

# **Pulp Fiction? Globalizing Industry and Nationalist Rhetoric in Argentina, Uruguay and Finland.**

## ***Part I: Fray Bentos Pulp Mill Discourse in Finnish Media***

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### **Abstract**

The cellulose plant conflict between Argentina and Uruguay is an actual local-global conflict. The conflict includes various time-space levels (local-regional- national-global). It is also a political-economy conflict between private people, business, civil society (NGOs) and the governments in two South American countries. This paper is part of a research project which brings not only Argentinean and Uruguayan perspectives but also the Finnish side's views to the conflict (Finnish mass media, global Finnish paper industry, Finnish NGOs, government). The paper analyses the discussions in Finnish mass media, mainly in *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS), the most important national newspaper in Finland.

### **Background**

The cellulose plant conflict between Argentina and Uruguay exploded when a Finnish cellulose/pulp company Metsa Botnia began construction of a one million ton pulp mill in Fray Bentos on the Uruguay River – a region which is shared by both countries. Also a Spanish cellulose company (ENCE) was planning a pulp mill a few kilometers away on the same river. Together, they would be equivalent to three big pulp mills in Finland, but established in the same place. Concern over the sheer size and potential ecological effects of the mill has created an ongoing local-global conflict. The conflict includes various time-space levels (local–(sub)regional–national–(supra)regional –global). It is also a

political-economy conflict between private actors, business, civil society (NGOs) and the governments in two South American countries. Especially interesting is the new alliance of relatively small ecological NGOs with local social movements, and also, in the Argentinean case, with the government. This raises the question of the use of the conflict for political purposes, from many angles.

At the moment the Argentinean Gualeguaychú's – a town on the opposite side of Botnia's mill – popular movement is organizing an almost permanent blockade of one of the main bridges linking Argentina and Uruguay. Also other bridges have been blocked every now and then. In Argentina, there was a huge growth of ecological consciousness at the beginning of the pulp mill initiatives. Now, after the blocking has been going on for a long period, also critical voices have raised, wondering how a relatively small local popular movement can guide the foreign policy of an entire nation. President Kirchner's motives have been doubted, and the whole conflict has to be evaluated in the context of Argentinean contemporary political and economic history (the economic and political crisis of 2002-2004).

This paper brings not Argentinean and Uruguayan perspectives but the Finnish mass media's views of the conflict (related to global Finnish paper industry, Finnish NGOs, government, etc.). The mass media is creating many of the diplomatic, legal, economic, cultural and political beliefs (and opinions) on the conflict. Critical analysis of the Finnish actors' points of view, actions and behaviour suggests that the Finnish mass media – as companies and state representatives – often have been acting as if Uruguayan River region were a socially and politically “empty space”. The relevance of the research proposal is not just Latin American, but also global – taking into account issues like “moral business”, corporate social responsibility, global ecological and social solidarity. These topics are basically philosophical questions of altruism/egoism.

This paper is part of a research project which will focus, from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, on the reactions of different political actors/communities to regional local-global conflicts. The case study is the economic, legal, ecological, political

and mass media conflict in Fray Bentos, but I will also analyze the impacts of the ongoing free trade negotiations on the political communities in Latin America (Mercosur and in Central America).<sup>1</sup> The empirical comparative material will also deal with two continental, regional or sub-regional integration processes (Mercosur, and Central American Free Trade Agreements with US and EU).

## **A General Framework and Methodological Considerations**

The key questions in my analysis are: Who is speaking? How are different actors using the Fray Bentos conflict? Whose nationalism/identity is concerned? What is the “people’s will”, who has the right to ‘represent the nation’, who defines the ‘right’ perspective and concepts, and which actor/actors of the nation are analyzed? This could also be summarized in the basic political question: who wins and who loses, and how to decide about this? These questions are at the center of theoretical debates on democracy and participation – but they are also questions about the use of political power, or use of the conflict’s “social capital”. Some actors are looking for economic profit, others for votes; some demand ecologically sustainable development, others jobs and safe work places, etc.

Posing such questions highlights the interconnected relations between global actors, states (official sector) and civil society – such as the arguments of transnational market-forces vs. globally acting ecological NGOs and anti- or alter-globalization movements.

