Asylum Seekers in the News: Frames of Illegality and Control

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s migration policies in Europe have thematically shifted from human-rights issues to control policies. Distinguishing political refugees from economic migrants has become more difficult. Analyses of this shift cannot overlook the role of journalism. By setting the agenda news journalism defines what is discussed and by framing the issues it selects how these issues are discussed.

This article uses frame analysis for foreign and domestic news of asylum seeking in the National Finnish News Agency (STT). The data consists of news published in 2002, total of 237 news items. Two frames are the most dominant. Firstly, the news are more often linked with trans-national crime and clandestine travel than with humanitarian issues. The illegality frame links foreign news with domestic news. Small incidents of 'illegal immigration' in Finland are covered since 'illegality' is on the agenda through news flows from other countries. Asylum seeking is presented as a common European problem. Additionally, the news construct a frame of controlled immigration in Finland. Often, insignificant details are reported which produce a *panoptic eye* on asylum seekers: they are being watched, moved and removed. The news construct a *panopticon* over asylum seekers.

Introduction and background

Themes related to ethnic minorities, refugees, asylum seekers, immigration and migration have become more important in various fields of the society from the early 1990s. In European politics these issues have shifted from 'low politics' to 'high politics'[1], and the volume of media coverage of the topic has increased in European countries (Ter Wal, 2002; Pietikäinen, 2000).

This article focuses on news agency coverage of asylum seekers in Finland. These short news are the regular material disseminated to all news media; from the internet and radio to the newspapers and newsmagazines. The news is repeated several times in different media. They are increasingly significant because of economic and political changes in the media landscape in Finland. The logics of economical field are increasingly influencing the journalistic field: the resources for time consuming background search and interviewing are getting scarce in both commercial media and public service media. Furthermore, the need for instant and very short news has proliferated due to new technological innovations in the news distribution, such as mobile news and webpage-news. The circulation of news agency news has therefore increased. It is increasingly important to analyze how these routine news frame asylum seeking. How do

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[1] Andreas (2000) uses these terms in his analysis of the US-Mexico border. A similar shift is however present in Europe. For instance Andreas compares the Gibraltar to the Rio Grande.

they portray asylum seekers, authorities, minorities, majorities and other actors? How are the frames of foreign news related to the frames constructed in domestic news?

The Scandinavian countries have differences in terms of international migration, integration and asylum and refugee policy. These countries also are not equal in terms of ethnic prejudice and racism. Generally speaking, racist attitudes are publicly more accepted in Denmark and least accepted in Sweden. Norway and Finland are somewhere in between. When the Eurobarometer public opinion study surveyed in 1997 the degree of expressed racism in Europe the figures from Denmark were higher than in other Scandinavian countries. However, other opinion surveys (e.g. Eurobarometer and European Social Survey) show that the Finns are sometimes closer to the Danes and even more reluctant towards immigrants and multiculturalism. Swedes are always the most tolerant towards ethnic difference in Europe and there is a gap between Sweden and the other Nordic countries.[2]

The number of foreign nationals as well as asylum seekers in Finland is among the smallest in Europe. In addition compared to other Scandinavian countries Finland has the smallest numbers. In 2002 Finland received 3133 asylum applications where as Denmark received 5947 applications, Norway 17 486 applications and Sweden 33 011 applications. Throughout the 1990s Finland had the smallest numbers of asylum seekers in the Nordic countries. However, at the end of 2003 Denmark started to receive even less applications due to its stricter policies.[3]

There is an increasing division regarding the status and rights of asylum seekers. They are being divided more clearly into two groups: to 'genuine' refugees and to 'bogus' refugees. This division is presently used in both political debate and in media discourse, and it reflects the idea of internal push-out and external pull-up mechanism of migration which assumes that migration is simply a result of an economical gap between Europe and its surrounding areas. This view has been criticised (Papastergiadis, 2000: 17) as too simple to characterise the current turbulent situation which is influenced by multivectoral flows. The simple view does not regard the actions of Western countries, such as economical regulations, economical needs of host societies and global media influence as elements of increased immigration. Instead, the 'blame' of mobility is directed to the asylum seekers and (labour) migrants themselves.

