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Pray for the fatherland! Discursive and digital strategies at play in nationalist political blogging

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ABSTRACT

Political blogs have come to constitute important channels for expressing nationalist and anti-immigration political views. The new forms that this rhetoric may take, comprising an intricate intermingling of verbal, digital, (audio-)visual, and communicative elements, present challenges for qualitative research. In this article we propose a way for analysing this “new” nationalist political discourse from a qualitative social psychological perspective. The suggested approach combines analytical procedures from critical discursive and rhetorical psychology with social semiotic and rhetorical studies of images, completed with analytical tools and concepts from narrative psychology and research into online political communication. Using two empirical examples of nationalist and anti-immigration political blog-entries written during the 2015 “refugee crisis,” we show this approach enables the researcher to adequately study how such political messages are conveyed through the multitude of elements provided by the blogs. In so doing, our ultimate goal is to contribute to the analytical capacity of qualitative social psychological research into contemporary political communication and persuasion.

KEYWORDS

Nationalism; persuasion; political blogs; political communication; qualitative research

Introduction

In the largest global refugee crisis since the Second World War, more than one million asylum seekers and migrants from war-laden countries crossed the European borders in 2015 in search for better and safer living conditions (Eurostat 2016). This caused turmoil within the European Union, with conflicting views over the individual member-states’ responsibilities in receiving the newcomers. The situation caused both international and national tensions, dividing the European populations into camps of those who wished to either open or close the national borders to the migrants. The concomitant societal polarisation and the failure of the ruling politicians to find a solution to the situation provided an opportunity for radical right parties across Europe to increase their support (Gutteridge 2015) by appealing to the voters with promises of protecting the nation and its people against the threat of uncontrolled mass immigration.

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In the present study we approach this topic by examining how populist radical right politicians in the Northern European countries of Finland and Sweden strove to appeal to the electorate in the midst of this time of uncertainty by constructing an image of the nation being under threat and of antagonistic divisions between “us,” the nationalists, and “them,” the proponents of multiculturalism. Before the refugee crisis, despite their similarities in terms of societal organisation, geographical location and political system, these two countries had received disproportionate numbers of asylum seekers: in 2014, Sweden received 83 301 and accepted 31 220 asylum applications (Swedish Migration Agency 2014), whereas the corresponding figures for Finland are 3 706 and 1 346 (Finnish Immigration Service 2015). Sweden initially reacted to the upsurge of asylum seekers in 2015 by maintaining its liberal immigration and asylum policy yet retreating from it in 2016, for example, by sharpening border controls and conditions for family reunification. Finland received more than 30 000 asylum applications in 2015, a number 10 times greater than in previous years (Finnish Ministry of the Interior 2016), resulting in a similar subsequent sharpening of the asylum policies to such extents that they were criticised for breaching both the Finnish constitution and international human rights law (Finnish Broadcasting Company 2016; Junkkari 2016).

Our study relies on research that has pointed to the growing importance of social media in the transmission and societal normalisation of radical right and nationalist political rhetoric (e.g., Allen 2011; Lentin & Titley 2011). Second, it is motivated by studies that have pointed to the “new” ways that political arguments may be conveyed through such media (e.g., Baumer, Sueyoshi & Tomlinson 2011; Farrell & Drezner 2008; Sakki & Pettersson 2016; Silva 2016), and to the particular potential of political blogs for voter persuasion and mobilization (Nilsson & Carlsson 2014; Sakki & Pettersson 2016). These topics are especially interesting to study in the context of Finland and Sweden, where the use of social media is significant in global comparison (Carlson, Djupsund & Strandberg 2014) and where such media, including political blogs, have been pivotal for the rise of the radical right in the 21st century (Horsti 2015; Keskinen 2013). Accordingly, our present interest lies in how *political blogs* function as a particular—indeed as a particularly fruitful—sphere for nationalist and radical right communication and persuasion.

Our study is purely qualitative: rather than attempting to demonstrate broad discursive patterns on the basis of a large corpus of data, we have consciously limited the material in order to demonstrate how the analytical approach we propose may be used for studying the details of the blog-discourse without omitting the broader social and historical context that surrounds it (e.g., Edley 2001). With this in mind, however, we join Simon Goodman (2008) in his criticism of traditional divisions between

“quantitative generalizable” and “qualitative nongeneralisable” research. As Goodman proposes, and as research on nationalist, anti-immigration and radical right discourse across time and space has demonstrated (see the following section in this article and Sakki & Pettersson 2016 for an overview), it may be that some of the discursive *functions* that such discourse aims to serve do indeed have a “general” character. This proposition adds value to the ultimate aim of the present article, which is to show the relevance for research into political communication and persuasion of an approach to studying nationalist political blog-discourse that integrates insights from a number of analytical perspectives. Only such an inclusive approach, we shall argue, is able to fully grasp the patchwork of verbal, digital, visual and communicative components that characterises nationalist discourse contained in political blogs.

This article is structured as follows. First, we discuss qualitative social psychological approaches to studying political discourse and propose how we situate our present study to make a contribution to this literature. Second, we describe our research material and methodological approach. Third, we present our analytical steps in detail, including the analysed blog-entries in their entirety. We finish with a discussion about our conclusions and their implications.

Studying nationalist political discourse

Within social psychology nationalist, radical right and anti-immigration political discourse has been extensively studied by critical discursive (CDP) and rhetorical (RP) psychologists (e.g., Billig 1987, 1995; Reicher & Hopkins 2001; Verkuyten 2013; Wood & Finlay 2008). CDP and RP share a focus on the argumentative character of discourse, the mutually influencing relationship with its specific social and historical context, and the concern about the role of discourse in (re)producing societal power inequalities (Taylor 2001). CDP views discourse as action-oriented, that is, as having social and political consequences *regardless of* the speaker’s intentions (Edley 2001; Edwards & Potter 1992). RP, in turn, accords that in order to grasp which views of the world are being defended and which are being denounced, political discourse is always to be examined as part of its argumentative context (Billig 1987).

Critical discursive and rhetorical psychological research has demonstrated that radical right political discourse has become *deracialized* (Augoustinos & Every 2007; Reeves 1983): political aims that are hostile toward immigration and ethnic minorities are justified through reference to cultural (e.g., Richardson & Colombo 2014; Verkuyten 2013; Wood & Finlay 2008) or national (Every & Augoustinos 2007; van Dijk 1993; Wodak & van Dijk 2000) rather than racial incompatibilities. Typically, the speaker associates him- or herself with Western liberal values such as democracy, tolerance,

(gender) equality, freedom of speech, human rights (Wetherell & Potter 1992), and the protection of national interests (e.g., Wodak & van Dijk 1993) against other cultures, predominantly Islam, that become associated with opposing, authoritarian values and depicted as entailing a threat to the nation. Thus avoiding references to notions of race and ethnicity the speaker aims to orientate toward pressures, deriving from societal norms against prejudice, to come across as unbiased (Augoustinos & Every 2007; Billig 1988; Goodman 2014). This renders the discourse ambivalent and even contradictory, yet it is no less capable than overt racist talk of serving discriminatory functions (Augoustinos & Every 2007).

Politicians may deploy various discursive and rhetorical strategies so as to seem rational (e.g., Potter 1996), unbiased (e.g., Billig 1988), and as representing the “common people” (e.g., Rapley 1998). Socially sensitive or controversial issues such as immigration are often expressed through shifts in footing or alignment, referring to whether speakers present claims directly as their own or distance themselves from them for the sake of omitting being held accountable for them (Goffman 1979, 1981; Potter 1996). In order for arguments that are hostile toward immigrants to seem rational and well-founded, the speaker may refer to economic factors—to the “costs of immigration” (e.g., Augoustinos, Tuffin & Rapley 1999; Sakki & Pettersson 2016) and to immigrants as entailing a threat to the welfare-system (e.g., Mudde 2007). Such arguments are often expressed rhetorically in ways that make them hard to refute: in terms of external facts or through *active voicing* (quoting external, seemingly objective “experts” on a matter), as warranted by prevailing consensus (e.g., Potter 1996; Verkuyten 1998), as “self-evident” or part of “common sense knowledge” (Billig 1987; Lynn & Lea 2003), or as narratives of personal experiences. Further, immigration is oftentimes depicted as a matter of urgent threat to the country and its people, which can be accomplished rhetorically through metaphorically referring to immigration and immigrants in terms of floods or waves (e.g., Lynn & Lea 2003; van Dijk 2000) or through using hyperbolic and “extreme-case” formulations (Pomerantz 1986). Immigration-hostile arguments are commonly conveyed in the form of powerful, emotion-provoking stories or narratives that make use of the notion of *temporality* (e.g., Mols & Jetten 2014; Reicher & Hopkins 2001) and tell a story of a glorious past “before” immigration.