In the Fray Bentos case the different actors involved have employed multiple arguments, perspectives or ‘discourses’ (in the sense of critical discourse analysis) to speak about the conflict. At least the following can be found:

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<sup>1</sup> I have done part of this research during my visits in Central America in 2000-2005, and also a PhD student of the project is working on Central American integration and CAFTA (free trade agreements). Many of the conflicts in Central America (in ecological issues, in tourism industry, etc.) give valuable comparative perspective for Argentinean-Uruguayan conflict.

- Ecological discourse (pollution, river area)
- Discourse on work places (more for industry and services/less for tourism)
- Pulp /cellulose –technological discourse (processing technologies)
- Economic (-cultural) discourse
- Discourse on the use/price of land (eucalyptus *vs.* soybean cultivators)
- Free trade discourse (tax free zone, ‘maquiladoras’)
- Discourse of the international organizations (Mercosur, EU, UN, International Court of Justice)
- Discourse on the size of the pulp mill (“big is efficient” *vs.* “big is an ecological monster”)
- Political discourse, included obviously in all discourses, but understood here as above, who wins, who loses
- Beliefs (mostly created and fed by the media)

The research project will compare different Argentinean, Uruguayan and Finnish forms of speech/discourses and mass media discussions of nationalism, local/regional identity and economy (economy understood also as industrial or economic ‘cultures’). The research materials will include a wide sample of newspapers and other materials in media. Also official governmental documents, reports and materials of paper industry and NGOs will be used. Semi structured interviews has already been conducted with business, government and NGO representatives in EU and Latin America.

A more general hypothesis of the research project claims that the possibilities of sovereign decision-making, be it national or regional, have changed considerably during the last decades. One of the central presuppositions of the project is that the rapidly globalizing pulp industry brings with it various kinds of challenges on the national and regional political decision-making in Latin America. In particular, I will focus on the changes in the concepts of political community and democratic participation – asking how to open the globalized ideological conflicts to more democratic politics, and what kind of role do the ecological conflicts (or local-global conflicts) have in these processes.

Methodologically the project will look at the conflict in Fray Bentos from various points of view. I have developed an interdisciplinary model or conceptual chain to contextualize the study. The project analyzes the conflict (comparatively in Argentina, Uruguay and

Finland) from the perspective of theories of nationalism and political economy, using the following “conceptual entities”:

- Culture / religion / tradition (linguistic, “ethnic”)
- Region / space / area; borders / frontiers
- Political movement / ideology
- Conflict / war
- Period / historical moment
- Personalism / populism
- Regionalism, nationalism (vs. integration)
- Symbols

*Nationalism* in the Fray Bentos conflict is also analyzed as:

- Movement (political, social, ecological or cultural)
- “Feeling”, sentiments or identity
- Ideology / political programme
- Official culture and laws vs. local/popular cultures

## **A Finnish Pulp Mill in Uruguay – Why?**

The decision to make a Pulp Mill in Uruguay dates from 1990 when a Finnish Forest and Paper Company UPM’s predecessor Kymmene Company began to study eucalyptus cultivation in Uruguay. Kymmene was a co-owner – with Shell – in the company called *Compania Forestal Oriental S.A.* (FOSA) since its foundation in 1990. The first idea was to transport the fast-growing eucalyptus fibre to the Kymmene’s European pulp factories. In 2003 Shell sold its part of FOSA to the Finnish company.

Although the Fray Bentos pulp mill project is executed by Botnia it is important to highlight that UPM has a 47% holding in Botnia. In 2003, The company founded Botnia S.A in Uruguay whose agreed ownership is Botnia 82.1%, UPM 12.4% and Metsäliitto 5.5%. Botnia S.A. is responsible for carrying out the construction, and the company’s name has in that way symbolized the conflict – but the gigantic UPM holds the majority of the Botnia S.A in Uruguay (47% of Botnia, and 12.4% directly).

To start the construction of a pulp mill in Uruguay was part of a logical economic process – there were already existing eucalyptus cultivations in the country. The Uruguayan thick soil and water resources are appropriate for eucalyptus industrial cultivation, and there are no restrictions or limitations to ownership of land or businesses by foreign interests. Land records are up-dated. Uruguay also grants equal treatment for national and foreign investors. The new rules created in Uruguay during the last five years were developed to promote forestry investment and they provide a nearly tax-free investment. There are no restrictions to repatriation of capital or profits. Plantations are exempt from land taxes, and there is no income or earnings tax for companies or individuals for the sale of timber products. Equipment and supplies imported for forestry operations are exempt from tariffs and import duties (comp. <http://www.ififorestry.com/uruguay.html>)

From the foreign capital's point of view also the non-existing indigenous population is a benefit – the land owning disputes, familiar in Brazil, are not expected in Uruguay. The “democratic culture” of Uruguay (not counting the military dictatorship of 1972-1985!) has also created, in the Latin American context, a more uncorrupted political tradition. Uruguayan “democratic culture” has also created welfare state traditions which still somehow survive in a strange mixture of neo-liberal and socialist government of the last years. The country still has a high literacy rates and good educational system available to most citizens.