The division to 'wanted' and 'unwanted' migrants has increased certain political processes of immigration in Europe. On the one hand, the regulations for labour migrants of some sectors have been loosened. On the other hand, asylum politics and practices have been tightened by intensifying internal and external control. Asylum processes as well as visa politics and carrier sanctions have been tightened. The media have played a key role in making these shifts possible and politically acceptable (Ter Wal, 1996; Nordberg, 2004;

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[2] For a summary of the surveys see *Majorities' Attitudes towards Migrants and Minorities.* Key findings from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey 2005.
[3] (UNHCR Asylum Trends [ref. 2.2.2007]. Available online from http://www.unhcr.org)

Erjavec, 2003). The European Union has co-operated in the field of immigration and aims at 'harmonizing' asylum laws and processes in member states. For instance, Finland has changed its Aliens Act according to EU decisions. However, it should be noted that the 'harmonization' process is very much concentrated on control policies and practises. For instance, harmonizing visa regulations, carrier sanctions and creating a common EURODAC-system[4] for fingerprint comparison has proceeded quickly. These European processes have created a stronger 'Fortress Europe' against the surrounding countries. Intensified control has however resulted that the prospective refugees entrance into the EU to test the asylum process has become more difficult and dangerous. 'Illegality' has increased along with the new regulations and control. In European politics this phenomena is generally not considered as a human rights issue.

Media research on asylum seekers

Media coverage of asylum seekers is often dealt with as a sub theme in studies on the coverage of ethnic minorities and migrants in general. Specific studies on the coverage of asylum seekers in Europe are not as common as one might assume due to the high political status of the issue. Due to the turbulent character of contemporary migration, the studies and the media texts they analyse may use different terminology, such as 'illegal' or 'clandestine' immigrants, immigrants, asylum seekers, migrants or refugees[5].

Many case studies claim that the media are involved in a process, where they in collaboration with state authorities construct a social problem of asylum seeking which may develop into a moral panic (Cohen [1972] 2002) in the society at large. The panic or a threat of a panic often results deportations of 'illegal' migrants, changes in the asylum process, tightening of internal and external immigration control, changes in the rights and privileges of asylum seekers etc. (Horsti, 2000; Nordberg, 2004; Ter Wal, 1996; Hier & Greenberg, 2002.) In most cases the construction of a social problem involves surprisingly similar language use in media texts. Asylum seeking is verbalised in terms of natural catastrophe or war, and it does not really matter how many asylum seekers actually enter the country. For instance, in Finland the media automatically picked up the metaphor of 'stream' in the first news items of Slovakian Roma asylum seekers in 1999 although only 300 applicants had arrived during a week. Furthermore, the media used the concept of 'refugee stream' in 2002 when 50 Romanian Roma had entered Finland as asylum seekers. (Horsti, 2003a.)

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[4] The official EU portal defines EURDAC in the following manner: 'To establish a system for the comparison of fingerprints of asylum applicants and illegal immigrants and facilitate the application of the Dublin convention which makes it possible to determine the State responsible for examining the asylum application.' http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33081.htm (Ref. 18 July.2005).
[5] All these terms have their problems, 'illegals' and 'clandestines' being the most derogating concepts. In this article I am mostly talking about asylum seekers, which is the most common term used in the texts I analyse.

Another common feature constructing moral panics is the emphasis on bad health and living conditions of asylum seekers or undocumented migrants. This often increases framing asylum seekers as a threat to the society. For instance, the Italian press constructed a moral panic in relation to the living and health conditions of immigrants settled in an old pasta factory, Pantanella, in the early 1990s. The media firstly produced a social pathology of the immigrants, secondly the local Italians were presented as worried of diseases and chaos. Thirdly, the media created an atmosphere, where 'something needed to be done'. (Ter Wal, 1996)

Framing asylum seekers as criminals, possible terrorists and trouble makers is also common in the media. This type of framing is supported by the generalization of the terms 'illegal' and 'clandestine'. Furthermore, the fear of terrorist attacks since the 9/11, Madrid attacks, and London attacks is channelled also against asylum seekers. 'The war on terror' has its influence in Europe as well. Sara Ahmed (2002) discusses how the figure of the international terrorist has been mobilised in close proximity to the figure of the asylum seeker for instance in the British Amendment to the Terrorism Bill. This Bill carries an implicit assumption that those who seek asylum and claim to flee from terror and persecution may be bogus insofar as they could be the very agents of terror and persecution. New restrictions on asylum have coincided with new terrorism laws.

