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# **Sacredness as a Resource, Sacralization as a Strategy: Field Marshal Mannerheim and Finnish Fields of Media and Cultural Production**

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This article re-thinks the concept of sacred in terms of sacralization, or as strategic action in a certain field of possibilities, and as sacredness, or as a resource to be appropriated in strategic action, aiming to accumulate or exchange specific capitals. Secondly, it looks into national symbols and their uses in the field of cultural production, especially the media in terms of sacralization and sacredness. Its Empirical data consists of media discussions around artworks re-interpreting Field Marshal Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim (1867– 1951) as a Finnish national symbol in the 2000s and 2010s. The dynamics of the field of cultural production and media affect the way Mannerheim is re-interpreted, and how these re-interpretations are received. Mannerheim as a sacred symbol can be used in many ways to accumulate specific capitals in the field of cultural production.

Keywords: C. G. E. Mannerheim, national symbols, sacred, symbolic capital, symbolic power, cultural production, media

## **Introduction**

This article has a dual purpose: firstly, it re-thinks the concept of *sacred* in terms of *sacralization*, or as strategic action in a certain field of possibilities, and as *sacredness*, or as a resource to be appropriated in strategic action, aiming to accumulate or exchange specific capitals. Secondly, it looks into national symbols and their uses in the field of cultural production, especially the media, in terms of sacralization and sacredness. Empirical data consists of media discussions around artworks re-interpreting Field Marshal Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim (1867–1951) as a Finnish national symbol in the 2000s and 2010s. Sacralization may have intended

and unintended results in certain social, cultural and economic environments and circumstances. It is activity that may take place on religious, secular and post-secular domains (Anttonen 2000; Knott 2005; Lynch 2012; Mellor and Shilling 2014).

Thus, this article poses the question of the relation between religion and nationalism not by comparing them or looking at the interaction between the two, but by starting out from the common denominator of these two forms of social imaginaries, that is the sacredness/sacralization of certain objects. The strategies relating to sacredness and sacralization in the field of media and cultural production are related to and affect the ways the society is imagined, whether these ways be nationalist, left-wing or liberal. The approach sketched here may be used also to analyze the relation of religion and nationalism also in a narrower sense (see also footnote 5 below). The media field is understood here to be a subfield of cultural production that filters other subfields, such as film, television, theatre, literature etc.

The cases I am analyzing are media discussions around an unfinished film project, *Mannerheim* (2001–2013), associated with Markus Selin and Renny Harlin, a stop motion animation *The Butterfly from Ural* (Uralin perhonen, Finland, Czech Republic 2008) by Katariina Lillqvist, a play *Mannerheim, or Nothing of your Children* (Mannerheim, eli lapsistasi ei mitään, 2010) by Theater Rujo, the novel *The Marshal* (Marsalkka, 2010) by Hannu Raittila and a cross-media project *The Marshal of Finland* (Suomen marsalkka, Finland, Estonia, Kenya, 2012) by Erkko Lyytinen.<sup>1</sup> The play and the novel did not gain as much attention in the media, and they are dealt here as commentaries on Selin and Harlin's unfinished film project.

I will emphasize this discussion in two Finnish tabloid papers, *Iltalehti* (IL) and *Ilta-Sanomat* (IS), owned by competing media houses AlmaMedia and Sanoma, and Finnish Public Service

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<sup>1</sup> I have analyzed media discussions around these works earlier from the viewpoint of social aesthetics (Kyyrö 2017) and otherness and ritualization (Kyyrö 2014). *The Marshal of Finland* included a film with the same name, a six episode television series *Operation Mannerheim* and internet pages including a blog and a campaign called "Updating Heroism" (Suomenmarsalkka.fi).

Broadcasting Company *Yle*'s<sup>2</sup> internet pages and television channels. I will also refer to other media, such as daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS) when needed. Yle, funded by television license payments until 2013, and by taxation since, has also been a co-funder and distributor of *The Butterfly from Ural* and *The Marshal of Finland*. Thus, Yle has a dual role as a cultural producer and as journalistic media. Yle and the tabloids form opposite poles in regard to public interpretations of Mannerheim: Yle usually supporting experimental reinterpretations considered transgressive by some audiences, and the tabloids defending a traditional view of Mannerheim. I will look into the strategies of sacralization connected to Mannerheim, and how the protection and re-interpreting of Mannerheim is used to accumulate and exchange different types of capitals.

Mannerheim is a highly ambiguous and polysemic symbol, attracting different kinds of interpretations. Although born in a Swedish speaking aristocratic family in the Grand Duchy of Finland and serving in the Russian Imperial army until his forties, he became a central symbol of Finnish nationalism already during his lifetime. His performance in World War II<sup>3</sup> made him a symbol of Finnish unification, although his earlier actions in the Civil War (1918) and his strict anti-communism made the working class loath him; regardless he was voted as the Greatest Finn in 2004. He is often portrayed as a ladies' man, but from time to time allegations of his homosexuality have emerged. These portrayals of him surface from time to time, in connection with discussions about his significance to the Finnish nation. He is a central part of Finnish national mythology, and thus makes an interesting case for study of religion.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Yle is an abbreviation of the company's former name, Yleisradio. The company was funded by television license payments until 2013 and by a special tax since.