Botnia is enjoying all these advantages in Uruguay. Inside Uruguay, the Fray Bentos region is strategically an excellent place for a pulp mill. The region has experience of industrial culture (Anglo meat industry), there is an excellent water transport system for ports, etc., and the eucalyptus plantations are near enough (source: Botnia, Sami Saarela, interview July 23, 2007).

The structural and global trends in paper and pulp industry are the background for these changes. The raw materials and labour in traditional forestry countries like Finland cannot satisfy the growing use of paper's raw material, 175 million tons of cellulose per

year<sup>2</sup>. Logically, the trend has been to create pulp mills next to the new eucalyptus plantations, in Asian countries and in Latin American countries like Brazil or Uruguay. From these places the pulp is transported (mainly shipped) to the paper factories near by the biggest markets.

This kind of tropical industry is at the moment very profitable. Making the pulp in countries like Brazil or Uruguay means that the profit is double, compared with a pulp mill in Finland. The eucalyptus grows much faster than the traditional Nordic fibre wood species. The transportation of the wood is much cheaper, and the plantations are near by the factory. Also the labour force is cheaper – and there are lot of tax advantages, as already mentioned above. A cellulose plant in Latin America is like a “tropical moneymaking machine” (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 16.4.2007) – at least until the restrictions and regulations are being developed in the countries of the region.

## **Fray Bentos Pulp Mill discourse in Finnish Media**

In this paper the focus of the national rhetoric is on the Finnish mass media, and on the main national newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS). HS published over 150 articles or news stories on the Fray Bentos pulp factory and consequent dispute from the beginning of 2005 until July 2007. Six of these were editorials, six were expert articles and five were letters to the editor. After Fray Bentos pulp factory project has turned more controversial in the beginning of 2006, HS articles transmitted more often value statements and strengthened nationalist stereotypes. The editorials took clear positions on the dispute, supporting mainly Metsä-Botnia Corporation or Uruguayan government positions.

### ***Stereotypes***

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<sup>2</sup> Comp. Botnia's pulp mill in Fray Bentos, sixth biggest in the world, produces only one million ton of cellulose per year.

HS articles characterized repeatedly Argentinean government as “strongly nationalistic” (which is not used in reference to for example of Uruguayan or Finnish government – or of the US government). The Argentinean government is also mentioned to be a follower of Peronist tradition: “Right and left wing Peronists are bound by nationalism [...] nationalistic Kirchner certainly is [...] roots of Kirchner are more on the left, but the final blend is his own. The strong role of the wife fits well to the Peronist tradition [...] According to another evaluation the dispute evoking nationalism is pleasing Kirchner and will continue at least over the next elections” (Foreign 31.3.07).

Articles portray repeatedly Argentinean politics as emotional, irrational and nepotistic, directed by vested interests, so that “the nationalistic passion disturbing world trade” accounted for the emergency of the pulp factory dispute: “Argentinean politicians could not contain themselves to keep background [...] according to them Kirchner advocates particularly Argentinean cause” (Editorial 24.4.06); “Fervent talks of Argentinean leaders” (Radio and TV 7.6.2006); “partly due the prestige” (Economy 22.11.06); “Not a single significant politician has questioned the claim over 'the monster factory’” (Economy 8.3.07); “The motives of Argentina are related to the coming presidential elections” (Economy 1.9.2006); “Romana Piccolotti, Mr Thailant’s wife, the director of CEDHA NGO, used to be director of CEDHA, before she became the Minister of the Environment of Argentina” (Economy 22.11.06).

The view of the Finnish ambassador of the weakness of Argentinean democracy has been widely repeated as a fact also in HS: “According to the ambassador the generally poor trust of the authorities is mainly due to the historical reasons. For example, there is only about twenty years from the end of the military dictatorship (1976-1983) in Argentina [Uruguayan dictatorship, 1972-1985, is not mentioned!] . Rooting the democracy and institutional strengthening takes time”(Economy 13.3.06); “In the question is not the environmental consequence of the factory, but among the other things functionality of Argentinean and Uruguayan democracies [...] the origin of the dispute is in the deficiencies of the Argentinean and Uruguayan democracies” (Editorial 24.4.06).