Radical right and nationalist discourse is indeed characterized by the aforementioned and other *self-defensive discursive strategies* (van Dijk 1993), including the denial of racism (e.g., Bonilla-Silva & Forman 2000; Condor et al. 2006; van Dijk 1992, 1993) that is often accompanied by a disclaimer (Billig et al. 1988; Hewitt & Stokes 1975) such as “I am not racist, but...” In its most extreme version denial may take the form of *reversal*, whereby the speaker not only denies racism but also accuses the Other, that is, political opponents or immigrants, of it (Goodman & Johnson 2013;

Richardson & Colombo 2014; van Dijk 1993). This strategy serves a further discursive purpose: it creates a positive self- and negative other-presentation (van Dijk 1992, 1995) and allows the speaker to depict him- or herself as acting on behalf of the “common” people against political antagonists who become accused abandoning this “people” in favour of policies aimed to support immigrants (e.g., Mudde 2007; Rapley 1998; Rooyackers & Verkuyten 2012; Sakki & Pettersson 2016). In summary, all these strategies allow for an image to be drawn of the speaker together with “the common people” as the defenders of the nation and as the true victims of racism, while political opponents and immigrants become “othered” and accused of national treachery and racism. Such antagonistic identities may be most effectively constructed in times of societal rupture and crisis (Lynn & Lea 2003), such as during the refugee crisis in 2015.

In recent years, critical discursive and rhetorical research has begun to show interest in online communication, and in how to develop research methods in order to study this “new” public space (e.g., Morison et al. 2015; Jowett 2015). This research shows some support for the notion that online political communication is more extreme (e.g., Billig 2001; Burke & Goodman 2012; Goodman 2007) than its “offline” counterpart. These findings may be at least partly explained by the likelihood that individuals holding strong views are those who are most active in online debates and by the possibility of maintaining a large degree of anonymity (e.g., through the use of nicknames) and thus having less at stake in the online sphere (e.g., Burke & Goodman 2012).

Matters are different within the understudied political blogosphere, however, where the identity of the blogging politician is intentionally and clearly disclosed. Research in the field of communication studies has indeed demonstrated that political blogging has become a new public sphere that with its particular digital and communicative features allows politicians to convey their messages in different discursive ways than traditional media channels (Cammaerts 2009; Silva 2016). Arguments in political blogs can be constructed through an intricate intermingling of verbal, digital, visual, and communicative features that jointly serve to enhance the credibility and persuasive power of the arguments (Sakki & Pettersson 2016; Silva 2016). Unlike social network sites such as Facebook or Twitter, which also are actively used by politicians, the blogosphere allows for considerable individual freedom in terms of layout and structure and is more suitable for conveying long and elaborated accounts than within Facebook, where posts are typically short and compete for readers’ attention in their news flows. Silva (2016) has summarised three ways in which blogs differ from other social networking sites in terms of political communication: first, a blog’s readership does not depend on it being connected through (online or offline) friendship with the blogger, but may constitute complete strangers; second, it

is possible for individual blogs to join together in a community of “like-minded,” linking and referring to each other; and third, blogs have started to develop norms pertaining to how information is shared, for example, in terms of hyperlinking to other web sources, which has rendered them “quasi-institutional” (Coddington 2014, p. 152). In this sense political blogs constitute an important platform for expressing socially sensitive, immigration-hostile, and exclusionary nationalist political views. However, political arguments expressed via social media in general and political blogs in particular become widely circulated further in mainstream media and thus have the potential to influence the broader political and societal debate (e.g., Baumer et al. 2011; Ekdale et al. 2010). With regards to nationalist and even racist political rhetoric, this development has indeed taken place in Finland and Sweden as well as elsewhere in Europe (Mäkinen 2016) and has escalated since the refugee crisis of 2015.

We know from previous research that politicians often use political blogs with the explicit aim of achieving a connection with and persuading potential voters of their political aims (Farrell & Drezner 2008). The readers of political blogs constitute a special kind of audience: it is neither a physically present, visible one nor an “imagined” one (Goffman 1981, p. 138), since it is typically possible for readers to pose questions and engage in a dialogue with the blogging politician. This feature makes the blogs a unique forum for directly engaging readers for political projects. Even though this can be seen as a positive, citizen-engaging, and democracy-promoting feature of the blogs, there is a darker side to it: the role of the journalist as a mediator between politicians and readers of political messages is erased, which allows politicians to exert substantial control over and to manipulate their messages as they will (O’Neill 2010). This feature facilitates the construction of antagonistic identities between internally likeminded groups at the cost of constructive debate between differing political camps.

Methods

In light of the aspects outlined in the previous section, we argue that it is of utmost importance that critical social research is capable of analysing how nationalist arguments contained in political blogs are constructed with the aim of political persuasion and mobilisation. Social psychology has much to offer here in terms of its theoretical knowledge and analytical capacity to disentangle the constructions of antagonistic identities between “us and them” (e.g., Lynn & Lea 2003; van Dijk 2000; Sakki & Pettersson 2016) that such arguments typically rely on. Yet there is a shortage of qualitative social psychological and discursive research exploring how the particular features of nationalist blog-discourse are exploited for politically persuasive aims. This may be precisely due to the methodological barriers of grasping

the maze of verbal, (audio-)visual, and digital components in a political blog. In the present study we wish to fill this methodological gap in qualitative social psychological research by demonstrating how the multifaceted discourse in political blogs may be critically analysed. To this end, we suggest an analytical approach that relies predominantly on insights and analytical procedures from CDP and RP studies of discourse and social semiotic studies of images, and that also incorporates sensitivity of the narrative structure and digital elements of political blog-discourse.

Our reason for proposing such a multimethodological approach is that each perspective provides a crucial contribution to the analysis of discourse in political blogs—discourse that can differ in significant aspects from traditional political rhetoric. Our specific aim is to explore how rhetorical devices and resources that derive from their cultural and historical context, along with possibilities for blogger-reader interaction, co-construct the argument presented in a political blog and add to its persuasive power. As Michael Billig (1988, p. 94) has emphasized, prevailing cultural norms that condemn overt expressions of prejudice force people to go through extensive rhetorical work in order to avoid charges of prejudice when presenting views that could be regarded as such. As research in CDP and RP has been able to show, contemporary expressions of prejudice are indeed characterized by ideological dilemmas and tend to be contradictory and flexible in nature (Augoustinos & Every 2007; Billig et al. 1988). Accordingly, through the perspectives of CDP and RP we mean in this article to explore whether and how politicians seek to abide by cultural norms against prejudice when conveying nationalist and anti-immigration political stances through verbal, (audio-)visual, and digital means in their political blogs.

We argue that the perspectives of CDP and RP can be fruitfully combined with social semiotics as the approaches share important theoretical underpinnings: where CDP and RP focus on the socially constructed and situated character and the rhetorical organisation of discourse and on the *action-orientation* or *functionality*, that is, on the potential social and political implications of discourse (Billig 1987; Edley 2001; Potter & Wetherell 1987), a social semiotic approach similarly views images as capable of constructing meaning by drawing on culturally shared resources and of achieving particular functions (Jewitt & Oyama 2001). Further, the approaches all take as their mission to be *critical*, that is, to demystify and unmask the naturalized, taken for granted or seemingly neutral contents of texts or images; to identify the cultural meanings they implicitly refer to; and to study how these may be used in order to sustain particular power structures or sets of values (e.g., Edley 2001; Penn 2010).

The advantage of combining CDP and RP with social semiotic analyses of images is, we argue, that however rich a discursive or rhetorical analysis of the verbal accounts in blogs may be, it can only ever capture one part of the

message contained in political blogs while failing to adequately consider the important role played by the visual elements in terms of adding persuasive power to the message (e.g., Blair 2004). On the other hand, the meanings of images are anchored in the text that surrounds them (Barthes 1977; Penn 2000); thus, in Jewitt and Oyama's (2001, p. 138) words, "...visual social semiotics can only ever be one element or an interdisciplinary equation which must also involve relevant theories and histories."