Criminal framing is constructed in the news for instance in the visual images where asylum seekers are filmed in the custody of the police, in handcuffs, or behind bars. These images resemble images of criminals and animals. Language use supports this framing. Asylum seekers are dealt with as having no social or personal history and life: they are presented as non-persons (Dal Lago, 1999). Asylum seekers in ships may be talked about as 'human cargo', which is being packed, moved and removed (Hier & Greenberg, 2002: 501). The Californian media used metaphors related to animals in its reporting of a law proposal. 'Illegal' migrants were *chased* and *hunted*, and the media was worried that they would *drop their babies* on the US side of the border. (Santa Ana, 1999)

Baldwin Van Gorp (2005) identifies two archetypal roles in Belgian press coverage of asylum seekers: on the one hand the media presented asylum seekers as "innocent victims" and on the other hand as "intruders". However, the intruder-frame was more used especially in the Flemish press.

Many studies emphasise that while the media construct negative stereotypes of asylum seekers or minorities, they also construct an identity of the majority: this can be a national identity, majority ethnic identity or a regional identity, such as European identity. National and ethnic borders are being defined and redefined through media panics. For instance, after independence Slovenia constructed a border between Slovenia on the one side, and the former Yugoslavia, the Balkans and Eastern Europe on the other. The moral panic generated in the media produced a self-image of Slovenia as part of 'the civilised European

world in opposition to the neighbouring 'uncivilised world' (Erjavec, 2003: 97). In Finland, the coverage of Slovakian Roma asylum seekers heavily supported changes in the Aliens Act and asylum process. After constructing a threat of asylum seeking, the public opinion was more than willing to accept changes which were in line with EU decisions. (Nordberg, 2004; Horsti, 2003b.)

Texts, concepts and method

Asylum seeking can be analysed as an issue culture (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gamson & Lasch, 1986) which is connected to a larger theme of immigration. Routine use of certain frames construct and reconstruct an issue culture which is a type of 'metanarrative' shaped along with the coverage. The issue culture offers instruments to interpret similar events in the future both for the journalists and the audience. Framing is a professional practice of journalism, and other professional practices such as selection of sources are vital in the framing process. Issue cultures resonate with cultural myths and stories. However, the culture changes over time, place and context. Frames can change during the coverage of an event and news stories may use more than one frame in a single story. Frames or issue cultures are therefore not fixed but reflect the multiplicity and multiple interpretive possibilities of journalism.

This article focuses on news agency news which form a particular genre in journalism. These news are routine journalism, which aims at answering the basic questions *what, when, where, who* and *why* in a shortest possible manner. This genre, especially in a small country like Finland, usually does not involve investigative practices or interviews of various parties concerned. Rather the news are made from the office with the fastest and most economical manner. This results that most of the news agency news are based on information material or interviews of authorities and other organised sources. The media which use the agency news may use the short text as a starting point and provide a background for it themselves. As news agency news are the core of journalism and as they are mainly concentrated on the 'facts', these news have an especially high expectations of truthfulness.

The research material consists of all foreign and domestic news on asylum seekers published through the Finnish News Agency (STT) during the year 2002. Out of 237 news published that year, 122 items were foreign news, 18 items news of European Union and 97 items domestic news.

