1. Introduction

Since the economic recession in 2008 the European Union (EU) and a number of member states have opted for strict austerity politics to tackle the crisis. Such austerity politics have signified the intensification of previous neoliberal policies, including cutting down welfare services and public sector jobs. The implications have been explicitly gendered as illustrated by a number of studies from different parts of Europe. Feminist critique has revealed the neoliberal underpinnings of austerity politics, showing how spending cuts have transferred costs and responsibility for care and well-being from state to families, in practice often women, while requiring women’s participation in the increasingly precarious labour market even more than before. (Bettio et al. 2012; Karamessini and Rubery 2014; Kantola and Lombardo 2017; Bargawi et al. 2017). Despite explicit commitments to gender mainstreaming, neither the EU nor its member states have evaluated the gender impacts of the policies let alone changed them to a more gender equal direction (Jacquot 2017; Kantola and Lombardo 2017). Instead, the new priority given to the economy and austerity has been particularly resistant towards feminist knowledge. Feminist analyses and debates have had difficulties to enter the public and political agenda and to have an impact on the policies that have been adopted (Cavaghan 2017). The increasing popularity of conservative and right-wing populist parties promoting “family values” has further sidelined gender equality as a political goal. The turn to conservatism and nationalism in Europe has lead, among other things, to efforts to restrict abortion rights in several European countries. Sometimes, like in Spain, backlashes against abortion rights have taken place side by side with harsh austerity measures (Lombardo 2017).
The dire political situation has had the paradoxical effect of strengthening, instead of undermining, feminist resistance and critique in some countries. Despite the fact that financial resources have been cut from traditional feminist actors as a result of austerity politics, for instance in Spain, feminist activists have played a central role in the new social movements and populist left parties which have responded to the government’s austerity politics (Lombardo 2017). In the UK, the Women’s Budget Group has formulated alternative - feminist - economic plans to replace government budgets and priorities and to draw attention to the role of unpaid care to the economy (Pearson and Elson 2015). At the same time, the plans in Spain, Poland and other European countries to restrict abortion have sparked feminist resistance and street protests and solidarity movements across Europe.

We explore these dynamics in one political context, namely Finland, where the new right-conservative populist government in power since 2015 has significantly intensified austerity politics, harshened immigration policy and weakened gender equality policy. Our paper is based on the insight that the three parties in the government represent the political forces of neoliberalism (National Coalition Party), conservatism (Centre Party) and nationalism (The Finns) with very gendered consequences for the politics adopted. Much of the feminist critique of relationships between these three forces focuses on the combined effect of neoliberalism and conservatism (e.g., Andrew and Maddison 2010: Brown 2006; Phipps 2014; Porter 2012). We, however, explore how various policies in Finland draw not just on neoliberalism and conservatism but also on nationalism to ensure their success. In other words, we explore a political moment where the three political forces of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism come together to form a ‘triangle’ informing government’s politics.

We analyse the particular challenges that the triangle of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism poses to feminist resistance. Finland has a strong state feminist tradition where the women’s movement has co-operated closely with the state (manifested in patterns of state based funding, practices of consultation and hearings on legislative and policy proposals, and close personal networks between actors), which has made the movement strongly co-opted to state discourses and practices. Parts of the women’s movement have furthermore, become not only increasingly professional but also specialised. The country has an established set of women’s
organisations that work on their specific niche issues: mainstream gender equality policy; minority women; sexual equality; or human rights. Each has specialised in advancing certain forms of equality or challenging particular inequalities. In such a context, the new dynamics created by austerity politics become interesting.

Our key research question then becomes: how does feminist resistance engage with the gendered forms of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism that underpin contemporary politics of Finnish government? Our hypothesis is that feminist resistance is compartmentalized: women’s movement actors and organisations focus on one point of the triangle instead of engaging in intersections and coalitions of the three forces. This has, among other things, the repercussion that more intersectional approaches to the gendered consequences of austerity politics - namely challenging racism as a manifestation of nationalism - are marginalised.

To analyse these questions we have gathered an extensive research data of the public statements and press releases of key women’s movement actors from the years 2011-2016. The material consists of about 300 texts from seven women’s movement actors. When undertaking a qualitative content analysis of the data the following questions have guided our empirical analysis: How are the statements and activities of the analyzed organizations and movements located in relation to the points and sides of the triangle of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism? How have their respective positions as regards to the triangle have changed over time? To what extent do organisations react to the key events related to the political context and frame their positions on gender equality issues in terms of the political context?

Whilst mindful of the fact that austerity politics as well as the political projects of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism are each highly context specific, we seek to draw broader conclusions about feminist resistance to feminist and political theory. Our key argument is that these three political forces that shape the current political context - in Finland and in other configurations in other parts of the worlds - are often discussed in pairs, for instance at the intersections of neoliberalism and conservatism, or conservatism and nationalism. We argue that instead they should be conceptualized as a triangle, where each point and side are co-constitutive of the others. In other words, to understand the possibilities and limitations of feminist resistance
in the current economic and political context shaped by neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism requires a holistic analytical approach that addresses the convergence of and coalitions between the three political projects. Feminist resistance in the context of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism, then, is difficult, but not impossible. The political context has indeed provided a fertile ground for new feminist movements that are more interested in engaging the whole triangle.

2. The gendered consequences of the triangle of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism in Finland

In this section, we focus on the Finnish political context to illustrate the interactions between neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism and their gendered effects. The three political projects have long histories in the Finnish context. Their strength and the way they may work in coalition became apparent when the economic liberal National Coalition Party, conservative Centre Party and nationalist The Finns party formed a coalition government in May 2015. The three parties adopted a ‘strategic government programme’, which put forward strict austerity politics, and hardened immigration policy. Feminist commentators were quick to point out the total sidelining of gender equality from the government's agenda: gender equality was deemed both irrelevant and incompatible with the new policies and strategic governance (Elomäki et al. 2016; Elomäki and Kantola 2017; Elomäki and Ylöstalo forthcoming; Jauhola and Kantola 2016).

