Accounting for minority-majority relations

The construction of identity positions in the blogs of Finnish politicians with immigrant background

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract
Recent years have witnessed a polarisation of public discussions on migration and refugee policies in Europe, and the position of immigrants and multiple ethnicities in European nation-states. While most research conducted on the issue takes a majority perspective, this thesis aims to examine the minority voice in public debates. The objective of this thesis is to gain an understanding on how three politicians in Finland with an immigrant background – Abdirahim Hussein, Nasima Razmyar and Ozan Yanar – account for minority and majority relations and immigrant belonging and participation in their blog posts, and what identity positions they construct for themselves, for other immigrants and for majority members.

The theoretical framework for this thesis draws from social constructionism and three branches of discursive research: discursive psychology, positioning theory and rhetorical psychology. The data, collected from online blog posts between April 2014 and December 2016, consists of 68 blog posts. The blogs selected deal with immigration and intergroup relations. A thorough analysis revealed five different interpretative repertoires that the politicians use to account for minority-majority relations: the hierarchy, the humanistic, the antagonistic, the collectivistic and the individualistic repertoires. The identity positions the repertoires offered for the politicians were, respectively, those of the success story, the moral human being, the good citizen and the contributor. The positions constructed for other immigrants were those of second-class citizens, the ordinary people, the victims and the diverse community members. The individualistic repertoire casts both groups in the position of independent choice-makers. Moreover, the analysis pointed out the positions that were constructed for the majority public (the positions of dominant group, the ordinary people, the victims of false politics, the diverse community) and for political opponents (the position of dissidents).

The closer examination of these repertoires and the subject positions they made available suggested that they functioned to legitimise immigrant belonging and participation by evoking universal human principles of morality and collectivity, by constructing a more inclusive Finnishness, and by undermining the credibility of those critical of immigration. Moreover, the analysis indicates that politicians of immigrant background have to manage at least three interdependent group relations – the relationship with their own and other ethnic minority groups, with the public consisting mainly of majority members, and with the mainstream or extreme political opponents.

The most central references for this thesis were, among others, Verkuyten's (2005) *Ethnic Identity*, Billig's (1995) *Banal Nationalism*, Billig's (1987) *Arguing and Thinking*, Potter and Wetherell's (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology*, Suoninen's (1992) *Perheen kuvakulmat*, and Varjonen's (2013) *Osallistuja vai ulkopuolinen*?.

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1 Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a polarised debate in media and politics on migration, ethnic and cultural diversity, and on the legitimacy and belonging of different people in nation-state centred societies – in Finland, as in other European states, these discussions became particularly animated in 2015, following the arrival of large numbers of migrants and refugees in the wake of the crisis in Syria and other conflicts in the Middle East and Africa. Concerns over the readiness and capacity of European nations to accommodate the needs of the newcomers have been mixed with fears over the incompatibility of different ethnicities and religions with western values. On the political arena, one side of the Finnish debate has argued for the moral and legal obligations to help those in need, and for the economic and social benefits of migration to the country, while more populist voices have sought to build an image of a nation and continent under invasion, and have called for more restrictive immigration policies, and even the closure of national borders. Media and political focus on these most recent circumstances in human migration has taken the attention away from the fact that Finland and other European nation states have never consisted of clean-cut, easily defined groups, and that Europe has throughout times been the scene of fluctuating migratory movements.

The tone of the public discourses about migration and intergroup relations has often been set by the majority groups that have the numeric and/or power advantage over minorities. Those who are directly or indirectly spoken of, the ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, are less prominent in the discussions on the belonging and position of diverse ethnicities and nationalities in Europe. The current setting thus invites closer examination of how minority members themselves contribute to and position themselves in the media and political discussions. Consequently, this master's thesis takes a discourse analytic approach to analysing how three Finnish politicians with an immigrant background – Somali-born Abdirahim Hussein, Afghani-born Nasima Razmyar, and Turkish-born Ozan Yanar – account for minority-majority relations in Finland, and what kind of identity positions they create for themselves, other minorities and the majority in their blogs.

Discourse analysis is a wide term that covers various theoretical and methodological practices. Here, discourse is defined as "*talk and text as a form of social practice*" (Potter, 1996, p. 105), meaning that talk and texts are more than isolated interactions between individuals: they are in fact accounts that establish a certain view of the world, and are used to serve particular social functions. Discourse analysis is therefore embedded in a social constructionist view of reality as a historically and socially specific construction, shaped in human communication, and reflecting power relations in society (Burr, 2003/2015, pp. 1–5). The perspective adopted in this thesis is that while people reproduce dominant discourses in their talk and texts, they also mould and modify them as they go. In other words, the approach taken here does not go to the extent of assuming discourses as predetermined and governing social groups (the Foucauldian approach, see e.g. Burr, 2003/2015, p. 27; Verkuyten, 2005, p. 22). Simultaneously, however, it is recognised that some forms of expression and certain discourses are more available and acceptable, and easier to produce than others (Edley, 2001).

The blog discourses of the politicians chosen for this thesis are therefore seen as forms of social practice that construct the understanding of minority-majority relations in Finland. Traditionally, the interaction between minorities and the majority has been studied from the perspective of acculturation, looking at the process of psychological and cultural changes that occurs when individuals or groups come in contact with each other (Sam & Berry, 2006). However, the focus of acculturation research is often unilaterally on the adaptation of minorities to the majority culture, and on the attitudes of majority members towards minorities, while research on how minorities, such as immigrants, portray themselves and the majority has been much more limited (Varjonen, 2013, p. 11). Studying minority perspectives from a social constructionist perspective not only gives a more comprehensive understanding of intergroup relations, but it also allows to contemplate on how these relations are discursively created and negotiated.

The way minorities talk about intergroup relations and their position in society ties to the social identities that they ascribe to. Social identities reflect the aspect of our

self-image that derives from the groups that we see ourselves belonging to, and that we share some emotional involvement with (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identities are based on our similarities and differences with other group members, as opposed to our unique, personal characteristics that distinguish us as persons from other individuals (Tajfel, 1981; Verkuyten, 2005, p. 42). In this approach, identities are not seen as fixed or homogeneous, but rather as something that people construct and negotiate when positioning themselves in the wider societal context (Verkuyten, 2005, p. 110–114). Identities involve the rights, obligations and characteristics that people assume for themselves and others in social interaction (Suoninen, 1992, p. 40). Minority members can consequently present themselves in various forms – as Finns, foreigners, outsiders, insiders, victims, equal contributors – depending on the context and situation, adopting different rights and duties, and stepping out from a simple dichotomous dominant-subordinate position in relation to the majority. In this manner, the way minorities describe intergroup relations and position themselves has direct situational functions as well as larger ideological consequences (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 187).

Needless to say, minorities do not construct their various identities in everyday interpersonal encounters alone. The negotiation for positions in society also takes place collectively in the public domain (Stevenson, Hopkins, Luyta & Dixon, 2015). There is a gap in Finnish research on minority political participation. Traditionally, when immigrants in Finland are studied, the research subjects tend to be everyday laypeople. As a result, research on immigrants often positions individuals as targets of integration policies, victims of majority attitudes or as persons undergoing an adaptation process. On the other hand, the majority population's perspective on immigration has been studied more widely, including research on radical-right political actors who oppose immigration (e.g. Sakki & Pettersson, 2015). Recognising this discrepancy, this thesis aims to bring needed attention to the active participation of minorities in the public arena and in the construction of the discursive climate on immigration.

To summarise, the aim of this study is to gain information on the construction of

intergroup relations in Finnish society by answering the following questions: *What descriptions do the blog writers use when talking about minority-majority relations? How do they construct positions for themselves, other immigrants, and majority members? What functions and consequences do these descriptions and identity positions make possible?*

As individuals with prominence in the mainstream media, the participation of politicians in the construction of minority identities is more visible than that of the everyday person. Directing attention at their blog discourses is important for three reasons. Firstly, media presence makes minorities visible, conveys and constructs particular representations of the minorities, and acts as a space for minorities to have a voice and make claims (Bleich, Bloemraad & de Graauw, 2015). Given that mass-migration and worldwide uncertainty are currently paired with the media's tendency to create a crisis mentality (Esses, Medianu & Lawson, 2013), it is useful to strive at a more balanced account of minorities and intergroup relations, and to support a more versatile understanding of the issue.

Secondly, current communication studies consider media in general, and social network services in specific, as a social space where movements of power and counter-power take place. Both mainstream institutions as well as alternative politics and social movements have found a platform on the Internet for advocating their own positions; specifically, through interactive, horizontal media networks, and new types of 'mass self-communication' such as blogs and other social networks (Castells, 2007). Thirdly, social media profiles such as blogs are a particularly relevant data source when talking about identity construction: individuals self-regulate their presence through social media, and use them to modify the representation of their identities, and to negotiate given identity claims (Uski, 2015, pp. 81–95). Consequently, blog posts provide a natural source of pre-existing text and talk for the task at hand, and may yield refreshing results in comparison to researcher-led interviews or focus group discussions.

The thesis will be structured in five parts, starting with chapter 2, a synthesis on the

social constructionist approach of studying immigrant identities, and a review of the key concepts and theories related to identity, acculturation and minority-majority relations. Chapter 3 will discuss three different discourse analytical perspectives that lie behind the analysis of the blog data, namely discursive psychology, positioning theory and rhetorical psychology, and present the research questions. Chapter 4 will give a more detailed description of the data, of using blogs in research, and of the steps of analysis. Finally, chapters 5 and 6 will present the results of the analysis and discussion.

2 Constructing identities and intergroup relations

Questions of belonging and identity are highly relevant in today's world where globalisation and transnational ties challenge existing group and national boundaries, social hierarchies and conceptions of citizenship: some social scientific theories suggest that processes of worldwide integration have led to a fragmentation and hybridisation of identities, a mixing and fusion of meanings that rejects homogeneous and essentialist views of identity (Verkuyten, 2005, pp. 1, 122, 151). Formerly taken-for-granted social categories such as sexuality, race and gender have now actually become the object of critical debate, self-conscious analysis and strategic choice – this trend has gained acceptance even on an institutional level, and has broadened the possibility of individual choice concerning different social identities (Brubaker, 2015). Simultaneously, however, the fluidity of identities has created fears about people making 'untrue' identity claims – people are suspicious over unnatural or exploitative identity claims, which in turn has resulted in attempts to police questionable cases, and to demonstrate the existence of authentic and objective identities (ibid.).

This thesis focuses on how immigrant politicians construct relations between minorities and the majority Finns and what kinds of identities they construct for themselves, other immigrants and majority members in their political blogs. The premise taken here is that the ethnic minority and Finnish categories can be flexibly claimed, but these claims may also be met with essentialist descriptions of

Finnishness and belonging to Finnish society. With that in mind, this chapter will situate this study in the field of social scientific research on intergroup relations, identity and acculturation, and in the specific approach of social constructionism.

2.1 The social constructionist approach

In social psychology, approaches to studying identity can roughly be divided into two: the socio-cognitive perspective, which focuses on the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional dimensions of identity; and the discursive perspective, which understands identities as constructed and negotiated in different contexts (Liebkind, Mähönen, Varjonen & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2015). The first approach analyses identity as an internal, psychological phenomenon. For example, the interest may be in the formation of identity in development (Erikson, 1968), or in the meaning of group memberships for the individual, as stipulated by the seminal social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hoggs, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987): this sees social identities as a person's sense of who he or she is based on his or her group memberships, and as the basis for dividing the world into groups of 'us' and 'them'.

The social identity approach builds on the idea that how people see themselves is tied to the broader social context in which they exist (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 2002). Tajfel and Turner (1979) outlined the concept of social identity as a way to explain intergroup behaviour, with the key assumption that people are motivated to distinguish themselves positively in comparison to groups they do not perceive themselves as belonging to. This motivation for positive distinctiveness invokes a variety of self-enhancing strategies such as individual mobility to a higher-status group, finding new dimensions to compare on, or competing with the other group and favouring one's own. What follows is that certain social identities are not intrinsically important or unimportant for a person, but that the same group membership can be considered as attractive or not depending on whether it compares well to other groups (Ellemers et al., 2002). At the same time, and as the self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987) stipulates, social identities are situationally salient: the social context determines how people choose the categories

that they ascribe to themselves and others. It is the context that makes one social identity more fit or accessible than the other.

However, Verkuyten (2005) has suggested that this approach does not sufficiently distinguish between the subjective understanding of social identity and the social reality of it. While the social identity approach describes the psychologically meaningful, subjective experience, Verkuyten wants to highlight identity as a socially constructed fact. Thus, social identities are not only personal, inner self-understandings that shift contextually or over time, but they are also categories that are socially defined and recognised (Verkuyten, 2009a). In this line of thinking, social identity is a process of claiming a group membership, and calling for others to accept this claim, and is shaped by how others value, recognise or misrecognise these claims (see e.g. Stevenson et al., 2015). Identity as a social fact is made meaningful "*collectively and in interaction*" (Verkuyten, 2005, p. 61). Some social identities, such as gender, ethnicity and religion, are socially and culturally more robust and learned at an early stage of life, but this does not mean that they are fixed – instead, people actively renegotiate and redefine these identities in the course of their lives (ibid., p. 54). It is this conceptualisation of social identity that is used for this thesis.

This perspective of identity as socially constructed has its roots in social constructionism. According to Burr (2003/2015, pp. 1–28), social constructionism is a theoretical framework that sees reality as constructed in language and human interaction. The way people categorise information is built in communication, which is why categories should not be taken for granted. What we consider as knowledge or truth is in fact the generally accepted, historically and culturally dependent way of perceiving things at a given time and in a given place. Because of its collectively shaped nature, and its historical and social roots, our understanding of the world is also affected by the power relations in society (Ibid.)

Language does not only describe reality, it constructs it. In an illustrative metaphor, Potter (1996, pp. 97–101) compares between descriptions of the world as a mirror reflection as opposed to a construction yard. In the former, things in the world are

merely reflected in language and communication, sometimes accurately, sometimes in a more blurred fashion – however, there is little that can be done about these 'things' and their reflection, apart from polishing the reflecting mirror to more accurately describe the 'reality'. In the constructionist, action-oriented approach, Potter likens language to a construction yard where different elements and materials are combined to form different end results. The metaphor of construction is two-fold: language constructs the world, and language itself is a construction.

However, even if this construed knowledge does not reflect an existing 'reality', it can still have real effects on legitimacy, power and everyday treatment of people (Burr, 2003/2015, p. 5). The implication here is that social identities - whether ethnic, national, religious or political – are social constructs, built in human interaction, while having real-life consequences for individuals. The social identities that people ascribe to should not be analysed in isolation or taken as a direct reflection of their private and stable beliefs: individuals construct their identities strategically and contextually, taking into account the situation they find themselves in, and considering the goals and functions they want to achieve in relation to others (Ellemers et al., 2002). Claiming, assigning and denying certain social identities can work to argue for allowing or withholding rights, to regulate people's actions, and to include or exclude individuals from participating in activities (Brubaker, 2002; Gibson, 2015). This can be seen daily and worldwide: we constantly witness disputes between 'ethnic' or 'religious' groups and over borders between 'nations' – all made possible by the established naturalness of a world divided into nation-states, and consisting of separate ethnicities and religions (Billig, 1995b).

The constructionist take on studying identity is a viable and important alternative to existing social scientific research on intergroup relations that takes predetermined identities for granted. Brubaker (2002) speaks of the phenomenon of 'groupism': the tendency of scholars to speak of social groups as homogeneous, externally bounded clusters with a collective common purpose, and to frame actions and events as occurring between distinct groups. This essentialising and naturalising manner of describing ethnicity, race or nation, says Brubaker, contributes to the reification of

ethnic, racial and national groups. Instead of analysing groups per se, it may be more useful to focus on the cultural idioms, commonsense knowledge and discursive practices related to the construction of the groups (ibid.).

To summarise, the focus of the analysis in this thesis will be on the interaction level of construction of identities: how identities are negotiated in a societal context in relation to other members of the society (Burr, 2003/2015, p. 11; Verkuyten, 2005, pp. 18–19). The analysis will thus explore how mainstream and shared ways of talking about immigrants and their position in society play into how minority individuals describe their identities, while recognising that simultaneously each individual can choose to promote, challenge or add to this discussion (cf. Pettersson, Liebkind & Sakki, 2016). Importantly, the analysis will not be involved with the individual level, and does not make claims on the inner thoughts and beliefs of the politicians (e.g. the self-image, identity status or identification of the politicians). As the data has been collected from published political blogs as opposed to simulated interviews, this study will also go beyond the situational micro level of interpersonal communication, and lean towards the macro and societal level.

2.2 Identity in the context of immigration

As stated, the interest in this paper is in how politicians in Finland with immigrant background present intergroup relations and identities in their blog texts. The underlying thought is that there are various discourses available in the social world around us for each of us to construct and mould our identities. Identities are not taken as stable, as they shift and change in time and according to context. (Burr, 2003/2015, pp. 125–126.) In the context of immigration, and based on the data used for this analysis, relevant categories to inspect are the ethnic, national, religious and political identities of individuals of immigrant origin. The following sections will describe some definitions of these key concepts.

2.2.1 Ethnicity and ethnic identity

While extensively studied in social sciences and the socio-cognitive branch of social psychology, there is no one definition for ethnicity or ethnic identity. In her review

of 70 social psychological studies on ethnic identity, Phinney (1990) found that there was some confusion over the definition of the concept. Some researchers saw it as the ethnic component of social identity, some emphasised feelings of belonging and commitment, shared values and attitudes towards one's own group. Others considered self-definition a key aspect, or focused on cultural elements, such as language, behaviours and history.

According to Liebkind et al. (2015), ethnic identity is a matter of subjective belief in common ancestry: beliefs in common origin, descent and history are socially constructed and can be reinterpreted, adjusted and changed. This does not mean that ethnicity is completely made up: on the contrary, it is assigned to us in the sense that we cannot choose the ethnic group into which we are born, but also acquired because we can choose the importance we give it in our total identity. What is noteworthy, however, is that ethnic identity is not just a matter of self-labelling oneself as a member of a group: it can include various factors such as self-identification, feelings of belonging, commitment to group, shared values, and attitudes toward the ethnic group. (Ibid.; Liebkind, 2006)

An individual's ethnic identity becomes meaningful only in situations in which two or more ethnic groups are in contact over a period of time: people rarely contemplate on their ethnicity in a homogeneous environment (Phinney, 1990). For Hutnik (1991, pp. 18–22), ethnic identity is often, if not always, a minority identity. Most minority groups are ethnic groups, defined by shared culture, shared ideology or some other group boundary that sets them apart from the majority group. The way Hutnik puts it, ethnic and minority groups suffer from low status and lack of power relative to the dominant group. Consequently, following the principles of the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), an ethnic minority group that is held in low esteem is potentially faced with a negative social identity. In response to this perceived inferiority, low-status groups seek to improve their position by trying to assimilate into the dominant group, by redefining characteristics deemed as inferior, or by accentuating their positive distinctiveness (ibid.; Hutnik, 1991, pp. 58–59).

Verkuyten (2005, pp. 92–121), on the other hand, highlights that ethnic identity is not composed of merely a minority status: the focus on the minority aspect assumes that ethnic groups are inevitably low-status, powerless groups that define themselves in relation to the majority group only. In reality, the ethnic identity of an individual builds on one's culture, traditions and homeland, and is also constructed in relation to one's own group or other minority and ethnic groups (ibid.). This view is an important alternative to the main socio-cognitive theories that conceptualise ethnic identity as an inner process in relation to a dominant majority group. The social constructionist approach looks at the definition of ethnic identity as a set of negotiations that occurs within a societal environment, and that can vary and be contextually flexible.

2.2.2 Nationhood and national identity

In a study of politicians, nationhood and national identity cannot be disregarded: as Members of Parliament, Razmyar and Yanar literally represent the Finnish people and act on behalf of the nation. Hussein has functioned as a politician on municipal level, and in the timeframe chosen for the data collection was also running for a seat in the parliamentary elections. It is therefore assumed here that the blogs contain political messages addressed to the Finnish nation. Moreover, it also implies that all three are Finnish citizens, and therefore are constructing nationhood from the position of legal inhabitants of the country.

Nationalism and nationhood have been of interest across several disciplines, including history, political science and sociology. For psychologists, the main concern has usually been individuals' identification with a national group to which they belong (Pehrson, Vignoles & Brown, 2009). In research on intergroup relations, national identity is often described as a majority identity (e.g. Verkuyten, 2009b), thus opposing it to the ethnic identity of minorities. In the psychological study of nations, the nation-state has been described as a source of personal dignity that provides a sense of self but also a sense of security that derives from the rights of citizenship, and from the knowledge that one's basic needs will be met (Kelman, 1997a). Thus, psychologists have tended to take the existence of nations for granted

and to consider the national identity as one of the many group memberships that people have – this assumption has more recently been critiqued (e.g. Billig, 1995a; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

On the other hand, in public discourse, national identity often builds on ethnicity: nations have been formed around the idea of a people of one ethnicity, and ethnicity has been used to justify belonging to a nation (Fenton, 2006; Jurva & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2015; Meeus, Duriez, Vanbeselaere & Boen, 2010). Even if current theoretical and social scientific debates have advanced from beliefs of the biological and ethnic origins of nations (Özkirimli, 2010, pp. 169–170), primordial ideas of natural national categories continue to proliferate in contemporary political discourse (Billig, 1995a, 1995b; Brubaker, 2002), and constitute the laymen's view of nations and nationhood (Özkirimli, 2010, p. 49). Edensor (2002, pp. 28–30) argues that the idea of a nation offers some point of anchorage and a sense of belonging which people need to counteract the uncertainty that comes with the fluid identities of contemporary times.

In the construction of nationhood, it is impossible to personally know everyone who is included in the nation. As a result, people rely on imagined ties that link individuals to each other. Anderson (2006) speaks of nations constructed around an imagined past that fortifies the sense of common nation, and of imagined political communities that exist outside face-to-face contact. However, as Kelman (1997a) has pointed out, there are also more concrete ties that constitute the construction of national identity for a certain population, such as perceived common language, history, religion, shared cultural habits and values, and mutual complaints and aspirations. This emphasis on a common tongue, customs and a myth of shared ancestors constitutes the ethnic definition of nation in which national membership is restricted to those belonging to the dominant ethnic group (Finell, 2012; Meeus et al., 2010). The understanding of the Finnish nation largely builds on this notion of collective ancestral home and of Finnish tribes, making Finnishness tied to roots and family as well as inherited physical features (Saukkonen, 2004). This is also noticeable in the widely-used term for native Finns, *kantasuomalaiset*, which roughly

translates as ‘Finns of the root/common origin’.

By contrast, a civic representation of the nation is based on the notion of shared ideological principles and institutional commitments that the people of the nation voluntarily uphold and participate in. In this case, the ideological principles of the nation can be changed and negotiated when this is deemed necessary by the people – moreover, group membership can be claimed by anyone who meets the democratically negotiated criteria (Meeus et al., 2010). This definition is more tied to a physical area, and the legal system that governs that space, rather than biological or cultural roots (Saukkonen, 2004).

Billig (1995a, pp. 60–72.) proposes that national identity is not directly comparable to other social identities, which are more situationally salient. As citizens of nation states we continually encounter, even if not consciously register, reminders of nationhood: some reminders we take note of, other signs go unnoticed. This would make national identity a latent identity that is maintained within the daily life of inhabited nations. This ‘banal nationalism’ is the continual, taken-for-granted flagging or reminding of nationhood: Billig (ibid., pp. 5–8, 43–46) proposes that the common ties that constitute a nation are not only exhibited in times of high nationalist emotion (war, national days, sports games) but also in the banal, unnoticed everyday reminders of a nation (media rhetoric, politicians' speech, visible symbols). The idea of a unified nation is thus maintained through everyday, barely registered reminders of the nation. National identity is thus more than an inner state or self-definition, it is a form of life, which is lived in the world of nation states (ibid., pp. 60–72). Edensor (2002, p. 28) shares this view and sees national identity as second nature: a barely conscious set of assumptions about the way ‘we’ as a nation think and act.

Interestingly, nationhood is not necessarily constructed around the idea of a certain national people only. In her study on the construction of British and English nationhood in the accounts of English respondents, Condor (2006) suggested that nations were not typically constructed as simple person categories, but were rather

described as a mix of people, objects, activities, events and places that were considered British or English. She also found that the respondents strategically avoided the socially unacceptable, stereotypical representation of nationhood ('Britain is for Brits'), yet managed to refer to the notion of an 'original' British nation by using a historical narrative of progress, in which the nation had transformed from a homogeneous ethnic entity to a more inclusive, civic form of nationhood.

At the same time, less attention has been paid to those individuals whose claims to national identity may be problematic (Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010). If the concept of nation is defined in an ethnically or religiously restrictive manner, nationhood may be 'second nature' or contextually independent to those whose claims over the national identity are generally accepted, but it may be more consciously and strategically approached by minority members. For example, in their study of ethnic minority, radical right politicians in Sweden, Pettersson et al. (2016) found that while the politicians typically accepted their ethnic identity as assigned, the Swedish identity was actively asserted in a deliberate manner. Indeed, in today's globalised and multicultural context, the idea of the national remains one of the commonsense themes that people continuously reproduce in discourse, images, and actions. At the same time, increasing global connectedness offers people new meanings, values and ways of understanding the world, and taken-for-granted everyday discourse of the nation has become scrutinised and disputed (Skey, 2009).

2.2.3 Religion and religious identity

In the context of the data collected for this thesis, there are various examples of discourse on minorities as a religious group. All three politicians come from Muslim-majority countries: Afghanistan, Somalia and Turkey. While this study is not concerned in the religious beliefs of the individuals per se, religion comes to play in the descriptions of intergroup relations, as the three politicians are members of ethnic groups perceived as Muslim. The theme of religion is especially pertinent in the current context in which the 'Muslim way of life' has been attacked as incompatible with western, liberal and democratic values: since 9/11, there has been a worldwide rise in Islamophobic writings and Eurabia conspiracy theories that

predict the islamisation of the European continent (Jalonen, 2011).

Recent social scientific studies have followed suit and have taken to treating the Muslim identity as a 'real thing' in the world instead of seeing it as a social construction that derives from the socio-political context. Some studies are concerned with the integration of 'Islam and Muslims' into the western nations-states as a continuum in which Islam represents one end and western values another (see e.g. Carlbom, 2006). Other studies treat the religious and national identities as a zero-sum game in which one identity 'trumps' the other, or as a stable hierarchy of identities where individuals, regardless of the fluidity of different identities, portray themselves as 'Muslims first' (e.g. DeHanas, 2013; Thomas & Sanderson, 2011). This type of research often relies on a predetermined, pre-assigned and reified notion of 'Muslimness' and ignores contextual factors and the flexibility of identities – in other words, it does not distinguish between the religious identity as a social construction as opposed to a sense of religious identity as an intrapsychic phenomenon (Verkuyten, 2005).

While in many instances people of Muslim origin also self-identify as Muslim, this should not automatically be taken as a reflection of their personal beliefs. Moreover, there is no single, hegemonic way of describing the Muslim identity: individuals navigate their own way in the discursive field surrounding them (Pauha, 2015). The position taken in this paper is that ascribing to a Muslim identity is a discursive act that reflects the social context, and serves certain purposes in the situation. This is not to deny the existence of inner convictions. However, identification as Muslim can also be seen as a response to the stigmatisation and experience of being othered in everyday interaction and public discourse. Individuals react to the experience of being categorised, counted, questioned and held accountable as 'Muslims' – and not only accountable for themselves, but for all Muslims. Equally, individuals are positioned as Muslims by fellow minority members, who presume others to share in their identity. (Brubaker, 2012.)

This study deliberately avoids labelling the politicians of immigrant origin as

Muslims, in an effort to step away from the overly repeated notion of religion as a primary identity for certain minority members. Nevertheless, the data collected for this study demonstrates that religion and Islam constitute a critical part of the construction of immigrant identities for those who are identified by others as Muslims. It also plays a major role in the negotiation of positions in the Finnish society. Undeniably, religion, just as other social categories, is a way of construing sameness and difference, and naming different social groups.

2.2.4 Minority political identity

Identity research within intergroup relations is usually concerned with bipolar relations of minority–majority. Similarly, research on political leadership typically investigates the relationship between leaders and their followers. However, when looking at politicians that represent a minority, group positions may not be as fixed or obvious. When positioning themselves on the political arena, minority politicians are involved in a tripolar or triangulated negotiation that involves their minority ingroup, the majority or mainstream political groups, and the audience or the public. This section will elaborate on the concept of tripolar identity negotiation.

Simon and Klandermans (2001) propose that minority members who assume a politicised identity and who are motivated to collectively represent the goals of their ingroup must adopt a dual identity as members of both the minority (such as an ethnic or religious group) and the majority (the political entity or nation in which they want to operate). Identification with the majority, the researchers propose, is a prerequisite for functioning on the political arena: people will only undertake political struggles in a political habitat they consider their own, and should feel their claims are entitled as members of the larger community. In addition to these two reference groups, minority politicians need to consider a third dimension: the audience that they are speaking to, and who they try to persuade to follow their agenda – this can be the general public, the media, the government or other political parties. (Simon, 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001.)

Discursive research has also indicated that minority political representatives need to

define and manage this tripolar relation of minority-majority-public in order to justify their political leadership. Rooyackers and Verkuyten (2012) studied the discourse of a Dutch extreme right politician to examine the ways in which he presented himself, his political rivals, and the public whose support he was seeking, and noted three patterns: first, the legitimacy of mainstream politicians was questioned, so that the public would become more open for alternative voices. Second, the public was constructed as aligned to the minority cause. Third, by constructing an antagonistic relationship between the public and the majority politics, the extreme right politician distinguished himself positively from his political competitors. (Ibid.)

