

**AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND ITS  
REPUTATION ACCORDING TO POLITICIANS  
Case: The United Nations in Finland**

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Master's Thesis  
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# JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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| <p>Abstract</p> <p>The purpose of this research is to estimate what kind of reputation the United Nations has amongst the Members of Parliament of Finland who are also members of the Foreign Affairs Committee. The theoretical framework concentrates on the terms reputation, image, intergovernmental organization and issues management. The theory part also concerns the UN as an intergovernmental organization and Finland's history as a member of the UN. The research is a case study and the method chosen is semi-structural thematic interview. Six Members of Parliament took part in the interviews and they took place during spring and summer 2014.</p> <p>The research data shows that the respondents consider the UN important but, at the same time, it is considered ineffective and bureaucratic organization. Especially its slow involvement in the crisis and the Security Council's actions were criticized. Although, the reputation is two-folded, the UN was still considered as an important actor internationally.</p> <p>The corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish politicians was formed based on the research data. The model is formed of four elements that describe the reputation. However, this research is not thorough enough for defining elements of reputation for intergovernmental organizations in a more general sense. Therefore there is a need for further research because the reputation of the IGOs has not received enough academic attention. In addition, the model of the elements of the reputation of the IGOs needs further research.</p> |   |
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## JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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| Tiivistelmä<br><p>Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, millainen maine tapaustutkimuksen kohteeksi valitulla organisaatiolla Yhdistyneillä kansakunnilla (YK) on ulkoasianvaliokuntaan kuuluvien kansanedustajien keskuudessa. Teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä esiteltiin tutkimuksen keskeiset käsitteet eli maine, imago, valtioidenvälinen organisaatio ja teemojen hallinta (issues management). Lisäksi teoriaosuudessa käsiteltiin YK:ta hallitustenvälisenä organisaationa sekä Suomen historiaa YK:n jäsenenä. Tutkimus toteutettiin tapaustutkimuksena ja tutkimusmenetelmäksi valittiin teemahaastattelu. Haastatteluihin osallistui kuusi ulkoasianvaliokuntaan kuuluvaa kansanedustajaa, ja haastattelut tehtiin keväällä ja kesällä 2014.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa kävi ilmi, että haastateltujen kansanedustajien silmissä YK on tärkeä, mutta sitä pidettiin tehottomana ja byrokraattisena organisaationa. Etenkin YK:n hidasta toimintaa kriiseihin puuttumisessa ja turvallisuusvaliokunnan toimintaa arvosteltiin. Vaikka YK:n maine oli kaksijakoinen, sitä pidettiin yhä merkittävänä toimijana kansainvälisesti.</p> <p>Tutkimusaineiston eli suomalaispoliitikkojen haastatteluiden perusteella luotiin maineen malli YK:sta. Malliin sisältyy neljä vastaavan organisaation mainetta kuvaavaa ulottuvuutta. Tämän tutkimuksen perusteella ei voida kuitenkaan yleistää, millaisista elementeistä valtioidenvälisen organisaation maine yleisemmin rakentuu. Jatkotutkimuksille olisikin tarvetta, sillä tällaisten organisaatioiden maine ei ole saanut riittävästi akateemista huomiota. Myös valtioidenvälisen organisaation maineen ulottuvuudet vaativat lisätutkimusta.</p> |                                     |
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## ABSTRACT

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

A good reputation increases credibility and makes the organization look more attractive (Fombrun 1996, 3). Especially when facing issues or crises a good reputation is the most important asset for an organization (Young 1996, 1). The benefits of a good reputation for a company have been proved in several studies (Gregory 1998; Jones, Jones & Little 2000), but is reputation really always just good or bad? According to Luomaaho (2007a), reputation can also be neutral (2007a, 127).

The reputation of an intergovernmental organization such as the United Nations is important for several reasons. Firstly, United Nations' actions have impact on international politics. Also, the member states of an intergovernmental organization have the power to decide whether or not an intergovernmental organization is effective or ineffective. (McGowan, Cornelissen & Nel 1999, 161.) United Nations is no exception: it needs a mandate from its member states for example to intervene a war. This means that the United Nations' reputation in its member states is important. Whether or not reputation is positive or negative, it does have impact on how stakeholders interact with the organization (Coombs 2007, 164).

Also, high-level politicians can have impact on how states' interests are defined and they can set policies for specific issues (Taninchev 2015, 141). For example Finland decided to change its United Nations strategy in October 2013. One of the reasons mentioned was that Finland failed to be elected for the Security Council's membership. (Ulkoasianvaliokunta 2013.)

Reputation research that concerns stakeholders is important because it enables the organization in understanding how the stakeholders view the organization and its operations. Therefore, the research that concentrates on member states is essential in survey of the resources. In addition, it increases the effectiveness of communication as a means of communicational strategy. (Aula & Heinonen 2002, 174.)

According to Taninchev (2015, 133), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) that facilitate more interaction between individuals from various states are conducive to greater member state interest convergence over time because there are more opportunities for the agents from one or more member states to persuade the agents from other member states to accept new ideas that affect the way they define their states' interests. (Taninchev 2015, 133.)

The reputation of the intergovernmental organizations has not received enough academic attention. Therefore this research aims to determine the reputation of the United Nations based on six interviews of Members of the Parliament of Finland. This research aims at collecting data of the reputation and images of the United Nations from the Members of Parliament of Finland's perspective. The research focuses on images that the Members of Parliament of Finland have of the United Nations: the MPs who are members of Foreign Affairs Committee are expected to have more knowledge of the UN compared to the general population. Six Members of Parliament of Finland were interviewed for the research.

In addition, it is essential to acknowledge, what is important in general when talking about the reputation of an intergovernmental organization like the United Nations. Therefore this research aims at composing a corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish politicians. The United Nations' reputation among Finland's Members of Parliament was selected as a case because allegedly there has been no research on it. In addition, the topic was current during the time when the semi-structural thematic interviews took place because Finland had just changed its UN strategy. Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made this decision together and because of this the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee were chosen as respondents for this research.

Research task:

What kind of reputation does the United Nations have amongst the Members of Parliament of Finland?

Research questions are as followed:

1. What kind of role does relationship between an intergovernmental organization and its member states' politicians have on the reputation of an intergovernmental organization?
2. What kind of images do the Members of Parliament of Finland have of the United Nations?

3. Which factors influence on the reputation of an intergovernmental organization such as the United Nations?

## 2 REPUTATION, IMAGE AND IDENTITY

This chapter presents the terms reputation, image and identity. Especially reputation and image are vital for this research. In this research the terms 'image' and 'reputation' are considered different. In this research image is seen as a part of reputation. The target organization has several images that together with identity form its reputation. Reputation is considered an overall view of the organization.

### 2.1 Reputation

According to Lehtonen (2002), reputation is related to the images and views that the receiver has of the organization. It shows the respect that the environment has of the organization: reputation is formed out of images, an organization's history and its actions. Stakeholders measure organization's value based on this information. Reputation is an intangible asset which rates the organization compared to its competitors: reputation capital can either be increased by fulfilling stakeholders' expectations or decreased because of negative publicity. (Lehtonen 2002, 41-44.)

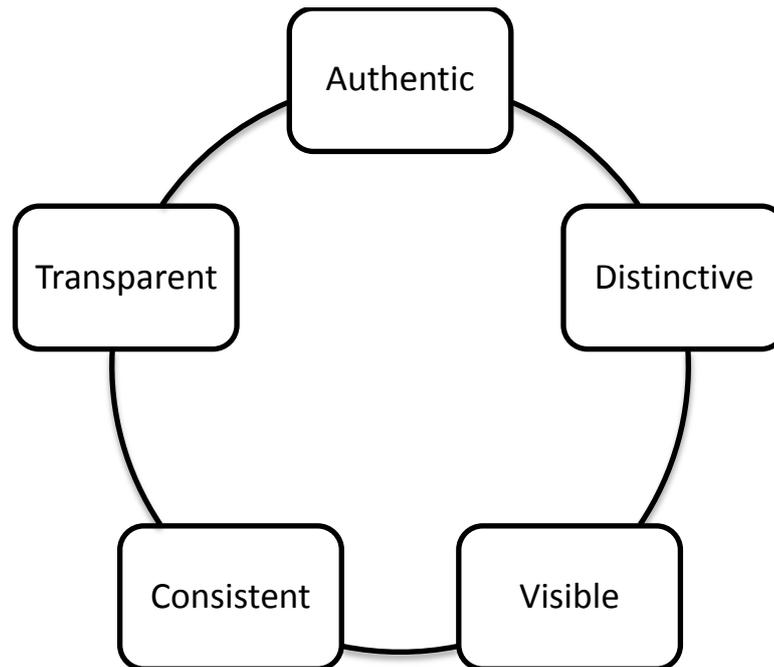
Reputation can also be seen as an intangible resource that is built of images and stories. The importance of reputation cannot be measured in money: good reputation creates good basis for operational environment, bad reputation makes it difficult to function. (Aula & Heinonen 2002, 32.) According to Bromley (1993), reputation is a product that consists of opinions and also a process where the information gained from social operational environment has an impact on ones attitudes towards a certain organization. Therefore reputation can easily adapt to all kinds of changes. (Bromley 1993, 217.) Bromley also defines reputation as a collective image of organization. This means that the reputation is a collective concept: it represents the perception of everyone. (Bromley 2001, 317.)

Like Bromley, Fombrun sees reputation as a product but also as a spinoff product created by the competition. Therefore one could say that reputation is formed when organizations are building competitive advantages that differ from the ones their rivals have. At the same time reputation is a signal that tells about the organization to its stakeholders and therefore it also has economic value. (Fombrun 1996, 32.) Because an organization is being evaluated by its stakeholders, all its functions are taken into account. Both past and future actions create an overall appeal that is then compared to other similar organizations (Fombrun 1996, 72). Therefore reputation has huge strategic value because it withdraws the attention to organization's characteristics that are attractive - but on the other hand unappealing features can gain attention too (Fombrun 1996, 3).

One way to define reputation is to call it "a publicly recognized name" (Wartick 2002, 374). So reputation is what others think of an organization. As Luoma-aho (2007b) points out, reputation exists in the minds of stakeholders (Luoma-aho 2007b, 5). It is also value of public awareness in social networks (Luoma-aho 2007b, 4), but it becomes valuable only after others have recognized it (Luoma-aho 2007b, 6). Reputation does not form overnight, instead it takes time for an impression to form into reputation. Therefore reputation is an ongoing process: impressions and expectations turn into a sum of experiences that altogether form reputation. (Luoma-aho 2007b, 9-10.)

That is because reputation is created in the minds of the people examine the organization and people always have their own view of the organization (Aula & Heinonen 2002, 32). Reputation is based on the images and experiences that stakeholders have and it is formed when the organization and its stakeholders confront each other. Stakeholders interpret organization's actions and these images create the reputation of the organization (Aula & Heinonen 2002, 90.) Therefore reputation is a review of the images of the current situations and is always exposed to changes.

Reputation is a record of past deeds. When forming a reputation, the past experiences with the organization are being taken into account. (Sztompka 2000, 72.) Because experiences are taken into account, the stakeholders that share a common history with the organization are also better at evaluating its action (Sztompka 2000, 72). For organizations it can sometimes be difficult that reputation can be based on second-hand information (Sztompka 2000, 74). This makes reputation hard to manage. For example the President of Russia Vladimir Putin used The United Nations' actions in Kosovo as an excuse for declaring Crimea a part of Russia and the United Nations was forced to react (Helsingin Sanomat 2014).



Fombrun and van Riel's reputation model (2004)

FIGURE 1.

It is demanding to measure reputation, however, several researchers have developed their own elements and dimensions for this purpose. These characteristics enable the quantitative calculation of the incidence of reputation. For example Aula and Hei-nonen (2002) divide reputation into six aspects (2002, 100). One of the best known models is the reputation model Fombrun & van Riel (2004) have developed (FIGURE 1). It divides reputation to five aspects: visible, distinctive, authentic, transparent and consistent. For example visibility means that the stakeholders see the organization as genuine, whereas distinctiveness is a way to stand out compared to other similar organizations. Organizations with a good reputation stand out with these abilities compared to their competitors. (Fombrun & van Riel 2004, 86-89.)

Because these models are describing the reputation of corporate organizations, they are not directly suitable when it comes to intergovernmental organizations. However, it is assumed that some of the characteristics are considered important elements of IGOs' reputation as well.

## 2.2 Good, bad or neutral reputation?

Reputation can be seen as a measurement of what is currently important. A good reputation works like a business card: it attracts customers, investors and opens doors (Fombrun & van Riel 2004, 3-4.) Fombrun (1996) also considers that a good reputation

increases more reliability and assures that the organization does what it has promised (Fombrun 1996, 3,10). A good reputation also has positive effect on the impressions that stakeholders have of the organization, its functions and things it represents thus defining its identity (Fombrun 1996, 56). Fombrun & Low (2011) also note that “a good reputation acts like a magnet in attracting stakeholder resources”, a less favorable reputation drives stakeholders away (Fombrun & Low 2011, 22).

It can be agreed that reputation consists of how others see the organization and according to Young (1996), it's either good or bad. There is no midway. A good reputation can help an organization during hard times. Therefore an organization needs to protect its reputation at all times because years of work can be lost in a moment. (Young 1996, 12.) However, a good reputation can also be a benefit when facing crisis; especially a strong reputation leader is an advantage in crisis management (Young 1996, 108).

Strong reputation lasts but achieving it requires long-term efforts (Aula & Heinonen 2002, 51). On the other hand even the strongest reputation can be lost in a moment if it is not taken care of (Young 1996, 12). Especially when facing crisis a good reputation can turn out to be the most valuable asset an organization can possible have (Young 1996, 1). Reputation does matter: a good one attracts and increases credibility; a bad one may destroy the whole organization.

Several researchers have shown that a good reputation can soften the damage a crisis can cause. According to Gregory (1998) stock market crash had less impact on organizations with a good reputation compared to those with less desirable one. Organizations that had a good reputation before the crash also recovered from it faster than others. (Gregory 1998, 288–289.) Jones, Jones and Little (2000) had similar results from their research.

