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Freedom of speech requires actions : Exploring
discourse of politicians convicted of hate speech

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**'Freedom of speech requires actions.' Exploring the
discourse of politicians convicted of anti-Muslim hate-
speech**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how politicians convicted of hate-speech against Muslims account for their actions in statements on their Facebook-pages as well as in reported interviews. Taking a critical discursive psychological perspective, the study examines the strategies through which the politicians discursively claim and resist various subject positions, thus managing to construct their hate-speech as everything from trivial mishaps to acts of virtue. The study examines the multifaceted dynamics of these constructions, and shows how elements from the *Five Step Social Identity Model of the Development of Collective Hate* are flexibly deployed in the discourse to serve distinct social and political purposes. Thus allowing the **Social Identity** and (critical) discursive approaches to challenge and develop each other, the study advances social psychological research on political communication and persuasion, and contributes to the debate on the boundaries between hate-speech and freedom of speech.

Keywords: political discourse, hate-speech, freedom of speech, **Social Identity** theory, critical discursive psychology, subject positions

INTRODUCTION

Across Europe the debate about the boundaries between hate-speech and freedom of speech (van Noorloos, 2014), especially but not exclusively when it comes to discourse about Muslims (Mårtensson, 2014; Maussen & Grillo, 2014), has become increasingly politicized. In Finland, for example, after the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, when a record-breaking 32,000 asylum-seekers and refugees arrived in the country, hate-speech and hate-related crime rates rose with more than 50 per cent (Tihveräinen, 2015). In the majority of instances, the hatred was indeed directed at Muslims. The present study will examine this topic through a closer look at three instances in which the speakers – populist radical right politicians – became prosecuted for such statements.

Hate-speech as a term remains contested, **within both** academia and the legal realm, which makes it difficult to distinguish it from, for instance, other forms of insulting speech (Bader, 2014). Bader consequently argues in favour of talking about ‘discrimination’ and ‘discriminatory speech’ instead. Maussen and Grillo (2014, p. 175), however, summarize three commonly agreed upon features of hate-speech: ‘it is directed against a specified or easily identifiable individual or, more usually, group of individuals based on aspects of their (core, nonvoluntary) identity; it stigmatises the target group by implicitly or explicitly ascribing qualities widely regarded as highly undesirable; and because of its negative qualities, the target group is viewed as an unwelcome presence and a legitimate object of hostility’.

International covenants regulating hate-speech emerged after the Second World War with the purpose of undermining racist regimes (Maussen & Grillo, 2014). The United Nations’ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that ‘any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law’ (ICCPR,

Art. 20). National regulations of hate-speech developed during the 21st century alongside two larger processes: the development of a view of language as a form of action; and the emergence of populist and radical right parties **with** their aggressive rhetoric against minorities in increasingly multicultural societies (Maussen & Grillo, 2014). The Finnish constitution does not recognise ‘hate-speech’ as a criminal act per se, but ethnic agitation and breach of the sanctity of religion are punishable with a fine or prison sentence of up to two years, and six months, respectively (Finnish Criminal Code, Chapter 11, Sections 10-11). Like in other countries, the law banning breach of the sanctity of religion has been particularly contested, as it is questioned whether insulting a *religion* also entails insulting *persons* (van Noorloos, 2014).

Another problematic issue with regulating hate-speech is the balance between the right to freedom of speech, on the one hand, and protection against discrimination, on the other. As Bader (2014) discusses, the need to protect freedom of speech, and the need to control it, are both justified by a wide array of abstract and more or less disputed values and principles, such as democracy, equality, individual autonomy and human dignity, which poses challenges for legal interpretations. Further, the dilemma is connected with asymmetrical power relations, as the right to express oneself freely tends to be the sole privilege of the majority at the cost of minorities (e.g., Bader, 2014; van Noorloos, 2014).

Legislation against hate-speech indeed often operates in a grey area, with plenty of room left for interpretations of the laws in relation to particular cases. For instance, when Geert Wilders, the leader of the Dutch radical right Party for Freedom, was prosecuted for hate-speech against Muslims, one justification for why the court decided to acquit him was that he as a politician must be allowed to participate in the broader timely and ‘serious’ debate about multiculturalism and immigration (van Noorloos, 2014). As van Noorloos (2014) suggests, however, one may well ask what came first, as

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3 politicians with considerable positions of power and voice in society have **significant** influence over
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5 which matters become debated and polarised in the public and political debates. The example of
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7 Wilders brings forth a fundamental challenge for contemporary multicultural societies, where the
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9 freedom of speech versus hate-speech debate has become so politicised: to what extent is court
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11 intervention, as opposed to 'letting people speak their minds' beneficial for harmonious intergroup
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13 relations? How can it be determined whether hate-speech causes *actual* harm to the targets of the
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15 speech, and where do we draw the line for acceptability (Bader, 2014)? Furthermore, as Bader (2014)
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17 discusses, how to **ensure** that legal prosecutions and convictions of hate-speech serve their purpose,
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19 that is, combatting racism and setting a clearer barrier between free speech and hate-speech, rather
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21 than, for instance, forcing racism and Islamophobia to go underground (thus making them more
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23 difficult to monitor), or turning the charged politicians into martyrs?
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31 In the Finnish context, the increase in anti-immigration political rhetoric, including political hate-
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33 speech and Islamophobia, did bring about a gradual normalisation of such views in the public debate
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35 (Lentin & Titley, 2011; Mäkinen, 2016; Pettersson, 2017). This process was largely aided by the
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37 social media, through which politicians reach out directly to groups of 'likeminded' and appeal to
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39 presumptive voters with radical, yet rhetorically forceful statements that then become picked up by
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41 journalists and further circulated in mainstream media (Hatakka, 2016; Horsti, 2015; Keskinen, 2013;
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43 Pettersson & Sakki, 2017; Sakki & Pettersson, 2016). In the present study, I will explore this topic
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45 by looking at how three politicians convicted of hate-speech talk about hate-speech in their Facebook-
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47 entries and in their statements in mainstream media. I will apply a (critical) discursive (e.g., Edley,
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49 2001; Potter, 1996; Wetherell, 1998) and rhetorical psychological (Billig, 1987; 1988) approach, and
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51 draw upon the *Five Step Social Identity Model of the Development of Collective Hate* (Reicher,
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53 Haslam & Rath, 2008) with its roots in the **Social Identity** tradition. I am interested in how politicians
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55 who convicted of criminal hate-speech give meaning to the notion of hate-speech, on the one hand,
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and freedom of speech, on the other; how they position themselves in relation to this distinction; and how they discursively seek to justify their actions.

The aim of this paper is two-fold. It is to show, on the one hand, how the Five Step Model may inform a critical discursive psychological reading of political hate-speech; and conversely, how a critical discursive analysis may both challenge and develop the original model in order for it to highlight the multifaceted and locally situated dynamics that characterize contemporary political rhetoric. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate how *such* a perspective on political hate-speech, through unpacking *its* multiple and complex dimensions, yet also seeing it as embedded in its political, cultural and social context (Maussen & Grillo, 2014), may contribute to the broader debate on the boundaries between hate-speech and freedom of speech.