Importantly, to win electoral votes, any politician must convince the population that they represent the national ingroup, and construct a self-image of a prototypical national who embodies the shared values and beliefs of the nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). While not a self-evident task for politicians representing a minority group, political leaders can actively construct an image of themselves as a prototypical group member by redefining the meaning of the shared identity within a specific context. For instance, as Rooyackers and Verkuyten (2012) suggest, minority politicians can construct mainstream politicians as being less prototypical to undermine their leadership, and legitimise their own authority by showing that they prioritise the goals and interests of the public. Group-orientedness and courage to act in the face of challenges may be emphasised in opposition to mainstream politicians who lack realistic and practical solutions. In this manner, it is the mainstream politics that is the deviant, and the minority politicians who are aligned with the population. (Ibid.)

2.3 Integration and minority-majority relations

The previous sections dealt with identity construction. This thesis will also look at the construction of minority and majority relations in Finnish society. The relationship of minorities and the majority is traditionally examined through the concept of integration: sometimes integration is understood as a process in which both parties change and accommodate to each other, but more often it is viewed

more one-sidedly as the progressive adaptation of minorities to a set of predetermined state policies (Varjonen, 2013, p. 11). Integration can be seen as participation in the functions of society (education, work, social services) or less mechanistically as acceptance into the society (ibid.). The following sections will examine different aspects of integration.

2.3.1 Definitions of integration

Integration is a central albeit ambiguous term in social scientific research on immigration. Sociology and political science focus on the macro level policies of integration and define integration as the set of processes that take place when an immigrant moves to a new country – these policies aim at social cohesiveness, require accommodation from both the immigrant and host society, and very often focus on challenges of language and cultural learning, housing and employment (Givens, 2007). In the Finnish context, the processes of *kotoutuminen* (literally "settling in at home") and *kotouttaminen* ("making someone settle in") are used synonymously to integration, and are focused on enabling the immigrant to adopt linguistic, cultural and civic competencies and to participate in the labour market (Keskinen & Vuori, 2012; Puustinen et al., 2017, p. 25).

Integration is also a central concept in cross-cultural psychology and different acculturation theories. Acculturation is the process of psychological and cultural development that arises following contact between individuals and groups (Sam & Berry, 2006). In Berry's (2006) acculturation model, integration is one of the orientations that an immigrant can adopt. Berry's model describes the adaptation process of a minority member in relation to the majority group in relation to two dimensions: one is how strongly an individual retains his or her heritage culture or ethnic identity, the other is how much that individual participates in the larger society. People may thus choose to maintain their heritage as well as involve themselves in mainstream society (the strategy or orientation called integration), reject their own culture and merge into the dominant culture (assimilation), dissociate from the dominant culture (separation) or reject both cultures (marginalisation).

Initially, models of acculturation in psychological research tended to build on the assumption that acculturation changes took place primarily among the minority and immigrant groups, and that the stimulus for acculturation changes came from the larger mainstream society, which in turn remained unaffected. These models have recently given way to a more bidimensional thinking that sees all the individuals and groups coming into contact influencing each other. Moreover, these newer models underline the two-way nature and idea of mutuality in acculturation (for a review, see e.g. Horenczyk, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Sam & Vedder, 2013). For example, Berry (2006) developed his model to also describe certain attitudes or strategies with which dominant groups, in turn, can regulate how much they allow for minorities to retain their originality and participate in society. They may favour diversity and equal interaction between groups (an attitude labelled as multiculturalism), enforce a more assimilative attitude towards minorities (melting pot), permit the maintenance of heritage culture while denying participation (segregation) or deny both (exclusion).

By contrast, the interest that this thesis takes in integration does not lie in the observation of societal structures or in the psychological adaptation of people. Instead, integration is defined as a process of interactions in which an immigrant constructs his or her place in the new society and takes part in its activities (Varjonen, 2013). The emphasis is therefore on the active role that the immigrant takes, as opposed to a forced or predetermined adaptation to the environment. While visible characteristics, cultural traditions, socio-economic factors, dominant ideologies, and discrimination can all influence the positions individuals take in society, these conditions are controlling only to a certain extent: apart from marginalisation, which is rarely a chosen strategy, minorities have room to negotiate a relationship with the majority, ranging from the assimilative to the separationist or integrative approach (Verkuyten, 2005, pp. 158–160).

More specifically, the perspective taken of integration is that of belonging and participation in Finnish society. Loosely speaking, belonging is understood here as a process that creates bonds between different groups of people, and depends as much

on an individual's own actions as on the society's conditions for belonging – belonging is closely tied to the idea of inclusion and exclusion (Keskinen & Vuori, 2012). Participation, on the other hand, comprises activity on the political and civic fronts, but also includes everyday action such as work, communal activities and neighbourly behaviour (ibid.). These concepts are closely related to the notion of citizenship, which social psychology increasingly understands as constructed in everyday interaction, and as a tool of inclusion and exclusion in society (Stevenson et al., 2015). Citizenship, just as belonging and participation, is also tied to the process of recognition: having one's status and behaviour recognised by others (ibid.). However, as citizenship theories constitute a theoretical corpus of their own, it was deemed more suitable for the purposes of this study to employ the lighter and more malleable concepts of belonging and participation.

The focus on belonging and participation is based on the data used for this thesis, since the politicians, in constructing accounts on immigrants, immigration and minority-majority relations, are defining who they *are* in relation to others, but also what they *can and should do*, i.e. to what extent they have the right and obligation to take part in society. The focus on these concepts is also motivated by Varjonen's (2013) findings on how immigrants in Finland defined minority-majority relations and integration: the relationship between Finns and immigrants manifested as hierarchical, and the immigrant positions as powerless and passive. Accounts of immigrants as equal contributors were less common (ibid.). It is therefore of interest to see how politicians of immigrant origin, who are striving for an official status in the society, argue for an equal position and involvement.

2.3.2 Societal factors in integration

Public ideals and dominant discourses on what it means to be a full-fledged member of a nation set the framework against which a minority member constructs his or her identity positions. This can become challenging in situations of high polarisation, where the difference between 'us' and 'them' is particularly emphasised.

The current debates on migration and integration are stretched between two ends: on the one hand, there are discourses of globalisation, weakening nation-states and encouragement of free movement and exploration of the world and other cultures; on the other hand, public discussions revolve around loyalty and attachment to the nation, and confirmation of core cultural values in the face of 'outside' threats (Kofman, 2005). The latter discourse derives from a historical understanding of the meaning of nation, which equates it with one ethnicity or 'race' – with a physically and culturally homogeneous group of people (Fenton, 2006; Meeus et al., 2010). While the contemporary civic ideal of nationhood attempts to replace the ethnic- or race-nation exclusiveness with a multi-ethnic inclusiveness, there is constant pressure toward 'racialising' nationhood and raising one dominant ethnic group above others. This can also come about in the language of culture or civilisation, where western values are described as advanced, and other cultures spoken of as more inferior. (Fenton, 2006.)

A different public ideal is the multiculturalist approach, which builds on the principle that minorities should be able to retain their cultural and ethnic heritage as well as gain the right to equal participation in society (Verkuyten, 2009b). One can make a distinction between the descriptive use of the concept that refers to a society comprising people from different cultural backgrounds, and the normative multiculturalism that recognises cultural diversity as a common value (Langvasbråten, 2008). In either case, the definition of multiculturalism is not unproblematic either: it contains an assumption of nationhood that often goes unnoticed – the idea of imagined, mono-cultural nations that incorporate the 'multiculturalism' brought to them by 'others' (Lentin, 2005). The concept of culture is also rarely questioned: it is presented as a taken-for-granted property of a group of people. This essentialist view of culture easily overlooks the fact that no culture is isolated or fixed. Consequently, even if immigrants identify with a cultural heritage of their ancestry and express distinct cultural behaviours, their identity is not equal to one cultural entity –the way people attach their identities to different cultures changes with contact and time (Liebkind, 2006).

Multiculturalist policies have been adopted by many European societies, but recent years have witnessed a strong rhetoric against multiculturalism, and discourses on its failure, propagating an image of immigrants as outsiders and threatening (Banting & Kymlicka, 2012). European societies have increasingly set conditions for the acceptance of immigrants and demanded that they fulfil certain requirements and ways of belonging (Kofman, 2005). This is particularly true with regards the Muslim population in the western world. Ever since 9/11, the war on terror has increased the surveillance of individuals with Muslim background, resulting in discourse of 'Muslim threat' both from outside and within the nation (Titley, 2013). Countries that have up until recently been willing to accommodate the special needs of minority groups have started to treat Islam as threatening to western values (Levey, 2009). Islam as a faith or culture has consequently been constructed as incompatible with western values. As a result, Muslim populations are expected to assume core western values, as well as explicitly affirm their loyalty to the nation states (Kofman, 2005).

2.3.3 Integration from the individual perspective

While the previous section focused on the framework that the larger society can set for immigrants in the negotiation of their integration, the premise in this thesis is that individuals can also affect the discourses around minority-majority relations, and contribute to defining the role they have in society.

From a socio-cognitive perspective, identity as a member of a minority in-group (such as ethnic or religious identity), and the identity as a member of the majority society (the national identity) can present two dimensions that one can identify with to varying degrees. In acculturation research, an individual who preserves a strong ethnic identity and also identifies with the majority is considered to have an integrated identity. However, multiple identification is possible only if the majority identity is sufficiently inclusive, and if the different groups in which an individual claims membership accept the individual as a member. (Liebkind et al., 2015.) Sindic and Reicher (2009) propose that in situations where the majority is seen to enforce its way of life upon minorities, minority groups may find it difficult to express their minority identities within a superordinate national identity. This type of 'identity

undermining', as the researchers put it, arises from the perceptions of minority and majority identities being irreconcilable, and from the minority members' perceived powerlessness in the situation.

That being said, the merging of ethnic and national identities does not always have to be problematic. In their ethnographic case study of a Belgian community, van de Vijver, Blommaert, Gkoumasi and Stogianni (2015) argued that the traditional split between ethnic and national identity as core identities of immigrants can no longer describe the multiple references immigrants have. They found that the participants' strong ethnic identity and Belgian identity went hand in hand. They also found that religion was no more salient to Muslims than to the other immigrant groups, and that the Muslim identity and national identity were seen as non-conflicted by the participants themselves.

From a constructionist point of view, it could be argued that an individual has various possibilities to construct their belonging and position in society. At the same time, if nationhood is strictly constructed around a single ethnicity, for example, it makes it challenging or impossible for minority members to position themselves in the national and ethnic categories at the same time. To resolve these challenges, the consolidation of different identities may happen on various levels of attribution. Verkuyten and De Wolf (2002) studied how Chinese residents in the Netherlands constructed their ethnic identity, and found that they related to the Chinese and Dutch identities on different levels of personal agency. They spoke of *being* Chinese as an inevitable, biological feature, whereas *feeling* or *doing* Chinese or Dutch was attributed to socialisation and active participation in a certain way of life. This study underlined the complexity of identity construction that moves between predetermined factors and choice, and negotiates between ethnic belonging and dispersal of identity.

These levels were elaborated by Verkuyten (2005, p. 198–205) who proposes that ethnic identity can be conceptualised as that which you are (*being*: homeland, parents, visible characteristics), that which you do (*doing*: participation in activities,

friendships, music, clothes) that which you know (*knowing*: group beliefs, culture, history) and that which you feel (*feeling*: importance, evaluation, commitment). Within these levels, doing and knowing is more negotiable than being; however, claiming to do, know or feel a certain ethnic identity also depends on the acceptance of others. As proposed earlier, in the atmosphere of monitoring of 'false' identity claims, individuals must balance between "*idioms of choice, autonomy and subjectivity*" and "*idioms of givenness, essence and objectivity*" in their construction of identities (Brubaker, 2015, p.1).

2.3.4 Socio-political context and the blog writers

To put the blog texts into context, this section will offer some general information on migration in Finland, as well as cover some of the main events that the blogs comment on. Moreover, the section includes a brief introduction of each politician.

Finland is a country that has its historical Sami, Swedish-speaking, Roma, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish and Tatar Muslim minorities, and that witnessed a surge in immigration starting from the 1990s. In 2015, Finland received a record number of over 30 000 asylum seekers, most of which came from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan[1]. The public reception of these events can be described as highly divided: the media narratives have ranged from criticism of migration and asylum policies and xenophobic outbursts, to portrayals of Finland as a liberal country that promotes human rights and equality for all. However, those publicly involved in the polemic issue tend to be majority representatives, as the media discussion pits the 'more tolerant/liberal/idealistic Finns' against the 'more prejudiced/conservative/ realistic Finns'. A recent survey suggests that it is this polarisation that concerns people in Finland above any other issue related to migration or asylum-seekers: people fear being labelled as either pro or con migration, and consequently feel they need to refrain from an exchange of opinions on the matter (Puustinen, Raisio, Kokki & Luhta, 2017).

[1] http://www.migri.fi/download/64990_Tp-hakijat_2015.pdf?6d4a98eee845d488

These events and the continuous escalation of the problem are currently reflected in the general tone of discussions on migration. Voices have become more polarised, and extreme factions have taken to the streets to patrol migrants and refugees, while those with more liberal attitudes have held their own demonstrations that promoted multiculturalism. At the same time, the Finnish government has tightened its asylum policies. A very recent survey on the attitudes of Finns toward asylum-seekers suggests that well over half of the population strongly believes that asylum-seekers increase terrorist threat (64%) and add to social conflicts (59%) and crimes (57%) (Puustinen et al., 2017, p. 28). At the same time, a large majority (88%) thinks that the active participation of asylum-seekers in basic societal functions such as education, employment and recreational activities will help in their adjustment to Finnish society (ibid.).

On a related topic, Finland follows in the trend of negative images of Islam and Muslims. Pauha and Martikainen (2014) note that contemporary Finnish media portray Islam as conflict-oriented, violent and aggressive, especially in reports of foreign events. Considering this, it is unsurprising that the public opinion about Islam in Finland could be described as antagonistic: the latest poll in 2008 showed that 52% of Finns view Islam negatively, while only 6% perceive it in a positive light (ibid.). Immigrants and refugees in general, and Islam in particular, have been portrayed as a threat in western public discourse already over the past ten or fifteen years (Esses et al., 2013; Jalonen, 2011). What could once be described as marginal hostility against Muslims has now found a wider ground in populist political rhetoric, and has been transformed into mainstream political discourse (Jalonen, 2011). This type of aggressive, problem-centred view of immigration could derive from the majority group's uncertainty in regard to national identity and capability to cope with immigrants, and from a simple 'we'-centred way of thinking, that sees the outgroup as less worthy (Esses et al., 2013).

According to Harinen et al. (2005), the Finnish official policy is based on multicultural ideals but research on immigrant experiences indicates a contradiction between principles and reality. Finland is a Nordic welfare state and the provision of

welfare services follows the principle of universalism, meaning that refugees, asylum-seekers and immigrants are all covered. At the same time, Finland does not have a strong or effective migration-oriented policy, a fact which, according to the researchers, gives breeding ground for an attitude toward migration that is problem-based and emotionally loaded. The lack of vision has led to the situation where Finnish society and different institutions adjust to new circumstances as they arise. The arrival of immigrants and refugees is seen quite exclusively from the economic perspectives as potential workforce, or as competitors for resources in economically changeable times. (Ibid.)

The timeframe chosen for the data collection (April 2014–December 2016) was also eventful in terms of discussions on migration and multicultural societies in Europe and in Finland. First of all, April 2015 was the time for the parliamentary elections, which resulted in a coalition government of the Centre Party, the centre-right National Coalition Party and the nationalist Finns Party. Some of the blogs are therefore written pre-election, while others after the elections. Razmyar and Yanar won seats in the parliament, while Hussein did not. The Finns Party is known for its Finland-centred, EU-hostile attitudes and criticism of current Finnish migration policies. The party also has its more hostile and extreme right factions that frequently published writings attacking refugees, immigrants and those who support them. These publications soon led to debates on freedom of speech and hate speech.

Terrorist attacks in Europe and criminal deeds in Finland also motivated the politicians to write responses to public discussions on the dangers of ISIS and the incompatibility of Islam. In January 2015, a terrorist attack was carried out in Paris against the satire paper Charlie Hebdo, killing 12 people. In March, five Somali-born young men were arrested under suspicion for raping a Finnish girl in Tapanila, a suburb in the capital metropolitan area. In March 2016, a terrorist attack was carried out at Brussels airport, and in July the same year, a truck was driven into the crowds celebrating the national day in Nice, France. Each of these events elicited a response from one or more writer.

After this brief overview of the context of the blogs, the remainder of this section is dedicated to introducing the politicians whose blogs have been chosen for this study: Abdirahim Hussein, Nasima Razmyar and Ozan Yanar. The choice of these public figures was based on their prevalence in the media but also partly based on availability – finding politicians of ethnic minority origin in Finland who also actively write or blogs proved a challenge.

Politician, social activist and media persona Abdirahim Hussein[2] was born in Mogadishu, Somalia, and moved to Finland at the age of 15. Hussein has a bachelor's degree in Community Pedagogy from a Finnish university of applied sciences[3]. At the age of 38, he is known for his career as municipal politician and parliamentary candidate within the Centre Party (*Keskusta*). In June 2016, Hussein resigned from the Centre Party and joined the Social Democratic Party, citing as main reasons the cutbacks that the Centre-led government had made on education and development aid. He is also popularly known from the radio show *Ali ja Husu* on YLE, the Finnish Broadcasting Company, in the years 2013–2016, where together with Iranian-born comedian Ali Jahangiri he would debate on current multicultural issues. The show was awarded by the Finnish Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) for showcasing the multifaceted Finnish society. Hussein himself has also been granted the Finnish PEN award for freedom of speech (*Suomen PEN* is an association of writers promoting freedom of expression). In his blogs, Hussein speaks of Islam and refers to himself as a Muslim.

According to her own website and curriculum vitae[4], Nasima Razmyar was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, and moved to Moscow at the age of 5 with her diplomat father and family. After the civil war broke out in Afghanistan, her family took refuge in Finland when Razmyar was eight years old. She has graduated from the Finnish high school system and holds a bachelor's degree in Community Pedagogy from a Finnish university of applied sciences. In 2010, she was chosen as the "Refugee Woman of the

[2] https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdirahim_Hussein
[3] http://abdirahimhussein.puheenvuoro.uusisuomi.fi/kayttaja/abdirahimhussein
[4] http://nasima.fi/nasima/, http://nasima.fi/nasima-in-english/, and http://nasima.fi/curriculum-vitae/

Year", an award granted by the Finnish Refugee Council to a person who has been an active part of Finnish society[5]. Razmyar has both volunteered and worked in different Finnish NGOs, before starting her career in 2011 with the Social Democratic Party of Finland (*Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue*, SDP), first as a political aide, communications assistant and, since the 2015 elections, Member of Parliament. In her English version of her website she stated three themes as her aims for the 2015 elections: equality regardless of background, opportunity for every Finn to achieve their dreams, and keeping Finland a good place for future generations by making good choices for the people, economy and environment. In the blog data examined for this study, Razmyar, who is 32 years old, speaks of herself as a Muslim.

On his website[6], Ozan Yanar describes himself as having an international family background – born in Istanbul, Turkey, his parents are Turkish, he has lived in Cyprus and England, and moved to Finland at the age of 14. After completing Finnish high school, he went on to acquire a Bachelor's degree in Political and Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki, majoring in economics. He was active in the Student Union as well as in the Greens of Finland (*Vihreät*), and worked in diverse positions on municipality, ministry and union level. He was elected as Member of Parliament for the Greens in the 2015 elections. The 29-year-old[7] depicts himself as the defender of justice and fairness, liberal values and of sexual minorities, and as someone who strives for sustainable economic and social solutions. While he comes from a Muslim background, Yanar has publicly stated that he does not count himself as a Muslim, and that he is not a religious person[8].

3 A discursive approach to studying immigrant identities

The previous chapter delineated the basic principles of social constructionism and some basic concepts used in this thesis. The current chapter will continue with the

[5] http://pakolaisapu.fi/2016/12/14/ehdota-vuoden-pakolaisia-2/
[6] https://www.ozan.fi/ozan-yanar/ and http://www.ozan.fi/cv/
[7] https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/kansanedustajat/Sivut/1332.aspx
[8] http://www.vihrealanka.fi/henkilöt/uusi-kärki

theoretical outline by introducing the discursive framework behind the analysis. Returning to the definition of discourse, it is defined here as talk or text as social practice carried out in interaction. A discursive approach focuses on social interaction as opposed to the individual's cognitive processes, and emphasises the role of language as crucial in understanding how people place themselves in the world and how they construct social reality. Consequently, instead of attempting to discern the inner thoughts and feelings of an individual, and what is going on 'inside someone's head', this perspective focuses on how meanings are created contextually in social situations. When studying identity, discursive psychology thus treats the meanings for the self as flexibly constructed and negotiated in everyday life social interactions (Edwards & Potter, 1992, pp. 128; Potter & Wetherell, 1987, pp. 101–104; Varjonen, Arnold & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2013).

There is much to be said in favour of a qualitative discursive approach into studying minority identities. It focuses on meanings which participants themselves attribute to actions and events, and emphasises naturally occurring verbal data. Discursive research assumes that participants themselves at least implicitly understand discourse as social action. As such, qualitative research may achieve a better reflection of the commonsense understanding of the participants than quantitative, positivist hypothesis-testing determined by the researcher. (McKinlay & McVittie, 2008, p. 5–8.) For the most part, in the field of social studies, minority-majority relations are studied through interviews where the interviewer plays a role in defining the context. Blogs can therefore be considered an even more naturally occurring source of data on intergroup relations and minority identities.

In order to arrive at a better understanding of how minorities view themselves and the society, it seems logical to direct attention to how they talk about the subject. It is equally reasonable to assume that this talk has a function that serves a purpose. A qualitative discursive approach can also highlight things that have become implicit and taken-for-granted (Potter, 2003) and is thus a relevant method for studying issues of status and power, such as minority and majority relationships.

Discourse analysis is strongly tied to social constructionist theory: language is seen as social performance through which people produce different versions of reality (McKinley & McVittie, 2008, p. 11; Willig, 2008). Potter (2003) points out that discourse analysis is more than a mere switch of attention from cognitive aspects to the topic of discourse: it is a theoretical stance, embedded in certain theoretical assumptions of language as social performance. In that sense, discourse analysis is not a stand-alone methods toolkit, but a mix of meta-theoretical, theoretical and methodological elements.

The following sections will give an overview of the theoretical and methodological elements of the three discursive approaches that serve as the basis for the analysis of the blog data: discursive psychology, positioning theory and rhetorical psychology. Each section will also provide some examples of empirical research that have served as basis for the analysis in this thesis.

3.1 Discursive psychology

Potter and Edwards (2001) outline three essential features of how discursive psychology understands discourse. Discourse is *situated*, as it is embedded in a certain context, and is often designed to rhetorically counter alternative constructions (Billig, 1987). Discourse is also *action-oriented*, performing actions or practices such as asking, blaming, justifying, displaying neutrality, or painting a certain description of an event. Thirdly, discourse is *constructed* of words, rhetorical tools, idioms etc. but is also *constructive* of the world around us, as the words are used to perform certain actions. In other words, discursive psychological research assumes that language and discourse are not simply abstract referential systems, but are both manufactured out of pre-existing linguistic resources, as well as selected and oriented according to the aim of the discourse, with the result that different sorts of activities will produce different sorts of discourses (Potter & Wetherell, 1990).

In order to detect how language is situated and used to perform actions and construct versions of the world, discursive psychology directs attention to the building blocks of discourse, i.e. *interpretative repertoires* (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Interpretative

repertoires are defined as repeatedly used clusters of terms that are used to describe and evaluate actions, events or other phenomena of social life. Repertoires consist of an internally coherent variety of lexical, grammatical and stylistic resources, and are often constructed around specific metaphors, vivid images, common-places and figures of speech. (ibid.; Suoninen, 1992, p. 20) Interpretative repertoires have also been defined as the established and self-evident knowledge that everyone has about an issue (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). When discussing a societal issue, people may use one repertoire to portray the topic in a certain light, or alternate between different, even contradictory repertoires to account for their opinions (Suoninen, 1992, pp. 15–16).

On the other hand, while repertoires can be flexibly used to argue for certain viewpoints, the choices are not infinite (Potter & Wetherell, 1990). For instance, if one repertoire manages to rise above the others as more hegemonic and self-evident (through e.g. public discourse, media or science), this may constraint others on how to approach the subject (Edley, 2001; Suoninen, 1992, p. 16). In the context of this study, an example of a naturalised repertoire is that of 'host society', which assumes the 'acceptance' of 'immigrants' and their consequent adaptation to the 'culture' of the hosts as a self-evident world order. Whether one is against or for immigration, or adheres to a more universal view of human kind, one must start the argument from this established division between nations of natives and immigrants. While the power of these models that society gives us is recognised and by no means underestimated, the stance taken here is that individuals have the theoretical and practical opportunity to step out of this model and recreate their own descriptions of the world.

Repertoires are a reflection of the culture, value and normative system in which people form their arguments – when choosing their words and arguments, speakers are weaving culturally possible and available constructions of the issue they are discussing (Suoninen, 1992, p. 19; 1997, p. 158). In this sense, accounting for a specific social phenomenon is never simply neutral description: when people employ the various, well-known repertoires to explain an issue, they do not only reproduce these

conventional ways of expression, but they also reproduce the symbolic cultural system that these repertoires are used to describe (Suoninen, 1997, pp. 162–163). Reproducing can here mean either reinforcing or recreating these repertoires – in any case, it is necessary for the speaker to use these widely accepted linguistic resources to convince the listener. Suoninen (ibid.) offers the example of the gendered way of talking about labour division – it can be accounted for using historical, societal, religious, educational, biological, or individualistic explanations. When we refer to these different repertoires in our efforts to legitimise or challenge the concept of men's and women's jobs, we in fact reinforce or recreate a socially constructed gender system. Moreover, as these repertoires are never clean-cut and set in stone, every account also recreates these same discourses that are used. (Suoninen, 1997, pp. 158–164). As Potter and Wetherell (1990) state, people are on the one hand, active users and moulders of discourses, but, on the other hand, discourses generate, enable and constrain what people think. So, in this continuous cycle, people use discourse and discourse uses people.

Suoninen's (1992, 1997) work serves as the basis for the analytical approach to the data for this thesis. In addition, this thesis takes inspiration from two recent discursive studies on immigration in Finland. In the first, Varjonen et al. (2013) conducted a longitudinal study for two years on how ethnic Finnish migrants accounted for their identities. Ethnic migrants were defined as people who return to their country of ethnic origin often after several generations. In this case, the respondents were Russian-speakers of Finnish ethnic origin who had moved from the Former Soviet Union and Russia. Their double-minority status made the identity negotiation particularly interesting and challenging.

The respondents in the study described how the majority population would not accept them as Finns, and how they were targets of negative attitudes because of their connection to Russia. The ascribed Russian identity stood in sharp contrast to their own views of themselves as at least partly Finnish. The researchers concluded that while claiming a Finnish identity was the predominant way for the respondents to describe themselves pre-migration, the post-migration data showed a larger

variety of self-labels, and the Finnish identity was problematised, suggesting that the Finnish identity constructed in Russia was no more valid in Finland. This is a good example of the contextual and performative nature of discursive identity construction, but also an example of how dominant discourses alter the way identities are described. However, the situation is not altogether predetermined. In their final analysis, Varjonen et al. (2013) suggested the following three interpretative repertoires that the respondents used for describing ethnicity: *the biological repertoire* (ethnic identity as inherent, unchangeable, and composed of certain characteristics), *the socialisation repertoire* (ethnic identity as learned, culturally influenced, relating to language and cultural practices), and *the intergroup relations repertoire* (the role of the majority described as decisive in the negotiations over identity). In other words, the construction of Finnish ethnic identity persisted albeit in a problematic way in relation to the majority attitude.

Another novel study conducted by Nortio, Varjonen, Mähönen and Jasinskaja-Lahti (2016) in Finland was concerned with the descriptions of multiculturalism as an approach of managing ethnic and cultural diversity. Discussions were conducted with both majority Finns and members of three immigrant groups; people of Russian, Somali and Estonian background. In focus group discussions, the researchers used statements such as 'When in Rome do as the Romans do' or 'Finns should accept that the Finnish society consists of different ethnic groups' to elicit descriptions and constructions of multiculturalism in Finland. Nortio et al. defined four different interpretative repertoires that the participants used to describe the relationship between minorities and the majority. The repertoires of *polite guests* (one should respect the Finnish culture) and *securing the majority culture* (it is important and understandable not to let Finnishness disappear) normalise and enforce the hierarchical situation between the majority and minorities.

On the other hand, Nortio et al. proposed the repertoires of *stigmatising multiculturalism* (being constantly reminded of minority position is stigmatising) and *individualism* (seeing people for who they are as individuals and not part of a certain group) which both call for a less essentialising and discriminatory approach

to speaking of immigrants. Interestingly, the divide between the supporters and opponents of multiculturalism did not always set along majority-minority group lines. The researchers concluded that the repertoires adhered to an essentialist notion of cultures and a separation between 'us' and 'them'. Talking about immigrants as guests enables the majority to maintain the status quo, but also allows for migrants to represent themselves as 'good immigrants'. Once more, discourses of minority members seem to serve to support and legitimise the dominant majority discourses – however, at the same time, the repertoire of individualism allows for a way to challenge hierarchical categories and propose treatment of people based on their individual merits rather than group belonging.

