

# From Political to National, Regional and Local

## *The Newspaper Structure in Finland*

RAIMO SALOKANGAS

There was no “Finnish” central administration or state as the Finnish provinces were subordinated to the Swedish crown in the 12th century. There was also Swedish colonisation in areas later to be known as Finland. The Turku archipelago between the Åland Islands and the Finnish mainland was populated by Swedes in the 12th century, and during the 13th and 14th centuries they colonised even certain coastal areas in Southern and Western Finland. As the Finnish provinces were incorporated into the Kingdom of Sweden, the Finns adopted the western version of Christian confession.

Under Sweden, Swedish became the language of administration and education even in Finland. In 1640 the Crown established a university in Turku to provide the eastern part of the kingdom with clergymen and administrators. When a son of a Finnish peasant went to school and university he adopted Swedish as his other language, and this way the families of educated Finns got “sweditized”. Finnish remained the language of the great majority of the peasantry. This was to be reflected even in the press structure.

As part of an agreement between the emperors Napoleon of France and Alexander of Russia, Sweden lost Finland to Russia in 1809. Finland got the status of a Grand Duchy, and during the 19th century its autonomy was deliberately constituted and strengthened by its administrative, political and cultural elite. For this end it was essential that Finland was allowed to keep the Swedish constitutions. It was also essential that Swedish remained the language of administration and education and was never replaced by Russian.

Finland’s total population reached one million in 1811, two millions in 1879, three in 1912, four in 1950 and five in 1991. The number of those who spoke Swedish as their native language reached its peak in absolute figures – about 350 000 people – around the year 1900. In that year their share of total population was 12.9%, having been above 14% for most of the 19th century. In mid 1990s the percentage was some decimals below six and the absolute number of native speakers of Swedish about the same as in 1880 (295 000).

It was during the autonomy period (1809-1917) that Finland emerged as a nation – with a parliament, a currency, an administrative structure of its own, just to

mention some examples that separated the grand duchy from the Russian empire.

In December 1917, in the aftermath of the Russian revolution, Finland declared itself independent. A civil war followed in January – May 1918 between Whites and Reds. The former won, and hard retributions towards the opponents followed. The events of 1918 left the nation severely split for decades.

However, the independent republic of Finland emerged as a multi party democracy and, contrary to the other new independent European nations that gained independence during and after the Great War, it has preserved that status uninterrupted.

This was the case also after the Second World War. Being a co-belligerent of Germany, the Finnish army made the Soviet offensive to halt in the summer of 1944, and the country was never occupied. Its new foreign policy, however, was to be dominated by the existence of the friendship and co-operation pact (1948-91) with the Soviet Union.

A western democracy by political and economic basic structure, and a striving towards neutrality within the framework of the pact, were the two main outlines of post-1944 Finland. As the ideological division of Europe ended after 1989 and the Soviet Union dissolved, Finland joined the European Union in 1995 in the same time as two other neutral countries Sweden and Austria.

Finland remained an agricultural country until quite late. Still in 1960 as much as 32% of the population had agriculture as its primary source of income. The share of manufacturing and construction was about 31%, having been in 1940 only 18% (compared to 54% for agriculture).<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s Finnish society experienced a rapid structural change. Small farmers and agricultural workers, especially from Northern and Eastern Finland, moved to the South (or Sweden) and became industrial workers or were employed by the growing services sector.

In 1997 the services sector employed 65% of the labour force, the processing sector 28% and the primary production sector 7%. These sectors' respective shares of the GNP in 1997 were 60,2%, 35.4% and 4.4%.<sup>2</sup>

In the first half of the 1990s Finland suffered from a severe economic recession, which was partly the consequence of the overheated casino economy of the 1980s and partly due to the abrupt end of the extensive bilateral trade with the Soviet Union. Still for the year 1997 the Statistics Central gives an unemployment figure of 12,6%, which however is far better than the dubious records over 16% for 1993-94. As will become evident later in this article, the recession had major consequences also in the newspaper market.

## The Beginning: A Press for the Few

The first newspaper in Finland was published in 1771. Its language was Swedish and its name *Tidningar Utgifne Af et Sällskap i Åbo*<sup>3</sup> (News Published by a Society in Turku). In everyday use the title was shortened into *Åbo Tidningar* (Turku

News). As Finland was part of the Kingdom of Sweden, the paper was one of the regional weeklies that were founded in Sweden's provincial towns in the latter half of the 18th century, particularly after the press freedom act of 1766. The first *Åbo Tidningar* appeared until 1778.<sup>4</sup>

Even the first Finnish language paper was published in Turku. The editor and publisher was a vicar from a nearby parish. This *Suomenkieliset Tieto-Sanommat* (Finnish Information-News) appeared only for the year 1776.<sup>5</sup> The next Finnish language paper was started only in 1820, but there was a Swedish language paper available in 1782-85 and 1789, and without interruption from 1791. It was only after 1819 that several newspapers were published in Finland at one time. Turku was the main publishing town until the great fire of 1827 after which the university and central administration were moved to Helsinki, closer to St. Petersburg. The first Helsinki paper was founded in 1829.

In the first half of the 19th century the potential readership consisted of the Swedish speaking upper stratum: civil servants, landed gentry, clergy, the wealthier burghers of towns. In 1815 their number was about 20 000. Thanks to the church, even common people could make the compulsory catechism test, but active reading was a habit of few. A change started to take place only in the 1840's, and it was accompanied by a growing Finnish language press.<sup>6</sup>

The number of Finnish language newspaper titles, however, outnumbered the Swedish language titles only in 1878. And as the Swedish language papers were aimed at a more urban and a more educated readership, their periodicity was denser than that of the Finnish papers. It was as late as in 1890 that the number of newspaper issues per week in Finnish papers became higher than the number of issues in Swedish.

The development may be followed in Tables 1 and 2, and Figures 1 and 2. One may notice that the number of Swedish language newspapers stayed roughly on the same level from the late 1880s to the 1970s. It was possible to cover the solid residential areas of the coastal minority by a net of newspapers at an early stage – a few small papers were published even in certain inland towns with industry based on “Swedish language capital” and/or administrative centres.

After the turn of the century the growth of the Swedish language press was growth of circulation and social reach, while the Finnish language press continued to grow also by number of titles till the latter half of the 1980s. The number of different Swedish language newspaper issues per week also reached its peak at the turn of the century, which reflects the fact that the urban strata of speakers of Swedish were prosperous enough to maintain papers with relatively dense periodicity.

## The Expansion:

### The Press as an Instrument of Political Mobilization

A Finnish nationalism emerged around mid-19th century. Later, its foundation was crystallised as a slogan: “Swedes we are not, Russians we do not want to be-

Table 1. The Number of Finnish Newspapers by Language, 1850-1980

	Swe	Fin	Total
1850	7	2	9
1860	8	9	17
1870	9	9	18
1880	14	20	34
1890	24	36	60
1900	28	56	85
1910	27	95	122
1920	24	104	128
1930	26	151	176
1939	25	164	189
1940	21	133	154
1950	23	157	180
1960	23	176	199
1970	21	216	237
1980	17	230	247

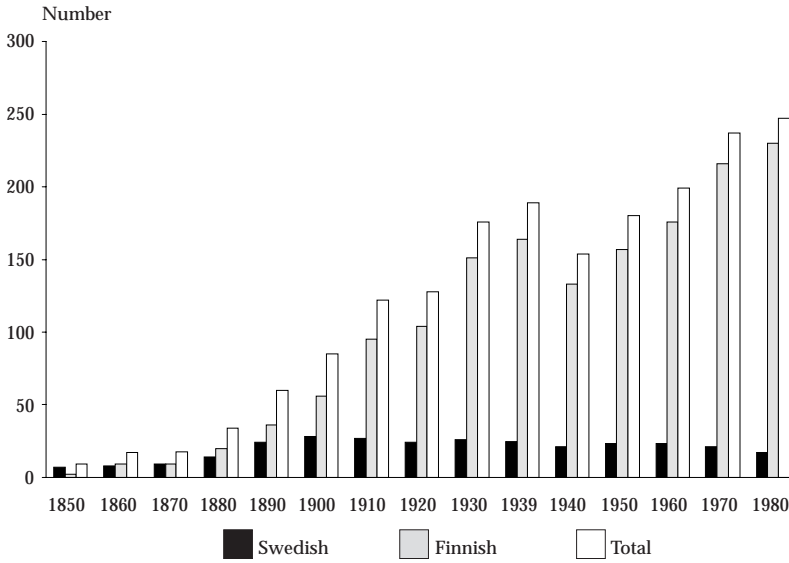
Sources: SLH 1, 215, 281-282, 444-445; SLH 2, 17, 203-204; SLH 3, 74-75, 491.