Of the three political forces that so became visible, the detrimental impacts of neoliberalism – marketization of public services, transferring of costs and risk from the state to individuals and families, employment and social policies that responsibilize individuals and governance reforms that extend private sector management practices to the public sector – on the Finnish ‘women friendly’ welfare state have been extensively explored. (e.g. Julkunen 2010; Heiskala and Kantola 2010; Kantola and Kananen 2013). As elsewhere, recent economic and financial crisis has provided opportunities to advance this neoliberal project (cf. Walby 2015). The conservative-right-populist government adopted significant cuts in public services and benefits, including the dismantling of the hall-mark of the women-friendly welfare state, namely the statutory right to
public childcare for all children. The government also aims at opening social and health care services to competition and marketizing public service provision, which has consequences for women’s employment and enterprises as well as for the provision of care. In addition, costs have been transferred from all employees to private employers in order to increase international competitiveness in a manner that hits the female-dominated public sector hardest (Elomäki and Kantola 2017). Furthermore, economic governance reforms that reflect the turn to ‘authoritarian neoliberalism’ (Bruff 2014) implemented in response to EU-requirements have weakened democratic debate and participation, making austerity a permanent state of affairs and centralizing power over financial matters (Elomäki forthcoming; Kantola 2016).

The long-standing influence of conservatism is visible, among other things, in the Finnish care regime that provides financial incentives for parents to take care of their children at home as well as in the long-standing political neglect of intimate partner violence (Kantola 2006). The visibility of traditional views on gender and family have in the past years increased in political and public speech, and now shape government’s policies on gender equality through the Centre Party and The Finns. The government programme was the first in 20 years that did not mention gender equality as the goal of the government, and gender equality policy has been narrowed down as regards to the long-standing goal of more equal division of care between women and men (Elomäki and Ylöstalo forthcoming). The high status given for family values is visible in that for the first time there is a designated government minister for family affairs. While the anti-abortion views of two of the three leaders of the coalition parties have not yet lead to new restrictions in the area of reproductive rights, the conservative agenda has gained visibility through a citizen's initiative to allow health care personnel to abstain from prescribing or performing abortions due to reasons of consciousness.

The third political project informing the government’s policy today is nationalism. Anti-immigration, anti-multicultural and racist arguments have become more visible and acceptable in public speech since the populist The Finns party gained growth of support in the municipal elections of 2008 and the position as the third biggest party in the Parliamentary elections of 2011 (Keskinen, Norocel and Jørgensen 2016; Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio 2016). While strict immigration policy has been characteristic of Finnish policy for decades, the policies were
substantially hardened since the party entered the government in 2015 and was able to set the political agenda and dominate the political discourse about immigration and multiculturalism in the face of the increasing numbers of refugees to Europe. The party worked to ensure that Finland would not be an attractive country for refugees, reducing benefits, legislating on stricter rules on family reunification (Pellander 2016) and shaping Finland’s EU relationship by refusing to agree to the common compulsory refugee allocation policy and a quota mechanism. The anti-immigration policies and the racist rhetoric were gendered: Finnish women were to be protected from the violence of other culture’s men (Keskinen 2012; 2013).

It is our contention that the current political context cannot be fully grasped without taking all these three political projects into account. Our distinct contribution is to show how they intertwine in informing government’s policy in different areas, including austerity policy, gender equality policy and immigration policy. In relation to austerity politics, conservatism has interacted neoliberalism in informing the restriction of statutory childcare rights while the home care allowance has been kept intact. In gender equality policy neoliberalism and nationalism interact with conservative tendencies discussed above: in the government gender equality action plan the only group of women that require state-led solutions to their gender equality problems are immigrant women.

3. Towards a feminist theory of the triangle of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism

Our suggestion - based on the Finnish case - is that whilst it has been useful in the past to provide feminist critiques of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism separately, the political momentum created by the current government requires a more holistic approach. In this section, we draw upon feminist theories of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism and their intersections to build towards a theoretical and conceptual framework to analyse feminist resistance in a political context simultaneously shaped by neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism.

Feminist scholars have pointed out that gender plays a central role in all three political projects and that each of them poses challenges for gender equality and feminism. Conservatism has been
seen as an explicitly anti-feminist force that relies on and promotes traditional views on gender and the family and resists changes in these areas (Verloo forthcoming). While neoliberal discourses and policies portray both women and men as rational economic actors and push women to the labour market, policies that dismantle the welfare state reprivatize and informalize care and intensify women's unpaid or poorly compensated work, creating new inequalities between women (e.g. Brown 2015; Bakker 2003; Bargawi, Cozzi and Himmelweit 2007). Nationalist and racializing discourses appropriate notions of gender equality and gendered violence for their own purposes and are in many national contexts closely connected to anti-feminism, misogyny and views that “gender equality has gone too far” (Keskinen 2012; 2013; Mulinari and Neergard 2014). Although conservatism, neoliberalism and nationalism are gendered in different ways and pose distinct challenges to gender equality, they may, as the Finnish case shows, work against gender equality in mutually reinforcing ways. This, we argue, poses challenges for feminist resistance.