3.2 Positioning theory

After defining the interpretative repertoires used in the data to account for intergroup relations and the belonging and participation of immigrants in Finland, the aim is to ascertain what identities or subject positions the politicians assign to themselves and others within these repertoires. This perspective of identities sees the self as constructed and negotiated in social interaction (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 12; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). Subject position is a concept that denotes how the discursive context limits the identities that are possible in a certain situation: the context and social practices produce certain positions, that carry specific rights and responsibilities, and that are available for the individuals to adopt or resist when they negotiate the various meanings for their self in that specific situation (Suoninen, 1997, p. 58). In discursive psychological research, the definitions for subject position and identity often overlap: for instance, Edley and Wetherell (1997, p. 206) examine the construction of masculine identities through the ways "*men are positioned by a ready-made or historically given set of discourses or interpretative repertoires*". Suoninen (1992, p. 40), in his analysis of discourses of family life, defines identities as "*the different characteristics, responsibilities and rights that a family member assigns for himself and other family members*". Similarly, this thesis will treat subject positions and identities as synonymous.

In a particular discursive situation, via the interpretative repertoires on offer, individuals can thus construct for themselves different identities or subject positions in relation to their own and other social groups. In this manner, identities are to be *accomplished* in discourse rather than natural facts (Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Edley, 2001): identities are seen as inconsistent and changeable and less permanent than traditional psychology would suggest. Davies and Harré (1990) theorised that people are positioned in certain roles through discursive practices, and looked at how people use words to locate themselves and others in conversation. By using certain words and discursive practices, people ascribe rights and place duties on themselves and others, in accordance to the position that is spoken of (ibid.).

Positioning can hence be described as a process through which an individual adopts, resists or offers certain subject positions – positioning involves two aspects: placing various positions in opposition to each other (such as the positions of sameness and difference) and forming a relationship toward that position (negotiation, rejection, acceptance) (Varjonen, 2013). Davies and Harré (1990) propose that discursive practices constitute speakers in a certain way and in specific positions, but they also allow for people to negotiate new positions. As opposed to the notion of 'roles', for instance, positioning and subject positions imply that a person is a choosing subject who locates him- or herself in conversations using familiar and well-known narrative forms – interpretative repertoires – and bringing to those narratives his or her own subjective experiences (ibid.).

Importantly, by using a specific repertoire and adopting a certain position, the speaker opens a possibility for certain types of action. Discursive analysis focuses on the situational functions of the discursive act - that is, it asks what purpose the adoption of certain identity positions serves (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, pp. 32–33; Suoninen, 1997, pp. 60–61). The function does not necessarily mean the conscious intent of the speaker, but rather the potential meanings and purposes that are activated by the adoption of a repertoire and subject position. Additionally, discursive analysis can pay attention to the wider, ideological consequences that go beyond situational functions. This could be for instance the legitimisation or

resistance of power relations (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 187; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003).

While positioning theory is most often used to analyse conversations, it is well suited for the analysis of blogs, which in fact are interaction between the writer and readers of the blog, and the writer and other writers or speakers in the public sphere. The concept of positioning is also well suited to analyse the construction of immigrant belonging and participation as a process of negotiating a place, rights and obligations in society.

In her doctoral dissertation, Varjonen (2013) analysed the discussions of immigrants of various ethnicities in Finland, and examined how they negotiated their position in the Finnish society. She found that being an immigrant in the sense of 'non-Finnish' was the most essential way of the participants' defining of their own identity. Moreover, the most common immigrant positions were those of *discriminated*, *outsider*, *underdog*, *well-treated*, *grateful*, *helpless* and *participant*. Varjonen concluded that the position of immigrants appeared marginal and unequal in relation to Finns. Integration was not presented as a mutual process of adaptation between Finns and immigrants. The main responsibility of adapting and changing was described as being placed on immigrants. However, she also considered the narratives as a response to dominant debates on immigration: they aimed at changing stereotypes, participating in the discussion and collectively enhancing the status of immigrants. These ideas are compatible with the concept of language as action that is present in discursive psychology (Potter & Wetherell, 1990).

In another analysis, Pauha (2015) studied 14 young Finnish Muslims who were education-oriented and active members in youth organisations. Pauha was interested in how the participants positioned themselves in relation to other immigrants of Muslim background and to the Finnish society at large. According to his interpretation, by adopting certain positions, the interviewees were either perpetuating or challenging dominant discourses about immigration and Islam. In some cases, there were alterations between one position and another – this may have

been purposeful: as the interviewees embraced certain discourses and downplayed others, they could maximise the benefit they gained in form of status, acceptance and concrete resources offered by the Finnish society. Pauha also suggested that the participants might have also tried to influence public discussion with their choice of words.

Based on his interviews, Pauha (2015) defined the following subject positions: *dynamic youth vs. problem youth, true Islam vs. false Islam and transnational vs. national*. The participants thus separated themselves from older generations, claimed a more original form of religiousness that was rid of cultural influences, and described themselves as part of a global network of Muslims. Moreover, the participants expressed dilemmatic position of being productive, useful members of the Finnish society on the one hand, but also being guests and outsiders on the other hand. The subject positions that Pauha outlines are constructed in opposition to some 'other': the marginalised, the elderly, the majority (ibid.). This in turn can be seen as resembling the principle of rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1987) that refers to language as dialogical in nature, consisting of explicit and implicit components, arguments and counterarguments (true i.e. not false; active dynamic youth, i.e. not stagnant old).

As a third example, in a very recent study on the blog texts of Sweden Democrat politicians with an immigrant background, Pettersson et al. (2016) analysed how the individuals constructed their identities based on available ethnic, cultural and political alternatives. The Sweden Democrats being a populist radical right political party, the possible tensions between different identities were also examined. Interestingly, Pettersson et al. found as a general pattern in their material that the ethnic minority identity was accepted at an assigned, superficial level, while the ethnic majority, or national identity was actively claimed and asserted. Navigations between identities took place even within the same blog entry. However, sometimes the bloggers did not mention their immigrant or ethnic minority background at all. The researchers speculated that the discursive function of the blog posts was to

divide between 'good' and 'bad' immigrants, deny structural discrimination, and provide tangible proof of the Sweden Democrats not being a racist party. (Ibid.)

3.3 Rhetorical psychology

Both discursive psychology and positioning theory rely on the idea of discourse as more than just a reflexive expression of self, and see it as an interactive response to a direct conversation partner or to wider societal discourses. Reynolds and Wetherell (2003) posit that people's discourse is often variable and contradictory, as each interpretative repertoire constructs a different version of the issue that is discussed. This inconsistency is at the core of the ideological dilemmas that people then rhetorically position themselves to (ibid.). Especially when looking at blogs, the study of how the texts are situated ideologically and rhetorically, i.e. what responses to the larger context are implied, is very relevant. While rhetoric is commonly understood as a tool of persuasion, Potter (1996, p. 108) suggests understanding rhetoric as the use of antagonistic descriptions of an event or thing: how one description counters an alternative one, how it resists the other description.

Billig's (1987) rhetorical psychology explores how everyday argumentation uses rhetorical tools. According to this approach, language is dialogical in nature. This means that every argument relates to another, and that we can distinguish between the explicit and implicit meaning of an utterance: when promoting one idea, for example, a person automatically discards another. When people express an opinion, they are in fact positioning themselves in a debate that they know contains different and oppositional views. In this way, an opinion takes its rhetorical meaning from the opinion that counters it (ibid., pp. 5–6). Billig (1995b) stresses the necessity of investigating what people say in relation to the wider social context. Criticism of a certain ideology, for example, is produced as a counterargument to more prevailing, commonsense understandings. In other words, when challenging certain constructions in the world, one must use these commonsense notions to argue against them. (Ibid.) These commonsense beliefs are the 'winning' arguments that are rhetorically strong and have won the test of time (Billig, 1987, pp. 199–201; Edley, 2001).

As discourse is argumentative, one must think of what is criticised or justified in order to understand the whole picture when analysing a discursive act (Billig, 1987, pp. 91–92). Discourse is thus tied to time and place: our everyday commonsense thinking that can be contradictory and dilemmatic in nature is built upon ideological beliefs. Rhetorical psychology is therefore interested in how ideology affects commonsense thinking, but also in how individual argumentation participates in larger societal transformation. (Salonen, 2005.) Moreover, there is no reason to assume that one repertoire is more real to us than the other, as we navigate and choose between the different accounts that are available – instead, the abundant use of one repertoire over another can merely indicate that it is culturally very strong, and thus requires consideration, even if it is no truer to the speaker than a contradictory repertoire (Suoninen 1992, p. 57).

Since rhetorical psychology highlights oppositional views, the approach is relevant for the research topic at hand. Using the rhetorical psychological perspective makes it possible to examine the construction and use of rhetorical strategies in participants' own terms, and how the speaker orients towards rights and responsibilities, instead of seeing them as being imposed on a speaker (Gibson & Hamilton, 2011). The analysis of the blog texts of the politicians seeks to understand how they construct minority-majority relations, and how they anticipate general assumptions in their positioning of themselves, other immigrants and majority members.

3.4 Summary and research questions

Chapter 2 introduced some theoretical work on the main concepts used in this thesis, identity and integration, and discussed their socially constructed nature. Chapter 3 continued with the theoretical outline for this thesis by explaining the discourse analytical theories behind the methods used to analyse the blog posts of the chosen Finnish politicians. As the discursive analytical field is diverse in its approaches, this section will first summarise the theoretical outlines used for this thesis, and then present the research questions.

First, language is seen as constructive of different realities – when we use language, we do not simply describe things but construct the object that we talk about. Second, social reality consists of various and competitive systems of meaning that arrange and construct the world differently. These systems are called interpretative repertoires. Third, repertoires are used, produced and recreated in social practice and context. This means that the context is not seen as a distraction to the discursive process but as an integral part of what course it takes. Additionally, the use of interpretative repertoires is seen as an argumentative process, a dialogue between explicit or implicit repertoires in a given context. Fourth, the theoretical basis for this thesis is that users of language are attached to the interpretative repertoires through various identity positions, i.e. their identities are constructed in relation to what is said and who is addressed. Identities are thus seen as changing and flexible according to the interpretative repertoire that is used. Finally, as language constructs social reality, language use has consequences. Thus the discursive interest is not only on how reality is constructed, but what situational functions that construction has, and what ideological consequences it carries.

In order to arrive at an understanding of how the three politicians construct minority-majority relations, and the belonging and participation of immigrants in Finland, the analysis of the blog data is therefore guided by the following questions:

1. *What interpretative repertoires do the writers use to account for minority-majority relations and the belonging and participation of immigrants in Finland? How do minority-majority relations and the belonging and participation of immigrants emerge in these repertoires?*

2. *What identities or subject positions do they construct for themselves, other immigrants and majority members (the public and the political opponents)?*

3. *What functions and consequences do these repertoires and identity positions make possible?*

The next chapter will introduce the data collection and analysis methods in more detail.

4 Data and methods

This chapter will present the data collection process and basic analytical procedures. The analysis presented in this thesis is conducted on the blog writings of three politicians of immigrant background: Abdirahim Hussein, Nasima Razmyar and Ozan Yanar. Razmyar and Yanar were identified through previous knowledge, and Hussein by doing a search with the words *immigrant*, *politician*, and *blog* and by following different leads that directed to his blog site. Initially, the intention was to focus on studying Facebook posts of politically active immigrants, which would have enabled the inclusion of a wider range of people. However, the incongruity of Facebook posts was a challenge: while some Facebook users wrote elaborate updates, others only used a few words, which made research or comparison difficult. Blogs are online publications that tend to be written in a personal, conversational style, and are usually the work of identified authors. Blogs are interactional in nature: they can often be subscribed to, and they usually offer the possibility for the readers to leave comments (Lietsala & Sirkkunen, 2008, p. 31). This makes blogs a suitable source of data for a discourse analytical study that aims at inspecting social and rhetorical constructions in that are built in interaction.

Blogs have been welcomed as a democratic platform for voicing of opinions and sharing of information, and as critical to public discourse – however, some suggest that blogging is an elite activity that is not equally attained by all layers of society, as the effort needed for content production favours those who are better educated and with wider resources (Schradie, 2012). This is acknowledged to be true in the blogs used for this thesis: all writers are highly educated and enjoy a certain societal standing.

Studying pre-existing documents such as blogs is by nature research on analytically filtered data: in other words, creating data is a matter of choosing, rather than generating the right data through premeditated questions and interviews (Gibson & Brown, 2009, pp. 65–83). The next sections will describe the data collection and analysis processes as well as some ethical considerations.

4.1 Data collection

The data was collected from the blogs retrospectively by filtering texts that had been published between April 2014 and December 2016. Most of the blogs are concentrated between the beginning of 2015 and mid-2016, but the timeframe was extended from both ends to include more data from Ozan Yanar, who in this period wrote the least (see Appendices). Relevant blog posts were identified by searching keywords such as immigrant, refugee, asylum-seeker, ethnic minority, Islam, Muslim, as well as terms referring to Finland and Finnishness, in addition to those referring to Afghani, Somali, and Turkish aspects. Many of the blog texts were by nature written in response or as a reaction to simultaneous events that had drawn the attention of media. As already explained in previous sections, the time frame chosen for the collection coincides with circumstances that had inspired writing about immigration, integration and majority-minority relations.

The most proliferate writer is Abdirahim Hussein, whose 33 blogs where taken from the blog site *Uusi Suomi Puheenvuoro*. For Nasima Razmyar, 18 blogs from her official website and the blog site *Iltalehti Blogit* were chosen. Some of the blogs were published on both sites. As for Ozan Yanar, 17 blogs were collected from blog sites *Iltalehti Blogit* and *Uusi Suomi Puheenvuoro* as well as his official website. The last text is taken from his Facebook account, where it was published as a 'note' (blog-like space on Facebook). In total, the data consists of 68 blogs that are 1–2 pages long on average. A list of the blogs is included in the appendices of this thesis.

The blogs were directly copy-pasted from the websites into Word documents, and thus include any orthographic mistakes that were part of the original blog posts. The entire data set will be preserved as a Word document in case of future need. All the blog texts have been published in Finnish, except one blog post from Razmyar, which was an English translation of her biographical first post. The citations presented in the analysis have been translated into English by the author.

4.2 Steps of analysis

The following section will explain how the theoretical principles outlined in previous chapters were applied in the analytical process. The methodological tools for analysing the data were derived from a combination of the discursive approaches introduced in chapter 3; i.e. discursive psychology, positioning theory and rhetorical psychology. In employing these discourse analytical approaches, this study thus acknowledges the existence of power structures and mainstream discourses that influence the blog writers' thinking, while also recognising the capability of the writers to counteract the existing discourses with their own versions of social reality. Importantly, this analysis does not treat the blog texts as reflections of the writer's mindsets and inner worlds, but as constructions related to the interactional context.

The analysis focused on distinguishing between different interpretative repertoires that were used to account for minority-majority relations. The interest was in the composition of the repertoires and how they were used to perform different purposes. In particular, the interest was in how the writers position themselves and other groups of people. Thus, the focus was on how groups orient towards each other, and general accounts of Finland, Finnishness and immigration were excluded if they did not directly comment on managing intergroup relations.

The analytical process consisted of several and repeated phases, with recurring comparison between data, theory and research questions (Taylor, 2001). The first step was to get familiar with the data and search for general themes that were dealt with. This thematic analysis was done during the first readings of the material, and served as a basis for the formulation of the preliminary research questions. Initially, the focus was on the construction of ethnic, national, and religious categories. Upon deeper familiarisation with the data, it was nevertheless concluded that the writers did not constrict themselves to talking about ethnicity and nationality, but that they were depicting intergroup relations and accounting for the belonging and participation of immigrants in Finland.

This mechanical part of the analysis was done using both pen and paper as well as

the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti. The first attempt resulted in some 30 different codes for the whole corpus. For example, the ten most common subjects of matter that were used were Finnishness, immigrants, refugees, religion, danger, extremist and radical groups, discrimination and marginalisation, integration, opposition and human rights or humane treatment. However, the initial coding proved that there were many overlapping categories (such as extreme racism and racism, equality and human rights) as well as codes that were not very informative in the end. The second phase was therefore to compare the codes and inspect the quotations that they were based on more closely, and mirror them back to the research questions, with an effort to ensure that the coding and research questions were aligned.

As a result, the analytical steps were repeated. After numerous attempts, what seemed to emerge from the data were descriptions of managing minority-majority relations and explanations for why immigrants belong or participate in society. Looking for repetition and variation in the data, arguments and counter-arguments, explicit and implicit meanings, and dilemmatic constructions, a new coding resulted in the following codes: solidarity, humanity, individuality, altruism, morality, collective, opposition, antagonism, hierarchy, normative, idealism. These varieties of codes and descriptions consequently served as a basis for formulating the five interpretative repertoires that are used in the data to account for intergroup relations: the hierarchy, the humanistic, the antagonistic, the collectivistic, and the individualistic repertoires.

Finally, the focus was on the subject positions that the writers adopted in the blogs, and the determination of function and consequence and forming hypotheses about the purposes that these discursive resources fulfil, and search for linguistic evidence. The analysis thus treats three aspects of the data: its *content* (what do the blog posts describe?), its *form* (how do they describe it?) and its *function* (what are the possible implications of these forms of description?) (e.g. Sakki & Pettersson, 2015).

4.3 Ethical and practical considerations

The research of blog texts published on the Internet does not require permission from the writers (Kuula, 2011, *Internet aineiston hankinnassa*). As the research relies on the public notoriety of the subjects, they will be identified by name, and their right to anonymity can be considered as revoked (McKinlay & McVittie, 2008, p. 16). However, from an ethical point of view, it is important to ensure that the research data is handled with sensitivity in regard to how its use may affect the individuals and their communities (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 69). Even if blog posts are public and there for everyone to see, there is a need to be mindful of the possibility that the current analysis and interpretation may be seen as commentary and stance-taking.

Internet-based data, such as blogs, lies in a grey area of research ethics and protection of privacy, and can be approached in two ways: as a reflection of the writer's inner thoughts, equal to an interpersonal situation (and thus subject to stricter rules of privacy), or as an open platform for moulding and creating discourses, ideas and identities, and for shaping the public views (and consequently can be treated with larger freedom) – the latter perception may especially be the case for e.g. politicians, who build a certain type of image of themselves in the media (Kuula, 2011, *Internet-tutkimuksen etiikasta*). When considering the data used in this thesis, it is safe to assume that the writers intended the blog texts for a larger audience, that they are prepared for their wider use and citation, and that they wrote them as a commentary on public issues (all Razmyar's and some of Yanar's blogs are in fact published on their personal campaign websites). The texts do not treat personal matters of a delicate nature, and are posted on public blog platforms that host other well-known writers, and contain substance closer to newspaper columns than to private, diary-style blog entries.

Based on these considerations, it is justified to treat the data collected here as unrestricted. Similarly, taking in consideration that the writers are treated here as the faces of alternative, minority discourses on intergroup relations in Finland, identifying the writers by their names is also a valid choice. At the same time, it is essential to reiterate here that the analysis concerns the content of the blogs, and not

the people writing them. No claims are made on the inner motivations, thoughts, beliefs or opinions of the writers.

However, to minimise ethical risks that are associated with taking the interpretation of the texts too far, it is necessary to be reflexive about the research methods and practices: any 'observed' similarities and differences between subjects are only made meaningful through the researcher's interpretation and use of theory. To do the writers justice, it is essential to follow some ethical guidelines, as suggested by Willig (2012, p. 56): to be modest about what the research can reveal, and to restrict interpretation to the research questions; to ensure that the writers' voices are not lost, and lastly, to remain open to alternative understandings of the data. Seeking for disconfirming cases is a way to increase the validity of the research, as well as keeping a paper trail of the data collection and analytical process (Yardley, 2008).

Using Internet-based discourses as data alerts to further two issues: firstly, the instability of the data sources, and secondly, the authorship of the posts (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 79–82). To begin with, posts in social media may easily be removed or altered at any point of time. For this reason, all the documents from the chosen timeframe have been saved on a separate Word document. The second issue of authorship is equally important. The blog posts all appear on mainstream internet sites, along with the photos and personal descriptions of the authors, and can thus be considered authenticated. With these remarks, it is now time to turn to the presentation of the analysis of the data.

5 Analysing minority-majority relations

Previous chapters have dealt with the notion of identities, minority-majority relations and integration, and the constructed nature of these concepts and phenomena in everyday interaction. This construction takes place through the use of available interpretative repertoires, i.e. repetitive, distinct sets of linguistic resources that are commonly shared and recognised (Suoninen, 1992). Interpretative repertoires concerning minority-majority relations and immigrant participation are

the substance for negotiating and constructing immigrant identities or subject positions. These subject positions come with different rights and obligations, and thus serve specific functions in the interaction.

To repeat the purpose of the analysis, the aim is to establish 1) what interpretative repertoires the writers of the blogs have employed when describing minority-majority relations and immigrant belonging and participation in Finland 2) what subject positions they construct through the use of these repertoires for themselves, other immigrants and majority members and 3) what implications the various subject positions have and how they function in the context of the blogs.

This chapter will start with a presentation of the interpretative repertoires pulled from the data, the way they make sense of minority-majority relations and immigrant belonging and participation, followed by a section clarifying the subject positions that they make possible. The last section will analyse the possible functions of these constructions for the writers, and the larger consequences. In the analysis and citations that follow, the acronyms AH (Abdirahim Hussein), NR (Nasima Razmyar) and OY (Ozan Yanar) will be used for the sake of brevity. In citations, a number after the acronym will refer to the number of the blog that the citation has been taken from. The following symbols will also be used in the citations:

[--] omitted text
[here] added text that clarifies the context

The extracts have been translated from Finnish to English by the author. In the translations of the extracts, the third-person singular pronoun *hän*, which in Finnish can refer to both male and female, is translated as *he* in instances where it does not refer to a specific person (e.g. in a sentence such as “a person is equal no matter who he is”). To remain as faithful to the original as possible, the translations attempt to follow the Finnish syntax and therefore may occasionally lack fluency in English.

A point to note in such a discourse analytical study is that different languages offer different elements to construct with (Potter, 1996): as the texts written in Finnish are

here analysed in English, some building blocks may in fact be lost in translation. This is particularly pertinent as the blog writers frequently use idiomatic and colloquial Finnish phrases. Whether deliberate or intuitive, these linguistic elements effectively situate the blog texts in the Finnish language construct and therefore give them more legitimacy in the eyes of the Finnish readers. Nevertheless, due to limited space, the citations will be presented in English only. For readers interested in the original texts, the blogs that have been used for extracts are included as appendices.

5.1 Identifying the interpretative repertoires

The first objective of the analysis was to determine what interpretative repertoires the politicians have used to account for and make sense of minority-majority relations, and the belonging and participation of immigrants in Finnish society. The discursive analysis of the data and the search for interpretative repertoires usually starts by finding similarities and differences in the texts: the researcher looks at what repetitive patterns emerge, but also at how parts of the data are distinct from one another (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, pp. 168–169; Taylor, 2001). Very often the repertoires appear as short, intercepting and contradictory excerpts within one speech, text or dialogue, instead of large, coherent bodies of discourse (Suoninen, 1997, p. 67). In the case of the data for this thesis, the analysis revealed some important repetitive patterns, and resulted in the distinction between five different repertoires that will be presented in the sections below. However, in comparison to short excerpts that are typical for interview-based data, the repertoires often appear more extensively as larger blocks of texts (i.e. several paragraphs), as written text gives the opportunity for the writer to expand and elaborate.

The repertoires that appear in the data are the hierarchy, humanistic, antagonistic, collectivistic, and individualistic repertoires. These repertoires each form a set of metaphors and images that construct a particular version of minority-majority relations and the position of immigrants in society. However, as Suoninen (1997, p. 76) points out, describing repertoires as perfectly coherent systems of meanings is somewhat restricted – empirical analysis often reveals the fluidity of the borders between different repertoires. It is therefore acknowledged that the repertoires

presented here are in some cases overlapping in content, and have similar functions. Nevertheless, the present section will attempt to justify this categorisation and highlight the differences between them through some illustrative examples. Each repertoire will also be more extensively introduced in the next section that defines the subject positions.

Extract 1

> One of the worst assumptions is that all those of immigrant background are thought to receive their money from the social welfare office. [--]
>
> I will give as an example my friends of Somali background, because the racism they experience is overwhelmingly the worst in Finland. Many of my friends of Somali background have always been grateful that they got to come to Finland but they are indefinitely fed up with racism. I have in the past years noticed that those who have the possibility to leave, will leave. I have bumped into a few of my highly-educated friends of Somali background who are sick of this situation and plan to leave elsewhere in Europe or the United States to work. They are Finns who feel like strangers in the country that they have grown up in. They are outsiders even though they have integrated into society, gotten an education and have paid jobs that they pay taxes for. (OY 3)

Extract 2

> I came to Finland at the age of 15 and I immediately noticed how much people trust each other here. I noticed that the system in Finland takes care of everyone and that everyone has human rights. Everyone is equal in the eyes of the law. Everyone has the possibility to dream and work towards their dreams and many manage to achieve them. No wonder that Finland does so well in international comparisons. (AH 11)

Both examples describe the Finnish societal system and the relationship between immigrants and the majority. However, the two excerpts represent different perspectives on what it is like to grow up as an immigrant in Finland. The underlined parts of excerpt 1 are a case example of the **hierarchy repertoire**, while excerpt 2 exemplifies the **humanistic repertoire**. Thus, the hierarchy repertoire depicts a population that is divided into categories that occupy different status levels: there are *outsiders* and *strangers*, but also a difference is made between immigrants and those *of immigrant background*, between different ethnic groups in terms of the discrimination they face (*Somali… the racism they experience is overwhelmingly the worst*), as well as between the *highly-educated* and those less educated, those who

work and those on welfare. These categories then serve as the basis for assigning rights and duties, as is reflected in the expressions describing economic contributions of immigrants (*having paid jobs* and *paying taxes*), undeserved gains (*receive their money from the social welfare*) and expected appreciation (*have always been grateful*). The humanistic repertoire, on the other hand, highlights how *everyone is equal*, and contains references to mutual *trust*, *rights* and the *law*, as well as success in society. The discrepancy between the hierarchy and humanist repertoire is easily detected in these two extracts, but is slightly subtler in the following descriptions of interactions between minority and majority members:

Extract 3

> I read in yesterday's Savon Sanomat [a regional newspaper] a story about a community college where some people wanted to ease the integration of boys 16–17 years old seeking asylum by [wearing] more covering clothes than usual. The thought behind this was that the new students who come from Muslim countries would not be so confused by a dress code that is different from their homelands. I believe that the people of the college had good intentions but these kinds of measures do not assist the adaptation of the refugees; on the contrary. Speaking of changing the Finnish way of life because we have people coming here from different cultures causes unnecessary opposition. (AH 14)

Extract 4

> I vividly remember my first day in school in Rovaniemi [city in northern Finland]. A strange city, a totally new country to me. [--] I did not speak a word of Finnish and I looked different from the others. [--]
>
> I also remember the first recess of the first school day. All the pupils immediately went out to play and I remained seated at my desk. I was not sure what would happen. Suddenly, a girl called Charlotte came back to the classroom. She signalled with her hand, come with me. And of course, I went since I was asked to. We skipped rope and we did not need a common language. We were all just children.
>
> I have had a lot of fine experiences in my life but this has remained in my mind as one of the best. I have thought of that moment many times afterwards. What made that single moment so remarkable was that I – a person who did not speak the language and looked different – was encountered as a human being. It only took for someone to take the first step. (NR 11)

While both examples depict situations in which the majority member demonstrates what could qualify as helping behaviour, the expressions in extract 3 such as *ease the integration*, *assist the adaptation of refugees, people coming here from different*

cultures and references to difference, misunderstanding and opposition, highlight the hierarchy between the majority and the minorities, in which the former controls the situation and makes unilateral decisions on what is needed, and the latter simply needs to *adapt*. By contrast, extract 4 starts with a hierarchical description (*I did not speak a word of Finnish and I looked different*) but moves on to the humanistic repertoire which emphasises equality and sameness. NR depicts how they were *all just children* – the word *just* rejecting attempts to differentiate – and how she was seen and treated through the common category of *human being*. The moulding of minority-majority relations is described as a mutual process (s*he signalled… come with me, and of course I went*), where a majority member can also *take the first step*. The hierarchy and humanistic repertoires were the most common repertoires to describe minority-majority relations and the place of immigrants in Finnish society. However, they were not the only ways to make sense of these phenomena, as the following extract from the same blog by NR exemplifies:

Extract 5

> Finland cannot afford racism of hate speech. Finland has always been and will always be a multicultural country. Finland's strength and richness has been that we have not had any us and them. In Finland, we only have us. We must remember that diversity is a resource – in Finland and all over the world.
>
> Esteemed chairman[9],
> The violence of extreme movements in Finland is a reality. According to the security service the violence of extreme movements is becoming more common in Finland. In July 2015, members of a neo-Nazi organisation attacked bystanders in Jyväskylä [a Finnish city] assaulting them. The members of the same organisation have also been seen with one member of the parliament without anyone intervening. The aim of the organisation in question is to create a national socialist nation in Finland. The security services have followed the activities of the neo-Nazi and far-right organisation in question for a longer time already.
>
> The atmosphere in Finland has become more strained. The volume of hate speech has increased and different extreme groups have used violence. (NR 11)

Describing Finland as multicultural and diverse differs from the humanistic repertoire that stresses the sameness of human kind. At the same time, describing

[9] This blog entry is a transcript of a speech held during a parliamentary discussion on hate speech and racism.

how people are not divided into us and them (*we have only us*) is in contrast with the hierarchy repertoire. This repertoire that emphasises how different individuals form a larger entity, and how the group is larger than its sum, is here defined as the **collectivistic repertoire**. It differs from the humanistic repertoire in its focus on collective doing, commitment and common interests and goals (implied here in the use of the words *resource*, *strength* and *richness*), as opposed to the focus of the humanistic repertoire on the inherent value and appreciation of humanity, and moral and ethical stances. Following this, NR abruptly switches in the second part of the extract to depict a situation of violence, attacks and extreme danger (*the violence of extreme movements in Finland is a reality*). This repertoire stands in stark contrast to both the collectivistic and humanistic repertoires. It also differs from the hierarchy repertoire which constructs a systematic and more stable separation of people – this repertoire, labelled here as **the antagonistic repertoire**, is a depiction of a change in the status quo (*violence… is becoming more common/ the security services have followed the activities… for a longer time already/ create a national socialist state/ volume of hate speech has increased*) and active hostility (*violence/ attacked/ assaulting*). This example links the rise of antagonistic group relations to the indifference of mainstream politics, and the interest of some political factions (*been seen with one member of the parliament without anyone intervening*).

