysis have to be unidimensional, mutually exclusive, exhaustive (each unit of coding fitting some subcategory in the coding frame) and saturate (each subcategory has to have some unit) (Schreier 2012, 74–78). Classes that do not fit the framework of analysis create new categories of data according to the principles of inductive content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013).

Research questions:

Who are the actors in the issue arena of Helsingin Sanomat online news (RQ1),

In which ways do they frame the debate (RQ 2), and

Which issue-frames and themes are most shared in the social media channels and comments following news (RQ3)?

In this research, the content was quantified in terms of social media sharings, but finding the themes followed qualitative content analysis research method. These themes included articles focusing on primarily either on political, social and financial aspects of the issue, which are inductively led from the research data. This helps to focus on the most shared online contents, track trends on which themes and frames are shared over time and defining the actors related to most shared contents.

In addition, for analyzing the frames, a conceptual framework was used, which is typical in the research of frames at a general level (Lengauer & Höller 2013, 304). For answering RQ2, a deductively led initial set of frames often is a starting point in framing research, continued by inductively testing the coding scheme (see eg. Chong & Druckman, 2007; Iyengar 1991). For this purpose, generalizable framing categories will be used (Boydstun & Glazier 2013): (1) gain versus loss and (2) self-referential and other-referential as discussed in the framing chapter (2.2.2) in the theoretical part of this study.

In conjunction with abovementioned generalizable frames, issue-level frames are used at first level analysis. Issue level frames are found by content analysis methods: extracting issue level frames from the data in order to examine the themes of the debate. The part of the text illustrating the interpretative context of the frame is first extracted, then abstracted to a more general level.

3.2 Research material and its limitations

The research material is based on 98 online news articles in Helsingin Sanomat newspaper. The articles were selected from July 2014 to November 2014. The reason for this was to approach the topic retrospectively, and to track the issue developments from an earlier stage. The debate went on in year 2015 in the news media. The legislative process was postponed due to the approaching parliamentary elections.

Helsingin Sanomat (hs.fi news) was chosen as the source of the news due to its wide distribution (weekly approximately 500 000 readers during 7/2014–11/2014). It the most read online newspaper [vi] in Finland after biggest afternoon newspapers. Its wide distribution makes it a fruitful target of research.

The selection of the time period has its limitations when aiming to explain the whole course of the debate, as this debate of social and health care reform has been in the public agenda for some years already. However, it gives an idea of the discourse in the media: how it is treated and by whom.

The research material in this research is online news. The analysis is based only on texts. Images have not been analyzed, although they could provide useful insights for frames. For example Brooks (2012, 76) states: *"What are understood to be plausible and preferable actions, is always more riveting and more likely to be persuasive when accompanied by images"*.

Another limitation is that only online news and numbers of sharings marked in those are analyzed. It is possible that the users of social media can re-frame the issue in another way, which might have a significant effect on the course of the debate.

It is also remarkable that numbers of sharings in the social media may vary upon time. The numbers used in this research have been checked in April 2015. The choice to use older articles as data for research makes this effect weaker as the articles in question are not anymore commonly shared.

3.3 Social media sharings

Although the reporting style of this research is mainly qualitative, some quantitative reporting is done in case of describing and tracking the most shared contents. The numbers of sharings in the social media (Facebook and

Twitter, and comments below the article) are analyzed by frame type (Boydstun & Glazier 2013) and RQ3.

In order to support answering the RQ3, also the most shared themes are covered, as before the analysis it was not yet clear, which of these would describe better the course of the debate in terms of reception – popularity in the social media. Originally the idea was to include only frames.

3.4 The course of the research

The data was added to a data extraction table, of which the columns were based on research questions: full title of article, date, type of article, theme/dimension of debate, actors mentioned, frame of the debate provided in the article (text extraction), gain/loss frame, self/other-referential frame, Twitter sharings, Facebook sharings, comments.

In order to enhance the reliability of the analysis, all the data in the table was undergone for twice. Still, as there was only one researcher doing the analysis, results may be subject to interpretation of the data, which is both an advantage and challenge of qualitative research. In the course of analysis, in the phase of finding frames, themes and actors, some articles that did not give value to the analysis, were removed. These were mainly the articles that appeared double in the research material: some articles were published in different sections of the newspaper. In addition, articles that were clearly focused on municipality level political debate without frames related to Sote reform, were removed. In some cases it was challenging to decide whether to choose the article to the analysis or not: these included other political projects such as fusions of municipalities or structural financial reforms in the parliamentary level. These were, however, included as they related the Sote reform to different phenomena and thus provided it a frame.

In the abovementioned data extraction table, type of article refers to 'department' of the newspaper – if the article was published under the newspaper column of politics, opinion, finance etc. The coding of the theme (theme / dimension of the debate) was abstracted to a second level. At first the themes were fitted into hypothetical abstractions of categories of political, financial and social, in order to get an idea about the nature of the debate. Political refers into centrality of a political process, financial if an issue of financial resources is a primary concern, and social if consequences to citizens was the most salient factor in the analysis. After this, the themes were revised for the second time and some explanative factors were taken into analysis, for

example when a political theme was identified, if it was related to government or municipality level of debate.

Actors of the debate (Vos et al. 2014) were identified by (1) actors mentioned in the debate, (2) their background organizations and (3) writers of opinions or editorials. Background organizations were abstracted, for example, where many political parties in parliamentary / governmental level were mentioned, as well as 'municipality' or 'private company'. The abstraction helped to get an overview of the actors in the debate on RQ1– who discusses and who is being discussed.

The frame of the debate (RQ2) was found by extracting a part of text providing the frame for the article (issue-level frame), which then was abstracted on issue-specific frames and conceptual gain/loss and self-referential/other-referential framing categories (Boydstun & Glazier 2013). In this way, it was possible to identify which aspects of the issue were emphasized over time. This helped understand the issue-related aspects and course of the debate according to Analytical model of communication in issue arenas (Vos et al. 2014). Time-series have been benefited also other researches on framing (Lengauer & Höller 2013, Boydstun & Glazier 2013), and also here were taken into account in the analysis.

Below follows an example to show how an issue-level frame was identified in the text. The issue-level frame was abstracted from the text to track the trends behind the gain/loss and self/other-referential frames (Boydstun & Glazier 2013, 716). The first column shows the text extract including the frame, and the second column shows the abstracted text providing an issue-specific frame.

The Sote reform takes the service structure a **step towards my dreams.**	The development of services from **a customer's viewpoint**
"**It is not wise to leave the enormous public debt for future generations to pay**", he said in the summer meeting of National Coalition Party in Vantaa.	The consequences of leaving the **public debt** for future generations to pay

Numbers of sharings in the social media were added in the data extraction table. The focus in the analysis part was on which contents were shared: what are the frames and themes that were most spread via social media and hence set the agenda on what is discussed in Facebook, Twitter and forum-styled comment column under the news article? And whose agenda is this?

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis part begins with quantitative remarks of the data and after that there is the qualitative analysis applying the *Analytical model of communication in issue arenas* (Vos et al. 2014, 207). All four aspects of the model will be covered. At first, the places of interactions will be discussed, followed by the actors of the debate and issue-related aspects, where themes and frames of the data will be analyzed. The analysis part ends with a reflection on how the different frames and themes were shared in the social media. The course of the debate including developments and outcomes of the debate will be discussed in the conclusion part.

4.1 Quantitative remarks of the data

Before the qualitative analysis, some quantitative remarks will be provided on the nature of the data.

It appeared that the articles were not published every day, and half of days in the timeframe (2nd July and 15th November 2014) were without an article published. The number of articles increased in the later period of the time series, when the number of articles typically was generally higher – ending with a peak on 15th November when the debate was stimulated by new political decisions. Also in the end of October and mid-end August there is more debate taking place. Over his period, a total of 98 articles were analyzed.
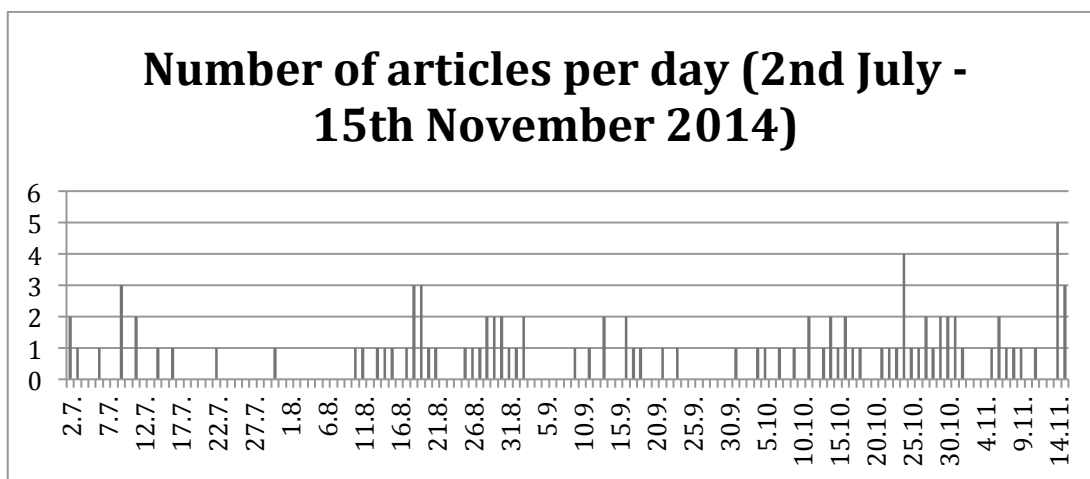
Figure 10. Number of articles per day between 2nd July and 15th November 2014

4.2 The places of interaction

The places of interaction (Vos et al. 2014) establish a structure on where the discussion takes place. In the case of Helsingin Sanomat online news, places of interaction consisted both of channels owned by newspaper and user-generated content in the social media. The discussion below each news article forms a forum where one can comment on the news on the site, which is moderated by Helsingin Sanomat. In addition, the news can be shared either via Facebook or Twitter.