ANTI-MUSLIM POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Research on immigrant-hostile and anti-Muslim political discourse has demonstrated that such discourse has largely been cleansed from notions of race, and instead come to revolve around claims about inherent and incompatible *cultural* differences, and real and pressing threats to the nation and to its 'Western' or 'Christian' culture (Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Hopkins, Reicher & Levine, 1997; Sakki & Pettersson, 2016; Verkuyten, 2013; Wood & Finlay, 2008). Focusing on cultural – rather than racial – differences and threats protects the speaker from accusations of holding prejudiced views (Billig, 1988), whilst nevertheless allowing him or her to portray entire groups of people as inferior and undeserving Others. This pertains especially to anti-Muslim political discourse, where the entire Muslim community is held accountable for the threat that radical Islamist terrorism poses to Western or European countries, and where the speaker positions him- or herself as the defender of the nation, its people and culture (e.g., Mårtensson, 2014; Sakki & Pettersson, 2016; Verkuyten, 2013; Wood & Finlay, 2008).

Notions akin to cultural essentialism also feature in Nick Haslam's (2006) theory of dehumanisation. Haslam distinguishes between two kinds of dehumanisation: *mechanistic dehumanisation*, in which human nature is denied to others, likening these to automata or machines; and *animalistic dehumanisation*, which entails denying uniquely human attributes to others, representing these as animal-like. Mechanistic dehumanisation is usually confined to interpersonal relationships, whereas animalistic dehumanisation more often occurs in intergroup contexts. Even though animalistic dehumanisation relies on ideas of culturally and socially acquired differences between ingroup and outgroup, paradoxically, this difference per se is viewed as essential. This is how cultural essentialism and animalistic dehumanisation may overlap in (political) discourse, where members of the outgroup, for example the Muslim community, are referred to in abstract, non-human terms (e.g., Verkuyten, 2013) or are (explicitly or implicitly) likened to animals (e.g., O'Brien, 2003), and treated as inherently incompatible with the ingroup and its features, culture and values (e.g., Sakki & Pettersson, 2016).

According to the **Five Step Model** proposed by Stephen Reicher and colleagues (2008), outgroup hatred, be it against Muslims or other groups, evolves through the following process: 1) *Identification* – the construction of an ingroup with a common identity; 2) *Exclusion* – the definition of targets as external to the ingroup; 3) *Threat* – the representation of these targets as endangering ingroup identity; 4) *Virtue* – the championing of the ingroup as (uniquely) good; and 5) *Celebration* – embracing the eradication of the outgroup as necessary to the defence of virtue (Reicher et al., 2008, p. 1313). Essentially, through this process outgroup hatred and intolerance – even eradication – become constructed not only as justified, but as morally sound, as they protect the virtuous ingroup from destruction by the evil outgroup.

As the **Five Step Model** suggests, in the development of outgroup hatred the construction of the ingroup as ‘good’ is as important as the construction of the outgroup as ‘evil’. In the context of anti-Muslim political discourse, the speaker – typically a radical-right politician – may deploy colloquial language and appeal to ‘common-sense’ (Billig, 1987) in order to create an **image of** the self as a prototypical member of the ‘ordinary people’. This self defends the ingroup not only against the ‘Muslim threat’, but also against any political forces – typically green or leftist politicians – that support the Muslim community and that concomitantly become accused of elitism and of abandoning the ingroup, ‘the people’ (e.g., Rapley, 1998; Rooyackers & Verkuyten, 2012; Sakki & Pettersson, 2016; Wood & Finlay, 2008). Thus, (radical right) politicians may construct themselves, and by implication, their ingroup of ‘the people’ that they defend, as moral superiors, yet innocent victims of discrimination and even racism on behalf of the political Other. In this way, the racist label commonly attached to the ingroup becomes reversed (van Dijk, 1993) to the political outgroup, and thus the circle that aims to warrant and even necessitate outgroup hostility becomes closed.

In the present study, I will investigate whether and how the three politicians convicted of hate-speech against Muslims deploy elements from the **Five Step Model** in their discourse. Whereas this model was developed within the **Social Identity** (SI) (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social categorisation (SCT) traditions (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987), my main approach in this study relies on work in critical discursive psychology (e.g., Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998) that stems from the social constructionist paradigm (e.g., Burr, 2003). A central tenet of SIT and SCT is that the social groups we belong to constitute an important source of our sense of self and our self-esteem; therefore, we tend to favour our own group(s) in comparison to other groups. By contrast, the discursive paradigm emphasises the flexibility and malleability of (social) identities or *subject positions*, and how these are continuously constructed and reconstructed in social interactions (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987). When it comes to national identities, SIT as SCT adopt a view of

these as essential and inevitable, whereas the discursive paradigm again highlights their context-dependentness and strategic character (see also: Burns & Stevenson, 2013). As Burns and Stevenson argue, research in the SIT and SCT paradigms tend to overemphasise and idealise the role of political leaders, and the purpose of political talk as being solely that of mobilisation. Through their study of leading Irish politicians' talk about the Irish Lisbon treaty referenda, the researchers demonstrate how a critical discursive approach allows for the exploration of politicians' locally situated, actual talk, and of how this talk can serve other purposes than mobilisation, such as *demobilisation* of support for political antagonists, or accounting for political action.

In sum, the SIT and SCT perspectives on political discourse focus on issues of group belonging and identification, the essentiality of national identity constructions, and the importance of political leadership. A critical discursive perspective, on the other hand, highlight the multifaceted, complex and locally situated dynamics of (political) discourse, and how identities may be flexibly claimed and resisted through such social, discursive practices. The discursive tradition also rejects the SIT and SCT view of discourse as grounded in cognitive processes (e.g., Burns & Stevenson, 2013). Despite these differences, the two perspectives **partly** do overlap, as they share an emphasis on the importance of the social context and of the construction of national identities for political discourse and persuasion (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Because of their different foci and assumptions, **the Social Identity** and critical discursive traditions seldom join paths in social psychological research. An exception is the study discussed above by Burns and Stevenson (2013), where the authors highlight the flexible and strategic character of national identity constructions in political leaders' rhetoric. Another is a study by Maykel Verkuyten (2013), who shows that Geert Wilders seeks to justify discrimination of Muslim immigrants through drawing on the steps proposed by the **Five Step** Model. The study does not, however, problematize

the combination of these two approaches, nor does it engage in a discussion about how such a combination may allow them to inform and develop each other. This will be the explicit aim of this paper, where I will demonstrate how a critical discursive **view** of the **Five Step** Model will help us understand the contents, forms and functions of contemporary political discourse. Hoping thereby not to do the original model excessive injustice, I view its different elements not as steps or stages, but rather, as *discursive resources* that may feature in the politicians' accounts, serving particular functions depending on the rhetorical context (Billig, 1987; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

As I will show, bringing the **Five Step** Model and a discursive perspective together allows the researcher to conduct fine-grained analyses that are sensitive to the locally situated and interactively constructed character of (online) political discourse – dimensions that, I maintain, the **Five Step** Model alone is not capable of grasping. Indeed, the discursive psychological (e.g., Potter, 1996) perspective allows me to analyse the discursive strategies that the politicians deploy in their anti-Muslim political discourse: first, its *epistemological orientation*, that is, the ways in which the politicians seek to construct their own statements as common-sensical, factual and credible; and second, its *action-orientation*, or the ways in which the accounts are constructed to achieve particular outcomes (see also: Augoustinos, LeCouteur & Soyland, 2002). The *critical* discursive perspective combines 'micro' and 'macro' perspectives on discourse, and takes into account both the *constitutive* role of discourse – how culturally available discourses enable and constrain individuals' social action, and its *constructive* role – how individuals use it in order to achieve particular social outcomes (Budds, Locke & Burr, 2016). Accordingly, it allows me to explore the culturally available resources that the politicians utilise in their discourse, and how these discursive patterns enable certain *subject positions* (Davies & Harré, 1990) that the politicians can claim or resist. Thus, I am interested in how and for what purposes the politicians position themselves, or become positioned, in particular ways within the discourse about hate-speech versus freedom of speech.