Frame analysis (Entman, 1991, 1993; Gamson & Lasch, 1986; Karvonen, 2000; Pietilä, 2005; Väliverronen, 1995, 1996; Wall, 1997a,b) aims at specifying the reasoning devices and the framing devices. The reasoning devices answer questions like what is defined as a problem, a cause to the problem, a solution to the problem, and what moral claims are being made (Entman, 1993). The analysis of reasoning devices, that is the analysis of the narrative structure of a series of news, is mostly operationalised in case studies of

a particular news event or theme. The research material usually consists of both visual and textual media material. The news from agency news are very limited in their narrative qualities and therefore it is reasonable to focus mainly on framing devices rather than reasoning devices. Framing devices are linguistic and visual elements which construct a particular frame. The analysis pays attention to metaphors, verbs, comparisons and adjectives. Verbal descriptions of actors and events are equally important to visual images. Furthermore, other details which are repeated in the texts, such as numbers and official terms, are being noted.

Because the news analyzed in this article are short and focus on basic 'facts', single news items generally do not have a clear frame. However, the short news grow in significance when they are analyzed as a series. Furthermore, they can be analyzed in the context of the issue culture of asylum seeking constructed over the years in the journalistic field.

General observations on the research texts

Foreign news

The research material comprises slightly more foreign than domestic news. The foreign news are heavily focused on Europe and other Western countries. One of the current themes is the changes in immigration and asylum laws in some European countries. These issues are reported when they arouse debates in a specific country or between some European countries. For instance, Denmark tightened its laws during the research period, and these debates were reported in the STT (14 times). Furthermore, modifications of laws in Germany, Switzerland, and Britain were reported.

Sweden seems to be the best covered European country in the Finnish news. The country appeared in the news 13 times with some fairly small incidents although nothing particular was reported.

High political actions or state relations were covered even from more distant countries like Israel, Columbia and Korea[6]. In Scandinavia a few debates among politicians were reported. A Danish minister got angry about the criticism the country received from other Scandinavian countries in relation to its asylum laws. He '*gave an understanding that Finnish foreign policy is being ridiculed around Europe*' (STT 10 February 2002). The Prime Minister of Finland denied these claims (STT 10 February 2002). The Swedish Prime Minister criticised Finlands harsh attitudes towards refugees. The Minister of Interior of Finland replied that '*Finnish language, weather conditions and the few numbers of ethnic communities*' were reasons why Finland received less asylum applications than Sweden (4 September 2002).

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[6] Palestinians went to hunger strike in the birth church of Jesus, and some EU countries gave them residence permits. North Koreans sought for asylum in embassies situated in Beijing. Venezuelan ex-president sought for asylum in Columbia. Finnish embassy in Jakarta received asylum seekers.

Another example of tensions in state relations in the context of asylum seeking is the news coverage of *Sangatte* reception centre in France. Britain and the rail company operating in the *Eurotunnel* demanded France to shut down the centre since many of the asylum seekers residing there headed for Britain through the tunnel. This resulted debates and tension between the countries. France decided to close down the centre in December 2002 (STT 2 December 2002).

These examples reflect the news criteria: state relations and high political actors are appreciated as actors and sources. The theme of asylum seeking is more likely to get access to the media agenda if the issue involves debated tensions in state relations. In these news the viewpoint and framing is dominantly the one of authorities: the views of asylum seekers are not presented. The news focus on state relations which now happen to appear in the context of asylum seeking.

In addition to state relation context a problem-oriented context was used. The *Sangatte* reporting highlighted problems and dangers related to the centre and to the attempts of entering Britain through the tunnel. Furthermore, a violent case from Australia gained a lot of media attention during the year. Asylum seekers protested against inhuman conditions in reception centres in Australia. The news reported suicide threats, hunger strikes, escapes and riots committed by asylum seekers. Australia was in the news 28 times during the year.

A notable feature of foreign reporting is the concentration on Europe: asylum seeking is presented predominantly as a European problem, or at largest a Western countries problem. Asylum seeking is therefore presented either from a national Finnish viewpoint or from a politico-regional European viewpoint. Geographical closeness is one of the news criteria, and in this case it produces a very unbalanced picture of the refugee and asylum issue. The majority of refugees and asylum seekers stay in developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Caribbean and Oceania (see Table 1). The majority of receiving countries are the ones neighbouring the countries from where the refugees flee from. This viewpoint was not at all present in the asylum news during the year.