<sup>3</sup> The Winter War (1939–1940) and the Continuation War (1941–1944) were fought against the Soviet Union. In the latter Finland was fighting a "separate war" along with Germany. Lapland War (1944–1945) was fought against the former ally, Germany, after Finland had made armistice with Soviet Union.

<sup>4</sup> Mannerheim was born in Askainen, Grand Duchy of Finland, which was then an autonomous part of the Russian Empire, in 1867, and he died in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1951. He served in the Russian Imperial Army, and was

## A Post-Durkheimian Approach to Sacralization/Sacredness

I will start by formulating my theoretical approach, building on theoretizations of “the sacred” in religious studies and sociology that have their roots in Durkheimian theory. The distinction between “sacred” and “profane,” and the basis of religion and classificatory systems in the society are the very core of Émile Durkheim’s conception of religion (Durkheim 1995; Durkheim and Mauss 1963).<sup>5</sup> I am myself following a post-Durkheimian line of argumentation, especially as formulated by Steven Lukes and Nick Couldry, the latter being influenced by Pierre Bourdieu and Bourdieu’s critic, Bruno Latour (Lukes 1975; Couldry 2003). These

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discharged in 1917 with the rank of Lieutenant General. He returned to Finland which had recently declared independence, and became the commander-in-chief of the White army as the Finnish Civil War broke out. After the civil war he acted as regent, and after losing the presidential election he withdrew from the public life until mid-1930s, when he became the chairman of the Defense Council, and was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal. He acted as a commander-in-chief in wars against Soviet Union (1939–40, 1941–1944) and Germany (1944–1945), and gained the honorary title of Marshal of Finland in 1942. After the war against Soviet Union he was voted by the electors as president, because he had enough prestige to guarantee the army’s support for signing the separate peace. He retired in 1946. His memoirs were published posthumously. For more detailed biography of Mannerheim, see Screen 2000; Clements 2009; for analysis of Mannerheim’s depictions in Finnish culture, see Peltonen 2010.

<sup>5</sup> In this article, I have chosen not to use the concept of “religion” to refer to the formations around the sacred objects I am studying, although elsewhere I have used the concept of “civil religion” to study these phenomena (Kyyrö 2017). Although for Durkheim there was no essential difference between a nationalist honoring or dying for a flag of his/her country or an Aboriginal worshipping a totem—as “[t] he totem is the flag of the clan”—he did distinguish nationalism from “proper religions,” in which divinities play a central role (Durkheim 1995, 222; 1994, 87; 91). William Arnal and Russell T. McCutcheon point out to the similarity of religion to nationalism and other forms of social imaginaries. However, they are skeptical to the use the category of religion as an analytical tool, and in their analysis, emphasize the ways the category has been in use in the development of the modern secular state. (Arnal and McCutcheon 2013, 104–110.),

While holding to the concepts of sacralization/sacredness, and agreeing with Arnal and McCutcheon’s assertions about “religion” as a folk category, I am not denying the analytical usability of the concept of religion altogether. I am not making a case that Mannerheim *is* a religious figure, or should be regarded as such, but that he *may be analysed as such*, when religion is defined in a certain way.

two theorists turn the Durkheimian setting around: society (including its borders and internal hierarchies) is seen as a result of successful imposition of strategies of classification that are given legitimacy by symbolic power and capital (see also Martin 2012). Similarly, Gordon Lynch, who is operating within a neo-Durkheimian frame, critiques Durkheim's social ontology of the sacred as unhelpful for nuanced analysis (Lynch 2012, 26–27).<sup>6</sup>

Bourdieu points out that each subfield of cultural production, such as literature, is defined by its specific capital. Specific capital may be anything that is considered to have value in a certain setting. Any specific capital that is recognized and legitimate is called symbolic capital, and it works only, if its value is recognized. Bourdieu writes also about symbolic *power*, which relates to symbolic *capital* as follows: the former is the ability to define reality, including social categories and structures of the fields, as the latter is the legitimate and recognized form of other capitals, such as cultural (including the specific capitals mentioned above), social or economic. Symbolic capital gives access to symbolic power; symbolic power is also ability to define what counts as valuable. (Bourdieu 1991, 170; 1993, 30; 41–42; Lawler 2011, 1418–1420.) Thus, the cases I am analyzing are instances of a struggle over legitimacy of the works—that is over their symbolic capital—and simultaneously over their ability to define reality, or symbolic power. Bourdieu directs us to pay attention to different sources and strategies of legitimation and removal of the legitimacy of the works, and also to the struggles over definition and value of the works themselves.

The post-Durkheimian approach has been mainly developed in regard to ritual (Lukes 1975; Couldry 2003; Bell 1992), but I argue that the approach can be expanded to deal with other instances where symbolic power, the power to impose meanings that is dependent on people's conscious or subconscious consent, is at work. The emphasis on how “the social” is being put up (instead of explaining “the social” with itself) comes from Latour, and the emphasis on the symbolic power and classification from Bourdieu (Latour 2007, 1–

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<sup>6</sup> Lynch also critiques Durkheim's sacred-profane binary, and proposes adding the mundane, which is separate from the sacred, and may be polluted by the profane (Lynch 2012, 26).

9; Bourdieu 1993). This turn-over has some implications on the way I conceptualize sacralization.

