The Quiet Opposition: How the Pro-Economy Lobby Influences Climate Policy

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The quiet opposition: How the pro-economy lobby influences climate policy

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ABSTRACT

The lack of ambitious climate change policies in large anglophone countries, such as the United States, has been explained by the strong media presence of denialist arguments against climate science. Such counterarguments are less visible in the news media of most European countries. Why do many of these countries nevertheless fail to enact ambitious climate change policies? This paper suggests that influential organizations may block ambitious climate change policies in corporatist countries without an extensive media strategy or a strong denialist message. We draw from theories on the policy process, policy networks, influence strategies, and comparative politics to formulate hypotheses about the existence, influence, and strategies of organizations that oppose ambitious climate policy. We test these hypotheses using an original combination of media data and survey data on the national climate policy network in Finland, a corporatist European country that has long lacked ambitious climate policies. The findings show that a coalition that prioritizes economic competitiveness over climate change mitigation is influential and occupies a central position in the policy network. This pro-economy lobby does not question the validity of climate science or actively seek media visibility. Rather, it influences the policy process using other strategies, such as inside lobbying, and appears in the news media less often than other climate policy organizations. Our results suggest that opponents of climate change mitigation can be powerful despite a weak media presence. This implies that studies on climate politics should pay more attention to strategies of influencing beyond the media spotlight.

1. Introduction

Political efforts to mitigate climate change have faced significant opposition from fossil fuel and energy-intensive industries, right wing political parties, and other organizations that fear mitigation policies will impede economic growth (e.g., Dunlap and McCright, 2015; Perrow and Pulver, 2015). In some of the largest emitter countries, such as the United States and Australia, these opponents are highly visible in the news media (e.g., Boykoff and Boykoff, 2004; Kukkonen et al., 2018; McKnight, 2010; Painter and Ashe, 2012). Their media visibility is the result of successful public relations campaigns aimed at blocking mitigation policies they view as too ambitious. The most famous example of such campaigning is the denialist conservative countermovement, which has forcefully cast doubt on the anthropogenic cause of climate change with the purpose of sweeping the issue away from the political agenda in the United States (e.g., Dunlap and McCright, 2015; Farrell, 2016; McCright and Dunlap, 2003).

Based on the association between denialists' presence in the media and the lack of ambitious climate policies in countries such as the United States, it would be tempting to conclude that the successful media strategies employed by denialists are a necessary condition for weak climate policies. However, the literature argues that denialism's strong media presence is mainly limited to a few anglophone countries, such as the United States and Australia, and some Eastern European countries and that denialist counterarguments are absent from or marginal in the media of most Western Europe countries and in India, for example (e.g., Antilla, 2005; Aykut et al., 2012; Boykoff and Boykoff, 2004; Brüggemann and Engesser, 2017; Dispensa and Brulle, 2003; Kukkonen et al., 2018; McKnight, 2010; Painter and Ashe, 2012; Rhomberg, 2016; Shehata and Hopmann, 2012; Lopera and Moreno, 2014). In fact, it is puzzling that despite the low media visibility of counterarguments in many countries, hardly any of them have enacted policies commensurate with the scientific consensus on the need to mitigate climate change, and global emissions levels remain on a trajectory that will result in dangerous levels of global warming (IPCC, 2018). Examples of countries in which climate change policies have been relatively weak despite the low media presence of counterarguments include Austria, Finland, and Ireland (Gronow and Ylä-Anttila, 2019; Germanwatch, 2019; Kukkonen et al., 2020; Rhomberg, 2016; Tobin, 2017; Wagner and Payne, 2017; Wagner and Ylä-Anttila, 2018).

This paper aims to solve this puzzle by asking whether there is a *quiet opposition* operating outside the media spotlight in countries in which arguments against climate change mitigation are marginal in the

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media but which nevertheless do not enact ambitious climate change policies. In analyzing the case of Finland, we examine whether opposition can be found in the networks of organizations that aim to influence climate change policy and whether opponents of mitigation policies prefer strategies other than operating through the media. Drawing from theories on the policy process, policy networks, influence strategies, and comparative politics, we formulate hypotheses about the existence, influence, and strategies of organizations that oppose ambitious climate policy. We test the hypotheses using an original combination of media data and survey data on the national climate policy network. We argue that Finland is a most likely case to find such a quiet opposition because it is a corporatist country (Jahn, 2016; Lijphart, 2012), in which selected economic interest groups—business interests and trade unions—are tightly connected to public authorities and can rely on these connections to influence policy making on various issues, including environmental policy.

Our results show that a substantial minority of organizations—-about a quarter of all organizations in the network—prioritize economic competitiveness over mitigation. These organizations' opposition to mitigation is thus based on economic considerations; they do not deny the validity of climate science. The members of this pro-economy coalition occupy core positions in the policy network, are connected to key government ministries, and are perceived as influential by other climate policy organizations. We also find, however, that this coalition's members are less visible in the media than other organizations in the network. Thus, the reason for their weak media visibility is not their peripheral role as policy actors or their lack of influence; instead, we show that they do not even actively seek media attention and instead rely on inside lobbying as a means of influencing policy. Opposition to climate change mitigation therefore exists, and oppositional actors are considered influential but remain relatively quiet in the media.

These findings contribute to the current research on the opposition to climate change mitigation (e.g., Boussalis and Coan, 2016; Brulle, 2019; Dunlap and McCright, 2015; Farrell, 2016; McCright and Dunlap, 2000, 2003) by showing that opponents rely on different strategies in different types of political systems. Particularly in corporatist European countries, powerful actors can block ambitious mitigation policies without extensive media strategies and without a strong denialist message. Power need not always be media power (cf. Castells, 2009). These findings also contribute to the policy process literature by showing how influential advocacy coalitions (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Weible et al., 2011) can influence policy processes in different ways in different types of polities. Our findings therefore suggest that a behind-the-scenes strategy may be more appropriate in corporatist polities, such as Finland, while a confrontational media strategy may work better in pluralist (see Lijphart, 2012) polities, such as the United States.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

The conservative countermovement in the United States is probably the best-known and most extensively studied case of how economic interest groups and other organizations have opposed mitigation policies. Important actors in this movement are industry-funded conservative think tanks (Boussalis and Coan, 2016; McCright and Dunlap, 2003), but the movement also includes other types of actors, such as trade associations, foundations, and lobbying firms (Brulle, 2019, p. 18; Farrell, 2016, p. 370). The main counterclaim these contrarian organizations have used to obstruct ambitious mitigation policies is denialism, which is the argument that scientific evidence of anthropogenic climate change is too weak to be taken seriously (McCright and Dunlap, 2003, p. 354).