When studying political discourse we argue that the aforementioned equation needs further completion: it needs to acknowledge that political argumentation is often conveyed in the form of stories or narratives, where *temporality* is used as a discursive resource (e.g., Jovchelovitch 2002; Mols & Jetten 2014; Reicher & Hopkins 2001) and where antagonistic identities are strengthened through the creation of the "hero" of the story as opposed to the countering (political) position of the "villain" (Propp 1968). Such narrative structures have important missions to complete in the context of political persuasion and mobilisation: they are more capable than "factual" language of appealing to readers' emotions (e.g., László 2002; Törrönen 2000), and they allow for the creation of a strong sense of connection between the speaker or writer and the audience (e.g., Jovchelovitch 2002; Reicher & Hopkins 2001). Hence, in order to study these constructions we incorporate into our analytical approach tools from those narrative psychological research perspectives that share our main approaches' emphasis on the socially embedded nature of discourse—in this case, of stories or narratives—and on how such narratives construct particular meanings (e.g., Bruner 1991; Gergen & Gergen 1988; Greimas & Courtes 1979). Finally, and in order to complete our methodological picture, we seek the help of research into the use of digital tools, such as collaborative features and hyperlinks, used in political blogging (Baumer et al. 2011; Silva 2016), whereby we can effectively study the central role these tools may play in the case of nationalist political blogging. We hope to show that an analysis conducted through this multi-methodological approach is able to provide valuable contributions to qualitative social psychological research about how political blogs may be used for purposes of nationalist political communication and persuasion.

Material

In order to realize our present endeavour—to analyse the multifaceted messages contained in nationalist political blogs—we chose to focus on a small data-corpus¹, yet one that is rich in terms of rhetorical complexity. First, given our interest in studying nationalist political appeals in the context

¹The material selected for this study is part of a larger data corpus of a research project exploring the blog discourse of members of the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats during 2007–2015.

of the 2015 refugee crisis, the initial criterion was for the blog-entries to be written during this time. Second, since a central aim of ours was to illustrate the vast array of ways that political messages may be expressed through blogs, we sought for blog-entries that would capture the “opposite poles” of this array. To this end, we chose two entries written in autumn 2015, one of which was structured as a traditional narrative, and the other constituting an illustrative example of how fragmented and multilayered the discourse in political blogs can be. Third, since we wished to stress the impact that discourse contained in political blogs may have on the societal and political debate in a country at large, we chose to focus on the blog-writings of politicians who have become especially (in)famous for their arguments against immigration and multiculturalism. The bloggers that, in our view, best correspond to this description, are two populist radical right politicians: Olli Immonen, MP of the Finns Party (*Perussuomalaiset*, FP) in Finland, and Thoralf Alfsson, former MP of the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*, SD) in Sweden. The political parties they represent have both transformed from marginal parties, with support-figures below 5% only some 10 years ago, into major political actors in their respective countries: the FP holds position in the Finnish national government since 2015, and the SD are, with a popular support of approximately 20%, among the three biggest parties in Sweden. The parties have very different historical roots: the FP stems from the former Finnish Rural Party, whereas the SD were formed by members of extreme-right and neo-Nazi groupings. Yet Jungar and Jupskås (2014) have argued that the FP and SD, despite these different historical legacies, have converged ideologically into populist radical right parties with socio-culturally authoritarian, socio-economically centrist, and ethnically nationalistic worldviews that sees immigration and multiculturalism as profound threats to the nation. Indeed, the parties were the strongest promoters of sharpening the immigration and asylum policies in their respective countries after the 2015 crisis, which became, as we have noted, a matter in which they succeeded. The two politicians whose blogs we have chosen to analyse are well known for their blatant hostility towards immigration and multiculturalism, with statements causing Immonen being exempted from the FP parliamentary group in 2015 and Alfsson being accused of hate-speech against Somalis in 2013. The blogs of both politicians have large readerships², and their writings have reached not only mainstream media, but have also often been quoted and discussed in a positive manner in far right and anti-immigration online discussion fora (e.g., *Hommforum* in Finland and *Avpixlat* in Sweden), and engendered criticism within anti-racist social media and online news sites (e.g., *Raster* in Finland and *Expo* in Sweden).

²According to the statistics on Alfsson’s blog, the blog receives approximately 50 000 unique visitors monthly. Immonen’s blog displays no visitor statistics, but it is liked by 5 800 people on Facebook.

Finally, our reason for ending up concentrating on only two single blog-entries is that in so doing we are able, first, to illustrate the whole storyline of the blog-entries, and second, to demonstrate in detail how the analytical steps we propose may be taken.

Analytical procedure

We approached the material by applying the insights and tools provided by CDP, RP, and NA for studying the co-construction and the discursive, rhetorical, and narrative organisation of discourse. In approaching the blogs' (audio-)visual elements we relied on social semiotic (e.g., Jewitt & Oyama 2001; Kress & van Leeuwen 1996) analyses of how meaning is embedded in images and on Barthes' (1977) theory of how words and images are interlinked. Our analytical procedure involved three distinct yet intertwined stages, wherein we explored the content, form, and function (Sakki & Pettersson 2016) of the verbal and visual messages. As it proceeded, our analysis moved back and forth through these stages, which we describe in detail below.

First, we thoroughly familiarized ourselves with the *content* of both the blog-pages and the two blog-entries we had chosen for analysis. At this stage our aim was to identify the patterns, that is, the consistency and variability within and between accounts in the material (e.g., Potter & Wetherell 1987). Furthermore, from a narrative perspective, we focused on the elements of the blog-entry's orientation (e.g., characters and their positions in a story, setting, time-aspects), event-sequences (e.g., turning points), and evaluation (e.g., narrator's evaluative judgements) (e.g., Bruner 1991; Greimas & Courtes 1979, László 2002). This stage also included analysing the literal or *denotative* meaning (Barthes 1977) of the blogs' (audio-)visual elements, including the composition, colours, and setting of the image; the actors and their poses and activity; and the relationship between the actors and the viewers (Jewitt & Oyama 2001; Kress & van Leeuwen 1996).

Second, we investigated the *form* of the blog-entries by identifying the rhetorical devices, for example, consensus warranting, active voicing (Potter 1996), footing (Goffman 1979, 1981), and resources such as rhetorical commonplaces and liberal principles (Potter 2012; Wetherell & Potter 1992) that the bloggers exploited in order to build their claim and enhance the credibility of themselves as speakers. In connection, we analysed the expressive meanings and associations, that is, the *connotations* (Barthes 1977), that the (audio-)visual material took in the context of the blog-entry, examining how these meanings as well as the blogs' digital and communicative elements contributed to the construction of the message (e.g., formal appearance of the blogger in a picture indicating position of political responsibility, use of hyperlinks). Here, we also paid attention to the ways in which the visual

material contributed to the rhetorical work of the verbal message (Blair 2004; Hill 2004) in the blog.

Third, following Billig (1987) and Edley (2001), in order to elaborate on the broader discursive *functions* of the messages we examined the blog-entries as part of their argumentative, that is, their social and political context. Concomitantly, we elaborated on how the concrete (denotation) and associative (connotation) meanings of the (audio-)visual material became tied together in ideological or “*mythical*” layers of meaning (e.g., individualism, freedom, Finnishness) (Barthes 1977).

In the following section we present our detailed analysis following screenshots of the two blog-entries. Being fluent in Finnish and Swedish, we translated both blog-entries originally written in Swedish and Finnish into English. We copy-pasted this English translation onto the original text, and numbered the lines in order for the readers to be able to follow our analyses. The original Finnish and Swedish texts can be found in the appendix of this article.

Analysis

The Finnish blog-entry: A “traditional narrative”

Our first example of a nationalist political blog-entry is written by Olli Immonen, MP of the Finns Party³ (see Figure 1). The blog-entry, “Multiculturalism destroys national unity,” was written on November 17, 2015, during the fall when a record-breaking number of asylum-seekers arrived in Finland in conjunction with the refugee crisis. Earlier that fall, Immonen had been expelled from the FP parliamentary group because of a Facebook post in which he called people to war against multiculturalism, and which caused huge public outrage. The blog-entry below was written only some weeks after Immonen’s return to politics.