The news articles concerning the Sote reform were most commonly located in the sections Politics (n=31) or Kotimaa (national affairs, n=27). Also the sections Opinion (n=14) and Editorial (n=21) were commonly used. By scrutinising the actors of the debate (RQ1), the editorials give useful information on the debate, on who gets to speak in these highly competed places of interaction, filtered by gatekeepers, namely the media.

Editorials as competed fora to influence

Editorials can be written both by the editors of the newspaper or invited external experts. They often represent some viewpoint on the issue and thus are interesting for this research. The people who have written about the Sote reform in hs.fi editorials, in addition to hs.fi editors are:

- Timo Kietäväinen, vice CEO of Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

- Jyrki Tala, professor emeritus of Legislative Studies
- Raimo Sailas, candidate of Political Science (career as civil servant in Ministry of Finance)
- Mikael Jungner, member of parliament, the Social Democratic Party of Finland
- Sixten Korkman, professor of Economy at Aalto University (two columns)
- Tuula Haatainen, vice CEO of Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
- Elina Grundström, freelance journalist and non-fiction writer

The viewpoint in these editorials was either political or financial. Kietäväinen focuses on financial consequences of the reform for municipalities, Sailas is concerned about how large-scale political reforms like this get postponed for the next government. Korkman, in one editorial, highlights how social and healthcare services should function in a more rational way as well as municipalities should work more efficiently. In his other editorial he points out how the discussion in Finland does not concentrate on real political issues such as the Sote reform but rather on minor, person-related political themes. Haatainen raises a concern about municipalities making agreements independently, so not in line with the reform, on service provision with private companies. Grundström's viewpoint differs from the other authors, as she states that not enough attention is given to service users and consequences of the reform to citizens. The dominant discourse focuses on rights of municipalities and businesses, not citizens. Grundström's editorial is published 11th November 2014, which makes it one of the last articles analyzed. Until that moment, the experts comment mainly on the economical and political aspects of the issue.

4.3 Actors of the debate

The group of actors of the debate (Vos et al. 2014) followed in this research consist mainly of politicians in different levels of policy-making: ministers, members of parliament and municipality-level political actors. This was the case for all article types, as well as the choices of writers selected for the editorial texts. The fact that most news articles were published under sections of Politics and Kotimaa, which focus on internal affairs of Finland, makes the political actors salient.

In quantitative terms, the actors mentioned the most in the news articles, were:

- Prime Minister, the National Coalition Party, Alexander Stubb (mentioned 14 times)
- Minister of Social Affairs and Health, the National Coalition Party, Laura Räty (11)
- Minister of Health and Social Services, the Social Democratic Party, Susanna Huovinen (9)
- Leader of Center Party, Juha Sipilä (9)
- Leader of the Swedish People's Party, Carl Haglund (7)
- Minister of the Finance, the Social Democratic Party, Antti Rinne (5)
- Leader of Parliamentery Committee on the Sote reform, the Social Democratic Party, Jouni Backman (5)
- Director-General of Kela (provider of social security benefits for all residents of Finland), the Centre Party, Liisa Hyssälä (5)
- Leader of Constitutional Committee on Sote reform, the Social Democratic Party, Johannes Koskinen (3)
- City of Helsinki politician: leader of social and health board, the Social Democratic Party, Maija Anttila (3)
- Chancellor at Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Päivi Sillanaukee (3)
- Vice CEO of Association of Finnish Regional and Local Authorities, Tuula Haatainen (3).

The strong presence of governmental actors is characteristic to the debate and creates governmental 'ownership' for the issue in Helsingin Sanomat. The lobbyists got surprisingly little place for expressing their views in this medium although many stakeholders with different interests are involved in the reform. Outside the political parties and the Association of Finnish Regional and Local Authorities, only Kela made an opening expressing its view on the issue: the director-general Liisa Hyssälä proposed that more private companies should benefit of in the service provision.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health gave relatively little information on the reform: there are only eight articles[vii] where the ministry takes a role of 'official communicator' of the debate. These articles focus mainly on informing on the process and schedule of the Sote reform, only four focus on communicating the contents of the reform. There are other ministries that critizised the Sote reform in their statements concerning the law proposal on arranging the social and healthcare services – Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance. This complicates the issue and the network of actors: it is not only politicians who disagree, but also civil servants and ministries behind them.

The role of private companies was discussed in 22 articles[viii]. Most of these articles, instead of expressing a point of view of some particular company, focused on the role of private companies in the reform in general. The interests of private companies might get articulated in the political process by some political party, for example, the National Coalition Party, when disagreeing with other parties on the role of private companies in the reform. The dispute on the role of private companies in the reform caused concerns about postponing the political process for the Sote reform, as the commitment of different parties could become less certain. Another storyline concerning the role of private companies in the reform was the independent decisions of municipalities for making agreements on purchase of services from private companies before the reform would re-organize those.

The editorial of 11th November, critizes the debate on the Sote reform for focusing too much on interests of private companies while the consequences to ordinary citizens are lacking from the debate. This shifts the debate in hs.fi articles to the perspective of service users. During the timeframe of this research, the voice of service users and citizens can be considered weak. One might ask if the information available about the reform focused too much on political process and policy-makers and ignored the interests of this important stakeholder group.

The news articles related to policy-making occupied much space in the hs.fi news. The sub-debates can be grouped to a few major entities, as:
- Carl Haglund critizising the political parties for bad preparations of the reform as well as sticking with public service provisions, which according to him forget the patient,
- Kela giving a statement in which it takes a clear stand on favouring private social and health services, and
- the National Coalition Party wishing to postpone the process as the role of private service-providers was not as good as they would have expected.

These discussions can be viewed as commentaries on previous events and included dialogue between political actors. The news articles often commented news items from other news media, as well as news published earlier in Helsingin Sanomat. This makes following the debate challenging as for understanding the context of one news item, one is expected to know what happened before.

The lobbying organizations are rarely mentioned in the news articles. The organizations who have written an opinion are:

- Perusturvaliikelaitos Saarikka (public utility responsible for social and health services of five municipalities)
- The Finnish Medical Association
- HUS - The Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa
- Itä-Suomen sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus (organization developing the knowledge-base of social affairs)
- Association of Finnish Regional and Local Authorities
- The General Assembly of the National Union of University Students in Finland (SYL).

In addition, scholars from three universities participated in the debate by writing an opinion:

- Aalto University, School of Business
- University of Tampere, School of Management and Business
- University of Vaasa, Area Studies.

The amount of opinions presented by organizations can be considered small compared to, for example, the number of organizations to whom the request for a statement on the Sote law was sent, as well as the large distribution of Helsingin Sanomat. As an issue arena, the publicity gained by presenting ideas in opinion pages or editorials was hardly used by lobbying organizations. Lobbying organizations seemed very silent, considering that this issue arena provides an opportunity to present opinions to a large public. This is surprising especially in the period open to giving statements on the Sote reform, for which the deadline was 14th October. In those days, there are only a few opinions related to Sote reform. Furthermore, the organizations do not contribute to the debate by commenting opinions of others, but just expressing their own view on the issue. These views often include that some sub-issue has not been sufficiently considered in the Sote reform preparation, for example, SYL mentioned concern about the status of student healthcare within the reform, and Itä-Suomen sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus about the little weight of social services in comparison with the healthcare services in the reform.

Which organizations get their viewpoint expressed in Helsingin Sanomat news items is also worthwhile of noticing. These include:

- Kela
- Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA

- The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra
- Hoiva-alan palveluntuottajat ry (lobbying organization of care businesses)
- Esperi Care.