The dispute is personified and explained by “leftist nationalism” of Kirchner and Cristina Fernández, and by other negative characteristics attached to them, where HS journalists can go quite far: “The fuss in Argentina on the environmental consequences of the pulp factory was based on the general distrust of the authorities and of pulp factories, as well as ‘personal populist social-climbing’ of Kirchner, instead of *facts*” (Editorial 27.11.06); “Very few would claim that Néstor Kirchner is a gentleman” (Foreign 31.3.07); “A political commentator remarks that Kirchner has distaste of, besides diplomats and journalist, also of business leaders, among the others” (Foreign 31.3.07); “He does not hide his distaste of big international investors. At home he fouls his enemies in the quicksand” (Economy 29.4.06); “Kirchner’s conception of the democracy and the modern market economy seems to be thin” (Editorial 29.4.06); “Argentina is furious that the billion investment is being built outside the borders of the country, and that is why the president of Argentina supports sabotaging of the factory project” (Sunday 19.3.06).

From the beginning of the conflict specially Jorge Busti, the governor of Entre Rios province, was claimed to be the cause of the dispute in several articles: “The main figure in the antifactory movement is Jorge Busti, the governor of the province of Entre Rios” (Economy 2.1.06, Int ed 10.1.), but later while dispute became critical he is suddenly found to be more conciliatory.

The social movement against Metsä-Botnia pulp factory is often presented as being directed by Argentinean government, especially after the quarrel heated up in 2006: “Argentina orders the opponents back from the blockade” (Economy 23.5.07); “All the protest marches has been executed under the sympathetic eyes of Argentinean authorities” (Economy 22.11.06); “The Argentinean opponent of the pulp factory was commissioned: the lawyer opposing Metsä-Botnia pulp factory has been nominated as the highest environmental civil servant of Argentina” (title in Economy 22.6.06); “According the experts, the Argentinean government could stop the demonstrations of the environmental movement if it liked to do so”[...] “Kirchner conducts the dispute by baton” (Sunday 30.4.06).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, this is true, because in some other recent Argentinean bridge-blockades – inside

It is common to confuse Argentinean social movements, the nation and the government. Social movement, Gualeguaychú inhabitants and activists are being repeatedly described by negative terms, like that the activists “threaten” something: “Despite the opposition of the Argentina, Botnia factory has been built in Uruguay. Argentineans blocked the border river bridges as protest” (Economy & Work 25.3.07); “The demonstrators create a disturbance” (Economy 31.7.06); “Part of the members are fundamentalists, who support road blockade and other non-violent extremist means” (Economy 23.5.07); “Nothing can make gualeguaychúans to compromise” (Economy 8.3.07); “According the Botnian representative, the organisation talks ‘full rubbish’”(Economy 22.11.06); “Gualeguaychúan is not allowed publicly support the factory on the opposite river side” (Economy 4.6.07); “Opposing Botnia has become many Gualeguaychúans purpose in life” (Economy 23.5.07). So, the Gualeguaychúans are not *rational*, as the Uruguayans and the global paper industry, they just *want* to protest. In this way the Argentineans in the frontier region are described just from a single perspective: they are “hot heads”, irrational, populist – somehow they cannot be taken in to account seriously, compared, for example, with other players of the conflict. Also it is said indirectly, between the lines, that there are persons in Entre Ríos who could support the factory, but the local authoritative and strict movement does not allow other opinions.

HS articles quite often strengthen nationalistic stereotypes and describe Argentineans as whole as arrogant, inconsistent and unreliable while Uruguayans are presented as conciliatory and trustworthy – Argentineans “demand” while Uruguayan “wish”: “The neighbour does not comply to participate” [...] they do not accept in Argentina [...] Uruguayan Cancela hopes” (Economy & Work 25.3.07); “Vasquez appeals” (Foreign 23.7.06); “Luis Molinuevo proclaims” (Economy 8.3.07); “Abrupt statements especially