The conservative countermovement has used a wide variety of strategies to oppose climate legislation. While these strategies include direct communication with politicians in congressional hearings and other forums (Brulle, 2019, p. 2; McCright and Dunlap, 2003), an essential part of the toolkit of conservative organizations has been influencing the media and public opinion. To this end, they have published press releases, op-eds, books, and newsletters in addition to buying radio advertisements and spreading their messages online (Boussalis and Coan, 2016, p. 90; Farrell, 2016; Jacques et al., 2008; McCright and Dunlap, 2000, 2003). The U.S. news media has given considerable visibility to the conservative movement's denialist counterclaims (Boykoff, 2013; Boykoff and Boykoff, 2004; Brüggemann and Engesser, 2017; McCright and Dunlap, 2003; Painter and Ashe, 2012). Studies have identified two main reasons for the high visibility of denialism in the U.S. media. First, journalists seek to fulfill the ideal of objective reporting and include denialist arguments to cover "both sides of the story" (Boykoff and Boykoff, 2004; McCright and Dunlap, 2003, p. 366). Second, denialist arguments have gained media visibility due to ideological media biases, particularly in conservative media outlets, such as Fox News and News Corp (Brüggemann and Engesser, 2017; Dunlap and McCright, 2015, p. 316–17). Scholars have argued that the media's backing of denialist counterclaims has been an important element of the conservative movement's success in opposing mitigation policies (e.g., McCright and Dunlap, 2003).

Denialism has been much less visible in the media of many European countries. Nevertheless, many European countries have also lacked ambitious climate change policies. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that there exists an influential opposition to climate change mitigation even though it is not visible in the media. Important questions and research gaps emerge from this puzzle: who are the opponents of ambitious mitigation policies in these European countries? What strategies do they use? Why are they influential despite the low media visibility of their contrarian views?

We draw on three bodies of literature to solve this puzzle: (1) the literature on policy networks and policy processes, (2) the literature on influence strategies, and (3) the comparative politics literature that examines the differences between corporatist and pluralist polities. First, the literature on policy networks and policy processes focuses on collaboration and other network relationships between organizations that aim to influence policy processes (e.g., Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Knoke, 1994; Ylä-Anttila et al., 2018a). From this perspective, actors' structural positions in the policy network are important in determining their success in influencing decision-making (Knoke, 1994). For example, interest groups may gain leverage in the policy process by establishing tight linkages with other powerful actors, such as government agencies (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Moreover, political actors may form advocacy coalitions with like-minded actors to pool their resources and increase their influence (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). This theoretical perspective thus highlights the linkages and coalitions between political actors and the overall network structure of their connections when explaining who is influential in policy processes.

Second, the literature on influence strategies distinguishes between largely nonpublic insider strategies that target policy makers through, for instance, direct lobbying and participation in formal policy making (e.g., hearings), and public outsider strategies in which groups utilize media to build support for their cause (Binderkrantz, 2008; Dür and Mateo, 2016; Schlozman and Tierney, 1983). Influence strategies and policy network structures are related, as network structures may affect the usefulness and efficacy of different advocacy strategies. Political actors with strong connections to like-minded government officials may be able to secure their interests by utilizing these connections and therefore do not have to resort to outside lobbying. Government organizations and interest groups may thus form exclusive, close-knit coalitions that enjoy a policy monopoly (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) in a policy subsystem. An archetypical example of such exclusive coalitions are "iron triangles", in which interest groups work in tandem with government bodies (Adams, 1981). Actors that enjoy a policy monopoly maintained by coalition structures may not need to rely on media strategies as extensively as the challengers of the policy monopoly who try to break it from the outside (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; De

Bruycker and Beyers, 2015; Hanegraaff et al., 2016).

Third, the comparative politics literature suggests that although coalitions between economic interest groups and government organizations exist in many countries, they are typical of the corporatist interest group systems found in many European countries (Christiansen et al., 2010; Lijphart, 2012; Siaroff, 1999). In pluralist systems, such as that of the United States, interest group politics is competitive and uncoordinated (Lijphart, 2012, p. 158); numerous independent interest groups compete for policy makers' attention and try to persuade them of the benefits of their preferred policy solutions. In contrast, in corporatist systems, selected economic interest groups, particularly the peak associations representing business and labor, often enjoy an institutionalized position in policy making, and governments negotiate important policy changes with them in a tripartite fashion (Christiansen et al., 2010; Lijphart, 2012). This means that economic interest groups can secure their preferred policy solutions and block unwanted policy changes. For this reason, studies suggest that corporatist power structures can hinder the adoption of ambitious mitigation policies (e.g., Dryzek et al., 2003).

In this paper, we test the proposition that corporatist power structures allow actors who see the economy as more important than the environment (pro-economy actors, in short) to exert considerable influence on climate change policy by relying on inside lobbying without the need of an extensive media strategy. To do this, we draw on the three bodies of literature mentioned above to propose a set of specific hypotheses about the composition, structural position, influence, and strategies of the coalition of pro-economy organizations in a climate policy network in a corporatist context, that is, Finland.

Finland's climate policy has long been marked by a lack of ambition (Gronow and Ylä-Anttila, 2019; Koch and Fritz, 2014), which leads us to assume that there is an influential coalition of actors that opposes ambitious climate policies. What kind of organizations can we expect to find in this coalition? Because the energy-intensive technology and metal industries and the forestry and agriculture sectors have traditionally been important economic sectors in Finland, the most likely candidates to oppose ambitious mitigation policies are interest groups defending their interests. In a corporatist country such as Finland, trade unions also enjoy a strong position in policy making (Jahn, 2016; Lijphart, 2012). Thus, in the context of climate policy, trade unions representing heavy industries may take the side of business interest groups in opposing ambitious climate policies because they fear that ambitious mitigation measures would lead to job losses. The government wants to secure economic growth and high employment, and therefore, we expect key ministries responsible for economic policies to belong to the pro-economy coalition. Therefore, it is likely that economic interest groups have ideological allies in ministries, which is a key factor explaining interest groups' lobbying success, according to a previous study (Baumgartner et al., 2009, p. 204–212).