Another example is presented in the following extract from OY's blog, part of which was presented in extract 1. After depicting the hierarchical and discriminative attitude of the majority with regards immigrants who are seen as living of welfare, OY continues:

Extract 6

> Pia Kauma[10], you contribute to the maintenance of this sort of opinion climate. I think it is disgusting that you "wanted to initially generate discussion" when as the chairman of the biggest political party in Espoo [city in Finland] you know that your quip about those with immigrant background getting more welfare [than native Finns] in the same situation was wrong. Alternatively, the verification of the

[10] Then municipal representative of the National Coalition Party, Kauma caused a social media sensation by asking why immigrant families can buy new baby prams with their social welfare money when native Finns are forced to recycle old ones.

> accuracy of the matter would have required a five-minute call with the municipal social security expert.
>
> Politics must not be opportunism on the expense of weaker groups. (OY 3)

Just as in extract 5, the unfriendly group relations are attributed partially to the *opportunistic* mainstream politics. Descriptions of rotten and self-serving politics were common in the data, and they were included as examples of the antagonistic repertoire. In these two examples, the attitude of mainstream politicians is described as indifferent in extract 5 (*without anyone intervening*), or deliberate (*you know it was wrong*) and deceitful (*the verification of the accuracy of the matter would have required a five-minute call*) in extract 6. The antagonistic repertoire often describes the negative minority-majority relations as an *atmosphere* or *climate*, which is thus more abrupt and changeable than a stable hierarchy.

The final extract in this section will demonstrate the last, albeit least used repertoire in the data. It also contains examples of the repertoires already introduced, and demonstrates the shifts between one set of meanings to another. This example is taken from a writing by OY that was published on the Finnish Independence Day:

Extract 7

> I have always been proud of Finland. Finnishness means to me growing up in a safe environment, the possibility to fulfil my potential and achieve my dreams. One of the most equal societies in the world. A country that cares for its citizens.
>
> We all have our own reasons to love Finland. I am however worried that angry forces are trying to hijack patriotism and Finnishness to themselves. Loving Finland should not be about hating others or exclusionary. Openness, caring and justice are real patriotic values. For me, loving your homeland means that we cherish those things that make Finland a fine country. Rule of law, the freest press in the world, quality education, gender equality, the possibility for social mobility and welfare state. These things we must defend. And we must be proud of them on this Independence Day.
>
> Finland, you are a great country to live in and you have given me so much. I feel I am privileged that I can daily develop this country as a member of parliament. (OY 17)

OY speaks of feelings of pride and love toward one's country, which fall under the collectivistic repertoire. Expressions about Finland caring for its citizens and

cherishing and defending shared communal interests (*the things that make Finland a fine country*) are further examples. At the same time, OY briefly mentions the possibility for self-fulfilment and personal dreams – this phrase has been categorised in **the individualistic repertoire**, which highlights the individual's interests, thoughts and worth as taking precedence over the social group. The individualistic repertoire was distinctly less used than the other repertoires. As in this extract, it is often a short intersection between the more commonly used repertoires. In extract 7, the expressions of collectivistic and individualistic repertoire are quickly contrasted to how some groups create conflict in society, by employing the antagonistic repertoire (*angry forces are trying to hijack patriotism and Finnishness to themselves. Loving Finland should not be about hating others or exclusionary*). OY then proposes what *real* patriotism, is by enumerating important Finnish values (*openness, caring and justice*) and calling to defend these values. The word *real* implies that the *angry forces* mentioned promote false values. This extract also shows the difference between the humanistic and the collectivistic repertoires: if openness, caring and justice had been described as a means of understanding fellow human beings, this would have qualified as humanistic repertoire. Since in this extract these values are portrayed as defining the common ingroup that members should love, protect and feel proud of, the excerpt is considered as part of the collectivistic repertoire. In the end of the example, OY expresses his gratitude toward Finland (*Finland… you have given me so much*) and for being *privileged* – this is an example of the hierarchy repertoire that sees people as belonging to different societal levels. Finally, OY shifts to the collectivistic repertoire again, as he speaks of *developing the country as a member of parliament*.

These interpretative repertoires have been identified from the data based on the differences they have, but also based on their repetitiveness in the data when examining the various ways that minority-majority relations and immigrant belonging and participation have been accounted for. The following tables illustrate the prevalence of the repertoires in the blogs. As identifying and labelling different repertoires is largely a matter of interpretation, the figures should not be treated as exact reflections of the data. However, they will give an idea of how the repertoires

relate to one another, and how the different writers made use of the repertoires. The counting of text parts as occurrences of a certain repertoire was done based on the following principles: each switch between one repertoire to another within one paragraph was counted as an occurrence; and if one repertoire extended uninterruptedly for a longer stretch of text, each paragraph was counted as one occurrence. This was justified by the idea that a paragraph can potentially start a new idea, so remaining within the same repertoire was interpreted as emphasis of this repertoire.

Table 1 The frequency and proportion of the identified repertoires in the entire data.

Repertoire	Frequency	Proportion
hierarchy	114	25 %
humanistic	107	24 %
antagonistic	97	22 %
collectivistic	96	21 %
individualistic	35	8 %

Table 2 The frequency and proportion of the repertoires shown by writer.

	AH		**NR**		**OY**	
Repertoire	Frequency		Frequency		Frequency	
hierarchy	**76**	**28 %**	30	22 %	**29**	**25 %**
humanistic	49	18 %	**45**	**32 %**	24	21 %
antagonistic	65	24 %	24	18 %	25	22 %
collectivistic	61	23 %	22	16 %	24	21 %
individualistic	**18**	**7 %**	**16**	**12 %**	**12**	**11 %**
TOTAL	269		137		114	

Table 1 indicates the frequency of the repertoires and their relative proportion in the corpus of extracts. As the table shows, four out of the five repertoires appear quite equally in the data, with the hierarchy repertoire slightly more employed than the others, and the individualistic repertoire clearly the least used.

Table 2 indicates the frequency and proportion of the repertoires by writer. As the figures show, AH was the most proliferate writer, and of the 520 quotations labelled in the data, those taken from his blogs cover roughly half. Furthermore, AH and OY

use the hierarchy repertoire the most, while NR uses the humanistic repertoire most frequently, and relatively more than the other two politicians. The individualistic repertoire was the least used by all, but relatively more used by NR and OY.

In conclusion, analysing the data by looking at the discrepancies and contradictions in how the three politicians write about intergroup relations and the position of immigrants in society helped identify several interpretative repertoires. As Suoninen (1992, p. 40) points out, the aim in discursive research is not to ascertain which of these repertoires might possibly reflect the inner convictions of the speaker – neither does the inconsistency in the use of various repertoires imply that people are confused or illogical. It is precisely this variation that is of interest, as it indicates the contextuality and purposefulness of the interpretative repertoires. These thoughts will be reflected on more closely in the next two sections.

5.2 Linking the repertoires and subject positions

The second aim of the analysis was to establish what identities or subject positions the politicians have constructed for themselves, for other immigrants and for majority members – both the public and the political opponents – in their blog texts. Just as social reality is constructed by a variety of different and contradicting interpretative repertoires, the identities of the people using these repertoires can also emerge as a heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory web of subject positions. This section will present each repertoire in more detail and analyse what identities are formed when these interpretative repertoires are employed.

5.2.1 Hierarchy repertoire:
the second-class citizens, the dominant group and the success stories

This repertoire portrays minority-majority relations as hierarchical, and the belonging and participation of immigrants as a question of conditional advancement: redeeming an equal position in society thus requires efforts from the part of the immigrant. In this repertoire, the Finnish nation and Finnishness emerge as undisputed categories at the top of the hierarchy (Billig, 1995a; Edensor, 2002, p. 28)

that the immigrant must strategically approach and claim (cf. Pettersson et al., 2016). In line with the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it also implies that individual mobility to a higher-status group is something to strive for, and thus contains vocabulary of the lower-status group member's advancement or efforts to advance (*a chance, to succeed, to try, to achieve*) or control from the dominant group (*to accept, to disregard, to exclude*). The repertoire is the most commonly used in the data, both in terms of frequency and volume.

Typically, the writers use the hierarchy repertoire to relate the experiences of other immigrants. In extract 8, AH describes the integration process from both majority and majority perspectives:

Extract 8

> [--] Europe is more multicultural, multi-religious and multicolour than ever before. In its diversity, our continent is also more beautiful than ever before, but this also brings about challenges that demand solutions; a new kind of reality that we all need to adapt to.
>
> There have been efforts but as nobody really knows what result is sought after, there is confusion over the means to get to the end. In relation to people of immigrant background, one speaks of integration, which in practice consists of teaching the newcomers the language of the country, its customs, of informing about rights and responsibilities, and suggesting that by abiding the law, they also have a chance to succeed.
>
> For the immigrant, the reality is however too often very different. After doing everything that was expected; acquiring an education and university degree, he will still come to realise that he is only fit for cleaning jobs or the service industry in positions that are not good enough for those of "the right colour". [--]
>
> The immigrant does his job and hangs on. [--] He might have family members either here or elsewhere in the world who, in the worst case, are dependent on him and his success – he has in the end gotten a chance to get forward in life.
>
> But no: he is only defined by his skin colour. He is always first and foremost an immigrant. As well as his children who are born here. And their children. A skin colour, religion that differs from the majority and a name more exotic than the usual turn out to be a deterrent if not even a barrier in his efforts to prove his value and find his place. In the long run this would be exhausting for any one of us. Think about it yourselves: what would it be like if you continuously bumped into demonstrations that "you are not one of us"? That "your place is not here"? That "you should go back to where you belong"? Where does a person return, if like

> Musta Barbaari [a Finnish-Tanzanian rap artist] you were precisely born and grown up here? (AH 27)

A lot of interesting things can be said about this extract, but the analysis here will focus on the hierarchy repertoire and the identities it constructs. First of all, in this passage AH constructs intergroup relations as a situation between two groups, the majority and the immigrants, without differentiating between various ethnic groups among immigrants. Speaking of immigrants as one homogeneous group is typical in the data. AH then describes integration (*one speaks of integration*) as a straightforward, unidirectional process that concerns immigrants only (*in relation to people of immigrant background*): the minority adapting to the majority, learning the majority language and culture, finding a job and respecting the majority law. This is portrayed as a promise of advancement, *a chance to succeed* and *get forward in life*. In this manner, the image AH constructs of the mainstream idea of integration corresponds to the civic principle of nation (Meeus et al., 2010), whereby following the common rules should give a person equal position. However, the use of passive voice (*there have been efforts/ one speaks of integration*) distances the writer from this view of integration, as does the reference to the *confusion* (*nobody really knows what result is sought after*) over what adapting multiple cultures in societies means.

In the next paragraph, AH moves to offer what he constructs as a more accurate account of minority-majority relations (*the reality for the immigrant)*. What AH describes resembles a dominant group's attitude of exclusion (Berry, 2006). In this passage, justification for inclusion in society, and allocation of 'good' and 'bad' jobs, are done on the grounds of ethnic and biological heritage. Even if an immigrant fulfils the integration requirements, his or her colour of skin, divergent religion or strange name are described as persistent reasons for discrimination, and barriers for advancement. In this manner, Finnishness is tied to ethnicity, and is irrelevant of the immigrant's efforts or perseverance (*the immigrant takes the job* and patiently *hangs on*). The strength of the ethnic definition of Finnishness is highlighted by the use of extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986): *he is always first and foremost an immigrant*, and a three-part listing (*he is defined by skin colour - his children - and their children*). Using a list of three is a rhetorical tool that conveys a sense of

completeness and thus gives a claim factuality. Similar rhetorical strategies are used to persuade the reader of the aggressiveness of the majority's exclusionary practices, AH uses maximisation (Potter, 1996) and again the three-part list (*continuously bumped into demonstrations that "you are not one of us"? That "your place is not here"? That "you should go back to where you belong"?*). Instead of a nation built on civic principles, Finland thus emerges as an exclusive nation that organises its population into hierarchies on biological and ethnic basis (Billig, 1995a, 1995b; Fenton, 2005; Jurva & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2015). The majority attitude and actions are described as a sort of 'identity undermining' (Sindic & Reicher, 2009) by which minority and majority identities emerge as incompatible.

The next extract from NR's blog is one of the fewer personal descriptions of the integration experience:

Extract 9

> I am often asked why I have adapted so well into Finland. I do acknowledge that I have been lucky. One of the most important things is my family and Afghan culture, which is cherished within my family. I have been allowed to keep my two homelands, live the culture of both of my countries and use both my native tongues. Learning the language and getting into Finnish communities have been things of utmost importance. Consequently, my family has gotten hold of the feeling of Finnishness and to be a part of Finnish society.
>
> It is important to remember this when people who arrive here have not been born in Finland but will become Finnish and raise their children as Finns. They have two homelands, both as dear and as important. They have two languages, two customs, two favourite foods and daily lives in two different worlds. These two worlds go side by side, not separately. (NR 13)

By denoting that she is *lucky*, NR implies that integrating to Finnish society is firstly, something desirable, and secondly, that it is rare. Furthermore, it indicates that integration is somewhat haphazard, and not related to personal efforts, which NR admits in her humble statement *I do acknowledge that I have been lucky*. The uniqueness of the situation is also emphasised by the fact that people often *ask* her about it. The hierarchy of intergroup relations, and the pressure to *become Finnish*, is revealed here negatively through the great emphasis NR puts on the importance of maintaining *two cultures side by side* and *not separately*: NR construct successful

integration as preserving family and ethnic ties through linguistic and cultural practices (*one of the most important things is my family and Afghan culture*/ *they have two languages, two customs, two favourite foods and daily lives in two different worlds*). NR also describes how she was *allowed to keep* her two cultures, but it is not made implicit who gave her this permission. The word *keep*, as in keeping something old, however denotes that it is the new society and culture that conceded to this. Moreover, describing how her family *cherishes* its heritage denotes that it is something vulnerable that needs taking care of. While NR describes the ideal situation to be an an identity attached to both ethnic and national/majority cultures, she simultaneously prioritises Finnishness, and emphasises how *getting into* and *getting hold* of Finnishness is of *utmost importance*.

To summarise these findings, as well as those previously presented in extracts 1 and 3, intergroup relations in Finland are constructed as a hierarchy where one group – those portrayed as ethnic Finns – have priority over another, and where other ethnicities must work for upward mobility. The consolidation of the ethnic and national identities proves difficult, as is highlighted in NR's contradictory account. However, and importantly, the descriptions of the majority's ethnicist and segregationist attitude are constructed as negative, and a more competency-based approach to integration is favoured. Learning language and culture, education and working are suggested as sufficient steps of integration (cf. Verkuyten, 1997). This is not out of the ordinary, as Finnish integration policies focus on finding employment and teaching technical level skills such as language (Keskinen & Vuori, 2012).

In these accounts, immigrants as a whole emerge as victims of discrimination and as second-class citizens. Oftentimes, the identity of immigrants is constructed in negation to the dominant group, as non-Finns, instead of as members of their own ethnic groups. The majority population, who the politicians address, on the other hand, is positioned as the larger community into which others want to integrate, or from which they are excluded – in other words the public constitutes the dominant group which makes the final decisions concerning in- or exclusion of immigrants. In this manner, the role of the majority is described as decisive in the integration

process (cf. *the intergroup relations repertoire* in Varjonen et al., 2013). When the hierarchy repertoire is used in a personal story of advancement, the description is either one of luck or success, and is often situated in the past as something that has already been overcome. Consequently, this repertoire positions the writers themselves as success stories – individuals who have managed to rise on the societal ladder, and constitute the model immigrants who have kept one foot in each world.

5.2.2 Humanistic repertoire: the moral human being and the ordinary people

The humanistic repertoire was the second most frequent in the data. In the humanistic repertoire, the belonging and participation of immigrants in Finnish society is constructed as a human right, and their inclusion a decent humane thing to do. In opposition to the hierarchy repertoire, it grants privileges as universal rights, and not something to be attained. While the repertoire of hierarchy describes the present situation, how things *are*, the humanistic repertoire describes how things *should be*. It builds on the notion of human rights, justice and virtue, and a general code of conduct that is seen as universal. The humanistic repertoire draws on evaluations of actions or intentions, and on the choice between what is right and what is wrong. As opposed to the hierarchy repertoire which was used to relate real experiences, the writers use this repertoire when giving advice on immigration policies, or when resisting the ideas of their political opponents. A common feature of this repertoire is the use of normative language: orders and instructions (*we should/ we must*), approval and disapproval (*this is right/ we cannot accept this*), and absolute expressions (*we have no other choice*). According to Billig (1987, p. 205), commonplace content of morality can often be found in deliberative political rhetoric.

The repertoire is typically applied in discussions human rights, and on the refugee situation in Finland and in Europe. The following extract complements the preliminary examples given in extracts 2 and 4. Extract 10 is taken from OY's blog post that criticises a bottle bomb attack carried out against a reception centre in Finland:

Extract 10

> Many seem to have forgotten the core of the European value base. Europe's bloody history has taught that anyone can be the next in line in need of help. Everyone has the right to seek asylum in a safe country. That is why it is called a human right. In a constitutional state/rule of law [*oikeusvaltio*], after one seeks help, the officials decide if the person is entitled to international protection.
>
> I am also irritated by the remarks of the Prime Minister and the President on how we cannot help people who "are looking for a better standard of living". We have never done that; economic starting points have never served as grounds for getting asylum. (OY 15)

In this caption, OY starts by constructing Finland as part of a *European* value system, and bound by laws of *international protection*: this depiction of universal human rights thus extends beyond and is independent of the nation-state (Kofman, 2005). References to values and shared moral consciousness (*the lesson that Europe's bloody history has taught us*) exemplify the humanistic repertoire, as do the affirmations that human rights concern *everyone*, and *anyone*. At the same time, referring to *rule of law* and *officials* underlines that these rights are not arbitrary or optional: they are protected by law and are thus non-negotiable. This account also constructs Finland as a country that respects human rights. Finally, OY strongly rejects the high authorities' suggestions that asylum-seekers have economic motivations: repetition and maximisation (Potter, 1996) serve to emphasise this (*we have never done that/ economic reasons have never served as grounds*). This rejection again underlines that help is given on the basis of moral obligation to respond to need. His *irritation* about the accusations also indicates a moral judgment on his part.

In a similar vein, extract 11 demonstrates NR's use of the humanistic repertoire in a blog that criticises the government's decision not to increase its refugee quota:

Extract 11

> When suffering increases, shouldn't help also increase? I think it should. It is humanely right. The Finnish government unfortunately seems to disagree.
>
> As a result of the Syrian civil war, millions of people have been forced to leave their homeland. [--] Ordinary people whose worth is the same as mine or yours, have been forced to leave their homes, leave their families [--]. Now, those in need must be helped, and the burden in Europe must be shared.

> Now Finland is not responding to the increased need for help. Distress has increased but we do not increase help. [--] I think this is wrong. When there is more need, we must increase help. [--]
>
> Could we offer asylum to more people? We could. It is a value judgment. For example, Sweden already takes relatively twenty more times refugees than Finland. Denmark and Norway also receive relatively more refugees than Finland. This despite [the fact] that the other Nordic countries are not ten times richer than Finland. Finland is in a completely different league than the other Nordic countries – our country of comparison is Slovenia instead of Sweden. (NR 8)

The passage starts by addressing the reader with a rhetorical question that evokes the commonplace moral principle of helping those in need, and describes this helping behaviour as *humanely right*. By contrast, the actions of the government are evaluated as *wrong* and their decisions as unfortunate. NR contrasts this to the actions of neighbouring countries, and by rejecting the idea that taking in refugees is an economic question (*the other Nordic countries are not ten times richer*), she emphasises that it is a *value judgment*. Stating that Finland is in *a completely different league* from the other Nordic countries, and pointing to Slovenia, implies that the Finnish government is moving to a faulty direction, and abandoning common, Nordic values and principles. The passage contains numerous examples of normative structures (*it should/we must*) and repetition of the word pair *need-help*.

Tackling a different topic, in extract 12, OY reacts to negative attitudes toward Muslims in relation to the attack on Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris.

Extract 12

> Another group that wants to scare us is the far right. They actually want the same thing as the extreme islamists, that is to create a picture that terrorists represent all Muslims, and to fuel hatred amongst us.
>
> This has been seen here in Finland too in the form of provocative writings that speak of the dangers of Islam. Linking ordinary average Muslims to terrorist deeds is unfair and absolutely wrong. Innocent people cannot be condemned for the actions of others. In a state of rule of law people are judged by their deeds and not by their religion, gender or nationality.
>
> If we take part in this irrational hatred, we give up on those noble values that make democracy so valuable. (OY 6)

OY describes here a situation in which Islam is seen as threatening and incompatible with western values (see e.g. Levey, 2009; Titley, 2013). He then rejects this by constructing the majority of Muslims as innocent. The double expression *ordinary average Muslim* highlights the distance of these Muslims from islamists, who are thus constructed as dissidents and exceptions. The moral principle OY applies here is that people cannot be judged for the deeds of others – minority individuals are not responsible for the actions of others in their ethnic reference group. Just as NR in extract 11, OY employs absolute and evaluative language (*unfair, absolutely wrong, people cannot be condemned*), and also refers to legal terminology (*innocent people, judged, condemned*) to highlight the immorality and injustice of the question. Moreover, referring to the rule of law and democratic values, OY again constructs the Finnish society as part of a western value system that upholds justice and equal treatment.

These examples construct the writers themselves, immigrants, refugees and the majority population as one superordinate category of moral human beings who share and uphold universal moral and ethical values. This position is clear in extracts 3 and 4. Moreover, in contrasting the public and the decision-making government, and differentiating between Muslims and violent extremists, these passages also align immigrants, refugees and the public as the ordinary people, deserving of a good life and protection, and whose rights are being violated or put to question by the countries of origin, by Finnish mainstream politics or by political dissidents such as violent extremists.

5.2.3 Collectivistic repertoire: the contributors, the mediators and the community members

The collectivistic repertoire draws upon the idea of a unity of the people that is based on common interest and objectives. In this repertoire, the relationship between minorities and majorities emerges as an equal companionship. In this manner, the collectivistic repertoire describes common efforts, shared goals and solutions to problems, and is employed when describing the building of a 'better Finland'. This is in line with the civic ideology of a nation that sees its citizens as voluntarily

upholding common commitments (Meeus et al., 2010). Unlike the humanistic repertoire that draws on sameness, the collectivistic repertoire highlights equality through diversity.

If the hierarchy repertoire is used in the data to describe the current state of affairs, and the humanistic repertoire employed to describe what intergroup relations should be, the collectivistic repertoire often contains descriptions on how to get there. The repertoire is used to directly address the reader, i.e. the general public. Typical vocabulary of the collectivistic repertoire includes collective expressions (*together, our shared interest*), and invitations to act (*let us, now is the time to*), and the use of the pronoun *we* when addressing the reader.

A first example of the collectivistic repertoire was already given in extract 5. The following example of this repertoire is from a blog text in which NR contemplates on the nature of Finnishness:

Extract 13

> I have often before and now heard that I can never become a Finn. No matter what I did. I have gone to school in Finland, graduated from college, been in working life the whole time and paid my taxes. This is not enough either, I have been told, to be a Finn. The discussion always returns to the same point: you cannot become a Finn, because there is no Finnish blood running in your veins.
>
> In my opinion feeling is thicker than blood. The feeling that you are a Finn and that you want to be part of this society. You want to be part of moulding the Finnish future and the ever-changing picture of what Finland is – what Finns are like. We cannot be put in one mould and we should not either. We come from different backgrounds, different families. We have different dreams about life, work, education, hobbies. Each one of us brings his own special part to our common Finnishness. (NR 13)

This passage is a clear example of how the collectivistic repertoire is used to resist the hierarchy repertoire. The passage starts with NR reporting what others have repetitively told her: Finnishness is based on ethnicity, and an immigrant *can never become a Finn*, *no matter* what an immigrant does. By contrast, in the second paragraph, NR takes a clear stance indicating that *feeling* and *doing* Finnishness is a much more important determinant of a Finn than *being* of a certain biological origin

(*feeling is thicker than blood*). *Feeling* is coupled with the narrative of progress as NR portrays the feeling of Finn as a sense of importance and commitment (Verkuyten, 2005, p. 198–205) to building a future Finland that is more diverse than the current one. Feeling Finnish is also a matter of *wanting to be part of this society* and therefore a choice of 'chipping in', as opposed to the inevitable, predetermined ethnicity. *Doing* is the typical participation in Finnish society through work, paying taxes, education and hobbies – NR uses the strategy of maximisation (Potter, 1996) to highlight that she has worked *all the time*, rejecting the stereotype of idle immigrant. Finnishness as a stable state of *being* is put to question by describing society as *ever-changing*, and as a *common* project to which everyone brings their own component. NR thus employs a progress discourse (Condor, 2006) to emphasise that while claims of the Finnish national identity as tied to one ethnic group may have been true in the past, circumstances have changed, and people need to look at what Finnishness means in the future.

As the repertoire is future-oriented and focuses on collective action, it is also typical in descriptions of the writers' political agendas. Extract 14 is an account of why AH decides to run for the 2015 parliamentary elections, and extract 15 is taken from OY's blog that is written on the Finnish Independence Day:

Extract 14

> Many have asked me during this campaign whose issues I will be representing in the parliament. I will tell you this. When I am elected to the parliament, I will make decisions for the benefit of the whole of Finland. [--] We need to weigh our options and courageously try out new solutions. That is why we need members of parliament who can think in a new way, see things as they are and feel a passion toward improving the everyday life of the people of this country. [--]
>
> I am also more convinced than ever that the time is ripe to get a more diverse representation in the parliament. I have gotten support from many people: acquaintances, friends and people I know in passing [Finn. *puolituttu*, literally half-acquaintance]. The campaign has been very eye-opening and incredibly good-spirited. Every expression of support and vote that I get is a sign of trust toward my action, and I am grateful for it.
>
> A brave Finland needs brave decision-makers who bear responsibility with the mandate given by the voters. I want to be a decision-maker who takes the responsibility given to me seriously. I am committed to building a society that

> supports families, encourages to work and is international. I want that every Finn, regardless of his background, to feel part of the group. (AH 6)

Extract 15

> In recent months, the climate of opinion in Finland has escalated. [--] Now more than ever we should stick together. We should remember that we are all in the same boat. Not one of Finland's problems is solved with acts of hatred or discrimination. A healthy national self-esteem is not based on the exclusion of others. Finnishness is so strong that it can fit many [types of] Finnishness. Finnishness does not depend on skin colour or name and one can become a Finn. Immigrants are not those others but rather they similarly build this society.
>
> I hope that political decision-making will also find the spirit of listening and cooperation. [--] Let us hold on to the fine, equal and caring society that we have built together. (OY 14)

As is typical for the collectivistic repertoire, these examples use temporal expressions to indicate a time for action and change (*the time is ripe, now more than ever*), and indicate that this change is based on collective support (*I have gotten support from many people*) or shared interests (*improving the everyday life of the people/ let us hold on to the fine, equal and caring society that we have built together/ we are all in the same boat*) and shared visions (*a brave Finland/ a healthy national self-esteem*). The collectivistic repertoire constructs the possibility for equal minority-majority relations and for an inclusive Finland in which immigrants *feel part of the group*, *can become a Finn* and *similarly build this society* – just like any other Finn. Moreover, the image of a good leader is constructed as someone brave, responsible and cooperative (Billig, 1987, p. 205).

In extracts 13, 14, and 15, NR, AH and OY are aligning themselves with the people by evoking collective interests and presenting themselves as people who can serve those interests and ambitions (*I will make decisions for the benefit of the whole of Finland).* This strategy positions the writers as useful contributors to the collective (cf. the position of *participant* in Varjonen, 2013). The extracts also define Finnishness as consisting of different ethnicities, as demonstrated in extract 5, 13 and 15 (*Finland has always been and will always be a multicultural country/ diversity is a resource/ the ever-changing picture of what Finland is/ we cannot be put in one mould/ Finnishness does not depend on skin colour or name/ immigrants are not those others*). In this way,

the writers position themselves, other immigrants and the majority population as community members in one diverse community.