TABLE 1: People included into *UNHCR mandate 1.1.2002*

Asia	8 820 700
Europe	4 855 400
Africa	4 173 500
North America	1 086 800
Latin America and Caribbean	765 400
Oceania	81 300
TOTAL	19 783 100

Source: Statistics – Refugees by Numbers 2002 Edition. (UNHCR 2003.)

Domestic news

Domestic news reacted mainly when a group entered Finland and sought for asylum. The cases were reported and followed especially if 'an illegal' dimension was added to it. The main events during the year were Eastern European Roma asylum seekers and Kurdish stow-aways. However, also some single small incidences were reported, such as one Russian's crossing of the border without papers (28 January 2002), accepting an asylum seeker into a football team (21 February 2002), and attempted rape by an asylum seeker (4 December 2002).

The news were generally short 'facts' reporting how many came, how, where, and where they were situated. The stories were totally framed from the authorities viewpoint, namely the Frontier guard's (subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior) and the Finnish Directorate of Immigration's. Asylum seekers were not interviewed, and a critical dimension to the tightening asylum laws was reported only once when NGOs and associations published their expression of opinion on the law proposal of tightening the Aliens Act. One NGO helping refugees delivered its 'Refugee woman of the year-award' and this was reported. These were the only cases out of the authority driven news.

Dominant frames: illegality and control

Illegality

'Illegality' and equal terms like 'clandestine' have increasingly become everyday language in European countries. For instance, in Finland the word 'illegal' was not used in 1999 when the media reported on Slovakian Roma asylum seekers entering the country. Instead, they used the term 'manifestly unfounded' which was adopted from authoritative discourse (Horsti, 2002). Actually, the number of cases involving entrance without documents is comparatively small in Finland. The authorities are unable to give statistics, but the majority of asylum seekers enter the country with documents. The rise of the term 'illegality' and the construction of the illegality frame can be analyzed in the context of foreign reporting. Since 'illegality' is the main issue in foreign coverage, the frame and the terminology is more easily adopted into domestic reporting.

In the stories 'illegality' refers to entering the country without the required documents or entering the country with the help of someone, often an expensive 'smuggler'. The term illegality refers to criminality, and the criminal quality is presented as the quality of an asylum seeker. In the term 'illegal immigrant' the illegality is the quality of the immigrant, and therefore the processes and reasons leading to the undocumented entrance remain invisible. The illegality frame does not recognise for instance that 'illegal' methods of immigration have increased as the internal and external controls have increased. The means of immigration have become more dangerous when safer means no longer exist.

If the media can operationalise the illegality frame asylum seeking tends to get into the agenda more easily than without the illegality framework. Even doubts of organised travel or hiding in ships are being reported. In domestic news small incidents and events involving only a few number of asylum seekers get covered when the illegality frame can be adopted. The texts use terms and phrases like *illegal migration, import* (which refers to organised travel), *human smuggling*, and *criminal action*.

The STT covered a case of eight Kurdish asylum seekers entering the country as stow-aways. The event was occasional and the number of asylum seekers was small, but the event was followed in detail in six different news items published between 6 February and 15 March 2002.

Asylum seeking of Eastern European Roma became the most reported single theme in the domestic news, and 36 news items were published on the Roma. Since the stories deal with events related to one group, and since the number of stories is this high in this case, it is possible to analyze also the reasoning devices.

The episode set off with the illegality frame in 21 May 2002 when the STT published a story with the headline *'Helsinki Police investigate illegal import'*. The news and the following stories became front page news in the media several times during the summer. The news of STT dealt with the numbers, routes and arrival times as well as with the reception process and asylum investigation. Later on in the summer the STT reported that some of the Roma had left the country without notice and that the Roma were being returned by organised group flights. The news tended to be very compact, like weather forecasts summing up the numbers and routes and predicting if more were to come. STT delivered basic information from the authorities and the other media continued with their own background reporting. Since the news agency is often the generator of a story or produces information on new following changes in the case, it is especially important to analyse the frames that are being constructed. These frames and the viewpoints they support are often primary definers to the story (Hall et al., 1978).