Feminist theory has been effective in analysing the gendered effects of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism as well as the significance of each for feminist resistance separately and more interestingly for our purposes - in pairs. One of the most well-known accounts of the relationship between neoliberalism and conservatism is Wendy Brown’s (2006) analysis of the convergence of the “economic-political rationality” of neoliberalism and “moral-political rationality” of conservatism. In different national contexts, the coalition between neoliberalism and conservatism has been seen lead to doubly unfavourable conditions for women’s movement that affect interpretations of what can be done and the possibilities for change (Andrew and Maddison 2010; Knight and Rodgers 2012). It has also been suggested that due to the convergence of neoliberalism and conservatism, it has become difficult for feminists to reject one without embracing another (Phipps 2014, 12). The relationship between conservatism and nationalism and its significance for gender equality and feminism has been addressed mainly in research on far-right politics, in which conservative views on gender and the family meet harsh anti-immigration stance bordering racism (e.g. Köttig, Bitzan and Peto 2017), as well as in the research addressing the connection between sexism and anti-feminism and racism (e.g. Keskinen 2013). The links between neoliberalism and nationalism have been explored in research on the connection of ‘welfare chauvinism’ targeting migrants to the
neoliberal restructuring of the state (e.g. Keskinen, Norocel and Jorgensen 2016) but the significance of these links for gender equality and feminism remains to be analyzed. Theoretical debates which would bring the three together are scarce.

We recognize that the concepts of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism are used in different ways and that the distinctions between neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism are not always clear cut. For example, in feminist literature conservatism has been theorized as a multifaceted phenomenon including elements connected to neoliberalism (Bryson and Heppell 2010), nationalism (Brown 2006) or both (Verloo 2016). We argue, however, that for the purposes of analyzing feminist resistance in the current political context, it is useful to address neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism as three distinct, yet partly overlapping and interconnected projects.

More specifically, we argue that in the current political contexts it is crucial to understand how neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism converge in posing challenges for gender equality and feminism. In order to make visible the interconnections between the three projects and the significance of their convergence for feminist resistance, we conceptualize neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism as a triangle, where each point and each side are connected to others. The figure of the triangle goes beyond acknowledging the simultaneous presence of the three political projects in specific geographic contexts: it draws attention to how neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism may, despite their differences, form coalitions and converge in determining public discourses and policies.

We understand neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism as ‘political projects’ instead of for example ‘ideologies’ or ‘governance strategies’ (e.g. for different understandings of neoliberalism, see Larner 2000; Ferguson 2009). Calling them political projects highlights their strategic and reflective uses and their political character. Political projects aim at the transformation of social structures, practices and relations and have certain core principles they seek to extend to different spheres of society. These projects are advanced by multiple social actors and involve high levels of contestation and struggle. Societies are usually inconsistently mixed between different overlapping and opposing projects. (cf. Walby 2009; Connell 2010;
Verloo 2016.) As political projects, neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism are dynamic, changing and contextual. For example, the process of neoliberalisation has been shown as both historically and geographically contingent (e.g. Peck and Tickell 2002), and conservatism in a particular European country is not the same as conservatism in US context (Verloo 2016). We further emphasise that the relationships between the three projects as well as the sites of their convergence are constituted through particular national and local coalitions (Porter 2012). Therefore, the triangle of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism and the relationships it entails is a temporary, contextual constellation. In line with this understanding, our focus is on how neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism manifest themselves in political discourses and policies in a specific geographic context, how they work in coalition with one another, and how they are resisted.

We regard feminist resistance as actions that challenge the gendered power relations and the regime of truths that function as rationalizations for such power relations, or attempts to do so (see Ikävalko and Kantola 2017). Feminist resistance has taken the forms of collective resistance by women’s movements to patriarchal and capitalist structures and oppression to more post-feminist forms celebrating individual subjectivities (McRobbie 2009). We follow Foucauldian theories of power and resistance, where neither power nor resistance simply top down or bottom up. In Foucauldian terms, it is not possible to step outside of the power relations that constitute both what is being resisted and the resistance. As a result, resistance also involves “the reification and reproduction of that which is being resisted” (Johansson and Lilja 2013, 271, see also Allen 2008; 2010; Heyes 2007, 116). In feminist debates this has meant considering how feminist practices, priorities, and discourses have become co-opted in the very political projects that are resisted. For example, market feminism (Kantola and Squires 2012) or governance feminism (Prügl 2011) are employed to capture the ways in which feminism has become co-opted to neoliberal discourses and practices.

4. Research material and methodology

To analyse empirically how Finnish women’s movement and feminist actors have responded to the triangle of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism and the ways these three political
projects intertwine in specific policies we have collected an extensive research material of publicly available statements, documents, position papers and press releases of the key organisations. Included in the research material are eight actors (see Table 1) representative of the different parts of the Finnish women’s and feminist movement. The research material consists of nearly 300 individual texts and 550 pages.

We have selected the key traditional actors of the women’s movement, namely Feminist Association Unioni (Naisasialiitto Unioni, an explicitly feminist and since 2014 also anti-racist, autonomous association with individual membership established in 1892), National Council of Women of Finland NJKL (Naisjärjestöjen keskusliitto, an umbrella organisation, whose nearly 60 members include traditional women’s organisations and some political women’s organizations), and Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations NYTKIS (Naisjärjestöt yhteistyössä, a cross party organisation for political parties’ women’s organisations that also includes as members Unioni, NJKL and the Finnish Gender Studies Association). We have also included The Council for Equality TANE (Tasa-arvoasiain neuvottelukunta), which is a consultative parliamentary council for gender equality representative of all political parties and key women’s movement organisations. It is a good example of the ways in which the Finnish women’s movement actors have been very closely integrated into the state and has been previously shown to be powerful in setting the agenda for gender equality policy (Holli 2003).

Unlike previous studies, we have included some more recently established women’s movement organisations in our research material. Monika - Multicultural Women’s Association (Monika-Naiset Liitto) is a growing NGO that provides services and advocates for immigrant women. It was recently taken into the state budgetary frame together with NYTKIS and NJKL and receives direct state funding. TASAN! Is a new feminist actor that have chosen not to become associations in line of Finnish tradition but operate more loosely as a network of individuals. We have also included the Feminist Party established in 2016. The latter three have been formed in clear reaction against the current political context.