Corporatism emerged particularly in small European states with open economies (e.g., Nordic, Benelux, and Central European countries) in which centralized wage coordination was practiced to increase national economic competitiveness—to cut the expenses of export-intensive firms (Katzenstein, 1985). In our case country, Finland, the idea of national competitiveness has been widely shared by the political elite, which has facilitated consensus building between labor, business, and the state (Kantola and Kananen, 2013; Lounasmeri and Ylä-Anttila, 2015). The idea of national competitiveness also plays an important role in climate policy discourses (Teräväinen, 2010). Therefore, we expect to find a coalition of business interests, trade unions, and governmental organizations united by their belief (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014) that national economic competitiveness is more important than climate change mitigation.

H1. The climate policy network includes a coalition of business organizations, trade unions, and ministries that prioritize economic competitiveness over climate change mitigation.

Even though we assume that there is a coalition that prioritizes the economy over climate change mitigation, we do not assume we will find outright denialist views that would attack climate science among the pro-economy actors or other organizations. This assumption is based on two things. First, experts and expert knowledge play an important role in corporatism because they "provide a common framework and acceptable data" that facilitates consensus-building (Katzenstein, 1985, p. 88). Expert knowledge is therefore usually respected in a corporatist policy making culture. In the context of our study, expert knowledge relates to climate science, and we expect denialist voices questioning the validity of climate science to be almost nonexistent.

Second, denialism is a strategy that essentially aims to use the so-called second face of power—agenda control (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962)—to eliminate climate change from the political agenda (Dunlap and McCright, 2015). This entails a total rejection of climate change mitigation efforts and aims to kill any related policy initiatives or proposals. Comparative lobbying studies suggest that outright opposition to policy proposals is more common in the United States than in Europe, where lobbying is more often about efforts to modify existing policy proposals (e.g., Woll, 2012). This difference can also be observed in the context of climate policy processes in which European business associations tend to lobby for mitigation measures that impose the fewest expenses on their own sectors instead of categorically opposing all mitigation policies (Kentala-Lehtonen, 2019; Meckling, 2015). Therefore, we propose the hypothesis below.

H2. The climate policy network does not include organizations that hold denialist views.

The existence of a coalition that holds economic counterviews on mitigation can explain the lack of ambitious climate change policies if that coalition has enough influence to translate its beliefs into policies (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). The literature on policy networks and processes has taken two complementary approaches to assessing influence. First, from a structural perspective, the network positions that policy actors hold can themselves act as sources of power (Knoke, 1994). From this perspective, organizations that hold core positions in collaboration networks and have close contacts with organizations that have the authority to make political decisions (e.g., ministries) are more influential than other actors (e.g., Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014, p. 198). In corporatist systems, the main business and labor organizations have close relationships with the economic ministries (e.g., Vesa et al., 2018). Therefore, we expect to find these actors that belong to the pro-economy coalition to occupy central positions in the policy network. Second, network scholars have conceptualized influence as reputational power (Fischer and Sciarini, 2015; Hunter, 1953; Ingold and Leifeld, 2016). The logic of this concept is that the actors involved in a specific policy domain are best placed to evaluate which other actors are influential. We hypothesize that the actors in the pro-economy coalition are perceived as influential by other actors.

H3. Pro-economy actors occupy central positions in the network and are perceived as influential.

Next, we expect that the pro-economy coalition prefers inside strategies and uses media lobbying less than other organizations in the network. There are two reasons for this expectation. First, the research on influence strategies shows that in corporatist polities, economic interest groups are more likely to prefer inside lobbying over media strategies compared to citizen groups, such as environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOs) (e.g., Binderkrantz, 2008; Kerrissey and Schofer, 2018). In corporatist systems, selected economic interest groups have an institutionalized position in policy making and collaborate closely with public officials (Beyers, 2002; Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Vesa et al., 2018). This makes nonpublic channels of interpersonal communication effective and leaves the media less space as an arena for policy debates (Koch-Baumgarten and Voltmer, 2010, p. 222). The situation is markedly different in pluralist systems, such as that of the United States, where numerous lobbyists compete fiercely for policy makers' attention and rely more extensively on media

strategies to attract it (Hanegraaff et al., 2017; Mahoney, 2008; Woll, 2012).

Most importantly, the privileged position of economic interest groups in corporatist systems gives them a lot of leeway to secure their interests. Together with their ideological allies in government ministries (see H1 above), economic groups can be expected to enjoy a policy monopoly (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) in climate politics. In a situation in which they can already effectively influence policy through inside strategies, there is no need to invest in extensive public communication campaigns, which can be very expensive (see Kollman, 1998). The situation is likely to be different for ENGOs. Studies show that those who oppose governments' policy positions and plans are more likely to use media strategies (e.g., De Bruycker and Beyers, 2015; Hanegraaff et al., 2016), leading us to expect that ENGOs and other proponents of ambitious mitigation policies seek media visibility to break the policy monopoly (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) enjoyed by the pro-economy coalition.

Second, the preference for nonpublic means of influence is particularly pronounced when interest groups' goals contradict public opinion (Kollman, 1998, p. 155–160). Outside strategies may spark counter lobbying and make the issue more salient among the public, which increases the likelihood that policy makers become responsive to public opinion. This result would be highly counterproductive from the lobbying organizations' perspective. Moreover, fighting the majority opinion may diminish an organization's public image (Jensen and Seeberg, 2019). For this reason, avoiding the media limelight when one opposes ambitious climate policies can be a conscious strategy when the majority of citizens perceive climate change as a threat, as they do in Finland (Poortinga et al., 2018). Occasionally, groups might employ the risky and challenging strategy of trying to *change* public opinion to be more supportive of their cause. The conservative countermovement in the United States has successfully employed this strategy (Farrell, 2016; McCright and Dunlap, 2003). The success of this strategy depends on the existence of media that supports contrarian messages. The highly conservative media outlets in the United States fulfill this criterion (Dunlap and McCright, 2015, p. 316–17). In contrast, most European countries, including Finland, lack highly conservative mainstream media, and mainstream media outlets tend to frame contrarian messages in a negative light (Brüggemann and Engesser, 2017). This makes changing public opinion to support the pro-economy lobby's goals markedly riskier and more challenging than in the United States.

Based on the above discussion, we expect that in a corporatist context organizations that oppose ambitious climate policies prefer inside lobbying and seek less media attention than pro-mitigation organizations.

H4. Pro-economy actors prefer inside lobbying and seek less media visibility than other organizations in the network.