Finally, in drawing upon Billig's (1987, 1988) rhetorical psychological approach, I will analyse the politicians' accounts of and positions in relation to hate-speech as seeking to defend certain arguments and undermine alternative counter-arguments. Put differently, I will elaborate upon the ways in which the politicians' discourse participates in and may have consequences for the societal (public and political) debates about hate-speech versus freedom of speech. Thus, ultimately, my hope is to enhance our understanding of the implications that sentences of hate-speech against minorities have upon the convicted politicians' discourse.

THE FINNS PARTY¹ AND HATE SPEECH

Since 2004, 42 people have been convicted of criminal hate-speech in Finland (Finnish Broadcasting Company, 2017). Six of these have been members of the Finns Party (*Perussuomalaiset*). The Finns Party is a populist radical right party that gained a landslide electoral victory in the Finnish national parliamentary elections in 2011, and renewed this success in the subsequent 2015 elections, when the party entered government for the first time (Jungar, 2016). The present study will explore three Finns Party hate-speech cases that received massive public and media attention in 2016-17: those of Terhi Kiemunki, Teuvo Hakkarainen and Sebastian Tynkkynen. Kiemunki was at the time of her case assistant to MP, and leader of the Finns Party local branch in Tampere, Finland's third biggest city. She had already been publicly criticised – but not convicted – because of her Facebook-entry wherein she compared Muslim girls to witches. Hakkarainen, an MP, is well known for his radical statements and involvement in racist scandals (Jungar, 2016). Tynkkynen is the (now former) president of the Finns Party Youth organisation, a very active political debater, who became (in)famous for his severe criticism not only of Islam, but also of the Finns Party leadership and their – according to Tynkkynen – too lenient immigration-policy.

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3 All three politicians became charged for their writings about Muslims, on Facebook in the case of
4 Hakkarainen and Tynkkynen, and in her blog in the case of Kiemunki. Hakkarainen and Tynkkynen
5 wrote their statements in July 2016, shortly after the terrorist attack in Nice where a man of North-
6 African origin drove a truck into a crowd, killing 86 people. Hakkarainen was charged with incitement
7 to racial hatred because of his writings claiming that ‘not all Muslims are terrorists, but all terrorists
8 are Muslim’. Tynkkynen had compared the prophet Mohammed to a monster, and called for the
9 ‘return-mill’ to start turning and removing all Muslims from Finland. The court ultimately concluded
10 him guilty of incitement to racial hatred and breach of the sanctity of religion. Kiemunki became
11 convicted for incitement to racial hatred because of her blog-entry written in March 2016, where she
12 drew an image of a future Finland where women and children are raped, ‘heathens’ killed and
13 mosques erected because of an Islamic invasion (see Extract 9 in the analysis below).
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31 As for the political repercussions of the sentences, they remained wanting², despite the then party
32 leader Timo Soini’s promise that expulsion would be the fate of any party member who engages in
33 racist activities (Jungar, 2016). In fact, notwithstanding the numerous instances of its members’
34 involvement in racist scandals, expulsions have been almost non-existing³. The party leadership has
35 been combining submissive and confrontational rhetoric vis-à-vis the scandals, thus striving to
36 maintain its distance from racist and hate-related crimes on the one hand, but to satisfy also the
37 significant portion of its supporters that vote for the more radical members of the party, on the other
38 (Hatakka, Välimäki & Niemi, 2017; Horsti, 2015). In terms of the three hate-speech cases that are the
39 focus of this study, the Finns Party’s municipal election campaign slogan in 2017, ‘Freedom of speech
40 is broken’ (*Sananvapaus on rikki*), may serve to illustrate the party’s official reaction to them. As will
41 be discussed further in this paper, drawing upon the right to freedom of speech is a powerful tool for
42 claiming the right to ‘say what one thinks’, whilst not necessarily granting this right to others (van
43 Noorloos, 2014).
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METHOD

Material⁴

The material for this study consists of Facebook-entries and interviews in news media by Kiemunki, Hakkarainen and Tynkkynen during the months following their statements that had rendered them convicted of hate-speech. The studied time-period stretches from March 2016 to February 2017, covering the time preceding, during and following the politicians' trials. Combining material from both the politicians' own Facebook-accounts and their interviews within news media is not without complexities: the two rhetorical contexts differ profoundly, as the former comprises accounts written by the politicians without the involvement of interviewers, whilst the latter is undoubtedly affected by the presence and particular questions and agenda of the journalist. Yet, Bull and colleagues (Bull, Elliot, Palmer & Walker, 1996) acknowledge that politicians are seldom helpless in the interview setting, as they may steer the conversation through shifting the topic either before or after responding to a question. The authors further propose that politicians need to orient to an array of different constituencies when giving interviews, thus they must, in Goffmanian terms, generally manage three different 'faces' or issues: their own, that of their party and that of 'significant others', that is, other agents associated with their party. For politicians, such face management is not merely a matter of strategy, but an end in its own right – as is *not* supporting the face of political antagonists.

One can expect that the faces politicians need to orient to will be different in news media settings, as compared to the social media. For example, face-management vis-à-vis the own party may be of lesser importance in politicians' own Facebook-accounts, where the creation of a personal brand and profile, and the communication with their followers, are paramount. As has been shown elsewhere

(Sakki & Pettersson, 2016; Pettersson & Sakki, 2017), the social media constitutes a public sphere where the politicians may engage in direct communication with a like-minded audience, whereas news articles and interviews are directed at a general, partly ideologically opposed one. Indeed, in circumventing the intermediating role played by journalists, the social media can function as a channel for politicians across the political spectrum to control and manipulate the messages they convey. The social media can also serve as a platform for producing pronounced populist identities that rely on dichotomies between ‘us’ (e.g., the politician and ‘the people’) and ‘them’ (e.g., immigrants or the ‘elite’) (Nilsson, 2012). Research has demonstrated that the social media has been of immense importance for the electoral fortunes of radical right parties in multiple country-contexts (e.g., Allen, 2005; Bratten, 2011), not least in Finland, where Internet and social media penetration is particularly high in international comparison (Strandberg, 2013).

Despite the differences between social and news media discussed above, I argue that a combination of the materials was highly purposeful, as it allowed me to gain a rich view of the politicians’ discourse of hate-speech, and to explore the variations in rhetorical formulations and strategic orientations, depending on the imagined audience. I found a critical discursive psychological perspective on political discourse especially useful here, as it allowed me in detail to explore these interactive dimensions of interviews and online exchanges, aspects that the **Five Step** Model does not capture.