Another important issue is the emphasis on making things sacred—thus my use of transitive verb “to sacralize” and suffixed “sacralization,” and avoidance of using definite article “the” in front of “sacred.” By these choice of words I am signaling that making things sacred is processual rather than ontological, and there is nothing sacred *per se*, but rather things are attributed as such. (Mellor and Shilling 2014, 40–41; Martin 2013).<sup>7</sup> Nor am I taking part here in discussions about (re)sacralization as a metaprocess counter to secularization (see for example Demerath III 2003); rather, sacralization refers here to smaller scale strategic action.

Veikko Anttonen writes that

In order to understand why certain values and their ritual performances receive their sacred character, it is important to conceptualize the sacred as a category-boundary which becomes actual only in social situations when the inviolability of such categories as person, gender, marriage, nation, or justice, liberty, purity, propriety, are threatened and are in danger of losing their legitimating authority as moral foundations of society and social life. (Anttonen 2000, 277)

I agree with this characterization of sacredness as a category boundary. It also allows us to see sacredness in its social situatedness. Along with these lines, I define “sacralization” in relation to cultural classification and giving value to things classified. Sacralization means investing value to an object and protecting these value investments from violations; the sacredness of an object is maintained in the positive, performative acts of valuing—that is, rituals, but especially in a negative sense, when the invested values are threatened, and the boundary is actualized.<sup>8</sup> Valorizing is connected to the way an object is defined (also in other ways than having/ not having the attribute sacred), and thus to its

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<sup>7</sup> Mellor and Shilling point out to the importance of paying attention to how “the sacred” is made. They ground their approach on Henri Hubert’s and Marcel Mauss’s ideas on sacrifice, setting apart and giving up something, which is thus made sacred (Mellor and Shilling 2014, 40–41).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Durkheim’s distinction between negative and positive cult (Durkheim 1995, 303–387).

associations with other objects. Thus, sacralization is not merely the same thing as underlining the importance of a specific (type of) object(s).

As Gordon Lynch defines sacred “by what people collectively experience as absolute, non-contingent realities which present normative claims over the meanings and conduct of social life” (Lynch 2010, 29), I will take a somewhat different route. From the point of view I am sketching here, the collective-ness and non-contingency of the experiences of sacred are seen as effects of successful strategies of sacralization, and normative claims are connected to these strategies.

The methodological choice here is to see sacralization as connected to situated strategies of classification and definition. Thus, the emphasis is not in historical sacred forms or modalities of sacred (cf. Lynch 2012; Mellor and Shilling 2014), nor are things attributed as “sacred” assumed as underlying principle(s) guiding these strategies: instead they are seen as a result of complex configurations, and choices for action in certain situations. In this I am following Pierre Bourdieu, who sees available strategies resulting from actors’ positions in certain fields (Collins 1993, 18).

According to Bourdieu, symbolic capitals—that is, recognized and legitimate forms of specific cultural and social capitals—may be transferred to economic capitals (Bourdieu 1991, 170). Nick Couldry (2012, 144–145; 155) points out that in the context of media it is important to analyze how media transform different symbolic capitals to economic ones. Thus, my research questions within this article are: What kind of strategies of sacralization are used? What kinds of specific capitals are in use? What are the gains of the strategies of sacralization in terms of different capitals?

### **Mannerheim: The Champion of Liberty**

Since 2001 there has been lots of interest around the figure of Field Marshal Mannerheim in the Finnish field of cultural production. This started when film producer Markus Selin, Chairman of the Solar Films production company, and Hollywood director Renny Harlin announced that they were making a film about the life of the Field Marshal. (Turunen and Kirstinä 2013, 51–52; IS 10 August 2001; IL 15 August 2001.) The idea for the film came from founders of *Champion of Liberty Association*, founded by former CEO and

chairman of Otava Book Publishing Company, Professor Heikki A. Reenpää and retired Lieutenant General Ermei Kanninen (1922–2015), and had been conceived already in the mid-1990s. The film was supposed to be the most expensive ever made in Finland, and international actors such as Sean Connery and Jude Law were mentioned as possible candidates for the role of Mannerheim (IS 10 August 2001; IS 15 August 2002). Highest speculations about the budget were 80 million US dollars in 2002. However, in 2006 the budget of the film had diminished from 33.6 million euros to 12 million, and in 2007 the casting and funding seemed to be mainly Finnish. The filmmakers were struggling to secure required funding for the film, and in 2013 it was announced to be bankrupt, having 1.5 million euros of unpaid debts. (IL Vaihde 21 March 2009; HS 24 March 2006; IS 28 March 2006; Solar Films 26 November 2007; IS 12 October 2013.)

The project held Mannerheim in high esteem, and the film-to-be-made was compared to such high-end historical dramas as *The English Patient* (1996), even though the film-makers' earlier productions were known to appeal to more popular taste (IS 10 August 2001).<sup>9</sup> The project was also quite prominent in the media, mostly being received in positive light, and the film makers were able to get their own preferred readings of the project through without being questioned. Their media strategy was to make the project a national one by accumulating certain type of specific capital and appealing to certain symbols.