Finally, we hypothesize that, because of their limited use of a media strategy, the organizations in the pro-economy coalition appear in the media less often than other climate policy organizations. Studies show that organizations' public relations activities have a strong impact on news media content (e.g., Lewis et al., 2008). Thus, the more intensively an organization uses media strategies (e.g., publishing press releases), the more media visibility it likely gets (Binderkrantz and Christiansen, 2014; Grömping, 2019). Therefore, we propose that because pro-economy actors seek less media visibility than other organizations in the network, they consequently get less media visibility.

H5. Pro-economy actors appear in the media less than other organizations in the network.

3. Data and methods

3.1. Network survey data

To study the policy network organizations' views, network positions, influence, and strategies, we conducted an online survey of these organizations in 2014. The respondents were chosen using a standardized sampling method developed in the international COMPON project on national climate policy networks in several countries (Ylä-Anttila et al., 2018a). First, our sampling procedure was designed to make sure different types of organizations with diverging views were included in the sample. We sought to include any denialist organizations in each country as well as those organizations that might hold economic counterviews on climate change mitigation. This was achieved by reviewing the literature on climate change policy making and running a computer-assisted search for all organizations appearing in a sample of newspaper material (1997–2013) we had collected for an earlier research project on climate change media coverage (Ylä-Anttila et al., 2018b). To ensure that our roster was not biased, the list was checked by climate policy experts from different types of organizations, who suggested some additions. These efforts resulted in a list of 96 organizations. As this study's first and second hypotheses concern the presence of economic and denialist counterviews in the population of organizations with a stake in climate policy, it is important that our sample does not under- or over-represent organizations that have such views. In addition to using the careful sampling procedure outlined above, we believe that this should not be a problem for two other reasons. First, the survey respondents had the opportunity to name organizations outside the list of 96 organizations as influential or as their collaboration partners, but they mentioned only a handful of organizations (that are probably non-denialist, since they are mostly universities). Second, we do not think our sampling procedure significantly underestimates denialism because a similar survey in other countries (the United States and the Czech Republic) revealed a bigger share of denialists or skeptics than in Finland.

We sent the survey to respondents in charge of climate change or environmental issues in their organization. After several reminders by phone and email, we achieved the excellent response rate of 83%. The questionnaire included several questions about the organizations' views on climate change, their perceptions about the influence of other organizations, their long-term collaboration with these actors, and the strategies they use to influence climate policy.

3.2. Media data and coding

To study media debates, we collected newspaper articles from the two most circulated daily quality newspapers in Finland, *Helsingin Sanomat* and *Aamulehti*. Media-party parallelism is very low in Finland (van Kempen, 2007), but *Aamulehti* has historically leaned more to the right and *Helsingin Sanomat* to the center left. Using an extensive search string composed of terms commonly used in the public debate about climate change and climate change politics, we collected all types of articles from 2013 to 2017, including news stories, editorials, columns, and letters to editors. We identified 4,231 articles, including a few duplicates we removed.

The data were coded according to a discourse network analysis procedure (Leifeld, 2013). Very similar to a political claims analysis (Koopmans and Erbe, 2004), a discourse network analysis identifies actors' political statements and codes them into different statement categories. A research assistant studied every fourth article in the media data and coded all statements made by organizational actors. The unit of analysis was a statement; we coded (a) the actors making the statement, (b) the statement category (concept), and (c) whether the actors agreed or disagreed with the statement category. For instance, an article in *Helsingin Sanomat* mentioned that Vladimir Putin claimed that "climate change is not caused by humans" (April 28, 2017). We coded the actor of this statement as "President of Russia" and that he disagreed with the statement category "The scientific claims that anthropogenic greenhouse gases contribute to climate change are valid." We employed 38 statement categories that were iteratively constructed as the coding procedure progressed. When the research assistant had coded all the statements she had found, this paper's main author went

through them and made changes wherever necessary (see also Leifeld, 2013, p. 177–178). In cases of disagreement, we discussed the coding within the project team. The final data consisted of 1,263 coded statements found in 438 articles.

3.3. Methods

Our analysis combines descriptive statistics of survey and media data and multivariable regression analyses to predict organizations' strategies of influence and their media visibility.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 state that the policy network includes business organizations, trade unions, and ministries that prioritize economic competitiveness over climate change mitigation but do not have denialist views. These hypotheses were tested by counting the number of different kinds of organizations expressing economic and denialist counterviews in the survey.

We tested H3, which asserts that organizations that belong to the pro-economy coalition occupy central positions in the network and are perceived as influential, by classifying organizations into three coalitions: pro-climate, neutral, and pro-economy. Based on the survey data, we compared the three coalitions' mean influence scores, coreness scores, and collaboration with ministries. First, we operationalized influence as reputational power, which is a measure that network analysts often use to assess the influence of an organization in a policy network (Fischer and Sciarini, 2015). The respondents were presented with a list of organizations that try to influence climate policy in Finland and were asked to indicate those they perceived as influential. The organizations that received the most mentions were considered influential.

Second, we calculated a coreness score for each actor based on a survey question about organizations' long-term mutual collaboration. Coreness is associated with core-periphery analysis, which determines whether there is a group of actors that are tightly connected with each other and thus in the core of the network, while other actors connect with the core nodes but not with each other, thus occupying peripheral positions (Borgatti et al., 2013). A high coreness value indicates that the actor is in the core of the network and thus links with other central players. A visual inspection of the network graph (Online Appendix 1) and the fairly high fit (0.573) of a core-periphery model (Borgatti and Everett, 2000, p. 381) indicate that the network has a core-periphery structure, making coreness values a useful measure for this network. To calculate coreness values, we used the union rule of symmetrizing the data, which means that a link exists between two organizations if either of them mentions the other as a collaboration partner.