Content

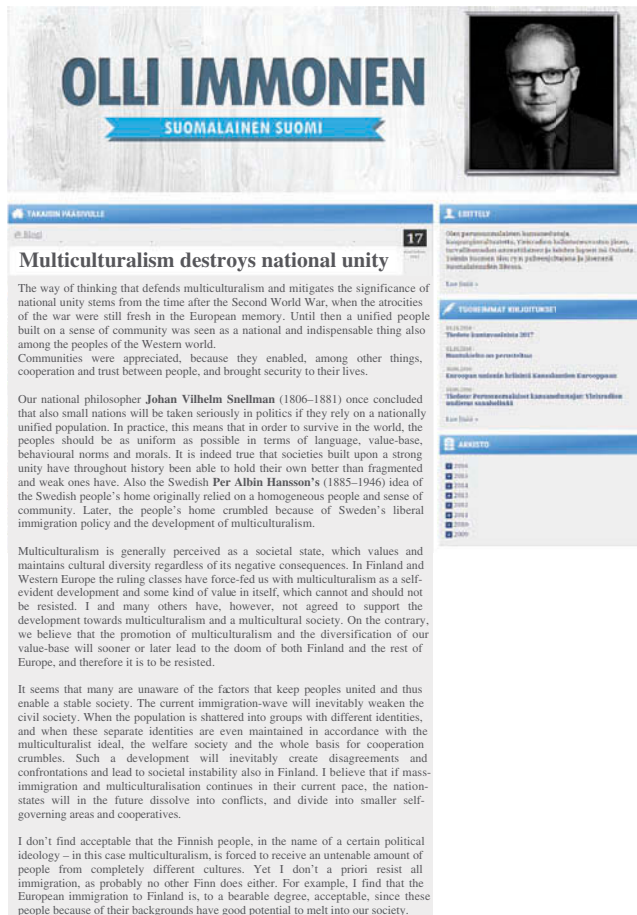
At the top of the blog, Olli Immonen’s name, his position as MP and city councilman, and motto “a Finnish Finland” are introduced. To the right of these verbal elements is a close-up picture of the blogger, the only picture on the entire web page. Immonen smiles slightly and his gaze is directed toward the camera. He wears glasses and is dressed in a white shirt and black suit.

The effect-colour of the blog is blue. The verbal and visual elements at the top of the blog are placed on a background that resembles a tree-trunk. This constitutes the visual centre of the blog, grasping the reader’s immediate attention, as the upper part of a space weighs more than the lower, and a

³<http://olliimmonen.net/blogi/monikulttuurisuus-tuhoaa-kansallisen-yhtenaisyden/>

visual object looks heavier when situated on the right (Arnheim 1974). Immonen's motto and the main links of the blog-entry, placed under this visual centre, are written in white inside a blue background.

The blog-entry entitled *Multiculturalism destroys national unity* constitutes a continuous narrative, divided into 10 paragraphs, with a clear beginning, middle, and end that are temporally related to the past, present, and future. The first two paragraphs focus on the origins of the story, rooted in the past. First, the main *villain* of the narrative, multiculturalism, is introduced, and its birth is located to the end of WW2 (lines 1–5). The blogger describes how everything was better in the past: people valued communities and trusted each other (lines 6–7). The narrative then delves deeper into the past, laying the ground for the upcoming story by drawing on the teachings of national philosophers (lines 8–17). The next six paragraphs form the middle of the story. Here, the blogger presents the main helpers of the protagonist (who still remains implicit), “I and many others,” as an active



The image shows a screenshot of a blog post on a website. At the top, there is a header with the name "OLLI IMMONEN" in large blue letters and "SUOMALAINEN SUOMI" in a blue banner below it. To the right is a portrait of Olli Immonen, a man with glasses and a dark suit. Below the header, the blog post title "Multiculturalism destroys national unity" is displayed. The main text of the post is visible, discussing the impact of multiculturalism on national unity and referencing historical figures like Johan Vilhelm Snellman and Per Albin Hansson. The page layout includes a sidebar on the right with a list of "TUOHIKALAT KÄYJÄT" (Recent posts) and a "ASIAKAS" (Customer) section at the bottom right.

Figure 1. Blog entry by Olli Immonen.

National identity has a vital role to play in determining the fate of the people. A sound national identity is a strong unifying force, which strengthens the community, maintains the spirit of investing in the common good, and enables the endurance of the nation-state. Precisely because of this, obscuring the significance of a national identity has played a vital role in the mission of the multicultural elite to destroy nationalist thinking. It is clear that they have wanted to pave the way for the multicultural societal experiment by weakening the national identity.

In reality a culturally too diverse and fragmented society is in many ways untenable. Many good things occur only in monocultures, such as the one we Finns were able to live in almost until the beginning of the 1990s. Certain features, such as community, trust in your fellow human beings, good manners, a safe living-environment, common practices, the ability to intuitively interpret other people's communication, equality, tolerance, freedom of religion, democracy and shared understandings of right and wrong only appear in monocultures, not in multicultures.

Multiculturalism tramples the above-mentioned important values and features, and eventually replaces them with self-centeredness, distrust for your fellow human beings, insecurity, lower levels of happiness, intolerance, religious and ideological extremism and ethnic nepotism. These values have rendered many countries almost impossible to live in. An example of a multicultural and scattered area is South Africa, which was destroyed by ongoing ethnic tensions. Also the tidal wave of immigration that is overflowing Europe is a consequence of religious disputes in the countries of origin of the immigrants. When they reach Europe, they inevitably bring this restlessness with them.

In order to secure good living conditions and the right to a Finnish identity for coming generations, we have to resolutely resist the harmful mass-immigration and multiculturalism, and defend the evidently successful Finnish living-sphere, way of life, monoculture and unified people.

Finland needs protectors. When national unity is destroyed, a return to the past is not necessarily possible. In my view, it is precisely nationalism and strengthening of the national identity that is the solution to the segmentation that is currently torturing our people.

       1.8.1. herättää tyhää tästä. Ole kauneus: enimmän.

Figure 1. (Continued)

agent in opposition to the threat of multiculturalism, imposed on Finnish and Western European people by the helpers of the story's antagonist—the ruling class (lines 18–26).

The blogger continues to describe the current problematic times and their related concerns: “the current immigration-wave” (line 28) and “multiculturalisation” (line 34) will weaken and fragment civil society and cause conflicts and confrontations between people. The blogger describes the untenable amount of people from foreign cultures that the Finnish people are forced to receive and makes clear his opposition to the prevailing immigration policy (lines 37–42). As a saviour, that is, as a way of solving this situation national identity is introduced as the *hero* of the story: it is a unifying force that strengthens a sense of community among the people but that is threatened by the “multicultural elite” (lines 46–49). The following two paragraphs deepen the division between “good” monoculture and “bad” multiculturalism, attaching the former to liberal, democratic, and community-enhancing values (lines 51–57) and the latter to their opposites (lines 58–66).

The last two paragraphs, the end of the blog-entry, are oriented to the future and to calls for action. The blogger warns his readers about the lurking

destruction of national unity and calls upon them to protect Finland (lines 71). He presents his aim—to defend Finnish identity and the idea of a united people (lines 67–70)—and the way to reach it: resisting multiculturalism and mass-immigration (lines 68–69) and strengthening nationalism and national identity (lines 72–74).

Form

Building the case. In order to build his claim, the blogger initially makes use of the rhetorical device of *category entitlement* (Potter 1996). That is, he refers to the philosopher J.V. Snellman, a main figure in the 19th century Finnish nationalist movement, and to the politician P.A. Hansson, father of the Swedish welfare state or “people’s home” (lines 8–17) and to their views about the importance of national unity and homogeneity. According to Potter (1996, p. 133), category entitlement refers to “. . . the idea that certain categories of people, in certain contexts, are treated as knowledgeable,” and this entitlement is not necessarily simple or “given” but may need to be worked up. In our present context, that of a nationalist political argument, considered heroes and symbols of their nations, Snellman and Hansson become worked up as primary representatives of the national category, and connected with positive connotations of the category “nation” (Potter 1996, p. 135). Thus the category entitlement of these two figures is built on their legitimate status as founders of the Finnish and Swedish nations, allowing the blogger to use them as authorities who have a say on the importance of national unity. The use of historical figures as entitled and knowledgeable also brings forth a temporal dimension of “national unity”: it seems as if it always existed.