Table 2. The Number of Finnish Newspaper Issues per Week by Language, 1850-1949

	Swe	Fin	Total
1850	17	2	19
1860	20	10	30
1870	28	12	40
1880	58	33	91
1890	87	105	192
1900	100	187	287
1910	81	308	389
1920	79	361	440
1930	80	448	525
1939	76	486	559
1940	60	400	460
1949	92	507	599

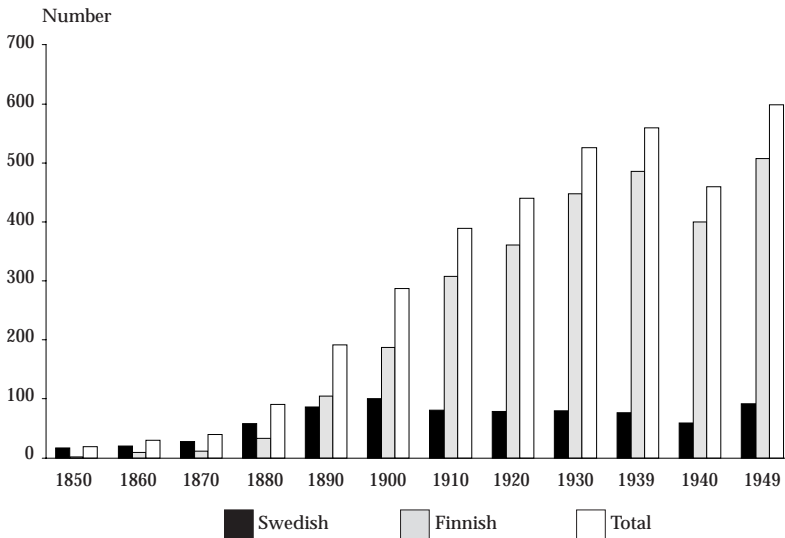
Sources: SLH 1, 215, 281-282, 444-445; SLH 2, 17, 203-204; SLH 3, 74-75, 491.

Figure 1. The Number of Finnish Newspapers by Language, 1850-1980



Sources: SLH 1, 215, 281-282, 444-445; SLH 2, 17, 203-204; SLH 3, 74-75, 491.

Figure 2. The Number of Finnish Newspaper Issues per Week by Language, 1850-1949



Sources: SLH 1, 215, 281-282, 444-445; SLH 2, 17, 203-204; SLH 3, 74-75, 491.

come – so, let us be Finns!” The idea of the philosopher J.V. Snellman was that only by making Finnish the language of Finland’s administration, culture and civilization, Finland could survive as a nation in the vast Russian empire. Swedish, on the other hand, being the language of an absolute minority, might some day be replaced by Russian if it maintained its old status.

To produce a Finnish language educated class, schools were needed as well in the primary as in the secondary level. To bring about Finnish language schools was one of the most important goals of the nationalist movement. The success was by all means good.

The role of literacy was crucial for the growth of the press, as Pekka Mervola has consistently argued.<sup>7</sup> If one were to believe the records made by the clergy at the catechism tests, already in mid 19th century more than 90% of Finns would have been able to read. It was however largely a matter of knowing the required chapters by heart, and if one uses the concept “literacy” as referring to both reading and writing, the literacy rate of the Finns started to grow rapidly only in the latter half of the 19th century. The primary school act of 1866 was of great significance.

Mervola also made extensive calculations to estimate the number of households and the total circulation of the press at various times and put his results in graphic form showing how the growth of the literacy rate was closely followed by the coverage figure of newspapers. According to Mervola’s figures, 50% literacy was reached around the turn of the century and 90% in the 1930s.

High coverage of newspapers in Finland is thus also a consequence of high literacy, which is a consequence of good popular education already prior to the compulsory primary education act of 1921. Popular education in turn had its connections with the nationalist movement and other forms of construction of the civic society especially from the 1860s onwards.

Finnish nationalism was originally a movement of young intellectuals who – as they were intellectuals – had Swedish as their first or at least their language of learning. Not few of them started with great effort to use Finnish in public life and even in their homes, but for many in the first generation of Finnish nationalists, Swedish remained their more fluent language.

The nationalist intellectuals wanted to make the Finnish population aware of its nationality and by means of Finnish language education make it capable of creating a high standard culture in its own language. An extensive nationalist press emerged to support the goals of “The Finnish party”. By the 1880s the movement had managed to gain legislation which compelled the administration to use Finnish when dealing with speakers of that language.

As a reaction to the Finnish nationalist movement, a Swedish nationalist movement emerged as well, and the idea of “the Swedes in Finland” (*Finlands-svenskarna*) started to be consolidated. In the 1880s the Swedish language nationalists replaced “the liberal party” as the main political grouping among the Swedish speaking population. Being on the defensive, “the Swedish party” was more upper class than its Finnish counterpart, and the farmer population was not

quite as important for the Swedish nationalists as it was for the Finnish: For the Finnish nationalists the core of “the people” was the independent landowning peasantry.

From the 1860s on, a new kind of civic society emerged in Finland, as people founded societies to promote various laudable goals from temperance societies to savings banks and voluntary fire brigades or from agricultural societies to co-operative shops and dairies or from trade unions to political parties. Language was one of the important issues in all this, and the press was the instrument by which supporters were mobilized and opponents were mauled.

Along with language, social issues and the means to oppose Russian pressures were on the political agenda that affected the party structure: Finnish – Swedish; constitutionalism or appeasement towards the Russians; socialist – agrarian – liberal – conservative in domestic political and social issues.

Throughout the 19th century, the 18th century constitution of Sweden was preserved in the Grand Duchy of Finland, and accordingly the representation system was based on a very limited suffrage and a four estate Parliament. But in 1907 universal suffrage was introduced, and the electorate multiplied tenfold as every man and woman over the age of 25 years got the right to vote.

Consequently, language lost even more of its political significance as social issues gained. In the first democratic election in 1907 the socialists got 80 of the 200 seats in Parliament, and in 1916 they won the majority. In the years 1905-08 the press grew rapidly by number of titles, circulation and social reach, and the growth was due to party press structures. Most significant was the growth of socialist and agrarian press systems, but also within the older political movements the power of the press was fully acknowledged.

The researcher of the press structure in the Nordic countries must keep repeating, in the footpaths of Niels Thomsen and others, how the press grew and spread along with the party system and was an integral part of it – until the parties’ “own” market shares no more sufficed to make the papers profitable, and the papers had to enter into real competition across political boundaries.<sup>8</sup>

In the first half of the 20th century the final results were not necessarily visible as destruction of the losers and emergence of regional monopolies, although it is true that in many cases the decisive rounds were fought already before the second world war. The results were evident in the 1950s and 1960s, but in those countries which introduced it, state press (or party) subsidies saved a number of papers from being devoured by the market forces or at least prolonged the process.

The political functions of the Finnish press were strengthened by periods of political upheaval in 1905-07, 1917-19 and in some senses even 1944-45. The crucial one was 1905-07, because it was then that universal suffrage and democratic representation were introduced. With this process the political parties ensured their position as the most important channels by and through which citizens were mobilized and the civic society constructed itself. It was generally regarded as self evident that a proper newspaper was a party organ. The paper had to have

a cause – a shade of immorality was easily cast upon primarily commercial newspaper enterprises.

In 1917-19 Finland first became independent, a civil war followed, and after that there was the heated question whether Finland should be a republic, as stated in the declaration of independence, or a kingdom, as promoted by the disillusioned right after the civil war.

In an independent nation, all political power was in domestic hands, and from the parties' point of view the press gained even more importance as a channel of propaganda and an instrument of mobilization. The political press system was preserved as a structure, only some details and the labels were changed.

If Swedish language non-socialist papers are regarded as supporters of the Swedish people's party, in 1919 79% of Finnish newspapers had a party affiliation and as much as 88,8% of newspaper issues during a week were issues of party organs. By 1929 the corresponding figures were 57,5% and 76,0%, the change being mostly due to the expansion of the local press.<sup>9</sup>

Still in the 1920s it was customary within the Finnish party structure to see the party organ as the natural type of the newspaper. It was just in the 1920s that the conservative and liberal parties and the economic and industrial circles enhancing the same ideas, used large amounts of money to support "their" newspapers. Usually it was wasted money in the end: it was spent upon papers that had no chance in the changing newspaper market.

In late 1920s and early 1930s significant developments in the newspaper market were noticed in party offices and newspaper houses. It was realized that newspapers were able to waste endless sums of money without any guarantees of future profitability. At the same time the financing sources of the conservative and liberal parties were drying out, and it was in those parties that the decision makers started to draw conclusions on the meagre results of investments in non-profitable newspapers.

Within the parties of the left the concept of newspapers as party instruments continued to live with only slight modifications. Firstly, there were ideological obstacles to adopt the idea that a social democratic newspaper might primarily be a business enterprise. Labour supporters were accustomed to the fact that the papers were owned by labour organizations and that the political functions of a newspaper overshadowed all else.

The agrarian (centre) press had from the very beginning (1906) had close connections with the party's individual supporters and thus with the circulation area. The papers were usually owned by up to thousands of land owning farmers of the region. The idea of loyalty towards the party was strong among the supporters, but as the agrarian political ties had always also had a strong local or regional flavour, a certain adjustment to changes in the newspaper market was possible.