Third, using the same data on long-term collaborations, we analyzed organizations' collaborations with ministries because collaboration with organizations that are legally able to make authoritative decisions is considered to increase the influence of advocacy coalitions (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014, p. 198). We calculated the number of ministries that an organization collaborates with and divided this by the total number of ministries that answered our survey. Here, we considered only reciprocal ties in which both the ministry and the other organization name each other as collaboration partners.[1]

H4, which states that the members of the economic coalition prefer inside lobbying and seek less media visibility than other organizations in the network, was tested in two phases. First, we descriptively analyzed the survey question on the types of strategies used to influence climate policy: (1) the media strategy (e.g., publishing press releases), (2) lobbying (i.e., informal interaction with policy makers), and (3) participation in formal policy making processes (e.g., parliamentary hearings). The use of these strategies was measured on a three-point scale ("never," "occasionally," and "often"). Because very few (5.1%–13.9%) organizations reported they never use these strategies, we merged the categories "never" and "occasionally" in order to run binary logistic regressions for each strategy to estimate the likelihood that an organization often uses a particular strategy. This procedure tested the hypothesis that organizations that hold economic views opposing climate change mitigation use media strategies less often than other organizations in the network. In these models, we also controlled for influence and organization type, similar to the negative binomial regressions predicting media appearances described below.

H5 states that the members of the economic coalition appear in the media less often than other organizations. We began testing this hypothesis with descriptive statistics, comparing the means of the number of the three coalitions' media appearances. To control for alternative explanations, we then ran a negative binomial regression model that predicted the number of the organizations' media appearances. The dependent variable measured the number of articles in which the organizations made statements. As is typical when studying organizations' media appearances, the dependent variable was skewed right, which means most organizations never or only rarely appear in the media and a small minority of organizations account for a large share of the appearances. Therefore, we employed negative binomial regression, which is commonly used to model over-dispersed outcome variables when studying organizations' media appearances (e.g., Andrews and Caren, 2010; Binderkrantz et al., 2017). The main independent variable measured the economic counterviews the organizations hold, for example, that economic competitiveness is more important than mitigation. We controlled for each organization's reputational influence (see Binderkrantz et al., 2015) and organization type, separating business organizations (firms and advocacy groups) from other types of organizations using a dummy variable because earlier studies demonstrated that business organizations are often relatively absent in media debates on climate change (e.g., Stoddart et al., 2017; Wood, 2019). A data set that allows for the reproduction of this paper's analyses is available on Mendeley (Vesa et al., 2020).

4. Findings

4.1. Economic counterviews in the policy network

We hypothesized that the Finnish climate policy network includes a coalition of business organizations (firms and advocacy groups), trade unions, and ministries that prioritize economic competitiveness over climate change mitigation (H1). The two top rows of Table 1 present responses to survey questions on the importance of climate mitigation vis-à-vis economic goals.

We find that a substantial minority of organizations view national economic competitiveness as more important than climate change mitigation (Table 1). Of the organizations that responded to our survey, 22.5% agree either strongly or somewhat that "national competitiveness is more important than tackling climate change," while 17.3% think that "securing Finland's energy supply is more important than mitigating climate change." These results indicate that a significant minority of organizations hold economic views that are counter to mitigation. This minority seems quite substantial, especially considering that social desirability might have led some organizations to choose "neither agree nor disagree" instead of explicitly supporting economic counterarguments.

To facilitate the descriptive analyses presented in the next sections, we grouped all organizations into three coalitions based on their answers to the two abovementioned questions that measure economic counterviews. This approach is reasonable because a strong correlation exists between the two questions (the Cronbach's alpha is 0.861). Both economic counterviews were measured on a five-point Likert scale in which higher values indicate agreement. We counted the mean of the two variables and labelled the organizations that scored 3.5 or higher as

[1] We included only reciprocal ties because we suspected that social desirability considerations might have led some ministries to over-report their collaboration partners. However, we also tested whether the results change if nonreciprocal ties are taken into account (see Footnote 6).

Table 1
Counter-mitigation views among organizations in the Finnish climate change policy network (%).

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total %	N
Economic							
National competitiveness is more important than tackling climate change.	23.8	31.3	22.5	17.5	5.0	100	80
Securing Finland's energy supply is more important than mitigating climate change.	21.0	35.8	25.9	13.6	3.7	100	81
Denialist							
Climate change is currently occurring.	0	0	0	9.8	90.2	100	82
Human activities are an important driver of current climate change.	1.2	1.2	1.2	20.7	75.6	100	82

the pro-economy coalition. This score typically means that they agreed with at least one of the economic counterarguments and did not disagree with the other argument.[2] This pro-economy coalition includes 21 organizations, which is 26.3% of the survey respondents. The 46 organizations that scored 2.5 or less were labeled "pro-climate" because they placed mitigation before economic goals. Thirteen organizations neither agreed nor disagreed with any of the economic counterviews,[3] so we labelled them "neutral."

As expected, business associations and firms that represent the energy-intensive, fuel, energy, and forestry industries, and agriculture have a strong presence in this coalition, accounting for half of its members (47.6%). The pro-economy coalition also has a clear tripartite corporatist structure. It includes two major trade unions representing industrial workers and three key ministries in charge of economic policies. In addition, two governmental research agencies, a nationwide interest group representing municipalities, and a small association of climate skeptics are among the other members of this group.

In sum, the findings support H1, as we find a pro-economy coalition of business interests, trade unions, and ministries that prioritize economic competitiveness over climate change mitigation. Although a minority, this coalition comprises a significant share of the organizations in the policy network, and, as we will show below in Section 4.3, its members occupy important network positions, have strong collaboration ties to government ministries, and are relatively influential. The presence of the pro-economy coalition in the policy network, we will further show, is at odds with the weak presence of economic counterviews to climate change mitigation in the media.

4.2. Denialist views in the policy network

We expected to find no denialist views among organizations in the policy network (H2). The bottom two rows in Table 1 show organizations' views on the reality of climate change. As expected, the results show that denialist views are almost absent among the surveyed organizations. All organizations agreed that "climate change is currently occurring," while only two organizations (2.4%) questioned its anthropogenic causes. These denialist organizations are a small association of climate skeptics (Ilmastofoorumi) and a trade union that represents employees of heavy industries (Metalliliitto).

To cross-validate these findings and our assumption about the low presence of denialism in the Finnish media, we turn to the results of our media analysis. In the media data, only six statements were classified as denialist (0.5% of all statements). These claims were mostly made by leaders of foreign nations, such as Putin and Donald Trump, and by Scott Pruitt, who was the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States. Only one Finnish actor, a professor from the University of Helsinki, voiced denialist views. In summary, the findings largely support H2; that is, very few domestic actors express denialist views either in the policy network or in the media.