In the data analysis, the category of collectivistic repertoire was also used to label parts of the text that highlight the importance of understanding people's different experiences in efforts to create harmony. In the following extract, AH suggests solutions to dealing with marginalised Muslim youth:

Extract 16

> [--] young people who in some way want to release their ill feelings cannot be hushed away and just hope that they do not explode at some point. I saw in one programme how young people who disagreed with an ordinary adult on the events on Paris, were nearly crucified instead of trying to understand them and veer them away from that thinking. If we do not listen to our youngsters, they may meet someone on the net who will listen and whose interest is to incite violence. And this is not just the problem of Muslims. We have a couple of examples of school shootings to speak to that [school shooting incidents in Finland have been carried out by young, white Finnish men]. (AH 1)

Here the emphasis is on dialogue as a way to understanding and more harmonious interaction between different groups. Lack of dialogue and understanding is described as leading to an explosive situation where the ill feelings of the youth will find an outlet in one way or the other (similar descriptions were found when studying accounts of one wife and mother in Suoninen, 1992, p. 50). Moreover, this passage rejects casting anyone out of the group and condemns hasty judgments (*crucifying*) of others. The proper way forward is depicted as discussing and convincing others through an exchange of thought. AH subsequently implores the reader to *listen to our youngsters*, and in the spirit of the collectivistic repertoire makes the solution of the issue a collective responsibility. Moreover, the problem of marginalised youth is constructed as a common one for both immigrant and the native populations (*it is not just the problems of Muslims*). The difference between this example and the one given of the humanistic repertoire in extract 4, is that the humanistic repertoire emphasises an idealistic, naturally occurring common human understanding, while the collectivistic repertoire highlights the need to jointly work to maintain pleasant group relations.

The following example continues the integration story as already started in extract 8, as depicted by AH, and describes the importance of the ethnic group in the process of integration:

Extract 17

> [--] Some immigrants think that their chances of succeeding are better if they find a circle of friends that consists only of native Finns. For some this may be true but not for all. Abandoning your own ethnic group that shares the same past and experiences also leads to isolation, when you have nobody for example to speak your own language with. In worst cases the accumulation of problems leads to among other things substance abuse and even crime.
>
> At this point a person has nothing to lose: he is ready to do almost anything to become accepted at least somewhere and to get rid of his bad feeling. [--] Among other things this is how people are pulled into crimes and radical movements. [--]
>
> I strongly believe that amongst us there are young people who do not see the light at the end of the tunnel and who are near an explosion point. If we do not want to see this and intervene in time; if we cannot create an atmosphere in our society where everyone feels part of it, we will see in Finland, too, what it can lead to at its worst. (AH 27)

In this excerpt, AH starts by reporting others' opinions using the hierarchy repertoire and constructs and image of a low-status group member who seeks to improve his or her position by trying to assimilate in the dominant group (*the chances of succeeding better if they find a circle of friends that consists only of native Finns*) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hutnik, 1991). He then describes assimilation, the abandonment of one's own ethnic group in a negative light. Thus, the collectivistic repertoire makes visible the importance of community, shared interests and values – the ethnic heritage is described as a source of common language and past, and shared experiences. This is in line with typical definitions of ethnicity that describe ethnic identity as including feelings of belonging and commitment (e.g. Liebkind et al., 2015; Phinney, 1990). The emphasis on the importance of the collective is also visible in how belonging to a group is described as being everything to a person: the exclusion of the majority and the abandonment of one's own ethnic group leave a person with nothing (*at this point a person has nothing to lose*). The explosion metaphor of misunderstood youth is once again repeated, indicating the urgency of addressing the issue. The cautiousness in the depiction of assimilation, however – the use of concession

(Potter, 1996) in the phrase *for some this may be true, but not for all* – is an indication that this type of assimilation ideology is a sensitive subject (Suoninen, 1992, p. 26–27), and that the hierarchy repertoire that favours native Finns is difficult to disregard and resist. Finally, AH calls the readers into collective action by prompting people to intervene in this development before it is too late.

Compared to the first examples (extracts 13–15) on the collectivistic repertoire, these last two extracts position the writer in the role of understanding mediator who stands between two worlds, and promotes dialogue, understanding and equal appreciation of the ethnic and national identities. This can be seen as a subcategory of the position of contributor, but one that positions them 'between two worlds' and thus differentiates the politicians more clearly from other immigrants, majority members and mainstream politicians and gives them an advantage over them. All these positions, the contributor, mediator and community member, redefine the common and national identity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) to include people of different ethnic origins.

5.2.4 Antagonistic repertoire: the victims, the dissidents and the good citizens

Whereas the collectivistic repertoire emphasises intergroup relations as constructive community spirit, the antagonistic repertoire describes a state of hostility, active resistance and opposition, and a situation where one party adversely affects the others. In this repertoire, minority-majority relations are portrayed as disrupted by a negative force. Common features of this repertoire are depictions of fear, suspicion and hatred, and language of conflict or confrontation. If the collectivistic repertoire is characterised by 'we' talk, the antagonistic repertoire focuses on depicting what 'they' do. The repertoire characteristically comes up in response to comments or actions of far-right and populist political figures. It is also commonly used in descriptions of the activities of violent extremist groups such as ISIS. The following example is from NR's blog that reacts to the writings of two other politicians – the well-known anti-immigration figure Jussi Halla-aho, former MP and current Member of the European Parliament, and Juho Eerola, MP from the Finns Party:

Extract 18

> Jussi Halla-aho wrote a blog text after the Paris attacks with the intention of making people hate and fear those of the Muslim faith. The same poisonous thoughts were cultivated by Finns party Juho Eerola, according to whom most of Finland's Muslims live on income redistribution. Statistics based on religion solely are of course not drawn up in Finland, but despite that Eerola presented his claims as fact.
>
> These days the most important war is fought in the minds of people and imagination. That is what Halla-aho and Eerola's writings basically are. First, one presents a bunch of problems or alleged problems, but then actually not one solution. The purpose is to plant hatred and suspicion in one's own supporters with the hope that the same hatred and suspicion would grow and multiply in the receivers of the message.
>
> Unfortunately, it is so that extreme groups, jihadists and the far-right, need each other. They are the two sides of the coin together. Both ideologies are equally reprehensible in their falsehood and dishonesty. The jihadists' attacks are meant to gain support from the moderate Muslim majority. This would never work if, after the attacks, the accusing finger did not point at the exact moderate Muslim majority that in reality had nothing to do with the act. Behind this accusatory finger, you will always find an inciter, like Halla-aho or Eerola, who does not have to worry about the consequences of his words.
>
> The starting point of Halla-aho and Eerola's politics is to get people to see in each other only the things that separate them. [--] In this manner, an artificial opposition is created between two groups and forces one to choose.
>
> The writers have shown no compassion toward the victims of the Paris attacks or their families. The terror attack was for them just an opportunity to spread their own frightening thoughts to the large public. (NR 3)

In this account, NR uses the antagonistic repertoire to portray intergroup relations in Finnish society as polarised into two camps (*an artificial opposition is created between two groups*) – one camp is explicitly mentioned (*the moderate Muslims*) but the other one is inferred from references to *the large public* as the majority Finnish population. From the socio-political context of the blog, the two groups could also be understood as those politicians and members of the public who promote more liberal immigration policies and those who are in favour of stricter immigration regulations. In this extract, these two camps are described as basically not so different: the opposition is *artificial*, but it is the far-right politics that makes people focus on the things *that separate them* from one another. In this manner, the antagonistic repertoire is employed to present the politics of Halla-aho, Eerola and their supporters as false propaganda and deliberate fear mongering. The extract

focuses on the negative emotions of the opposing side (*hatred, suspicion, frightening*), on their lack of empathy (*the writers have shown no compassion*), fraudulence (*despite that Eerola presented his claims as fact/ in their falsehood and dishonesty*), and on their failure to contribute to society (*one presents a bunch of problems or alleged problems, but then actually not one solution*).

While both the antagonistic and hierarchy repertoire construct a society that is divided into groups, the former involves an element of choice that the latter lacks: the antagonistic repertoire describes the situation as a war that is *fought in the minds of people*, a war that *forces one to choose* between the two groups. The public is thus constructed as victims in a political game. This is also true for religious minorities that are depicted as being used to advance political arguments (*the jihadists' attacks are meant to gain support from the moderate Muslim majority. This would never work if, after the attacks, the accusing finger did not point at the exact moderate Muslim majority that in reality had nothing to do with the act*). Repeating the phrase 'moderate majority' works to construct this group as equally ordinary as the general public. In portraying political opponents and extremist groups as purposefully planting hatred in the minds of the people, and disregarding commonly held values, the antagonistic repertoire positions them as political dissidents. In portraying the misguided public and the abused immigrants, as well as the rotten political forces as 'them', the writer takes distance from these manipulative attempts. Subsequently, even if not explicitly stated, NR negatively positions herself negatively (Edley & Wetherell, 1997) in opposition to the dissidents, a position that can be described as that of an honest, good citizen who has the best interest of the public at heart, and has the courage to oppose the dissidents.

5.2.5 Individualistic repertoire: the choice-making individual

The individualistic repertoire stresses the moral worth, independence and self-reliance of the individual as opposed to the collective – in this repertoire, the needs and interests of the individual precede the needs of the group. In the context of minority-majority relations, the repertoire of individualism also portrays treating people as individuals as opposed to members of a group as a preferred approach (cf.

Nortio et al., 2016). The individualistic repertoire emerges in relation to various different topics, and is scattered between other repertoires, such as amidst the previous example of the humanistic repertoire in extract 12 (*in a state of rule of law people are judged by their deeds and not by their religion, gender or nationality*).

Indeed, one theme that repeats above the rest if that of the treatment of Muslims, especially in blogs that react to news on terrorist attacks in Europe or on ethnic minorities being suspected of crimes in Finland. In these accounts, the writers seem to react to the majority demand of affirming loyalty to western values (Kofman, 2005). In extract 19, NR comments on a discussion on violence and sexual harassment that women face in Finland. It is part of a debate on the adaptation capability of Muslim/Arab men to 'western values' that started after the harassment scandal in Germany on New Year's Eve, 2015, whereby a number of women reported attacks by immigrant and/or refugee men. This outrage was followed by a similar outburst in Finland in which women reported having experienced harassment by western men equally.

Extract 19

> I have previously worked with migrant women who have experienced violence. I know how appalling it is to justify violence and oppression with culture. It does not belong to Finland, it should not belong anywhere. It is difficult for me to understand how men like that who are guilty of these crimes could stay in Finland. No one who really seeks asylum comes here with violence or terror in mind. On the other hand, labelling the whole population is wrong. It cannot be accepted. (NR 14)

This passage exemplifies the individualistic repertoire that emphasises treating people as choice-making individuals (cf. Suoninen, 1992), and not generalising the actions of one person to the whole group. NR also evaluates *justifying violence and oppression with culture* as *appalling*, underlining that it is the individual who chooses the actions. Equally, making the whole group pay for one person's deeds is constructed as unacceptable. This is also the idea in extract 20, where the individualistic repertoire is used to resist calls for collectivistic action. The extract is from a blog that reacts to the Finns Party's immigration paper in which they demanded differential treatment for admission to Finland based on nationality:

Extract 20

> As a new Finn [Finn. *uussuomalainen*], Muslim, Somali, Center Party member and African man living in Finland I am forced, against my own will, to renounce the bad deeds of new Finns in Finland, of criminals of those of Muslim background in the world, of the crimes in Somalia of those living in Somalia and in Finland, of the wrong decisions Center Party members do in Center Party Land [*kepulandia*] and of what may.
>
> I do not do these rejections of my own will, because I am not, as a person, in a position to be obliged to do that. I have been forced to make these renunciations because the community has demanded/asked, so that the unity of the community would continue, and so that other groups would not need to have any reason to suspect my own group of reference in question.
>
> Just as I have rejected terrorism and all other things that certain people with similar qualities to mine do, I now demand you, Soini [leader of the Finn party, current Foreign Minister], to reject racism. (AH 2)

This example starts with AH demonstrating the several group memberships he has – this way he constructs his social identity as consisting of more than just an ethnic minority identity (Verkuyten, 2005, pp. 92–121). AH uses the individualistic repertoire to highlight that while he is a member of different ethnic, national and political groups, he does not accept collective responsibility for the actions of these groups. Renouncing their crimes and mistakes is done just out of pure necessity, against his *own will* as an individual. Balancing between the collective and the individualistic repertoire emerges as a challenging task in this passage, as is exemplified in the seemingly illogical sentence *I do not do these rejections of my own will, because I am not, as a person, in a position to be obliged to do that* – on the one hand, AH claims he does not denounce the actions freely, implying that he is expected to do so as a member of the group. He then confirms this explicitly (*I have been demanded/asked*). On the other hand, AH claims that he is not in a position to be obliged to reject other group members' actions. He offers an explanation for heeding to the demands of his group: so that the unity of the group continues, and no one should suspect the group. In this passage, AH offers this type of sacrifice of individual-level freedom as a necessary evil, and urges Timo Soini, leader of the Finns Party, to do the same.

Although descriptions of personal religious identity were lacking throughout the data, there was one example where AH speaks of his journey to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage:

Extract 21

> I left a month ago for a trip [Finn. *reissu*] to that Middle-Eastern country situated on the Persian Gulf that awakens the most contradictions in people: Saudi-Arabia. The reason for my journey was that I wanted to accompany my mother while she performed her religious duty of pilgrimage. I was also supposed to do this before, but I had not been mentally prepared for it.
>
> Every Muslim must observe the basic principles of Islam called the five pillars. These are the declaration of faith, daily prayers, alms given to the poor, fasting at Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca to be carried out once in a lifetime.
>
> This was the reason for this journey. As a country, Saudi-Arabia was interesting and there would be so much to tell about it.
>
> We arrived at the fasting month of Ramadan. Our journey started in Medina where we spent three and a half days. I remind you again that I went to seek peace and to experience what the initiator of the Islamic belief Muhammed (peace upon his soul) had experienced when he used to live here. I wanted to understand the Arab mentality and how it has developed and changed. I wanted to find out which stories told about these people and their customs were true. As a Muslim myself, I was also interested in the local culturally bound practices and how they differed from the Islamic faith itself.
>
> [--] For my part I got the chance during this trip to fuel up on vitamin D, enjoy the sun and cleanse my body and soul. (AH 26)

The account again exemplifies the balance between the individualistic and collectivistic repertoires. On the one hand, AH constructs an image of the event as an obligation tied to his religious group or family (*to accompany my mother while she performed her religious duty/ I was also supposed to do this before/every Muslim must observe the five pillars… this was the reason for the journey/as a Muslim myself*). These are examples of the collectivistic repertoire that places the group and its priorities ahead of the individual. On the other hand, AH describes the journey as people would describe a holiday (*I left for a trip/ as a country, Saudi-Arabia was interesting/ fuel up on vitamin D, enjoy the sun*) or a personal journey of enlightenment and discovery (*I went to seek peace and to experience what Muhammed had experienced/ I wanted to understand/ I wanted to find out/ I was also interested in the local culturally*

bound practices/ cleanse my body and soul). This reflects individualistic rhetoric of self-discovery and self-development. Moreover, AH justifies his choice not to perform the pilgrimage earlier by not being *mentally ready*, implying that religious experience is an individual one rather than one dictated by a group. This is underlined with his phrase *I want to remind you again that I went to seek peace*, as if held accountable as a Muslim (Brubaker, 2012) and defending himself against accusations of passively following religious rules. Another example of the individualistic repertoire would be contrasting the *culturally bound practices* of Islam to *Islamic faith itself* – implying that religion is a reified entity that each person can relate to independently from collectivist traditions (this resembles the *true Islam* position found by Pauha, 2015).

Based on these examples, the individualistic repertoire constructs an identity of the choice-making individual, in which each person is responsible for his or her own failure or success, thoughts and beliefs, but also each individual has the right to pursue his or her personal dreams and ambitions.

5.3 Flexible identities: their functions and consequences

The final objective of the analysis is to contemplate on the situational functions of the interpretative repertoires and subject positions, as well as the ideological consequences of their use. This section will sum up and compare the identity positions and discuss what social functions they activate and make possible, and how their use can be interpreted from an ideological perspective. The analysis of the blog data revealed five interpretative repertoires that are used to construct and account for minority-majority relations: the hierarchy repertoire, the humanistic repertoire, the antagonistic repertoire, the collectivistic repertoire and the individualistic repertoire.

The hierarchy repertoire is the most common repertoire used in the data for constructing minority-majority relations. The positions that arise are those of the second-class citizen for the immigrants, and success stories for the politicians themselves. In line with previous findings in Finland, the relationship between

minorities and the dominant majority emerges as hierarchical. For instance, previous studies have suggested the repertoires of *polite guest* and *securer of majority culture* (Nortio et al., 2016) as typical for immigrants. Equally, the positions that Varjonen (2013) identified in her analysis of interviews of immigrants – *discriminated*, *outsider* and *grateful* – denote a submissive position in relation to the majority group. It seems that the notions of 'host' and 'guest' are difficult to detach from. Previous research on immigrants (e.g. Varjonen, 2013; Verkuyten, 1997) has also shown that the identity of the immigrant appears in negation to the majority. This was visible in the data for this thesis, i.e. the politicians describe themselves and other immigrants more often as non-Finns than as members of their ethnic groups. Moreover, the hierarchy repertoire constructs ethnic identity and national identity as separate entities where the first is subordinate to the latter, and are not easily reconcilable (Sindic & Reicher, 2009).

Nevertheless, and conversely to the studies mentioned above, the hierarchy repertoire in this data does not construct polite or protective positions for the immigrant. While integration is predominantly described as the minority member adapting to or working towards a level that is accepted by the majority, at the same time, the hierarchy repertoire criticises the dominant group and makes it possible to place responsibility for successful integration on them. This is based on the culturally accepted premise that only those who can choose are responsible for their actions (Suoninen, 1992, p. 120). If immigrants are portrayed as bound by the restrictions of the majority, the fault for not integrating is in those who choose to exclude. Using this repertoire allows for the writers to negotiate the terms and conditions of 'acceptable integration' by pointing out the failures of the majority to contribute to the process. Moreover, by positioning themselves as exemplary immigrants who have despite the challenges succeeded in the difficult integration process, they can distance themselves from the 'discriminated immigrant population', and claim the equal rights and responsibilities of the Finns.

The frequency of the hierarchy repertoire is not a surprising discovery, taking into consideration that the blogs are tied to the writers' ambitions of political

advancement, and accession to higher positions of power: political debates typically build on constructions of competition and leadership (see e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Rooyacker & Verkuyten, 2012). The hierarchy repertoire is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it reproduces the status quo and conflates the Finnish national identity with the ethnicity and culture of the majority, reinforcing the power imbalance in society. On the other hand, the hierarchy repertoire allows to identify oneself as a winner and success that a more equal description of minority-majority relations would not do. Highlighting one's own success inevitably requires the description of groups as hierarchical.

The second, humanistic repertoire constructs a superordinate level of human beings that on the one hand positions immigrants and majority members as ordinary people and on the other hand as moral human beings. The first position highlights the sameness of people and the ability for them to intuitively understand each other. This serves to replace the common Finnish identity with a common human one: to diminish the perceived differences between minorities and the majority and create a shared ingroup that goes beyond the opposition of native Finns and immigrants. The second position of moral human being opens a window to justify the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in Finnish society by making the right to safety and a good life a human right, and obliging those who are better-off majority to accommodate to those in needs. Kirkwood, McKinlay and McVittie, C. (2013) suggest that constructing one country in terms of its stability and security and contrasting it with the dangers of the countries of origin implies that the people coming there are in need of protection. In this regard, constructing the receiving society as safe and problem-free and the countries of origin as dangerous works to establish the identity of refugees and asylum-seekers as legitimate (ibid.). The humanistic repertoire works to resist the notion that access to Finland or other western countries is conditional on the usefulness or adaptation of the newcomer, as is the case in the hierarchy repertoire. Employing the humanistic repertoire, the politicians also align themselves with the ordinary people, and construct an identity of moral uprightness – consequently positioning themselves as ideal representatives of the people who uphold important values (e.g. Rooyackers & Verkuyten, 2012).

On a larger scale, the humanistic repertoire undermines countries' discriminatory policies by challenging the notion of a world divided into nation-states, and of rights and responsibilities assigned on national and ethnic basis. Typically, the humanistic repertoire uses spatial metaphors (Bowskill, Lyons & Coyle, 2007) and locates the writers and their public in European or universal values – the depiction of universal human rights thus extends beyond and is independent of the nation-state (Kofman, 2005). Bowskill et al. (2007) have suggested that in minority-majority relations, the majority's emphasis on conflict-resolution may provide legitimacy for exclusion and segregation of certain groups in the name of harmonious intergroup contact. In a similar vein, building intergroup relations as a moral question, may work to exclude those who are perceived as wrong-doers – for instance, while the hierarchy repertoire allows to shift blame for maladapted immigrants partially on the majority, the humanistic repertoire activates the requirement to denounce those minority members who act against common values.

The third repertoire in the data is the collectivistic repertoire, which builds on the notion of togetherness, and constructs immigrants and the majority as a diverse community, and the politicians themselves as contributors and mediators in the community. By redefining the national identity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) as an inclusive one, and demonstrating that they share common values and interests, the writers create the possibility for an immigrant to be a prototypical community member, and to highlight their group-orientedness – this is necessary to convince the public of their suitability as minority leaders (ibid.; Rooyackers & Verkuyten, 2012). The repertoire also positions the writers as solution-oriented and responsible problem-solvers who summon and convene the public toward collective efforts, which increases their legitimacy as politicians (Rooyackers & Verkuyten, 2012). While the national identity is claimed through collaborative action, ethnicity is constructed as something valuable and important for the immigrant and as a community of shared experiences. This makes it possible to consolidate between the ascribed ethnic identity (Liebkind, 2006; Varjonen et al., 2013), or ethnicity as *being* and *knowing* (Verkuyten, 2005), with the national identity as *doing* Finnishness (ibid.).

The use of this repertoire makes it possible to reject the demand of assimilation as the basis for acquiring social and political rights (Bowskill et al., 2007), in favour of an integration that permits preservation of heritage along with participation in wider society. At the same time, however, it emphasises benefitting the community as the step to inclusion in the common ingroup. Individualist inclinations or wishes are not easily justified within this repertoire that positions immigrants (and majority members) in terms of group belonging.

The antagonistic repertoire depicts a disruptive force that troubles majority and minority relations. It thus makes it possible to construct immigrants and the public as victims of rotten politics, and attribute antagonistic intergroup relations to 'the other'. It works to abnormalise (Verkuyten, 2001) the behaviour of the other group as obviously harmful and wrong (in this regard, it is complementary to the humanistic repertoire that normalises humane and ethical behaviour as unarguable). By constructing political opponents and extreme violent groups as conceited and untrustworthy dissidents, the writers create antipathy between the public and the far-right and extremists, distinguishing themselves positively from these groups, and maximising the fit between them and the public (Rooyackers & Verkuyten, 2012). This repertoire also allows for the writers to bring up the hostile and violent discrimination that immigrants face without pointing at the public and estranging them. Simultaneously, by positioning themselves as honest and 'normal', the writers promote their adequacy as politicians. Outside the immediate situation, however, the antagonistic repertoire has the effect of perpetuating the divisive opposition it actually criticises and thus, by focusing on the difference between 'us' and 'them', maintains an image of hostile intergroup relations. Moreover, an exaggerated emphasis on the antagonistic repertoire could risk putting the writers in the negative light of ungrateful faultfinders.

The individualistic repertoire was the least used. It casts people as individuals who have their free will and choice. There may be a couple of explanations for the scarce use of the individualistic repertoire. It has been suggested that individualist ideology may be problematic in creating harmonious relations between majority and

minorities: as it sees people first and foremost as individuals, it easily leads to disregarding of group-based discrimination and of the importance of minority cultures (see e.g. Nortio et al., 2016). In addition to that, the individualist repertoire may be a poor fit with the collective mobilisation efforts that these blogs serve. The individualistic repertoire was most often employed when dealing with the topic of Islam. It constructs an image of Muslims who always stand accused and who need to establish themselves as not 'one of them' in order to be accepted in society (similar reactions to accusations are not limited to ethnicity, as demonstrated in the analysis of repertoires that single women use to account for their lives, see Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). Using the individualistic repertoire served the purpose of distancing the writers from negative images of Islam in two ways: by constructing criminal and violent Muslims as deviants who made their own, misguided choices independently from their reference group; and by constructing a personal Muslim identity of a self-reflecting, intellectually-motivated believer and carefully balancing between the collectivistic and individualistic repertoires. By condemning the dissident Muslims and proposing a religious identity that is compatible with western values, the writers (and AH in specific) can be seen as affirming their loyalty to the civic principles of the nation state (Kofman, 2005).

6 Discussion

6.1 On the diversity of interpretative repertoires and subject positions

This thesis has looked at the construction of minority-majority relations and identities within blogs of Finnish politicians of immigrant origin. More specifically, the analysis looked at what identity positions were constructed for the writers themselves, other immigrants, majority members and other politicians in descriptions of intergroup relations. As anticipated, the analysis revealed a variety of ways in which minority-majority relations were accounted for, and accordingly various positions for the parties involved. The thesis has also tried to demonstrate the active rhetorical work that is involved in negotiating the positions for immigrants in the current Finnish society, and how the belonging and participation of the

politicians themselves and of other immigrants is justified by using multiple and sometimes contradictory strategies.

Together, the interpretative repertoires and the identities or subject positions they construct form a discursive set to describe minority-majority relations, and propose some important ideological dilemmas that are not easily resolved. As previously noted, the repertoires are somewhat polarised – two involve condemnation of intergroup relations (the hierarchical and antagonistic repertoires), and two involve their idealisation (the humanistic and collectivistic repertoires). The fifth individualistic repertoire emerges in both positive and negative descriptions of minority-majority relations. In the flow of the blog texts, the idealised humanistic and collectivistic repertoires, for example, can be found in response and as a challenge to the antagonistic and the hierarchical repertoires. Alternatively, in more pessimistic accounts, the positive repertoires are undermined by the negative ones. The subject positions offered to immigrants thus vary widely from 'moral human being' worthy of equal treatment and 'community member', to 'second-class citizen' and 'victim'. Radicalised and criminal immigrants are in some accounts positioned as marginalised 'second-class citizens', and in others as free 'choice-making individuals'. Similarly, the majority members are offered the contradictory positions of exclusionary 'dominant group', 'victims' and cooperative 'community members'.

The only consistent identities in terms of positive or negative connotations are the ones constructed for the politicians themselves and their far-right political opponents. By distancing themselves from discriminated immigrants and/or aligning themselves with a more inclusive public, the identities offered for the writers are positive and empowering: 'success stories', 'good citizens', 'contributors' to the community. At the same time the political opponents are positioned in a negative light as unlawful 'dissidents'. By invoking group prototypicality and stressing co-membership, the politicians thus highlight their group-orientedness and suitability for political leadership. This is emphasised in portrayals of courage and honesty that they demonstrate in the face of outside 'dissident' threat (Rooyackers & Verkuyten, 2012).

On the basis of this analysis, the functions of the politicians' blog discourses emerge as two-fold. On the one hand, the blogs constitute a critique of the power imbalance in minority-majority relations, which is not surprising or unjustified considering the discrimination and exclusion that minorities are faced with. The dominant position of the 'ethnically Finnish' is either questioned or directly challenged, and a more inclusive Finnishness or overarching human identity are proposed as the basis for belonging and participation. In this way, and in line with Varjonen's (2013) findings about what immigrants aimed to achieve with their discourse, the politicians are speaking for the benefit of a wider minority community. On the other hand, the social identities that are constructed have a more personal function for the writers: they serve to convince the public of the legitimacy of their claims as politicians for belonging and participation in the decision-making bodies, and advocate for their role as representatives of the public. This happens partially by evoking a common identity with the public, but also by distancing the politicians from 'other immigrants'. In addition, by demonising the opposition and undermining their credibility, the writers are able to abnormalise the opponent's racist and discriminative claims, and question their suitability for representing the public.

Thus, as reported by Rooyackers and Verkuyten (2012), the analysis indicates that politicians of minority background have to manage a tripolar negotiation that involves at least three interdependent group relations – those with their own and other ethnic minority groups, with the public consisting mainly of majority members, and with the political opponents. The minority identity of these politicians comes from their ethnicity and not their political views, which means that the natural political opponents in the debate are the far-right with their anti-immigrant views, and not the mainstream politics as in the case study of a far-right politician by Rooyackers and Verkuyten. It is therefore interesting to find out that the same discursive and rhetorical strategies are used at both ends of the spectrum.

Contrary to previous research conducted in the Finnish context, the identities for immigrants in this data are not always constructed as submissive in relation to the

majority. The data revealed examples of constructions of inclusive national or 'human' identities that immigrants could include themselves in. Moreover, repertoires that could be seen as reflecting intergroup relations 'negatively', such as the hierarchy and antagonistic repertoires, can in fact be strategically used to advance personal and collective goals, such as assigning the majority greater responsibility, addressing issues of racism, and highlighting one's own success and good citizenship. At times, however, the goal to renegotiate group status and improve the social position of minorities seems to happen at the expense of the ethnic and religious identities. Descriptions of ethnicity or religion are de-emphasised in the data, and often appeared negatively as 'non-Finn' identities.