From a rhetorical perspective, the claim of the blog-entry is constructed through counter-argumentation (Billig 1987). As evident already in the title, the argumentation is based upon categorization of and binary opposition between the benefits of national unity and the costs of multiculturalism. These are constructed as mutually exclusive through contrasting, parallel structures: labels such as equality, tolerance, and freedom of religion are attached to national identity (lines 51–57); inequality, intolerance, and extreme religious thinking are attached to multiculturalism (lines 58–66).

The binary opposition between nationalism and multiculturalism is further constructed through the blogger’s establishment of relations and causal inferences between concepts that are semantically related, yet different. The blogger initially uses vague concepts such as “national unity” (line 2), “unified people” (line 3), “sense of community” (line 15), “homogeneous people” (line 15), “national identity” (lines 43, 44, 47, 49, 73), “nationalist thinking” (line 48), and “monoculture” (lines 51, 56, 70), later moving on to discussing the “Finnish living-sphere” (line 69), “Finnish way of life” (lines 69–70), “Finnish identity” (line 69), “Finland” (line 71), and “nationalism”

(line 72). In this way, these different concepts become united under one same meaning—national identity—constructed as a category in direct opposition to multiculturalism.

This opposite end of the binary is constructed between the concepts of “multiculturalism” and “mass immigration” or “waves of immigration” (lines 28, 33–34, 38, 58, 63–64, 68–69), the latter ones referring to the prevailing refugee crisis. The use of such *metaphoric language* increases the sense of threat attached to the concept of immigration. Several studies show that the process of migration is often characterised in “water” terms (Ana 1997; Charteris-Black 2006; van der Valk 2003). These metaphors can be politically persuasive because they are used to draw upon common-sense understandings of the properties of water (Charteris-Black 2006). Such metaphors of water as “flow,” “flood,” and “tide” reinforce the belief that immigrants are a threat to the nation-state and to sovereign control since water is, as a liquid substance, difficult both to stop and to contain (Charteris-Black 2006; Van der Valk 2003). In the context of the 2015 refugee crisis, with massive media-exposure of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea by boat in order to reach Europe, the water metaphors may easily evoke such associations and appear especially concrete, sensory, and emotion-provoking.

Building the blogger’s credibility. The bulk of the blog-entry is written in passive tense. When active tense occurs it is used to provide the blogger with credibility, allowing him to present himself as an active and concerned politician distinguished from the political elite (lines 22–26, 34–35, 39–42). Through *consensus warranting* the blogger gives the impression that not only he but also an entire political movement opposes multiculturalism (lines 22, 24). The repeated use of the pronouns “we” (lines 23, 51, 68) and “our” (lines 8, 24, 42, 74) enlarges the ingroup to include the entire national group of Finns (Billig 1995).

The blogger goes through extensive rhetorical work in order to manage the ideological dilemma between delivering a nationalist and anti-immigration message, while managing to appear unbiased and rational (Billig et al. 1988). He initially uses a classic disclaimer (Billig et al. 1988; Hewitt & Stokes 1975): he does not a priori resist *all* immigration (lines 39–42). He continues by implicitly distinguishing between “bad” asylum seekers, that is, those who come mainly from Africa and the Middle East, and “good” immigrants, that is,, Westerners. The way in which the blogger manages to warrant the exclusion of the former group is through references to *cultural* rather than racial differences, alleging that the former group is not compatible with Finnish culture and society, whereas the latter is compatible (Every & Augoustinos 2007; Wetherell & Potter 1992). The removal of notions of race from such discriminatory statements serves effectively to deny that such statements would be racist (Goodman 2014).

The message of the blog-entry is co-constructed by various verbal and visual features that complete each other. The picture of the blogger with his formal appearance and targeted gaze transmits an image of a trustworthy and well-informed politician. The short presentation below describes him as an MP, a city councilman, a professional of safety-services, and a father of a young boy. He is chairman of *Finnish Sisu* and member of the *Finnish Alliance*, both nationalist movements. Besides positioning the blogger as a politician, the four former characteristics underline the importance of family and security values, whereas the two latter position him and his mission as on behalf of “Finnishness.” Finally, the dominant blue-white colours work, in Barthes (1977) words, as connotation for the Finnish flag and national identity—indeed for the entire nation. In line with what Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002) propose, the blue-white colours of the blog could be considered as “colours of grammar”: from a Finnish perspective these colours are so naturalised that they may even pass unnoticed, yet become automatically associated with Finnishness and national identity (Hakoköngäs & Sakki 2016).

Function

To elaborate further on the functions of the blog-entry, the analyses of its content and form must be discussed in the argumentative and social context, particularly the 2015 refugee crisis with the unexpectedly large amount of asylum seekers arriving in Finland. The entry’s central rhetorical device of counter-argumentation functions as a persuasive tool, since the contrast between “bad” multiculturalism and “good” nationalism makes it easier for the audience to choose the “correct” alternative. The rhetorical power of this strategy is further strengthened by the narrative structure of the blog-entry, which allows for creating linkages between concepts whose semantic similarities are far from self-evident. Through the conceptual journey from “national unity” to “Finnish identity,” “Finland,” and “nationalism,” the populist radical right blogger manages in an intricate way to define the meaning of “Finnishness” as contrary to that of multiculturalism.

Another rhetorical association that the blogger draws, and one that is crucial for grasping the function of the text, is the one made between “multiculturalism” and “mass-immigration.” At many instances (lines 28, 33–34, 38–39, 68–69), the blogger explicitly draws an association between the two concepts, conveying the latter as the actual threat. Thus, “multiculturalism” provides him with a way of talking about a politically most sensitive topic: the “mass-immigration” hitting Finland. It is important to consider that the blog-entry was written only three months after the blogger’s controversial Facebook post calling for a fight against multiculturalism, leading to massive demonstrations across Finland and to the blogger’s resignation from the FP parliamentary group. Upon his resignation, Immonen

announced that he will continue to write, but shall be more careful in the future (Finnish Broadcasting Company 2015).

Immonen's blog-entry is an ideal illustration of what Isabela and Norman Fairclough (2012) would call practical reasoning: it motivates its readers to act. It explicitly calls for action by using we-form (lines 67–70) and justifies this action by saying that “Finland needs protectors” (line 71). The nationalistic message is enhanced by the blue-white colours, symbolising the Finnish flag, and on a mythological or ideological level (Barthes 1977), the nation and Finnishness. Finally, *temporality* is used as a rhetorical resource: the “good” is anchored in the past, depicting the blogger's idea as no mere a fantasy—things were indeed better before (lines 3–7, 8–15, 51–52, 71). By contrast, the present is used to remind the reader about the timeliness of the threat (lines 28, 63) and the future to motivate the reader to act on behalf of nationalism (lines 24–25, 32, 33–36, 65–66, 68). Thus, the promotion of nationalism as the right course of action becomes the central purpose of this blog-entry.

In sum, the argumentation in this blog-entry strives to manage the ideological dilemma (Billig et al. 1988) between reasonableness and opposition to immigration by building a binary opposition between national unity and multiculturalism. This opposition, together with the logically proceeding narrative structure, enables the linking together of semantically related yet different concepts. The entry departs from broad and ill-defined topics such as “national unity” and “sense of community” that as the narrative unfolds become specified more concretely as Finnishness and nationalism. Thus, the different contents and meanings of the concepts become constructed as interconnected, kindred oppositions to multiculturalism. The blog-entry's structure as a traditional, continuous narrative also enables the use of temporality as a resource in the blogger's nationalist argument: the construction of a glorious past *before* multiculturalism, a present threatened *by* multiculturalism and future that may still be *saved from* multiculturalism.

The Swedish blog-entry: A conglomerate of verbal, digital and audio-visual elements

Let us turn now to our second example of a nationalist political blog entry, in this case, written by the Swedish SD-politician Thoralf Alfsson⁴ (see Figure 2). The blog entry, entitled *Pray for Sweden and the fatherland*, was posted on All Saints' Day, October 30, 2015, during the autumn of the refugee crisis and the year when Sweden received a record 163 000 asylum applications (Swedish Migration Agency 2016). Unlike our Finnish example, which as we have seen was formulated as a monologue in traditional

⁴<http://thoralf.bloggplatsen.se/2015/10/30/11207705-be-for-sverige-och-fosterlandet/>



Thoralf Alfsson
Sverigedemokrat från Kalmar

Direktlänk till inlägg 30 oktober 2015

PRAY FOR SWEDEN AND THE FATHERLAND

By Thoralf Alfsson - Friday 30 Oct 22:36 Comment (47)

All Saints' Day is here and I'm guessing that many are thinking of their passed relatives and perhaps pay a visit to the cemetery to light a candle. I have done so.