Jones, Jones and Little (2000) were exploring if organizations with a good reputation survived from the stock market crashes in 1987 and 1989 with less damages than the others. Reputation had no significance in the 1987's crash but in the 1989's crash reputation had a huge impact on the stock value: organizations with strong reputations can have their stocks dropped notable less than those organizations that have a bad reputation. According to Jones et al. (2000), a good reputation creates a reservoir of goodwill which helps organizations to minimalize panic during the crash and to shelter from a crisis. (Jones, Jones and Little 2000, 1,5,11.)

When an organization has a good reputation, it creates a shelter around the organization and softens the effects of a crisis or gives extra time to react to them. Organization with a good reputation is considered authentic, visible, transparent, consistent and distinctive (Fombrun 1996, 72–80.) However, the better the reputation, the riskier it is for an organization: there is always a chance that an organization faces a crisis thus losing all the work built for years (Luoma-aho 2007a, 129).

When it comes to intergovernmental organizations, these characteristics can still be considered important because reputation does matter: people already have expectations of how the United Nations is going to achieve peace even before the organization's peacekeeping unit has entered the country. Even politicians have an image of the United Nations and it may have impact on the decisions they make. These expectations are relevant when forming an image of the organization. However, it can be questioned whether the reputation is good or bad – could it be neutral as well?

According to Luoma-aho (2007a), it could. Neutral reputation is defined as a reputation that does not aim too high or too low. Instead, it is something in between a good and a bad one. (Luoma-aho 2007a, 129.) According to Dowling (2002), governmental bureaucracies usually have bad reputation (Dowling 2002, 3), and if the United Nations is associated more like governmental institutions, it may have a bad reputation as well. However, according to Walker (2010), reputation represents both internal and external stakeholders' perceptions and thus it can be either positive or negative (Walker 2010, 367). This means that the Members of Parliament of Finland as stakeholders view the United Nations' actions in certain topics either positively or negatively. For example the resolutions of the Security Council are considered either responsible or harmful.

### **2.3 Image**

Kotler and Andreasen (1996) define image as a sum of beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, ideas, relevant behaviors or impressions that people have of an organization (Kotler & Andreasen 1996 according to Belanger, Mount & Wilson 2002, 218). An image also consists of impressions and evaluations of the organization as a whole, in other words, it is the image that various publics have (Fombrun & van Riel 2004). An image can be compared to a mirror because it reflects the identity of the organization. Stakeholders make interpretations based on the organization's actions and the way it presents itself. These interpretations form either good or bad image. (Fombrun 1996.) Even though, some stakeholders have a positive image of the organization but it does mean that all the other stakeholders have it too (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 26).

Image is perceptions formed in the mind of those observing the organization (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 39). Thus, an organization's public image is often the result of public interaction with the organization's stakeholders. Larger organizations try to influence the public image their stakeholders have but may not succeed, because images consist of stakeholders' choices, actions and social interactions and thus are difficult to change or control. (Belanger, Mount & Wilson 2002, 218.) If the first impression of the organization is made after an unflattering information leak the information twists and gets generalized. This might lead to changing or twisting the image of the organization. (Fombrun 1996, 162.)

Image is not a tabula rasa. Instead experiences that various stakeholders have form the image of an organization (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 16). People have different information and different experiences of an organization, hence instead of one single image there are a lot of different images. Both long-term (honesty, responsibility) and short-term (excitement, enjoyment) values are of significance when people are evaluating an organization (Dowling 2002, 18-19). Image can be formed from personal experiences or indirectly, for example, based on rumors or news on the media (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 22). Because there are multiple publics, there are also multiple images: this makes image like a multicolored mosaic, full of different associations (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 17).

Image is related to culture, so it does have effect on operational environment and local diversities (Liuo & Chung 2010, 1081). Therefore, it is important to manage both internal and external communication when assuring as favorable and as realistic an image as possible. However, this cannot be done without affecting corporate identity (van Ruler & Vercic 2004, 37.) Image is easier, faster and cheaper to change than identity (van Ruler & Vercic 2004, 49). Image is also under the influence of the society: how the organization is seen may alter because of the changes in the world surrounding it. Therefore it can be said that image only exists in a certain period of time. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 27.)

Service industry sees image as a brand extension that has more value to the organization than even its products. However, stakeholders may have a complex and subjective perception of the organization. (Liuo & Chung 2010, 1081.) Therefore, image can be unfamiliar, intangible, subjective, transitory and personal experience to those who form it. On the other hand, if image is managed successfully, positive image can be of significance to the organization by strengthening its reputation and attracting more customers. (Liuo & Chung 2010, 1080.)

According to Vos & Schoemaker (2006), image consists of five elements: primary impression, familiarity, perception, preference and position. First associations of the organization give a significant notice on what the respondent considers important. Familiarity, on the other hand, reveals what kind of issues people are aware of. Perception shows which characteristics are connected to the organization, and preference gives information on which characteristics respondents give value to. The last element, position, reveals how people compare the organization to others. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 84–85.)

Images can also be shared by people of a group, which makes reputation a collection of images (Bromley 2001, 317). Collective impressions that the members of an organization have form internal image, which may also refer to corporate identity (Bromley 2001, 318). So, image refers to collective or at least partly shared interpretations and generalizations that various groups have of the organization. It can be agreed that image is the reception an organization receives in its environment (Christensen & Askegaard 1999, 295).

An image of a certain product or service that the organization is offering can be different than the image of the organization. A product image and a organizational image can be partly similar as well. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 28.)

## **2.4 Differences between reputation, image and identity**

There have been differences between the definitions of reputation and image among the researchers and these differences have divided researchers into two schools of thought. The others consider corporate reputation and corporate image synonyms – the others view them as autonomous concepts that may be different and interrelated. (Gotsi & Wilson 2001, 25.) The idea of image and reputation being synonyms is due to the 1960's and 1970's fashionable area for research: unlike reputation, image was a common concept in the literature (Gotsi & Wilson 2001, 25).

In the school that considers the terms separate three dominant views exist. According to the first reputation and image are different and separate terms with image having negative associations. The second views reputation as one of many dimensions that build image. However, the researchers who share this view also believe that even though reputation and image are different concepts they are still related to each other. Then there are also researchers who see that reputation is influenced by multiple images. (Gotsi & Wilson 2001, 26–27.)

The literature does not give direct answers to the nature of this relation: different stakeholders have different images of the organization which create the corporate image, but it is unclear how much corporate images effect on the reputation (Gotsi & Wilson 2001, 28). According to Gotsi and Wilson (2001), stakeholders' overall evaluation of the organization (in other words reputation) influences the images that they form but on the other hand reputation is also largely affected by the images. Therefore, it can be said that reputation affects image as well as image affects reputation. (Gotsi & Wilson 2001, 28.)

Both image and reputation exist in the eye of the receiver. Image can be defined as the first impression that comes to mind when the organization's name is mentioned. Reputation is related to image but it represents the estimation of the organization as a whole. Normally, image is created more quickly and easily than reputation, which is built in the long run. Achieving a strong reputation requires more than successful image-building campaign contains - it is a result of consistent performing over time. (Gray & Balmer 1998, 696.)

Chun (2005) also agrees that image represents stakeholders' concerns and latest beliefs about an organization, while reputation consists of value judgment built over time of organization's actions and behavior. Although, image is usually considered to be easier to alter than reputation, they are both vulnerable when facing a crisis and the possible damage it can cause. (Chun 2005, 96.) According to Walker (2010), the greatest difference between reputation and image is time: whereas image can change rapidly, the reputation is more stable and changes take time (Walker 2010, 367).

Whereas image includes associations and evaluations of the organization, reputation focuses on evaluations only. Image considers the interests of public groups more important while reputation concentrates on the assets this forms from an organization's point of view. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 15). Wartick (2002) relates image to external stakeholders and identity to internal stakeholders. Reputation is the sum of these two. (Wartick 2002, 376.) Reputation's relation to other two can be seen in the formula (Davies, Chun, da Silva & Roper 2001):  $REPUTATION = f(IMAGE + IDENTITY)$ . This formula not only equates image with the employees' view of how external stakeholders might see the organization, but also equates reputation with the external image of the organization. (Davies et al. 2001, 113-114.)

Chun (2005) makes a difference between reputation, image and identity by defining reputation as an umbrella construct: identity expresses internal impressions and im-

age external. This way reputation refers to overall activity in an organization, image to the external view and identity to the internal view. (Chun 2005, 105.)

Strong reputation is built on well managed image and identity (Fombrun 1996, 28–29). Sometimes image mirrors organization's identity, but more often it is twisted because of organization's attempts to manage the public opinion or because of rumours running on employee level. There can be more than one image. (Fombrun 1996, 37.) According to several studies, image is the key to receiving a good reputation: an organization needs to carefully choose the right images to manage and let them alter the identity (Fombrun 1996, 53). Identity is what organization is at the moment, and image is how they represent themselves (Fombrun 1996, 54). Image however could be related mostly to customers and to other external stakeholders whereas identity is more focused on internal stakeholders, such as employees and together they form reputation (Wartick 2002, 376).

Identity is relatively easy to change but it does not have much impact on reputation. Identity needs to work through image. (Dowling 2002, 26.) Identity and desired image are often confused. Identity represents the reality of the organization, whereas desired image is the impression the organization wants its stakeholders to have of it (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 47–8.) Sometimes, if the communication has been successful, identity and image are similar to each other; mostly, however, image is twisted because of internal, such as failed communication, or external reasons, like rumors and media (Fombrun 1996, 37). Reputation develops from identity, but as organizations are trying to affect images, reputation starts to reflect organization's identity (Fombrun 1996, 11). Reputation, on the other hand is the perception of identity and, therefore, it is more stable than image. Images are converted into a reputation. (Stuart 1999, 206.)

Image can have effect on identity, if organizational image is considered negative; the message to public is interpreted or rejected, which lets opinions influence on the organizational identity (Hatch & Schultz 1997, 361). Bromley does not see that identity is only organization's true self – instead, it is both product and process like reputation. Therefore, it can change over time (Bromley 2001, 319–320.)

Corporate images can be measured by associations that are attributed to the organization as well as by attitudes or opinions (e.g. Vos & Schoemaker 2006), while reputation is usually measured with attitude scales only, in comparative research (e.g. reputation quotient by Fombrun & van Riel).

Public governmental organizations differ from companies. According to Luoma-aho (2008), this kind of organizations' reputation is formed of expertise, respect, trust, services and effectiveness. Expertise represents public sector's organization's expert duties and its typical problems, respect shows the respect and honor that the organization receives, trust includes trust and other ethical statements, services include service situations and effectiveness shows how competitive and effective these organizations are. (Luoma-aho 2008, 202.) Because intergovernmental organizations are no corporate nor public sector's organizations, their reputation cannot consist of the same dimensions like corporate and public sector's organizations. Because these reputations measurements are created for regular organizations, they cannot be used directly for intergovernmental organizations.

| DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF REPUTATION  |
|---|
| "A good reputation act like a magnet: It attracts us to those who have it. ... A good reputation is an excellent calling card: It opens doors, attracts followers, brings in customers and investors – it commands our respect." Fombrun & Van Riel 2004, 3–4 |
| "A publicly recognized name." Wartick 2002, 374   |
| "The way key external stakeholders groups or other interested parties actually conceptualize that organization". Bromley 2000, 241  |
| "A collective term referring to all stakeholders' view of corporate reputation, including identity and image." Davies, Chun, da Silva & Roper 2001, 144   |

TABLE 1. Definitions of the concept of reputation

There are several different definitions for reputation, as seen on TABLE 1. Walker (2010) points out that Fombrun's theories (1996) concerning reputation, identity and image have had a remarkable impact on the reputation research and Fombrun is often cited by other researchers. Many researchers define identity in reference to internal stakeholders and image as perception of external stakeholders. Reputation, on the other hand, often refers to both internal and external stakeholders and, thus, is a combined perception of identity and image. (Walker 2010, 362–366, 370.) According to Fombrun (1996), this makes reputation difficult to manage (Fombrun 1996, 59).

In this research, image is seen as a part of reputation. The target organization has several images that together with identity form its reputation. Reputation is considered a perception of both external and internal stakeholders: it is an overall view of the organization.

### **3 INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION**

This chapter presents the terms reputation, image and identity. Especially reputation and image are vital for this research. In this research the terms 'image' and 'reputation' are considered different. In this research image is seen as a part of reputation. The target organization has several images that together with identity form its reputation. Reputation is considered an overall view of the organization.

#### **3.1 History of intergovernmental organization**

Public organizations operating in international contexts can be divided into intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) or supranational organizations (SNOs). The United Nations is an example of the first: it is formed by nation-states and as an intergovernmental organization it aims at voluntary cooperation and coordination among its members. All members maintain their independence even though decisions and agreements are made together. (McCormick 1999, 10.) Intergovernmental organization refers to activity between actors, for example official representatives of a country, in at least two different states (Archer 2001, 1). The European Union is often considered an example of a supranational organization. Tallberg and McCall Smith (2014) compare UN to interstate WTO and the greatest difference between these organizations is that, unlike WTO, the EU as a supranational organization and the European Commission have no authority to prosecute infringements. These kinds of decisions are made between the Commission and the member states. (Tallberg & McCall Smith, 2014, 2-3.)

First intergovernmental organizations were founded over 150 years ago but their number started increasing during the 20<sup>th</sup> century thanks to advanced communication and transport that made the interaction between the states better. The forerunner of the United Nations, The League of Nations, was established in 1919, after the World War I. The idea was that the states would prevent wars by cooperating. However, the

organization failed to do so, but its existence has still been remarkable in the history of the intergovernmental organizations and particularly to the United Nations. Especially after the 1960's the amount of IGOs has increased and by 2004 there were over 238 intergovernmental organizations (McGowan, Cornelissen & Nel 1999, 150-152).

One of the reasons why intergovernmental organizations did not exist earlier is that there was no stable state system in Europe. Archer (2001) sees the ending of the Thirty Years War in 1648 as a turning point – after that the idea of unified Christian Europe influenced politics. However, it was the Peace of Westphalia and the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 that created the state system with defined geographical borders, territorialities, forming of governments and sovereign equality. Since then national governments have been seen as actors in international society. (Archer 2001, 3-4.)