The mix of both positive and negative constructions of minority and majority relations leads to "delicate footwork" (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003, p. 501) over the ways in which the writers position themselves back and forth in their blog texts. Taking a closer look at this management of diverse repertoires and positions (Suoninen, 1992, p. 116–117) and the rhetorical strategies that are used to switch from one position to another would be an interesting avenue for further research on this data set.

6.2. On the methodology

Studying minority discourses offers a window to two points of interest: firstly, to what is locally achieved with certain discourses, and secondly, what they reveal of the larger social and ideological context (Varjonen, 2013). Discourse analysis on pre-existing text can reveal how minority members portray themselves and how they describe their relationship to different groups. In contrast, discourse generated through interviews and focus group discussions may have the disadvantage of framing the discourse beforehand. If the research setting categorises the participants automatically as 'immigrants', and if the research questions prompt to discuss multiculturalism, it is possible that a minority identity becomes salient even if it normally is not the first and foremost identity for the participant. By choosing data that is created outside the research situation hopefully provides a more natural source of information.

It is also necessary to reflect on the limitations of this thesis. Presenting the five common repertoires in these blogs is not suggesting that these are the only ways that politicians of immigrant origins could make sense of minority-majority relations. The results of a qualitative study cannot be generalised to claim that these are *the* ways of talking about intergroup relations. Instead, this thesis has shown that these are five *possible* ways of approaching the issue. The analytic process itself was intuitive and continuously re-evaluative. The definition of the possible interpretative repertoires was based on the following principles: the aim was to find as many different repertoires instead of focusing on one or two, and their definition was based on content and not form (see Suoninen 1992, p. 125–130).

The first point in these principles in fact presented a dilemma: a data corpus this large combined with a wide research subject – minority-majority relations – resulted in identifying several distinct repertoires that were consequently regrouped and combined under larger umbrellas. This caused some difficulties in connecting between certain text parts and the repertoires, as the merging of the more distinct 'sub-repertoires' resulted in some questions on repertoire boundaries. However, as previously mentioned, defining repertoires is a process of choice and interpretation that does not always fit with the aim of having rigid categorisations. The latter point in the analysis principles also ties into this dilemma: definition of repertoires based on content and not form meant that two identical text parts could be classified into two different repertoires according to how the content linked to the repertoires. For example, there were many parts of the data where discerning between the humanistic and collectivistic repertoires posed a challenge (this was pointed out in relation to extract 16). How the text part linked to the content of the repertoire was more decisive than whether it shared some formal characteristics (metaphors, typical expressions etc.).

In addition to the challenge of defining the interpretative repertoires, the analysis also presented a challenge in terms of deducing the functions and the consequences of the repertoires. While the distinction of the repertoires and the subject positions

should be strictly based on the data, the analysis of situational functions and ideological consequences has been done on a more speculative manner, again following Suoninen's (1992, p. 127–128) methodology. At the same time, it is acknowledged that these are not the only interpretations and certainly not final conclusions regarding the data. The next step would be to conduct a more detailed analysis on a smaller data set, for instance a few key blogs, and analyse the relationship between different repertoires. As mentioned in the previous section, this could reveal interesting information on the functions of the repertoires as well as the rhetorical strategies used to attain those discursive goals and coordinate between contradictory repertoires.

6.3 Conclusions

In a climate of polarised media discussions and heated political debates on immigration and immigrants, it is more important than ever to draw attention to the different ways that minorities position themselves in these discussions. The minority voice should be given more space in the public discussion on the place of immigrants in the Finnish society, to give a rounder impression of the multiple identities that exist in today's world, and to allow for the contestation of taken-for-granted minority categories. This master's thesis is an attempt to take research into that direction: to show those who are spoken about as capable of speaking for themselves, and to shed some more light on how ethnic minority members construct not only their identities but also the identities of others around them, as well as the relationships of different groups in Finnish society.

In every society, there will always be minorities and minorities within minorities. The true way to harmonious and equal intergroup relations is not the through the levelling of differences, but through the negotiation of a common identity to include all of those who it affects and who identify with that identity. It is essential to keep the discussion alive on the meaning of Finnishness, for example, and to promulgate the defining belonging and participation in society on the basis of certain requirements or characteristics without threatening the identity or belonging of any groups involved – in Kelman's (1997b, p. 336) words, discursive work around

identities is important as it prevents them from becoming "non-negotiable" items. Discursive research can open windows to understanding these negotiations – through the exploration of meanings, discursive psychologists also dig into what is constructed with these meanings, and offer possible entry points to changing the common understanding of human phenomena (Taylor, 2001). It is important to make people aware of these negotiations and processes in order to provide space for alternative discourses. As demonstrated in this thesis, the negotiation of identities is not merely a symbolic act but has social, economic and political implications in terms of rights and responsibilities (Edley, 2001).

Social media and blogs can be viewed as a site through which immigrants and other minorities can have a voice and make claims. They can be used to advocate for discourses of belonging and participation, but can also be seen in themselves as an indication of democratic participation through the political and social debate that they entail (Bleich et al., 2015). Some researchers have questioned whether the blogging of politicians of immigrant background actually reaches the mainstream audience, or if it remains in silos (Schradie, 2012). Whichever the case, the discursive activity of minority politicians will always add to the mainstream discourse, and give other individuals examples and practice of how to engage in societal negotiations (e.g. Edley, 2001). Nevertheless, in addition to blog texts, further research should focus on the varied ways minority members enter in identity negotiations with their own and other minority groups and the majority group, such as on discourses that take place on various political levels, in ethnic and community associations, or in official situations such as schools, workplace and other institutional settings where different groups meet. Enhancing our mutual understanding of how minority members themselves contribute to the collectively constructed reality gives us potential to step out from a rigid view of the subordinate position of minorities, and opens up possibilities for a more diverse and equal identity-claiming.

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Abdirahim Hussein

1) **Pelosta, epäilystä ja vastakkainasettelusta on luovuttava** (11.1.2015)

Jokainen tragedia muistuttaa meitä siitä, että elämä on liian lyhyt ja että meidän tulee tehdä siitä mahdollisimman hyvä. Maailma suree Pariisin iskun uhreja. Viime vuosina maailma on muuttunut koko ajan brutaalimmaksi ja pelottavammaksi paikaksi ja pelkäänpä Charlie Hebdon toimiston tragedian olevan alku vuoden 2015 väkivallan kierteelle. Väkivalta kun yleensä synnyttää vain lisää väkivaltaa.

Pariisin tapahtuma tarkoitti eri asioita eri ihmisille Euroopassa ja maailmassa. Annan jokaisen kertoa itse, mitä se kullekin tarkoitti, mutta minun nähdäkseni murhilla pyrittiin aiheuttamaan kolme asiaa Euroopassa. Ihan ensimmäiseksi tarkoituksena on ollut luoda pelkoa ihmisten keskuudessa. Toiseksi sillä yritettiin kylvää epäilystä keskuuteemme ja kolmanneksi pyrkimyksenä oli saada Euroopassa asuvat ihmiset asettumaan toisiaan vastaan.

Euroopassa on todellakin syntynyt pelkoa ja ihmiset alkavat käyttäytyä kuten pelokkaat ihmiset käyttäytyvät. He katsovat ympärilleen enemmän ja alkavat seurata heidän lähellään olevia muslimeja. Tätä tapahtuu aika paljon esimerkiksi sosiaalisessa mediassa. Epäilystä on myös onnistuttu synnyttämään, sillä ihmiset alkavat esimerkiksi pyytämään heille tuttuja muslimeja irtisanoutumaan näistä teoista. Tässä ovat kunnostautuneet erityisesti oikeistolaiset, jotka haluavat hyödyntää pelkoa poliittisesti. Vastakkainasettelua taas ylläpitävät monet tahot, mm. oikeistolaiset, jotka haluavat saada lisää valtaa.

Laitaoikeistolaiset ovat taas nostaneet esiin perusmantransa, kuinka esim. islam ei ole sovitettavissa demokratian kanssa ja kuinka muslimit eivät tule hyväksymään eurooppalaisia aatteita. Itselleni täällä asuvana ja viihtyvänä muslimina nuo mielipiteet näyttäytyvät vain absurdeina. Hyväksyn eurooppalaisen lainsäädännön ja toimin sen mukaan. Näin tekee myös 99 % Euroopassa asuvista muslimeista. Fraaseja kuitenkin toistellaan tarkoitushakuisesti koska tavallinen ihminen ei jaksa seurata kaikkea mediaa ja tehdä itse tutkimuksia vaan tästä syystä helposti valitsevat lähimmän ja stereotyyppisen mielipiteen. Tähän pelkoon, epäilyyn ja vastakkaisenasetteluun ei kuitenkaan kannatta jäädä asumaan. Maailma ei nimittäin sillä paremmaksi muutu, eikä Suomen talous kasva. Pitää etsiä ratkaisuja, eikä surra uhkakuvia.

Ihan ensimmäiseksi ehdotan, että Suomen muslimeja pitää kohdella nimenomaan Suomen muslimeina. He eivät edusta koko maailman muslimeja eikä heitä voi/saa vaatia irtisanoutumaan jokaisesta muualla tapahtuneesta tragediasta. Toiseksi, muslimeita pitää kohdella kuin muitakin suomalaisia. Meillä ei voi olla esimerkiksi niin, että suomalaiselta muslimilta, joka on tehnyt rikoksen, halutaan rankaisemisen lisäksi viedä vielä kansalaisuuskin. Meidän tulee kohdella Suomen muslimeita meikäläisinä, eikä jonain koeajalla olevina kansalaisina. Kolmanneksi nuoria, jotka jollain lailla haluavat purkaa pahoinvointiaan, ei voi hyssytellä ja vain toivoa etteivät he jossain vaiheessa räjähdä. Näin eräässä ohjelmassa, kuinka nuoret, jotka olivat eri mieltä tavallisen aikuisen kanssa Pariisin tapahtumista, oltiin valmiit ristiinnaulitsemaan sen sijaan, että heitä olisi yritetty ymmärtää ja saada käännytettyä pois tuosta ajattelusta. Jos me emme kuuntele nuoriamme, he voivat tavata netissä jonkun, joka kuuntelee ja jonka intresseissä on yllyttää väkivaltaan. Eikä tämä ole pelkkä muslimien ongelma. Siitä on jo parin kouluampumisen verran esimerkkejä.
Meidän tulee katsoa maailman ongelmia ja yrittää vastata niihin maailman ongelmina, eikä valita niistä itsellemme mieluisimpia. Meidän tulee rakentaa sellaista yhteiskuntaa, jota on helppo kutsua omaksi ja josta olla ylpeä. Suomessa asuvien muslimien sydämet tulee saada rakastamaan heidän kotimaataan Suomea.

Tämä kaikki on mahdollista, sillä meillä ei ole muutakaan mahdollisuutta. Me emme voi tehdä kaksia erilaisia lakeja yhdessä maassa. Me emme voi kohdella ihmisiä eri tavalla tai tarjota heille eri palveluja. Mitä meillä on hävittävää jos minun jälkeläiseni rakastuvat heidän syntymämaahansa? Mitä meillä on hävittävää jos he ovat ylpeitä kotimaastaan ja haluavat sitä puolustaa? Mitä menetettävää meillä olisi, jos tulevaisuuden nuoret ovat erilaisia, he seuraavat eri uskontoja, mutta kaikilla heillä on yhteinen Suomi? Mitä menetettävää meillä on mikäli lähdemme rakentamaan sellaista maata, josta nämä tulevaisuuden tekijät nauttisivat? Jokainen meistä aikuisista puhuu, kuinka haluaisi jättää lapsilleen paremman huomisen. Mitä jos tuo huominen olisi parempi kaikille? Tämä kaikki on mahdollista, mikäli tulemme pois pelon, epäilyn ja vastakkainasettelun asenteestamme. Huomisen päivä, jota lapsillemme toivomme ei voi perustua varallisuuteen, vaan turvallisuuteen, suvaitsevaisuuteen ja ihmisläheisyyteen.

Mikään ei ole mahdotonta. Paitsi tietysti verojen ja kuoleman välttely.

2) **Timo Soini - Rasisti?** (13.2.2015)

Suomessa asuvana uussuomalaisena, muslimina, somalina, kepulaisena ja afrikkalaismiehenä joudun väkisinkin vastoin omaa tahtoani irtisanoutumaan uussuomalaisten tekemistä pahuuksista Suomessa, muslimitaustaisten rikollisien teoista maailmalla, somaliassa asuvien

rikoksista Somaliassa ja Suomessa, kepulaisten tekemistä vääristä päätöksistä kepulandiassa ja mistä milloinkin.

En tee näitä irtisanoutumisia omasta tahdostani, sillä en ole henkilönä sellaisessa asemassa että olisin sellaiseen velvoitettu. Olen joutunut tekemään irtisanoutumisia, koska yhteisö on sitä vaatinut/pyytänyt, jotta yhteisön yhtenäisyys säilyisi, ja jotta toisilla ryhmillä ei tarvitsisi olla mitään syytä epäillä kulloinkin kyseessä olevaa omaa viiteryhmääni.

Viimeisen viikon aikana olen seurannut jälleen kerran kuinka vuoden 2011 vaalipropagandaa yritetään tuoda takaisin Suomen poliittiselle kentälle. Europarlamentaarikko Jussi Halla-aho on sitä mieltä, että maahanmuutosta pitää tehdä agenda jolla eduskuntavaaleja käydään. Soini Perussuomalaisten puoluejohtajana on ulkoistanut puolueen maahanmuuttopoliittisen ohjelman Halla-ahon tehtäväksi. Minusta tämä kertoo, että Soini hyväksyy Halla-ahon maahanmuuttopoliittisen asiakirjan.

Asiakirjassa kerrotaan, että Perussuomalaiset haluavat eri lakeja ja erilaista viranomaiskohtelua ihmisille riippuen heidän etnisestä taustastaan. Puolue haluaa, että ihmisten elinmahdollisuudet ja perusoikeudet riippuisivat siitä, keitä heidän vanhempansa ovat. He haluavat, että laki ei ole sama kaikille. Se tarkoittaisi myös perustuslain rikkomista tai ainakin sen määrittämistä uudelleen.

Luin tämän persujen mamu-asiakirjan kun se julkaistiin, mutta ajattelin jättää sen huomiotta, koska se vaikutti niin pöljältä. Perussuomalaiset haluavat suurta julkista paheksuntaa, jotta voivat esiintyä sananvapauden marttyyreina. Rasisminvastainen liikehdintä on ollut aktiivista ja se on antanut Halla-aholle juuri sitä mitä hän oli hakemassa. Viimeaikaisissa julkituloissa ei kuitenkaan ole uskallettu sanoa sitä, mitä todennäköisesti jokainen uussuomalainen olisi toivonut tästä ohjelmasta sanottavan. Ja koska vaalitkin ovat tässä lähellä, ei tiedetä kuka vain kerää huomiota ja kuka on aidosti huolissaan asiasta.

Sana RASISMI tarkoittaa aatetta tai toimintaa, jossa ihmisten eriarvoista kohtelua perustellaan rodulla, etnisellä taustalla tai biologisilla eroavaisuuksilla tai näihin liittyvien fyysisten tai henkisten ominaisuuksien erilaisuudella. Perussuomalaisten maahanmuuttopoliittinen asiakirja täyttää rasismin kriteerit, ja tästä syystä asiakirja on rasistinen. Sen kirjoittaja on rasisti ja jokainen joka sen hyväksyy, hyväksyy rasismin. Näillä perusteilla on Timo Soinikin, hyväksyessään ohjelman, on rasisti.

Minusta Suomen Keskustan ei tule mennä samaan hallitukseen Perussuomalaisten kanssa tai olla muutoinkaan tekemisissä heidän kanssaan, mikäli vaalit voitetaan. Puolue, joka hyväksyy Suomen perustuslain vastaisen toiminnan ei saa päästä johtamaan Suomea, ja tästä syystä Timo Soinin tulee irtisanoutua tästä linjasta ja kaikesta muusta rasismista.

Suomi on tuhlannut neljä vuotta paikallaan polkien. Työttömyys ja huono-osaisuus on lisääntynyt. Yrityksiä menee konkurssiin koko ajan. Tarvitsemme päättäjiksi rakentavia ihmisiä; emme sellaisia, jotka haluavat jakaa ihmiset eri tason kansalaisiksi.

Suomi on antanut Perussuomalaisille mahdollisuuden muuttaa maan linjoja ja politiikkaa äänestämällä heille 39 kansanedustajaa, mutta puolue ei ole ottanut vastuuta vastaan. Meillä ei yksinkertaisesti ole varaa tällaisen jatkumiseen. Meidän tulee valita sellaisia tekijöitä jotka voivat nostaa maan jälleen jaloilleen ja sellaisia jotka kohtelevat toisia kunnioittavasti.
Samalla tavalla kuin minä olen irtisanoutunut terrorismista ja kaikesta muusta mitä tietyt ihmiset, joilla on joitain samoja ominaisuuden kuin minulla. tekevät, niin vaadin nyt Soinia irtisanoutumaan rasismista. Ja miksi ei samalla koko Halla-ahosta, sillä siitä tyypistä tulee olemaan sinulle, Timo, enemmän haittaa kuin kaikista Suomen maahanmuuttajista yhteensä.
Irtisanoutumistasi odottelen.

PS. Kirjoitukseni kohdistuu persujen maahanmuuttoasiakirjan..
Persu maahanmuttoasiakirja:
http://www.perussuomalaiset.fi/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ps-maahanmuutt…

6) **Miksi äänestäisit minua?** (14.4.2015)

Moni on kysynyt minulta tämän kampanjan aikana, että kenen asiaa tulen ajamaan eduskunnassa. Sanon tämän nyt teille. Kun minut valitaan eduskuntaan, tulen tekemään päätöksiä koko Suomen hyväksi. Kansanedustajana olen käytettävissä tämän yhteiskunnan asioiden ajamisessa, meidän kaikkien hyväksi.

Tulevalla eduskuntakaudella tarvitaan tekijöitä, jotka laittavat Suomen talouden kuntoon ja rakentavat ihmisten luottamusta tulevaisuuteen. Meidän täytyy puntaroida vaihtoehtoja ja kokeilla rohkeasti uusia ratkaisuja. Siksi tarvitsemme kansanedustajia, jotka osaavat ajatella uudella tavalla, nähdä asiat asiana ja tuntevat paloa tämän maan ihmisten arjen parantamiseen.

Tiedän, miltä yrittäjästä tuntuu pitkän työpäivän jälkeen vielä istua papereiden eteen ja yrittää selvitä byrokratiasta, tai kantaa huolta siitä riittävätkö rahat verojen ja laskujen maksamiseen,

sillä olen ollut yrittäjä. Kansanedustajana, tulen tekemään ja tukemaan aloitteita jotka edistävät byrokratian keventämistä. Yrittäjien pitää saada hoidettua asiat viranomaisten kanssa helpommin, esimerkiksi yhdellä verkkosivulla. Verotuskäytäntöjen tulee olla sellaiset, että niistä voi pienikin yritys selviytyä. Lisäksi yrittäjillä ja yrittäjien puolisoilla täytyy olla oikeus sosiaaliturvaan. Perustulo voisi olla ratkaisu tähän.

Tiedän, että lapsiperheen vanhempi saattaa joskus väsyä. Niissä tilanteissa perheet tarvitsevat apua. Ei riitä, että kotiapu on laissa mainittu, sen täytyy toteutua myös käytännössä. Nämä palvelut maksavat itsensä takaisin. Liian moni suomalainen nuori tuntee ulkopuolisuutta ja syrjäytyy, koska hänen perheessään on ongelmia.

Olen nähnyt, että Suomessa on paljon vanhuksia, jotka kärsivät yksinäisyydestä. Meidän pitää varmistaa, että perheet voivat hoitaa isovanhempiaan kotona. Tässä eduskunta voi auttaa kehittämällä omaishoidon tukimuotoja. Tarvitaan myös asennemuutosta, vanhukset ovat osa perheitämme. On järkyttävää, jos ihminen jätetään yksin viimeisinä elinvuosinaan.

Näiden arjen asioiden parantaminen on haaste, jonka olen valmis ottamaan vastaan, sillä olen nähnyt, kuinka politiikassa muutetaan asioita. Politiikassa muutos saadaan aikaan yhteisyöllä, ja sen tekemiseen minulla on olemassa vahvat verkostot sekä keskustassa että muissa puolueissa.

Keskustelut, joita olen kampanjani aikana käynyt kaupungilla, olohuoneissa ja eri tilaisuuksissa, ovat vahvistaneet uskoani suomalaisiin. Olen myös entistä vakuuttuneempi, että aika on kypsä saada moninaisempi edustus eduskuntaan. Olen saanut tukea monelta ihmiseltä: tutuilta, ystäviltä sekä puolitutuilta. Kampanja on ollut silmiä avaava ja mielettömän hyvähenkinen. Jokainen tuen osoitus ja ääni jonka saan on osoitus luottamuksesta toimintaani kohtaan, ja siitä olen kiitollinen.

Rohkea Suomi tarvitsee rohkeita päättäjiä, jotka äänestäjien valtakirjalla kantavat vastuun. Haluan olla päättäjä, joka suhtautuu vakavasti minulle annettuun luottamukseen. Olen sitoutunut rakentamaan yhteiskuntaa joka tukee perheitä, kannustaa työntekoon ja on kansainvälinen. Haluan, että jokainen suomalainen, riippumatta taustastaan, tuntee kuuluvansa joukkoon.

Ystävät, kiitos kaikille teille tähänastisesta, eiköhän oteta vaalivoitto!

11) **Suomi, maailman islamilaisin valtio** (14.8.2015)

Synnyin ja kasvoin muslimimaassa ja -perheessä. Minulle opetettiin, että islam on oikea uskonto ja siihen ajatukseen myös kasvoin kuten miljoonat muutkin. Olin utelias nuori poika ja muistan, kuinka halusin tietää, miksi pitäisi olla muslimi ja mitä kaikkea islam sisältää. Luin Koraania nuorena poikana kuten muutkin ikäiseni. Rukoilin ja noudatin sääntöjä, joita omat vanhempani opettivat. Minä myös haastoin vanhempiani ja kysyin, jos jokin asia epäilytti tai hämmästytti. Vastaukset pistivät yleensä hiljaiseksi. Kiitos siitä kuuluu vanhemmilleni, opettajilleni ja niille muille aikuisille jotka minua opastivat.

Yksi tärkeimmistä nuorena oppimistani asioista, oli muslimin ja islamin ero. Muslimi on henkilö joka on omistautunut Luojalle ja haluaa noudattaa hänen lakiaan. Islam taas on uskonto, johon sisältyy muslimina elämisen oppi. Tämä oli hyvä erottaa, koska usein islam uskontona tuomitaan yksittäisen muslimin teoista. Tämä ero helpotti oloani, sillä minulle opetettiin, että ihminen on erehtyväinen ja tulee aina myös olemaan. Näin ollen en saa tuomita ihmisen teosta koko uskontoa.

Tulin Suomeen 15-vuotiaana ja heti huomasin, miten paljon ihmisten täällä luottavat toisiinsa. Havaitsin, että järjestelmä Suomessa huolehtii kaikista ja että jokaisella on ihmisoikeudet. Kaikki ovat tasa-arvoisia lain edessä. Kaikilla on mahdollisuus unelmoida, tehdä unelmien eteen töitä ja moni onnistuu tavoittamaan ne. Ei ihme, että Suomi pärjää useissa kansainvälisissä vertailuissa.

Olen koko aikuiselämäni ajan seurannut muslimimaiden tilannetta ja minun täytyy todeta, että yksikään muslimimaa ei kohtele kansalaisiaan yhtä hyvin kuin Suomi ja suomalainen yhteisö. Suomi ottaa kaikista maailman kolkista ihmisiä, joilla ei ole edes ihmisoikeuksia ja antaa näille turvallisuuden lisäksi mahdollisuuden tulla joksikin. Suomi jopa antaa mahdollisuuden osallistua päätöksentekoon ja antaa kullekin tulijalle tilaisuuden harjoittaa omaa kulttuuria, kieltä ja uskontoa.

Islam on oikeudenmukainen, tasa-arvoinen ja demokraattinen uskonto - aivan kuin tämän päivän Suomi. Islam kunnioittaa toisten uskontoa ja jopa kehottaa elämään rauhassa muiden uskontojen kanssa. Näin tekee myös suomalainen lainsäädäntö ja suomalainen yhteiskuntakin tämän hyväksyy. Islam kunnioittaa ihmishenkeä ja tuomitsee jyrkästi hengenriiston yrityksenkin. Suomi toimii tismalleen samalla tavalla. Islam kehottaa huolehtimaan perheistä, naapureista, vanhuksista ja vammaisista. Suomi on yksi niistä (liian harvoista) maista, joka ottaa huomioon erilaiset ihmiset ja heidän haasteensa poliittisessa päätöksenteossa. Islam kehottaa kunnioittamaan eri mieltä olevia, eikä salli sen varjolla käydä käsiksi kehenkään. Suomi toimii

samoin olemalla yksi maailman parhaimmista sananvapautta edistäviä maista. Tätä listaa voisi jatkaa loputtomiin.

Kaikki nuorena Islamista oppimani asiat ja sen asettamat ihannetilat ovat täällä käytännössä itsestään selviä, tai ainakin niitä tavoitellaan. Samaan aikaan maailmassa on muslimimaita, joissa monikaan edellä mainituista asioista ei ole mahdollisia. Se, että jokin muslimivaltainen maa rikkoo ihmisoikeuksia, ei tarkoita, että Islam rikkoo niitä. Se että joku muslimivaltainen maa ympärileikkaa naisia ja polkee heidän oikeuksiaan ei tarkoita, että Islam hyväksyisi sen.

Uskon, että Suomen malli on paras ja läheisin malli sille, miten Islam kehottaa ihmisiä elämään. Näin ollen koen, että Suomi on maailman islamilaisin valtio.

FYI.
George Washingtonin yliopistossa tehdyn tutkimuksen mukaan koraanin opit ja arvot toteutuvat paremmin länsimaissa kuin islamilaisissa maissa. Suomi oli tässä tutkimuksessa viides sijalla. Irlanti ykkösenä.
Tässä jutusta linkki
http://www.iltasanomat.fi/tiede/art-1288700611753.html
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ireland/10888707/Irelan...

14) **Kaula-aukkohysteria on turhaa** (21.9.2015)

Luin eilisestä Savon Sanomista jutun, jossa kerrottiin kansanopistossa, jossa jotkut ovat halunneet helpottaa turvapaikkaa hakevien 16–17- vuotiaiden poikien kotoutumista normaalia peittävämmällä pukeutumisella. Taustalla on ajatus, että islamilaisista maista tulevat uudet opiskelijat eivät hämmentyisi kotimaastaan poikkeavasta pukeutumisesta niin paljon.
Uskon, että opiston väellä on ollut hyvät tarkoitusperät, mutta tämän kaltaiset toimet eivät helpota pakolaisten sopeutumista; päinvastoin. Puheet suomalaisen elämäntavan muuttamisesta sen takia, että tänne tulee ihmisiä eri kulttuureista, aiheuttaa turhaa vastakkainasettelua ja kärjistää juuri nyt kovilla kierroksilla käyvää keskustelua ja väärinymmärrysten kierrettä. Se aiheuttaa ennakkoluuloja ja lisää negativisia [sic] asenteita turvapaikanhakijoita kohtaan. Siksi pitää miettiä mitä kaikkea erilaiset ulostulot saavat aikaiseksi, ennen kuin niitä lauotaan: tie helvettiin on kivetty hyvillä aikomuksilla, kuten sanonta kuuluu.

Savon Sanomien jutussa haastateltu Afganistanilainen Nawid tuntui kummastelevan kysymystä suomalaisnaisten pukeutumisesta.
– Ei se ole mikään ongelma, hän sanoi.

Minun, ja monen muun suomalaisen muslimitaustaisen maahanmuuttajan reaktio uutiseen on ollut samanlainen ihmetys: emme kukaan halua suomalaisten pukeutumisen tai muidenkaan tapojen muuttuvan mihinkään meidän takiamme.

Suomessa on historiassa taisteltu naisten ja miesten tasa-arvon, ihmisoikeuksien, uskonnonvapauden ja sananvapauden puolesta. Juuri näiden periaatteiden takia Suomi on turvallinen maa, jonka puolesta suomalaiset ovat valmiita tekemään töitä ja johon halutaan ulkomailta turvaan sotaa ja vainoa tai tekemään töitä. Mielestäni on täysin selvää, että naisia tai ketään muutakaan ei tässä maassa voi eikä pidä vaatia pukeutumaan niin, ettei se loukkaisi jonkun toisen ihmisen moraalisia tai uskonnollisia käsityksiä.

Tulevaisuuden Suomi on monikulttuurisempi, moniuskoinen, monivärinen ja vielä monityylisempi kuin nykyään. Nyt jos koskaan, tarvitaan kauan suomessa olleiden maahanmuuttajien neuvoa ja osaamista uusien tulijoiden kotouttamisessa ja opastamisessa.

Kaula-aukkohysteria on turhaa. Sen sijaan että kehotetaan suomalaisia pukeutumaan eri tavalla, jotta uudet tulijat sopeutuisi paremmin, tärkeää on muuttaa asenteita, jotta he tuntisivat olonsa tervetulleeksi ja pääsivät uuden elämän syrjään kiinni. Enemmän kuin pieniä kaula-aukkoja, pakolaiset tarvitsevat ystäviä, koulutusta ja työmahdollisuuksia.