A key criteria for our selection has been the extent to which the actors seek to influence government policy and the triangle underpinning it. This has meant leaving out of the data
selection smaller and more local actors, as well as more identity based feminist actors (including the feminist thinktank Hattu, anarchist feminists) who do not aim at influencing government policies to the same extent as the ones selected. We have also left out our own - more academic feminist networks and struggles - which we have discussed extensively elsewhere (Elomäki et al. 2016; Elomäki and Kantola 2017).

Table 1: Feminist actors and collected material per year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminist actor</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Association Unioni</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council of Women of Finland (NJKL)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations (NYTKIS)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Gender Equality (TANE)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monika - Multicultural Women’s Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASAN!</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research material covers the years 2011-2016. We have selected 2011 as the starting point in order to cover two parliamentary elections and governments and allow for a sufficient time frame to track changes. This time frame contains the gradual introduction of austerity as well as the development of the Finns first into a major Parliamentary party and then into government coalition member. The material has been collected from the websites of the organizations in January 2016. It covers all documents that reflect the position of the organizations on topical issues. Because what organizations include on their websites is subjective and because material might have been lost due to website changes, the collected material may not reflect all the activities of the organizations.

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1 For TASAN! that has issued only few official statements or press releases and that emphasises the contribution of individuals, blog posts have been included.

2 We can see, for example, that Monika has not included all statements on the website. The material includes joint statements that have been signed by Monika, but could not be found from Monika’s website.
Our methodology combines quantitative analysis with qualitative content analysis. For the purposes of quantitative analysis we have categorized the documents according to whether they address neoliberalism, conservatism or nationalism. Different gender equality themes (e.g. gender equality policy and legislation, work-life balance, equality at work and equal pay, violence against women, human trafficking and prostitution, decision-making, gender equality in education) can be framed in different ways. They can be discussed in connection to one or several of points of the triangle or without any reference to neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism. We have used quantitative analysis to track changes in the frequency of references to the different points/sides of the triangle over time in general as well as for each organization. We have also constructed profiles of each organizations as regards to how frequently they address the different points/sides of the triangle.

Quantitative analysis tells little about the contents or the quality of the resistance. A more qualitative content analysis makes it possible to discern what forms the critique of conservatism, neoliberalism and nationalism takes among women’s movement actors in today’s Finland and how the actors understand the connections between the three forces. Not all of the material is as amenable for qualitative analysis: whereas press releases are often short and snappy, official statements offer more content for discursive readings.

5. Resisting the points of the triangle

In this section, we focus on the points of the triangle: neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism. We ask how common critique towards each political project is; by which feminist actors is it articulated; in relation to which gender equality issues; and with which discourses/frames. We also ask how this critique might be co-opted to the very ideology or political force which is being resisted.

When analysing the research material it is evident that resisting different manifestations of conservatism is at the heart of feminism in many ways (see Table 2). It was by far the most dominant way of framing feminist resistance in 2011 but has retained its centrality in 2016
despite the fact that resisting nationalism and neoliberalism have gained in importance. Resisting nationalism in particular has emerged as a stronger trend in the last two years of the time frame.

Table 2: The percentage of all documents addressing neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism: change from 2011 to 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neoliberalism</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensional</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The women’s movement organisations have distinct profiles in relation to resisting the three political forces (see Table 3). Resisting conservatism is the most important frame for the traditional women’s movement organisations: Unioni, Nytkis, NJKL and TANE. However, reflecting the turn to conservatism under the centre-right-populist government in 2015, resisting conservatism is also important for one of the new feminist actors, the TASAN! campaign. Interestingly, resisting nationalism is the key frame not just for Monika, the multicultural women’s association, but also for the new feminist actor, the Feminist Party. Resisting nationalism - and racism as one of its manifestations - is not central to the traditional women’s organisations. Resisting neoliberalism is not a relative priority for any of the organisations although of the traditional actors Nytkis and Tane, and of the new actors the Feminist Party, articulate its gendered effects relatively often.

Table 3. Resistance profiles based on how frequently organization/initiatives take a resisting stance against neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Neoliberalism</th>
<th>Conservatism</th>
<th>Nationalism</th>
<th>More than one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Association Unioni</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council of Women of Finland</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Gender Equality</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monika – Multicultural Women's Association</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASAN!</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Party</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conservatism

The core gender equality policy issues dominate the articulations of resistance to *conservatism*: challenging gender stereotypes or the illusion of gender neutrality; challenging traditional gender roles, gendered structures and practices in education, politics, and economic decision-making; calls for reconciling work and family (parental leave system), father’s rights. Violence against women and prostitution (shared by Unioni and Nytkis especially) is resisted through the lense of conservatism too and the Finnish practices (e.g. lack of priority and resources, penal code that does not define rape through lack of consent; promotion of mediation between the victim and the perpetrator as an effective solution to domestic violence) are seen as manifestations of conservative views on gender and violence. Calls for criminalizing buying sex are seen as a challenge the conservative to view of women as sex objects. Political questions about gender identity and gender diversity (à gender as non-binary), transgender rights and law, same sex marriage and other LGBTI issues have gained in prominence over the recent years but remain more controversial.

Indeed, we find surprising levels of co-optation to conservatism from the research material, which is paradoxical considering the centrality of critiquing conservatism. Characteristic of the Finnish women’s movement actors is that they come from different parts of the political spectrum. This has meant that two of the key actors have been chaired by explicitly politically conservative women, which creates explicit tensions between ‘feminism’ and conservatism. Such tensions included silences on abortion and LGBTI questions. Co-optation to conservatism significantly narrows down the spectrum of issues that can be discussed and resisted.