I selected the Facebook-entries for this study through a manual review of the politicians’ Facebook-pages during the studied time-period. My focus was on identifying the entries wherein the politicians discussed the topic of hate-speech and/or their individual cases. A thorough reading of the Facebook-entries was a time-consuming endeavour, yet it was necessary in order to identify all relevant entries, including those in which, for instance, the word ‘hate-speech’ was not mentioned explicitly. The final

number of Facebook-accounts was 38. This material was supplemented with interviews with the politicians in the largest Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, *HS* (circulation approx. 366,000) and the website of the Finnish National Broadcasting Company *YLE*. I identified the relevant articles by entering the politicians' names and the term hate-speech (*vihapuhe*) into the websites' search-engines and, again, limiting the time-frame to March 2016 to February 2017. I ended up with a final set of 60 articles, 27 from *HS* and 33 from *YLE*.

In order to ensure a fine-grained critical discursive analytical process, and in order not to lose the idiomatic nuances of the textual material, I conducted the analysis on the original Finnish-language entries and interviews. I then translated the extracts presented in this paper into English, retaining rhetorical complexities and idiomatic expressions as much as possible. In terms of the ethical considerations related to using these sets of material, I abided by the guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (2012). Accordingly, as both the Facebook-pages and the news media articles constitute readily accessible and public material, and as the concerned politicians do not belong to any threatened minority that I might harm with my research, I could use this material without the politicians' consent.

Methodological approach

My analytical procedure was divided into three stages that I moved back and forth between as I proceeded. First, I read the material multiple times in order to identify the patterns, or the *consistency* and *variability* within and between accounts (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The patterns I sought for were the ways in which the politicians talked about hate-speech versus freedom of speech, and about their individual cases. I paid special attention to the culturally available meanings (e.g., Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998) that the politicians attributed to the concept of hate-speech, and how they related their own cases to these meanings.

Second, I set out to explore the subject positions that were made available in the discourse, and how the politicians claimed certain subject positions and resisted others (Davies & Harré, 1990). Here, relying on the analytical toolkit of discursive (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) and rhetorical (Billig, 1987; 1988) psychology, I paid attention to the discursive and rhetorical strategies and tools whereby the politicians sought to construct these positions. This stage of analysis included paying attention the potential ways in which 'we' were constructed as a group with a common identity, as good and in need of protection, in contrast to how 'they' were constructed as other, inferior and threatening (Reicher et al., 2008). In conjunction, I analysed the empiricist orientation of the politicians' discourse, that is, how they sought to build their actions (i.e., the statements that had rendered them accused of criminal hate-speech) as logical, credible and based upon facts (Potter, 1996). Throughout the analyses, I remained sensitive to the ways in which the politicians constructed their messages in a dialogical relationship with the (imagined) audience that the Facebook-entries or interview settings involved.

Finally, I analysed the discourse in terms of both the specific, immediate (Potter, 1996) as well as further-reaching (e.g., Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998) social and political implications it might have. Thus, I studied the discursive patterns as part of their broader argumentative context (i.e. the general debate on hate-speech) (Billig, 1987), focusing on what counter-positions the politicians' arguments sought to undermine.

ANALYSIS

Through my analyses, I identified four subject positions that the three politicians claimed in relation to their own cases as well as to the topic of hate-speech in a broader sense. These positions that I call *Only Human* (1), the *Voice of Reason* (2), *Victim* (3) and *Hero* (4) ranged from transmitting some degree of confessional tone (position 1) to the explicit denial of hate-speech (positions 2 and 3) and, finally, to the celebration of the politicians' acts as virtuous (position 4; Reicher et al., 2008). In the

analyses below, I shall demonstrate that the **Five Step Model** does indeed provide a useful, yet incomplete, framework for studying political discourse such as that of our present focus. As I shall highlight, critical discursive psychological lenses allow us to examine how the politicians claim subject positions through various interactive, discursive and rhetorical strategies, including ‘freedom of speech’ as a central rhetorical tool. The four subject positions often intermingled in the politicians’ discourse, yet, for the sake of clarity, I present them under separate headings in the analyses below.

1. *Only Human*

One of the subject positions that the politicians claimed in relation to their sentences was that of being *Only Human*. This position was more common in the politicians’ statements in news media than on Facebook. As we shall see below, in the construction of this position, the politicians relied heavily on *ontological gerrymandering* and discursive *abnormalisation* (Potter, 1996) that served to portray their statements as unfortunate breaches to their normally tolerant and sensible character (Edwards, 1992). Despite the confessional tone, the politicians managed to dismiss their statements as trivial accidents that could ‘happen to anyone’ and that by no means deserved the negative attention they had received. In terms of the **Five Step** Model, the construction of this position involved its first two steps of *Identification* (the construction of an ingroup) and *Exclusion* (the definition of targets as external to the outgroup), emphasising the politician’s position as one of the ‘common people’ against the overly intellectual and politically correct ‘elite’ (e.g., Mudde, 2004). In its most confessional form the *Only Human* position was claimed through explicitly apologetic language, as in Extract 1 below:

Extract 1: Kiemunki, *HS*, March 3rd, 2016

1 The discussion on my wall departed from two questions and
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5 2 caused quite some anger. (...) The comments have escalated in
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8 3 the subsequent discussion. The comparison to children was bad
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10 4 and thoughtless. I am genuinely sorry and apologise if I have hurt
11
12 5 people.

17 In Extract 1 Kiemunki discusses her Facebook-entry about Muslim children that caused public
18 outrage but no criminal charges. What I would like to draw attention to is the way in which Kiemunki,
19 albeit apologetic (line 4), aims to detach herself from this statement. Whereas she emphasises her
20 own agency through the use of active voice and the personal pronoun ‘I’ in her apology (line 4), the
21 rest of the extract is dominated by criticising the actions of others (the comments of her Facebook
22 followers) and presenting her own (publicly condemned) actions in passive form (lines 3-4). Indeed,
23 here we can see how Facebook as a social (online) forum allows the speaker to develop her self-
24 defensive argument through references to her own community of followers. Kiemunki discusses a
25 specific part of her statement – the reference to children – as ‘bad and thoughtless’, yet she does not
26 express regret for the statement *per se*. Further, the apology is conditional: she apologises *if* she has
27 hurt someone. Here, what is arguably missing is an explicit apology for her *statement* and its
28 consequences. In sum, through shifting between active and passive voice, and through ontological
29 gerrymandering (Potter, 1996) – through strategically selecting which issues to address and which
30 ones to ignore – the politician manages to distance herself from her actions, and to come across as
31 *Only Human*: as remorseful, yet not guilty of outgroup hatred. In Billig and colleagues’ (Billig et al.,
32 1988) terms, she thus manages to negotiate the ideological dilemma between prejudice and
33 reasonableness.

59 Another way in which the politicians claimed the *Only Human* position was through *minimisation* of

their actions (Potter, 1996), that is, through explaining their writings as mere unfortunate choices of wording: ‘*With one change of wording there would have been no prosecution. One should have written: “All Muslims are not terrorists, but many terrorists are Muslim.”*’ (Hakkarainen, Facebook-entry, September 27th, 2016). Furthermore, the politicians could claim the position through depicting themselves as having acted in a state of emotional shock:

Extract 2: Hakkarainen, *HS*, November 1st, 2016

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1	‘The choice of wording capture my feelings at the time. A series
2	of horrendous terrorist-attacks had shaken Europe. My intention
3	was not to incite anyone against any group of people’,
4	Hakkarainen explains.