The amount of organizations getting their message into Helsingin Sanomat news items is little. Kela gets publicity by its statement on enhancing the status of private healthcare services, which causes political buzz and debate, the parliament-led foundation Sitra by presenting its model for financing the reform, EVA by pleading for bringing the Sote reform back to the preparation phase, and the two last ones also by presenting the viewpoint of enterprises in the field of social and healthcare. Considering the total number of articles used for this analysis, the organizations having a stake in the reform do not seem to take much initiative in the public debate. Possibly, they prefer to lobby with members of parliament or government authorities.

Municipalities mentioned in the articles as political actors (lobbyists) are:

- Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa[ix] (Article 38: Sote-laista muhii epäsopu Helsingin seudulla – There are disagreements related to law on Sote reform in the Helsinki region)
- Helsinki[x] (Article number 40: Helsinkiläisten terveyspalveluiden uudistamisesta käytiin vilkas keskustelu – There was a heated debate on the reform on healthcare services of people living in Helsinki; Article number 48: Helsinki ei tahdo sitoa käsiään Sote-järjestelyissä - Helsinki does not want to tie its hands in Sote preparation)
- Municipalities in central Uusimaa[xi] (Article number 45: Pääkirjoitus: Seuraavaksi selviää, ovatko Keski-Uudenmaan kunnat tosissaan – Editorial: Next will become clear if the municipalities of central Uusimaa take it [the issue] seriously)
- Vantaa[xii] (Article number 45: Vantaa haluaa järjestää terveysasemansa itse – Vantaa wants to organise its health centre by itself)

Otherwise in the articles, the municipalities were presented as groups of municipalities, on a more abstract level. In fact, the role of municipalities in the debate is pivotal. The big issue related to municipalities lies in their independence provided by the current constitution, whereas the Sote reform would create new administrative structures by forming groups of municipalities that would arrange and produce the social and health services.

This research focuses on the public debate and does not provide an analysis of the effect of lobbying behind the scenes, but significance of the latter should not be underestimated. As political parties note the values and interests of their voters, and advance certain political interests and programmes, the exact interests presented by lobbying organizations are often difficult to pinpoint.

4.4 Themes and frames – issue-related aspects

4.4.1 Themes

In order to support the argument of framing, the researcher chose to first find the themes discussed throughout the debate. By scrutinizing the topics discussed over time, information was gained related to the analytical model of communication in issue arenas (Vos et al., 2014) and, in particular, issue-related aspects and the development of the debate. The themes provide an answer on what is being discussed, while framing takes into account the tone and context of the debate, which according to Boydstun and Glazier (2013) can be gain or loss focused, and other- or self-referential. The issue frame needed to extract in order to identify the frames according to Boydstun's and Glazier's idea, is actually conceptionally close to theme of the debate.

The issue developed from the very beginning as a political debate where politicians were commenting on each other's views. This is why, in order to separate political ideas, social aspects and financial aspects of the debate, the first thematisation divided the articles into these three groups. Political refers to the centrality of a political process, social to consequences for citizens discussed, and financial to issues of financial resources. Political themes were found 73, social 14 and financial 39 times. Despite the general level of abstraction, the division into these categories was helpful in the later phase of examining the themes, so that we can speak about political, social and financial dimensions of the debate. It was also worthwhile to notice, that even if the debate is often carried out between the politicians and focuses on the political process, the theme may also be financial by nature. The discussion on the Sote reform has major financial consequences for the public administration and private service providers. Moreover, it may also impact other financial reforms.

After gaining this basic-level information from the data, a more in-depth thematisation was done. This phase was done in two steps; first the theme of the article was found, followed by its abstraction. The following example shows how this was done. The first column (text extraction) presents the in-depth theme and the second its abstraction.

A municipality decided to outsource all its Sote services to a private service provider. Still, all the municipalities have to participate in the finance of Sote region, which can cause double-costs.	Outsourcing

National Coalition Party has been advocating for a solution where a client could choose between private and public service provider. This was not agreed by the other parties.	Private / public

The reform aims at providing better the equal social and health care services for all the citizens. Services from social services to specialized health care should come from one service provider and there should be less queues.	Integration, service user perspective

As the articles contained many words, the key words were identified from the content. Public and private category was separated from the private category. The same was done to user/social category because the viewpoint was similar: a service user's perspective. This led to the following set of themes:

Theme	Number of times that the theme was abstracted
Private	19
Municipalities	18
Postponing OR delay	7
Government	7
Public AND private	6
User OR social	6
National Coalition Party	5
Information	4
Constitution	3
Savings	3
Finance	3
Free competition	2

An interesting point concerning the themes is, in addition to their frequencies, the wording for similar themes. For example, freedom of choice is in many

cases the core message of those who advocate the status of private service providers (ex. Articles 11 and 16). Similarly, constitutional issues often refer to the status of municipalities, according to municipalities' self-governance (Chapter 11 121§) in the Constitution. To get an overview of the course of the debate, it is needed to track the debate over a longer period of time.

The biggest sub issue in the debate appears to be the role of the private service providers, often contrasted with public service provision. Next to this, the role of municipalities is an important theme. The role of small municipalities in Sote regions, who have the task of arranging the services, is being discussed. Also the constitution appears to set challenges to the preparation of the reform, as the Sote regions created in the reform would take tasks of municipalities and move decision-making to a higher level, away from the citizens.

The discussion, when reviewing the themes, is much focused on politics, mainly at the governmental and municipality levels. There is much disagreement here, and many articles focus on the ability to collaborate within the government. The biggest disagreement shows in late October – early November, when the National Coalition Party suggests new changes for the reform, although there was an agreement between the political parties from before. They suggest that administrative structure of the reform should be lighter, and that more time would be needed for the preparation of the reform, which would mean postponing the reform to the next electoral term (see article 72: Kokoomus ajaa muutosta Sote-esitykseen). It is also discussed that this party is not happy with the role planned for private companies in the reform.

In almost the same period, from the beginning of October, there are news articles concerning the constitutional issues that would not allow the reform to be accepted as such, due to the self-governance principle in the Constitution. Moreover, many municipalities do not know how to exactly reorganise their service provision and especially small municipalities would have only little power in the bigger Sote region (see articles 73 and 77). Also transparency issues concerning the cost of the reform for municipalities are raised (see Article 52). In the timespan between October and early November the debate can be characterised by major questions that challenge the reform, and the news items have a pessimistic tone of voice. A turning point in the debate occured on 15th November when agreement on the service provision is reached: 19 joint municipalities would get the responsibility to provide the

services, and thus the biggest challenge was said to have been overcome (Article 97).

The financial dimension of the debate is often entwined with the political. At the first stage of thematisation, the financial dimension appeared as pivotal, but in the abstraction it was further divided into multiple plots concerning, for example, the financial consequences for municipalities, service providers and citizens. On the high level of policy-making, the financial themes appear when discussing the objectives of the reform, as savings is one of the major effects desired from the reform. Also other major reforms are sometimes discussed within the discourse on the Sote reform, such as the pension reform and the municipality structure reform, which have been on political agenda simultaneously with the Sote reform. The talk on the financial dimension of the debate, however, is difficult to follow, as it goes hand in hand with the political process. In addition, the news articles published in hs.fi have been mainly placed in the politics or internal affairs sections of the newspaper, as previously mentioned, which may shift the attention to the political process, rather than on the financial consequences of the reform. Still, surprisingly little information is given on the actual costs and financial consequences of the reform.

The social dimension of the debate is discussed only little in the data of this research. Some of the articles investigated discuss the consequences of the reform to the citizens and thus provide more easy-to-understand themes to the public. These articles include the following.

- 11th July: a news article providing information on what one should know about the reform
- 14th July; an opinion where a politician from the National Coalition Party proposes 'more freedom of choice' for service users when using the services
- 30th July: an opinion by PhD Philosophy, docent, doctor and psychotherapist that asks for more integration for children's and youth's psychosocial services
- 19th August: a news article that employees will not get a five-years lay-off protection in the reform
- 20th August: a news article that citizens have to be heard in the Sote services and services should be developed with their users
- 31st August: a news article with an interview of an Estonian expert, who states that the Finnish healthcare system has forgotten the client

- 14th October: a news article on Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA's statement on Sote law proposal, which states it is not demonstrated how the accessibility or quality of service would get better
- 29th October: a news article providing information on why the reform is being done
- 11th November: an editorial by a writer who criticises the debate of the reform for focussing too much on consequences to private companies, not citizens who would be users of the services
- 14th November: two news articles on social consequences of the integration of social and healthcare services to service users and one editorial from service user perspective on two parallel basic health-care systems (occupational health and public health-care).

4.4.2 Frames

The research on frames in this research began by identification of issue-level frames, by extracting text from articles and abstracting it into fewer words. An example follows. The first column presents the in-depth theme and the second its abstraction.