Neoliberalism

3 NJKL was chaired by a conservative Centre party woman MP and NYTKIS chaired by Christian democrats in 2016. For example, NYTKIS was not able to take a stance on abortion or LGBTI questions during that year. Whilst one of the most feminist actors Unioni defended abortion and sexual health and reproductive rights (Unioni 2014/10 and Unioni 2013/3), these two organisations did not participate in the debate.
The new context for the critique of neoliberalism provided by the current and the previous government is reflected in the research material. We can discern an urgent need to engage with economic policy. A more qualitative content analysis illustrates, however, the thinness of this critique. There are only some feminist analyses of neoliberalism and efforts to reconceptualize the economy. Unioni critiqued the low value given to the public sector and proposed that unpaid work needs to be counted as part of the GDP. It suggested that instead of looking only at immediate costs of gender equality-friendly policies (e.g. parental leave reform) the government should assess the long-term economic benefits of such reforms (Unioni/2015/7, Unioni/2015/8). Nytkis also attempted to formulate a positive discourse about the public sector seeing it not only a financial burden but a necessity for ‘renewal of labour for and the stability and well-being of the society’ (Nytkis/2015/12). While central to feminist economics research and visible in feminist advocacy in some other national contexts (e.g. Pearson & Elson 2015), these perspectives have until now been almost absent from the Finnish public debate and women’s movement agenda.

Most importantly, the traditional women’s organisations’ resistance to neoliberalism does not question the overall necessity of government’s austerity politics. They merely critique (some of) its gendered consequences. For instance, restrictions to the statutory right of childcare were not opposed as such, but Nytkis called for their gender impact assessment (Nytkis/2015/14). We have suggested elsewhere that calls for gender impact assessment make this critique technical (Elomäki and Kantola 2017). It creates the impression that the policy would be effective and legitimate if only a gender analysis was undertaken. The Council for Equality opposed the cuts to childcare rights too, but without mentioning its effects on women’s employment and rather emphasising the rights of children. Its rhetoric made use of the language of the government, emphasizing the increased costs in other places such as child protection (TANE/2015/4 and 5). Unioni is the only organization that has explicitly taken an anti-austerity stance and rejected a proposed expenditure cut.

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4 In this research material examples include: NJKL/2016/3, NJKL/2016/11 and 12; Nytkis/2016/2; Nytkis/2016/11; TANE/2013/16
The women’s movement actors have to a large extent adopted the concepts and framings of the government, which waters down their critique. For instance, instead of talking about ‘austerity’ or ‘spending cuts’ (talouskuri, leikkaukset), many organizations use the more neutral terms favored by the government: ‘savings’ (säästö) and ‘adjustments’ (sopeutukset). Women’s movement actors do not question the dominant discourse about the crisis which is used to justify austerity and neoliberal reforms. They regularly refer to ‘difficult economic times’, ‘recession’, or ‘current economic situation’ thereby accepting the dominant interpretations of the economic conditions for government policies.

We suggest that for traditional women’s organisations - in which women from political parties play a central role - neoliberalism offers a convenient explanatory model with which to shift attention away from conservatism underpinning the neoliberal policies. For instance, the lack of progress in reforming the parental leave system tends to be linked to the unwillingness of the government to allocate resources for the purpose in times of austerity (Unioni 2015/7 and 2015/8, Nytkis 2016/6) and when the statutory right to childcare is defended the arguments are only linked to austerity (Unioni 2013/4). A very common way to frame the critique is that the savings to the public sector as estimated by the government are not realistic and that therefore the curtailment is ineffective as a saving method - increased bureaucracy might even increase costs. (Nytkis/2015/14). The critique then does not capture the conservative political project underpinning the government’s reluctance to advance gender equality.

We find that there is slightly less critique of neoliberalism within new women’s movement organizations than old organizations, with one notable exception, namely the Feminist Party. The Feminist Party addresses neoliberalism in half of its statements, mostly in connection to the other points of the triangle (see below). Party’s references to austerity do not exclusively focus on gender impacts, but take consistently into account the impacts on minorities as well (FP/2016/4; FP/2016/9). The Feminist Party seeks to create a vision of feminist economic policy. “Feminist economic policy is welfare economy. …It means that public investment is targeted mainly to sectors/fields that reproduce the society and make it wealthier, such as education and care.” (FP/2016/5)
What we also find interesting is that there is very little usage of economic arguments to make case for gender equality (=good for growth, competitiveness, employment, fertility, businesses) in comparison to how prevalent these arguments are at EU-level and in many other national contexts (ref. Elomäki). Whilst a more extensive usage of such economic arguments could be interpreted as a further sign of co-optation to neoliberalism, it also tells to us that the women’s movement actors in Finland have little knowledge and experience of this kind of argumentation. It may have wider repercussions: the key (male) politicians in the right wing governing parties (most prominently the prime ministerial Centre Party) remain unconvinced about the need for gender equality as it is not explained to them using their own language.

Nationalism

Finnish feminism and women’s movement have been prone to charges to be very nationalist: to have an uncontested and unproblematic relationship to Finnish nationalism (ref. Koivunen, Markkola debate etc.). This history can be seen in the weaker position that critiquing nationalism has in the research material as mentioned above in relation to Tables 2 and 3. We can discern no significant change in these patterns after the entry of the right populist party The Finns to government and the refugee “crisis” in 2015: resistance to nationalism has been and remains marginal even though these two events made it more visible in the public debate. A particularity of Finnish system is that The Finns’ women’s organisation The Finns Women (Perusnaiset) is represented on the board of NYTKIS and the party’s MPs in the Council of Equality (TANE) giving them insider roles in the Finnish women’s movement actors.

Nationalism or racism is explicitly mentioned only by some actors (mainly Unioni and Feminist Party) and resistance to it creates distinct profiles for the women’s movement actors. Unioni has recently become a vocal anti-racist actor: it issued a significant number of statements in 2015
and 2016 resisting racism and strict immigration policy as its manifestations. It explicitly portrayed feminism as an antidote for nationalism (Unioni 2015/4 and Unioni/2014/9).