According to Wallace and Singer (1970), there are qualifications concerning which organization is intergovernmental. An IGO needs to consist of at least two qualified members of the international system and they should have meetings regularly. A permanent secretariat and headquarters is also required (Wallace & Singer 1970, 245-246.) These features give an IGO a different structure compared to state (Chan 2005, 240). Also, for instance confederations are not intergovernmental organizations. An independent organization can only be considered as an intergovernmental organization if another IGO does not select its members and the organization does not include personnel who work under other plenary sessions. For instance heterogeneity, form of government and major power status have impact on how well intergovernmental organization functions. (Wallace & Singer 1970, 248.) Also, when it comes to IGOs, their size and only fully participating members, as opposed to those with associate status, are counted; but a system member's colony or dependency can serve to provide the basis for an indirect membership if that metropolitan nation is not a member (Singer & Wallace 1970, 529).

Intergovernmental organizations can be separate from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) because their active members are governments of national states. However, there are some mixed organizations that function partly by governmental institutions and partly by private bodies. (Wallace & Singer 1970, 247.) Intergovernmental organization is a formal entity that has at least three member states and it has a permanent secretariat or headquarters. Sufficient organizational structure makes continuing decision-making between IGO and the member states possible. (Pavehouse, Nordstrom & Warnke 2005, 9-10 according to Volgy, Fausett, Grant & Rodgers 2008, 839.)

Some intergovernmental organizations exist only technically and do not have power because they lack bureaucratic, executive or judicial organs. For example Central Afri-

can Customs hold meetings only when the heads of the member states meet. Some IGOs, like Arctic Council, also have only a minimal organizational structure and for them the power is centralized to a secretariat. (Boehmer, Gartzke & Nordstrom 2004, 37.) There are also differences between the equality of intergovernmental organizations because of their structure, mandate and member cohesion. Some intergovernmental organizations are more efficient creating agreements and have more power. However, some consider that intergovernmental organizations only mirror power relations in the world politics and not necessarily have impact on it. Still, they are not ineffective either. (Boehmer, Gartzke & Nordstrom 2004, 2-3.)

Organization's effectiveness can be evaluated by how active the organization is (the output), how it changes governments, mass media et cetera, how it behaves (the outcome), and what kind of impact it has (the impact). Focusing on behavioral changes (the outcome) is likely the best way to assess the effectiveness. Even though the effect that the organization has globally or nationally can be intended or unintended, other issues besides organization's policy can matter as well. However, it is still unclear how the organizations could improve their effectiveness. (Biermann & Bauer 2004, 190-191.)

According to McGowan et al (1999), intergovernmental organizations are sometimes seen as tools used by the states, which makes them somewhat important but they are not considered to have effect on the constitution of the international system. Others however consider that intergovernmental organizations do have impact on how the states act and they can even help to avoid conflicts. Thus one can agree that intergovernmental have at least some impact on the international politics and they definitely can increase the cooperation between the states by providing information that promotes decision-making and by making their member states to behave according to IGOs' rules. (McGowan et al. 1999, 152-153.)

States are also willing to become IGO's members and find it beneficial. Even though intergovernmental organizations are far from perfect, they do make things better globally. If intergovernmental organizations lack power, it is because the member states are afraid to increase their independency. For example the United Nations is unable to intervene a war or a conflict without the mandate from its member states. Thus, intergovernmental organization is as effective as its member states allow it to be. (McGowan et al. 1999, 160-161.)

For example NATO and EU are considered intergovernmental organizations that can change how the states act. If organizations are treated homogeneously, their actual impact on international policies is mutilated. (Boehmer et al. 2004, 5.) However, it is governments of states that decide whether or not to join a certain intergovernmental organization and these same governments also determinate if the state goes to war or

opts for peace (Singer & Wallace 1970, 528). Yet some intergovernmental organizations are relatively autonomous and can operate internationally with a different agenda compared to their member states (White 1996, 27 according to Kille & Scully 2003, 176).

Some even argue that certain intergovernmental organizations only exist instead of others because states need them in problem-solving. However, intergovernmental organizations can sometimes repeat the same mistakes, for example the United Nations' failure to bring peace to Congo and the chaotic situation in Kosovo, and yet the states are not demanding to execute the UN. (Barnett & Finnemore 1999, 701.) In fact, the United Nations' agenda has led to conflicts with member states. Still, for example UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) has been able to increase its autonomy over the years. (Barnett & Finnemore 1999, 705.)

### **3.2 The United Nations as an intergovernmental organization**

The United Nations was founded in 1949 to help to achieve world peace; international peace and safety are still its main duties. The members of the UN commit to solve their diplomatic differences peacefully and to refrain from the threats or acts of violence against other nations. The UN has had a significant role in solving several international crisis and conflicts from the very beginning. By the year 2005 it had had successful interventions in over 170 military conflicts. The United Nations had its first peacekeeping operations in the 1940's but in 1956 peacekeeping became one of its central functions. During the 1990's the organization founded 35 new peacekeeping operations and the focus of the operations changed from military to civilian issues. Even though the United Nations' peacekeeping forces received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988, the organization's reputation as a successful peacekeeper has divided opinions. The operations in El Salvador and in Mozambique have been praised, whereas the UN has failed in Somalia, in Ruanda and in Bosnia. (Leisma 2009, 99-101.)

Unlike its ancestor the League of Nations, the United Nations was formed based on future needs and therefore not on a range of interallied institutions. The UN wanted to avoid the same mistakes as the League of Nations and not to confuse responsibility for peace and security between Council and Assembly. It became a peace and security organization with four non-voting policemen: USA, USSR, the United Kingdom and China. It did not focus only on the existing peace agreements but also on creating means for projects in the future as well. (Archer 2001, 22-23.)

Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Or-

ganization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations (The United Nations 2011, Article 4). The United Nations has always had a quest for international peace and security and, unlike some other intergovernmental organizations, it was not founded for practical reasons such as growing economics (McGowan et al. 1999, 153).

At the moment the United Nations has 193 nation-state members. Having this many members has been seen problematic; can the United Nations be separated from its members to one single voice (Ryan 2000, 2)? After all, it has been said that “The United Nations is a mirror of the world around it, if the reflection is ugly, the organization should not be blamed” (Glaswyn 1953, 390 according to Archer 2003, 25). Therefore it is not a surprise that not every state is satisfied with the UN. For example the Cold War was problematic for the functioning of the UN because of two of its major actors, the USA and the USSR. This led to the creation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Treaty Organization in 1955. However, even the Cold War did not stop major powers from being in contact with each other through the UN and other intergovernmental organizations. (Archer 2001, 26–28.)

The United Nations is divided into several specialized agencies that are autonomous. Each has its own board that has more power than the member states. (McGowan et al. 1999, 156.) Because of this structure, there has been a lot of speculation of its effectiveness (Biermann & Bauer 2004, 190). The autonomy of these agencies is considered a weakness. Since the UN’s establishment, there have been proposals that have not passed the drawing board, for instance the war in Iraq, and the fact that the UN has not been able to bring as huge improvements into the world as it was expected to. It has been agreed that the United Nations needs to reform its system. (McGowan et al. 1999, 156–157.)

The United Nations has also been criticized for not doing enough for supporting human rights (McGowan et al. 1999, 157), even though human rights are the reason the UN explains its intervention and continuing peacekeeping missions (World Conference on Human Rights 1993, according to Barnett & Finnemore 1999, 712). The UN’s peacekeepers claim to be independent, objective and neutral actors, which leads to UN officials actually aiming at maintaining this image: instead of being a tool for member states power games they are representing the international community (Rieff 1996, 19–24 according to Barnett & Finnemore 1999, 709). It was also been greatly criticized for the Security Council’s decision to refuse the 2003 invasion of Iraq and some even used the case as an example of the corruption of the United Nations. (Kuziemko & Werker 2006, 908.)

The United Nations Security Council was found in 1945 (United Nations Foundation 2016). The Council leads the international community in reacting to situations that

threaten peace. It has five permanent members and ten non-permanent members that are elected by the general assembly. The resolutions need the support of at least nine member states, including all the permanent member states. When a crisis occurs, the Security Council can demand the troops to withdraw, send peacekeeping operations to the crisis area, establish sanctions or give the international community a mandate to interfere. The Security Council gives a more dominant role to five of its permanent member states that are the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Russia, France and China. These countries have a veto to prevent the resolution. For example Russia used the veto to prevent the mandate of a peace-keeping operation in Georgia in 2009. This veto is often criticized. (Leisma 2009, 43.)

### **3.3 Finland as a member of the United Nations**

According to Taninchev 2015), new members in the IGOs are not the only ones that have interest in effective cooperation. Because norms change in the community of states, all the states are interested in new ideas and beliefs and are willing to redefine their interests. Also, the states within the IGOs may not always follow common norms and there is variety in member states' view of cause and effectivity of relationships. (Taninchev 2015, 135.) Finland has changed its UN strategy to redefine its main interests in 2013.

The states that have interests abroad are likely to act internationally and be members of intergovernmental organizations. States that are members in several intergovernmental organizations are more likely to interact, whether or not it is in good or in bad, than those states that are member in only one IGO. (Boehmer et al. 2004, 6.) Finland is one these active states. Besides the UN, Finland has been a member of the European Union since 1995 and it also belongs to World Trade Organization, to name a few (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2016).

Finland has been a member of the United Nations since 1955. During the first years as a member Finland concentrated on adopting the procedures and practices of the organization and explored the international operational environment. Before the membership, Finland's foreign policy consisted mainly of bilateral political relations. The membership has broadened Finland's foreign politics. During the first years as a member, Finland aimed at decreasing the tensions between USA and the Soviet Union and diminishing the risk of war. As a result, the main principle of Finland's United Nations politics was neutrality and the target was to strengthen country's neutral position. (YK-liitto 2013.)

During the last decades, Finland has been active on especially peacekeeping operations and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs considers Finland as one of the great powers because of its active role in peacekeeping. Besides peace keeping, Finland has also been active for example in developing international human rights and development policies. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2015.) As a member of the United Nations, Finland has been able to create relations with tens of other states. The membership is useful: The United Nations offers information and is a vital meeting point for its 193 member states. (YK-liitto 2013.)

Finland has been a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council twice and altogether for four years, 1969–1970 and 1989–1990. For Finland, the general membership of the UN serves as an arena for dialog with other member countries but it is also a way to strengthen those functions that serve Finland's national interests as well (Ulkoasianvaliokunta 2013, 5). However, there may be other reasons for the membership of the Security Council. According to Dreher, Gould, Rablen & Vreeland (2012), the Security Council is one of the most important organs of the United Nations and the membership of the Security Council gives its member both "significant international influence and also economic benefit" (Dreher et al. 2012, 22). It is estimated that the membership can bring 59 percent increase in total aid from the United States and an 8 percent increase in total development aid that the members can receive from the United Nations. In addition, the Security Council is the only body of the UN that has a mandate for the use of force, access to classified information and a power to make decisions about where other countries need to send their troops. (Kuziemko & Werker 2006, 905–907.)

All in all, Finland was actively campaigning for membership during the United Nations Security Council elections 2012. There are five permanent members (People's Republic of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) and ten elected, non-permanent members. Despite the campaign, Finland was not amongst the elected countries. Instead, Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda secured their place in the Security Council for a two-year mandate.

The failed campaign was one of the reasons Finland changed its UN strategy of the Finnish Foreign Service in 2013. Besides this, the Foreign Affairs Committee felt that Finland needs to reevaluate the UN's position, operations and the significance of the membership. The main focus of setting of the new strategy was to decide which issues Finland will invest in via the UN and which issues Finland will run for example via the European Union. (Ulkoasianvaliokunta 2013, 2.)

Finland had updated the UN strategy in 2008. The previous strategy focused on issues such as military crisis management, preventing terrorism and international justice: these issues were left out of the new strategy. (Ulkoasianvaliokunta 2013, 2.) The new strategy attempts to assist Finland in pursuing its goals in the UN more effectively. In the future Finland will concentrate especially on aiding sustainable development. The other important issues for Finland's work in the UN are conflict prevention and resolution, promoting gender equality, supporting democratic institutions and eradication of extreme poverty. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2013).

## 4 ISSUES MANAGEMENT

This chapter aims at defining concepts 'issue' and 'issues management'. The concept 'crisis' is also defined because not only is it an important part of the term 'issue' but because this research concerns the United Nations that as an organization continuously deals with crisis. It is important to notice that the term 'crisis' has a different meaning as a communicational term. For the United Nations, crisis most commonly means a violent conflict. However, if the peace-keeping process fails and the crisis occurs in some part of the world, it is also a reputational crisis for the United Nations.

### 4.1 Issue

Crises can be defined without defining crisis management but issue is hard to separate from issues management to its own independent definition (Jaques 2007, 148). Heath & Coombs (2006) define issue as a fact, value or policy. It is a subjective experience and is based on evaluations and perspectives of certain matter. (Heath & Coombs 2006, 263.)

Issues have five stages: early, emerging, current, crisis and dormant. When the issue has grown into crisis, it draws more attention to the organization and the issues management is more demanding. The sooner the issue is notified, the better. Issue is identified by scanning and monitoring. When the issue reaches the crisis phase, reactive responsive is recommended. However, not all the issues become crisis. (Dougall, 2008).

## 4.2 Issue management theories

According to Heath & Coombs (2006), issues management means managing organizational resources through the public policy process and thus balancing organization's own interests and rights with stakeholders' (Heath & Coombs, 2006, according to Jaques 2009, 285). Heath (2008) has also defined issues management as managing the organizational resources through public policy process by creating a balance between stakeholders. If successful, the process will benefit the organizations interests. This means that the organization needs to defend its reputation against the certain issues by proving them either true or false. Issues management is also used to make strategic changes or improvements that enable the organization's growth. Communication has a key role in issues management. There are four theories concerning the issues management: systems theory, rhetorical theory, social exchange theory and power resource management theory. (Heath & Palenchar 2008, 9-12.)

So stakeholders are involved in issues management because they tend to have opinions on certain issues. But when it comes to issues, stakeholders can mean a large group of people. (Lerbinger 1997, 318.) Issues management also deals with both threats and opportunities at the same time but in a different way. Formulating goals, objectives and strategies is a way to deal with the issue. (Pratt 2001, 338.)