The reform aims at **securing equal social and health services** for everyone better. The queuing times particularly for non-urgent care in health centres are unreasonable in many municipalities. When the population gets older, the need for care becomes bigger and problems escalate.	
	Equal social and health services

This first-level abstraction (issue-specific frames) brought useful framework of interpretation, when analyzing the frames. In many cases more than one word was needed to describe the issue-specific frame, so these frames were not exclusively grouped into different groups. The stricter grouping was done in the next phase, when the generalizable frames were identified.

The articles were then read with the idea of grouping frames according to the two-tiered model of Boydstun and Glazier (2013, 719), who categorise frames, in addition to issue-specific frames, to a more generalizable level: gain versus loss and self versus other-referential, which are frames commonly used by journalists. Gain frames focus on presence or promise of gain, whereas loss

frames focus on threat or loss (Boydstun & Glazier 2013, 710). Self-referential refers to the effects of the issue on "self" or "in-group", while other-referential refers to the effects on "other" or "out-group" (ibid., 712). Further, these frame types are classified into hope frames (gain and self-referential), fear frames (loss and self-referential), charity (gain and other-referential) and shame (loss and other-referential) groups following the typology of Boydstun and Glazier (2013).

Examples of all four generalizable frame types found in the articles:

Hope frames (gain and self-referential)

When all the service-providers meeting the quality standards are equal, the patients choose whose services get used.

The Finns see the securing of social and health services as the most important theme for the future government.

The reform is making the service system a step towards my dreams.

The citizens will have more power to influence on social and healthcare services before the reform gets implemented.

The reform aims at creating more equal social and healthcare services. Queuing times for non-urgent care are too long in many municipalities.

It is a common advantage that Finnish Student Health Service will have an opportunity to continue its activities after the reform.

Fear frames (loss and self-referential)

In Finland there is a law in the process that will monopolise Sote services for (joint) municipalities to produce, and tax-payers will pay the inefficiencies.

In Finland the services have already been centralised, which has made the queuing times the longest in Scandinavia for basic healthcare services.

The new leader affecting the reform in Helsinki is lacking competencies, which is not a good development for a patient residing in Helsinki.

There is still a long road for implementation of the reform.

Vantaa wants to produce its basic health services by itself, and fears the lack of power of municipalities and citizens in the reform.

Do we want a new administrative structure for municipalities affecting 50% of budgets of municipalities, and what happens to power of a citizen?

Charity frames (gain and other-referential)

After years of disputing, now there is a law proposal on arrangement of Sote services that will be presented in parliament in November.

Municipality finance can be enhanced by reducing their tasks and raising the taxes, including the Sote reform.

Real competition will put different service providers to endeavour better results in terms of quality and cost.

Prime minister Stubb stated that the National Coalition Party is commited to implement the reform during the governmental period.

Leader of Center Party Sipilä is happy that an agreement on a crucial question was found and Sote reform took a step forward.

There are issues with the constitution in the reform, but they can be solved before government presents the reform to parliament.

Shame frames (loss and other-referential)

The tax model proposed would not be equally good for public service provider.

Leader of the Swedish People's Party Haglund is not happy that parties out of government could prepare the reform.

The government has been inefficient in making large reforms like Sote.

The reform has been described to be beneficial for basic and local service as well as integration between social and healthcare, but social services are not provided resources.

The reform does not take into account two major issues: the multichannel finance and is protectionistic with public service-provision.

Sote as well as other large-scale reforms can be described as 'political dream' until the details of implementations are agreed.

The frequencies of the different generalizable frame types found are presented in the Figure 11.
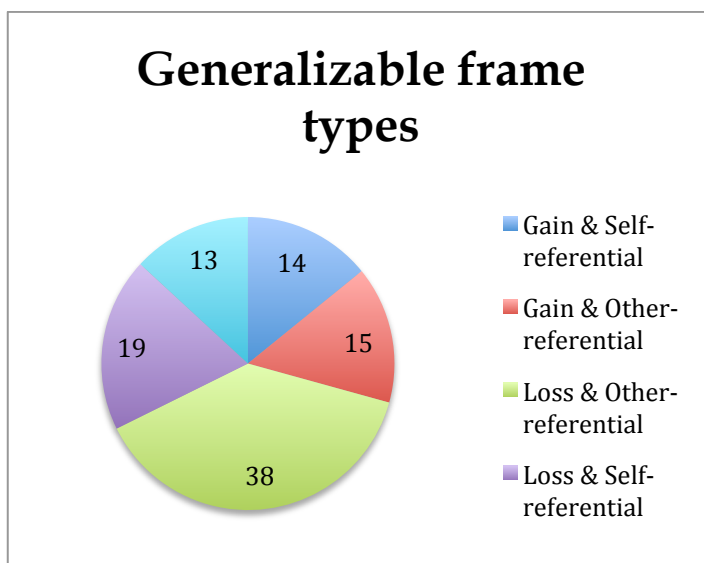
Figure 11. Generalizable frame types

Determining into which group of frame an article would fit, required some decisions on who represents "self" and who "other" in the self/other-referential frame types. Discussions that were limited as internal to government were grouped into other-referential frames, as well as those concerning only municipality politics without stressing the consequences to citizens. In the category of 'Not defined' there were frames that did not express either gain or loss, but were rather descriptive or did not focus either of gain or loss sides. Only in one article it was impossible to determine whether it was about self- or other-referential, even though there were some cases which required interpretation on which category to choose. For example, an article that informed that the Finnish social and healthcare reform got appraised by credit company Moody's, was chosen to the 'self-referential' group as it treated Finland as a unity. It was interesting that even articles whose function was to give information, focused on the potential positive outcome, so they could be grouped into gain frames. The loss frames will be analyzed first here, as they represent the majority of the frames found.

The majority of generalizable frame types fell in the group of loss & other-referential, so the shame category. The articles including this frame were often about the discussion between different opinions in the government, and the hopelessness that the process did not advance as it was planned. The articles of loss & other-referential had two peak months. In August, four articles focused primarily on loss in terms of government's inefficiency and political disagreements, which make the process of Sote reform slow. In addition, one article provided a frame of inefficient decision-making with a context of

municipalities having too much power. The sub-issues concerning constitution and private sector service-provision appear as well, but not as strongly as in the later period. The peak of loss & other-referential frames of October can be summarised into the following issue-specific frames:

- status of private service providers,
- the statement of Kela on favouring private service providers,
- municipalities' status in the reform that is in conflict with self-governance provided by constitution,
- municipalities agreeing independently on outsourcing of their social and health services, which can be problematic for the Sote reform,
- National Coalition Party's non-commitment and its proposal to postpone the process due to disagreement on the status of private service providers and the high-level of bureaucracy that the reform would create.

In November there is talk on the inefficiency of the government, and there is also one article stating that decisions are made without sufficient information, including costs. Also in October there is critique that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health does not mention the costs for municipalities in public.
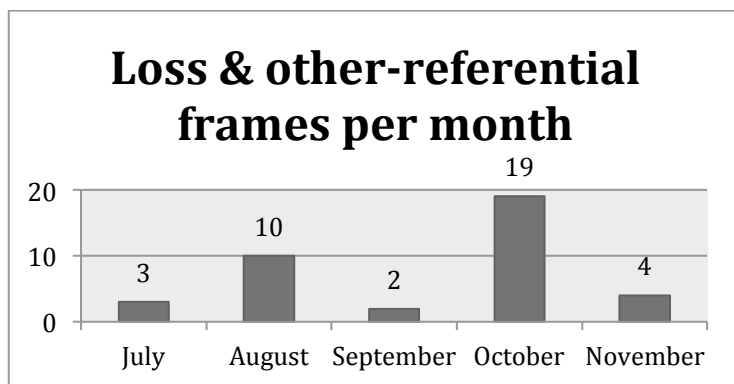
Figure 12. Loss & other-referential frames per month

The 20 fear frames concern loss and self-referential frames, including the following issue-specific frames over time:

- lack of democracy (of municipalities and people who vote in the municipality elections)
- lack of information on consequences and insecurity about the benefits, lack of understanding
- lack of skills of those who make decisions concerning the reform in Helsinki

- different interests between administration and citizens
- no enhanced quality or accessibility of services
- local services do not benefit centralising that reform would bring
- costs to tax-payers as the reform would give priority for public service-provision
- equality for service-users in stake
- need to cut services, loss of jobs and services, no five-years lay-off protection
- future of student healthcare insecure
- service-user perspective lacking from the debate (this critique appeared only in November).

Self-referential loss frames discussing the consequencies to citizens, are surprisingly few as the debate goes mainly between politicians and organizations. The fears expressed do not follow any noticible trend, but are rather sporadic expressions concerning different sub-issues.