The first story presented the illegality frame: asylum seeking of the Roma was investigated by the police. They suspected someone was organising 'asylum trips'. Since the event involved a possible criminal act, it gained a prominent status on the news agenda. After the illegality frame was adopted, also small incidents were reported. For instance, the STT reported the arrival of one family of four people (1 June 2002).

The reasons why the Roma applied for asylum was not reported. There had been a media panic on Slovakian Roma asylum seekers three years earlier, and therefore the media was likely to continue or follow up from that situation. Only two stories give hints for the Roma's reasons to leave Eastern European countries, namely Romania. These hints are given in the quotations of authorities who assume that the Roma are 'bogus asylum seekers' which in the Finnish terms is often referred as 'status refugees'. This definition was strong in the coverage of Slovakian Roma in 1999 (Nordberg, 2004; Horsti, 2003b).

The story referring to the Romas assumed motives:

> *'Romanians to Finland with the hopes of a better future.*
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> *According to various authorities Romanians have arrived in Finland last week with hopes for better working and educational chances and with hopes for a better future and economical status.'* (7 August 2002.)

The Roma were not interviewed or their viewpoint was not presented through another source, such as an NGO or association. Though the STT usually does not make many interviews with non-organised sources, the total absence of the view of the Roma is noteworthy. Mainly the STT used sources like the police, the Super intendents of the Ministry of the Interior, officials from the Finnish Directorate of Immigration, directors of reception centers and officials of the Frontier Guard. The primary definers constructing the framing of the event were the Frontier Guard and the Police. These authorities responsibilities lie in the arrival of asylum seekers, and therefore from their point of view it is logical to emphasise extraordinary features of the arrival, such as suspected 'illegality' of the action.

Later on it was reported that the Roma cancelled their applications when they were convinced that they would get a two-year suspension to all Schengen-countries. Furthermore, it was reported that some Roma left the reception centres without notice, and that they were wanted by the police, that they begged and sold fake gold jewellery. In addition, the STT covered that the Roma received negative decisions for their applications and that they were being returned to Romania with group flights in police custody. All these reported events present the Roma as 'trouble makers': they were undisciplined and suspected criminals.

In addition to the domestic news the illegality frame appeared strong in foreign reporting. It seems that the adjective 'illegal' can be added as a prefix to any word characterising the arrival or the asylum seekers. The news reports also mix the possible status of the newcomers: they might refer to the same group of people as refugees, asylum seekers or (labour) migrants. For instance, in reports of a ship of a thousand asylum seekers in Italy and of a national state of emergency (19 March 2002, 20 March 2002) refugee status and migration are being mixed. On the one hand, the agency uses terms referring to refugee status: *refugee flood, illegal arrival of refugees, Kurdish refugees, refugee problem, political asylum seekers*. On the other hand, it uses terms referring to (illegal) migration: *illegal pursuers to the country, illegal immigrants, illegal newcomers, illegal foreigners*. Furthermore, this example illustrates how illegality can be added to any term. The focus is on illegality and the texts give not much importance to the rights of the asylum seeker, if s/he is entitled to seek for asylum and possibly has a right to refugee status.

Other choices of words construct a root metaphor of ASYLUM SEEKERS = NON-HUMAN OBJECTS. Reference to animals and non-living things increase the conception of asylum seekers as non-persons (Dal Lago, 1999). Asylum seekers are presented from a plain biological viewpoint without social and personal human life. For instance, in Britain the police was reported to '*chaise illegal arrivals*' (11 February 2002), in

the coverage of *'human smuggling'* the STT use the terms *'import'* and *'smuggling'* (23 May 2002), in Finland the Roma *'came ashore'* (ref. *driftwood* in Finnish) and in the news on their *'return'* (the Finnish word *'palautus'* can be also translated as *'refund')* the STT use *'the lot of asylum seekers'*.