Issues management means following matters that have public attention such as public concern, conversation or interest that happen in organization's operational environment. Organizations should pay attention to those themes that have impact on its functions and need to be taken into account when designing new strategies. This environmental scanning usually means following media or different arenas. Time distinguishes issue itself between crisis: issue arises relatively slowly unlike crisis which can emerge with speed and is unpredictable. (Lehtonen 2002, 31-32.) Issues management requires following three principles: discovering a threat that may lead to an issue as early as possible, including understanding of the issue to internal resources management and enforcing issues management strategy when an issue appears (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 203). However, organizations are not able to control how issues arise and how others discuss the issue (Heath & Palenchar 2008, 5).

Issues management is closely linked to reputation management and risk communication: failure in any of the three areas may lead to crisis (Coombs & Holladay 2012, 62). Issues can have impact on organization's image and they may also change public opinion of the organization. Since several issues have impact on the image it is essential to stay connected with different public groups. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 87.)

According to Boutilier, nowadays global and local are interconnected in international politics. A local issue may easily become global issue. Therefore developing relationships with stakeholders is increasingly important. (Boutilier 2011, 3–4.) As Boutilier (2011) points out in his preface, in the political field every actor have their own political agendas, which makes issues managing difficult (Boutilier 2011, 3–4). For an organization like the United Nations managing local issues or even crises is one of the key points. Since the UN has over 190 member states, it can be assumed that there are several different political agendas.

### 4.3 Crisis

According to Fearn-Banks (1996), crisis is more than just a problem. It is a great issue that can have negative impact on the organization, community or even the whole field. A crisis can interrupt normal business and on the worst case it can threaten the whole existence of the organization. (Fearn-Banks 1996, 1.) Lerbinger (1997) sees the crisis as an event that can draw negative publicity on the organization and jeopardize the future income, growth and the future of the organization. Crisis is always a sudden event even though the signs can be visible in advance. (Lerbinger 1997, 4, 7.)

Millar (2004) has listed the most common definitions of the crisis: crisis is something that happens suddenly, requires fast reaction, has impact on the organization and how the public see it, creates uncertainty and stress, threatens the reputation of the organization, achieves great dimensions, sets the organization under exploration and has permanent effect on the organization. (Millar 2004, 19.) Crisis is considered current when the organization attracts media attention, its employees are interested in other organizations and the clients prefer competitors (Millar & Heath 2004, 2).

Fearn-Banks (1996) defines crisis as five-stage-event. During the first stage, the crisis could be prevented if the signs were noticed. At the second stage the crisis can be stopped by continuous two-folded communication with the most important stakeholders. At the third stage the organization can try to shorten the duration of the crisis or prevent it from spreading. The fourth stage consists of the organization aiming at retrieving its operations to normality. In the fifth stage the main issue is to both reevaluate the crisis and the damages or benefits it has caused and to prevent the future crisis from occurring. However, some crises are unstoppable and in these cases the crisis communication strategy is in a vital role when preparing to the crisis. (Fearn-Banks 1996, 4–9.)

Coombs (2007) defines crisis as a sudden event that can also cause damage to stakeholders. In addition, it can also have negative effect on the reputation. In this case the stakeholders may decrease interaction with the organization and in the worst case end their relations to the organization and even spread negative news concerning the organization. (Coombs 2007, 164.) Like Coombs, Young (1996) reminds that the successful organization can lose its reputation management when crisis occurs. Therefore the communication is extremely important because if the communication is not efficient enough the rumors emerge. Rumors can be a major risk for the organization because if the organization receives negative media coverage it poses a threat to the organization's future. (Young 1996, 108-109.)

Coombs (2007) also considers crisis communication that focuses on returning organization's favorable reputation irresponsible if the organization's actions have caused harm to others. Instead, it is best to focus on the victims in communication as well. (Coombs 2007, 165.) This communication strategy concerns the United Nations as well, since the organization's ineffectiveness in certain conflicts with victims raises attention.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

The research questions and the task of the research are represented in this chapter. This chapter also gives a view on the methodology that was used during the research process.

### 5.1 Research task and questions

Research task:

What kind of reputation does the United Nations have amongst the Members of Parliament of Finland?

Research questions are as followed:

1. What kind of role does relationship between an intergovernmental organization and its member states' politicians have on the reputation of an intergovernmental organization?
2. What kind of images do the Members of Parliament of Finland have of the United Nations?
3. Which factors influence on the reputation of an intergovernmental organization such as the United Nations?

This research aims to determine the reputation of the United Nations based on six interviews of Members of the Parliament of Finland. This research aims at collecting data of the reputation and images of the United Nations from the Members of Parliament of Finland's perspective. The research focuses on images that the Members of Parliament of Finland have of the United Nations: the MPs who are members of Foreign

Affairs Committee are expected to have more knowledge of the UN compared to the general population. Six Members of Parliament of Finland were interviewed for the research.

In addition, this research aims at composing a corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish top politicians.

## 5.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research methods offer best results when researching for example complexity or power relations, because they are able to delve into meaning and require critical ways of thinking. Also, when doing a qualitative research on managed communication related to organizations or people, qualitative research prefers to research the views of those they are studying. This information from the perspective of stakeholders helps to understand communication in many levels. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 5-6.)

Qualitative research does include some problematic issues: qualitative research does not give quantitative information of the phenomenon. Because the data is usually rather small, qualitative research studies cannot be generalized. However, qualitative research is a powerful tool when researching the relationship between international culture and communication from selected society's point of view (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 7-8, 11). Because this research aims at collecting data of the reputation and image of the United Nations from Finnish Members of Parliament's perspective, it can be agreed that the qualitative research is an appropriate method.

Research is not always just qualitative or quantitative, because dataset can be analyzed using both methods at the same time. For example qualitative data can be analyzed using quantitative methods and the other way around. Thus there is no need for pitting these two methods against each other. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 13-14.) Also, qualitative and quantitative research can no longer be separated by comparing the methods of analyzing, because nowadays even qualitative research can include quantitative methods like counting. Nevertheless, the quality of these two differs: qualitative research focuses on meaningful discursions and meaningful functions. (Töttö 2000, 27.) It is often thought that even though the data can be small, the depth of the analysis will substitute the lack of quantity (Töttö 2000, 114).

In other words, there are differences between qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research often focuses on analyzing rather small data but does it very

thoroughly. Thus, the theoretical basis of the research is essential when selecting and gathering the data because quantitative generations are not possible. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 18.) Quantitative research, on the other hand, focuses on gathering information of numbers and statistics. Qualitative research can be recognized for instance based on the methods of how the data is collected, what kind of theory has been selected, how the results are represented and what kind of a role the researcher has. Qualitative methods reach the changes of the phenomenon better because of the open research plan. Data gathering, analysis, discussion and reporting are all united, which sometimes makes it difficult to divide the research into smaller parts. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 14–16.)

Qualitative research gives its researcher more freedom to plan and execute the research compared to quantitative research. Because of this, the researcher has a central role which also means that interpretation is of importance. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 18–20.) Because of the researcher's role, qualitative research has often been considered as subjective. However, quantitative research is not automatically objective and qualitative research subjective: they only have a different approach on the topic. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 21–22.)

Qualitative research also enables creating something new while in quantitative research there is no room for creativity: analysis will only confirm or fail to reject the hypothesis (Töttö 2000, 105). Qualitative data can sometimes create discoveries and integrations, thus furthering the generating or revising of conceptual frameworks. These kinds of findings are unquestionable. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 1.)

Qualitative research consists of two phases: simplifying the observations and solving the dilemma. Usually these phases are linked together. Simplifying refers to examining the data from a certain theoretical view factoring meaningful issues. (Alasuutari 2011, 39–40.) Solving the dilemma, in other words interpreting the results, aims at creating meaningful totality of the phenomenon (Alasuutari 2011, 44).

In qualitative research observations are based on theory but there is no such a thing as an objective knowledge: one's perception of the phenomenon, what kind of meanings are given to the research topic and which methods are being used have impact on the research results (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 20). One cannot separate gathering data and analyzing it because qualitative research is totality. However, nowadays the focus is on the problems of analyzing the data rather than in gathering it. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 68.)

One of the biggest questions in qualitative research is the size of the data. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2008), usually it is thought that there is enough data when

new cases do not bring any new information to the research. However, the quantity of data depends on the nature of the research. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 62.) In this research six Finnish Members of Parliament were interviewed. After the interviews the data was considered to be thorough enough and there were no essential questions left to be answered, more interviews did not take place.

### 5.3 Semi-structured thematic interviews

According to Grunig and Hon 1999, open-ended questions measure reputation the best if the measurement concerns attitudes (Grunig & Hon 1999, 26). When the questions are open, the respondent does not have any pre-set attributes. (Luoma-aho 2005, 202.) Measuring reputation on a sample of the general population can be demanding since not everyone is involved with the organization in question. Therefore it is wiser to choose those who are known to be in a public. Relational forces explain why the organizations either have good or bad reputation, so measuring the perceived quality of relationships can be useful. (Grunig & Hon 1999, 26.) Therefore this research focuses on images that the Members of Parliament of Finland have of the United Nations: MPs who are members of Foreign Affairs Committee are expected to have more knowledge of the UN compared to the general population. In addition, members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made this decision together and because of this the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee were chosen as respondents for this research.

Interview is one of the main methods in qualitative research. Compared to other methods, it is a flexible way to collect the data. Usually it is chosen when one wants to deepen the topic or the topic is unknown. Semi-structural thematic interview usually includes selected themes that will be discussed but the questions may not be accurate and there is no strict order of the questions (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 204–205).

Semi-structural thematic interview as a means to collect the data is chosen because this kind of an interview allows the researcher to be in direct contact with the respondent. It also makes it possible to find out if there are hidden motives behind the answers. When the interview is selected to gather data, it emphasizes the fact that the respondent is a subject who needs to have an opportunity to express his opinions as freely as possible. An interview is a good method when there is little information of the research topic and the researcher cannot be certain of the answers or there are no simple

answers to the questions. Therefore it is possible to ask for more arguments. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 34–35.) Semi-structural thematic interview as a method aims at gathering a data that makes it possible to have reliable results of the phenomenon (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 66).

The themes chosen should be loose in order to research the phenomenon with diversity. There are no lists of questions but themes. Both the researcher and the respondent can deepen the topic and the conversation can continue as long as the research interests require. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 66–67) The researcher's duty is to make sure that all the themes will be covered during the interview, but the order and width can vary (Eskola & Vastamäki 2001, 26–27). It is necessary to record the interviews because that is the only way the conversation can flow without breaks. Also, recording makes it possible to maintain all the essential details of the conversation, such as silences, and changes in voice. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 92.) In this research all the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. However, silences and voice changes were not considered important to the subject of the research and they do not appear in the transcribed texts.

In semi-structured thematic interview there are no general answers to be known because the respondents will answer in their own words. The themes of the interview are chosen beforehand, but the questions are not as specific as in structural interview. The themes will be discussed, but the order and the extent of them will depend on the interview. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 86.) Because of this, all the interviews will be in some different from one another. Thematic interview will ensure that the research results will not be too simple: reporting will be dialogue between theory and empirical research (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 82). Because semi-structured thematic interviews are open and the respondent will be able to speak freely, the data is considered to represent the respondent's opinions. It also makes individual interpretations possible better than structural interview. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 87–88.)

Semi-structured interview was chosen as a method for this research because there is little research on the United Nations' reputation among its member states' politicians. The research aims to determine the reputation of United Nations' based on six interviews of Members of Parliament of Finland. Because of lack of resources, the amount of interviews can be small. Instead, it is essential to acknowledge, what is important in general when talking about the reputation of intergovernmental organizations. In addition, this research aims at composing a corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish top politicians. Case the United Nations' reputation among Finland's Members of Parliament was selected because so far there has been no research on it. There

were no pre-interviews because the researcher has worked as a journalist since 2004 and is used to interviewing politicians.

## 5.4 The research process

Vos and Schoemaker's The Corporate Image Measurement model (2006) was used to define the structure of the interviews. The model includes all the elements that are necessary to measure reputation. First it aims to define what kind of images the respondents have of the United Nations. Second it gathers information of their knowledge of the organization. This is necessary in order to measure image with liability. It also measures images and perceptions and preferences that the respondents have of this kind of organization. Last but not least, the model also explores the respondents' view of the position that the target organization has compared to other organizations. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 84–86.)

Primary impressions are respondents' free association and description of the organization. This does not include reasoned characteristics of the organization. Instead, the primary impressions focus on the most prominent aspects of the topic. Primary impressions are important when measuring the reputation because it reports the respondents' utmost associations and opinions of the organization. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 84–86.)

According to Vos & Schoemaker (2006), familiarity measures the level of knowledge the respondents have of the organization. It is important to understand how people have formed their image and how involved they are with the target organization. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 84.) The position measures how the respondents place the organization compared to other similar organizations (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 85).

This research uses Vos and Schoemaker's model (2006) as the basis for the semi-structural interview and the structure of the interviews was designed based on the model. The interview structure is represented in Appendix 1. The themes of the interviews were the same but the order of the questions was not identical during each interview. Because the interviews were semi-structured thematic interviews, other related topics were also discussed during each interview if required. However, the model was not used to measure the reputation. Instead, the reputation of the United Nations was formed based on the data collected from semi-structural interviews. Nevertheless, the structure of Vos and Schoemaker's model (2006) was used to represent the research results.

Even though Vos and Schoemaker's model (2006) includes the basic question of respondents' knowledge of intergovernmental organizations, this question was left out of the research because it was assumed that the MPs have more than basic knowledge of both IGOs and the UN due to their position and post in the Foreign Affairs Committee. Besides these aspects represented in the model this research aims at measuring another element of the issue concerning Finland's relationship with United Nations. During the interview the respondents were asked about their opinions concerning Finland's cooperation with the UN, the importance of the membership and the Security Council elections.

According to Vos & Schoemaker (2006), calculations are not always necessary when using this model. However, calculations can serve as confirmation of the results that quantitative methods have given. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 85.) In this research the calculations are used in the chapter number 8 when forming the corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish top politicians.