Concerning the gain frames, there are hope frames (gain and self-referential) expressed in terms of:
- freedom of choice in choosing the service-provider
- responding to needs of service-users
- Finland's ability to make large-scale political reforms
- the Finns considering the reform as the most important governmental theme
- integration of services that make the service system better for users
- social and health services becoming more rational and cost-effective
- citizens having better possibilities to influence the social and health services in their area
- equal social and health services with shorter queuing times.

In addition, two of the informational articles fall into this category by presenting the potential of the reform and reasons why it is being done. The hope frames are most prevalent in the beginning of the period investigated: eight hope frames are dated in July or August. Three articles including a hope frame are published in November, just when the agreement between parties is reached. In terms of positive consequences of the reformlittle information is provided.

Charity frames (gain and other-referential) focus on high-level impacts of the reform. These include:

- a presentation of model, with both public and private sector, where 'money would follow the patient'
- positive news on how the law-making process advances
- balancing the finance of municipalities
- reducing costs and enhancing quality by free competition
- finance of the model that should come from only one source
- government's ability to make decisions
- positive response to the National Coalition Party's commitment issues
- the process advancing after difficult times
- approaching elections making the parties to agree on the reform.

In November all these charity frames are used by government representatives, often the Primer Minister who represents the National Coalition Party, reassuring that the process is advancing, government can work together, and the National Coalition Party is committed to the reform as the parties agreed together.

Some general trends over time can be identified when examining generalizable frames. One is, that at the beginning of the data collection there are slightly more gain than loss based stories. The negative, loss-based stories have a clear peak in October, when there are various political debates and disagreements present as presented before. The drastic increase in loss-based frames may also have an effect on public's feelings about the issue, who follow the news.
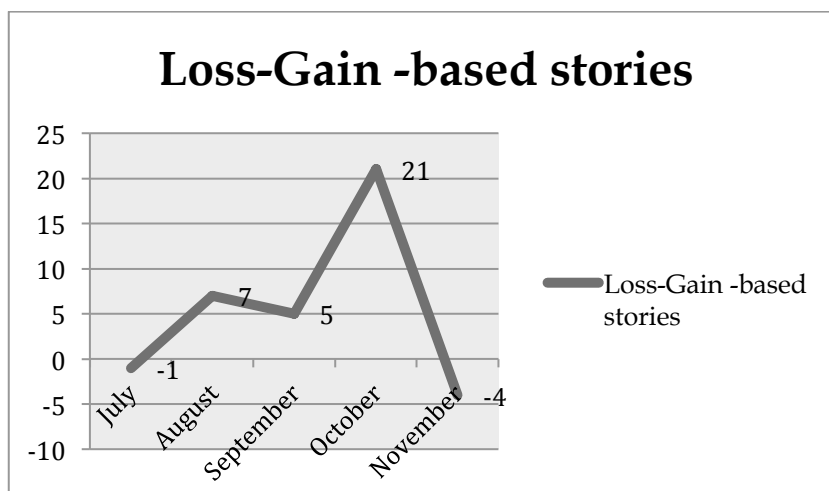
Figure 13. Loss minus Gain –based stories

The loss-based news stories of October reflecting the political situation provide mostly other-referential frames (18), yet there are also many self-

referential loss-frames (8). The self-referential loss-frames in that period focus on the conflict of interests between citizens and administration, debate on equal access to services (users of public/private services) and insecurity to various groups.

The shift towards the positive tone in November includes news on the Prime Minister's statements that the National Coalition Party is committed to the reform in the agreed form, as well as the statement of Minister of Basic Services, who promised the the law proposal in November (7th November). Still, the positive balance between loss and gain based frames often works in the logic of the Prime Minister responding to the critique, not independent gain-based openings of debate. In November, the debate goes on primarily focused on the other-referential level. On 11th November there is an article that may have shifted the focus towards a more self-referential path by stating that the perspective of the service users is lacking in the debate. However, as on 15th November the last stories followed in this research, this development was not tracked further. On 15th November, right after the agreement on service-provision was reached, there was an article showing a loss/other-referential frame on decisions being made without sufficient level of information and transparency. These two articles would provide fruitful ingredients for continuation of the discussions related to the issue.

4.5 Sharing in the social media

Out of social media channels available in hs.fi for sharing, stories were most commonly shared in Facebook, where 98 news articles were shared for 18 530 times in total. News stories were commented 925 times in hs.fi pages, and shared 484 times in Twitter. These figures represent the situation of April as people may share and comment the articles also later.

On the one hand, there were some articles that reached plenty of attention in terms of sharing in the social media and commenting. On the other hand, most of the articles were not discussed at all, which shows that there is not much dialogue in these public channels. The mean of Twitter shares varied between two and nine per article in groups of different frame types (gain/loss/self-/other-referential), Facebook between 43 and 337, and comments between six and 12. The most shared contents in each frame type are identified below.

The most shared contents in gain/self-referential (n=14) group were the following:

- An article on KELA's statement was published on 1st October, proposing that Sote regions would finance the costs using private health services, so that clients could choose services they want to use; this article was published in the politics section, and was shared especially in Facebook.
- An opinion by Janne Kurki (PhD philosophy, psychotherapist, Lic. Med.) was published on 30th July, stating that the reform is making the social and health services a step towards the writer's dreams, while clarifying his vision on the reform.
- A column written by Sixten Korkman, Professor of Practice at Aalto University School of Business, was published on 9th September, stating that there is much potential in making the municipalities work more efficiently and social and health services more rational.

Out of the gain/other-referential (n=15) type of frame, the most shared content was a news article in the politics section, which emphasized the agreement reached between political parties in the law-making process of the reform. This article was published on 14th November. Otherwise, articles in gain and other-referential did not include more than 100 shares in Facebook and Twitter and comments in total, so these frames were less shared compared to other frame types.

Out of loss/other-referential frames (n=38), the most shared content was an article published 31st August, which was based on interview of an Estonian expert, (doctor and PhD of technology) Madis Tiik. According to the article, Finnish municipalities have too much democracy and slow decision-making causes inefficiencies and financial losses. This article was placed in the section of internal affairs. The second in the most-shared list was an editorial published 26th August by Raimo Sailas, who has a long-term experience in Finnish public administration. His concern is that government seems not to be able to make difficult decisions, so the Sote reform will get postponed for the next government. Another similar, much shared article was published 13th August, a column written by Sixten Korkman, who is concerned that the government has not decided on the contents of the reform. The theme of inefficiency is present also in the third-most shared article in this frame group, an editorial written by Mikael Jungner, a member of parliament (Social Democratic Party of Finland) who states that the issue of the Sote reform is that politicians are affecting too much the work of authorities, which makes the reform lack expert knowledge.

Out of loss/self-referential frames (n=19), the most shared article was an editorial from 14th November, which focused on the consequences of two different and unequal systems of organizing healthcare (private and public) to citizens. A video interview of Kela's director Liisa Hyssälä on 18th October was often shared as well; in the interview she gives opinions about the reform, after the much discussed statement of Kela on favouring private healthcare services, and questions common beliefs in Finland favouring institutionalized care instead of prevention of issues. There is also a column written by Elina Grundström, published on 11th November that states that the user perspective is lacking from the discourse.

As most of the articles did not receive any social media shares or comments in the issue arena of hs.fi, it can be concluded that it was not a strong arena for public discussion on the issue. The discourse was mainly political, focusing on the political process and the debate on favouring either of private or public service providers. In addition, municipalities and their interests were well represented, as well as the conflict with the Constitution in terms of self-governance. It could be further examined, which sub-themes the public would be interested in to read and further discuss, and if there are generally some sub-issues that lack attention in hs.fi. Some clues on what is lacking were brought up: these included the lack of user-perspective in the debate as well as transparency of the costs of the reform. It can be questioned if the debate would have been richer if more scientific data on related facts had been presented in the debate instead of the strong focus on political conflict.

Another point of interest here is if there is anything in common between the most shared articles. The articles represent very different themes: political inefficiency, expert opinions on the implementation of the reform, and future visions of the reform. These all brought something new to the debate: new aspects, or an expert opinion of somebody who may be interesting for people to listen to. An organization doing communications in the field of the reform, e.g. presenting a self-referential frames, could have provide more meaningful content to readers, as those frames represent the consequences to 'us-group', bringing the issue closer. Other-referential frames were already over-represented in the news items on hs.fi, due to the political nature of the debate, but more organizations could have contributed, own opinions, or comment opinions and editorials by other writers.

In terms of themes, the most shared articles fell mainly in groups of social or financial themes although the most articles were political by theme. Political themes were found in 73 articles, financial 39 and social only in 14 articles.

Some of the themes were overlapping so one article could be both social and political as an example.