4.3. The position and influence of the pro-economy coalition

H3 states that organizations in the pro-economy coalition occupy central positions in the network and are perceived as influential. Fig. 1 illustrates the three identified coalitions' means of coreness, collaboration with ministries, and reputational influence. First, we look at coreness values in which a high value indicates that the organization belongs to the core of the climate policy network and mostly collaborates with other actors who are also in the core. We find no statistical differences between the three coalitions regarding coreness (Fig. 1; t-tests). Thus, pro-economy actors are neither more nor less influential in terms of their coreness than other organizations.[4]

Second, Fig. 1 shows the mean percentage of reciprocal collaboration ties that the different groups have with the seven ministries. The mean is the highest for the pro-economy coalition (M = 0.21, SD = 0.17), which indicates that its members collaborate on average with 21% of the ministries in the network (1.47 ministries). The pro-climate coalition has the lowest mean (M = 0.12, SD = 0.15), and the difference between the means of the pro-climate and the pro-economy coalitions is statistically significant ($t(65) = -2.12$, $p = 0.037$[5]).[6] When looking at different types of organizations, ENGOs collaborate the least with ministries (M = 0.02, SD = 0.05); only one of eight ENGOs in the network collaborates with a ministry. The difference between the pro-economy and neutral coalitions is not significant. All in all, the findings indicate that the members of the pro-economy coalition are in close contact with the ministries, more so than the pro-climate coalition.

Third, our measure for influence (reputational power) measures how many times an organization is named as being influential. The score is standardized so that the scale ranges from 0 to 1 (Fischer and Sciarini, 2015). We identified no significant differences among the three coalitions' average influence (pro-climate = 0.30; neutral = 0.27; pro-economy = 0.30). Therefore, the pro-economy actors are not more influential than other actors in the network. However, they are not less influential than other actors either, which indicates that the network includes influential actors who think that the economy is more important than mitigation.

[2] However, two organizations strongly agreed with the argument about national competitiveness and somewhat disagreed with the argument about the national energy supply.

[3] This category includes one organization that somewhat agreed with the importance of national competitiveness but somewhat disagreed with the statement about energy supply.

[4] The results are similar when one considers only reciprocal ties (pro-climate: M = 0.08, SD = 0.07; neutral: M = 0.11, SD = 0.08; pro-economy: M = 0.09, SD = 0.07).

[5] The Mann-Whitney *U* test yielded a similar result ($U = 333.00$, $p = 0.033$).

[6] The difference between the means of the pro-economy (M = 0.55, SD = 0.28) and pro-climate (M = 0.45, SD = 0.22) coalitions are smaller if one considers also nonreciprocal ties ($t(32.28) = -1.50$, $p = 0.144$). However, we think reciprocal ties are a more reliable metric (see Footnote 1).

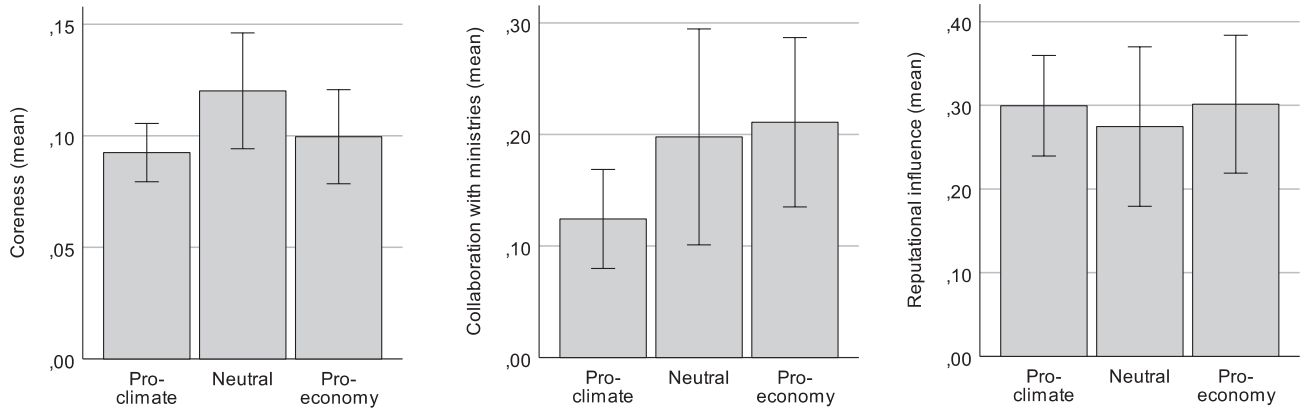

Fig. 1. Means of coreness (0–1 scale), collaboration with ministries (percent of ministries in the network, presented on a 0–1 scale), and reputational influence (0–1 scale) among Finnish climate policy coalitions (95% confidence intervals).

In summary, we find support for H3 in the sense that the pro-economy coalition occupies central positions in the network and is perceived to be influential. While we do not find that the members of this coalition would be significantly more in the core of the network or more influential than other organizations, they are significantly better connected to ministries—which are key actors in the network—than organizations in the pro-climate coalition.

4.4. Organizations' influence strategies

We hypothesized that members of the pro-economy coalition prefer inside strategies and seek less media visibility than other organizations in the network (H4). Fig. 2 shows that merely 21.1% of the surveyed pro-economy organizations reported that they often use a media strategy (e.g., publishing press releases, holding press conferences). Furthermore, the pro-economy organizations use inside strategies much more actively than media strategies; 45.0% of them reported that they often lobby policy makers, and 60% report that they often participate in formal policy making (e.g., consultations or hearings). The pro-economy coalition includes only one organization that claims to never engage in lobbying. These findings indicate that the pro-economy coalition clearly prefers inside strategies, as H4 predicted.

The use of media strategies is more common among organizations outside the pro-economy coalition (Fig. 2); 55.6% of organizations in the pro-climate coalition and 50.0% in the neutral coalition used media strategies often. This result means that, in line with H4, media strategies are clearly least common within the pro-economy coalition.

We also ran logistic regressions that predicted the likelihood that an organization uses the three different strategies of influence often (Table 2). The main independent variable—"economic counterviews"—was the mean of the two pro-economy views (see Section 4.1).

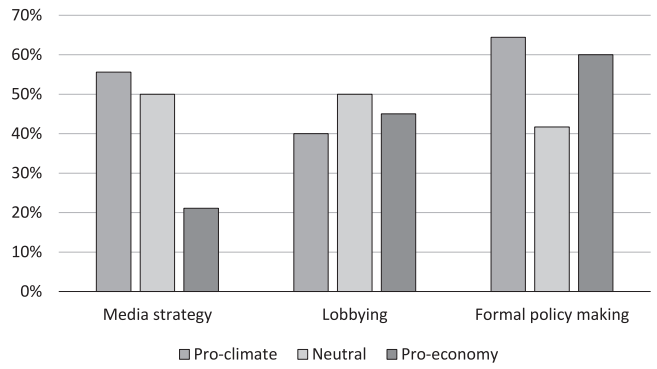

Fig. 2. Finnish climate policy organizations' strategies of influence (% of organizations that pursue a strategy "often").