Of the other traditional women’s organisations NYTKIS addresses nationalism in more than fifth of its statements, but NJKL and TANE in only 10%. The only statements where resistance to nationalism is the main focus are on the rights of the undocumented migrant women (Nytkis/2013/2) and refugee women (NJKL/2015/15). These could be characterized as weak statements that do not address the problems of immigration policy and require changes to it. Violence against women is the one issue in relation to which NYTKIS, NJKL, and TANE regularly mention rights of minority women. Feminist researchers have indeed pointed out the tendencies to culturalize violence against women in this way framing it as a problem of certain minority cultures only (Rolandsen Agustín; Kantola 2010). Racism and the harshening immigration policy are addressed rarely.

We have widened our interpretation of resisting nationalism to include pro-EU - as opposed to euroscepticism - statements. Such forms of resisting nationalism can be found from two of the traditional actors NYTKIS and NJKL especially in relation to European Parliamentary elections, where the EU is framed as a defender of peace and the importance of women’s representation in its decision-making bodies stress (Nytkis/2014/3) and EU anti-discrimination law deemed important for Finland (NJKL/2015/13).

The weak position of resistance to nationalism is evidenced by other aspects. First, organizations are more likely to address nationalism and make demands regarding immigration policy in joint statements with other human rights organizations rather than when acting alone. For instance, NYTKIS who otherwise has been silent on the increasing racism and hardening immigration

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The statements focused on the treatment of refugees in Finland, the restrictive rights to family reunification, need to take more refugees, protecting Roma women on the sleeping rough on the streets in the winter, rights of the victims of human trafficking. Unioni also resisted “organised racism”, namely racist and fascist organisations and associations in Finland. It both worked in coalition with other anti-racist organizations / organizations that defend the rights of migrants and refugees and releasing its own statements explicitly addressing questions related to nationalism linking racism and misogyny and sexism (Unioni 2015/4 and Unioni/2014/9).
policy participated in a joint statement arguing that human rights policy requires the government to create legal routes for refugees and to not tighten family reunification rules (NYTKIS/2015/8). Second, the pressure to resist racism often comes from the international commitments, for example from the need to report to the UN when it takes the form of expert statements rather than more political articulations. In CERD statement, NYTKIS expresses its worry about “the increase of anti-immigration stances and racist speech in Finland” and singles out several political developments (Nytkis/2015/2; see also NYTKIS/2013/5). TANE and NJKL statements on the CERD, which either mention racism only in passing (TANE/2013/20, TANE/2011/7) or not at all (NJKL/2015/5) are good examples of how non-important resisting racism and its different manifestations in the Finnish society is for these organizations. Resisting nationalism/racism are not seen as political priorities, which would require their own independent demands on the public discourse or political system.

Resistance to nationalism far more important for the new actors: Monika-naiset takes up refugees, victims of trafficking, and undocumented migrant women’. For the Feminist Party, nationalism was a key part of the party’s analysis of the political context; and anti-racist struggle and struggle against nationalism are an important part of the party’s feminism. Indeed, 80% of the statements of the party address nationalism in some way. The party represents itself, following the example of Swedish Feminist Initiative, as an opposing force to nationalism: “[The Feminist Party] understands that the society is at the moment very divided and that the dividing line is between nationalist and feminist worldview” (FP/2016/10).

In sum, the discussion in this section has illustrated that resistance to neoliberalism (even if it is weak and technical) and resistance to nationalism (even if it is represented only by some organisations) have become part of the Finnish women’s or feminist movement’s agenda in the 2000s. The feminist critique towards neoliberalism and nationalism have been fuelled by the changes in the political system. We can discern some compartmentalization of the women’s movement organisations already at this stage. For example, nationalism is clearly a concern of only some: not the traditional actors but rather the explicitly feminist ones (Unioni) and new ones (Feminist Party).
6. Resistance to sides of the triangle and the triangle as a whole

Our analysis above shows that in the 2010s the Finnish women’s/feminist movement actors have begun to acknowledge the significance of neoliberalism and nationalism for gender equality and feminist struggle. The increasing criticism neoliberalism and nationalism shows that the political context shaped by the triangle has influenced feminist resistance in Finland. We now turn our attention from the points of the triangle to its sides and the triangle as a whole. We ask, how common critique against sides of the triangle or the triangle as a whole is, in relation to which issues the simultaneous presence of and relationships between neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism become visible, and how these relationships are understood.

We find that Finnish women's/feminist movement actors are making increasing efforts to address more than one point of the triangle at once. Multidimensional analysis of the political context and/or specific issues has become more common in particular after 2015 when Sipiläs government came into power (Table 2). Actors have different profiles as regards to which sides of the triangle they address, if any (Table 4).

Table 4: Share of multidimensional analysis (of all documents) for each actor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neoliberalism</th>
<th>Conservatism</th>
<th>Neoliberalism</th>
<th>Conservatism</th>
<th>Neoliberalism</th>
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<td>Neoliberalism</td>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>Neoliberalism</td>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Association Unioni</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NYTKIS</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJKL</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANE</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monika</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TASAN!</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feminist Party</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conservatism and neoliberalism

A combined feminist critique of conservatism and neoliberalism has become more common in the aftermath of the intensification of austerity and the turn to conservatism. For established organizations - apart from Unioni - and for TASAN! this is clearly the most important side of the triangle. However, in most texts that address both conservatism and neoliberalism, the latter
remains an afterthought. Many texts that fall in this category are statements, where established organizations’ present their gender equality goals for the government or evaluate government’s gender equality policy (e.g. Nytkis/2014/7, TANE/2012/1). Here resistance to conservatism is the main frame (e.g. demands for gender sensitive education, division of care responsibilities, more women in decision-making positions). Neoliberalism is present in short references to the need to include more gender perspective in economic policy or assess its the gender impacts.

For our purposes more interesting are texts that connect gendered austerity measures and structural reforms to the turn to conservatism, because they indicate how organizations interpret the current political context and how they see the role of conservatism in austerity politics.