15 Members of Parliament who are members of Foreign Affairs Committee were contacted by email (25.3.2014). Beforehand it was decided that those MPs who replied first would be interviewed and only one MP from each party would take part in the interview. It was decided that if the data is not thorough enough, more interviews take place. Six politicians, Jörn Donner, Ilkka Kanerva, Ilkka Kantola, Mari Kiviniemi, Tom Packalén and Aila Paloniemi, were able to participate in the research. Members of Parliament that were interviewed represent National Coalition Party, Centre Party, Social Democratic Party, The Finns Party (former True Finns) and Swedish People's Party. Two of the interviewees represented Centre Party. The reason for this was that MP Aila Paloniemi had already agreed to do the interview when (now former) MP Mari Kiviniemi's assistant contacted the researcher. Since Kiviniemi was a former Prime Minister of Finland and former Minister for Foreign Trade and International Development and Minister for Public Administration and Local Government, her views of the United Nations were assumed to be very useful for this research. Besides MP Kiviniemi, MP Kanerva has experience as a Minister. He has been the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Labor and Minister of Transport.

There were only individual interviews, because group interviews may not be as deep as individual ones because people tend to accompany other people's opinions (Alasuutari 2011, 153). The interviews were done during spring and summer 2014. At that time the National Coalition Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Swedish People's Party, the Christian Democratic Parliamentary Group and Green Parliamentary Group held power in the government. The shortest interview lasted circa 17 minutes and the longest circa 58 minutes. The average duration of the interview was circa 33 minutes. Due to the respondents' busy schedules, their background information was

left out of the interview but reported beforehand via the website of the Parliament of Finland, which keeps an updated list of the Members of Parliament, their history in the Parliament, its Committees and in the Government. In addition, the interviews were shorter because the questions concerning the background information of the intergovernmental organizations in general were not considered necessary because of the position of the respondents. It was assumed that the MPs who are also members of Foreign Affairs Committee have a higher knowledge of IGOs and the United Nations compared to regular citizens. As members of Foreign Affairs Committee they have for example had the possibility to visit the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. However, only the respondents' speech was transcribed because other sounds were not essential for the data. The data consisted of 30 pages (16,597 words) of transcribed data. After the data was transcribed, it was read through several times. Then the factored and coded before analyzing it. Coding will be both data and theory based, because pure data based analysis is debatable. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 152). In this research the data was first factored in general level to identify factors that appeared in all the interviews. Then the data was factored in order to search for factors that may have appeared less frequently but may still be relevant for the research. Vos and Schoemaker's model (2006) was used to structure the interview and it was also used when coding the data. Themes and topics were searched from the data according to the model.

According to Eskola and Suoranta (2008), there are at least three ways to analyze the data: first it can be factored and then analyzed, or after factoring it can be coded and then analyzed. The third way is to combine factoring and coding and analyze the data after that. If one uses semi-structural thematic interview, the data is easier to structure and process. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 150–151.) In this research the data was factored and coded before analyzing it. Semi-structural thematic interview frame helps in coding the data: one searches for issues that give information of the selected themes (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 150–152).

## **5.5 Content analysis**

Content analysis is a process that is based on interpretations and deductions. During the process the researcher creates a more conceptual view of the phenomenon by using empirical data. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003, 110–112.) However, one can only start analyzing when the data is gathered. When creating the final conclusions, one must stay sceptic and open minded. (Huberman & Miles 1994, 11.)

Because data can be massive, analysis process can be elaborate and problematic (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 135). Content analysis as a method aims to describe the phenomenon in a general view. Analysis concentrates on text data, and it focuses on finding meanings from it. Content analysis refers to an analysis that describes documents systematically (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 103–105). Content analysis is one of the basic methods of qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 93.) Content analysis is a method that aims at creating verbally clear narration of the phenomenon. Its target is a compact data that still includes all the essential information. The data is factored into small pieces which will be given concepts. The logical big picture consists of these concepts. There are three ways to analyze qualitative data using content analysis: databased, theory based and theory guided. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 110.)

Data based analysis aims at creating a theoretical entity of the data. Data based analysis is problematic because there are no objective, pure observations. Chosen theory, methods, literature and focus of the research will most likely effect on the results. In theory based analysis the topic is defined by certain theory, model or authority – in other words something that is already known. This type of research usually tests previous knowledge in a new context. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 95–97.)

Data based analysis is necessary when there is not much information on certain phenomenon (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 19). As of 2016, there has been allegedly no research on the reputation of the intergovernmental organization. Before one can say anything about intergovernmental organizations' reputation one needs to know what kind of things form it, thus data based analysis will be needed. This research used Vos and Schoemaker's model (2006) as the basis for the interview structure and the structure was also used when analyzing the data and representing the research results. Some irrelevant themes were not included in the results. The research data also included data concerning the relations between Finland and the United Nations. This was not part of the Vos and Schoemaker's model (2006).

Data reduction is one way to analyze qualitative data. It requires selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and, transforming of the data. Data reduction is considered to sharpen, sort and organize data in order to verify the final conclusions. After the reduction early grouping can help to both understand what is essential to analyze and perceive the knowledge (Huberman & Miles 1994, 10–11). Basically early grouping refers to scanning the reduced data, gathering similar definitions and forming categories of them. Each category is named after a definition that describes the category the best. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003, 110–112.)

Inductive thematizing refers to a process where the data is scanned in order to find themes that lighten the research problem. The appearance of these themes is compared to each other. The researcher is able to do interpretations, and describe the data with quotations. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 174–175.) Inductive thematizing refers to examining those themes or topics that have stood out in the data in the analysis process. These issues may be based on the themes that have been selected for semi-structural thematic interviews, however, other topics may stand out as well. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 173.)

For forming a corporate image model for the intergovernmental organization the data was processed several times before analysis began. All repeated expressions were singled out and these expressions were divided into groups based on their similarity. The most common expressions formed characteristics. According to Fombrun & van Riel (2004) these characteristics allow the quantitative calculation of the prevalence of reputation (Fombrun & van Riel 2004, 86).

After quantification the elements of the United Nations' reputation were formed. Allegedly there was no research on the reputation of intergovernmental organization and therefore the model was formed based on the research results. This image model is presented on the page 62. The appearance of these characteristics was calculated, factored and coded. Based on the appearance similar characteristics were classified and clarifying quotations were selected. The data is represented in the results section based on the themes.

## **5.6 Background information**

At the time of the interview (spring and summer 2014), all respondents were members of Parliament and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Jörn Donner is a member of Swedish People's Party. Donner has been a Member of Parliament 1987–1995 and 2007–2011. In the 2011 elections he was left as a deputy Member of Parliament. In 2013 he replaced Astrid Thors as a Member of Parliament and became a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He was not nominated in the 2015 Parliament elections. Besides national politics, Donner has been a Member of the European Parliament 1996–1999.

At the time of the interview, MP Ilkka Kanerva had the longest career as a national politician of the respondents. Since 2011, Kanerva has been the longest standing Member of the Parliament as he was elected to the Finnish Parliament in 1975 as a

member of the National Coalition Party. He was Minister of Transport 1990–1991 (Harri Holkeri's cabinet), Minister of Labour 1991–1995 (Esko Aho's cabinet) and Minister for Foreign Affairs 2007–2008. He was forced to resign after a texting scandal in 2008. Kanerva first joined the Foreign Affairs Committee in 1979 and served until 1987. He was also a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee 1995 – 2004, in 2007 and since 2008 to the present. He was a deputy member of the Committee 2003–2004.

Ilkka Kantola is a member of the Social Democratic Party. He has served as a Member of Parliament since 2007. He was a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee 2011–2015. Besides being a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Ilkka Kantola has also been involved with the United Nations as the chairperson of UN Association of Finland. Before this position, Kantola was the vice-chairperson of the association. He has taken part in the United Nations Day (24<sup>th</sup> October) celebrations yearly and has been involved with the peace marches since the 1980s.

At the time of the interview, Mari Kiviniemi had served as a Member of Parliament almost 20 years. She started as an MP in 1995. Kiviniemi served as Minister for Foreign Trade and International Development in 2005–2006 (Matti Vanhanen's cabinet) and as Minister for Public Administration and Local Government 2007–2010 (Matti Vanhanen's cabinet). Kiviniemi was also the leader of Centre Party 2010–2012 and served as the Prime Minister of Finland 2010–2011 after Vanhanen gave up his position.

Tom Packalén has served as a Member of Parliament since 2011 and as he started as an MP, he also joined the Foreign Affairs Committee. He is a member of the Finns Party. He has also been a member of the Constitutional Law Committee and a deputy member in the Defence Committee. Before Packalén was elected, he worked as a Chief inspector.

Aila Paloniemi has been a Member of Parliament of Finland since 2003. Paloniemi is a member of the Centre Party. She has been a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee since 2004 focusing in foreign and security politics and development cooperation. At the time of the interview Paloniemi was a member of the Social Affairs and Health Committee and a deputy member of the Defence Committee.

## 6 RESULTS

The results of the research interviews are presented in this chapter. The chapter follows the structure based on Vos & Schoemaker's The Corporate Image Measurement model (2006). The research part begins with primary impressions of the United Nations. Besides the issues included in the measurement model, this research also presents the relations between Finland and the United Nations according to the respondents.

Only those issues relevant to the research are represented in this research. Quotations are used as examples of the research findings to emphasize them. The interviews were conducted in Finnish and the quotations are freely translated into English.

### 6.1 Primary impressions

As Vos & Schoemaker (2006) points out, primary impressions are the respondents' free association and description of the organization and are important when measuring the reputation (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 84–86). In the beginning of the interview, the respondents were asked to describe the United Nations in their own words. Later, they were asked what recent events they can associate with the UN.

The Members of Parliament had mainly a positive primary impression of the United Nations. It was considered a necessary, respected institution which aims at maintaining both peace and development and is one of the vital actors in international politics. Human rights were also mentioned. The respondents mentioned as their first impression that the organization is necessary and there is a need for it. One of the respondents noted that the first impressions were not mainly positive.

*It is an international, necessary organization that is one of the most vital actors in international politics and interaction. And I would emphasize the need for that kind (of and organization). q1*

The respondents mentioned the faults of the organization when describing their first impressions. The UN was considered ineffective, except when it comes to defending human rights and international humanitarian aid. The UN was also described as bureaucratic and it was considered a twofold institution: On the other hand it represents a fine, respected institution but at the same time it is old-fashioned and ineffective. It awoke positive associations as well but its view of the world was considered naïve.

*(It includes) A big dream of world order. In this dream the UN would be leading an enlightened and responsible development. The impression is positive but I would connect it with a naive view of the world. In this world everything is as I had wished. q2*

When the recent events concerning the United Nations were discussed, all the respondents mentioned Ukraine. At the time of the interviews, the crisis in Crimea had just begun. The United Nations' role in the crisis was considered too marginal. One of the respondents noted that the crisis and the UN's role in it had only strengthened the image the respondent had of the UN.

## **6.2 Primary impressions**

According to Vos & Schoemaker (2006), familiarity measures the level of knowledge the respondents have of the organization in question and helps to understand how their image is formed (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 84). All the respondents have personal experience of the United Nations and they have visited the United Nations headquarters at least once because the Foreign Affairs Committee visits the headquarters every year.

Besides this, Members of Parliament have several meetings concerning the United Nations and the representatives of the United Nations often visit the Foreign Affairs Committee during their meetings. One of the respondents estimated that the work as a Member of Parliament covers all the most important United Nations agencies, issues concerning the development aid and especially UNICEF (Children's Rights & Emergency Relief Organization). Interaction is very diverse covering both meetings of the United Nations employees on certain themes or then just regular overviews. For example the Foreign Affairs Committee has been briefed on matters such as children's education, health situation or finance systems and then there have been typical reports

on singular sections. One of the respondents estimates that circa 20 percent of their duties as MPs involve the United Nations at least on some level.

*One cannot say that every week, how would I say this, there are many issues linked to the UN. Even if the UN is not the main issue, but work that is done via the UN is linked to many issues. Well, what would I dare say? Would it be too brave to estimate that circa 20 percent (of the MPs duties) concern it at some level. So it is not unremarkable. q3*

One of the respondents estimates that he has visited the United Nations headquarters at least dozen times and met most of the secretary-generals of the organization during his long career as a Member of Parliament. As a Foreign Affairs Minister he attended the UN's General Assembly and met circa 40 Foreign Affairs Ministers during the minister week.

*I (have) a broad view of the UNs special agencies. (I know) several UN actors. Of course Finland's actions concerning the UN have been involved in almost every meeting. I have a deep and diverse personal connection to the UN. q4*

It was noted that the United Nations is an essential organization for the Parliament of Finland but one of the respondents also reminded that in his opinion the significance is slightly exaggerated. One of the respondents also considered that the UN was not an important organization for Prime Minister of Finland.

*I was not associated with the UN that much as a Prime Minister, which is a sign, that it's more like an organization that is a vital actor in foreign politics and thus important for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Finland the Foreign Affairs Minister and the President are those actors that are most involved with the UN, of course the Prime Minister on some level as well, but not as much. q5*

### **6.3 Perception and preference**

When evaluating the perception people have of the organization, characteristics that are associated to the organization are important means of measuring the reputation. This can be done for example by asking the respondents to freely describe the organization. (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 85.) All the respondents were asked to describe the United Nations in their own words. In addition, they were asked to describe what kind of image they have of the United Nations and to analyze what kind of reputation the United Nations has in general in their opinion.

The United Nations was considered important and necessary, but at the same time the respondents admit that it does have its faults too.

*It is ineffective and poorly organized and above all, it is bad. Nevertheless, it is necessary and important, and I don't want to get rid of it. It should have been moved away from New York to Europe or somewhere else, because in New York the United States of America can pressure it too much. And then there has been discussion about the decision-making of the Security Council, because of the veto some countries have felt that there should be more permanent member countries, such as Germany and Brazil. q6*

The UN was described as a broad, comprehensive, dogmatic organization that aims at consensus and this makes the decision-making a little difficult. The UN was viewed as somewhat bureaucratic organization that is not flexible or agile. However, the UN was still considered as a platform and meeting point for countries all over the world.