The results indicate that holding economic counterviews greatly decreases the likelihood that an organization will employ media strategies. When the five-point index of economic counterviews increases by one, the likelihood of using a media strategy often decreases by 53%. The regressions also reveal that organizations that hold economic counterviews are as likely to lobby policy makers or participate in formal policy making as other organizations. Thus, all our findings support H4.

4.5. The media visibility of the pro-economy coalition

Finally, we analyze whether organizations in the pro-economy coalition appear in the news media less often than other organizations (H5). Fig. 3 illustrates the three coalitions' mean number of media appearances. On average, members of the pro-climate coalition made statements in 4.7 articles. This number is nearly six times greater than the pro-economy coalition's average of 0.8 articles. The organizations with a neutral stance appeared in an average of 1.2 articles. When looking at the media appearances of organizations that answered our survey, the pro-climate coalition, which comprises 57.5% of survey respondents, is responsible for 87.2% of all media appearances. In contrast, the pro-economy coalition includes 26.3% of organizations, but its share of media appearances is only 6.2%. These findings thus support H5 because the members of the pro-economy coalition appear in the media less often than other organizations, especially less than those of the pro-climate coalition.

To control for alternative explanations, we ran negative binomial regressions that predicted the organizations' media appearances (Table 3). Our results indicate that the more strongly organizations agree with economic counterviews the less often they appear in the media. In the full model, a one-point increase on the five-point scale reduces the level of organizations' media appearances by 46%. Turning to control variables (Model 2), business organizations appear less in the media than other organizations, but economic counterviews reduce organizations' media appearances even when this is taken into account. This finding means that the low media presence of pro-economy actors is not only driven by business organizations. Reputational influence has a positive effect on media appearances. Its inclusion in the regression model does not significantly change the effect of economic counterviews, which is not surprising given that influence does not correlate with economic counterviews (see also Fig. 1 in Section 4.3.). The absence of interaction effects (results available from the authors upon request) between influence and economic counterviews suggests that pro-economy organizations appear in the media less than other organizations at all levels of influence. In summary, these analyses provide strong support for the hypothesis that pro-economy organizations appear less in the media than other organizations, and this is in stark

Table 2
Binary logistic regressions predicting the likelihood that Finnish organizations reported to use strategies "often" to influence climate policy.

	Media strategy			Lobbying			Formal policy making		
	B	Std. error	Exp (B)	B	Std. error	Exp (B)	B	Std. error	Exp (B)
Economic counterviews	−0.749	0.259	0.473**	0.006	0.222	1.006	0.054	0.239	1.056
Influence	2.540	1.386	12.677+	1.239	1.239	3.452	3.500	1.413	33.126*
Business organizations	0.352	0.529	1.422	0.169	0.491	1.184	−0.258	0.512	0.773
Constant	0.750	0.709	2.118	−0.742	0.687	0.476	−0.639	0.714	0.528
Nagelkerke R^2	0.199			0.019			0.125		
N	76			77			77		

Note: Entries are regression coefficients, standard errors, and odds ratios. Significance levels: + = p < 0.1; * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001.

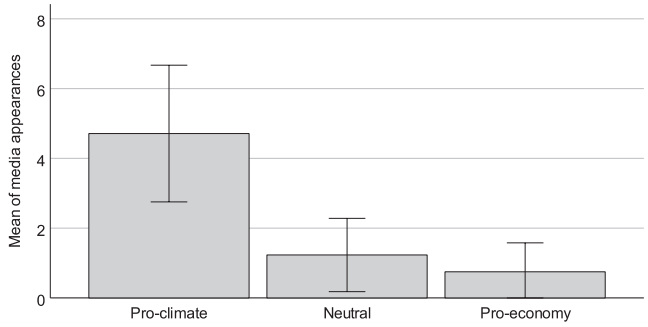

Fig. 3. Mean number of Finnish climate policy organizations' media appearances depending on their policy views (95% confidence intervals).

contrast with organizations that hold pro-climate views.

To cross-validate our findings on the low media presence of the pro-economy organizations, we also looked at descriptive statistics on economic counterarguments in the media. The results are in line with the findings about organizations' visibility; we classified only 16 statements (1.3%) as economic counterarguments. These arguments were coded under the category "Climate change mitigation should not endanger economic competitiveness." This argument was voiced by the main interest group organization for businesses, representatives of the energy and forestry industries, a trade union of paper industry workers, three ministers, a university professor, and President Trump. For instance, the Confederation of Finnish Industries, the peak association of businesses, argued that the European Union's climate change policy has brought "competitive disadvantages" to Finnish industries (*Aamulehti*, December 14, 2015) and also feared that its policies increase the transportation sector's costs (*Helsingin Sanomat*, July 21, 2016). The tone of the arguments by Finnish organizations is, however, markedly milder than Trump's, who is reported to have claimed that "climate change is a 'scam' and a 'concept invented by the Chinese' that aims to ruin the competitiveness of U.S. industry" (*Helsingin Sanomat*, June 2, 2017).

While economic arguments opposing mitigation were very rare, ecomodernist arguments claiming that mitigation and economic growth can exist side by side were much more common. For instance, 3.9% of all statements argued that climate change mitigation creates economic growth (e.g., opportunities for cleantech companies). More generally, pro-mitigation arguments are clearly dominant in the data. Two of the most popular arguments were classified under the categories "Climate change has led to many severe weather events and related phenomena" (11.1% of all statements) and "Fossil energy production must be decreased to mitigate climate change" (7.8% of all statements). The complete list of statement categories appears in the Online Appendix 2.