26) **Tunnelmia Saudi-Arabiasta** (11.7.2016)

Lähdin kuukausi siten reissuun siihen Persianlahdella sijaitsevaan Lähi-idän maahan, joka herättää ihmisissä eniten ristiriitaisuutta: Saudi-Arabiaan. Matkani syy oli se, että halusin olla äitini seurana hänen suorittaessaan uskonnollista velvollisuuttaan pyhiinvaelluksesta. Minunkin oli ollut tarkoitus tämä jo aikaisemmin tehdä, mutta en ollut ollut siihen henkisesti valmis.

Jokaisen muslimin tulee noudattaa islamin viideksi pylvääksi kutsuttuja perusperiaatteita. Näitä ovat uskontunnustus, päivittäiset rukoukset, köyhille annettavat almut, Ramadanin paasto sekä kerran elämässä tehtävä, Mekkaan suuntautuva pyhiinvaellus.

Tämä oli siis matkan syy. Maana Saudi-Arabia on mielenkiintoinen ja siitä riittäisi kerrottavaa vaikka kuinka.

Saavuimme maahan paastokuukauden Ramadanin aikana. Matkamme alkoi Medinasta, jossa vietimme kolme ja puoli päivää. Muistutan vielä, että lähdin etsimään rauhaa ja kokeakseni, mitä

islamin uskonnon alullepanija profeetta Muhammed (rauha hänen sielulleen) oli kokenut aikoinaan täällä asuessaan. Halusin ymmärtää arabimentaliteettia ja sitä, miten se on kehittynyt ja muuttunut. Halusin selvittää, mitkä näistä ihmisistä ja heidän tavoistaan kerrotut tarinat ovat totta. Itsekin muslimina minua kiinnosti myös paikalliset kulttuurisidonnaiset käytännöt ja se, miten ne eroavat itse islamin uskosta.

On pakko todeta, että ihmiset Medinassa olivat todella ystävällisiä ja auttavaisia. Kadulla jengi kinasteli siitä, kenen luokse vieraat pääsisivät syömään ja meitä kohdeltin [sic] niin vieraanvaraisesti ettei omia rahoja päässyt ruokaan edes käyttämään. Toinen asia, jonka pistin merkille oli se, että vaikka paikan päällä oli erilaisia ihmisiä ympäri maailmaa joilla ei välttämättä ollut edes yhteistä kieltä, niin hyvin kuitenkin yrittettiin [sic] tulla toimeen. Kärsivällisyyttä täällä koetellaan ja sitä tarkoittava sana ”sabir” toistuu puheessa usein. Niin sanalle kuin sen merkitykselle oli todellakin käyttöä, sillä ihmiset eivät noudata täällä mitään järjestystä, johon esimerkiksi Suomessa on saanut tottua. Jonoissa ohitellaan ja tönityksi tulee jatkuvasti. Menetinkin useaan otteeseen malttini – onneksi joku sai minut kuitenkin aina rauhoittumaan. Välillä äiti, välillä joku toinen.

Mekassa vietin puolestaan yli kolme viikkoa. Tästä kaupungista voisi vaikka kirjoittaa kirjan Mekassa sijaitsee Kaaban musta kivi, jonka suuntaan kaikki maailman muslimit kääntyvät rukoillessaan ja jota he kiertävät suorittaessaan pyhiinvaellusta. Kaabaa ympäröivää moskeijaa kutsutaan nimellä Masjid al-Haramein ja se on niin iso, että sinne ja sen ympärille mahtuu kerrallaan rukoilemaan yli kolme miljoonaa ihmistä. Moskeijan sisällä vallitsi hyvä ja toisia kunnioittava henki. Mekassa taas kaikilla on kiire päällä. Siinä missä meillä Suomessa kiirehditään milloin mihinkin ehtiäkseen - bussiin, ratikkaan, metroon – mekkalaiset juoksevat riyalin, paikallisen rahan perässä. Kaupustelijoilla on kiire myydä kiinalaisia halpatuotteita joita et edes tarvitse. *Hajjin* (pyhiinvaelluksen tehneestä henkilöstä käytetty kunnioittava nimi), *habibin* (rakkaan) ja veljen kaltaisia imartelevia sanoja ei prosessissa säästellä.

Mekasta löytyy hyviä tyyppejä, mutta myös kriminaalitaustaisia huijarikerjäläisiä jotka tekevät hommansa niin huolella, että saivat minutkin uskomaan juttuihinsa. Kuvio menee näin: mies, yhdessä naisen kanssa (joka yleensä esitellään miehen vaimoksi) lähestyvät sinua ja esittäytyvät pyhiinvaellusmatkalle tulleeksi pariskunnaksi joka on tullut ryöstetyksi ja joka nyt tarvitsee apua. Mies anelee ja jopa itkee kunnes joko autat häntä tai kävelet pois. Suomalaisena ei voinut uskoa, että aikuinen mies ihan oikeasti itkisi saadakseen nyhdettyä ventovieraalta kympin. Me kun olemme hieman sinisilmäisiä ja hyväuskoisia, niin minähän autoin heitä ja puoliväkisin sain myös muut seurueemme jäsenet mukaan hankkeeseen. Tästä tullut hyvä mieli kestikin seuraavaan

iltaan… kunnes kuulin täsmälleen saman tarinan joltain toiselta pariskunnalta. Tällä kertaa sanoin ei suoraan päin heidän naamaansa – tätä suomalaista kun ei kahta kertaa huijata.

Kolmas asia, joka kiinnitti huomioni oli liikenne, joka oli yhtä helvettiä. En ymmärrä, miksi niitä autokaistoja on teihin piirretty, jos kukaan ei niitä kuitenkaan noudata. Autot seisovat ruuhkassa toisilleen töötäten, vaikkei kukaan pystynyt asialle mitään tekemään. Roskia on kaikkialla ja kaikki käyttäytyvät ihan kuin tämä olisi normaalia. Kummallisinta oli kuitenkin se, että vaikka mitään järjestystä ei ollut, oli vaikea löytää ketään, joka olisi sille korvaansa lorkauttanut tai suuttunut… paitsi tietysti minä ja muut eurooppalaiset vieraat.

Yksi asia, jota ei voi olla huomaamatta on vierastyöläisten kurjuus. Nämä muodostavat tällä hetkellä liki kolmasosan koko maan väestöstä ja tässä hyvin eriarvoisessa luokkayhteiskunnassa koko yksityinen sektori (kaupat, ravintolat, palvelusväki, rakennustyömaat) on käytännössä tämän renkiluokan varassa. Suuri osa työvoimasta on maassa lisäksi laittomasti: Saudi-Arabian viranomaiset itse arvioivat, että joka pyhiinvaelluskauden jälkeen noin 400 000 jää maahan laittomasti etsimään mahdollisuuksia pimeiltä työmarkkinoilta. En osaa sanoa, mitä eri työstä maksetaan, mutta työnsä ohessa he myös kerjäävät ohikulkijoilta. Itse en todistanut mitään kaltoinkohtelua, mutta eri tahojen raporttien ja tilastojenkin kertoman perusteella on selvää, etteivät heidän olosuhteensa hyvät ole.

En tiedä, onko olemassa mitään muuta maata, joka ottaa vuosittain vastaan 10 miljoonaa täysin eri kieli- ja kulttuuritaustoista tulevaa ihmistä joka vuosi. Suurin osa näistä tulee kehtysmaiden [sic] köyhistä oloista pakon ja epätoivon sanelemina, minkä vuoksi heidät on helppoa puhua raskaisiin työolosuhteisiin pienellä palkalla käytännössä vailla mitään oikeuksia. Tilannetta on kuitenkin pyritty viime vuosina parantamaan mikä näkyy mm. vähentyneinä kuolintapauksina.

Omalta osaltani sain reissun aikana tankattua D-vitamiinia, nautittua auringosta ja puhdistettua elimistöä ja mieltä. Kun ottaa huomioon kaiken, mitä nämä ihmiset joutuvat kestämään, annan meitä pyhiinvaeltajien osaksemme saamasta ystävällisyydestä ja vieraanvaraisuudesta arvosanaksi 8.5/10. Järjestyksen osalta maa saa tyytyä arvosanaan 2/10, puhtaudesta 3/10. Ruoka oli 7.5/10, palvelu 6/10. Ja kaiken tämän takaa löytyvät ne Aasiasta ja Lähi-idästä peräisin olevat vierastyöläiset. Ei näissä hommissa saudeja näy.

27) **Yhteisöllisyydellä terrorismia vastaan** (20.7.2016)

Oli aika,jolloin uskottiin, ettei terrorismia voisi tapahtua täällä meillä Euroopassa. Silloinkin kun sitä tapahtui, oli se osa tiettyjen ryhmittymien itsenäisyyspyrkimyksiä. Esimerkkejä näistä olivat vaikka baskien ETA Espanjassa sekä IRA Pohjois-Irlannissa. Heidän kohdallaan löydettiin keinot vähentää iskuja ja IRAn kohdalla jopa lopettaa ne kokonaan.

Vielä tuolloin iskujen kohteena olivat vain ryhmittymien isäntämaat. Tänään, kolme vuosikymmentä myöhemmin Eurooppa on monikulttuurisempi, moniuskoisempi ja monivärisempi kuin koskaan aikaisemmin. Monimuotoisuudessaan maanosamme on myös kauniimpi kuin koskaan aikaisemmin, mutta se tuo mukanaan myös haasteita, jotka vaativat ratkaisuja; uudenlaisen todellisuuden, johon meidän kaikkien on sopeuduttava.

Yritystä on ollut, mutta kun kukaan ei oikein tiedä, millaista lopputulosta haetaan, ovat siihen vievät keinotkin yhä hakusessa. Maahanmuuttajataustaisten kohdalla puhutaan kotouttamisesta, joka käytännössä pitää sisällään sen, että uusille tulijoille opetetaan maan kielta [sic] ja tapoja, kerrotaan oikeuksista ja velvollisuuksista ja annetaan ymmärtää, että lakia noudattamalla heilläkin on mahdollisuus menestyä.

Maahanmuuttajan kohdalla todellisuus on kuitenkin liian usein ihan toista. Hänen tehtyään kaiken sen, mitä häneltä on edellytetty; hankittua koulutuksen ja yliopistotutkinnon saa hän yhä huomata kelpaavansa ainoastaan siivoustyöhön ja palvelualalle tehtäviin, jotka eivät niille ”oikeanvärisille” kelpaa. Pakkohan se työ on ottaa vastaan, vaikka sydän ja kunnianhimo olisivatkin jossain ihan muualla: maahanmuuttajana kun joutuisit silmätikuksi senkin vuoksi.

Maahanmuuttaja tekee hommansa ja sinnittelee. Ympäröivä yhteiskunta ei kuitenkaan osaa eikä halua tehdä eroa hänen ja muiden hänenväristensä [sic] ihmisten välillä ja hän saa yhä vain olla syrjinnän ja huutelun kohteena. Hänellä on kenties perheenjäseniä joko täällä tai muualla päin maailmaa, jotka ovat pahimmassa tapauksessa riippuvaisia hänestä ja hänen onnistumisestaan – onhan hän saanut mahdollisuuden päästä elämässään eteenpäin.

Mutta ei: häntä määrittää vain hänen ihonvärinsä. Hän on aina ensisijaisesti maahanmuuttaja. Samoin kuin hänen täällä syntyneet lapsensa. Ja heidän lapsensa. Valtaväestöstä poikkeava ihonväri, uskonto ja tavanomaista eksoottisempi nimi osoittautuvat toistuvasti hidasteeksi ja suoranaiseksi esteeksi hänen yrityksissään osoittaa arvonsa ja löytää paikkansa. Pidemmän päälle tällainen olisi uuvuttavaa ihan kenelle tahansa meistä. Miettikää nyt itse: millaista olisi, jos saisit jatkuvasti törmätä osoituksiin siitä, ”ettet ole yksi meistä?” Että ”sinun paikkasi ei ole täällä”?” Että

”sinun kuuluisi palata sinne mistä olet tullutkin?” Mihin ihmeeseen ihminen palaa, jos esimerkiksi Mustan Barbaarin lailla on syntynyt ja kasvanut nimenomaan täällä?

Töissä tai koulussakin saatetaan kiusata eikä lohtua tai yhteenkuuluvuudentunnetta löydy sieltäkään. Suomi on kylmä myös tunneilmastonsa tasolla: tähän porukkaan on vaikea päästä sisään.

Osa maahanmuuttajista ajattelee, että heidän onnistumismahdollisuutensa paranevat, mikäli he hankkivat pelkästään kantasuomalaisista koostuvan ystäväpiirin. Osan kohdalla tämä voi olla tottakin, mutta ei kaikkien. Oman, samankaltaisen menneisyyden ja yhteneviä kokemuksia omaavan etnisen viiteryhmän hylkääminen johtaa sekin eristäytymiseen kun ei ole ketään, jonka kanssa esimerkiksi puhua omalla äidinkielellään. Pahimmillaan ongelmien kasaantuminen johtaa mm. päihteisiin ja jopa rikollisuuteen.

Tässä vaiheessa ihmisellä ei ole enää mitään menetettävää: hän on valmis tekemään melkeinpä mitä tahansa tullakseen hyväksytyksi edes jossain ja päästäkseen eroon pahasta olostaan. Tälla [sic] lailla vinksahtanut mieli on otollista maaperää liki kenen tahansa huomiota osoittavan, hyväksyntää ja kuuluvuutta tarjoavan tahon pyrkimyksille – hänelle voisi vaikka myydä lunta keskellä talvea!
Mm. näin ihmiset saadaan mukaan rikollisuuteen ja ääriliikkeisiin. Skenaario on nähtävissä esimerkiksi siinä, miten huumausainerikollisuus on kasvanut etnisten vähemmistöjen keskuudessa. Tämä ei kuitenkaan valitettavasti vielä saa niitä hälytyskelloja soimaan ja asiaankuuluvia tahoja puuttumaan ongelmiin. Vasta siinä vaiheessa, kun he alkavat murhata ihmisiä keskellä päivää, asiaan reagoidaan ja siihen johtaneisiin syihin aletaan kiinnittää huomiota.

Terrorismi on jotain, joka pelottaa meitä kaikkia. Juuri edelläkuvatun [sic] kaltaisella tavalla sitä edustavat tahot toimivat ja uusia uhrejaan rekrytoivat. Toki jokainen on viime kädessä vastuussa omasta elämästään ja valinnoistaan, mutta juuri tuo kuulumattomuuden ja toisarvoisuuden tunne tekee heistä niin helposti lähestyttäviä kohteita värväreille. He lupaavat näille kohteilleen kaikkea sitä, mistä he kokevat jääneensä paitsi: arvostusta, hyväksyntää ja yhteisön, johon kuulua. He käyttävät kohteidensa olosuhteita häpeilemättä hyväkseen ja tarjoavat ulospääsyn heidän pahalle ololleen. Tuossa tilanteessa valitettavan moni tarpeeksi keppiä saanut on valmis tarttumaan kiinni tarjottuun porkkanaan.

Kun yhdistää kaikki nämä tekijät, voi meilläkin olla mahdollinen massamurhaaja keskuudessamme. Vasta sen ensimmäisen hirmuteon jälkeen me muut kuitenkin heräämme käymään keskustelua siitä, miksi näin pääsi tapahtumaan. Jotkut tulevat heti syyttämään uskontoa ja kulttuuria, toiset taas väittämään, ettei näillä ollut mitään tekemistä tekijän motiivien kanssa.
Tunnemyllerryksen vallassa aletaan muuttaa maan lakeja ja systemaattisesti osoittamaan syyttävää sormea toisiamme kohtaan. Tätä kestää niin kauan, kunnes seuraava tragedia tapahtuu.

Uskon vahvasti, että keskuudessamme on nuoria, jotka eivät näe mitään valoa tunnelin päässä ja jotka ovat lähellä räjähtämispistettä. Mikäli me emme halua nähdä tätä ja puuttua asiaan ajoissa; mikäli emme pysty luomaan yhteiskuntaamme sellaista ilmapiiriä, jossa kaikki tuntevat olevansa osa sitä, tullaan Suomessakin näkemään se, mihin se pahimmillaan johtaa.

Sisäministeri Paula Risikko sanoi viime viikolla Nizzan terroriteon jälkeen, ettei voida varmuudella sanoa, etteikö tällaista voisi tapahtua Suomessakin. Olen ministerin kanssa samaa mieltä, enkä voi tarpeeksi korostaa ennaltaehkäisyn tärkeyttä.

Viime viikkojen tapahtumat ovat saaneet tietyt poliittiset tahot taas vetämään irtopisteiden keruun ja ja [sic] uutisotsikoihin pääsemisen toivossa yhtäläisyysmerkit islamin ja terrorismin välille. Kollektiivinen syyllistäminen ja esimerkiksi Sebastian Tynkkysen vaatimukset tietyn uskonnnon edustajen [sic] maahanpääsyn estämisestä ja maassa jo oleskelevien karkottamisesta eivät kuitenkaan ole yhtään mitään muuta kuin miltä ne kuulostavatkin: kiihottamista kansanryhmää vastaan. Jos ongelman ytimessä on jatkuva eron tekeminen ”meihin ja noihin” ja tietyn ihmisryhmän sulkeminen yhteiskunnan ulkopuolelle niin sanojen kuin tekojen kautta, ei heidän entistä rajumpi marginalisointinsa voi olla kestävä ratkaisu.

Mahdollisen terrorismin uhka on uhka ihan meille kaikille. Sen estäminen on ihan meidän kaikkien etujen mukaista. Niinpä työtä on tehtävä yhdessä: kantaväestön ja maahanmuuttajataustaisten välillä ihan siellä naapurisuhteiden ja työyhteisöjen ruohonjuuritasolla sekä viranomaistahon ja uskontokuntien edustajien kesken.

Nasima Razmyar

3) **Rasistien ääniharava on jo selvillä** (16.1.2015)

Jussi Halla-aho kirjoitti Pariisin iskujen jälkeen blogitekstin, jonka tarkoituksena on saada ihmiset vihaamaan ja pelkäämään islaminuskoisia. Samoja myrkyllisiä sanoja viljeli myös Perussuomalaisten Juho Eerola, jonka mukaan suurin osa Suomen muslimeista elää tulonsiirtojen varassa. Pelkkään uskontoon pohjautuvia tilastoja ei Suomessa tietenkään tehdä, mutta siitä huolimatta Eerola esitti väitteensä faktana.

Nykyisin tärkein sota käydään ihmisten mielissä mielikuvilla. Sitä Halla-ahon ja Eerolan kirjoitukset pohjimmiltaan ovat. Ensin esitetään joukko ongelmia tai väitettyjä ongelmia, mutta sitten ei varsinaisesti ensimmäistäkään ratkaisua. Tarkoituksena on kylvää vihaa ja epäluuloa omiin kannattajiin siinä toivossa, että sama viha ja epäluulo kasvaisi ja moninkertaistuisi sanoman vastaanottajissa.

Valitettavasti on niin, että ääriryhmät, jihadistit ja äärioikeistolaiset, tarvitsevat toisiaan. Ne ovat kolikon molemmat puolet yhdessä. Molemmat ideologiat ovat yhtä tuomittavia valheellisuudessa ja epärehellisyydessään. Jihadistien iskujen tarkoituksena on saada tukea maltilliselta muslimienemmistöltä. Tämä ei koskaan onnistuisi, ellei iskujen jälkeen syyttävä sormi kohdistuisi juuri maltilliseen muslimienemmistöön, jolla ei todellisuudessa ole ollut mitään tekemistä itse teon kanssa. Syyttävän sormen takaa löytyy aina Halla-ahon tai Eerolan kaltainen yllyttäjä, jonka ei tarvitse murehtia sanojensa seurauksista.

Halla-ahon ja Eerolan politiikan lähtökohtana on saada ihmiset näkemään toisissaan vain heitä erottavia asioita. Tarkoituksena on tarttua näihin asioihin, ja tehdä ihmisille selväksi, etteivät he voi tulla toimeen keskenään. Näin luodaan keinotekoinen vastakkainasettelu kahden ryhmän välillä ja pakotetaan valitsemaan.

Kirjoittajat eivät ole osoittaneet minkäänlaista myötätuntoa Pariisin iskujen uhreille tai heidän omaisilleen. Terrori-isku oli heille vain tilaisuus levittää omia pelottavia ajatuksiaan suurelle yleisölle. Tätä kuvastaa hyvin Halla-ahon Facebook -päivitys iskuja seuranneena päivänä:

”Tänään on ihan popcorn-päivä.”

Huomenna perjantaina Halla-aho tulee ilmoittamaan asettuvansa eduskuntavaaliehdokkaaksi teemanaan maahanmuutto. Kampanjan tavoitteena on kerätä jokaisen rasistin ääni Helsingistä ja ratsastaa Pariisin terroristi-iskuilla suuremman kannatuksen toivossa.

Perussuomalaiset on poliittisessa umpikujassa. Kannatus on tippunut ja Jussi Halla-ahosta toivotaan pelastajaa. Puolue haluaa toistaa vuoden 2011 vaalituloksen, mutta sitä tehdessään unohtaa yhden tärkeän asian. Ihmiset eivät pitkään aseta toivojaan vihan ja pelon varaan rakennettuun viestiin.

8) **Voimme valita, kuolevatko hädänalaiset vai eivät** (13.6.2015)

Kun hätä lisääntyy, eikö avun pidä myös lisääntyä? Minusta pitää. Se on inhimillisesti oikein. Suomen hallitus näyttää olevan valitettavasti eri mieltä.

Syyrian sisällissodan seurauksena miljoonat ihmiset ovat joutuneet jättämään kotimaansa. Pakolaisvirta on katkeamaton Välimeren rannoilla. Etelä-Euroopan maat, ennen kaikkea Kreikka ja Italia ovat pakolaistulvan alla voimattomia. Ihmiset ovat hädissään, salakuljettaja käytettävät heitä eri tavoin hyväksi, heitä hukkuu. Tavalliset ihmiset, joiden arvo on sama kuin minulla tai sinulla, ovat joutuneet lähtemään kodeistaan, jättämään perheensä, joutuvat toimimaan kielillä joita eivät osaa, maissa joita eivät tunne. Nyt hädänalaisia pitää auttaa, ja taakkaa on Euroopassa jaettava.

Suomi ei nyt ole vastaamassa lisääntyneeseen avun tarpeeseen. Hätä on lisääntynyt, mutta apua emme lisää. Näin päätti hallituksen esityksen mukaisesti eduskunnan suuri valiokunta perjantaina linjatessaan, että emme ota enempää turvapaikanhakijoita Välimeren tragediasta huolimatta. Suomen tulisi ottaa vastaan noin 800 uutta turvapaikanhakijaa osana EU:n yhteisiä toimia Välimeren kriisin ratkaisemiseksi. Nykyinen hallituksemme jatkaa kuitenkin samalla linjalla kuin se kehitysavun leikkauspäätöksen yhteydessä jo osoitti: muiden inhimillinen hätä ei koske Suomea, muut saavat hoitaa. Välimeren tilanteesta syntyvä tarve turvapaikoille otetaan pois kokonaisturvapaikkamäärästämme. Eli hallituksen linjauksen mukaisesti kokonaismäärämme auttamisessa on rajattu, nyt se vain jakaantuu eri tavoin!

Minusta tämä on väärin. Kun hätä lisääntyy, on lisättävä apua. Jos Suomen rannikolla tapahtuu esim. laivaturma, niille ihmisille, jotka juuri olivat hukkua järjestetään kriisiapua. Heitä ei ohjata normaalin johonkin lähimpään terveyskeskukseen odottamaan vuoronumeroa.

Voisimmeko tarjota turvapaikkaa entistä useammalle? Voisimme. Kyseessä on arvovalinta. Esimerkiksi Ruotsi ottaa suhteessa kaksikymmentä kertaa enemmän pakolaisia jo nyt, kuin Suomi. Myös Tanska ja Norja ottavat paljon enemmän suhteellisesti vastaan kuin Suomi. Tämä siitä huolimatta, etteivät muut Pohjoismaat ole kymmeniä kertoja Suomea rikkaampia. Suomi on nyt aivan eri seurassa kuin muut Pohjoismaat – verrokkimaamme on Ruotsin sijaan esimerkiksi Slovenia. Toivon, ettei linja kostaudu jos Suomi joskus tarvitsee apua tai painoarvoa sanoilleen EU yhteyksissä tai kansainvälisessä politiikassa.

Suomen arvovalinta on syytä suhteuttaa EU:n toimintaan. Euroopan parlamentin puhemies Martin Schultz suhteutti eurooppalaisten sosialidemokraattien kokouksessa johon osallistuin tällä viikolla asiaa näin: koko Välimeren pakolaistilanne voitaisiin ratkaista rahalla, joka käytettiin eurokriisin aikana yhden pankin pelastamiseen. Siis vain yhden. Euroopalla, Suomi mukaan lukien, on varaa estää ihmisten hukkuminen, hyväksikäyttäminen ja hädän lisääntyminen. On vain tehtävä oikea arvovalinta.

11) **Puhe vihateoista ja rasismista Suomessa** (14.10.2015)

Arvoisa puhemies,
Hyvät edustajakollegat,
”Hyvien ihmisten hiljaisuus on ihmiskunnan suurin tragedia.” Nämä Martin Luther Kingin sanat ovat totta myös tänään, kun puhumme painajaisesta nimeltä rasismi.

Ja arvoisa puhemies, vaikenemisen aika on nyt ohi.

Rasismi tai vihateot eivät mene itsestään pois. Pelko tai tietämättömyys eivät haihdu automaattisesti. Juuri siksi Suomen eduskunta ei voi kääntää katsettaan pois. Me, kansan vapailla vaaleilla valitsemat kansanedustajat emme voi sulkea korviamme. Ja ei – me emme voi vaieta.

Toisin kuin useimmat tähän saliin tulevat asiat, tässä ei ole kyse politiikasta. Tässä on kyse ihmisyydestä. Ja tässä asiassa edunsaajana on jokainen ihminen. Sinä, minä, me kaikki.

Arvoisa puhemies
Lokakuu 2015: Suomessa yritetään polttaa vastaanottokeskus
Syyskuu 2015: Suomalaiset tekevät ihmismuurin estääkseen pakolaisten maahantulon
Syyskuu 2015: Polttopulloisku turvapaikanhakijoiden tiloihin
Elokuu 2015: Ministeri Stubbin kotiin isketään
Elokuu 2015: Uusnatsit hyökkäävät ihmisten kimppuun Jyväskylässä

Heinäkuu 2015: Kansanedustaja julistaa taistelun monikulttuurisuutta vastaan
Miettikää hetki, kuinka järjenvastaiselta tämä kuulostaa. Ja kuitenkin, se on totisinta totta.

Suomi on ollut maa, jossa polttopulloja on näkynyt vain vanhoissa sotaelokuvissa. Ilotulitusraketteja on ammuttu uudenvuodenaattona.

Miten on mahdollista, että vuonna 2015 Suomesta on tullut paikka, missä vastaanottokeskukset ovat joutuneet polttopullon ja ilotulitusrakettien kohteeksi? Kenen suomalaisen hyvinvointia uhkaa ihminen, joka on menettänyt elämässään kaiken?

Suomi ei ole rasistinen maa, mutta tosiasia on se, että Suomessa on rasismia. Rasismia on nähty jopa eduskunnassa. On järkyttävää huomata, että aikuisten kovat asenteet ovat siirtyneet hiekkalaatikossa leikkiville lapsille. Olemme nähneet jopa videon, jolla aikuinen opettaa lasta lyömään erilaisia ihmisiä.

On tärkeää muistaa tämä: yksikään lapsi ei koskaan kasva rasistiksi ellei aikuinen hänestä sellaista tee. Meillä aikuisilla on siis valtava vastuu. Meillä päättäjillä on vielä suurempi vastuu. Meidän on näytettävä esimerkkiä.

Mitä me voisimme tehdä? Me voimme näyttää esimerkkiä rakentavasta keskustelusta, jolla rasismille ja kaikenlaiselle vihapuheelle sanotaan ei.

On tärkeää tehdä selväksi, että vihapuhetta ei koskaan voi hyväksyä. Miksi vihapuhe sitten on niin vaarallista? Syy on se, että vihapuheesta on lyhyt matka vihatekoihin. Me tunnemme liian monta esimerkkiä historiasta, joissa vihapuhe on muuttunut vihateoksi. Esimerkkejä on myös Suomesta.

Mitä me sitten emme voi tehdä? Me emme voi sulkea silmiämme emmekä me voi vaieta. Me emme voi unohtaa historiaa emmekä me voi menettää inhimillisyyttä. Emme myöskään me poliitikot. Sellaisesta poliitikosta, joka menettää kykynsä asettua toisen ihmisen asemaan, ei ole mitään hyötyä.

Suomella ei ole varaa rasismiin ja vihapuheeseen. Suomi on aina ollut ja tulee aina olemaan monikulttuurinen maa. Suomen vahvuus ja rikkaus on ollut se, että Suomessa ei ole ollut meitä ja heitä. Suomessa on ollut vain me. Meidän on muistettava, että erilaisuus on voimavara – Suomessa ja kaikkialla maailmassa.

Arvoisa puhemies,
Ääriliikkeiden väkivalta Suomessa on tosiasia. Suojelupoliisin mukaan ääriliikkeiden väkivalta on yleistymässä Suomessa. Heinäkuussa 2015 uusnatsijärjestön jäsenet hyökkäsivät Jyväskylässä sivullisten ihmisten kimppuun pahoinpidellen heitä. Saman järjestön edustajat ovat myös esiintyneet yhdessä erään kansanedustajan kanssa ilman, että siihen on puututtu. Kyseisen järjestön tavoitteena on kansallissosialistisen valtion luominen Suomeen. Suojelupoliisi on seurannut kyseisen uusnatsijärjestön ja äärioikeistolaisten liikkeiden toimintaa jo pidemmän aikaa.