The speaker above uses various discursive means of accounting for and distancing himself from his actions. Hakkarainen refers to his statement as an uncontrolled emotional response to external pressures: to horrible terrorist attacks (lines 1-2). This creates an image of the speaker’s statement as a *script and breach formulation* (Edwards, 1994), as something *abnormal* that goes counter to how he would usually act as a sensible person, under *normal* conditions. The *extreme-case formulation* (line 2, Pomerantz, 1986) serves to further warrant the politician’s emotional reaction and his strong words, and that they should therefore be excused.

During his trial Hakkarainen’s defence constructed his *Only Human* position and aimed to warrant his innocence through describing him as ‘*a saw-man⁵, no university-folk, and only interprets the sentiments of his own community*’ (HS, January 4th, 2017). This presentation of the politician involves the strategic use of *footing* or alignment (Goffman, 1979): Hakkarainen spoke not as an MP that perhaps should have known better, but as a common man, as ‘one of the people’ who should be

excused as we would excuse **anyone** who simply is not able to express himself in an intellectual way. This reasoning bears strong populist connotations, as it efficiently functions to place the politician among the 'ordinary people' against the educated 'elite' (e.g. Sakki & Pettersson, 2016), protecting the face of the former and harming that of the latter group (Bull et al., 1996). In Reicher and colleagues' (2008) wording, in his construction of the *Only Human* position, Hakkarainen here identifies his ingroup 'the people' (Step 1) whom he distinguishes from the outgroup: those who unjustly accuse him (Step 2). What the **Five Step** Model would fail to recognise, however, but what the fine-grained critical discursive analysis above is able to show, is **how the politicians may claim the *Only Human* position, not through merely making a single ingroup/outgroup distinction, but through invoking multiple categories and boundaries in order to simultaneously position themselves relative to different ingroups (e.g., 'the people') and outgroups (e.g., 'the elites').**

2. *Voice of Reason*

Unlike the position above that sought to explain and excuse the politicians' statements, that of the *Voice of Reason* took more confrontational and self-defensive forms of expression. This position was common in both the mainstream news and Facebook material. Here, the politicians abandoned the submissive tone and drew upon an empiricist discourse (Potter, 1996) and cultural essentialist views about Islam (e.g., Hopkins et al., 1997; Verkuyten, 2003; 2013) in order to describe their cases as purely reasonable actions of honest, straightforward and logical political debaters; indeed, as actions that any reliable politician should perform (Augoustinos et al., 2002). The Finnish laws against hate-speech were accused of endangering freedom of speech, especially when it comes to criticising Islam, which, as has been discussed elsewhere (van Noorloos, 2014) is a typical rhetorical tool in arguments against the regulation of hate-speech. As we will see, the construction of the subject position of the *Voice of Reason* involved steps 1-4 of the **Five Step Model**: the construction of the ingroup (step 1)

involved the championing of the ingroup as uniquely good (step 4) and in need of protection from the outgroup that endangers ingroup identity (steps 2 and 3).

Typically, the culturally essentialist arguments through which the politicians denied any personal engagement in hate-speech against Muslims involved describing their own statements as criticism of – allegedly barbaric – Islamic culture: *'In court Kiemunki explained that the writing was not about individuals, but about a culture that is oppressing and intolerant.'* (HS, November 21st, 2016). This allows her statements to appear as 'truthful' criticism against an abstract target and not against individuals (e.g., Richardson & Colombo, 2014; Verkuyten, 2003; 2013; Wood & Finlay, 2008). Yet, as for example Bader (2014) discusses, (populist radical right) politicians' propaganda against terrorism and Islam has profound consequences for individual Muslims, as they implicitly become placed into this same category, without the speakers having to bear responsibility for their statements.

The *Voice of Reason* position was further strengthened in statements wherein the politicians emphasised the ridiculousness of being charged of hate-speech because of the mere presentation of 'facts': *'This [that every terrorist in recent years has been a Muslim] is a fact, not my opinion'* (Kiemunki, HS, November 21st, 2016) and *'I am truly worried about the state of Finnish freedom of speech. Perhaps most confusing is the fact that you are not even allowed to speak about facts'* (Tynkkynen, HS, November 11th, 2016). Such talk of external, indisputable 'facts' protects the speaker from charges of holding biased or prejudiced views (Potter, 1996). In the last example, the politician's extreme-case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986) 'extremely worried' and 'even about facts' further establishes his position as the *Voice of Reason* against an untenable system. Importantly, moreover, this example shows how the notion of 'freedom of speech' functions as a powerful, liberal argument in the politician's construction of his reasonable and innocent subject position (see also: van Noorloos, 2014).

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The *Voice of Reason* position was furthermore claimed and hate-speech concomitantly denied through comparing criticism of Islam to that of other religions or groups of people, as in Extract 3 below:

Extract 3: Hakkarainen, *YLE*, February 2nd, 2017

1	That was no racist talk. Had I in the same situation criticised
2	Christians or berated Jesus, no-one would have raised any
3	charges. But if I criticise Muslims for their evil deeds then I for
4	sure get accused and judged, and handed a note [a fine].

The extract above begins with an explicit *denial of racism* (van Dijk, 1992) that lays the ground for the speaker to seem unbiased and logical (line 1). The following sentences build up a *contrast structure* (e.g., Gill, 2000/2010) between criticism of Muslims and criticism of Christians: the former is ‘without doubt’ punishable, whereas nobody would voice any concerns about the latter. Through emphasising the injustice and unreasonableness of his charges the politician efficiently positions himself as a reasonable, earnest counter-voice to them (van Dijk, 1993). Muslims, the outgroup, are categorically distinguished (Verkuyten, 2003) from the non-racist self and the (good) ingroup, (Reicher et al., 2008, Steps 1 and 4) and given a dangerous label (line 3; Reicher et. al, 2008, Steps 2 and 3).

Below are two examples of a related, more aggressive version of the outgroup categorisation described above:

Extract 4: Tynkkynen, *Facebook-entry*, November 1st, 2016

1 You should and must criticise Muslims for their belonging to the
 2 world's most disgusting and dangerous religion from a human
 3 rights perspective. This doesn't mean that one shouldn't respect
 4 people. If my son would join, for example, the Klu (sic) Klux
 5 Klan, he would still be my beloved son, but I would do my utmost
 6 to release him from that sick worldview. That is caring.

Extract 5: Tynkkynen, *Facebook-entry*, January 16th, 2017

1 So if I today would found a religion of a flying spaghetti-monster,
 2 declare myself its prophet and claim a 9-year-old child as my wife,
 3 you may not call me a paedophile based on this, only a prophet.