"The grand era" of the party political press structure in Finland begun in 1905 and ended with the great recession of the early 1930s. There was, though, another period of politicization in 1944-45, when the extreme left was legalized (communists, or socialists left of social democracy, had been banned and underground



in 1930-44) and the communists built up a network of newspapers. But from a market point of view this was only surface, the main current was already another, and even the communist papers soon faced the same problems as the older “second” papers.

## The Penetration: Information Needs on the Local Level

Finnish newspapers have been divided into two groups in a way that is a bit difficult to express in English, although it roughly corresponds with the division to “dailies” and “non-dailies”. In the 1970s “newspaper proper” (*varsinainen sanomalehti*) was introduced as a label for the “daily”. By that the Finnish Newspapers Association meant newspapers with a periodicity of three to seven days a week. The term for “non-daily” was “local newspaper” (*paikallislehti*); however the Association of Local Newspapers did not adopt any periodicity limits.

Periodicity is only one, but practical, clue to the actual functions of a newspaper. Whether a paper is “universal” or “local” can only be judged by the contents. Periodicity as a clue is also connected to history: Today a newspaper with three issues a week is usually “local”, but historically (still in the 1930s) that periodicity used to be typical for regional “universal” newspapers. The borderline between “local” and “universal” newspapers neither has been nor is by any means self evident. In many enough cases a paper seems to be situated in a “grey zone”, mixing “universal” or “general” and “local” features.

The number of general and local newspapers in Finland from the year 1900 to 1980 is shown in Table 3 and Figure 3. As it can be seen, the number of general newspapers reached its peak in the 1930s, whereas it was the local papers that made the total number of newspapers expand. Local papers outnumbered the general newspapers in the late 1950s.

Between the world wars, the basic periodicities of Finnish newspapers were once, three times or six times a week. There were some “universal” weeklies, but many of the twice a week newspapers were in the grey zone between generality and locality. There were even a few three days a week papers in that zone, but as a rule that periodicity indicated a general newspaper. Some regional newspapers increased their periodicity from three to six days a week – but seldom anything in between – and the largest ones started to bring out even a Monday issue, especially to gain more foothold among the growing number of sports enthusiasts.

An increase in the number of local newspapers was a distinct feature between the world wars. Typically those papers were weeklies, but some increased their periodicity to two or three issues a week – and glided towards being general newspapers.

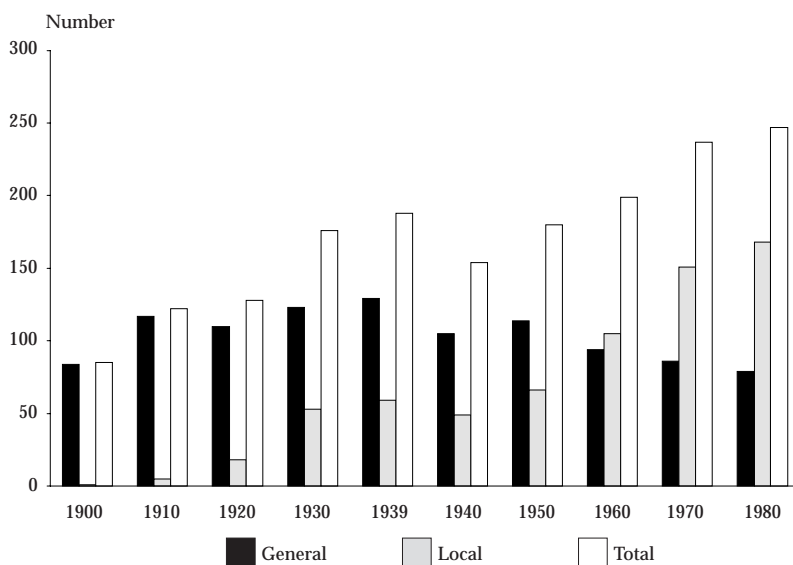
The pioneer of the local newspapers was founded in 1894 by a primary school teacher in a village in South-West Finland, and it was intended for the inhabitants of that community only.<sup>10</sup> In 1998 *Tyrvään Sanomat* still exists as a local newspaper. Its periodicity is three days a week and its circulation about 8700 (1997). The early local newspapers were ordinarily established by teachers, bank directors and

Table 3. The Number of "General" and "Local" Newspapers in Finland, 1900-1980

	General	Local	Total
1900	84	1	85
1910	117	5	122
1920	110	18	128
1930	123	53	176
1939	129	59	188
1940	105	49	154
1950	114	66	180
1960	94	105	199
1970	86	151	237
1980	79	168	247

Sources: SLH 1, 215, 281-282, 444-445; SLH 2, 17, 203-204; SLH 3, 74-75, 491, SLH 4, 113.

Figure 3. The Number of "General" and "Local" Newspapers in Finland, 1900-1980



Sources: SLH 1, 215, 281-282, 444-445; SLH 2, 17, 203-204; SLH 3, 74-75, 491, SLH 4, 113.

other members of the local establishment, and it was only after the second world war that business objectives started to become more dominant.

The number of local papers was quite low until mid-1920s. Eeva-Liisa Aalto<sup>11</sup> argues that the increase may be explained by two things: Firstly, it was only with

the freedom of the press act of 1919 that the Finns were allowed to establish print shops in other localities than towns. Secondly, since 1925 profane announcements were no more read from the church pulpit, which created a need for a new channel of local information.

Still in the 1930s many local newspapers carried even some foreign news. This was partly an attempt to suffice as the only newspaper for less demanding households, but partly the explanation lies in printing conditions. Often the local newspaper was printed in the near-by town in a shop that printed a regional general newspaper, and the set of that paper was used as additional material to fill the pages of the local paper. After the second world war this practice was given up and, although the grey zone still existed, the typical local paper became literally local by its contents.

In 1945 the Association of Municipal Newspapers (Pitäjänlehtien Liitto, Sockentidningarnas Förbund) was established. Later it changed its name to the Association of Local Newspapers (Paikallislehtien Liitto, Lokaltidningarnas Förbund), which in turn was incorporated into the Finnish Newspapers Association in 1993.

The Association of Municipal/Local Newspapers has at various times given descriptions of the basic characteristics of its members.<sup>12</sup> In 1945 the definition went like this:

*A municipal newspaper is a regular newspaper that is published at least once a week. Its circulation area consists of certain municipalities and its news and advertisement material consists of affairs of these municipalities and parishes and other local matters. Ideologically it does not represent any given political party or affiliation.*

In the 1980s there was a change of emphasis in the criteria. It was pointed out that the papers were politically neutral but had opinions of their own.

*Local newspapers are newspapers that primarily inform of matters of their own circulation area. They are published one to seven days a week, are subscribed, independent and neutral, give space to different views and take position as organs of their circulation area.*

In accordance with these declarations and their own findings Eeva-Liisa Aalto and Pirjo Santonen, in their history of the local press, give the local newspaper the following identification marks:<sup>13</sup>

- 1) The paper publishes primarily local material.
- 2) It deals with the general issues of the circulation area.
- 3) Its regular circulation area is a few communities, one community or an area within a community.
- 4) It is subscribed.
- 5) According to its own announcement it is not an organ of any political party.

## Perspectives on Historical Newspaper Typology

In the introductory article for the History of the Finnish Press -series Päiviö Tommila<sup>14</sup> listed as many as 16 types of newspapers in Finland in the 19th and 20th century. In the following, Tommila's account is used as a point of departure, but the material is looked at from different angles.

### *Spatial Division: National, Regional and Local*

The most recent type is the local newspaper, the characteristics of which have been described above. This level actually expanded and filled the gaps on the map from the 1950s on. Prior to that it were the regional "newspapers proper" that had to serve even the local needs, to the extent it was possible.

The earliest newspapers, i.e. those of the first half of the 19th century, were not regional in the same sense as later newspapers. The core of their circulation area was in the province where the paper was published, but a considerable part of the copies were sent to readers all over the country. In his study on the circulation of Finnish newspapers prior to the year 1860 Päiviö Tommila, however, points out that by the end of that period it was the biggest Helsinki papers that preserved their "national" status, whereas the newspapers published in provincial towns became regional, some even local in the sense that they were read mainly in their own town but were general by contents.<sup>15</sup>

### *Political Division: Main Organs and Regional Heralds*

From the 1870s on the spatial division needs an explanatory addition, i.e. politics. The biggest Helsinki newspapers with a national circulation were the leading organs of different political groupings and affiliations. They were read also by the political elite in the provinces and they were the opinion leaders. As "the parties" had no organization, they were really "newspaper parties". This goes to the Finnish party and its leading newspaper *Uusi Suometar* as well as to the liberal party and *Helsingfors Dagblad* or the Swedish party and *Nya Pressen* or the young Finns and *Päivälehti/Helsingin Sanomat*.