Ilmapiiri Suomessa on kiristynyt. Vihapuheen määrä on lisääntynyt ja erilaiset ääriliikkeet ovat käyttäneet väkivaltaa. Kansan vaaleilla valitsemat päättäjät eivät voi seurata tällaista kehitystä sivusta. Nyt on aika päivittää äärijärjestöjen riskiarvio ja selvittää tarkasti, millä tavalla lainsäädäntöä voidaan parantaa, jotta ääriliikkeiden väkivaltaisuutta voidaan ehkäistä ja estää. Kaikki väkivalta tai poliittinen väkivalta on väärin eikä sitä voi hyväksyä – ei äärivasemmalta eikä -oikealta.

Vihapuhe ja rasismi näkyvät Suomessa myös ihmisten arjessa. Rasismia esiintyy hiekkalaatikoilla, kouluissa, työpaikoilla, lehtien palstoilla ja nettikeskusteluissa.

Jopa osa suomalaisista on joutunut pelkäämään oman äidinkielensä vuoksi. Se ei ole oikein. Kenenkään ei pidä joutua pelkäämään siksi, että puhuu äidinkieltään, joka on Suomen virallinen kieli.

Arvoisa puhemies,
Tällaista kehitystä ei voi hyssytellä, hyväksyä tai puolustella millään tavalla. Jokainen suomalainen vaikuttaa omalla käyttäytymisellään siihen, millainen viesti Suomesta lähtee maailmalle. Suomen pitäisi olla tunnettu ennemmin Marimekon petivaatteista, ei valkoisesta lakanasta. Yksilöillä on aina vastuu, mutta niin on meillä yhdessäkin. Sen vastuun kantaminen edellyttää sitä, että me emme vaikene tai käännä katsettamme pois. On hienoa, että sotiemme veteraanit ovat tuominneet voimakkaasti rasismin. Myös tasavallan presidentti Sauli Niinistö on tuominnut rasistisen väkivallan selväsanaisesti ja todennut, että turhautuneisuus tai kritiikki pitää osoittaa poliitikoille eikä viattomille ihmisille.

Jokainen meistä voi omalla toiminnallaan näyttää, että suvaitsevaisuus voittaa vihan. Ja jokainen meistä voi näyttää, että rasismi ei ikinä voita sitä tosiasiaa, että me kaikki ihmiset olemme samanarvoisia.

SDP:n puheenjohtaja Antti Rinne ehdotti kesällä, että kaikki puolueet allekirjoittaisivat uudelleen rasisminvastaisen julistuksen. Nyt puheenjohtaja Rinteen esitykseen on tartuttu. On hyvä, että eduskuntaryhmät ovat tänään sitoutuneet omalta osaltaan tähän.

Koska kyseessä on puolueiden julistus, uskon, että eduskuntaryhmien allekirjoittama rasisminvastainen julkilausuma on vahva signaali siihen, että myös kaikki eduskuntapuolueet ja puoluejohtajat allekirjoittavat tämän.

Siinä ei ole kyse politiikasta, vaan oikeasta ja väärästä. Siitä, että poliittiset puolueet lähettävät selkeän viestin, että Suomessa ei sallita kenenkään ihmisarvoa alentavaa puhetta tai toimintaa. Toivon, että jokainen puolue toimii oikein.

Arvoisa puhemies,
Haluan kertoa teille pienen tarinan yli kahdenkymmenen vuoden takaa.

Muistan elävästi ensimmäisen koulupäiväni Rovaniemellä. Vieras paikkakunta, minulle aivan uusi maa. Minua jännitti hirveästi. Vastaanottokeskuksessa oli kyllä paljon ihmisiä, mutta koulussa olisin erilainen. En osannut sanaakaan suomea ja näytin erilaiselta kuin muut.

Ensimmäistä koulupäivää edeltävänä iltana yritin kovasti oppia edes yhden sanan. Toistin sanaa ”moi” peilin edessä varmaan tuhat kertaa. Tuli ensimmäinen koulupäivä ja minut esiteltiin uusille luokkatovereilleni. Menin luokan eteen, mutta kun tuli minun vuoroni avata suuni, minua jännitti uuden asian kohtaaminen niin paljon, että unohdin sanan ”moi”.

Mieleeni on jäänyt myös ensimmäisen koulupäivän ensimmäinen välitunti. Kaikki oppilaat lähtivät saman tien ulos leikkimään, mutta minä jäin pulpettiin istumaan. En ollut varma, mitä tapahtuisi. Yhtäkkiä eräs tyttö nimeltään Charlotte tuli takaisin luokkaan. Hän näytti kädellään, että tule mukaan. Minä menin tietenkin, koska pyydettiin. Hypimme hyppynarua, eikä siihen tarvittu yhteistä kieltä. Olimme kaikki vain lapsia.

Elämässäni on paljon hienoja kokemuksia, mutta tämä on jäänyt minulle mieleen yhtenä parhaista. Olen miettinyt tätä hetkeä monta kertaa jälkeenpäin. Tuosta yksittäisestä hetkestä teki niin hienon se, että minut – kieltä puhumaton ja erilaiselta näyttävä – kohdattiin ihmisenä. Siihen vaadittiin vain se, että joku otti ensimmäisen askeleen.

Tässä tarinassa on kaksi opetusta. Ensimmäinen on se, että meissä kaikissa asuu Charlotte. Meidän pitää vain uskaltaa kohdata ihmiset ihmisinä. Toinen opetus on se, että kun teemme näin, ihmisen kokee olevansa osa yhteiskuntaa, jolloin hänen on helpompi pärjätä. Koen, että olen itse tästä esimerkki.

Arvoisa puhemies,
Me emme tarvitse Suomessa jakautumista, vaan yhtenäisyyttä. Me emme tarvitse Suomessa vihapuhetta, vaan vuoropuhelua. Emme tarvitse sulkeutuneisuutta ja epäluuloisuutta, vaan avoimuutta ja myötätuntoa. Suomesta ei saa tulla maata, jossa ihminen joutuu pelkäämään olla oma itsensä.

Rasismi sulkee silmät. Viha sulkee silmät. Sitä vastoin suvaitsevaisuus avaa silmät. Myötätunto avaa silmät.

Kun maailma palaa ja miljoonat ihmiset pakenevat sotaa, Eurooppa kipuilee asian kanssa. Saksan Yleisradio kysyi pieneltä saksalaispojalta, onko tämän päiväkodissa ulkomaalaisia.

Neljävuotias Niklas vastasi toimittajalle: ”Ei, siellä on lapsia.”

Pieni Niklas on oikeassa. Vihan kohteena eivät ole suomalaiset tai ulkomaalaiset. Vihan kohteena ovat ihmiset.

Arvoisa puhemies,
Tämä keskustelu tuli oikeaan aikaan. On tärkeää, että eduskunta reagoi yhteiskunnan ongelmiin ja ihmisiä puhuttaviin aiheisiin. On meistä itsestämme kiinni, mistä vuosi 2015 tullaan muistamaan. Kymmenet tuhannet suomalaiset ovat kesän ja syksyn aikana ilmaisseet mielipiteensä rasismia ja vihapuhetta vastaan. Nyt koko eduskunnalla on mahdollisuus tehdä sama ja lähettää selväsanainen viesti: Suomessa ei ole sijaa rasismille ja vihapuheelle.

Vaikenemisen aika on nyt ohi.

13) **Suomalaisuus on tunne** (4.12.2015)

Olen monesti aiemmin ja tällä hetkellä yhä useammin kuullut, kuinka minusta ei voi tulla koskaan suomalaista. Ei, vaikka mitä tekisin. Olen käynyt kouluni Suomessa, valmistunut korkeakoulusta, ollut työelämässä koko ajan ja maksanut veroni. Tämäkään ei kuulemma riitä siihen, että on

suomalainen. Keskustelussa palataan aina lähtöpisteeseen: sinusta ei voi tulla suomalaista, koska sinussa ei virtaa suomalainen veri.

Mielestäni kuitenkin tunne on verta sakeampaa. Tunne siitä, että on suomalainen ja haluaa olla osa tätä yhteiskuntaa. Haluaa olla mukana muokkaamassa suomalaista tulevaisuutta ja jatkuvasti muuttuvaa kuvaa siitä, millainen Suomi on – millaisia suomalaiset ovat. Meitä ei voi laittaa yhteen muottiin eikä pidäkään. Me tulemme erilaisista taustoista, erilaisista perheistä. Meillä on erilaisia unelmia elämästä, työstä, koulutuksesta, harrastuksista. Jokainen meistä tuo oman erityisen osansa yhteiseen suomalaisuuteemme.

Minulta kysytään usein, miksi olen sopeutunut niin hyvin Suomeen. Tiedostan hyvin, että olen ollut onnekas. Yksi tärkeimmistä asioista on perheeni ja afgaanikulttuuri, jota perheeni kesken vaalitaan. Olen saanut pitää kaksi kotimaatani, elää kummankin maan kulttuuria ja käyttää kumpaakin äidinkieltäni. Kielen oppiminen ja suomalaisten yhteisöihin pääseminen ovat ensiarvoisen tärkeitä asioita. Sen myötä perheeni on päässyt kiinni suomalaisuuden tunteeseen ja osaksi suomalaista yhteiskuntaa.

Tämä on tärkeää muistaa, kun tänne saapuu ihmisiä, jotka eivät ole syntyneet Suomessa, mutta heistä tulee suomalaisia ja he kasvattavat lapsensa suomalaisina. Heillä on kaksi kotimaata, kumpikin yhtä rakkaita ja yhtä merkittäviä. Heillä on kaksi kieltä, kaksi tapakulttuuria, kaksi lempiruokaa ja arkea kahdessa eri maailmassa. Nämä kaksi maailmaa kulkevat rinnakkain, eivät erillisinä toisistaan.

Koko maailmassa ihmiset liikkuvat aivan eri tavalla kuin ennen. Suomeen tullaan tekemään töitä, opiskelemaan tai vaikka hakemaan turvaa, kun omassa kotimaassa asiat eivät ole kunnossa. Myös meistä yhä useampi myös vuorostaan lähtee maailmalle hakemaan uusia kokemuksia. Ihmiset rakastuvat, saavat lapsia, etsivät erilaista koulutusta tai haluavat tehdä töitä eri puolilla maailmaa.

Tällaisessa maailmassa, Euroopassa ja Suomessa on entistä enemmän korostettava yhteistyötä ja ymmärrystä toisia ihmisiä kohtaan. Samalla nykyisessä ilmapiirissä on muistettava, että ihminen on pohjimmiltaan hyvä ja inhimillinen, ja aina on toivoa kauniimmasta huomisesta.

14) **Jotta vähempi rohkeus jatkossa riittäisi** (18.1.2016)

Muutama vuosi sitten osallistuin konferenssiin naisiin kohdistuvasta väkivallasta. Seminaarin aikana käsiteltiin muun muassa ongelman laajuutta eri EU-maissa. Tilastot eivät näyttäneet hyvältä. Kahvitauolla minulta kysyttiin mistä maasta tulen. Kerroin tulevani Suomesta. Tämän

kuultuaan Espanjasta kotoisin oleva kollegani totesi: ”niin se maa, jossa ei edes puhuta koko ongelmasta!” Ihmettelin hänen kommenttiaan, mutta hän jatkoi perustellen, että vaikka tilanne Espanjassa on Suomea heikompi, he myöntävät epäkohtien olemassaolon julkisessa keskustelussa. Naisen mielestä huolestuttavampaa on hiljaisuus ja kunniakkaalla historialla ratsastaminen. Tämä keskustelu on noussut elävästi mieleeni seuratessani lääppijäkohun eri vaiheita.

Kirjoitukseni lääppijäkohusta kirvoitti monenlaista palautetta. Myös Ulla Appelsin sivusi kirjoitustani kirjoituksessaan. Mielestäni on ollut hienoa ja arvokasta miten ihmiset ovat uskaltaneet jakaa omia kokemuksiaan #lääppijä-tunnisteella sekä viime viikonloppuna aiheeseen liittyneessä tempauksessa. Muistot ovat varmasti monelle kipeitä. Se, että moni kertoi vuosia sitten kohtaamistaan ikävistä kokemuksista vasta yhteisessä rintamassa muiden kanssa, kertoo siitä, että meillä Suomessa seksuaalista häirintää kokenut kohtaa yhä syvään juurtunutta kulttuurista vähättelyä. Toki lainsäädäntömme on edellä monia muita maita, mutta asenteet muuttuvat hitaasti. Avioliitossa tapahtuneesta raiskauksesta tuli rikos vasta vuonna 1994. Istanbulin sopimuksen Suomi allekirjoitti häntäpään joukossa ja turvakotitoiminta kamppailee edelleen liian niukin resurssein. Joka vuosi poliisin tietoon tulee vain jäävuoren huippu kaikesta tapahtuneesta seksuaalisesta väkivallasta. Se on perheiden oma asia, ei yhteiskunnan yhteinen häpeäpilkku.

Olen aikaisemmin tehnyt töitä väkivaltaa kokeneiden maahanmuuttajanaisten kanssa. Tiedän kuinka vastenmieliseltä kuulostaa seksuaalisen väkivallan ja sorron perustelu kulttuurilla. Se ei kuulu Suomeen, sen ei pitäisi kuulua minnekään. Minun on vaikea ymmärtää, että sellaiset miehet, jotka syyllistyvät näihin rikoksiin voisivat jäädä Suomeen. Kukaan aidosti turvaa hakevaa ei tule tänne väkivalta tai terroriteot mielessään. Sen sijaan koko väestöryhmän leimaaminen on väärin. Sitä ei voi hyväksyä.

Appelsin pyysi minua katsomaan omaa kotimaatani tarkoittaen Afganistania. Hän taisi unohtaa, että minun kotimaani on Suomi. Istun Suomen eduskunnassa ja suomalaisena kansanedustajana minun tehtäväni on puhua kaiken hyvän lisäksi myös yhteiskuntamme epäkohdista. Kun keskustellaan tasa-arvosta ja erityisesti naisten asemasta, pelataan pöytään yleensä aina sama kortti: sinulla on asiat hyvin, katso nyt noita muita raukkoja. Muiden kärsimys ei kuitenkaan pyyhi pois oman yhteiskuntamme epäkohtia ja ongelmia. Rohkea on se, joka näkee malkan omassa silmässään ennen kuin alkaa osoitella rikkaa toisen silmässä. Me voimme välillisesti tukea Afganistanin kehitystä esimerkiksi kehy-rahoin, mutta omaa yhteiskuntaamme meillä jokaisella on suora mahdollisuus muuttaa.

On kaikkien häviö jos tasa-arvokeskustelu pääsee typistymään nais- ja miesvihan käsikassaraksi. Se ei kuitenkaan tarkoita sitä, että epäkohdilta pitäisi sulkea silmät, lyödä kädet korville ja rallatella, että kaikki on hyvin, kaikki on hyvin, kaikki on hyvin. Meillä on yhä sukupuolittunut perhekäsitys, meillä on yhä selkeästi mies- ja naisvaltaisia aloja, joiden välillä on suuria palkkakuiluja. Meillä on yhä olemassa kulttuuri, jossa seksuaalinen väkivalta on vaietua ja uhrille noloa. Meillä kiusataan yhä herkkiä poikia ja vahvoja tyttöjä. Me tarvitsemme avointa keskustelua suomalaisesta tasa-arvosta ja sen kehittämisestä.

Viime vaalien alla moni suomalainen mies tuli kertomaan äänestävänsä minua, koska he halusivat muuttaa Suomea. Nämä miehet, kuten niin monet heidän kaltaisensa, ovat rohkeita. Minä haluaisin kuitenkin Suomen, jossa ihmisen ei tarvitsisi olla erityisen rohkea ajaakseen tasa-arvoa, voidakseen jakaa kotityöt ja lastenkasvatusvastuun, kunnioittaakseen omaa ja toisen seksuaalista itsemääräämisoikeutta ja tukeakseen tytärtään ja poikaansa kasvamaan oman potentiaalin, ei sukupuoliodotusten mukaan.

Kenenkään ei pitäisi joutua uskaltamaan elääkseen tasa-arvoista ja turvallista elämää. Kyllä niitä haasteita ja jännityksen hetkiä tulee tarpeeksi arjessa eteen ilman ylimääräistä seksismihöttöäkin.

Ozan Yanar

6) **Emme voi antaa periksi epärationaalisen vihan edessä** (9.1.2015)

Charlie Hebdon toimitukseen iskeneillä hyökkääjillä oli yksi tärkeä tavoite: pelotella arvostelijat hiljaiseksi. Siksi meidän on kaikin tavoin vastustettava pelkoa ja puolustettava sananvapautta, joka on demokratian kulmakivi. Syyttömien ihmisten tappaminen mielipiteidensä vuoksi on järkyttävän alhainen teko.

Verilöylyn aiheuttaneet terroristit halusivat esiintyä heidän keksimänsä ”puhtaan uskonnon” ja kaikkien muslimien edustajina. Sitä he eivät todellakaan ole, emmekä me saa ruokkia sellaista käsitystä. Silloin pelaamme heidän pussiinsa. Ääri-islamistinen terrorismi on vakava ongelma ja että siitä kärsivät edelleen eniten itse muslimit Aasiassa, Lähi-idässä ja Afrikassa. Pariisin iskujen kanssa samoihin aikoihin itsemurhaisku tappoi 34 ihmistä Jemenissä, Isisin toimista puhumattakaan.

Emme vielä tiedä eilisen iskun tekijöiden taustoista paljon, joten on vielä vaikeaa analysoida sitä, miten isku olisi ehkä voinut olla estettävissä. Yksi keskustelu, joka varmasti tulee nousemaan taas esille ovat Syyriasta palaavat taistelijat. Se pitää ottaa vakavasti, vaikka esimerkiksi Isis ei vielä ainakaan julkisuudessa olleiden tietojen mukaan ole onnistunut käyttämään palaajia iskuihin länsimaissa. Eri asia ovat yksittäiset hullut, jotka saavat inspiraation näistä liikkeistä. Itse asiassa tällaisten yksittäisten toimijoiden jäljittäminen on paljon vaikeampaa kuin järjestäytyneen toiminnan. Jos joku on esimerkiksi Syyriassa syyllisytynyt [sic] esimerkiksi sotarikoksiin, on hänet saatava oikeuden eteen vastaamaan siitä. Supon on voitava seurata sitä, ovatko palaajat radikalisoituneet. Mutta esimerkiksi Tanskassa on saatu myönteisiä tuloksia palaajien kuntouttavalla toiminnalla. Näin estetään palaajien eristäytyminen. Radikaalista ajattelusta on vielä onneksi matkaa väkivallan tekoihin.

Toinen ryhmä, joka haluaa pelotella meitä, on äärioikeisto. He haluavat itse asiassa samaa kuin ääri-islamistit eli luoda kuvan, että terroristit edustavat kaikkia muslimeja ja lietsoa vihaa keskuudessamme.

Tämä on näkynyt meillä Suomessakin provosoivina kirjoituksina, joissa puhutaan islamin vaaroista. Tavallisten rivimuslimien liittäminen terroritekoihin on epäreilua ja ehdottoman väärin. Syyttömiä ihmisiä ei voi tuomita toisten ihmisten teoista. Oikeusvaltiossa ihmiset tuomitaan tekojensa eikä uskontonsa, sukupuolensa tai kansallisuutensa perusteella.

Jos lähdemme mukaan epärationaaliseen vihaan, annamme periksi niistä hienoista arvoista, jotka tekevät demokratiasta niin arvokkaan. Osoitetaan, että me olemme vihaa suurempia. Rakennetaan vapautta, tasa-arvoa ja suvaitsevaisuutta vaalivaa yhteiskuntaa. Ei kohdisteta vihaa viattomiin riviuskovaisiin, mutta ollaan tiukkoina ääriliikkeiden edessä.

14) **Syytä olla ylpeä Suomesta** (6.12.2015)

Suomi on hieno maa, josta pitää ylpeä. Meillä on tasa-arvoinen ja laadukas koulutus, turvaverkkoja auttamaan väliinputoavia ja puhdas luonto. Meillä on sananvapaus ja demokratia. Erilaisten mielipiteiden edustajat saavat äänensä kuuluviin yhteiskunnan eri foorumeilla ja meillä on vertailujen mukaan maailman vapaimpiin kuuluva lehdistö. Meidän poliittisessa järjestelmässämme on ihmisiä hyvin erilaisista taustoista. Eduskunnassa istuu tällainen maahanmuuttaja, joka välillä sinnitteli opiskelijan tuloilla vielä ennen vaaleja. Politiikkaan pääsyyn ei vaadita oikeaa perhetaustaa tai miljoonatuloja. Sukupuolten tasa-arvo ei ole valmis, mutta siltä pidemmällä kuin suurimmassa osassa maailman maita. Nämä asiat eivät todellakaan ole itsestäänselvyyksiä monessa maassa. Siitä meidän on syytä olla kiitollinen vanhemmille sukupolville, jotka ovat olleet rakentamassa Suomea.

Monet tuntemani ja työn kautta tapaamani ihmiset elävät suuressa epävarmuudessa. Taloustilanne on synkkä. Ihmiset pelkäävät työpaikkojensa puolesta, yt-kierrokset seuraavat toisiaan. Yhä useampi on vaarassa pudota kelkasta. Näihin ongelmiin meidän pitäisi löytää nyt ratkaisu, jotta Suomi pysyy sinä hienona maana, josta voimme olla ylpeitä. Ja olen varma, että me pystymme siihen. Olemme selvinneet vaikeista paikoista aiemminkin, enkä epäile lainkaan, ettemme selviäisi nyt.

Viime kuukausina mielipideilmasto on Suomessa kärjistynyt. Tuntuu, että puhumme toistemme ohi. On pelottavaa, miten paljon vihaa ihmiset tuntevat. Se on hälyttävää. Nyt jos koskaan meidän pitäisi pitää yhtä. Meidän pitäisi muistaa, että olemme kaikki samassa veneessä. Yksikään Suomen ongelma ei ratkea vihan teoilla tai syrjinnällä. Terve kansallinen itsetunto ei perustu toisten poissulkemiseen. Suomalaisuus on niin vahva, että tänne mahtuu monia suomalaisuuksia. Suomalaisuus ei riipu ihonväristä tai nimestä ja suomalaiseksi voi tulla. Maahanmuuttajat eivät ole niitä toisia vaan rakentavat tätä yhteiskuntaa yhtä lailla.

Toivon, että myös poliittisessa päätöksenteossa löytyisi kuuntelun ja yhteistyön henki. Toivon, että hallituksella olisi malttia kuunnella myös opposition ja asiantuntijoiden näkemyksiä, kun se tekee päätöksiä Suomen tulevaisuudesta. Toivon, että meillä olisi malttia olla murentamatta suomalaisen yhteiskunnan hienoja kulmakiviä, kuten laadukasta ja tasa-arvoista koulutusta ja

päivähoitoa. Niistä leikkaamalla voi saada lyhyen tähtäimen säästöjä, mutta pitkällä tähtäimellä ne heikentävät Suomen menestyksen mahdollisuuksia. Pidetään kiinni siitä hienosta, tasa-arvoisesta ja välittävästä yhteiskunnasta, jonka olemme rakentaneet.

Toivotan kaikille rauhallista ja rentouttavaa itsenäisyyspäivää!

15) **Hiljentyä ei voi vihan edessä** (4.2.2016)

"Vitun ylimielinen mutakuono saatana, kannattaa alkaa pakkailee laukkuja ja miettiä, mihin suuntaan lähtee vittuun Suomesta saatana. Nyt on mitta täynnä ylimielisii mutiaisii, ketkä luulee, että ne tulee Suomeen tänne ja selittää meil, miten täällä eletään. Tiedätsä saatana, että nyt alkoi sellainen katupartio, että mutakuonot saa turpaan ympäri Suomea. Ruvetaan kiertelee ja vetää pataan vittu. Voi olla, että mutiaisten tyttäretkin tulevat raiskatuksi ja vaimot. Ei kannattaisi välttämättä kulkee enää missään vittu.
Nii, suomalaisten mitta on täynnä, ymmärrätsä mutanaama?"

Tällainen viesti odotti aamulla puhelinvastaajassa. Vielä vakavampiakin asioita sattui viime yönä. Petäjävedellä pakolaiskeskukseen heitettiin viime yönä polttopullo. Asukkaista puolet olivat lapsia. Vain hyvän tuurin vuoksi kukaan ei loukkaantunut. Psykologiset vahingot sen sijaan ovat varmasti mittavia. Suomi on pitkään ollut pelottavalla tiellä, jossa luotamme vain onneemme, ettei pahemmin käy.

Olemme nyt kohtaamassa aidosti ison haasteen ja tulemme selviämään siitä vain jos rauhalliset ja tavalliset ihmiset pitävät ääntä järjen ja sydämen puolesta. Hiljentyä ei voi. Polttopullomiesten ja räyhääjien äärellä ei pidä hiljentyä.

Monet näyttävät unohtaneen eurooppalaisen arvopohjan ytimen. Euroopan verinen historia on opettanut, että kuka tahansa voi olla seuraava avun tarvitsija. Kaikilla on oikeus hakea turvaa turvallisesta maasta. Siksi sitä sanotaan ihmisoikeudeksi. Oikeusvaltiossa avun hakemisen jälkeen viranomaiset päättävät, onko henkilö kansainvälisen suojelun piirissä.

Minussa ärtymystä herättävät myös pääministerin ja presidentin puheet siitä, ettemme voi auttaa ihmisiä, jotka "tavoittelevat parempaa elintasoa". Emme ole koskaan niin tehneet, taloudelliset lähtökohdat eivät ole koskaan olleet peruste turvapaikan saantiin.

Me emme voi palata vastaajaani soittaneen häirikön maailmaan. Nyt tarvitaan aitoa arvojohtajuutta, joka ravistelisi meidät vaaraallisesta [sic] hiljaisuudesta. Sellainen arvojohtajuus meiltä näyttää puuttuvan tällä hetkellä.

17) **Hyvää itsenäisyyspäivää 99-vuotias Suomi!** (6.12.2016)

Olen aina ollut ylpeä Suomesta. Suomalaisuus on merkinnyt minulle turvallisessa ympäristössä varttumista, mahdollisuutta itseäni toteuttamiseen ja unelmieni saavuttamiseen. Yhtä maailman tasa-arvoisimmista yhteiskunnista. Maata, joka välittää kansalaisistaan.

Meillä kaikilla on omat syymme rakastaa Suomea. Minua huolestuttaa kuitenkin, että vihaiset voimat yrittävät kaapata isänmaallisuuden ja suomalaisuuden itselleen. Suomen rakastamisen ei pidä olla toisten ihmisten vihaamista tai poissulkevaa. Avoimuus, välittäminen ja oikeudenmukaisuus ovat oikeita isänmaallisia arvoja. Minulle kotimaan rakastaminen on sitä, että vaalimme niitä asioita, jotka tekevät Suomesta hienon maan. Oikeusvaltio, maailman vapain lehdistö, laadukas koulutus, sukupuolten tasa-arvo, sosiaalisen liikkuvuuden mahdollisuus ja hyvinvointivaltio. Näitä asioita meidän on puolustettava. Ja niistä meidän pitää olla ylpeä näin itsenäisyyspäivänä.

Minä uskon avoimeen Suomeen, jonka kaikenlaiset ihmiset voivat kokea omakseen. Olen surukseni huomannut, että on paljon suomalaisia, jotka joutuvat päivittäin todistamaan, että ovat suomalaisia ja että kuuluvat tähän yhteiskuntaan. He joutuvat taistelemaan päivittäin sen puolesta, että saisivat olla suomalaisia ja että heitä pidettäisiin ilman taustaoletuksia yhtenä meistä. Minä kuulun myös heihin. Olen surulla kiinnittänyt huomiota, että tämä on yhteiskunta, jossa edes Suomessa syntyneitä ei-perinteisen suomalaisnimisiä ja esimerkiksi tummia suomalaisia ei pidetä aina suomalaisina. Näitä ennakkoluuloja vastaan pitää olla äänekäs. Ei pidä tehdä ollenkaan kompromisseja, kun ihmisiä toiseutetaan.

Mietin paljon, miten Suomi pääsisi eteenpäin syyttelyn ja sulkeutumisen ilmapiiristä, johon se uhkaa vajota. Me tarvitsemme arvojohtajuutta. Päättäjiä, jotka seisovat vankasti inhimillisyyden puolella. Puolustavat välittämisen ja oikeudenmukaisuuden arvoja. Jotka kriisitunnelman lietsomisen sijaan osaavat kannustaa ja nostaa esiin Suomen vahvuuksia. Luovat uskoa tulevaan. Vaikka 99-vuotiaassa Suomessa on paljon korjattavaa, monet asiat ovat hyvin. Suomi on monella mittarilla maailman parhaiten hyvinvoivia maita. Meillä ei ole mitään syytä lamaantua tai vajota apatiaan.

Suomi, olet huippu maa elää ja olet antanut minulle valtavasti. Koen olevani etuoikeutettu, kun saan olla päivittäin kehittämässä tätä maata kansanedustajana.

Hyvää itsenäisyyspäivää 99-vuotias Suomi!