The Champion of Liberty Association was given the function of controlling the historicity of the project, and helping to secure the funding (IS 10 August 2001). However, supporting the film project was not the Champion of Liberty Association's only activity: founded in 2000 and registered in 2002, the association defines its purpose as "Nurturing [...] Mannerheim's memory and improving the knowledge of his life's work" by organizing lectures and publishing articles and manuscripts. (Championofliberty.fi.) The

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<sup>9</sup> Selin has made his career in Finland, as Harlin has been working in Hollywood, mainly on big budget action films. The *Internet Movie Database*'s page on Renny Harlin describes him as the "the most successful Finnish film director in the history of Hollywood," and raises *Die Hard 2*, *Cliffhanger*, *Deep Blue Sea* and *Skiptrace*—all action films—as films he is known for (Imdb.com).

organization is still active, and has published a journal focusing on the history and biography of Mannerheim, titled *Mannerheimiana*, in co-operation with the *Marshal of Finland Mannerheim's Heritage Foundation* and the *Marshal of Finland Mannerheim's Lodge Association*.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, an honorary committee was made up of politicians and notable citizens,<sup>11</sup> and the function of the committee was defined as to “support the actualization of the film project with their expertise and prestige.” However, the committee assembled only once, and the members were not informed about the different turns in the project. (IL 21 February 2009.) Thus, its function in relation to the project was similar to that of the Champion of Liberty Association's: to provide prestige and authenticity to the project, with the difference that the latter was active in publishing and organizing lectures.

The project was however quite successful in involving prominent citizens on a national level. Selin and Harlin were allowed to present the project at National Coalition Party Minister of Defense Jyri Häkämies' 2009 New Year reception. *Helsingin Sanomat* enquired if the presentation was a matter of advertising, and if Harlin had taken part of the costs of the party. Häkämies denied this, and framed supporting a historical film as a matter of national defense (HS 3 January 2009). Social Democrat Minister of Foreign Affairs Erkki Tuomioja was critical of presenting a commercial project at the Minister's reception in his blog, and *Iltalehti* took a defensive stand towards the film in its editorial, pointing out that art and sports are also commercial, and that a Hollywood film about Mannerheim

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<sup>10</sup> The journal has not been issued every year since its inauguration in 2004, and its most recent issue is published in 2012. Mannerheim's Lodge Association maintains a hunting lodge, which was presented to Mannerheim on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1942 by the soldiers of General Raappana, fighting at Lieksajärvi, currently in Russian Karelia. As Finnish forces retreated, the lodge was moved to Loppi, Southern Finland (Marskin Maja).

<sup>11</sup> *Iltalehti's* article mentions former Social Democrat PM, MP Paavo Lipponen, Labour Unionist Lauri Ihalainen, Admiral Juhani Kaskeala, National Coalition Party Speaker of Parliament Sauli Niinistö and Social Democrat MP Liisa Jaakonsaari (IL 21 February 2009).

would be beneficial for the nation, and thus government sympathy towards it would be desirable (IL 12 January 2009).

Veterans of the Winter War and the Continuation War (see footnote 3) were also evoked as a symbolic resource, with the tabloids' assistance. In August 2002, *Ilta-Sanomat* portrayed Harlin and screenwriter Heikki Vihinen as humbly interviewing General Adolf Ehrnrooth (1905–2004), the embodiment of all Finnish veterans, who had known Mannerheim personally. The retired General was portrayed as a source of valuable knowledge about Mannerheim as a person and a leader that would be inaccessible through books. (IS 15 August 2002.)

The Champion of Liberty foundation also sold memorial medals depicting Mannerheim to gain funds, and in 2009 tickets were sold in advance for a price of fifty euros, because Solar Films as a joint-stock company could not legally organize a fundraising, which was also considered as an option (IS 27 November 2007; IL 28 February 2009). As the problems with funding became more obvious, the Champion of Liberty Association appealed even to Finnish Center Party Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen to secure the funding (HS 24 March 2006). These examples demonstrate how the different actors in the project attempted to transform its national-historical capital into economic capital. However, these attempted cash-ins mostly failed. Some politicians and journalists remained critical, and did not recognize this capital, but on the other hand, the tabloids remained mostly in favor of the project, and supported the attempts to transform the national-historical capital into economic one.

In 2011 Renny Harlin left the project and was replaced by Dome Karukoski. At this point it was also emphasized that the new director should not be a left-wing artist, thus distancing the project from the field of art and left-wing interpretations of Mannerheim (HS 6 August 2011). As the project went into bankruptcy, criticism came from the publicly-funded Yle's investigative journalism program, *MOT*, which reported that costume manufacturers were left unpaid. The framing of the project as a national enterprise was criticized, as Renny Harlin, who had left the project, had personally earned 700,000 euros (*MOT/Yle.fi* 24 February 2014). As mentioned, the tabloid press took a neutral, positive or even at some points defensive stance towards the project, except for few pieces

of news, some columns and interviews with critics representing high-brow culture.<sup>12</sup> Only after *MOT*'s findings did the reporting turn into a question of "who benefits and who does not?," instead of a previous "can the project gain enough funds to be realized?"

Selin and Harlin's project made use of several symbols to legitimize and authenticate their project, and to create the required prestige, or in other words, symbolic capital. Harlin reassured that although living abroad for years, he, a son of a veteran, had always been a patriot. A picture of Mannerheim had been a visual effect for stories told to children by his father, who served as a Lieutenant-Colonel in the medical corps during the war. (IS 5 December 2003.) The association with the veterans was a strategy that created a national-historical capital for the project, and this strategy and this capital guaranteeing people's acceptance of the project as national one, was not questioned in the tabloids until the very end of the project. As the makers of the film testified their worthiness for making a film of Mannerheim, they simultaneously classified Mannerheim in relation to other symbols, and invested it with this capital.