The labour movement, however, was more organized, and its main organ *Työmies* had a more instrumental role than the earlier leading political papers. In the first years of the 20th century all parties built a formal organization, but newspapers still remained a bond often more important than the actual party machine. The political hierarchy of newspapers was cemented into structures of a more or less national main organ and a group of regional or constituency organs.

### *The Market: the First and the Seconds*

According to the established theory, the political multi-paper system was based on a situation where all the parties/party affiliated newspaper groups had a market among their "own". Much competition did not occur across political borders. But as the change started to take place, the political roots of the press system re-

mained as they were by the force of historical continuity, although for a growing group of readers politics ceased to be the primary basis for choosing a newspaper to subscribe.

The winning newspaper in each marketing area – or region or province, as they were regional/provincial newspapers – moved towards being “omnibus”, for everyone, while the losing papers tended to preserve distinct features of the political press system. This development can also be seen as a move towards another type of spatial press system. The core of that system consisted (consists) of regional newspapers that step by step are getting a virtual monopoly in their areas. And in addition there was (is) a group of “national” papers. It must be noted, though, that primarily also the national newspapers were (are) regional Helsinki area papers with a secondary national function.

### *The Social Division: Towards Omnibus*

In the History of the Finnish Press Päiviö Tommila<sup>16</sup> has sketched the social expansion of the newspaper readership in Finland from the early 19th century to mid-20th century. According to him, the order is: Swedish speaking civilized classes (the one newspaper period -> 1820), Swedish speaking urban burghers (Swedish language elite newspapers, 1820s ->), Finnish speaking landowners (Finnish language educational newspapers, 1830s ->), Finnish speaking civilized classes (Finnish language nationalist newspapers, 1840s ->), Finnish speaking urban burghers, Swedish speaking rural population (Swedish language nationalist newspapers and “folk newspapers”, 1870s ->), the working class (labour newspapers, 1890s ->), small farmers (agrarian newspapers, 1900s ->), population of remote areas (local newspapers, 1920s ->).

Tommila’s scheme sketches the starting points of new sorts of newspapers and points out the target groups and/or new social stratum that is beginning to subscribe a newspaper. Except for the last phase the point of departure is primarily politics, but what happens at the same time is that by mid-20th century practically the whole population is within reach of the press.

Taking this into account and noticing what is simultaneously happening to the political press system, the core of the Finnish press was on the move towards being omnibus, for everyone.

## The Concentration: The Development After 1950

### *The Number and the Periodicity of Newspapers*

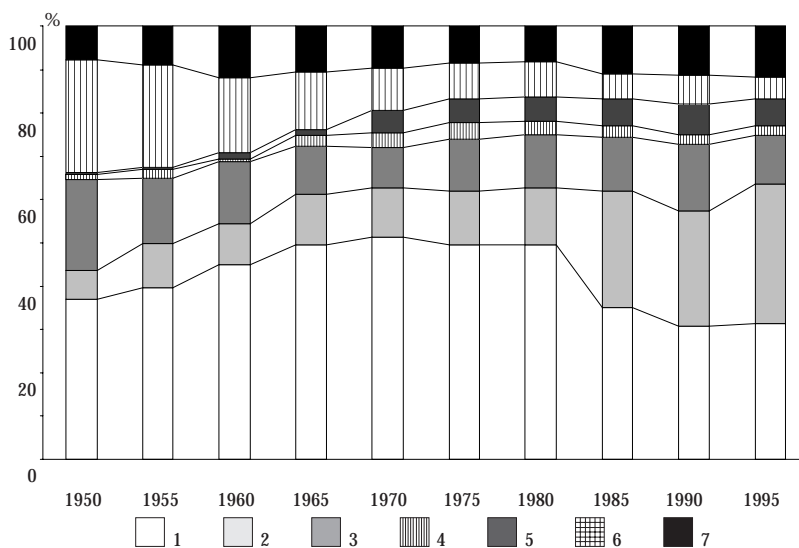
It must be noted that the figures in Table 4 and Figures 4 and 5 are not quite accurate for 1990 and 1995, because non-members of the two associations are excluded. (They are not included in the sources compiled by the publishers associations.) But anyway, there is no doubt of the fact that the number of newspapers in Finland reached its peak in the years 1985-90, i.e. the period that was nicknamed the years of casino economy and was followed by the deep recession of the 1990s.

Table 4. The Structure of the Finnish Newspaper Press by Periodicity, 1950-1995

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
1950	67	12	38	2	1	47	14	181
1955	76	19	29	4	1	45	17	191
1960	91	19	29	1	3	35	24	202
1965	118	28	26	6	3	32	25	238
1970	121	27	22	8	12	23	23	236
1975	116	29	28	9	13	19	20	234
1980	121	32	30	7	14	20	20	244
1985	90	69	32	7	16	15	28	257
1990	74	64	37	6	17	16	27	241
1995	70	71	25	5	14	11	26	222

Sources: SCH 3, 319, SLH 4, 113, the "media issues" of *Soumen Lehdistö – Finlands Press* 1985, 1990, 1995.

Figure 4. The Structure of the Finnish Newspaper Press by Periodicity, 1950-1995

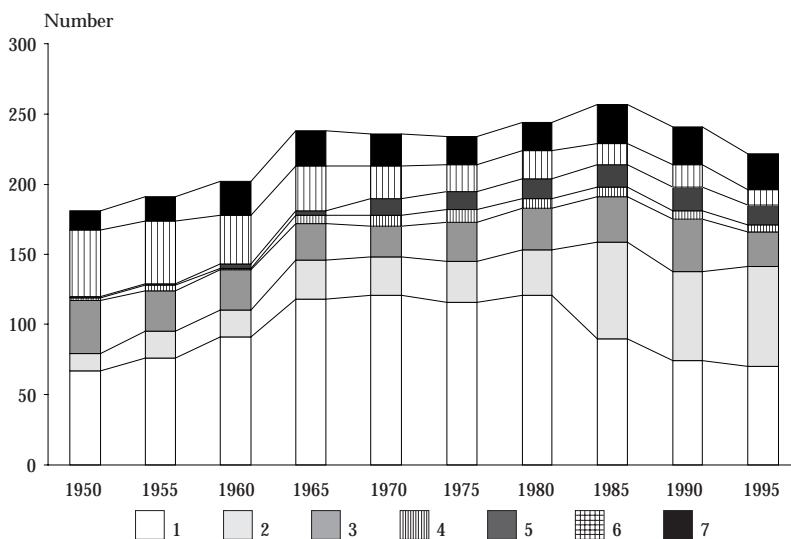


Sources: SCH 3, 319, SLH 4, 113, the "media issues" of *Soumen Lehdistö – Finlands Press* 1985, 1990, 1995.

But as noticed in Table 3 and Figure 3, the number of general newspapers started to decline already in the late 1930s. On the other hand, it was the number of local newspapers that kept growing in the post war decades and kept doing that till the end of the 1980s.

Some distinct tendencies are visible in Figure 4. The first is in the lower part of the columns, the non-dailies. In that group the papers with one and two issues a

Figure 5. The Number of Finnish Newspapers by Periodicity, 1950-1995



Sources: SCH 3, 319, SLH 4, 113, the "media issues" of *Soumen Lehdistö – Finland's Press* 1985, 1990, 1995.

week are local almost without exception, whereas among the papers with three issues a week there are also general newspapers. That was the case particularly in the 1950s.

Originally the local newspaper was typically a weekly. However, in the first half of the 1980s many of the former weeklies introduced a second issue, and in mid-1990s the figures for once or twice a week are roughly equal. The foundation is primarily in the fact that advertising revenue made it possible to expand the service, and partly in the fact that there were more things to tell about – and partly in the expansion of journalistic professionalism as well.

In the boom years of the late 1980s many local newspapers also took the step to publishing a third issue – but in many enough cases the recession made them pull back.

In the upper ends of the columns the first tendency is that while still in the 1950s and the early 1960s the papers with six issues a week clearly outnumbered the papers with seven issues, they were on the losing side. From the late sixties to early eighties there were roughly as many newspapers with six issues a week as there were newspapers with seven issues, but in the eighties the dailies in the literal meaning of the word took over.

From the days of *Helsingfors Dagblad* in 1871 the objective of the Finnish newspaper has been to be published every day of the week, that is about 350 issues per year. The example was put and the competitive situation created by the big Helsinki papers. The biggest regional newspapers followed suit in mid-1920s, and in

the latter half of the 1930s even some smaller ones that were in a competitive position.

In the 1980s seven issues a week was the sign of a “real” regional newspaper, while six issues placed the paper only in the lower ladder of regional newspapers. Contrary to the situation in Norway, the six-day papers are not published on Mondays. On Sundays the Finnish readers are accustomed to expect a newspaper. The tabloids sold in single issues, however, have never been published on Sundays in Finland.