*In the UN the broad international cooperation is emphasized, after all it is a place where the countries all over the world meet and it is the link in both minor and major international conflicts. It is an organization that enables dealing with global issues and trying to find solutions to these problems. q7*

The United Nations was considered to represent hope but one of the respondents felt that at the same time it has given reason for cynical world view and bureaucratic world order. However, the respondent reminded that the bureaucracy may not only be the United Nations fault, but simply a human way to operate.

*Sense of community is an important value and even though the UN is ineffective, as said, but if the majority of the world society sees things in a certain way, it does have a role as the conscience of the world. q8*

One of the respondents reminded that for many Finns, the first contact with the United Nations is usually via a peacekeeping project. The crisis in Cyprus and Finland's role in it, Max Jacobson's run for the secretary-general, Martti Ahtisaari's efforts in regenerating the UN's administration and decreasing its bureaucracy and Finland's periods in the Security Council were mentioned as issues that affect the image the Finns have of the United Nations.

The respondents considered that in spite of all its faults the United Nations has a good reputation. One of the respondents felt that the UN's reputation is bad but nevertheless agreed that the organization is still necessary. The UN was also viewed as a neutral organization that at least aims at taking all perspectives into consideration. Even

though the primary impression and image of the UN is positive, its reputation is two-folded. At the same time it is considered an old-fashioned and slow actor.

*At the same time the UN is respected and its role in the international communities is recognized very broadly. It is important. If there was no UN, it should be invented. However, there is also criticism that it is too expensive, bureaucratic and slow and it has little effect considering the efforts. And it is also criticized for being too western and too much based on western values. q9*

The UN was considered as necessary but one of the respondents described it as a giant that needs a lot of nourishment and cannot react fast enough to global crises. Even though the decisions that the UN makes are being followed closely, it is considered ineffective.

*A dinosaur is a right word to describe it. It is appreciated but many consider that it needs to reform itself. q10*

When the respondents were asked, if there was anything that had changed their impressions of the United Nations, the crises in specific countries were mentioned. It was agreed that the United Nations need to have more merits to solve serious crisis in Ukraine and for example in the Middle East.

*In these kinds of situations there should be an order of importance for the UN to operation in the future. But above all, it is about the function of the Security Council. It should become a true operator instead of the consensus organization that it is at the moment. q11*

The crisis in Ukraine was also viewed as an example of a diplomacy gone wrong. It was considered that the crisis could have been prevented if the UN and other countries had shown more understanding towards Russia. One of the respondents noted that not even security general Ban Ki-Moon attempted to prevent the violence in Ukraine. Instead, he stood silent.

The crisis in Syria was also mentioned and the UN was being criticized for not being able to bring long-lasting peace to the area. It was considered that the international organization could do nothing. The financial funding and development of the organization was also viewed as too ineffective and the United States of America was considered to be poorly engaged in funding the UN.

*In a way, The United Nations stands in crisis. To me it seems that this is a fairly new phenomenon, it has lasted maybe 10 to 15 years. But then again, the ineffectiveness to solve demanding crises is maybe the latest criticism concerning the UN. q12*

It was reminded that the international community, its functions and will have an effect on the impressions of the United Nations. It was noted that the UN does have high principles, but in practice it only executes the will of certain countries' governments, not the will of the international community itself. The decision-making and the role of the Security Council's permanent member states was considered the UN's weakness and 'an eternal issue'. On the other hand the failed Security Council campaign had no effect on the image respondents had of the United Nations because the voting system and the whole election process is familiar to them. However, it was mentioned that the more one knows of the United Nations the worse one feels about the United Nations.

*Now that I know this huge organization better, I feel irritated that the money and the resources do not always meet the best possible targets. I feel that the UN should be able to eliminate the bureaucracy. q13*

The respondents considered that the functions of the Security Council of the United Nations need to be developed. The Security Council was considered old-fashioned and especially the veto rights were considered unequal. It was noted that there have been several attempts to reform and redevelop the United Nations but different national interests have blocked them. It was also noted that many member countries have issues with intergovernmental decision-making.

*The decision-making of the Security Council (needs to be developed). Now Russia and China can together block those resolutions that may have not lead to anything, but this veto can prohibit them. There was a time when the Soviet Union was representing a veto, now it is the United States or some other country. q14*

*I don't understand this veto right the great countries have and it should be removed. In order for the United Nations to be truly transparent, it should represent the whole world more equally, for example South America, not just the old world, which represents the world after the Second World War. But removing the veto is just one thing, it alone is not enough. q15*

The slow decision-making process of the Security Council was also being criticized.

*The effects (of the membership) are related to the UNs special agencies, but that kind of decision-making is very slow and even peacekeeping operators somewhere in Lebanon need to ask for permission from New York and the local commanders cannot decide about anything. q16*

One of the respondents reminded that the Security Council's role is important but it is somewhat handless when it comes to genocides or crisis like in Syria.

*It is the system's fault because there is a veto right and it disables all the cases like the Syria reform. There are issues that truly need to be aided. Don't ask me how, but these same problems will always arise. q17*

It was also noted that the United Nations should be more effective and it should prevent crisis from occurring in advance, not after the situation has developed into crisis. One of the respondents remarked the United Nations is always a bit late, for example in Rwanda. Even though most member states agree that the UN needs to intervene, the UN can do only a little. It was also considered that the United Nations need to develop its foreign affairs and its ability to function in foreign politics. One of the respondents noted that the UN is old-fashioned and falling behind time.

*These are difficult issues, because you hope all the best for the UN, but at the same time you can see that it is quite inefficient. It is grandiloquent, expensive, stiff and ineffective when it comes to foreign politics. q18*

However, despite all its faults, an organization like the UN was considered important to exist and was complimented for its efforts on peace-keeping. The UN's efforts in peace-keeping were considered successful and the organization was thought to have succeeded in making a progress in fulfilling the millennium declarations even though all the goals were not received. The respondents were also satisfied with the UN because of the development concerning the human rights issues and its engagement on reducing poverty. UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and High Commissioner for Human Rights were also mentioned as successful parts of the United Nations. One of the respondents also remarked Unesco ((United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), Unifec, equality issues and education as issues that have created a more positive image of the United Nations.

Only one of the respondents declined to describe the values of the United Nations. The respondents noted that peace, sustainable development, the principle of the constitutional state, democracy and human rights were important values for the United Nations. It was considered that these values is continuously present in the United Nations operations and keeping these values are extremely important strategically. The sense of community was also considered a significant value for the UN.

One of the respondents remarked that the values such as equality, peace and justice are important and values such as women's rights, sexual equality and health are part of the UN's resolutions. However, the respondent feared that these values can cause

dilemmas and conflicts because different cultures have different approach to these issues. In his opinion, this could lead to distrust of the United Nations.

*There should be simple basic values and small values should not be added. It can cause the situation where small issues achieve greater meaning than they in reality have, because some people get hurt because of their religion or other reasons. And it may be that this is considered a western dictation politics. One has to admit that the Christian values have significant meaning for the United Nations. q19*

Different national interests in the member states were also viewed as a possible cause for problems when running human rights in different countries. These national differences were considered to have impact on how the human rights are adapted and how the processes are developed in the member states. One of the respondents even considered these differences the greatest challenge the UN will face in the future.

## 6.4 Position

The position measures how the respondents place the organization compared to other similar organizations (Vos & Schoemaker 2006, 85). All the respondents considered the UN important: the UN was described as a necessary and obligatory organization. It was remarked that the United Nations has a significant and strong position internationally, even though it has its faults. It was also considered that the UN does have a strong position internationally and the organization gets its voice heard but its weakness is in solving difficult conflicts.

*In solving these broad global issues it has a strong role and it can operate, but when it comes to these really serious political foreign and security conflicts, it is too slow and even incapable. The UN can operate and have long lasting efforts for example with loans, development issues and completing millennium declarations. But if there is a crisis like the one in Ukraine, it lacks of skills. Or at least they are not enough. q20*

One of the respondents considered the UN's position as remarkable. He reminded that there have been only a few military interventions that have been executed without the Security Council's resolution. However, the respondent hoped that the United Nations would pay more respect to independent nation's sovereignty. He pointed out that for example Kosovo was a province that was separated from the main country and that was against the international justice.

In addition, it was reminded that the UN is not almighty. It was noted that not all international issues are dealt with only via the UN. It was also reminded that there are

other important organizations as well. For example several sports organizations were mentioned.

*As I have said the UN has a respected role and people have high expectations of it at least in keynote speeches. Some of these expectations are completely unreal. I mean, people demand more from the UN than it is capable of. After all, the UN's capacity has its boundaries. q21*

The UN's role was also considered as amphibious. On one hand there is a lot of criticism toward the UN because it cannot solve crisis in countries like Syria and people are disappointed in the UN. On the other hand, there are high expectations of the United Nations and people tend to expect more of it than what it actually can achieve.

It was reminded that the United Nations is in a league of its own. The respondents noted that no other organization can compete with the UN when it comes to the number of member states, the expanse and coverage of the operational functions. There is no other organization that has the same capacity and is as multidisciplinary as the UN. One of the respondents remarked that not even G7 (Group of Seven) or G20 (The Group of Twenty) are equate to it. Again, there was criticism of the UNs role in solving crisis and conflicts. The crisis in Ukraine was mentioned as an example of a crisis in which the UN had internationally only a marginal role. The slow decision-making process of the Security Council was considered the reason because it enables certain countries to use their veto and thus slow or stop the whole intervention process.

*Well, the UN cannot resolve this kind of crisis (the situation in Ukraine) or be involved in it, so I don't know what kind of a role it could have. Other organizations are more important in this context, for example IMF (The International Monetary Fund), World Bank, EU (European Union) or the United States of America. They have greater meaning than the UN. q22*

It was also noted that the United Nations is not the only internationally important organization. One of the respondents mentioned the crisis in Congo and reminded that for example Finn Church Aid has achieved great things in Congo.

*Finn Church Aid goes there, where nobody else goes. And of course we have many other organizations that do good work. But I really appreciate Antti Penttiläinen in peacekeeping as well. In my opinion he has a great way of operating because he gets both parties of the crisis to the same negotiation table. All in all, the negotiator does not need to be a state. q23*

It was also noted that the UN is not involved for example in the sports. One of the respondents considered that sports can also have an important role in conflict management and the UN is not the only organization that has positive effect worldwide.

*The UN is easily left behind compared to for example G8 (The Group of Eight) and G20 and these kinds of regional actors. It cannot meet the expectations and requirements people have of it. For the UN, the situation is hopeless. The decision-making system cannot create results and others can challenge its representativeness. It is a demanding situation. The UN has some sort of legitimacy crisis. q24*

It was noted that military operations are not necessarily the best way to solve crisis. It was reminded that the crisis in Ukraine has indicated that for example the European Union or Finland cannot take part in solving that kind of crisis that evolves many member states of the European Union. The OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) was mentioned as another organization that is capable of solving crisis for example in Ukraine.

*Besides the UN, it is the only international community that enables conversations, negotiations and aims at finding a diplomatic way. The UN is the same, when issues cannot be solved military or even with the pressure, diplomacy and threatening of one major state, like the United States, this kind of international community is needed. q25*

It was reminded that the future of the United Nations depends on the world politics. If there are major changes in the world politics and countries' power relations, the UN's role might change as well. The UN's future was considered as stable. However, it was reminded that there will be a need for reformation and development.

*I do not believe that there will be major changes. The only thing that is needed in my opinion is to build the Security Council's operations. Thus, the effectivity of the UN could increase but it could be that this is a vain hope. However, the consensus approach is considered important and it has its own arguments. As such, I believe that the functions of the UN will most likely continue the same as at the moment and I do not expect major changes. q26*

In addition, it was noted that since the end of the Cold War and because of China's increased position internationally the role of the United Nations and its meaning in international politics has decreased. However, at the same time the UN's role in the developing issues has become stronger. It was believed that the role of the UN might increase in the future especially concerning peacekeeping. It was noted that there will be a need for an international organization that will try to solve crisis by negotiations,

peaceful diplomacy and even with economic sanctions. However, it was reminded that to increase the UN's role the bureaucracy requires development and a government that is more effective. In addition, one of the respondents hoped that the United Nations would not develop into an organization that has its own military forces. The respondent hoped that the crisis would be solved by the UN mandate in the future as well.

*It requires a lot of work. In a way the UN is a process on its way towards international community that would commit more strongly and share the same values in practice as well. But there is still a long road ahead. I hope that the journey will continue. But it requires not dictation but authentic dialogue between the member states. q27*

## 6.5 The United Nations and Finland

Finland's relationship to the United Nations cannot be mentioned without the failed campaigning for a membership in United Nations Security Council elections 2012. All the respondents mentioned the Security Council at least once and four out of six analyzed the reasons why Finland was not elected even without the researcher asking about the issue. Most considered the result of the elections negative and the results were described as "a disappointment". The campaign was considered "a difficult process" which led to Finland changing its UN strategy. It was noted that after the elections the issue caused passionate discussion and people were trying to find someone to blame for the failure. Only one of the respondents considered the election results as a relief and did not understand why Finland had to spend millions of euros for the campaign in the first place.

*It was a huge disappointment that Finland wasn't elected in the Security Council. However, I feel that it tells more about the member country than the UN as an organization. q28*

It was reminded that the result may have been the same even if Finland had done something differently. It was remarked that Luxembourg had never been a member of the Security Council, unlike Finland and noted that the other nominees were too strong compared with Finland. It was assumed that the failure to be elected was partly because Finland did not succeed in committing to give 0.7 percent of its gross national product to humanitarian aid as the UN Millennium Project required (UN Millennium Project 2015). It was also noted that Finland is quite an impeccable member of the UN if one does not take the 0.7 issue into consideration.