### **The Scandalous Artists Threatening Mannerheim**

In 2008 Mannerheim appeared in different light. In the stop motion puppet animation *The Butterfly from Ural*, directed by Katariina Lillqvist, a protagonist reminiscent of Mannerheim ventured in Central Asia and Civil War Finland. He was portrayed as having a homosexual relationship with his Kyrgyz servant—the "Butterfly" of the title. In the Civil War the protagonist was shown executing the Reds. After returning to Finland he abandons his servant-lover, who commits suicide. As a result, Mannerheim's sexuality and role in the Civil War executions were discussed in the media. On Prime Minister's hour of inquiries Christian Democrat MP Bjarne Kallis asked if it was appropriate for Yle to support a project which

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<sup>12</sup> For example, on the pages of *Italehti*, the most acclaimed film critic in Finland, Peter von Bagh criticized heavily the Selin-Harlin's film project; columnist Jyrki Lehtola did this in several of his columns, although he was equally critical towards *The Butterfly from Ural* and *Mannerheim, or Nothing of your Children*, as well as those who were offended by these productions (IL 26 February 2008; 20 March 2008; 23 March 2009; 19 February 2010).

“insults large bodies of citizens.” Center Party Prime Minister Vanhanen replied that this was not a political question, and pointed out that “there are few sacred things today,” implying his disposition towards Mannerheim and Lillqvist’s work (IS 29 February 2008).

The discussion culminated in Yle’s *A-talk* discussion show, which featured Lillqvist and Kallis along with General Gustav Hägglund, a former commander of the defence forces and Minna Sirnö, a Left Alliance MP. Kallis stated that Mannerheim is sacred, and Hägglund tried to reassure viewers of Mannerheim’s heterosexuality (A-talk 6 March 2008). The issues discussed were freedom of speech and artistic expression, and its effects on the history, national symbols and emotions of the people, including veterans of war. Indeed, Mannerheim’s sexuality seemed to be more problematic for Hägglund and Kallis than his role in Civil War executions.

Lillqvist appealed to the Leftist view of history as a justification of her way of portraying the national hero. She stated that the story of *The Butterfly from Ural* was based on workers’ oral tradition that Lillqvist had collected from the inhabitants of Pispala district in Tampere, the city in which the executions portrayed in the film took place. According to Lillqvist, the children of Pispala still have songs mocking Mannerheim (IS 23 February 2008; 25 February 2008). This strategy was similar to Selin and Harlin’s use of veterans as a guarantee of the project’s authenticity, but the source is different - the working class oral tradition. Lillqvist and her supporters also emphasized her training in Czech Puppetry, thus creating associations to a prestigious artistic tradition (A-talk 6 March 2008; IS 12 March 2008; HS 1 March 2008).

The tabloids took a mainly negative stance towards the film. It was labeled as scandalous, and was quickly labelled as “a film that portrays Mannerheim as homosexual” (IL 18 March 2008; 19 March 2008; IS 23 February 2008). On the other hand, the beauty of its expression was praised, and its potential for diminishing prejudices to sexual minorities was raised in discussion (IL 17 March 2008).

Some differences in the ways Selin and Harlin’s and Lillqvist’s films were treated in the tabloids can be seen. The former was

criticized mainly in the media-critical columns and interviews, whereas the latter was appreciated, when treated in the context of art; the former was treated mostly in positive terms in the news and entertainment sections, while the latter was treated mostly critically. Lillqvist was able to report her own preferred readings of the film in the tabloids, but they were almost always accompanied by a critical voice, unlike Selin and Harlin's project. Yle acted as funder and distributor of Lillqvist's film, but also facilitated the discussion via *A-talk*, which represented the opposing voices, accompanied with talk show host critical of both of the opposing views.

The beginning of 2010 saw two new works related to Mannerheim that also commented on the Selin's film project. The film project was not bankrupt yet, but the twists in the accumulating of the money had already been reported. The first work was theater group Rujo's play *Mannerheim, or Nothing of your Children* that juxtaposed the worship of Mannerheim with darker aspects of modern Finnish society, such as abusive family relationships and issues between men of different generations. The play was instantly classified as mockery of Mannerheim, and provoked lots of negative feedback in op-eds and letters to editors (IS 16 February 2010; HS 19 February 2010). The play's director, Lauri Majjala, also pointed to the role of Mannerheim in organization of the prison camps after the Civil War (IL 16 February 2010). The play was labeled as the young theatre makers' generational rebellion, which was said to be without substance. Using the figure of Mannerheim to gain visibility was criticized, which was ironic as the play had explicitly commented on Selin's and Harlin's efforts to make money through Mannerheim. When Majjala brought this up in *Ilta-Sanomat*'s interview, the interviewer's response was "[b]ut surely some veterans will be genuinely hurt by your performance" (HS 19 February 2010; IS 16 February 2010).