The argument of resonance of social and financial themes supports the results gained from the generalizable frame perspective: the debate should be brought to a more personal and fact-rich level. The most shared articles were by theme:

1) Political/social theme, 31st August. An expert criticizes the reform for being late and not focusing on service-users. Shared 150 times in Twitter, 9369 times in Facebook, 84 comments.

2) Financial theme, 1st October. Kela's statement favouring private heath-care. Shared 14 times in Twitter, 2017 times in Facebook, 63 comments.

3) Financial theme, 13th August. Structural changed needed, government inefficient in decision-making on large reforms. Shared 37 times in Twitter, 1205 times in Facebook, 53 comments.

4) Social theme, 14th November. The existence of two parallel basic health-care systems (unequality perspective). Shared 20 times in Twitter, 569 times in Facebook, 64 comments.

5) Financial/political theme, 26th August. Government criticized for inefficiency. Shared 13 times in Twitter, 597 times in Facebook, 22 comments.

6) Political theme, 14th November. Agreement between parties. Shared 27 times in Twitter, 474 times in Facebook, 22 comments.

7) Social theme, 30th July. Future vision on socially better services. Shared 35 times in Twitter, 356 times in Facebook, no comments.

8) Financial theme, 9th September. Effectiveness of sote services. Shared 29 times in Twitter, 285 times in Facebook, 39 comments.

Although here the focus was the popularity of the contents shared, in the online world it is also important to lead the people to those contents. One point is that if the online title is considered interesting, people click it open more easily. That point has to be considered to have an effect on the virality of some online contents, as the news in this research. In addition, via the social media, people get influenced by the information shared by the people

of their networks. This information is shared from peer to peer, which is the driving force in public opinion formation, as in the theoretical part was discussed.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of the research was to apply the *Analytical model of communication in issue arenas* (Vos et al. 2014, 207) in order to analyze the frames and actors of the media debate. The model in this case served mainly as a theoretical framework, while the research questions were phrased according to the research interests for this particular issue arena.
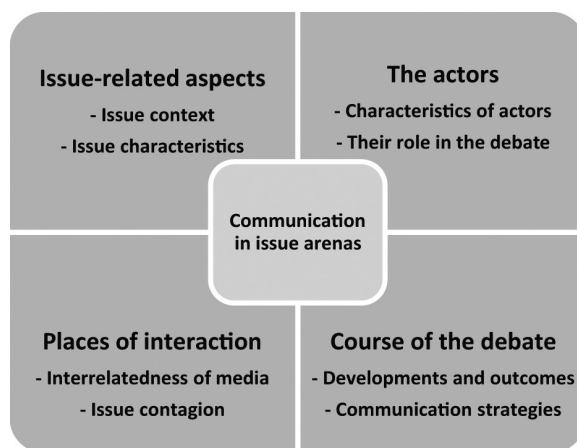
Figure 14. Analytical model of communication in issue arenas (Vos et al. 2014, 207)

According to the developers of the model, the research approach can provide help in identifying directions for research, describing and understanding on processes of interactions and finally, assist in decision-making on communications strategies in complex and changing environments (Vos et al. 2014, 201). The authors also propose that it would be beneficial to take all the four levels of analysis (issue-related, actors, places of interaction, course of the debate) into account in the analysis (ibid., 208–209).

This research provided most information in terms of issue-related aspects by focusing into framing and themes of the research as well as 'ownership' of the issue, so at the level of the actors involved. The level 'Places of interaction' was researched by: (a) counting and analyzing the social media sharings, and (b) taking into account the sections of newspaper where the article was published. The course of the debate was analyzed in the analysis chapter by adding the time dimension to the debate: when different frames and themes were present.

The typology of gain/loss and self/other-referential frames according to Boydstun and Glazier (2013) was useful for finding the tendencies of prevalence of different frames over time. Sometimes it was difficult to decide if an article provided a gain or a loss frame. Often they provided both, but qualitative content analysis of the article helped to define the major tone of the article.

The main findings of this research can be summarized as follows:

Issue-related aspects. The themes of the debate, in the abstracted level, are mostly about the status of private social and healthcare services, role of municipalities, postponing or delay of the reform, and debate related to the role of government. Finding the themes served as sketching the debate and its sub-issues, while analyzing framing goes into a more conceptual level. An important finding was also, that the issue was mainly discussed as a political issue (n=73), and to a lesser extent as a social (n=14) or financial issue (n=39).

The issue was framed mostly as a loss and other-referential (Boydstun and Glazier, 2013), so the debate was not taking the readers of the newspaper as 'in-group', but focused on the debate between some other groups, such as political actors. The service-users were not given priority in the debate. The presence of loss-based frame indicates, that the debate focused on negative aspects of the issue, such as disagreement and negative concerns.

Looking into issue development over time, there are two peak-months in the loss/other-referential frames. In August, the focus is on loss in terms of government's inefficiency and political disagreements, which make the process of the Sote reform slow. In October, more sub-issues are present: the status of private service providers, the statement of Kela on favouring private service providers, the status of municipalities in the reform being in conflict with the principle of self-governance in the Constitution, municipalities agreeing independently on outsourcing their social and health services which can be problematic for the Sote reform, and finally the National Coalition Party's non-commitment to the reform. October could be described as a period of escalation of the issue. Moreover, the balance between all loss and gain based frames is most towards loss in October, so both shame (loss and other-referential) and fear (loss and self-referential) are most prevalent in that month.

In the times of escalation of the issue, the issue positions have already been taken and it is difficult to bring new issue frames to the debate. For building

up a public issue like this, it would ideally get co-constructed in order to create resonance with those stakeholders that are concerned. In the case of Sote reform, the stakeholders vary between different sub-issues, but in the case of newspaper that has such a large distribution, the stakeholder of 'wider public' should be considered. In the times of issue escalation, methods of crisis communications could be used by those organizations that have an interest of re-building the trust of their stakeholders, if they feel themselves responsible for the escalation of negativity around an issue.

Places of interaction. The news articles concerning the Sote reform are most commonly located in the sections Politics (n=31) or Kotimaa (national affairs, n=27) sections. Also the sections Opinion (n=14) and Editorial (n=21) are commonly used. The editorials – those not written by editors of hs.fi newspaper - are written by invited experts: academics, interest groups (only the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities), and people with a background in state-level decision-making. Only one writer of the editorials is an external journalist/writer. The number of external writers of editorials is small (7), and thus it could be seen as a potential opportunity for other stakeholders as well to offer their editorials to the newspaper. Of course, the publishing will always depend on the gatekeeper, but there could be potential to have more voices heard through editorials.

The user-led debate is not particularly active in hs.fi, while examining the social media sharings (Twitter, Facebook, comment space under the article). Most articles are not shared or discussed at all. Facebook is most used of these arenas by its 18530 shares, while Twitter shares count only 484 and the comments section 925. The most shared articles in the other-referential frames, the biggest generalizable frame group of this research, included mainly concerns of inefficiency in the political decision-making. All of these articles were either editorials or articles focusing on an expert-interview, so they include a clear viewpoint or opinion on the reform, which is fruitful for further public discussion. Similar findings are provided by other frame groups, which focus on an opinion of a stakeholder. The topics vary between the writer's vision of the reform, the opportunities the reform may bring, the un-equality caused by the two overlapping basic healthcare systems and the lacking user-perspective in the debate. The only article without an opinion clearly presented by somebody is the news article in the gain and other-referential frame group that informed that the parties had reached an agreement on the reform considering the service provision. It has also to be taken into account, that here only the texts were analyzed. For example, one of

the most shared contents included a video interview, and also the images could have had effects, as stated earlier in the theoretical part.

The actors. The debate was undergone mainly between political actors. The most mentioned actors in the articles are all politicians:

- Prime minister, the National Coalition Party, Alexander Stubb (14)
- Minister of Social Affairs and Health, the National Coalition Party, Laura Räty (11)
- Minister of Health and Social Services, the Social Democratic Party, Susanna Huovinen (9)
- Leader of Center Party, Juha Sipilä (9).

The role of the municipalities is pivotal as well. In most articles the municipalities are discussed as a group, whereas only in five articles the political views of certain municipalities are presented.

There is surprisingly little dialogue between stakeholders of the issue in hs.fi, although it could have been an opportunity for lobbying organizations to present their opinions to a large public. For example, the deadline for giving statements on the law related to the Sote reform was 14th October, and there are few opinions related to it those days: Kela's statement on adding private healthcare services, two ministries (Justice and Finance) criticizing the reform for non-compliance with constitution, the Hospital District of Helsinki on the future role of university hospitals, and Uusimaa and Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA demanding more time for the process. The issue is, that the organizational actors did not relate their input to those of others: they are sporadic expressions of opinions not linked to the earlier. Only Kela's statement created a debate with contrasting opinions as well as supporting voices.