*This is also very essential. We are no longer on the path of giving 0.7 of the GNP for humanitarian aid. It is an extremely sad situation and I claim that this sort of an issue can affect, that we start to cut humanitarian aid. That always has an effect on the poorest people. q29*

*What comes to Finland, we do not make 0.7 percent and it attracts attention. We punish ourselves for it and in that sense we are a poor member of the UN. Of course I would gladly pay 0.7 percent if it was possible, but what's more important is that we were not able to highlight the effectiveness of our funds. I mean, do we have the kind of a content that brings some added value to the UN? q30*

The respondents suggested that the campaign failed because of Finland's attitude. It was suggested that Finland may have given a bit too confident an impression to other countries and it may have seemed like a poor listener. It was also reminded that others may have seen Finland as a *besserwisser*, a country that feels the need to give advice to others. It was suggested that Finland was too arrogant and acted like it was better than the other countries. It was also believed that unlike the other nominees, Finland failed to meet the other countries to discuss their issues and try to find common ground. Instead, Finland's message concentrated on the issues that need to be dealt within the UN, not in certain member states. One of the respondents noted that only a few member states of the European Union voted for Finland and those that voted gave their vote to Finland "because of an old friendship".

*That was a political mistake in that sense that African countries are not interested in how Finland sees the UN. They are interested in what Finland wants for them. These interests are quite national and the sense of community exists only amongst the more enlightened actors. And we imaged the level of community to be higher and opted to stick to the themes that did not include national valuation. q31*

One of the respondents remarked the image of Finland may have changed among the UN's member states. The respondent suggested that Finland's earlier non-permanent memberships were due to the special relationship between east and west and since the Soviet Union no longer existed, this special position also lost its meaning in international politics. However, it was noted that even though Finland failed to be elected, that cannot have effect on Finland's attitude to the United Nations. Still, it was reminded the matter has caused discussion over Finland's position and the meaning of the failed campaign.

*I think that people understand it. The image of the UN's Security Council is that there are these victors from the World War II, these permanent members that have a veto to any resolution. There is the power when it comes to important matters, even though there*

*are these non-permanent members. So Finns may see that the non-permanent membership was not such a big deal. q32*

One of the respondents noted that the non-permanent membership in the Security Council may not really matter that much for Finland. The respondent suggested that the permanent members (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States of America) are the ones holding the power so in the end the other members do not have much effect on issues any way. The decisions are made elsewhere. The respondent also noted that Finland and other smaller countries have a different position compared to the permanent member countries.

*It's not the same if there is Finland or the United Kingdom giving a speech. There's a huge difference. Then there're so many closed tables and decisions are being made between small groups and then they are just presented in the Security Council as a formality, the big boys can make deals with each other and then just bring the issues to the room. And if there are non-permanent members, they rarely disagree. q33*

It was noted that the purpose of the change in the UN strategy was to focus Finland's actions in the UN on certain issues. One of the respondents felt that before the change of strategy Finland was a bit involved in everything, but the clear general view was missing. According to Finland's new UN strategy, sustainable development is the most important issue that Finland will run in the United Nations in the future.

Only one of the respondents did not want to analyze what kind of issues Finland should try to operate via the United Nations. The respondent was also not able to answer what issues are important to the member states in general considering the United Nations membership and considered it as "such an abstract question that he cannot have answers to even with common sense".

The other respondents considered for example children's education, equal rights and peacekeeping as the issues Finland should try to run in the United Nations. Education, peacekeeping and equal rights were mentioned as an answer. Preventing poverty, promoting sustainable development and health issues were also mentioned.

*Sustainable development is a huge issue and the priority number one for Finland. And then there are women's rights. q34*

*Education and equal rights are issues that should be strongly included in them. After all, we have merit and they are issues we can raise our profile with. Then there are peacekeeping operations and sort of comprehensive development of a country starting from peacekeeping is one thing that should be visible. q35*

Especially peacekeeping was considered important because Finland has a lot of experience in peacekeeping operations and it has long history of it. That was considered as a way to differ from the other member countries. It was assumed that Finland could have a bigger role in world politics via peacekeeping operations.

*That is something we should invest in and play a bigger role there. We should offer an arena for (peace) negotiations on a neutral ground in Finland. We regard this as an important issue and both parties are heard. For example in peace negotiations it is important that one cannot make peace if one does not understand both parties. q36*

It was also mentioned that Finland should run the issues and values that are important for Finland. However, at the same time it was reminded that Finland should aim at the goals that are set together within the United Nations.

*Of course it is also important for Finland that the goals set together in the UN will make progress. For example reducing poverty and sustainable development are among those issues. This Earth belongs to all of us and of course global warming is something we need to have impact on. In any case, problems and solutions do not recognize borders. q37*

All the respondents consider the United Nations' membership important for Finland. It was pointed out that Finland simply could not function without the membership. It was also reminded that Finland has to support the issues and values that it considers important.

*It is still one of those organizations that we need to invest in and where we need to be in especially from the point of view of sustainable development. There we can have influence on so many issues, for example on our humanitarian aid fund and where it is directed. Even though we decide about it ourselves, we are involved in creating international rules that are an advantage for us as well and thus it is useful that we are strongly involved in the UN. q38*

*I would say that it has been of a significant advantage. Finland is more well-known internationally and it has influence and as a nation it is more interesting and more alive. We are still a small country and most countries find it difficult to place Finland on the map. q39*

However, it was noted that the United Nations does not bring security to its member countries. One of the respondents admitted that he is critical towards the membership, and suggests that Finland might have more power outside the UN with projects that

could be developed perhaps with the UNs agreement. The respondent suggested that Finland should take a bigger role in peacekeeping for example.

*However, one must not imagine that things work out only via the UN. We have witnessed many times that the world still stays the same regardless the UN. Not all the negative issues in the world politics are solved and positive issues developed via the UN. To me, the UN is an essential and necessary actor. q40*

The member states' assessed share of the United Nations' budget was considered a disadvantage of the membership and the membership was considered expensive. It was also reminded that besides the estimated share, Finland has to invest in the human resources. However, one of the respondents considered these costs as a necessary need that will eventually lead into positive things. The assessed share and resources met with criticism also because the respondents felt that they are not always used for the best possible targets. One of the respondents was especially critical towards the humanitarian aid.

*Nobody knows where that money goes or what is achieved with it. This has to do with Finland's politics: Finland funds these UN organizations and significant amount of money goes to them. I don't know how reasonable it is that we focus our foreign affairs politics on funding these UN organizations. The assessed share should fund them and we could concentrate on the issues where we are good at. q41*

It was reminded that Finland is a small country and so it needs to be more active. It was suggested that Finland should continue cooperation with the other Nordic countries within the UN as well. It was also noted that the cooperation with the countries that share the same values is important.

*The effectiveness depends on for example if we have our own people on the important positions, how well we can network and cooperate with similar countries and what kind of negotiation skills we have with those countries that have their own, different views of development and other issues. q42*

*Finland's influence is small, if you consider Finland's size as a member state, but it depends greatly on how active we are and how good ambassadors and officials we have on the right places and how good negotiation skills we have. Finland has a chance to a much greater influence than its size would imply, if we are active. q43*

One of the respondents reminded that the membership itself does not offer Finland anything, instead Finland's role is achieved by being active in foreign politics and concentrating on issues that Finland is excellent in. The respondent believed that if Fin-

land worked more active for it, Finland could get a status to operate in peacekeeping more independently but with the UN's permission.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter aims at answering the research task and the research questions addressed. It also introduces the corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish top politicians. Because allegedly there has been no image model for intergovernmental organization, this research created new reputation elements for such an organization. These elements describe the reputation of the United Nations. All the elements may not concern other IGOs because of the unique structure of the UN.

### 7.1 Conclusions of the research

**What kind of reputation does the United Nations have amongst the Members of Parliament of Finland? Which factors influence on the reputation of an intergovernmental organization such as the United Nations?**

An organization's reputation is formed by stakeholders who base their valuations on the information they receive through interaction with the organization but also via media and second-hand information (Coombs 2007, 164). According to Aula (2011), relationship between organizations, stakeholders and their success can result in a good reputation. The reputation is formed of stakeholders' stories and it can spread within networks. An organization with a good reputation is trusted and people associate good reputation with it. (Aula 2011, 3-4.)

According to the research data, there are several issues that have impact on the reputation of the intergovernmental organization. When discussing the functions and operations of the United Nations, the most common words that occurred during the semi-structured thematic interviews were the Security Council, women's right and

equality, development aid, reducing poverty, peace-keeping and peace, Ukraine, human rights, education and veto.

The issues women's rights and equality, development aid, reducing poverty, human rights and education were mostly used in positive association. These were for example considered issues that the United Nations had succeeded in. They were also amongst the issues that the respondents considered important concerning Finland's goals in the United Nations. However, these are also the main themes of the new UN strategy and it is likely that all the respondents are familiar with the strategy.

When discussing the United Nations in general, the most commonly used words in the research data were important, significant, international community, ineffective, inability to solve crisis, expensive, cultural differences, bureaucratic, old-fashioned and slow. Words important, significant and international community had a positive meaning. The other words on the other hand were considered negative. Based on these descriptions, the functions of the intergovernmental organization seem to be in an important role when valuing its reputation.

The most commonly used word was the Security Council. Thus, for the United Nations the most important single issue concerning cooperation with Finland seems to be issues concerning the Security Council. This may be because of the change of the UN strategy after the failed campaign. The Security Council received mainly criticism by all the respondents. It was considered slow and ineffective and the veto right was considered old-fashioned and unequal since it favors five permanent member states. In addition, all the respondents mentioned Finland's failed campaign for the Security Council. Two respondents considered the election results as a disappointment.

The organization's reputation is evaluated based on its history, actions and the images the stakeholders have of it (Lehtonen 2002, 41-44). Like any other organization, the intergovernmental organization's reputation seems to be estimated based on these same issues. During the semi-structural interviews the respondents seemed to form their image of the United Nations based on both personal experiences of the organization, and valuation of its actions. Also, the history of the UN was in an important role as the respondents mentioned several crises from earlier years, for instance the crisis in Cyprus in 1974, described Finland's long history with the UN and even mentioned some Secretary Generals they appreciated. Some of the respondents had had positive personal experiences of the United Nations even before they started as the Members of Parliament and they seemed to react to the UN more positively.

**What kind of role does relationship between an intergovernmental organization and its member states' politicians have on the reputation of an intergovernmental organization?**

All the respondents consider the United Nations' membership for Finland important and vital. They reminded that Finland could not function without the membership. However, three respondents felt that Finland could have even more important role in the United Nations. Finland's position in the organization was also discussed. One of the respondents reminded that the results of the elections did not matter because Finland as a small country would still have a different position compared to the Security Council's permanent member countries. It was suggested that Finland should pursue for a more important role for example in peacekeeping operations, since it is something Finland has experience in.

Organizations which are keen to manage their reputation need to focus on the components of reputation. Building a good reputation is a long process - losing it can happen very fast. In addition, if the organization fails to meet the stakeholders' expectations on a certain key area, it can have impact on the other areas as well. Thus, stakeholders have poor opinion of these areas, which has impact on the reputation of the whole organization. (Aula 2011, 7-8.) Even though one of the respondents pointed out that the failed campaign for the Security Council membership cannot have impact on Finland's relationship to the United Nations, Finland changed its UN strategy after the elections. Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made this decision together.

Thus, it can be agreed the Members of Parliament of Finland are also part of interaction between the member state and the intergovernmental organization. Still, some of the respondents reminded that Finland was also to blame for the failed campaign. These respondents pointed out that Finland did not successfully commit to give 0.7 percent of its gross national product to humanitarian aid. This and Finland's attitude was considered one of the reasons the campaign was unsuccessful.

According to Finland's renewed UN strategy (2013, 10), the UN is a forum for foreign politics for a member country but it also serves as means to take part in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union for those members who are also member states of the European Union (The UN Strategy for the Finnish Foreign Service 2013, 10). Many of the respondents reminded that the UN is not the only internationally significant organization and not all the issues can be solved via the UN. As one of the respondents pointed out, the United Nations is not almighty. Finland is also actively involved in other organizations such as the European Union.

Like Barnett & Finnemore (1999) remind, intergovernmental organizations also exist because they serve individual state's interests (Barnett & Finnemore 1999, 703). This means that Finland does not only support the United Nations but it wants to fulfill its own political agendas via the organization. Like one of the respondents noted, without the UN, Finland would have even smaller role internationally but as a country Finland still wants to have an important role in the future as well. The respondents hoped that Finland could receive a bigger and a more active role for example in the peacekeeping operations.

### **What kind of images do the members of Parliament of Finland have of the United Nations?**

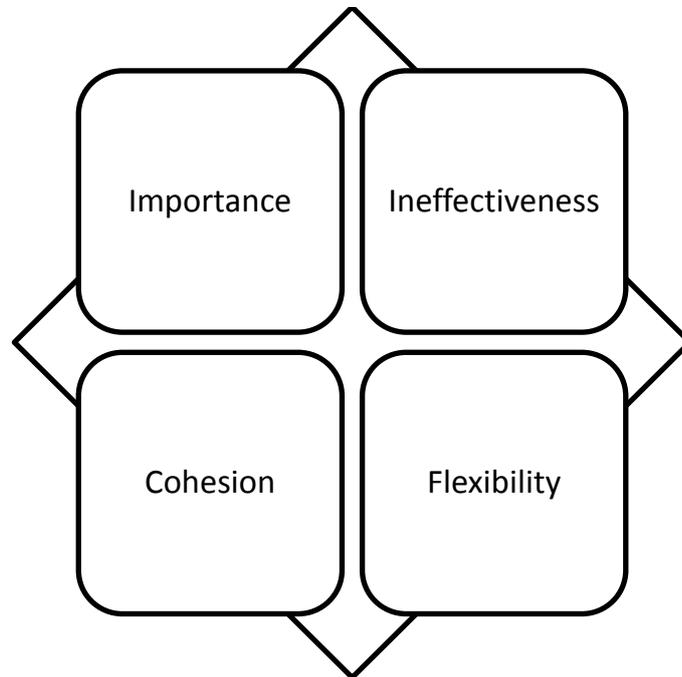
Most of the Members of Parliament had a positive primary impression of the United Nations. It was considered a necessary, respected institution which aims at maintaining both peace and development and is one of the most vital actors in international politics. Peace, development or human rights were mentioned as first impressions during three interviews. Some respondents also mentioned as their first impression that the organization is necessary and there is still a need for it. However, only two respondents had mainly positive first impressions of the United Nations.