The far more confrontational tone in Extracts 4 and 5, as compared to Extract 3 above, illustrate well the difference in discursive formulations between the different media environments. In Extract 3, the speaker **appears** to manage his face vis-à-vis himself, his party, and the general Finnish public, whereas the Facebook-entries (Extracts 4 and 5) seem to be more about managing one's own face and of a likeminded readership (Bull et al., 1996). The speaker in Extracts 4 and 5 makes extensive use of extrematisation (Potter, 1996), as illustrated in the extreme-case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) 'the world's most disgusting and dangerous religion' (Extract 4, line 2), and in the vast use of vivid metaphors throughout Extract 5, where Tynkkynen discusses his sentence. In Extract 4, through references to liberal 'Western' values (Wetherell & Potter, 1992), a concession (lines 3-4) and the final sentence 'That is caring' (line 6) the speaker discursively consummates his philanthropist views: he is no hater. In both extracts, Muslims are yet again dehumanized into the more abstract notion of Islam, which in turn is likened to extremist (Extract 4) and absurd (Extract 5) ideologies. As Bar-Tal

(2000) has noted, processes of dehumanisation can indeed involve such constructions of the outgroup as '...demons, monsters and satans' (p. 122), which may, for example, serve the function of assigning superiority to the ingroup and justifying outgroup aggression (Haslam, 2006). Previous research on anti-Muslim discourse among the radical-right has demonstrated that the analogy between Islam and Nazism is a frequently used rhetorical strategy when trying to 'demonstrate' the evil and dangerous nature of Islam (e.g., Wood & Finlay, 2008). In Extract 4 above the analogy between Muslims and the Ku Klux Klan (lines 4-5) allows the politician to perform two distinct discursive actions: first, to align Islam with extremist, racist movements, that is, to construct Islam as both external to and endangering the ingroup (Reicher et al., 2008, Steps 2 and 3), and second, to efficiently distance himself from both, thus implicitly constructing himself and his ingroup as good and virtuous (Steps 1 and 4). Dissociating himself from racist groups may be especially important for the present speaker, who together with his party often becomes associated with extreme right and racist ideologies in public debates (e.g., Sakki & Pettersson, 2016). **In sum, the critical discursive analysis of the extracts above has been able to highlight the ways in which the politician uses various discursive resources in order to perform steps of the Five Step Model *simultaneously* – rather than as a sequence of discrete actions as implied in the original model – and the distinct social and political purposes this serves.**

3. *Victim*

In comparison with the two subject positions described above, a third one went further in its denial of hate-speech, as the speakers here positioned themselves as the true *Victims* in the prevailing circumstances. Also this position was prevalent in the news as well as the Facebook material, though it was more dominant in the latter. In the construction of this position, through reducing the definition of racism to concern matters of skin-colour only, the politicians depicted themselves as explicitly anti-racist, and instead accused their political antagonists of political persecution and discrimination,

for example through framing the process leading up to, during and following their trials as explicit witch-hunts:

Extract 6: Tynkkynen, *YLE*, January 11th, 2017

1 ‘Previously, I have acted as witness in a trial against my African
2 friend. A racist or xenophobic person would never do so. These
3 charges are the complete opposite of what I am’. (...) ‘A political
4 persecution has been launched against me’.

The extract above is taken from an article wherein Tynkkynen comments upon his sentence. Tynkkynen begins his emotional statement with a narrative involving his own black friend, which functions to establish his position as evidently non-racist (lines 1-2, Wodak, 2013). Having thus constructed himself as a ‘defender of black people’ the speaker discursively removes his stake or interest (Potter, 1996) in any racist activities, as explicated in the extreme-case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986): ‘a racist or xenophobic person would *never* do so’. The speaker consolidates his position as a *Victim* by describing his situation as ‘political persecution’ (line 4). This position bears close resemblance to the discourse of the Austrian radical right leader Heinz-Christian Strache, who used his ‘own Israeli friends’ as proof that he cannot be anti-Semitic, and depicted the accusations against himself as a witch-hunt by his political antagonists (Wodak, 2013). Intriguingly, then, such discursive constructions seem to function efficiently for radical right politicians who seek to deny and even reverse their racist label (van Dijk, 1993), be the context charges of Islamophobic or anti-Semitic hate-speech.

In the construction of the subject position above, we may see the rhetorical deployment of the first four steps of the **Five Step** Model: the self is categorised together with non-racist, good people (Steps

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1 and 4), whereas the outgroup – the speaker’s political opponents – are categorised as an external, hostile force (Steps 2 and 3). The present example illuminates how in this particular setting – the interview – the speaker seems to construct his message as a plea to the general Finnish public: ‘I am an innocent victim; my political antagonists are to blame’. Again, not only does the speaker here manage his own face (and his party’s and its supporters’), but he also seeks to harm the face of his political opponents (Bull et al., 1996), with the apparent aim, not so much of mobilisation, but of managing issues of accountability (Burns & Stevenson, 2013).

Oftentimes, the accusations of political persecution were directed at rather abstract culprits, as in the following quote: *‘Present-day humanism has made the guilty innocent and the innocent guilty’* (Hakkarainen, Facebook-entry, September 28th, 2016). Often, however, the outgroup became more explicit:

Extract 7: Kiemunki, *Facebook-entry*, August 20th, 2016

1	Those living in the red-green bubble and calling themselves
2	tolerant label people racist when they imagine that they don’t
3	tolerate or that they even hate every person who has even a partial
4	foreign background or darker skin-colour. Maybe such people
5	exist, but I have not met a single one.

In Extract 7 above the speaker constructs a common outgroup category for her antagonists, red-green politicians and ‘so-called anti-racist’ people, who are given pejorative and irrational connotations through the metaphor of ‘living in a bubble’ (line 1) and ‘calling themselves tolerant’ (lines 1-2). The politician, in turn, implicitly places herself within the category directly opposed to this outgroup – that of those who are reasonable and falsely accused of racism (line 2, van Dijk, 1993). Not only does

she thus deny racism on her own part, but she also accomplishes the *reversal* of racism (van Dijk, 1993) through attaching the biased, intolerant label onto her political antagonists, in this way striving to make them lose face (Bull et al., 1996). Again, this is an example of political discourse aimed less at political mobilisation, and more at demobilisation of support for political opponents (Burns & Stevenson, 2013). In this extract, racism is constructed as something so extreme that the politician does not seem to even believe it exists – at least not within her ingroup. She defines racism as based solely upon skin-colour and unreasonable intolerance (lines 2-4), and not, for instance, upon expressions of hostility towards *cultural* groups. Again, this is an instance of ontological gerrymandering (Potter, 1996), which in the present context serves to protect the speaker from liability of holding racist views. In summary, the speaker above manages to construct a position for herself and her ingroup as an innocent, non-racist *Victim* of undue accusations (Reicher et al., 2008; Steps 1 and 4) – even intolerance – on behalf of her outgroup (Steps 2 and 3).

The analyses of the constructions of the *Voice of Reason* and *Victim* positions above have been able to show that the elements of the **Five Step** Model may be used in complex ways to serve varying discursive purposes, and for constructing different subject positions. Together, the examples of the constructions of *Victimhood* (Extracts 6 and 7) strongly confirm the findings of McNeill, Pehrson and Stevenson (2017) that such constructions, when studied at the micro-level through a critical discursive perspective, may be understood as rhetorical accomplishments that serve particular functions, such as the speaker's impression management, the creation of antagonistic divisions between 'ingroup' and 'outgroup', and the reversal of racism.