Furthermore, illegality frame is supported by listing asylum seeking with prostitution, sex trade, and suicides. Coverage of reports, EU-meetings and other authorities meetings often refer to asylum seeking in the context of criminal or problematic activity. For example, the news on the first year of the Schengen agreement list negative and positive aspects such as deductions in drug confiscation and capture of dangerous criminals suspected in Finland from other EU countries. After these details the report mentions that there *'has not been effects to the number of asylum applications'* (22 March 2002). This statement is based on the assumption that the Schengen would increase all kinds of transnational problems, including 'problematic increase of asylum seekers'.

To sum up the studies on the media coverage of asylum seekers it seems typical to Western media framing that the coverage emphasise illegality, problems, demonising metaphors and the like. Therefore, illegality frame as a result of this analysis of news agency news is not startling. However, these news are perceived as being the core of the basic journalistic principles: as a genre they are believed to concentrate on facts only. Though the news are apparently 'neutral' and to the basic facts as single news stories, as a group they strongly support the illegality frame.

Control

As the analysis above shows, illegality is often highlighted in the coverage of asylum seekers. In this sense, the analysis conform the results of many previous studies on the subject. It is important to note, however, that along with the illegality framing goes the control frame. These frames support each other. Control frame exists exactly because there is a fear of loosing the control, fear that the 'illegality' spills over the limits.

The journalists situate themselves close to the authorities. This becomes evident in the language used. See the following extract:

> *[...] the hearings of the Romanians are to be brought to a conclusion during this week.[...]They [the Roma] are to be moved into a reception centre.'* (29 May 2002.)

Furthermore, the actions of the Roma are illustrated with words that clearly belong to authoritative discourse. The Roma *'disappear', 'run away'* and *'leave without permission'* from the reception centres for good or for a few days. This language emphasise the authorities viewpoint since from the asylum seekers viewpoint they do not 'run away'. Actually, they do not need to ask for permission to leave: reception centres are not prisons. In the news the Roma are represented as undisciplined and un-grown up.

The non-human metaphorisation I discussed in the context of the illegality frame presents the asylum seekers as objects of authoritative action. They are moved, removed or persuaded to move. In the stories on the *Sangatte* centre the police *forced* asylum seekers out of the Eurotunnel. The centre was *closed* and the people there were *transferred* elsewhere. Eastern European Roma in Finland *were forced to return* by *organised flights*, and Afghan refugees *were persuaded to return* from Australia and some European countries.

The genre of news itself supports the control frame. The news focus on technical facts. They go over details of the numbers, the names and times of ships and flights. The news produce a gaze which follows the moves of asylum seekers and construct a safe and controlled image of the situation.

An example of a typical news item:

> *'Asylum seekers from Slovakia to Helsinki-Vantaa Airport.*
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> *29 Slovakian Roma who sought for asylum arrived at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport on Monday. After registration they will be transferred into a reception centre. A group of several families arrived in Finland from Prague at 13.50 with a flight operated by the Czech Airlines. Since the end of August the total number of 75 Slovakian Roma have arrived to Finland through the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport and sought for asylum.'* (30 September 2002)

In this example the audience starts to hear the story from the point of arrival. What happened in Slovakia and why these people are asylum seekers is not seen as relevant. The news follow the asylum seekers from the border authorities viewpoint which is technical: the numbers, the flight time and route, and finally the placing of the group. The review of 'facts' results a control oriented eye on asylum seeking.

This type of 'discursive panopticon' is integral part of a more general tendency of surveillance posed on the Other in the Western countries. Surveillance technology and its use in governance have increased in general in the so called information societies (Lyon, 2002). However, surveillance is not socially, economically or politically equal. What is being selected from the immense material produced by surveillance technologies is highly classified, especially in terms of class and ethnicity (Fiske, 1998). Fiske (1998:69) notes that surveillance is a technology of whiteness that racially zones city space by drawing lines that Blacks cannot cross and whites cannot see. Similarly, mobility to and within European Union is highly divisive. The Fortress Europe exists for some of the outsiders, but for the White Europeans the borders within the continent have diminished. The White Europeans cannot see the existing borders which the Non-White Europeans and outsiders constantly struggle with.