Sadly, I think that very many are very worried about the future that probably awaits us. Many have probably noted the text Jimmie Åkesson wrote on Facebook on Thursday. In the text there is a quote by a song written by Simon Ådahl. Today, I have listened to it and written the following on Facebook.

I understand why Jimmie Åkesson thinks the song by Simon Ådahl runs like a projectile straight into the heart. I had never heard the song before but today I've listened to it many times and it only grows stronger each time.

It completely expresses the sorrow I feel about the development that is taking place in my fatherland and the desperation I feel when I think of my children and grandchildren who won't be able to grow up in the Sweden that I've had the privilege to see.

Now All Saints' Day begins! Sit down for a minute and listen to the text to 'I will pray for Sweden'.

I will pray for Sweden and my family!

Jag tänker be för Sverige - Simon Ådahl LYRICS

Ställ en fråga till mig...

Skicka fråga

727 besvarade frågor

Omröstning

Tror du på en havsnivåhöjning på ca 1 meter till år 2100 enligt prognoser från SMHI?

Ja

Nej

Vet ej

Se resultat

Kalender

Figure 2. Blog entry by Thoralf Alfsson.

narrative form, the following case is far more complex and fragmentary in terms of its structure and content.

Content

Heading Alfsson's blog is a picture-banner representing the castle of Kalmar, accompanied by the text "Thoralf Alfsson – Sweden Democrat from Kalmar." On the upper right-hand side is a small close-up picture of the blogger, smiling toward the camera, and dressed in a white shirt and black jacket. Beneath it is information on how readers can pose questions, as are the blogger's political affiliations and contact details, links to anti-immigration blogs and websites, and to the web and Facebook pages of the SD. The blog features various channels for reader-blogger interaction, for example, commenting upon entries and emailing or posing online questions to the blogger.

The pc-fascists immediately breathed morning-air and started 'attacking' Simon Ådahl for his 10-year-old text, and Jimmie Åkesson for using it in his Facebook-post about the state of the fatherland and the disgusting murders in Trollhättan. But within the Christian world there are still those who truly stand up for the equal value of all humans. Tommy Dahlman wrote a forceful text in his blog.

'My feeling is that Swedish Christianity continues to build conflicts and increasing segregation between Christians, Christian churches and reverends by becoming ever more party-political. Part of the Christians maintain a which-hunt against a parliamentary party and are thereby indirectly designating thousands of individuals as suspects, which is a dangerous road. When Christian individuals are selected in the congregations on the basis of their political colour, it amounts to nothing but Christian racism. And the last days' bustling around Jimmie Åkesson's positive statement about a Christian songwriter's work shows where we are heading if this is allowed to continue.'

So nice to read that someone external actually dares to defend Jimmie Åkesson with so strong and frank words. May Tommy Dahlman be honoured for this.

What is going on in Sweden now is simply sad. That we have a government with a large number of ministers who don't take responsibility for our fatherland is remarkable to say the least, and the question is if it shouldn't be called betraying the fatherland. This week a tough debate in the opinion-section in Barometern five years ago between the footballer Henrik Rydström and the author Anders Johansson came to my mind. Like the song-text, this text is even timelier today.

'The footballer Henrik Rydström has in his blog in this paper noted me and my opinions about the big question that is called 'immigration-policy', even though I haven't spoken about these issues in many years. Despite sloppy reading he takes himself the liberty of calling me 'old bastard', something also Rydström will become, quicker than he knows. I want to return his little amiability by depicting him as a sparkler that sparks for a while. Despite his attacks he claims to be opposed to all forms of discrimination, including age-discrimination. Evidently, logics is not his thing. Now I read another statement that goes: "The multicultural per se can never be a problem. It is only our attitude towards it that can. Or rather, people like Anders Johansson and the hideous views they stand for". I assume Rydström means 'view of humanity' and not eyesight? He ends by stating that he is taking a 'hell of a stance'. The arguments are replaced by invectives at the level of primal-screams. Rydström's art style is a curious mixture of gorilla at the door to a pub and a perky moralist with pointing-sticks.'

Anders Johansson continues with concluding something I often think about.

*'Here I conclude that Sweden for many decades has come across as the world's most immigration-liberal country, with uniquely big quotas and seldom rejecting migrants. **Today immigration has reached such a magnitude that one with slightly adjusted terms can claim that Sweden is the only country in the world that funds its own colonisation.** Not one single opinion-poll supports this development. 'Now we have come to a situation where we have to choose between multiculturalism and welfare'. That is a claim by a Social Democratic politician in Holland, but is even more relevant in Sweden.'*

'Coexistence with strange cultures is never uncomplicated. Clearly the enormous immigration, which tends to increase, is a fatal question for our country. When future will look back at what happened in our time, while the situation still could have been managed, it will conclude that the majority of the Swedish journalists not only remained silent but also recklessly haunted the persons who wanted to raise a debate. In circumstances where the Swedish municipalities' economy often is so bad that they could be considered bankrupt if they were acting in the market, the influx of people who need public funds increases. Thereby, Sweden is taking on a support-burden that already in a few years will turn out to be unbearable, and in practice destroy what is left of the public sector's service society. Quicker than we can forebode the Swedish secular society with its arduous achievements, where social democracy once played such a significant role, will be set to hard and hopeless tests. We need a government that deals with the reality that exists behind all hypocritical proclamations, including a humane immigration-policy. To the politicians I want to say: stop being so bloody good at others' expense!'

I wish all my readers a nice and fine All Saints' Day!

The screenshot shows a portion of a Swedish blog page. At the top right, there is a calendar for October 2015. Below the calendar are navigation buttons: '<< Oktober 2015 >>'. There are also buttons for 'Tidigare år' (Previous year) and 'Sök i bloggen' (Search in the blog). Below these are buttons for 'Senaste inläggen' (Latest posts) and 'Senaste kommentarerna' (Latest comments). The 'Senaste inläggen' section lists several recent posts with titles like 'PINSAM ALLIANS I KALMAR', 'KLIMATALARMIERTERNA HAR FÅTT HÄRJA FRITT', 'KALMAR SLOTS OCH STADS HISTORIA', 'S-HYCKLERI', 'VAD TÄNKER NORRMÄNNEN OM SVERIGE', 'FLYKTINGBYN I PÄRYS STOPPAS TILLFÄLLIGT', 'SORGLIGT MED DET FORTSÄTTA GODA HATET', 'HÄR RÄDDNINGSTJÄNSTEN MÖRKAT KÄLLARMOSKEN I FYRA ÅR', '24 HUSVAGNAR BESLAGTAGNA', 'NATIONAL PEN HAR KONTAKTAT MIG', 'DET GODA HATET DEL 4, PELLE FRYLESTAM OCH GALLERI SVÄLAN', 'DET GODA HATET, DEL 3', 'DET GODA HATET, DEL 2', 'NATIONAL PEN', 'DET GODA HATET, DEL 1', and 'PROCENTEN'. The 'Senaste kommentarerna' section shows a comment starting with 'Utvändigskoefficienten är 0,00021 per grad för vatte...'. At the bottom, there is a comment starting with 'Tror att proffret blir miljöminister i nästa regering...'. There is also a comment starting with 'Wallström om Berlingdådet: Vi ska inte vara rädda! Vi kan...'. At the very bottom, there is a comment starting with 'Jag känner precis igen denna...'

The fragmentary blog-entry has received 47 comments and is an assemblage of verbal (including intertextual), audio-visual, and digital elements. It begins with the blogger's account of his visit to the graveyard earlier that day, where he paid respects to and lit candles for passed relatives (lines 1–2). The topic thereafter switches to a claim that the future of Sweden is in danger. Alfsson quotes his own Facebook entry from the same day, where he discusses the song "I will pray for Sweden" (Swe: "Jag tänker be för Sverige") that perfectly captures his worries for the future of his nation (lines 5–15).