The number of organizations debating in hs.fi is small, if the number of organizations who were asked for statement for law preparation is taken into consideration. Kela gets publicity by its statement on enhancing the status of private healthcare services, which caused political buzz and debate, parliament-led foundation Sitra by presenting its model for financing the reform, Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA by insisting in bringing the Sote reform back to preparation and the two last ones by presenting the viewpoint of enterprises in the field of social and healthcare. Rather, it can be supposed that the organizations having a stake in the reform possibly, prefer to lobby with members of parliament or government authorities.

The course of the debate. The findings in terms of the development of the course of the debate were summarized in the issue-specific aspects, where the presence of different frame types was discussed. Vos, Schoemaker and Luoma-aho in their model (2014) propose, that the course of the debate could include developments and outcomes as well as communication strategies used.

The approach of issue arenas has mainly been used for user-created contents, and in terms of issues management it states that an organization cannot control the development of the issue, whereas it should monitor the stakeholder dialogue and contribute to it (Luoma-aho & Vos 2010). This research provided an interesting environment that combined different forms of realtime media, traditionally gate-keeped media and social media as a forum for user-created content.

Communication strategies of organizations, which have a stake in this debate, can, with the help of analysis like this, monitor the debate, find the relevant stakeholders with whom to collaborate and create hubs, and with the help of this knowledge find a proper way of participation into the debate. Collaboration strategies with those organizations that have similar interests in the debate may help to get visibility through traditional media, as media space is highly competed. As one finding of this research was that the publics of online newspaper were eager to comment and share via social media editorials or articles focusing on an expert-interview, organizations should seek to opinate and make their spokespersons visible.

In addition to actors found from this research, organizations should track the influencers of the topic and relevant discussions online. Managing the expectations and knowing the concerns of the public help an organization to design legitimate messages for different issue arenas.

There are many sub-topics of the debate, which create opportunities for organizations to engage. As the medium examined here is hs.fi newspaper, organizations may either approach the journalists by providing an information-base for news items, or otherwise take a stand by writing an opinion or comment. The issue here for many organizations is the gate-keeping power of the media: it selects the contents it wishes to publish. If the news items concerning the Sote reform would have become more debate-like, taking into account the perspective of the service users, and facts and visions of different organizations, there could have been more voices heard in the

debate. The creation of alternative fora could also attract the traditional media, as many news topics nowadays raise from the public agenda.

In the period of data collection of this research, the debate was saturated with talk on the political level and between the political actors – with a focus on statuses of private/public service providers and power of municipalities. Organizations should, in addition to the medium analyzed here, find those issue arenas that reach the people with whom they wish to engage in dialogue. These arenas can be both traditional and virtual media, as well as other platforms of communication, chosen based on the strategic goals the organization aims to reach by participation. The issue arena can also be an organization's own communication channel.

Monitoring the numbers of sharings of hs.fi articles in the social media provides important information both for stakeholders and media. Yet the numbers of sharing are not endorsements, the relevance for the public could be easily tracked by this method. This research did not take into account the issue contagion towards different issue arenas by following the debate in the social media. That would provide useful information for stakeholders of the debate by tracking the expectations of the publics on the reform: which questions gained too little attention, and specify what the information needs of the public are. There are tools for social media monitoring, which could offer useful information for organizations aiming at tracking the debate and participating into it.

It is beneficial for organizations to participate into a debate relevant for them at an early phase of the issue life-cycle, as was stated in the issues management part. This may give them a priority to participate in the framing of the sub-issue together with journalists, who possess a gatekeeping role in the media. According to the Typology of Public Policy Issue Evolution by Rakich & Feit 2001 (Figure 1), the issue may re-activate after a silence, and the issue positions may then open to new actors.

The frame and the agenda that will be adopted by media have to be relevant to the consumers of these media. The Network Agenda Setting Model argues that public and media agendas are interconnected, and there are links between different issues and the attributes attached to them. The organizations should think strategically which other issues and debates they would like to include in their agenda and make salient in people's minds simultaneously. This agenda then, should be advocated in the relevant channels with clear core messages, not too late so that the issue positions would have become ossified.

In the future, according to the issue arenas approach, organizations will seek different ways to co-create issues with the public. Large-scale societal issues like the Sote reform will require more fora for co-operation with the public, if the aim is to respond to citizens' needs and expectations. Organizations having something at stake in the reform should listen to people's concerns and try to bring viewpoints to the debate that touch the people who will be the service-users. In the same way, financial consequences of the debate can be discussed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the grass-root level. It will be interesting to follow if the debate in the future will be facilitated so that more information would be available in the media and the stakeholder dialogue more focused on multiple dimensions of the debate, making it more relevant for the public to follow actively.

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ugh_in_current_form/7744607
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APPENDIX

Articles used in the analysis (retrieved 21st December 2014)

1. Pääkirjoitus: Metropolihallintoon ei ole oikotietä (2nd July)

2. Veroratkaisut vääristävät kilpailua (2nd July)

3. Sote-uudistus syö markkinoiden hyödyt (3rd July)

4. Sosiaali- ja terveydenhuollon lähipalveluiden tuottaminen kärsii keskittämisestä (6th July)

5. Kauppalehti: Haglund pitää Sote-ratkaisua fiaskona (9th July)

6. Stubb eri mieltä Haglundin Sote-tyrmäyksestä (9th July)

7. Laura Räty Haglundin Sote-kritiikistä: Parempi myöhään kuin ei milloinkaan (9th July)

8. Muut lehdet: Kritiikki horjuttaa haurasta Sote-sopua (11th July)

9. Mitä Sotesta tarvitsee tietää? (11th July)

10. Kokoomus ajaa valinnanvapautta (14th July)

11. Tulossa on talousvaalit, puoluejohtajat uskovat (16th July)

12. Suomen Sote-uudistus saa kehuja luottoluokittaja Moody'siltä (22nd July)

13. Varat lasten ja nuorten palveluihin yhdestä pussista (30th July)

14. Länsi-Savo: Suomen Pankin Liikanen patistaa rakenneuudistuksiin (10th August)

15. Kolumni: Talous sakkaa, mutta me suomalaiset elämme kuin herran kukkarossa (13th August)

16. Uusia edustajia: Soten kutsu veti Mikael Palolan politiikkaan (14th August)

17. Sosiaalipuoli on unohtunut Sote-uudistuksessa (15th August)

18. Uusi kansanedustaja Terhi Peltokorpi lupaa puolustaa Helsinkiä (17th August)

19. Vieraskynä: Valtion on tuettava kuntien selviytymistä (18th August)

20. Järjestämispäätös ratkaisee Sote-palvelujen sisällön (18th August)

21. Kokoomuksen Räty: Yritysten asema Sotessa pettymys (18th August)

22. Blogi: Sote-uudistus järjestää julkisen terveydenhuollon uudelleen, mutta ei lupaa pikavoittoja yksityisille (19th August)