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Argentina – the army has opened the roads. One explanation of the whole Gualeguaychú’s case is that Kirchner’s government is afraid of the nation-wide ‘piqueteros’-movement – which might arise if the Argentinean army would go to open the bridge in the Uruguayan river. So many presidents fell in riots after the crisis of 2002. Probably in Kirchner’s government there is some will to try to solve the international conflict with Uruguay and Mercosur, but at this moment – before the elections of October 2007 – it could be too risky. At least some kind of ‘victory’ should be realized. For example, if Argentina would gain the case of the Uruguayan River Treaty of 1975 in the International Court of Hague – and Uruguay would be condemned to pay some fines – this could create political conditions in Argentina to resolve the blockings.

in Argentina” (Economy 7.3.07); “Kirchner declares [...] Vasquez is clearly careful not to counter” (Economy 7.3.07); “Representatives of Argentina attack fiercely against Finnish Fray Bentos pulp factory project” (Economy 9.6.06); “brawling of Argentina” (Economy 6.5.06); “Is this attitude not an overexaggeration? Does Argentinean not understand market economy? (Sunday 30.4.06); “Argentinean messages are contradictory” (Sunday 30.4.06).

Sometimes also the normally positively described Uruguayans get their share of being “latinos”. In some articles the efficiency of the Finnish directors is contrasted to the laziness of Uruguayan workers or irrational functioning of Uruguayan labour market: “Construction workers are ‘slow’ and they converse too much during the work time [...] workers go to solidarity strike regardless what happens” (Economy 14.5.07); “Workers panic due the accidents” (Economy 11.7.06).

### *The “facts” and beliefs*

In HS, the supremacy of Finns in communication is mostly taken for granted, and Finns are not seen to distribute propaganda but facts, and the representatives of Metsä-Botnia are seen to comment always honestly without emotions. Metsä-Botnia is seen as an innocent victim of internal disputes of Latin America, where the truthful information distributed by the Metsä-Botnia is not getting due attention: “They got clear answer from Botnia” (Economy 7.3.07); “Is told from company” (Economy 23.9.06); “Metsä-Botnia passed information” (Economy 14.7.06); “The embassy wants to make sure that there is around right information on Finnish environmental policy and forest industry” (Economy 15.3.06); “Metsä-Botnia has been caught to the situation where it is in the position of a victim” (Editorial 24.4.06); “The information passed by Metsä-Botnia has not reached Argentineans” (Economy & Work 11.6.06); “Botnia has made enough ‘gestures’” (title Economy 13.4.06); “Company seeks to shoot down prejudices” (Economy 15.3.06).

After long dispute in June 2007, HS reports: “Metsä-Botnia admits shortcoming in the communication of the Uruguay project” (title Economy 4.6.2007) – interestingly, not

even Botnia's Finnish construction workers in Fray Bentos consider the Finnish media coverage very truthful: "Many of us are amazed when relatives in Finland are afraid" (Economy 14.5.07).

HS coverage communicates Finnish qualitative supremacy in general and Finnish technical talent especially. When referring to the pulp factory, the Finnish high technology is all the time emphasised ("The most modern factory in the world"), which automatically leads to the unpollution. Consequently, questioning the pollution-free image of high technology is seen irrational: Finland and Metsä-Botnia are presented as technologically high standard and modern, in opposition to the unmodern Argentinians or Latin Americans, who irrationally opposes modernisation: "The factory has been promoted by 'Finnish quality'" (Economy 14.5.07); "If the most modern factory of the world is discovered dangerous, and will be ordered to close down, one will pay attention to the much older factories of Argentina itself" (Economy 1.9.06); "The processes in the factory will exploit best available technology" (Economy 10.5.06); "Metsä-Botnia pulp factory used most recent and best possible technology" (Economy 27.4.06); "The question is not the lack of the knowledge, as they claim, but the lack of the will to understand" (Economy 30.8.06); "For the Gualeguaychúans there is only one truth: pulp factories either exist, or do not exist at all" (Economy 13.3.06).

The question of 'truth' and 'beliefs' is very interesting. The Botnia's representatives' slogan has repeatedly been "Whatever we say in Botnia, there is always a belief in the Argentinean side, and they always clutch in their beliefs". (Kaisu Annala, Seminar "Lens Política", Sept 9, 2006) This is one way of using discursive power: the 'truth' lies in the belief of technological supremacy – like in the opinions arguing for the 100% safety of nuclear power ("we know, believe, think... that there is no risk" – although it is obvious that the use of high technology always brings new kind of risks, and there is no 100% sure technology). On the other hand, there are same kind of "facts" on the Argentinean pulp mill opponents' side: "Finland is a colonialist, imperialist or fascist country"; "Pulp factories were thrown out from Finland because they were contaminating all the rivers in

Finland”, “Finns are terrorists”<sup>4</sup>.