The simultaneous presence of conservatism and neoliberalism in Finnish politics is acknowledged in various ways. In statements commenting on the results of the 2015 Parliamentary election, NJKL and Nytkis voice a concern for the remasculinization of politics and mention the looming expenditure cuts (NJKL/2012/2; Nytkis/2015/4). In its analysis of the government programme, Nytkis places concern for the sidelining of gender equality side by side with concern for the gendered effects of austerity measures (Nytkis/2016/9). NJKL’s critique of the government's gender equality action plan (NJKL/2016/6) points out weaknesses related to turn to conservatism (no parental leave reform to divide care responsibility) as well as to neoliberalism (commitment reduce temporary work contracts forgotten). These examples illustrate that although the simultaneous influence of neoliberalism and conservatism on political agenda and gender equality policy is acknowledged at least at some level, the two are seen as separate forces rather than as interconnected projects working in unison against gender equality.

As pointed out in the previous section, the way some austerity measures and structural reforms support both neoliberal and conservative goals rarely becomes visible in the way established organizations discuss these reforms. Only Unioni has challenged the dominant interpretation of the restriction of statutory childcare rights as a neoliberal expenditure cut and pointed out that the decision is also underpinned by “moral arguments about daycare being unnecessary when one parent can take care of the child at home.” (Unioni/2014/1). Despite their unwillingness or inability to see the conservative agenda behind austerity politics, organizations’ general focus on
resisting conservatism may sometimes enriches their analyses of the effects of neoliberal reforms. Whereas due to their weak resistance to neoliberalism they do not necessary reject the reforms or understand their broader meaning for the welfare state and division of wealth in society, they sometimes discuss the effects of these reforms on gendered division of care. For example, when NJKL comments on the plans to increase care provided by relatives (NJKL/2016/9), it draws attention to “women’s care burden” and requires that efforts to develop care by relatives should not increase women’s care responsibilities, even if the situation of caregivers would be improved.

Not surprisingly, the strongest analysis of the current political situation in terms of conservatism and neoliberalism comes from one of the new actors. One TASAN! blog post outlines clearly the convergence of conservative values and neoliberal goals: “Family-centered values and the view that everyone should manage by oneself are visible in the media. The restriction of statutory childcare rights is part of neoliberal politics visible in Finland, where care responsibility is being transferred from the public sector to individuals and families.” (TASAN!/2016/3.) TASAN! also addresses in an analytical way the combined effects of various expenditure cuts and employment reforms, showing their disruptive effects on the welfare state as well as on the ability of the thinned third sector and individuals struggling in precarious employment to bridge gaps in public services (TASAN/2015/5, TASAN/2015/12).

That discussions on the relationships between neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism are limited to the relationship between conservatism and neoliberalism, is telling of the weak position of resistance to nationalism on the Finnish women’s movement agenda. For example, when established organizations take stance on the government gender equality policy, they may acknowledge how conservatism and neoliberalism weaken this policy and make demands that counter conservatism and neoliberalism, but nationalism is rarely present in these statements.

Conservatism and nationalism
The links between conservatism and nationalism and their joint effects are far less important for the Finnish women’s movement actors than the links between neoliberalism and conservatism. This side of the triangle is mainly addressed by Unioni and the Feminist Party.

When established actors connect conservatism and nationalism, this happens mainly through linking resistance to nationalism – often narrow and weak – to a mainstream issue, such as violence against women or trafficking, that is usually framed in terms of conservatism. The strongest case is the debate about the reappropriation of arguments about rape and sexual harassment for nationalist and racist purposes. Of the established organizations Unioni actively participated in the debate and explicitly criticized the nationalist reappropriations (Unioni/2015/9). NJKL and Nytkis issued statements about sexual harassment that stressed the pervasiveness of the phenomenon, but did not denounce the way the issue was used to promote racist agendas (NJKL/2016/1, NYTKIS/2016/1). The debate shows that the Finnish women’s/feminist movement actors are aware of the dangers of co-optation of feminist discourses on VAW by nationalist forces and are ready to reclaim the terrain.

We find only a few instances where the relationship between conservatism and nationalism and their joint effects come to fore. The connection between the two political projects and its significance for gender equality and feminism is made visible in two ways. Firstly, Unioni, TASAN!, Feminist Party observe how sexism, anti-feminism and the marginality of gender equality issues converge with racism and right-wing populism (Unioni/2014/9, Unioni/2015/3, TASAN/2016/1). Secondly, conservatism and nationalism are joined in feminist critique, when Unioni and Feminist Party discuss the general disregard of fundamental and human rights. For example, Unioni connects the harshening views towards LGBTI people to the harshening views towards ethnic minorities, paperless and refugees (Unioni/2015/3). Unioni and Feminist Party also refer to changes in the societal values in a manner that covers both conservatism and nationalism without making a distinction between the two. For example, when Unioni analyses the “turn to conservatism in the societal value climate” it refers to anti-abortion views as well as anti-immigration views (also FP/2016/9).
Ability to resist conservatism and nationalism as interconnected projects that work in unison against gender equality rather than as distinct forces seems to be connected to intersectional approach and anti-racist stance. Both Unioni and Feminist Party see LGBTI rights and the struggle against racism as a key feminist issues.

*Nationalism and neoliberalism*

It is even more rare for Finnish women’s/feminist movement actors to link nationalism and neoliberalism. This suggests that it is easier for organizations who understand resistance to conservatism as their main focus to link conservatism to neoliberalism or nationalism than to connect points of the triangle that are far less important for their analysis and agenda.

Feminist Party is the only organization that connects critique of neoliberalism to critique of nationalism. The Party takes an intersectional approach when analyzing the effects of austerity politics, arguing that in addition to women also immigrations have been particularly hit (FP/2016/4, FP/2016/10) and being the only organization drawing attention to the effects of austerity on minorities. Furthermore, the Party portrays austerity politics as one reason for increased racism and encourages public spending for activities countering racism: ‘Feminist economic policy understands that everything that decreases discrimination, inequality and racism is an investment in the future. It is short-sighted set the dispossessed against each other through cutting from the poor and thus build ground for hate and racism’ (FP/2016/5). The party also portrays public services as an antidote for harshening societal values and hate speech, ‘a glue that ties us together’ (FP/2010/9).