4. *Hero*

Thus far we have explored three subject positions through which the politicians – in more and oftentimes less submissive ways – sought to deny their engagement in hate-speech. In the fourth and

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3 final position – that I found predominantly in the Facebook material – the politicians instead
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5 constructed their actions as morally sound. In this most rhetorically forceful way in which the
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7 politicians sought to account for their hate-speech, they claimed the position of the *Hero* of the
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9 Finnish nation and people (e.g., Augoustinos et al., 2002; Sakki & Pettersson, 2016) that was depicted
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11 as virtuous, yet threatened by the intrusion of Islam. As Reicher and colleagues (2008) have shown,
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13 such constructions of antagonistic identities, where the good ‘we’ stand against the evil ‘them’ render
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15 acts of outgroup hatred as seemingly celebratory, morally sound pursuits. In other words, the fifth
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17 and final element of the **Five Step Model** – *Celebration* (embracing the eradication of the outgroup
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19 as necessary to the defence of virtue) interacted with the four other ones in the construction of the
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21 subject position of the *Hero*. This is illustrated in Extract 8 below, drawn from a Facebook-entry by
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31 Extract 8: Tynkkynen, *Facebook-entry*, September 30th, 2016

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33 1 Freedom of speech requires actions. It’s good to be pioneering
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35 2 freedom of speech to concern also criticism of Islam, as serious
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37 3 human rights problems within this ideology and among its
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39 4 supporters are apparent. The Enlightenment-philosopher Voltaire
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41 5 once concluded that through recognising those who cannot be
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43 6 criticised one may see who is on the edge. If I get convicted for
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45 7 criticising Islam and its realisers, we unfortunately have to
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47 8 conclude that Islam is still above us. I will, however, defend my
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49 9 freedom of expression until the end, even if a judgement is
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51 10 snapped. This untenable situation has to be crushed, and I invite
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56 11 others as well to fight for our freedom of speech and our rights.
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3 In this extract the speaker warrants his fight against Islam through the use of a powerful *category-*
4 *entitlement* (Potter, 1996), a discursive strategy through which certain categories of people – in this
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6 case the Enlightenment-philosopher Voltaire (line 4) – in certain contexts, are constructed as credible
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8 and knowledgeable on a given matter, thus serving to warrant this particular matter. In the extract
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10 above the fight against Islam is phrased in metaphors of struggle and battle (lines 1; 8; 10; 11, e.g.,
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12 Mols & Jetten, 2014) between liberal, democratic values on the one hand, and authoritarian ones, on
13
14 the other. Paradoxically then, the reference to Voltaire allows the speaker to draw upon
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16 Enlightenment values of liberalism, tolerance and freedom of speech in order to justify his own
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18 intolerance and hate-speech against the outgroup (e.g., Mårtensson, 2014). Another powerful
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20 category-entitlement that all three politicians drew upon in their discourse was that of Geert Wilders,
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22 who became constructed as a prime symbol of freedom of expression (van Noorloos, 2014;
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24 Verkuyten, 2013). The frequent references to Wilders in the three politicians' talk signals the
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26 transnational character of contemporary political hate-speech, as acknowledged by Maussen and
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28 Grillo (2014).
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37 In the extract above, through the frequent use of the pronoun 'We', the politician addresses his
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39 Facebook-followers directly, including them in a common national ingroup of the 'Finnish people',
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41 whom he invites to join in his battle against Islam. As Augoustinos and colleagues (2002) have shown
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43 in the Australian context, with the help of such rhetorical moves, the speaker may present his or her
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45 hostile views against minorities not as the opinions of a marginal, radical or racist group, but as a
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47 representing the view of the majority population, 'the people'.
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53 The subject position constructed above relies on all five elements of the **Five Step Model**: the ingroup
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55 is constructed as sharing a common, virtuous identity (Steps 1 and 4), whose survival is dependent
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57 on the – explicit – fight against the evil and threatening outgroup (Steps 2 and 3), thus, the fight is
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both indispensable and morally justified (Step 5). What the model is not able to account for, but what the present analysis highlights, is that the discursive construction of national identity above seems to orient towards at least two aims: to mobilising support for the speaker's political agenda, as well as to presenting discursive justifications for his own actions (Burns & Stevenson, 2013). Further, it shows how the elements of the **Five Step Model**, **deployed simultaneously**, rest on liberal arguments (e.g., freedom of speech, line 1), and interactive affordances provided by the social media context (lines 7, 8, 11).

The same politician as in Extract 8 above oftentimes integrated elements of alleged victimhood in his discourse, through stressing his own bisexuality when discursively defending 'our' liberal 'Western' values (Wetherell & Potter, 1992): *'From my perspective it is no whatever-matter when people who support death-penalty for example for homos come to our country.'* (Tynkkynen, Facebook-entry, September 30th, 2016). Here, Tynkkynen engages in delicate use of footing (Goffman, 1979): in presenting himself as a sexual minority member, he may speak from a rhetorically powerful position about protecting the rights of these minorities from external threats – in this case, allegedly, from Islam. As has been shown elsewhere (Pettersson, Liebkind & Sakki, 2016), positioning oneself explicitly within a vulnerable minority group can serve variable discursive functions. For example, through emphasising their immigrant or other ethnic minority background, radical right politicians can add credibility to arguments that deny the existence of structural racism in society. Further, as social psychological theories of collective victimhood have shown, such constructions serve to create an image of the ingroup – in this case, the Finns and their values, norms and morals – as the target of a cultural attack by the external threat of Islam (Gone, 2008; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari & Nadler, 2017). Indeed, as our last example below will illuminate, in its most rhetorically forceful form the position of the *Hero* was claimed in connection to that of the *Victim*:

Extract 9: Kiemunki, *Facebook-entry*, November 28th, 2016

1 After all the hatred, scolding, condemnation and ridiculing I have
 2 encountered, I am ever more certain that I don't want Islam to
 3 conquer our country. I am not ashamed, and I don't apologise for
 4 not wanting into our country one single Muslim who is not able to
 5 give up this oppressing and violent culture, demanded by religion,
 6 only to exploit our hospitality. (...) When Finland has been
 7 invaded and its people oppressed – when the infidel have been
 8 killed – women and children raped, mosques erected and
 9 democracy beaten, I will ask you who wanted this, with the same
 10 words that have been directed against me: 'Are you ashamed? Do
 11 you apologise?'. I'm sorry, it will then be too late.

In this final extract – which is a re-posting of the same statement that rendered Kiemunki charged of criminal hate-speech – the ingroup, the Finnish people, is defined even more explicitly than in Extract 8 above. Through the initial repetitive language, the speaker foments the image of herself as an undue *Victim* of hatred and persecution (line 1). Yet, in aligning herself with 'the people' and in committing to her fight for this people and the protection of the nation, she discursively moves towards the position of national *Hero* (lines 2-6). Against this hero stand the intolerance, violence and abuse represented by Islam and the development towards a totalitarian society (lines 6-9). The politician depicts this process in utterly hyperbolic terms (lines 6-9, 11), thus increasing an image of urgency and threat. Further, she addresses a second outgroup apart from that of Islam: 'you who wanted this' (line 9), in other words, the speaker's political opponents, whose face again becomes attacked (Bull et al., 1996). Similar to Extract 8 above, this formulation clearly shows the interactive dimensions of the social media that politicians may utilise in the transmission and justification of outgroup hatred:

not only can they address their views to a like-minded audience of existing and potential voters, but they may also direct rhetorical attacks at political antagonists (see also: Pettersson & Sakki, 2017; Sakki & Pettersson, 2016). Such accusations serve to foment the image of the speaker as a martyr, a *Victim* of political marginalisation and silencing, yet as a reliable and honest defender, a *Hero*, of the national people. The present extract exemplifies the discourse in which hostility towards the outgroup, in this case Islam, becomes not only justified, but depicted as a morally sound act, as it protects the virtuous ingroup from external threats (Reicher et al., 2008, Steps 1-5). In sum, the analyses above demonstrate in detail how the speaker brings all steps of the Five Step Model together in the construction of the subject position of the *Hero*. In other words, the position allows all of these steps to be accomplished simultaneously – rather than sequentially – in the discourse in order to convincingly justify outgroup hatred.