Another feature is the sudden expansion in the late 1960s of newspapers with five issues a week: The 40 hours or five day working week was introduced in the graphical industry in 1968, which raised employment expenses and made some newspapers to give up the issues that required work during the weekend. For a period of time many political “second” papers were in this category.

### *The Locations of Publication*

The historians of the local press in Finland have put the locations of publication on a map at ten years interval from 1919 to 1979. The number of locations of publication and the number of locations with competition between two local papers goes as follows.<sup>17</sup>

1919	16/-
1929	53/4
1939	58/3
1949	56/1
1959	101/4
1969	143/8
1979	158/8

The pattern in the local newspaper market has been to choose an “uninhabited homestead” and establish a paper. The maps mentioned also show that the “frontier” moved from south-west towards north-east, with the exception of the Karelian Isthmus while it belonged to Finland (till 1944). Still in the early 1960s the border between the Finland with local press and the Finland without, was roughly the ancient cultural border between west and east that run from Oulu in Northern Ostrobothnia to Viipuri in Southern Karelia, and which also signified a difference in wealth. The wealthy agricultural regions in South-Western Finland, the province of Häme and Southern Ostrobothnia were the pioneers of the local press.

But as noticed, competition was rare, was normally connected with some local disputes and did not last long at one time. “Competition with an established local newspaper has proved difficult or impossible” Pirjo Santonen concludes, and her account of the cases confirms the point.<sup>18</sup>



In the history of the general press Raimo Salokangas made corresponding maps, but including all newspapers, both local and general. In table form the result looks the following.<sup>19</sup>

Locations with:	1919	1929	1939
4 newspapers or more	8	11	9
3 newspapers	9	4	10
2 newspapers	10	21	15
1 newspaper	30	56	69
total of locations	57	92	103

The number of locations with only one newspaper grew most, and again the explanation is the local press. But still in 1939 there were nine towns with four or more newspapers. They were Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, Viipuri, Vaasa, Oulu, Jyväskylä, Kuopio and Mikkeli. Towns with three papers included the rest of the provincial centres: Porvoo, Kotka, Pori, Hämeenlinna, Lahti, Sortavala, Savonlinna, Joensuu and Kajaani. It was the political press system that provided the Finns with such a number of newspapers even in relatively small towns.

In the next volume of the history of the Finnish press Veikko Löyttyniemi made the maps and tables of the general newspapers only, i.e. those published 3 to 7 days a week.<sup>20</sup>

Locations with:	1950	1965	1980
4 newspapers or more	8	4	3
3 newspapers	7	6	4
2 newspapers	9	9	9
1 newspaper	19	34	40
total of locations	43	53	56

From 1950 to 1980 the number of locations with more than one newspaper was reduced from 24 to 16, while at the same time the number of locations with only one newspaper grew from 19 to 40. The account makes two features distinct. On the one hand there is the decline of the party press. On the other hand there is the strengthening of the local press or the press of the “grey zone”.

In 1950 there were eight towns with four or more newspapers, but by 1965 Kuopio, Jyväskylä, Tampere and Kotka had fallen from this category and by 1980 also Turku, leaving only Helsinki, Vaasa and Oulu. Of the towns with four or more newspapers in 1950, in Jyväskylä there was a regional monopoly since 1970. The other towns in 1970, where only one newspaper was left of previous two or more were Hamina (since 1958), Iisalmi (1967), Kajaani (1967), Kemi (1957), Kouvola (1951), Lahti (1964), Mikkeli (1963), Rovaniemi (1955) and Savonlinna (1969).

The smallish provincial centre Jyväskylä is a pointed example of how the decline of the party press advanced. In the 1920s there was a liberal paper, *Keskisuomalainen*, a social democratic paper, an agrarian paper, and even the conservatives established a paper of their own. A new building was erected for *Keskisuomalainen* just on the threshold of the great recession. The company could not manage the loans and was bought in 1932 by the agrarians who laid down their former paper and made *Keskisuomalainen* their organ, though deliberately preserving its qualities as a not so ardently political newspaper. In 1936-39 there was even an organ of the extreme right-wing patriotic people's movement, and in 1947 the communists established an organ and published it until 1956. The social democratic paper was laid down in 1959, and finally the conservative paper had to give up in 1970. The only one left was *Keskisuomalainen*, originally a product of a 1917 merger of two party organs, the target being the establishment of a broad non-socialist paper. *Keskisuomalainen* was relatively "broad" even under the agrarian label, and the resulting story was the usual.<sup>21</sup>

The material of the Finnish Newspapers Association gives base for another table from the 1990s, but again with new criteria: The figures include "dailies" with four to seven issues a week, and only members of the union.<sup>22</sup>

Locations with:	1992	1995
4 newspapers or more	1	1
3 newspapers	1	1
2 newspapers	6	6
1 newspaper	37	34

The material also lists the "non-dailies" (one to three issues a week). In 1992 there was one location with three or more non-dailies, six locations with two and as many as 153 locations with one. In 1995 five locations hosted two non-dailies but none more, and on 148 locations there was only one. In addition to members of the association there are less than a dozen non-members, and this means competition in a few areas.

As they are members of the union, the table includes also some social democratic weeklies which, for historical reasons, do not represent the local newspaper genre but originate from the general newspaper genre. They are the offspring or follow-up of old regional organs that have lost the battle to the big regional newspaper.

Taking only the "dailies" in consideration, Helsinki is left alone as a location with four or more newspapers. The town with three newspapers is Turku, but the category should also include Oulu where the leftist paper is not a member of the union. The towns with two newspapers thus really include Kokkola, Maarianhamina, Porvoo, Seinäjoki and Vaasa. Genuine competition exists only in the Åland Islands (Maarianhamina/Mariehamn), between the older Åland and the newer Nya Åland. In the coastal towns Kokkola/Karleby, Vaasa/Vasa and Porvoo/Borgå one newspaper is Finnish language and the other Swedish lan-

guage, and in Seinäjoki the big regional newspaper now owns the smaller paper that actually falls in the local category.

### *The Decline and Fall of the Party Press*

Tables made by Toivo Nygård and Raimo Salokangas clearly show that a political press system existed also in Finland. In 1910, of the 117 general newspapers only 20 did not have a party affiliation, and in 1925 the figure was 11 out of 109 (if even the Swedish language non-socialist papers are counted as party affiliated). In 1939 the same formula produces the figures 19 out of 127.<sup>23</sup>

Table 5 and Figures 6 and 7 show the political affiliation of the newspapers with three to seven issues a week from 1950 to 1995. In 1950 the structure was still that of the political press system. The change from that year to 1970 was a result of several factors. Firstly, during that time “the newspaper death” raged among the conservative, social democratic and communist press. Particularly the weaker conservative papers suffered, because already in the 1930s they had started to lose their subsidies from the party and the industry. Secondly, the number of independent “general newspapers” grew because bigger local newspapers increased their periodicity and some even extended the scope of their contents. And only thirdly: a few liberal newspapers denounced their party affiliation or drew conclusions when the party was renamed and restructured.

In the latter half of the 1960s two factors halted the “newspaper death”. The weak conservative newspapers had already passed away, but the remaining social democratic, communist and centre “second” organs were saved by state subsidies. (Of those more later.) In the 1970s and in the first half of the 1980s the number of party organs changed only to a minor extent. Then the leading regional newspapers started to draw conclusions from the market situation.

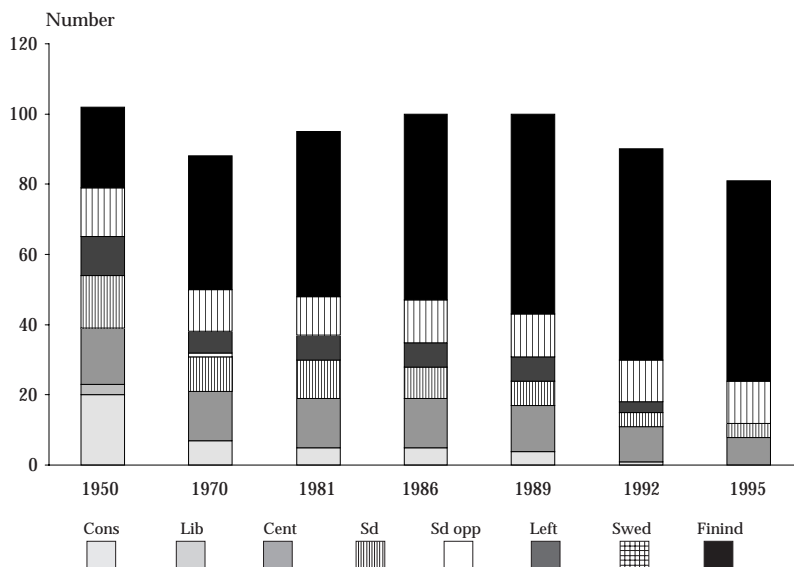
In 1986 *Keskisuomalainen* (Jyväskylä) loosened its ties to the centre party by declaring itself, instead of a party organ, a bit obscurely to “a newspaper in the centre”. By the winter of 1992 the conservative coalition party lost the formal support of the regional newspapers *Aamulehti* (Tampere), *Länsi-Suomi* (Rauma),