According to Lehtonen (2002), an organization that is known and trusted survives of the negative attention better than an organization that is considered unfamiliar and outsider. A known and trusted organization is believed to have a more approved reason for the negative publicity or the events are understood to be more out of its control than those organizations that have less favorable reputation. (Lehtonen 2002, 67-68.)

When it comes to the United Nations, most of the respondents viewed that the United Nations has a good reputation – despite all its faults. The United Nations was considered as necessary and on a league of its own. The organization was considered important and useful and its position internationally was considered unique. Especially the UNs efforts concerning peacekeeping were valued highly. The respondents admitted that there is no other organization like the UN.

The UN was considered necessary but at the same time the respondents also reminded that the organization needs to renew its functions. The membership was considered expensive and the assessed share too high. The organizations' ineffectiveness received the most criticism from the respondents. Many felt that the UN should react to crises faster and even try to prevent them from occurring beforehand. In addition, all the respondents mentioned the crisis in Ukraine and it was considered an example of yet

another conflict that the UN and the Security Council failed to prevent. Thus, the reputation of the United Nations seems to be two-folded. It is still considered an important organization internationally but its faults are well known.



Corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish politicians (2016)

FIGURE 2

## 7.2 Corporate image model of the UN according to Finnish politicians

The elements of the reputation of the United Nations were searched of the research data manually. Every transcribed interview was managed individually and the most common elements were calculated. Quantification made the qualitative calculation of the most common elements possible. Every interview could conclude several elements. After all the interviews were processed, the most common elements were counted together and they created the elements of the reputation of the United Nations according to Finnish top politicians.

Fombrun and van Riel's reputation model (2004) includes visible, distinctive, authentic, transparent and consistent as elements of reputation (Fombrun & van Riel 2004, 86.) Based on the research data, the elements for the corporate image model for the United Nations according to Finnish politicians are importance, ineffectiveness, cohesion and flexibility. These elements were formed after the data had been themazied and the most common themes were grouped based on the topics.

## Importance

Themes that describe this element were significance, importance and appreciation. These themes occurred during the interviews over 27 times. They were used mainly in a positive connotation. The United Nations was considered important even with all its faults and it was viewed as unique organization internationally.

*Well, Finland could not live a normal life if we weren't in the UN. Of course we need to be there. And personally I consider it a good thing that we put effort into the activities of the UN. q43*

*The UN is appreciated and its role in the international community is recognized broadly, it is important. If the UN did not exist, it should be invented. q44*

*The significance of the UN has decreased in the world politics but on the other hand its role has strengthened for example in the development issues. q45*

## Ineffectiveness

This element was formed of the words ineffectiveness, effective, slow and inability to solve crisis. These words appeared during the interviews over 31 times in different discussions. The element had a negative association more often than a positive association. The respondents considered the United Nations ineffective when it comes to for example peacekeeping and solving conflicts that require fast intervention. For example the Security Council, its slow decision-making and the permanent member countries' veto right was pointed out as examples of the ineffectiveness issues.

*The UN's inability to solve difficult crisis is maybe the most recent criticism that concerns the UN. q46*

*It's in general ineffective. Then there are the Unifec and others like the development aid projects that need to be renewed. q47*

*The system should be somehow more effective. When there are countries that are sliding towards the civil war, the crisis should be prevented beforehand both in the UN and in the EU. q48*

## Cohesion

This element was formed based on the words international community, cohesion and national or cultural differences. These words appeared during the interviews over 36 times. They were used to describe the United Nations more in a positive way than negative. The UN was considered important internationally and it was considered an arena for the world to gather to discuss certain issues. However, it was also considered too western in some issues.

*It matters how much the world community, the international community and its actions and will are formed via the UN. Even though the UN does have high principles, in practice we see that in many cases it only fulfills different countries' governments will, not the will of the world community. q49*

*There is also criticism that in some way it the UN's leaders are too western and it is based on western values too much. Not everyone shares these values. q50*

*The broad international interaction is emphasized in the UN, after all it is an arena where the world's countries gather. It also connects the world with huge international conflicts and smaller ones as well. It is an organization that makes it possible to discuss the global issues and try to find the answers and means to solve these issues. q51*

## **Flexibility**

This element consists of the themes concerning the issues bureaucratic, old-fashioned and dynamic development. These terms appeared during the interviews 22 times. They were used mainly in a negative context to describe the issues that the United Nations needs to improve. The organization was considered bureaucratic and the respondents hoped that in the future it would become more dynamic.

*If one thinks of what it represents, it brings hope. But unfortunately the UN has given reasons for a cynical world view and it also seems to have a bureaucratic view of the world order. It is the UN's fault or is it the human way of thinking or a norm that there should always be a huge bureaucracy when dealing with issues? q52*

*The complete makeover has been made tens of times but it has not been successful because different national interests have stopped it. And many countries as well. q53*

*It is still quite a bureaucratic. I hope that it will change, because the system is extremely important and appreciated. The UN could examine its procedures and it could decrease the bureaucracy when it is possible. I hope that the UN could be more innovative in that sense. q54*

## 8 DISCUSSION

### 8.1 Discussion of the results

As the most representative intergovernmental organization of the world today, the United Nations' role in world affairs is irreplaceable by any other international or regional organizations. The United Nations has made enormous positive contributions in maintaining international peace and security and promoting both cooperation among states and international development. (China & UN 2016.) The respondents of this research considered the United Nations necessary but there were several suggested improvements. Reputation is formed based on the expectations that the stakeholders have of the organization (Coombs 2007, 164). It seems that the expectations concerning the United Nations are high because people tend to keep it important and appreciate the high values the organization has. Like one of the respondents reminded, people have higher expectations of the United Nations compared to what it is capable of.

According to the research and the corporate image model, the reputation of the United Nations was both negative and positive. The elements importance and cohesion were considered mainly positive. However, the elements effectiveness and flexibility were considered mainly negative. The elements that changed into negativity were partly explained because of the Security Council and Finland's failed campaign during the Security Council elections. It is understandable that there is criticism towards the Security Council because Finland's efforts were unsuccessful. Finland has not had a non-permanent membership in the Security Council since 1990 so it does raise questions of the importance of the whole membership. After all, the membership was also considered expensive and the United Nations too slow and ineffective. However, all the respondents felt that the United Nations was an important institution and Finland could not operate internationally without the membership.

This research aimed at solving what kind of reputation the United Nations has amongst the Finnish politicians and what kinds of factors influence it. Based on the research data the reputation of the intergovernmental organization is valued in a similar way like for example corporate organizations. However, because the structure and actions of the IGOs are different, the image model was also different from models that for example Fombrun and van Riel (2004) have formed. In this research it is assumed that some of the characteristics are considered important elements of IGOs' reputation as well.

Because there has allegedly been no research on the reputation of the intergovernmental organization, the model of the elements of the reputation of the IGO was formed based on the research data. Even though the model was formed based on the case study of the United Nations, this model can apply to other intergovernmental organizations as well. There were five elements that form the model and these elements are importance, effectiveness, cohesion, development and flexibility.

According to one of the respondents, about 20 percent of MPs' work is related to the United Nations. Also, because Finland did not receive a membership at the Security Council of the United Nations, the Foreign Affairs Committee decided to change its UN strategy in October 2013. The new strategy aims at promoting Finland's goals in the United Nations more effectively. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2013.) Therefore, how politicians see the United Nations can have impact on the decisions they make concerning the organization. Reputation does matter.

All the interviewees mentioned for example the crisis in Crimea, Ukraine when discussing problems with the UN. Also, several other crises (for example Syria and Rwanda) were mentioned. It seems that the United Nations is expected to take part in all crises across the world. Thus, for an organization like the United Nations, managing reputation can be demanding. People tend to associate the UN with several issues that are not necessarily directly linked to it. For example the New York Times wrote an article of the crisis in Syria and its damaging effects on the reputation of the United Nations (New York Times 2015). The United Nations is held responsible for all the conflicts in the world and it is expected to bring peace. When it fails to do so, the failure has impact on its reputation. Like Young (1996) notes, it takes years to build a good reputation but still one single crisis can destroy it at once. Thus the reputation is extremely essential resource for an organization and the organization needs to manage it at all times. (Young 1996, 11-12.).

|   |
|---|
| The UN is a globally important and widely appreciated organization                        |
| The membership of the UN is vital for Finland's foreign politics                          |
| The UN is not the only internationally significant organization focusing on global issues |
| The UN has a good reputation, but it also has its faults                                  |
| The UN is bureaucratic and old-fashioned: it needs to renew its functions                 |
| The membership is very expensive for the member countries                                 |
| The UN is too ineffective and slow at solving crises                                      |
| People have higher expectations of the UN than it seems to be capable of achieving        |

TABLE 2 Summary of the research

In this research the United Nations was criticized for being ineffective (TABLE 2). Also the slowness of the Security Council was considered a major downside of the UN and its functions. However, this is not a new issue. According to Reisman (1993), the United Nations was in constitutional crisis in the beginning of the 1990s as well. Back then the UN failed to fulfill the expectations concerning the effectiveness and the power to prevent crisis. (Reisman 1993, 83.)

Also, there are great differences between the member states and their national interests regarding the United Nations. For Finland, issues such as peacekeeping, equality and decreasing poverty were considered important. However, for example African member states can value different issues. Therefore, it would be useful if the UN acknowledged these differences case-by-case. Ideally, the United Nations could have a focused external communication and reputation management – if not designed for each member state, then at least for similar states.

## 8.2 Validity, reliability and ethics of the study

According to Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2000), measuring validity and reliability in qualitative research can be demanding. As a matter of fact, every qualitative research is unique and the analysis is based on the researcher's own interpretation. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2000, 214–215.) Also, the reliability of the research is a target for critics, because qualitative research process may always include researchers' own conclusions. Even though this research is a qualitative research, quantitative methods such as quantification were used when analyzing the data. This means that the re-

search results do not consist of only the researchers own interpretation. In addition, when analyzing the data the research aimed at neutrality.

This research process started in October 2010. The theoretical framework of the research was mostly collected during the spring 2011 and the semi-structural interviews took place during the spring and summer 2014. The theoretical framework could have needed more update articles and newer theories because at the moment it does not contribute much new knowledge. Vos and Schoemaker's *The Corporate Image Measurement model* (2006) was used to define the structure of the interviews. The model was useful when defining what kind of images the respondents had of the United Nations. It also measured the images, perceptions and preferences that the respondents had of this kind of organization and the model also gave valuable information of how the respondents place the UN compared to other similar organizations. However, even before the semi-structured thematic interviews took place, it was clear that the model could not answer to all kinds of questions, such as Finland and United Nations' relations. Therefore the interviews included this theme outside the model.

Five respondents had high knowledge of the United Nations and its functions and followed the UN and its decisions regularly. One of the respondents noted that working as a Member of Parliament had deepened his insight on the United Nations and another assumed that the MPs have higher knowledge of the UN compared to regular citizens. However, despite the experience as a Member of Parliament of Finland and as a Member of the European Union, one of the respondents seemed to have concise knowledge of the United Nations. The respondent did not answer to questions concerning Finland's UN ambitions, the role of the member states in general, Finland's UN strategy, the UN's future role and values and the respondent did not have any development proposals concerning the UN. However, it cannot be assumed that all the members of the Parliament have as high knowledge of the United Nations as the five other respondents. Thus, it can be assumed that the six respondents that took part in the process represent at least in great probability the average knowledge of the Members of the Parliament.

### **8.3 Further research**

The method for this research could have also been a questionnaire. Then the research could have included all the 200 Members of the Parliament of Finland. According to Holopainen & Pulkkinen (2004), the error marginal is 1.2 percent when a risk of a mistake is 5 percent (Holopainen & Pulkkinen 2004, 36). However, it is unlikely that the necessary percentage of all the Finnish Members of Parliament would have attended

the research due to their busy schedules if there would have been only an online questionnaire. There could have been a risk that their assistants had taken part in the research instead of the MPs and it could have been difficult to verify which MPs really took part in the research. Also, there were not enough resources to execute the questionnaire in person but in the future this kind of a research could be fruitful to the reputation research.

Because this research narrowed the number of possible respondents to 15 members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, 40 percent of the MPs that are also members of the Foreign Affairs Committee took part in the research. In addition, semi-structural thematic interview enabled discussion of certain themes that may have not otherwise appeared if different methods had been used. With for example a questionnaire there would have been a risk that the respondents could have taken part in the research anonymously.

The data of this research is not sufficient enough to draw any major generalizations concerning the reputation of the intergovernmental organizations, the reputation of the United Nations in its member states or even in Finland. However, it still managed to bring new information concerning the images the Finnish politicians have of the United Nations. This information could be useful for the United Nations when dealing with issues concerning Finland. Still, there is a need for further research on the reputation of the United Nations and intergovernmental organization's reputation in general because so far there has been little research on the reputation of intergovernmental organizations. In addition, the aspects of the reputation of the IGOs require further research. Even though this research created a model for the United Nations, the data is not sufficient enough for generalizations.

In the future there could be a research of reputation of the intergovernmental organization in more than one member state. It is likely that different aspects of the United Nations have more meaning in one member state compared to others. The role of the Security Council may have been increased amongst the Members of Parliament of Finland because of the failed Security Council campaign and it may not have as huge distribution of the critic in other member countries. All in all, there could not be enough data for forming a model that would concern other organizations as well, not just the United Nations.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. The interview structure in general

#### Primary impression:

What is your first impression of United Nations?

#### Familiarity:

How familiar are you with United Nations?

Do you have any personal experiences of United Nations and its missions?

In what way have you been in cooperation with the UN?

#### Perception and preference:

How would you describe United Nations?

What kinds of characteristics are important for intergovernmental organizations?

How well United Nations has succeeded in solving particular issues?

What is the latest news you can recall of UN?

What kind of an image does UN have in your opinion?

Has this image changed in some way recently?

What kinds of things have had impact on this image?

#### Position:

What is United Nations role as an intergovernmental organization?

How does it differ from other intergovernmental organizations?

What United Nations needs to do to improve their operations?

What issues do you value in the UN and its operations?

#### The UN and Finland:

What kinds of issues are important for Finland in cooperation with the UN?

How important is the membership for a country like Finland?

Have the results of the Security Council elections affected Finland's relation to the UN?