The final resolution of the conflict depends on promoting of “the democratic learning culture” – this means that the representatives of both sides should openly try to understand the points (beliefs and truths) of the ‘opponent’. The engineer should try to understand – or at least listen to – the logic of the ecological activist, and vice versa. Difficult, but the truth is always... “somewhere there” (comp. de Sousa Santos 2002; Freire 1972).

### *National symbols attacked – and the Nation defended?*

In editorial articles HS transmits and is worried over the discredit of the Finnish national symbols and myths: “Big blond men are now walking in the streets” [of Fray Bentos] ... ‘homeuruguayans’ are those who have gone to forestry polytechnic in Finland” (Economy 14.5.07); “Argentinean demonstrators pushed the Finnish flag to the waste water reservoir [...] it shows deep historical sense of the activists that in last October demonstrators waved the blue cross flag where a skull had been drawn with the words of ‘Auschwitz Finlandia’ [...] Argentineans, those embracing cherishers of Nazi criminals” (Foreign 10.2.07); “She felt allegations of the Argentineans in her heart” (Foreign 10.2.07); “Correcting the misunderstandings over home country was felt almost as a national obligation” (Economy & Work 11.6.06).

Still, HS disposition toward the role of the government of Finland in the dispute is contradictory and varies according to the context – mostly Metsä-Botnia is described as ‘Finnish’, but in the dispute context it is often referred as an international company. On the one hand, the claim of the foreign trade minister Paula Lehtomäki – that the Finnish government has no role whatsoever in the case – is accepted without doubt. It is repeated that the government should have nothing to do with the markets. But on the other hand, especially at the beginning of the dispute, it is reported how Finnish embassy promotes

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<sup>4</sup> The word “terrorist” has been, interestingly, used by both sides of the conflict. Also the Uruguayan and Botnia representatives have used this concept (mainly off the record) when describing the

project, and how the Finnish public export credit agency Finnvera secures the pulp mill construction. The Finland is also described as a small country, in a nationalist way: “The big Argentina tries to block by economic pressure the construction of Finnish pulp factory” (Editorial 5.6.07); “Promoting Botnia pulp factory has occupied small embassy during the last months” (Economy 8.12.05); “Mother country of Botnia” (Economy 13.3.06); “Lehtomäki defends Botnia in Uruguay” (title Economy 27.4.06); “The dispute over the pulp factory does not belong to the government[...] Finnish government is not a party in a row, and should not in any case to prepare oneself to be in that position” (Editorial 24.4.06).

## Conclusion

This preliminary study on the Finnish media’s role on an actual global-local conflict shows that the traditional stereotypes survive in the core of the national media. Also the beliefs on the ‘exotic other’, far away, are easily justified and constructed by the media. The Finnish government’s carefully built image of the efficient, honest and technologically superior Nordic culture is presented and repeated by the media quite uncritically.<sup>5</sup> A negative attitude of the Argentinians is felt like something surprising: how the Argentinians, our old ‘tango-friends’ have changed their opinion on us so suddenly? And the Finnish media goes to contra attack: all the Argentinians are irrational, undemocratic, and quick-tempered. They do not understand what is happening in the world, they are somehow backward people who cannot follow the way to the progress and development which made Finland as a rich welfare country. The media neither make big difference on what are Botnia and Kymmene (global or transnational companies), what are the Finnish government and the Finnish people. The image is mainly “those Latin Americans against us”. Some critical voices that have arisen – pointing on the structural changes in the global forest industry – are marginal in the media. Mainly these have been news explaining how pulp or paper companies in Finland

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Gualeguaychúans blocking the bridges.

<sup>5</sup> Also the national TV-channels – not analyzed here in detail– repeat mainly the same image of the

are closing factories and dismissing workers. The media does not understand what is happening in the global paper industry – or then it understands it perfectly, and accepts these structural changes without any critique. The paper industry, the ‘green gold’ of Finland, is still in the main media like a sacred cow, felt like ‘our’, not part of the new globalized and neo-liberal world economy.

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conflict. A negative image of Finnishness (outside of Finland) is not accepted easily.

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