Table 5. The Number of Finnish Newspapers (3-7 issues a week) by Political Affiliation, 1950-1995

	Cons	Lib	Cent	Sd	Sd opp	Left	Swed	Finind
1950	20	3	16	15	–	11	14	23
1970	7	–	14	10	1	6	12	38
1981	5	–	14	11	–	7	11	47
1986	5	–	14	9	–	7	12	53
1989	4	–	13	7	–	7	12	57
1992	1	–	10	4	–	3	12	60
1995	–	–	8	4	–	–	12	57

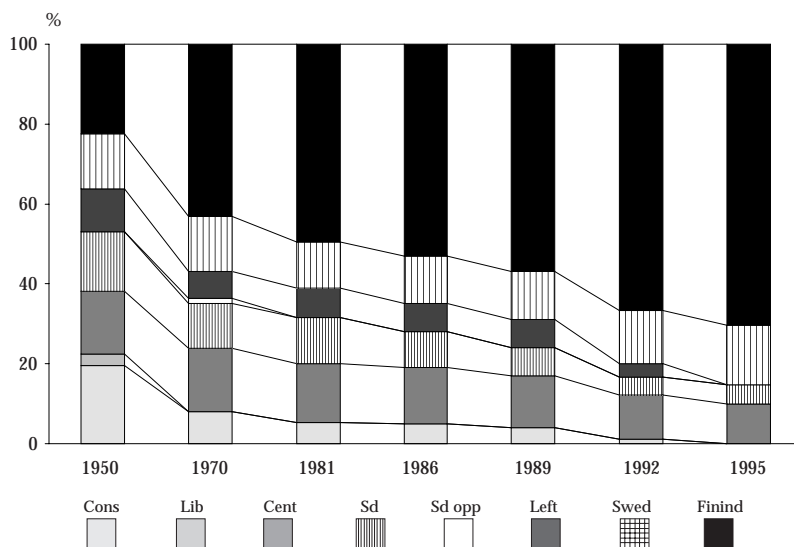
Sources: Pihlajasaari 1996, 29; *Suomen Lehistö – Finland's Press* 6-7/1996.

Figure 6. The Number of Finnish Newspapers (3-7 issues a week) by Political Affiliation, 1950-1995



Sources: Pihlajasaari 1996, 29; Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press 6-7/1996.

Figure 7. The Structure of the Finnish Newspaper Press (3-7 issues a week) by Political Affiliation



Sources: Pihlajasaari 1996, 29; Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press 6-7/1996.

*Pohjalainen* (Vaasa) and *Satakunnan Kansa* (Pori). *Savon Sanomat* (Kuopio) detached its affiliation to the centre party, and the centre organ *Kymen Sanomat* (Hamina) was incorporated into *Kotkan Sanomat*, an independent paper which in turn was the result of a merger in 1989 of two Kotka newspapers, the social democratic *Eteenpäin* and independent, former conservative organ *Etelä-Suomi*. The collapse of communism resulted in Finland the emergence of a new leftist party, the left union, but the former communist/people's democratic union main organ *Kansan Uutiset* (Helsinki) started to call itself an independent leftist paper. Also the regional former communist papers have taken distance to the left union although they have remained close to it. The Swedish people's party formally lost the support of *Jakobstads Tidning* (Pietarsaari) and *Östra Nyland* (Loviisa).<sup>24</sup>

In 1993 the centre organ *Etelä-Saimaa* (Lappeenranta) declared itself independent and in 1994 *Kainuun Sanomat* (Kajaani) followed suit. The conservative coalition party lost its last formal organ in 1995 as *Karjalainen* (Joensuu) made the declaration.<sup>25</sup> The most recent cases are the former centre organs *Keskipohtanmaa* (Kokkola) in 1996 and *Ilkka* (Seinäjoki) in 1997.

In 1997 the Finnish Newspapers Association had 214 members of which only 18 had a formal party affiliation.<sup>26</sup> Among them were three regional "first" newspapers, all centre: *Pohjolan Sanomat* (Kemi; circulation 30 700), *Itä-Savo* (Savonlinna; 23 300) and *Iisalmen Sanomat* (Iisalmi; 16 500). In addition there were three "second" newspapers that were centre organs. The party's formal main organ Suomenmaa (now in Oulu after rather variable fates) had in 1997 a circulation of 5 100 copies for its local printing of five issues a week and 11 200 for its "national" printing of three issues a week.

As many as eleven of the party papers were social democratic, but seven of them were weeklies. Two were published three days a week and two five days a week. The two with the densest periodicity were the party's main organ *Demari* (Helsinki) with a circulation of 25 000 copies (1997) and *Turun Päivälehti* (Turku; 6 000). Till late 1996 the two were separate papers, but after the merger *Turun Päivälehti* started to publish mainly the same material as *Demari*, preserving its name and some local pages edited in Turku.

The remaining self-declared party paper was the small bilingual local paper *Hangötidningen Hangonlehti* (Hanko/Hangö) which calls itself an organ of the Swedish people's party.

The decline and fall of the party press becomes even more evident when looking at circulation shares in Table 6 and Figure 8. Still in the early 1970s about half of the total circulation of newspapers in Finland could be credited to the party organs, but by mid-1990s less than ten percent. The comparison of Figures 7 and 8 also shows that the circulation share of the independent papers is higher than their share of titles; the independent papers are bigger.

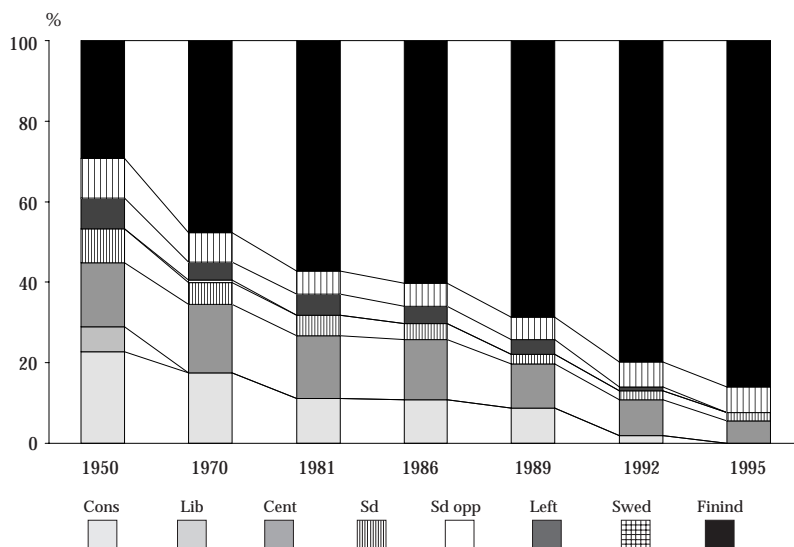
During the former half of the 20th century the "natural" type of newspaper was the party organ, but by mid-1990s the situation has changed fundamentally. Now the "normal" newspaper is independent – but in almost all cases it

Table 6. The Circulation Structure (percentages) of the Finnish Newspaper Press (3-7 issues a week) by Political Affiliation, 1950-1995

	Cons	Lib	Cent	Sd	Sd opp	Left	Swed	Finind
1950	22,7	6,3	15,8	8,5	–	7,6	9,9	29,2
1970	17,5	–	17,0	5,4	0,7	4,3	7,4	47,7
1981	11,2	–	15,6	5,0	–	5,3	5,6	57,2
1986	10,7	–	15,1	4,0	–	4,3	5,6	60,3
1989	8,7	–	11,0	2,4	–	3,7	5,5	68,7
1992	1,9	–	9,0	2,2	–	1,0	6,0	79,9
1995	–	–	5,6	2,1	–	–	6,3	85,9

Sources: Pihlajasaari 1996, 31; *Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press 6-7/1996*.

Figure 8. The Circulation Structure of the Finnish Newspaper Press (3-7 issues a week) by Political Affiliation, 1950-1995



Sources: Pihlajasaari 1996, 31; *Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press 6-7/1996*.

has a politically committed past. Particularly for the big regional “first” newspapers the organ status has become a historical relic, as they are read by “everybody” and as the role of the newspapers as instruments of political mobilization has, if not disappeared, diminished and changed its forms. No doubt even the three mentioned centre organs that are “first”/only in their regions, denounce party affiliation before the turn of the century.

*State Subsidies for Parties and Newspapers*<sup>27</sup>

In Finland state subsidies to newspapers have been politically motivated, and directed to party organs. In 1967 a grant for “party support” was included in the state budget. The state committee on press economy had suggested an allowance for supporting newspapers in economical difficulties, and the government made a proposal of that for Parliament. The legislators, however, chose to make it five-fold and give it to the political parties. Those, in turn, distributed it to their press organs.