2010 also saw a publication of a novel by Hannu Raittila called *Marsalkka*. Raittila had been working with Selin and Harlin to write a novel based on the film script, but the eventual work was supposed to be an independent piece. As the problems with funding continued, Raittila decided to publish the book that had already taken a different course than the original script it was supposed to follow—against the will of Markus Selin (IS 22 October 2009; HS

13 March 2010). The novel is historical fiction which comments on Selin's project, set at the end of 1940s, as Mannerheim is writing his memoirs. An American intelligence organization plans to use Mannerheim in the anti-communist fight by making a film of his life, which is apparently to be understood as an analogy of Selin's film project. The novel also includes a non-fictional narrative about Raittila's participation in the film project, written in a form of open letter which also analyzes Mannerheim's place in Finnish culture, and is somewhat critical towards Selin and Harlin's project. (Raittila 2010.) However, unlike *The Butterfly from Ural* and *Mannerheim, or Nothing of your Children*, Raittila's novel did not inspire any negative feedback in the media. It can be concluded then that the heaviest criticism towards Selin's project came from the fields of theatre and literature and Yle, not from the commercial media.

### **The Marshal of Finland: An Attempt to Multiculturalize Mannerheim**

The last case that I will analyze is a cross-media project called *The Marshal of Finland*. In early 2012 the author Erkkö Lyytinen announced on Yle's channels and internet pages that he was working on an international film about Mannerheim. The tabloids instantly compared it to Selin's project: *Iltalehti* characterized the film as the "latest turn in the Mannerheim-farce," unusually showing Selin and Harlin's unfinished project in a negative light (IL 18 January 2012; IS 18 January 2012).

On 14 August, *Iltalehti* reported that in Lyytinen's film, Mannerheim would be played by an African actor. The next day, *Helsingin Sanomat* named him as Kenyan actor Telley Savalas Otieno (IL 14 August 2012; HS 15 August 2012). *Iltalehti* asked if a "black man is suitable for Mannerheim's role," and the effect on veteran's feelings was again brought forth (IL 15 August 2012; 16 August 2012). On 16 August Lyytinen and Yle organized a press conference, which could be viewed on Yle's online streaming service *Areena*, reporting that the film was made by Kenyan production team, based on background material collected in Finland (Yle Areena 16 August 2012).

The Finnish-Estonian production team produced a documentary series (*Operaatio Mannerheim*, "Operation Mannerheim") about

the making of the film, and started a campaign on their internet pages called “Updating heroism.” In this campaign, some prominent citizens shared their visions of heroism, and internet users could propose new Finnish heroes who were to be awarded with crude medallions picturing a lion’s head, forged by a Kenyan blacksmith from iron items from the Winter War and Continuation War. This was a reference to the Champion of Liberty medals, which were sold to gain funds for the Selin’s film project, while these were given for free, and also to medallions depicting the Finnish heraldic lion popular among Finnish nationalists (Yle Areena 16 August 2012; Suomenmarsalkka.fi). By offering an alternative to these two medals, a metaphoric transformation of commercialism and exclusionary nationalism was attempted. There is also an implicit reference to the veterans: the metal items brought to Kenya were presented as symbolically carrying the heroism of the war-time generation to be used as a basis for the new, updated heroism.

This reflects the purpose of *The Marshal of Finland* cross-media project, which was along Yle’s guidelines to promote multiculturalism,<sup>13</sup> and as Lyytinen brought out, the context of the project was the national populist Finns party’s victory in 2011 elections (Voima 29 December 2012). Kenya represented an otherness which was used to purify Finnish nationalism of its negative aspects (Kyyrö 2014). Mannerheim was treated with respect throughout the project. However, *Iltalehti* especially fixated on the fact that Mannerheim was played by a black man, which it framed as an insult towards veterans of war. As earlier, when it was seen as a competitor to Solar Films’ project, it was now compared to *The Butterfly from Ural*. *The Marshal of Finland* and *The*

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<sup>13</sup> *The Act on Yleisradio Oy*, as amended in 2005, states that one of the public service duties of the company is to “support tolerance and multiculturalism and provide programming for minority and special groups” (The Act on Yleisradio Oy, Chapter 3, Section 7 [2]). However, in 2016 a parliamentary committee set to investigate Yle’s future duties and funding, decided to remove the support of multiculturalism, and focus on Finnish cultural heritage, tolerance, equality and cultural diversity. Removing the word “multiculturalism” was the *sine qua non* for Finns party’s acceptance of the new formation of the law (Uusi Suomi 16 June 2016.)

*Butterfly* were seen as threats to the sacralized image of Mannerheim they were protecting, and were labeled with the Finnish noun “kohu,” denoting “noise,” often used as a prefix meaning “sensational” or even “scandalous.” Further, this scandalousness was associated with Yle (IL 16 August 2012; 17 August 2012; IS 16 August 2012b; 26 July 2012.)

This way, the tabloids could create a distinction between themselves as supporters of the people and the feelings of the veterans on the one hand, and Yle that supports scandalous art and tries to fool the people on the other. This strategy became most apparent as the tabloids found out that the Finnish participants of the project were paid according to Finnish wage rates, and the Kenyans according to much lower Kenyan rates. Yle was accused of fooling the taxpayers and misusing their money (IS 16 August 2012a; IL 17 August 2012).