Foucault theorised the *panoptic eye* in the context of modern codes of punishment and development of prisons. The panoptic architecture of a prison enables one central figure to discipline a number of prisoners or mentally ill by watching and observing them. The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible

for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point would be both the source of light illuminating everything and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known: a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned. (Foucault, 1977: 173)

The superficial neutrality and factuality of the very detailed news of asylum seekers can be seen as discursive forms of Foucault's theoretical formulation. The media invites the audience to observe and control the 'un-disciplined' Others side by side the authorities. The asylum seekers are not aware of this discursively panoptic eye. They are not allowed to present their views, they are just objects of observation. This process is unseen by the audience since the news genre has a particular status of truthfulness and since the news are 'neutral'.

The foreign reporting also constructs the control frame. For instance, the stories of the *Sangatte* centre and the tunnel are presented from a distant authority viewpoint. The *Sangatte* became news firstly because the illegality frame was possible to adopt and secondly because the case involved high state relations. The state relations were presented from the control frame. Britain was worried because many of the asylum seekers headed for Britain, therefore Britain wanted to impose control over France and the asylum question. This caused tensions in the state relations, but after negotiations, France and Britain joined in their view and imposed control over the asylum seekers. The centre was cleared and the news on the tunnel, at least as far as Finland, disappeared.

Conclusions

The asylum theme gets access to the routine news especially if two qualities are fulfilled: firstly, if the issue involves high political or state actors, and secondly if the issue involves any type of 'illegality'. The coverage is highly concentrated on Europe and Western countries which support the national order of things (Malkki, 1995). It is presented as logical and normal that 'we' as Western Europeans are interested in 'our' matters. Asylum question and refugees in Asia and Africa is 'their' matter, and therefore no business for 'us'. The routine news coverage totally ignores that the majority of refugees and asylum seekers stay in the neighbouring countries of the 'sending' areas in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The issue culture of asylum seeking is therefore highly constructed as a European problem. This definition of a shared 'Other' increases the symbolic unity of Europe and European (white oriented) identity. Although some of the 'illegals' might be residents of Europe, as the Roma, they can be constructed as the 'Internal Other'.

Both the domestic and foreign news use two main frames: illegality and control. The illegality frame supports the control frame. Control frame becomes logical and justified since illegality frame raises suspicions of criminality and possible chaos. Both frames of illegality and control support the primary

definers needs: illegality refers to possible chaos if the problems are not prevented. This justifies the authorities existence and builds ground for their claims making.

STT news are short items based on authorities 'facts'. The language is scarce and adjectives, illustrations, comparisons and naming are few. The research material falls into the two main frames and alternative frames (e.g. human rights frame) are not used. Apparently the news seem neutral: in single stories the language is often not explicitly derogative. However, series of news stories clearly support the frames of illegality and control. The events which get access to news agency news are mainly the ones with possible criminal and disturbing qualities, events which can be framed 'illegal'.

Illegality and control frames reflect the basic narrative structure which is often used in the news genre. The stories often begin with a state of unbalance, and the news story seeks to find a solution to the presented and constructed problems and bring back the balance. (Pietilä, 1995) 'Illegality' and other problems connected with the asylum seekers refer to a state of unbalance. The control frame is invited to bring a solution to the constructed problems.

Especially interesting in this research material is the emphasis on control frame. The logics of news genre as such support this framing. Reports on the numbers, times, routes and placement routinely construct a managerial 'panoptic' eye on asylum seekers. The audience is invited to watch the objects, but they are unaware that they are being observed by the media audience. Access to the debate is denied from the asylum seekers. With non-humanizing language the asylum seekers are presented as non-persons without social or personal life, and this justifies the managerial eye and control actions. Through routine coverage of this kind the asylum seekers are ever more marginalised and limited to a biological state of living. The media coverage position asylum seekers as objects which can be moved and removed due to the majority's will. In the reporting the audience is invited to take the authoritative side and viewpoint and let the authorities act on its behalf.

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