He then encourages his readers to listen to the song, which is presented as a YouTube-video with lyrics. The song follows minor tone and conveys a gloomy image of Sweden: homeless people, failed relationships, suffering children, open violence, and killings have become reality, whereas morals,

ethics, and Christian values have fallen into oblivion. It calls for lighting candles and praying for Sweden, the “dear fatherland.” The video depicts a white candle whose flame slowly burns during the course of the song, and whose contrast to the black background that surrounds it is distinct.

Below the video the blogger accuses “pc [politically correct] fascists” of having attacked the songwriter because of the lyrics and the SD party leader Jimmie Åkesson for mentioning the song on Facebook (lines 16–18). Alfsson concludes there still are some Christians who “believe in the equal value of all humans” and then presents a link to a blog-entry by the author Tommy Dahlman (line 20). Below it Alfsson includes a quote from Dahlman’s blog-entry (lines 21–28) that argues that Christians and employees of the Swedish church are showing an unreasonable hostility toward the SD. After thanking Dahlman for this writing, Alfsson depicts the current Swedish government as irresponsible and as betraying the nation (lines 31–33). Subsequently, he includes an extract from a newspaper debate between footballer Henrik Rydström (proponent of multiculturalism) and author Anders Johansson (opponent thereof) (lines 37–49, 51–71).

The blogger remarks that Johansson brings up concerns he often ponders about himself: that immigration to Sweden has taken uncontrollable proportions, that the country’s immigration policy is among the most liberal in the world, and that Sweden is financing its own colonisation (lines 52–55). A quote inside the quote by Johansson concludes that a choice must be made between multiculturalism and welfare (line 56; see, e.g., Norocel 2016 for more extensive elaborations of this “welfare chauvinist” discourse). Without further comments, the blogger ends his entry by wishing his readers a nice All Saints’ Day.

Form

Building the blogger’s credibility. Already in the title “Pray for Sweden and the fatherland” the blogger directly addresses his readership, the main recipients of the blog-entry. Throughout the blog-entry, whenever the blogger himself is in the active voice, he maintains this connection with the readers. Specifically, he does so through a *personal narrative* built on concrete and detailed personal experiences that, in contrast to more abstract accounts, function to increase the plausibility and factuality of an argument (Potter 1996). Through such a narrative, the blogger explains how the song “I will pray for Sweden” has touched him and how he is praying for his country and his family.

In order to strengthen his own credibility the blogger exploits many of the classic rhetorical tools we have familiarised ourselves with above. One such tool is that of *consensus warranting* (Potter 1996; lines 3–4), whereby the blogger implies that his worries concerning the nation are widely shared. He continues by engaging actively in shifting *footing* or alignment (Goffman

1979, 1981): rather than expressing his argument here and now, the blogger does so through reports of his own (lines 7–15, 50) and predominantly others' (lines 4–5, 21–28, 37–49, 51–71) previous utterances, which allows him to distance himself from the argument that is being delivered. In Goffman's (1979, p. 144) terms, the blogger assumes the position of a mere *animator* and *author* of the argument: he delivers "facts" that have been given by someone else (in Goffman's words: the *principal*, whose stance the talk represents), and thus he cannot easily be held accountable for the argument. What both the rhetorical creation of an apparent consensus and the different footings accomplish is to decrease the air of subjectivity and enhance the seemingly objective and "already established" nature of the blogger's argument that multiculturalism is destructive. This impression, in turn, allows the blogger's to claim a comfortable position vis-à-vis societal taboos against prejudice (Augoustinos & Every 2007; Billig 1988): since he does not engage in any personal, blatant expressions of prejudice, he cannot easily be accused of holding such views.

The blogger consolidates his credibility through constructing a positive representation of the Self and the ingroup (van Dijk 1992, 1995)—opponents of immigration: "we" are courageous and strong (lines 29–30) and stand up for liberal egalitarian values (line 19; Wetherell & Potter 1992). By contrast, a negative picture is drawn of the Other—political adversaries and proponents of multiculturalism (lines 16, 31–33). This is accomplished further through the quoted anti-immigration debater's description of the pro-immigration footballer's argumentation as "gorilla-like" (lines 47–49), which resembles Haslam's (2006) conception of *dehumanisation* of the other: the denial to others of distinct senses of humanness. The same debater accuses the ruling parties and their immigration policies of hypocrisy (lines 69–70) and exploitation of the Swedish people and economy (lines 52–71).

Building the claim. It is worth noting that nowhere in the blog-entry does the blogger explicitly state that the prevailing immigration policy is the cause for his concerns about the future of his nation. Rather, the connection emerges through the rhetorical device of *active voicing* (Potter 1996), that is, by linking this discourse directly to the quoted and objective anti-immigration voices. Similarly, the accessory hyperlink (line 20) functions as what we here term *digital voicing*: even though it is not necessary to follow the link in order to understand why it is relevant, this external source strengthens the trustworthiness of the overall message (Silva 2016). The extensive use of voicing also strengthens the blogger's argument that nationalism and opposition to multiculturalism are the means necessary to achieve the aim of saving the homogeneous nation and thus its people's welfare. By contrast, the counter-argument—support for a multicultural society—would entail sending the nation into destruction. The pros of the former mode of action thus

clearly outweigh the cons of the latter, a dichotomy that functions to increase the attractiveness and persuasive power of the blogger's argument.

Similar to the Finnish example above, by using the notion of *temporality*—past and coming generations, and the concepts of family and children—as a rhetorical resource (lines 1, 11, 15; Mols & Jetten 2014; Reicher & Hopkins 2001), the blogger increases the affective value of the message, demonstrating that the call for nationalist action (praying for the fatherland) should concern us all. As the final quote in the blog-entry illuminatingly captures (lines 51–71), the fatality of the prevailing times is conveyed rhetorically through the use of *extreme case* (Pomerantz 1986) (lines 52, 55, 58, 63) and *hyperbolic formulations* (lines 52–55, 59, 65–66, 67–69): not only is the immigration policy depicted as excessively liberal but also as unwarranted (line 55) and irrational (lines 62–66).

Turning to the visual components of the blog, we can note the picture of the castle of Kalmar placed at the very upper part of the blog. The castle is a symbol not only of the city of Kalmar but also one that carries important historical connotations: first, it brings to mind the *Kalmar Union* that existed between 1397 and 1523, uniting the kingdoms of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, with Kalmar as its centre (geographical and governmental); second, it reminds us of Sweden's "golden days" as a European superpower in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the Swedish kings resided in Kalmar castle. As Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have argued, images placed on the top usually carry the "ideal" meanings of a message, its most important ideological component. Indeed, the picture embodies and promotes an air of national pride and commemoration.

The second picture on the blog is that of the blogger himself. It is placed on the upper right part of the blog page, thus catching the reader's prompt attention (Arnheim 1974). The blogger's formal dress creates a sense of sincerity and credibility as a holder of political opinions: he knows his stuff. However, the blogger's smile, his gaze directed at the readers, and his horizontal position vis-à-vis them creates a symbolic sense of equality between the blogger and his readers (Jewitt & Oyama 2001): we are in this together.

Drawing upon Barthes' (1977) approach to the linking of words and images, we can elaborate on how the text guides the reader to interpret the elements of the audio-visual material. The music video is placed in the visual centre of the blog, which allows it to become the rhetorical "glue" of the overall message, tying its different elements together into an essential core (Jewitt & Oyama 2001). Preceding the video, the blogger describes how the song captures his concerns about the future of his fatherland and his children and grandchildren (lines 3, 10–12). By encouraging the readers to listen to the song (lines 13–14) he urges: if you share my concerns about our nation's future you have to act now: Pray! Light candles! Together with hyperbolic

formulations (lines 3, 10–12) these pleas accomplish an apocalyptic impression of the prevailing circumstances. The accusations below, directed at advocates of a liberal immigration policy, serve as an *anchorage* for the image: it “remote-controls him [the reader] towards a meaning chosen in advance” (Jewitt & Oyama 2001, p. 40). Thus, regardless of the songwriter’s original intention, the silently burning flame of the candle is easily interpreted as the urgently threatened, fading country of Sweden: if no action is taken, the candle of Sweden will burn out.