DISCUSSION

This paper has explored the ways in which three Finnish populist radical right politicians sought to warrant their actions that had rendered them convicted of hate-speech, and whether and how elements from the Five Step Social Identity Model of Development of Collective Hate featured as discursive resources in this talk. As the analyses above show, the three convicted politicians were able to claim four subject positions – *Only Human*, *Voice of Reason*, *Victim* and *Hero* – that allowed them to portray their hate-speech against Muslims as everything from trivial mishaps to acts of virtue. This study suggests that the combination of the positions of the *Victim* with that of the *Hero* is crucial for the discursive justification of outgroup hatred, as it allows the politician to portray him- or herself as an unfairly treated, yet brave defender of the nation and its people. This finding is in line with Reicher and colleagues' (2008) conclusion that the championing of the ingroup as (uniquely) good warrants hostility towards the outgroup as necessary to the defence of virtue. It also confirms Burns and Stevenson's (2013) argument that the construction of national identity is complex and multifaceted,

and can serve not only the purpose of political mobilisation, but also of *demobilising* support for political antagonists, and of managing issues of accountability.

The argument of this study has been that neither the Five Step Model nor a critical discursive psychological perspective offers a clear approach when it comes to investigating hate-speech in the specific context in which it occurs, and therefore they alone fail to make a pronounced contribution to the broader debate about hate-speech versus freedom of speech. However, in combining the two approaches, the present study has been able to explore how the different media outlets (social media versus news media) afford certain kinds of subject positions, and how politicians use differing rhetoric to target distinct audiences depending on the media context. The approach has allowed us to see at a micro-level how the multifaceted, complex and interactive dimensions of contemporary (online or offline) political hate-speech increase its argumentative and persuasive force. Furthermore, it has provided insight into the potential – intended or unintended – consequences that legal repercussions may have for the politicians' rhetoric.

As we have seen, the three politicians' rhetoric was, for the most part, far from remorseful. This needs to be taken seriously, as highly asymmetrical power-relations are embedded in, and further consolidated through, political hate-speech: the speakers are able to control (online and offline) media space, and consequently, to influence the public debate, whereas the target of the speech is a vulnerable and politically and culturally marginalised minority-group (Bader, 2014). The present study suggests that radical right politicians may continue pursuing such political agendas and, paradoxically, use their convictions as rhetorical tools in their constructions of themselves as martyrs and defenders of liberal values, the nation and 'the people' against 'evil' and 'barbaric' others.

Through its methodological approach, this study has highlighted the importance of the social media as a communication channel for the radical right, and as a central forum for the transmission and justification of outgroup hatred (see also: Pettersson & Sakki, 2016; Sakki & Pettersson, 2017). Indeed, the *Hero* and *Victim* discourse was characteristic of the politicians' Facebook-entries, in contrast to the generally more submissive tone of their statements in news media. This may partly reflect the individual politicians' differing communication strategies, yet I interpret this finding first and foremost as an indication of the differing rhetorical contexts and (imagined) target audiences of the different media: on Facebook the politicians address their messages at their own existing and potential supporters, with whom they can interact immediately without the journalists' involvement. Here they may also direct forceful accusations at political antagonists, who become labelled with irrationality and accused of abandoning 'the people' (e.g., Sakki & Pettersson, 2016; van Dijk, 1993). By contrast, within so-called mainstream media the politicians must be more rhetorically cautious, strive to appeal to a larger and ideologically more diverse audience, and seem 'politically correct'. In Bull's and colleagues' (1996) terms, politicians simply need to manage a different set of 'faces' in these two different media environments. Yet, both forms of rhetoric may be equally important in a populist radical right party's management of their public image: retaining radical voters on the one hand, yet not losing political credibility, on the other (see also: Hatakka et al., 2017).

The results of this study support Bader's (2014) argument that in order effectively to combat political hate-speech, legal sentences should be accompanied by other responses, for instance, by codes of media conduct; dialogue across ethnic, religious and cultural borders; and political repercussions for the convicted (radical right) politicians. Such repercussions should not necessarily entail complete exclusion (or 'cordon sanitaire') of the politicians, as this may have a similar effect of allowing them to acquire the role of the martyr (Maussen & Grillo, 2014), but rather, they should involve developing means to confront their arguments. It is precisely here that the present study may be beneficial, as it

allows us to see the rhetorical tools on which the hate-speech rests, and accordingly, helps to develop the means to respond to and counter such speech (Mårtensson, 2014; van Noorloos, 2014).

This study has several limitations in terms of its scope as well as its methodological approach. The focus on the specific Finnish context and on hate-speech targeted exclusively at Muslims implies that different results could be obtained in studies conducted in other country-contexts, and investigating hate-speech against other groups. It would be important to explore, for example, whether politicians construct their subject positions differently where the normative climate does not condemn hate-speech as strongly as (or more strongly than) in Finland, and where the hate-speech cases concern other groups than Muslims. The qualitative approach of the study also necessarily limits the conclusions that can be drawn from it. As social media remains an arena for hate-speech that requires urgent attention from social psychologists, it would be important to continue research in and across various social media outlets, such as online discussion fora, political blogs, and Twitter, and applying different methodological approaches. Finally, and importantly, as the patterns of hate-speech are far-reaching and multi-layered in the current era of digitalisation and globalisation (Bader, 2014), there is a desperate need for cross-cultural, comparative research on the topic.

In sum, despite the ontological and epistemological differences between the Social Identity and critical discursive perspectives, this study has shown that they can be purposefully combined and contribute to social psychological research on contemporary political hate-speech. At best, and as I hope this study has accomplished, such a combination allows the perspectives to challenge and develop each other, thus ultimately advancing social psychological research on political communication and persuasion, and contributing to the complex debate on the boundaries between hate-speech and freedom of speech.

NOTES

¹ In June 2017 The Finns Party was split into two after Jussi Halla-aho, regarded as the leader of the Finnish radical-right and anti-immigration movement, was elected party leader. The break-out group comprised all ministers of the Finns Party, including Timo Soini. However, the three politicians who are the focus of this study all remained in the Halla-aho lead Finns Party.

² In February 2017, well after her involvement in the racist scandals, Kiemunki was expelled from the Finns Party. The reason for her expulsion was never given. Kiemunki did, however, continue with her political activities in the party at the local level.

³ In October 2013 a guest of James Hirvisaari, MP of the Finns Party, made a Nazi salutation during a plenary session. As a consequence Hirvisaari was expelled from the FP, but was able to continue as MP by switching to the newly founded Change Party (*Muutospuolue*, formerly *Muutos 2011*).

⁴ The material is kept at the Department of Social Research at the University of Helsinki during the project, and will be given to the Finnish Social Science Data Archive for research and teaching purposes when the project is finished.

⁵ Before entering politics, Hakkarainen was co-owner at a Finnish sawmill.

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