*Resistance to the the triangle as a whole*

It is very rare for Finnish women’s/feminist movement actors - both old and new - to address the triangle as a whole. For established organizations, joint statements by many human rights organizations are often needed before the three-fold political context becomes visible and before neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism are each resisted (e.g., Unioni/2015/3 and Nytkis/2015/3; Unioni 2015/14 and Nytkis/2014/8). Furthermore, for established organizations,
addressing the whole triangle appears to be easiest in the context of a key issue of expertise that is mainly framed in terms of conservatism (e.g. Nytkis/2016/9 on VAW, TANE/2014/2 on men’s equality). In these cases, critical references to neoliberalism and nationalism often remain superficial.

The way neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism work together against gender equality becomes most clearly visible in a joint statement on violence against women for the UN (Nytkis/2016/4). In addition to addressing problems related to conservatism (e.g. definition of rape), the statement points out how racism and austerity politics disrupt efforts to combat violence against women: ‘During the fall of 2015 a new far-right anti-immigrant group, Soldiers of Odin, began patrolling cities in Finland. Among Soldiers of Odin, there are members with criminal record, often linked to VAW. By claiming that Soldiers of Odin protect women’s integrity (“naisrauha”), they are actually hijacking the concepts of activism against VAW and putting it in use in a racist discourse. … At the same time, due to the austerity policy women’s organisations monitoring the implementation of international and regional treaties and conventions are facing cuts to their state funding.’ (Nytkis/2016/4.) In contrast and underlining the importance of joint action for holistic critique, an almost identical statement issued by Nytkis alone leaves out the discussion on racism (Nytkis/2016/9).

With the exception of Feminist Party, the new actors are even less likely to address the triangle as a whole. It is common even for the Feminist Party to leave either conservatism or neoliberalism out of its analysis of the political context (FP/2016/1, FP/2016/10), but a press release on the occasion of a visit of Gudrun Schyman, the leader of the Swedish feminist party, makes all three forces visible: ‘Austerity politics has weakened in particular the situation of women, immigrants and disabled people across the EU. In Finland non-discrimination laws have been left on the table one after another. Racism has increased and borders are being closed in front of those in need of help.’ (FP/2016/4). Resistance to the triangle as a whole is best visible when the Party discusses feminist economic policy: opposition to neoliberal austerity politics and the devaluation of public services is combined with an understanding economic policy as a tool to change conservative family leave arrangements and decrease racism (FP/2016/5).
Our analysis reveals that it is difficult for both old and new actors to analyse the joint effects of the triangle and resist the triangle as a whole. We interpret this difficulty as a sign of compartmentalization of feminist resistance. As we have shown, most established organizations that focus on resisting conservatism are to some extent able to address neoliberalism, even the critique of neoliberalism remains weak. However, they do not see resistance to nationalism and racism as part of their main agenda. In contrast, Feminist Party, Unioni and Monika that are more likely to resist nationalism or address the convergence of conservatism and nationalism may, in turn, have difficulties to integrate neoliberalism in their analysis and critique.

Conclusions: compartmentalized resistance

In this paper we have analysed how feminist resistance engages with gendered forms of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism that underpin contemporary politics of Finnish government. Our hypothesis was that feminist resistance is compartmentalized: women’s movement actors and organisations focus on one point of the triangle instead of engaging in intersections and coalitions of the three political projects.

Our analysis suggests that compartmentalization has several repercussions for feminist resistance. Firstly, it leads to limited analysis of the effects of policies simultaneously underpinned by neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism and limited or even wrong interpretations of reasons behind the adoption of these policies. For example, as regards to austerity politics, more intersectional approaches to the gendered consequences - namely challenging racism as a manifestation of nationalism - are marginalised. At the same time, the conservative underpinnings of the some of most problematic expenditure cuts from a gender perspective, such as the restriction of statutory childcare rights, remain unchallenged. Compartmentalization may also make women’s/feminist movement actors vulnerable to forms of co-optation. For example, limited critical engagement with neoliberalism means that critiques of conservatism and nationalism may be based on neoliberal arguments about resource-efficiency, economic benefits of gender equality and costs of inequality.
Our analysis has illustrated that women’s movement actors in Finland have difficulties in the new political context to resist the joined impact of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism on gender equality. Established organizations’ close relationships to political parties mean that the organizations include actors who advance all three projects. This makes voicing a strong critique towards any of the three projects impossible and leads to co-optation and silences that can be interpreted as support. Austerity politics and the harder times for gender equality politics have also led to establishment of new feminist actors. Our analysis shows that the new actors do not shy away from directly opposing the three political projects and that some of them are also more interested in resisting the combined effects of neoliberalism, conservatism and nationalism.

We have shown that resistance to conservatism has been the key to Finnish women’s movements and continues to be the driving force for established organizations, however, slightly less important for new organizations. Feminist resistance to neoliberalism is mainly narrow and technical: organizations request for gender impact assessments but rarely question the need for spending cut. Co-optation to neoliberalism is common, visible in particular in uncritical adoption of the government’s concepts and discourses around the economy and austerity. Resisting nationalism is a new emerging trend for Finnish women’s/feminist movements that has become visible in the 2010s in response to the increasing visibility of nationalist and racist agendas in politics and public debate. However, critique of nationalism is limited to some actors only - mainly new - and remains marginal for most established organizations. Multidimensional analysis of the political context and specific policies that takes gendered forms of neoliberalism, conservatism and racism into account is rare. When engaging with more than one point of the triangle, most organizations focus on the relationship between conservatism and neoliberalism, leaving nationalism aside. The organizations who make most efforts to engage with the triangle as a whole are those who have the most intersectional approach to feminist politics.
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