However, unlike *The Butterfly from Ural*, neither *The Marshal of Finland* nor *Operation Mannerheim* convinced the television and film critics. The projects’ motives were deemed good, but their realization was not appreciated (IL 27 September 2012; IS 27 September 2012; 6 October 2012; HS 6 October 2012). *The Marshal of Finland* cross-media project was not appreciated either in national populist nor high-brow terms.

### **Strategies of Sacralization**

These strategies of sacralization go hand in hand with strategies of legitimation/de-legitimation of the works that I have analyzed in an earlier article (Kyyrö 2017), and are presented in the table 1. Going further from my earlier analysis, these strategies are building on certain sacred symbols and value assumptions: Mannerheim, who should not be used to make money or create attention; Veterans or the people, whose emotions should not be offended; taxpayers, whose money should not be misused; freedom of artistic expression and expression of the leftist view of history, and multiculturalism.

	<b>Mannerheim</b>	<b>The Butterfly from Ural</b>	<b>The Marshal of Finland</b>
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Legitimation	Veterans guaranteeing historical authenticity; big budget guaranteeing a film worthy of Mannerheim; not a leftist art project	Workers’ oral history and Red interpretation of history; freedom of artistic expression	Multicultural and liberal project in the time of growing nationalism; the need to understand Mannerheim
	<b>Mannerheim</b>	<b>The Butterfly from Ural</b>	<b>The Marshal of Finland</b>
De-legitimation	Using Mannerheim to make money	Hurting the feelings of large bodies of citizens; bad taste; wrong kind of use of taxpayers’ money; attention seeking	Otieno unsuitable to the role; hurting the feelings of veterans; using Mannerheim to gain audience; Lyytinen’s personal interests; wrong kind of use of taxpayers’ money

**Table 1.** Sacred symbols and values and legitimation of the works (partly based on Kyyrö 2017)

These values and symbols (or their sacredness) are used either as a source of legitimation of the works, or they (or their sacredness) are seen to be threatened by certain kinds of actions, or cultural products. It is noteworthy that both ways of mobilizing things

attributed as sacred are also acts of sacralization of these things. However, these values can be analyzed also as investments and exchanges of different types of specific capitals.

First, there are the two types of claims to historical authenticity, the one leaning on veterans (Selin and Harlin's *Mannerheim*) and the one leaning on the Red interpretation of history (*The Butterfly from Ural*). These are investments, which, if successful, produce an aura of authenticity to the work. Secondly, there is the artistic capital (*The Butterfly from Ural*), which accumulates by claims of freedom of expression, or praising a work's aesthetic beauty, which works quite similarly as the first one. Thirdly, there are two kinds of capitals connected to the society: the liberal-multicultural-pedagogic one (*The Marshal of Finland*) emphasizing the need to reflect, and the national-populist one, emphasizing the emotions of the people and their representatives, such as veterans (the tabloids). Finally, there is talk about the misuse of money, which can be used to undermine a work's legitimacy (e.g. the tabloids, Raittila's *Marsalkka; Mannerheim, or Nothing of your Children, MOT*), but money-talk is also used to give value to a project (e.g. Selin and Harlin's *Mannerheim*). This is in line with Bourdieu's writings about the autonomy of a field being dependent of its ability to create a specific capital distinct of economic capital that is recognized and thus becomes symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1993, 30).

There were also exchanges between forms of capital: as Yle funded and redistributed artistic, multiculturalist projects, or projects re-interpreting history, it simultaneously attempted to accumulate liberal-pedagogic capital. Similarly, when tabloids reinforced Selin-Harlin's project's historical authenticity, they tried to accumulate national-populist capital.

However, to answer my question about how these strategies of sacralization are used to gain different capitals, I do not take these sacred values as a starting point, but I look them in relation to the structures of the fields of action. Disputes around the figure of Mannerheim reflect the structures in the field of cultural production and media, and homologies between these two fields.

	<b>Cultural production</b>	<b>Media reactions</b>
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	Commer- cial culture, entertainmen t	Art, non- commercia l culture	Commercia l (tabloids)	Public service (Yle)
Selin and Harlin's <i>Mannerheim</i> (film)	X (□)		+	-
<i>The Butterfly of Ural</i> (stop motion animation)		(□) X	-	+ (co- funder )
<i>Mannerheim , or Nothing of your Children</i> (play)		(□) X	-	
<i>The Marshal of Finland</i> (cross media)	X		-	+ (co- funder )

**Table 2.** Homologies between the positions in the field of cultural production and media reactions

In Table 2 I present the dominant classifications of the five cultural products, which are based on the characterizations of the makers of the products, and critics' opinions. Selin and Harlin's project attempted to portray itself as a "classy" high-end film, and more than mere entertainment. However, it was not appreciated by left wing artists, film critics and columnists. *The Butterfly from Ural* and *Mannerheim, or Nothing of your Children* were clearly classified as art, but their artistic value was questioned as they were seen insulting and seeking for attention. I have left Raittila's *Marsalkka* out of this table, as it did not gain much attention in the media (possibly indicating that an artistic project with no connections to Yle is not seen as a worthwhile object of attention by the tabloids), and thus it was not characterized in the terms presented in the table. *The Marshal of Finland* is also a difficult

case. Its makers did not frame the project in terms of art or entertainment, and it did not gain praise from the critics or the tabloids at large, who characterized it as a fairytale and reality-tv (HS 27 September 2012; 6 October 2012; IL 27 September 2012; IS 29 September 2012; 6 October 2012). However, the makers' explicit aim was to reappraise the Mannerheim myth, which reflected ambitions transcending mere entertainment (Yle Arena, 16 August 2012).