23. Sote-lakiin ei tule viiden vuoden irtisanomissuojaa (19th August)

24. Stubb lupasi talouspolitiikkaan "verta, hikeä ja kyyneleitä" (19th August)

25. Asukkaita on kuultava Sote-palveluissa (20th August)

26. Sote-uudistuksen seuraava vaihe koskee myös työterveyshuoltoa (21st August)

27. Vieraskynä: Lakien vaikutukset pitäisi tuntea tarkasti jo etukäteen (25th August)

28. Kolumni: Budjettiriihi uhkaa sortua näpertelyyn (26th August)

29. Valiokuntapomo Koskinen KSML:lle: Uusikin Sote-esitys törmää perustuslakiin (27th August)

30. Rakennepaketin viisi kohtaa: Rakennepoliittinen ohjelma koostuu useista osista (28th August)

31. Koskinen: Sote-lain ongelmat ovat ratkaistavissa (28th August)

32. Nimityskoplaus Helsingissä huolestuttaa (29th August)

33. Mikael Jungner: Suomessa on liikaa ministereitä (29th August)

34. Muut lehdet: Hallituksen hyvä henki on nyt koetuksella (30th August)

35. Lastensuojelulain uudistus aiheuttaa painetta (30th August)

36. Virolainen asiantuntija: Suomen julkinen terveydenhuolto on unohtanut asiakkaan (31st August)

37. Sote-laista muhii epäsopu Helsingin seudulla (1st September)

38. Huovinen: Kuntien rooli muuttuu merkittävästi (2nd September)

39. Helsinkiläisten terveyspalveluiden uudistamisesta käytiin vilkas keskustelu (2nd September)

40. Kolumni: Voiko suomalainen olla optimisti? (9th September)

41. HS listasi viisi Suomen talouden kipupistettä (11th September)

42. Pääkirjoitus: Seuraavaksi selviää, ovatko Keski-Uudenmaan kunnat tosissaan (13th September)

43. Huovinen: Sote-laki viivästyy ensi kevääseen (13th September)

44. Vantaa haluaa järjestää terveysasemansa itse (16th September)

45. Kunnat voivat vesittää Sote-uudistuksen (16th September)

46. Pääkirjoitus: Vahvat enemmistöhallitukset muuttivat poliittista kulttuuria (17th September)

47. Helsinki ei tahdo sitoa käsiään Sote-järjestelyissä (18th September)

48. Pääkirjoitus: Sote-remontin tuska alkaa valjeta kunnissa (21st September)

49. Sote-järjestämislaki muuttaa kuntien ja kuntalaisten asemaa (23rd September)

50. Kela ehdottaa yksityisten terveyspalveluiden lisäämistä (1st October)

51. Muut lehdet: Sote-uudistuksesta tarvitaan kaikki vertailutieto (4th October)

52. Kolumni: Kunnat muuttuivat, mutta toisin kuin hallitus halusi (5th October)

53. Kelan Sote-lausunto kuohuttaa poliitikkoja (7th October)

54. Ulkoistukset voivat sotkea Sote-uudistusta (9th October)

55. Sote-uudistuksessa kuunneltava asiantuntijoita (11th October)

56. Sote-uudistus on mahdoton yhtälö (11th October)

57. Hus: Vahvat yliopistosairaalat pitää säilyttää (11th October)

58. Eva tyrmää Sote-uudistuksen ja vaatii aikalisää (13th October)

59. Oikeusministeriö kritisoi hallituksen Sote-esitystä (14th October)

60. Valtiovarainministeriö: Peruskunnilla pitää olla oikeus tuottaa terveyspalveluja (15th October)

61. Vastaväite: Vastuullisuutta palvelutuotantoon (16th October)

62. Pääkirjoitus: Sote-uudistukseen kuluu vielä useita vuosia (16th October)

63. Studio Kulmapöytä: Sote-lausunnosta noussut kohu yllätti Liisa Hyssälän (17th October)

64. Lauantaivieras: Liisa Hyssälä: Suomi uskoo liikaa laitoksiin (18th October)

65. Sitra keskittäisi rahoituksen Sote-alueille (21st October)

66. Kelan johdon Sote-lausuntoa puidaan vielä uudestaan marraskuussa (22nd October)

67. Yle: Kokoomuksessa haluja lykätä Sote-uudistus yli vaalien (23rd October)

68. Pääkirjoitus: Ennenaikaiset vaalit eivät pelastaisi mitään (24th October)

69. Kommentti: Ideologian ytimessä (24th October)

70. Kokoomus ajaa muutosta Sote-esitykseen (24th October)

71. Soini ja Sipilä tyrmäävät kokoomuksen Sote-jarruttelun (24th October)

72. Kuntien asema vaatii täsmennystä (25th October)

73. Kokoomus ei suostu Sote-syntipukiksi – "Sipilä puhuu mustaa valkoiseksi" (26th October)

74. Lyhyesti: Pitääkö Suomen olla aina ykkönen? (27th October)

75. Pääkirjoitus: Sote-uudistuskin uhkaa jumiutua (27th October)

76. Sote-kiista kärjistyy kuntien asemaan (28th October)

77. Tausta: Miksi Sote-uudistusta tehdään? (29th October)

78. HS-analyysi: Sote-ongelmat olivat tiedossa jo kesällä (29th October)

79. Sote-uudistus voimaan mahdollisimman pian (29th October)

80. Hoivayritykset pelkäävät Sote-uudistuksen lisäävän rahanmenoa (30th October)

81. YTHS pitää säilyttää Sote-uudistuksessa (30th October)

82. Kolumni: Vaaleja ei pidä aikaistaa vaan myöhentää (31st October)

83. MTV: Kunnanjohtajat lykkäisivät kunta- ja Soteuudistusta (31st October)

84. Stubb: Sote-uudistus viedään maaliin (1st November)

85. Pääministeri Stubb ei usko hallituksen kaatuvan (5th Noveber)

86. Sote-uudistus on umpikujassa (6th November)

87. Ministeri Huovinen lupaa Sote-esityksen marraskuun aikana (6th November)

88. Sipilä: Soten kanssa mennyt kolme vuotta hukkaan (7th November)

89. Stubb: Kokoomuksesta yritetään tehdä syntipukki (9th November)

90. Kolumni: Hyvin pukeutuneita eläimiä ja syrjittyjä firmoja (11th November)

91. Sote-uudistuksen jälkeen potilaiden pompottelun luukulta toiselle pitäisi loppua (14th November)

92. Keskustan Sipilä: Hyvä, että Sote nytkähti eteenpäin (14th November)

93. Kolumni: Työterveyshuollosta tuli hyväosaisten terveyskeskus (14th November)

94. Sdp:n Backman: Päätös turvaa lähipalvelut ja pompottaminen vähenee (14th November)

95. Sote-palvelujen tuottamisvastuusta syntyi viimein sopu (14th November)

96. Stubb: "Askel eteenpäin" (15th November)

97. Soten tuotantovastuun saa 19 kuntayhtymää (15th November)

98. Sarkomaa: Ei enää pussi päässä Sote-päätöksiä (15th November)

i http://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/
ii http://yle.fi/uutiset/suomalaiset_vahvasti_facebook-kansaa__whatsapp_toiseksi_suosituin/7707216

ii http://yle.fi/uutiset/suomalaiset_vahvasti_facebook-kansaa__whatsapp_toiseksi_suosituin/7707216
iii http://stm.fi/aiempi-Sote-valmistelu
iv http://stm.fi/Sote-uudistus
v http://viestilehti.fi/lobbarin-lokakuu/
vi http://tnsmetrix.tns-gallup.fi/public/

vii Mitä Sotesta tarvitsee tietää?, Sote-lakiin ei tule viiden vuoden irtisanomissuojaa, Asukkaita on kuultava Sote-palveluissa, Sote-uudistuksen seuraava vaihe koskee myös työterveyshuoltoa, Huovinen: Sote-laki viivästyy ensi kevääseen, Ministeri Huovinen lupaa Sote-esityksen marraskuun aikana, Sote-palvelujen tuottamisvastuusta syntyi viimein sopu, Soten tuotantovastuun saa 19 kuntayhtymää

viii 2nd July: Veroratkaisut vääristävät kilpailua; 3rd July: Sote-uudistus syö markkinoiden hyödyt; 11th July: Muut lehdet: kritiikki horjuttaa haurasta Sote-sopua; 11th August: Potilailla oltava valinnanvapaus; 18th August: Kokoomuksen Räty: yritysten asema Sotessa pettymys; 19th August: Blogi: Sote-uudistus järjestää julkisen terveydenhuollon uudelleen, mutta ei lupaa pikavoittoja yrityksille; 18th September: Helsinki ei tahdo sitoa käsiään Sote-järjestelyissä; 1st October: KELA ehdottaa yksityisten terveyspalveluiden lisäämistä; 5th October: Kolumni: kunnat muuttuivat, mutta toisin kuin hallitus halusi; 9th October: Ulkoistukset voivat sotkea Sote-uudistusta;

11th October: Sote-uudistuksessa kuultava asiantuntijoita; 16th October: Vastaväite: vastuullisuutta palveluntuotantoon; 17th October: Studio Kulmapöytä: Sote-lausunnosta noussut kohu yllätti Hyssälän;

22nd October: Kelan johdon Sote-lausuntoa puidaan vielä uudestaan marraskuussa; 23rd October: Yle: Kokoomuksessa haluja lykätä Sote-uudistus yli vaalien; 24th October: Kommentti: ideologian ytimessä;

26th October: Kokoomus ei suostu Sote-syntipukiksi; 27th October: Sote-uudistuskin uhkaa jumiutua

30th October: Sote-uudistus voimaan mahdollisimman pian; 31st October: Vaaleja ei pidä aikaistaa vaan myöhentää

5th November: Stubb: Sote-uudistus viedään maaliin; 11th November: Kolumni: hyvin pukeutuneita eläimiä ja syrjittyjä firmoja

ix Article 38: Sote-laista muhii epäsopu Helsingin seudulla – There are disagreements related to law on Sote reform in the Helsinki region

x Article number 40: Helsinkiläisten terveyspalveluiden uudistamisesta käytiin vilkas keskustelu – There was a heated debate on the reform on healthcare services of people living in Helsinki; Article number 48: Helsinki ei tahdo sitoa käsiään Sote-järjestelyissä - Helsinki does not want to tie its hands in Sote preparation

xi Article number 45: Pääkirjoitus: Seuraavaksi selviää, ovatko Keski-Uudenmaan kunnat tosissaan – Editorial: Next will become clear if the municipalities of central Uusimaa take it [the issue] seriously

xii Article number 45: Vantaa haluaa järjestää terveysasemansa itse – Vantaa wants to organise its health centre by itself