5. Discussion and conclusions

We set out to determine whether a quiet opposition influences climate change policy via inside lobbying in Finland, an example of a country in which counterarguments to climate change mitigation lack a strong media presence but which nevertheless has long lacked ambitious climate change policies. The results show that a significant minority (26%) of organizations—including business associations, firms, trade unions, and ministries—in the Finnish climate policy network believe that economic and energy concerns are more important than climate change mitigation. They do not hold denialist views on climate science; their opposition to ambitious mitigation policies is based on economic grounds. Organizations in this pro-economy coalition occupy core positions in the network, collaborate with key government ministries, and are perceived as influential. Their views, however, are not especially visible in the media. Thus, the reason for the quietness of this opposition in the media is not their peripheral position in the policy network, lack of connections to the government, or lack of influence. Rather, as we show have shown, they do not even actively seek media visibility. Instead, they prefer inside lobbying as a strategy of influence. Our results suggest that actors who prioritize the economy over ambitious climate change policy can be influential without using extensive media strategies or voicing a strong denialist message.

Our findings contribute to research on the influence and strategies of anti-mitigation organizations (e.g., Boussalis and Coan, 2016; Brulle, 2019; Dunlap and McCright, 2015; Farrell, 2016; McCright and Dunlap,

Table 3
Negative binomial regressions that predict Finnish climate policy organizations' media appearances.

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	Std. error	Exp (B)	B	Std. error	Exp (B)
(Intercept)	2.520	0.328	12.433***	1.094	0.436	2.986*
Economic counterviews	−0.659	0.135	0.517***	−0.619	0.161	0.538***
Influence				4.399	0.813	81.369***
Business organization				−1.209	0.348	0.298**
AIC	334.90			288.60		
BIC	339.61			298.03		
Log likelihood	−165.45			−140.30		
N	78			78		

Note: Entries are regression coefficients, standard errors, and relative risk ratios. Significance levels: * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001.

2003) by demonstrating that different strategies may be effective in opposing climate policies in different institutional contexts. We have shown that selected economic interest groups closely collaborate with and have views similar to key ministries in Finland, and can therefore influence policy through inside lobbying without seeking media attention or attacking climate science. This is in marked contrast with the United States and some other anglophone countries, such as Australia, where industry-funded organizations have used confrontational media strategies to attack climate science and block mitigation policies (e.g., Dunlap and McCright, 2015; Farrell, 2016).

These differences in strategy mainly reflect differences in institutions. In countries characterized by a competitive, pluralist interest-group system and the existence of strong conservative media outlets, such as the United States, economic interest groups have the incentive to use the media to oppose unwanted policy proposals. In contrast, in Finland's corporatist system, a small number of key organizations that represent economic interests collaborate with like-minded ministries and enjoy an institutionalized position in policy making, which gives them leeway to influence climate policy through inside strategies. We have argued that due to its corporatist institutions, Finland is a most likely place to find such a quiet opposition that can influence climate policy through inside lobbying and without a denialist message. We expect that similar patterns exist in other European countries in which corporatism coexists with relatively unambitious climate policies, such as Belgium, the Netherlands, and some Central European countries, such as Austria (Jahn, 2016; Tobin, 2017). However, more comparative studies are needed to find out whether this expectation holds.

Our findings also have methodological implications for future studies on how economic interests influence climate policies, and perhaps environmental policies more generally. The results imply that, especially when studying corporatist European countries, it is important to look beyond media debates and organizations' public communication to understand the influence of economic interest groups in policy making. Data that enable the tracking of interactions between policy makers and interest groups outside the media spotlight, such as interviews, surveys, and policy documents, are useful in identifying organizations that have counter-mitigation views and in tracking their influence in the policy process. Another lesson for future research is the importance of looking beyond denialism. Therefore, comparative studies should be attentive to other kinds of counterarguments, such as economic counter-arguments. In fact, it may be useful to look beyond denialism in the United States as well, as organizations opposing climate policy also use other strategies there, as a recent study demonstrated (Brulle, 2019, p. 18).

Moreover, the findings contribute to the literature on influence in policy networks and in the policy process. The observation that a pro-economy coalition is influential in a corporatist European country despite the lack of an extensive media strategy implies that the role of public opinion in policy processes differs among polities and is probably less important in corporatist systems than pluralist ones. This finding is relevant, for instance, to the literature on advocacy coalitions, which discusses favorable public opinion as a resource that can strengthen their influence (e.g., Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). Scholars who study advocacy coalitions have suggested that there is a need to learn more about how the importance of different resources, such as public opinion, depends on a particular institutional context (Weible et al., 2011, p. 357). A plausible hypothesis for future studies is that public opinion is a more important resource for coalitions in pluralist systems than in corporatist ones (see also Wlezien and Soroka, 2015).

While we have stressed that policy-making institutions explain cross-country differences in the advocacy styles of contrarian organizations, the role of media should not be neglected. Specifically, we have argued that the lack of highly conservative mainstream media in Finland (and similar European countries) may be one explanation of why the pro-economy lobby has not used extensive media strategies or strong denialist messages. Unlike the conservative countermovement that relies on the conservative media's echo chamber in the United States (Dunlap and McCright, 2015), European counter-organizations probably cannot expect mainstream media outlets to uncritically publish contrarian arguments (Brüggemann and Engesser, 2017). This is likely one reason for their preference for inside lobbying. Thus, both the political and the media system contribute to a political opportunity structure that incentivizes contrarian organizations to prefer inside lobbying.

Perhaps the most important limitation of our study has to do with its time frame. Our data collection period concluded at the end of 2017, and therefore, the most recent developments are excluded. In spring 2019, a new group that presented new kinds of counterarguments to ambitious climate change policy in the media emerged in Finland, and climate change emerged as one of the most central topics in the debate before parliamentary elections. All other major parties agreed on the need for ambitious climate policies, but the populist Finns Party responded by coining the concept of "climate hysteria." Their arguments were neither denialist nor straightforwardly economic; rather, the party claimed that Finland has already made relevant contributions and that even if emissions were drastically cut in such a small country (5.5 million people), the world would be no closer to meeting mitigation targets (Barry and Lemola, 2019). This anti-elitist politicization of the climate issue (Lockwood, 2018) may be a backlash against the public elite consensus on the need to mitigate climate change that we have observed. Ironically, in light of the findings presented in this paper, the idea of an elite consensus that populists revolt against may be more a reflection of the public image of making climate policy in Finland than one of reality.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Juho Vesa: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing, Funding acquisition. **Antti Gronow:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Validation, Investigation, Data curation, Writing - review & editing, Funding acquisition. **Tuomas Ylä-Anttila:** Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing - review & editing, Funding acquisition, Project administration.

Reference Data

Data available in data repository Dryad at doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/67dg45rj6r.1.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102117.

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