There is a clear homology between the positions of the works in the field of cultural production on the entertainment–art axis and the media reactions on the commercial–public service axis. I have already pointed out the clear rivalry between tabloids and Yle. The difference is obvious when we look at the tabloids' reactions to Yle's projects. Yle's and the tabloids' positive and negative reactions also seem to cross according to projects' classification as art or as entertainment. There is a quite clear homology between the fields of media and cultural production, which is formed by the disposition toward economic capital. Actors who have the least specific capital of a field, are according to Bourdieu's terminology *heteronomous*. They are seen as prone to influences external to the field (Bourdieu 1993, 30, 41).

The different art projects and their reception analyzed here portray also different forms of social imagination. All the projects used the Mannerheim as a central building block of their imaginations: Selin's project emphasized the traditional view of the Mannerheim as a great man, importance of the wars in the formation of the nation and the unity of the nation. *The Butterfly of Ural* and Rujo Theater's *Mannerheim, or Nothing of your Children* questioned the unity of the nation and brought forth breaches in this image, such as the trauma of the civil war or abusive family relations, implying the necessity of taking them into account, instead of celebrating questionable heroes. Raittila's *Marsalkka* remained on the meta-level, questioning the ways Mannerheim's figure is used. *The Marshal of Finland* attempted to transform the exclusive nationalism of the Finns to liberal multiculturalism by manipulating national symbols. However, the success and failure of these visions were moderated by the dynamics of the fields of cultural production and media.

In regard to symbolic capital and symbolic power, Selin's film project did not succeed in transforming its social and specific cultural capital (networks of people, historical authenticity) into economic capital, regardless of media's compliance, and the project failed. However, in the discussions around the project, the traditional, sacred image of Mannerheim was maintained, and the project was not contested by the tabloid journalists, but rather, by other artists and columnists. On the other hand, the world-defining value of the works contesting the sacralized Mannerheim-image and simultaneously Selin's film project, was immediately denied in the tabloids, although *The Butterfly from Ural* was appreciated by the critics in the high cultural frame. These struggles reflect the polarized nature of the Finnish field of cultural production at large, and journalism as its subfield, in terms of specific capitals.

In the political context of growing neoliberalism and nationalist populism, the protection of Mannerheim's value and the meanings traditionally associated to him have been the strategies of commercial media, and re-interpretation and re-classification according to the visions of educating citizens have been Yle's strategies. For the tabloids, defending the traditional interpretations of the national symbols and the emotions attached to them and disregarding Yle's projects as abusive are strategies of privileging their position in relation to the-people-as-paying-audience. Mannerheim's sacredness is a useful resource for both the commercial media's and Yle's strategies. When analyzing the clashes between such formations as nationalism and liberal multiculturalism—formations that could be called following Gordon Lynch (2012) as sacred forms—the interests of media actors and culture producers should be taken into account.

The two competing forms of specific capital at play that the media try to accumulate and gain legitimation to, the national-populist capital of tabloids and the liberal-pedagogic capital of the Yle, reflect the different economic revenue logics of the two types of media. Tabloids transform their capital into money by selling newspapers; Yle uses its capital to legitimize its position to the taxpayers, as an alternative to the commercial media, and as a correct and fact-relying media (Cf. Herkman 2005, 58–59). Yle and the tabloids use

Mannerheim and other symbols, such as veterans to gain respective specific capitals, and legitimacy from these capitals.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I have attempted to sketch an approach towards the sacred—as both sacredness and sacralization—that is post-Durkheimian in the sense that it aims to see sacredness in the light of contributing to maintenance and construction of the social, instead of taking “the social” and “the sacred” as given and fixed. Things are not merely sacred, but are made as such, and the sacredness of an object would not persist if it would not be continuously sacralized. However, certain contexts create certain interests, and interests drive actors to use different strategies of sacralization. Thus, Mannerheim’s attribution as sacred is a useful resource for strategies aiming to improve different actors’ positions; and the contests and conflicts in which these strategies are used simultaneously invest the Mannerheim-symbol with different values and meanings, and thus impose certain visions of the world. Seeing sacralization as interested, strategic action allows us to take the local configurations of power more fully into account.

On the other hand, a view that sees sacredness as constitutive of certain social formations is supported by the persistent sacredness of certain objects, such as Mannerheim, or veterans of war: this persistence seems to indicate that some sacred things are indeed in the core of certain social formations, as pointed out by Gordon Lynch, for whom “the sacred” as a communicative structure is something that makes “meaningful and moral foundations and boundaries of human society” known (Lynch 2012, 127–128). The approach sketched here is an attempt to explain these continuities by pointing to the contexts and fields of strategic action.

While paying attention to *contexts*, *interests*, *capitals* and *strategies*, one should keep in mind that meanings stick to objects. This is a result of successful strategies of sacralization. Thus, while I somewhat agree with Lynch (2012), that a “sociologist of the sacred” is (and/or should be) a kind of therapist mediating between different sacred forms, I would like to suggest that the therapist’s toolbox should also include concepts that account for strategic action.

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