Since 1971 the state budget included press subsidies by the name “transportation support”. The papers applied for it and the money was distributed by the government after a proposal by a press subsidy board. The members of the board were party representants, and the government coalition had the last say in the allocation of the support. The government decided in which proportions different parties received press support. Veikko Löyttyniemi writes of the first ten years: “As a whole half of the press subsidies have been granted to organs of the left and the other half to organs of other parties of the governing coalition. The largest support has been given to those organs of parties in the government that have been in difficulties for a long time.”

In 1974 a new kind of subsidy was introduced to be paid to the political parties in proportion to their parliamentary strength. It was up to the parties how to distribute the money – it could be directed also to other papers than formal party organs. The size of this subsidy was about the same as the one allocated by the government.

According to Löyttyniemi’s figures, from 1972 to 1981 the total of the press subsidies was a sum that equalled about 3-4 percent of the total turnover of the country’s newspapers – which was roughly on the same level as in Sweden. The subsidies were of crucial importance particularly for organs of the parties of the left. On the other hand, the centre party and the conservative coalition party directed these subsidies even to regional “first” newspapers, thus relieving their position in the market.

In 1976 there was a new form of support in the state budget: the so called general transportation support for the press. The background was the fact that the postal tariffs for newspapers were formally raised to cover the expenses calculated by the post. In practice, “transportation support” was the difference between the price paid by the press for the distribution of newspapers with the ordinary mail and the costs calculated by the post, and the newspaper companies noticed it only as one line in the bill.

The objective of the support to (politically affiliated) newspapers was to preserve a pluralistic structure of public opinion. But on the other hand the support did not encourage its recipients to reforms and adjustment to the market in order to become more self supporting. No wonder the political subsidies were cut down as state finances rapidly deteriorated in the early 1990s.

A report<sup>28</sup> was made in 1992 by a liquidator nominated by the ministry of communications, and consequently the government gradually cut down and restruc-

tured the subsidies. Most importantly, the political parties lost much of their power in directing the subsidies.

The state subsidies for the press reached their peak with the 1991 figure of 478 million FIM. In 1993 it was only 221 millions and in 1995 it had dropped to 150 millions. The fall was mainly due to cuts in transport subsidies (peak 1989: 355 millions -> 1995: 49 millions), but also the direct press subsidies diminished (peak 1991: 158 millions -> 1995: 101 millions).<sup>29</sup>

It was not only due to these changes that in the 1990s many political “second” newspapers were obliged to cut down on their periodicity or even close the shop, but together with the fact that during the recession advertising revenue dropped in all newspapers and especially in the “second” ones, they were leading towards a certain end: The strengthening of regional monopolies and the concentration of ownership.

### *The Recession Melts the Circulation and the Coverage*

Table 7 and Figures 9 and 10 show what has happened to the total circulation of the Finnish newspapers in the years of the recession. The turning point was the year 1990, when the total circulation was at its highest. The figure for 1995 was only 83.4% of the figure for 1990.

As can be noticed in Table 4, the number of newspaper titles has fallen in the 1990s. Particularly there have been losses in the columns for papers published three or six days a week. Many of the three days papers of 1990 were big local papers who had to cut down as advertising revenue dropped with the recession; revealingly it is only the number of papers with two issues a week that has grown in the 1990s. There were also political “second” papers among the three days a week paper of 1990 that either have become weeklies or have been closed down.

Almost all Finnish newspapers lost circulation in the 1990s. As a consequence of high unemployment, subscriptions were not renewed, overlapping circulation diminished partly due to ownership concentration, partly due to withdrawal of newspapers to their core circulation areas. Also the expansion of the electronic

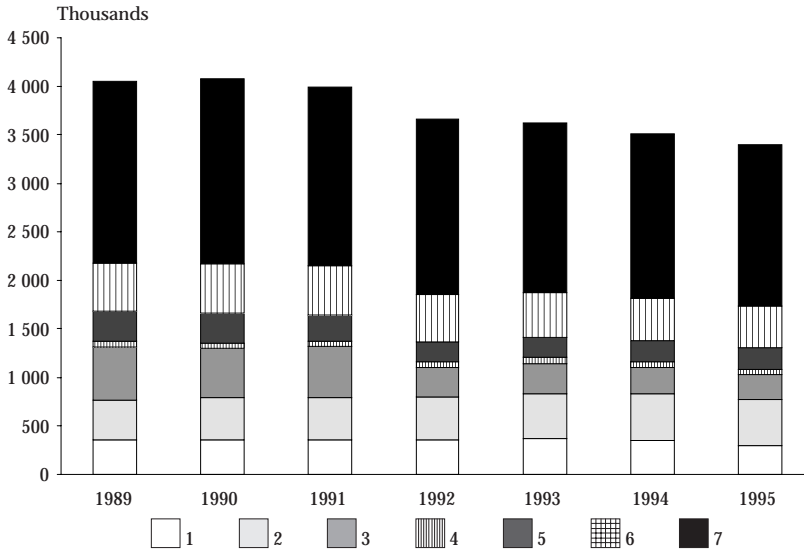
Table 7. The Circulation of Finnish Newspapers by Periodicity, 1989-1995

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
1989	354 624	407 238	549 924	62 651	307 343	498 930	1 874 858	4 055 568
1990	351 085	442 850	505 514	52 585	309 011	509 677	1 908 482	4 079 204
1991	356 399	439 025	528 413	47 005	271 225	511 611	1 840 029	3 993 707
1992	350 964	452 550	293 003	63 861	204 652	492 820	1 805 985	3 663 835
1993	367 218	466 491	309 481	59 716	208 708	464 147	1 751 295	3 627 056
1994	350 003	483 020	272 026	58 743	215 379	433 362	1 697 665	3 510 198
1995	300 084	466 633	265 376	48 043	221 729	433 467	1 666 398	3 401 730

Sources: The “media issues” of *Suomen Lehdistö – Finland’s Press 1990-1996*.

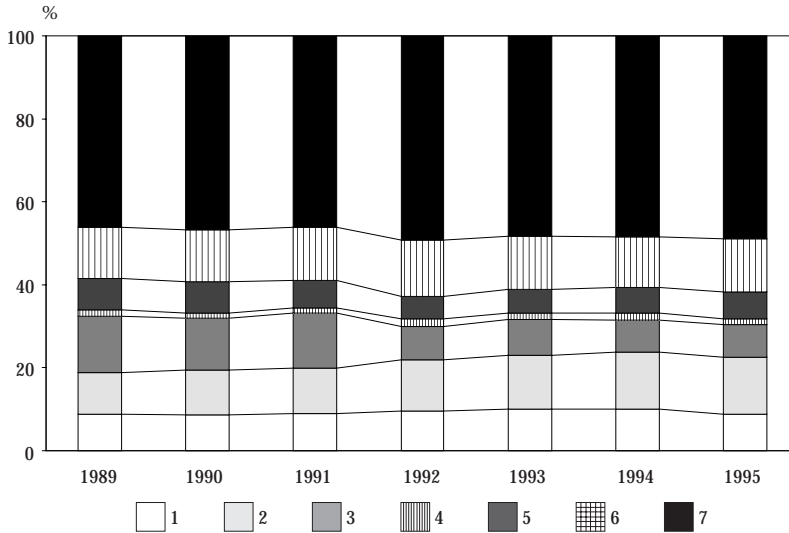


Figure 9. The Circulation of Finnish Newspapers by Periodicity, 1989-1995 (thousands)



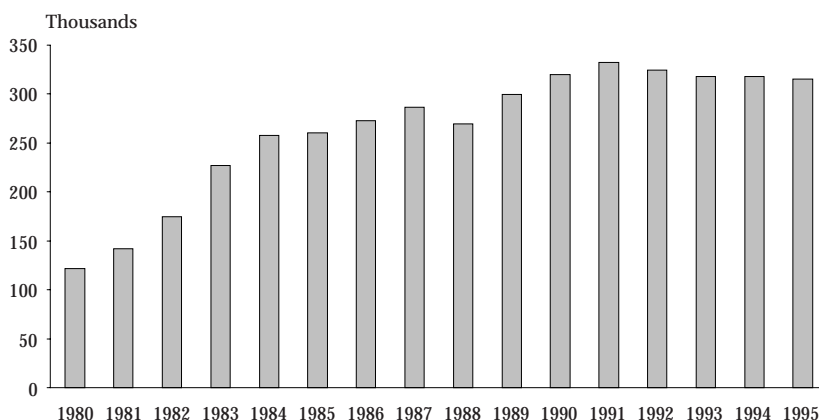
Sources: The "media issues" of *Suomen Lehdistö - Finlands Press* 1990-1996.

Figure 10. The Circulation Structure of Finnish Newspapers by Periodicity, 1989-1995



Sources: The "media issues" of *Suomen Lehdistö - Finlands Press* 1990-1996.

Figure 11. The Circulation of Single Issue Newspapers ("evening papers") in Finland, 1980-1995



Sources: The "media issues" of *Suomen Lehdistö - Finlands Press* 1981-1996.

media – both as advertising media and as a contender of people’s attention – is a factor that slowly gnaws the circulation of the print media.

The two tabloids sold in single issues have made it relatively better, although compared to the other Nordic countries, the tabloid market is underdeveloped in Finland. In 1995 the total circulation of the two single issue newspapers was 94.9% of the top circulation of 1991 and 98.6% of the circulation of 1990. Figure 11 starts from 1980, when there was only one tabloid and shows how the competition of two papers boosted the market. Nevertheless, the expansion since mid-1980s has not been impressive.

In international statistics on the coverage of newspapers per 1000 inhabitants, Finland has been close to the top, and still in 1998 held the third place.<sup>30</sup> (The figures for Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden are shown in Table 8.) But the figures are falling down – partly because newspapers have been closed down, partly because the high unemployment is reflected in declining circulation figures, partly because the supply of the electronic media is increasing. A major concern among newspaper publishers in Finland in the latter half of the 1990s is to get beyond the obvious fact that people abandon the subscription of the regional newspaper for economic reasons.

### Suggestions for Explanations

In late-1990s there are three basic layers of newspapers in Finland: national, regional and local.

The national level consists, strictly taken, only of *Helsingin Sanomat* – the biggest newspaper in Scandinavia with a circulation of 470 000 copies on weekdays

Table 8. The Total Circulation of Newspapers per 1 000 Inhabitants in some Countries, 1950-1995

	Finland	Sweden	Norway	Denmark
1950	419	497	462	368
1979	557	549	519	337
1990	558	526	611	343
1998	453	438	598	307

Sources: Miettinen 1980; *Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press 6-7/1998*, 7; <http://www.sanomalehdet.fi/maailmantilasto.html>

(1996) and with an average reader coverage of 17-18% outside Helsinki marketing area – or a household coverage of 5-10% outside its core area; in university towns the figure is 10-15%. In the Helsinki marketing area both its reader and household coverage are around 69%.

Being less strict, even the two single issue tabloids *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Ilta-alehti*, may be accepted as national, because that is what they are by function. Also such party organs as the social democratic *Demari* and the centre *Suomenmaa* or the independent leftist *Kansan Uutiset* are national in principle, although neither their circulation nor their coverage imply a truly national status. Historically the national level is a continuation of the political press system: the main organs used to be read all over the country. Even *Helsingin Sanomat* has that background, although it is a combination of journalism and job advertising that has constructed its national coverage. For “Swedish Finland”, the Helsinki daily *Hufvudstadsbladet* has a national status.

The regional level is the core of the daily press in Finland. Also *Helsingin Sanomat* is primarily regional, as a majority of its printing is distributed in metropolitan Helsinki area and the province of Uusimaa. Historically the regional level developed as a structure of regional organs of national political parties, though they were founded by people and organizations of the respective region. As the market developed into regional monopolies or almost-monopolies, the remaining newspapers have ushered their political past to the background, although not into oblivion. The number of this level is about 20 Finnish language newspapers and around 25 if the lower stratum of regional papers is counted in. The respective figures for the Swedish language press is 2-6 titles.

But the local level is the one that gets the best coverage. The local press as such covers the entire country; no “empty homesteads” exist. Particularly in rural areas these papers normally enjoy a household coverage of over 90%, occasionally over 100% because of the sale of single issues and the subscriptions by people who have moved from the municipality but kept reading its newspaper.

The subscription pattern in rural areas and in small towns combines the regional and the local. The household reads the regional paper for national and world news and the basic coverage of the region – and it reads the local paper be-

cause it covers in detail the reader's own community. Some of the more educated people even subscribe to *Helsingin Sanomat*. For townspeople the subscribed local paper is sometimes replaced by a free distribution paper relying totally on advertising revenue. But, contrary to especially Denmark, this type of publication is not seriously threatening the subscribed local newspaper, not at least in the rural areas. In the bigger towns the situation is quite different, and the free distribution press may be expanding and targeting at the local advertising revenue of the regional newspapers.

The strength of the local newspaper is in its local nature, which makes it almost unreplaceable as a source of information on local small events. It is not possible for a regional daily to cover that area of news in such detail. On the other hand, the local newspapers do not attempt to cover anything but their own circulation area, which in turn makes possible and necessary the combination of a local and a regional newspaper. (In this article the joint ownership of the two types is not discussed, let it suffice to make a note that it exists.)

It takes at least three bunches of explanations for why the Finnish press structure is the way it is. Firstly, the newspapers in the regional and the local level serve different functions, and both types of papers need to be read. They serve different functions even as advertising media, for both the advertiser and the reader. In the local/regional perspective the national paper, notably *Helsingin Sanomat*, is usually something "extra" – adding to what the regional daily is able to offer.

Secondly, there is the long term development of Finnish society. As was pointed out earlier on the basis of Pekka Mervola's calculations, thanks to popular education and a general positive attitude towards learning and printed word, active literacy was a relatively early phenomenon and made possible the growth of the press.

Economic factors make a third set of explanations. The price of the newspaper has been in the reach of everyman, or at least a large and continuously growing number of people. And if the daily was too expensive, which it was not for many, the local weekly was cheap enough. This goes for the expansion period, and what now worries the newspaper business is the opposite development, boosted by television.

## Notes

1. The figures for calculations are from *Suomen taloushistoria 3*. Historiallinen tilasto. Helsinki: Tammi 1983, 35 (table 1.11).
2. Basic statistics on Finland are in home pages of the Statistics Centre: <http://www.stat.fi/tk/tp/tasku>
3. See <http://www.sanomalehdet.fi/ensimmainen.html>
4. Päiviö Tommila, Suomen sanomalehdistön alkuvaiheet. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 1*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1988, 44-45, 48-49, 53.

5. Tommila, op. cit. 1988, 54-58.
6. Päiviö Tommila, Yhdestä lehdestä sanomalehdistöksi 1809-1859. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 1*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1988, 246-247.
7. Pekka Mervola, Kirja, kirjavampi, sanomalehti. Ulkoasukierre ja suomalaisten sanomalehtien ulkoasu 1771-1994. Jyväskylä & Helsinki: University of Jyväskylä & Finnish Historical Society 1995, 88-93.
8. The following is summarized in Raimo Salokangas, Puoluepolitiikka ja uutisjournalismi muuttuvilla lehtimarkkinoilla. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 2*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1987, 408-409.
9. Salokangas op. cit. 1987, 207.
10. Eeva-Liisa Aalto, Paikallislehdistön alkutaival. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 4*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1985, 28-29.
11. Aalto op. cit. 1985, 46.
12. Eeva-Liisa Aalto & Pirjo Santonen, Millainen on paikallislehti? In *Suomen lehdistön historia 4*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1985, 15.
13. Aalto & Santonen op. cit. 1985, 14.
14. Päiviö Tommila, Yleissuunnitelma ja sen toteuttaminen. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 1*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1988, 17-18.
15. Päiviö Tommila, *Suomen lehdistön levikki ennen vuotta 1860*. Porvoo: WSOY 1963, 145-257.
16. Päiviö Tommila, Suomen sanomalehdistön kehityslinjat. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 3*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1988, 490.
17. Aalto op. cit. 1985, 24-25; Pirjo Santonen, Kasvun vuosikymmenet. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 4*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1985, 144-145.
18. Santonen op. cit. 1985, 143-148.
19. Salokangas op. cit. 1987, 208-209.
20. Veikko Löyttyniemi, Sanomalehdistön rakenne ja talous 1940-luvulta 1980-luvulle. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 3*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1988, 319-321.
21. The history of the Jyväskylä press is thoroughly analyzed by Päiviö Tommila, *Keski-Suomen lehdistö 1-4*. Jyväskylä: Keskisuomalainen 1970, 1973, 1976 and 1979 (the two last volumes with Tuire Raitio).
22. The table is based on the "media issues" of *Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press* (7-8/1993 and 6-7/1996).
23. Toivo Nygård, Poliittisten vastakohtaisuuksien jyrkentyminen sanomalehdistössä. In *Suomen lehdistön historia 2*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila 1987, 21; Salokangas op. cit. 1987, 207; Aalto op. cit. 1985, 22.
24. Jouni Pihlajasaari, *Sitoutumattomaksi ei tulla yhdessä yössä. Viiden maakuntalehden taival puolueen äänenkannattajasta sitoutumattomaksi ykköslehdeksi*. University of Jyväskylä: Unpublished Master's Thesis in Journalism 1996, 14-15.
25. Pihlajasaari op. cit. 1996, 15.
26. *Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press* 6-7/1998.
27. Unless otherwise stated, the following is based on Löyttyniemi op. cit. 1988, 389-391.
28. Jarmo Virmavirta, Julkinen sana ja tuki. *Selvitys lehdistötuen kehittämisestä*. Helsinki: Liikenneministeriö 1992.
29. *Joukkoviestintätilasto* 1995, 214.
30. *Suomen Lehdistö – Finlands Press* 6-7/1998, 7.