Function

The sombre air of the blog-entry is enhanced by the mere fact that it was posted on All Saints’ Day, when tradition ordains you to honour the dead. All verbal, digital, and audio-visual elements contribute to enhancing the positive presentation of the Self or the story’s *hero*, the camp that opposes immigration and supports nationalism, and the negative presentation of the Other—the *villain* that defends a liberal immigration policy and a multicultural society. Importantly, the word “fascist” (line 16) and the accusations of betrayal of the nation (line 33), and of “Christian racism” (line 26) allow the blogger to smoothly distance himself and his party from its lingering racist reputation and instead give it the position of national hero and victim. Through this *reversal of racism* (van Dijk 1992), political opponents, in turn, become the actual racists and national traitors (Sakki & Pettersson 2016). The blogger thus positions himself and his party as concerned about the Swedish people, who are described as suffering from the disadvantages caused by uncaring Others, the proponents of multiculturalism, who devote unreasonable resources, both material and symbolic, to immigration and immigrants (Lynn & Lea 2003). There is no need for the blogger to take an explicit stance on immigration or immigrants, not to mention on the timely and heatedly debated topic of the refugee crisis, since this powerful juxtaposition between “us”—the people together with the nationalists—and “them”—demanding immigrants and above all their elitist protectors—suffices to justify the entry’s central purpose: that nationalism and resistance to immigration are the only solutions to the dangerous times. These formulations are of utmost importance in the blogger’s argumentative context (Billig 1987), where the counter-argument in favour of multiculturalism needs to be delegitimized.

Overall, the quoted elements and the message of the song take up considerably more space in the entry than do the blogger’s own statements. This contradicts the usual keenness of politicians to advance their individuality and personal profile (Silva 2016). However, when it comes to arguing against immigration, politicians are faced with difficult ideological dilemmas (Billig et al. 1988) in choosing what to say and how to say it in order to avoid violating prevailing norms against prejudice. As has been shown elsewhere (Sakki & Pettersson 2016), active and digital voicing, that is, presenting

“expert knowledge” and hyperlinking to external sources when taking socially sensitive stances, are frequently exploited devices by anti-immigration political bloggers. The reason, it seems, is that in this way the bloggers cannot be held responsible for their claims. Instead, giving up at least partial control of their message (Silva 2016) allows them to protect themselves from potential accusations of holding radical and even racist views.

Turning to the functional role played by the blog’s visual elements, the picture of the castle of Kalmar, drawing upon shared memories of the country’s history, serves as a symbol of national pride that brings the readers together into a sense of imagined national community (Helmets & Hill 2004, p. 4). The image of the blogger and the underlying collaborative element enabling readers to pose a question to him completes this sense of community and togetherness. The audio-visual material, in turn, serves not only to support the overall nationalist message but also to provide an *extension* of it by metaphorically adding meaning to the text (Barthes 1977). Sometimes images may, through their expressiveness, immediacy, and symbolism say more than words: seeing the candle of the *white*, innocent Sweden fading away into the *blackness* of the threatening, intruding immigrant Other has the potential for even more convincing power than arguments about the prevailing detrimental immigration policies (Blair 2004; Jewitt & Oyama 2001). A further important element of the audio-visual element is that it contains lyrics that enable the readers to join in the creation of the meaning of the message and thus in their own persuasion (Blair 2004, p. 59): Let us, protectors of Sweden, unite before it is too late! A central function of the audio-visual element, thus, is to mobilize the readers to join the blogger in his nationalist and anti-multiculturalism mission.

In sum, this second example that we have explored demonstrates remarkably clearly how intricate intermingling of verbal, (audio-)visual, and digital tools may co-constructs nationalist political messages within blogs. The verbal part of the blog-entry was replete with rhetorical devices, such as consensus warranting (Potter 1996), hyperbolic and extreme-case formulations (Pomerantz 1986), metaphorical language, and, above all, active and digital voicing that functioned to increase the credibility and persuasive power of the blogger’s message. Completed with the vivid images with their nationalist symbolism, the hyperlinks, and reader-engaging features, the blogger is able to construct a clear antagonistic relationship between “us, the good nationalists” and “them, the bad proponents of multiculturalism” (van Dijk 1995, p. 18), without uttering much himself. Put differently, the blogger manages to deliver a strong nationalist message without needing to violate any norms against expressions of prejudice.

Discussion

Our aim in this article has been twofold. First, we have wished to highlight that political blogs may be used as a powerful means of constructing antagonistic identities and conveying exclusionary nationalist political views. This power is a product of the particular character that online political communication may take: it is not mere verbal communication but also the sum of a joint production of verbal, (audio-)visual, and digital arguments that can be used efficiently in order to create distance from, and thus avoid responsibility for, prejudiced and discriminatory political messages. This finding allows us to argue that we as social psychologists must broaden our approach to political discourse if we are to adequately study it in the online sphere: we must begin to move beyond our persistent focus on text, and to shatter the rigid boundaries we have built among different analytical perspectives.

Our second aim has been, accordingly, to empirically demonstrate that the study of political blog-discourse requires a methodological approach where analytical procedures from critical discursive, rhetorical and narrative psychology join forces with social semiotic interpretations of images, and with an analytical sensitivity to the communicative and digital tools that political blogging allows. We do not deny that there are contradictions between the different disciplines: unlike critical discursive and rhetorical psychologists that have no interest in the cognitive processes of individuals, social semiotic researchers do usually focus also on the cognitive aspects of visual communication, for example, what cognitive resources we use in the creation and interpretation of visual images (Jewitt & Oyama 2001), and what effects visual communication may have on viewer's attitudes and emotions (Blair 2004). Nevertheless, these different perspectives share central theoretical underpinnings that emphasize the socially constructed meanings and functionality of discourse—be it verbal, visual, or digital—and may fruitfully be deployed for the *critical* study of discourse (Edley 2001; Jewitt & Oyama 2001). We maintain that it is possible to combine these perspectives and allow them to collaborate in an approach that, in conjunction with analyses of the role of narrative structures and digital tools in political blogging, is sensitive to the verbal, visual, and digital modes of transmitting a political message and that grasps the persuasive power of nationalist appeals contained in political blogs.

By focusing on only two single blog entries in a particular geographical and historical setting—two Northern European countries during the refugee crisis of 2015—we have in this article sought to demonstrate the highly differing ways that nationalist and anti-multiculturalist political stances can be conveyed through political blogs and how these conveyances may be studied. As we saw, in the Finnish example nationalism was constructed through leaning on ideals, grounded in the past of an ethnically

homogeneous people; whereas the Swedish nationalist appeals were rooted more strongly in welfare chauvinism: welfare services cannot be extended beyond the tightly defined Swedish people (Norocel 2016). The Finnish blog-entry provided an example of “traditional” political argumentation, a case of practical reasoning conveyed as a monologue in narrative form that lacked digital and communicative components, and instead relied on the use of temporality and on the construction of binary oppositions between “heroes” and “villains” of nationalist and multicultural identities. The Swedish entry, by contrast, consisted of a patchwork of verbal (including intertextual), audio-visual, and digital features that intricately intermingled with each other, co-contributing to the construction of the message. Despite their differences in form and certain aspects of content, these two blog-entries ultimately served the same function: to claim that an exclusionary form of nationalism is the solution to the future of the country and its people. In line with Goodman’s (2008) argument, whilst the particular discourse we studied is not generalizable but what it accomplishes, that is, its social and political consequences, might well be.

As we demonstrated, the rhetorical devices (Potter 1996) and resources (Potter 2012; Wetherell & Potter 1992) as well as the narrative structures (e.g., Bruner 1991) may interact in complex ways with audio-visual, digital, and communicative elements in order to construct bloggers’ arguments. These elements reinforce each other and gain importance within the peculiar sphere of the blog, which through its visual design and possibilities for blogger-reader interaction invites the readers to unite for a political cause. The individual blogger does not need to take an explicit stance on politically sensitive topics, in this case the 2015 refugee crisis, in order to advocate closing the country’s borders to “outsiders.” Instead, such stances gain rather than lose persuasive power by being articulated through tools for digital voicing provided by the blog, and rhetorical (verbal and visual) strategies anchored in collectively shared memories and values. Our analysis shows that online nationalist and anti-immigration discourse, at least the discourse contained in blogs of influential politicians who must manage their respectability and reputation in the public domain, need not be phrased in extreme wordings in order to serve its purpose.

Blogs do provide a valuable medium for expressing antagonistic and exclusionary nationalist political views (Sakki & Pettersson 2016). As the barriers between these new forms of media and mainstream media become increasingly blurred (Horsti 2015; Silverstone 2007), the writings of influential political bloggers become widely circulated and read by a broader public. As a result, they may not only direct the political and societal debates at large, but as in the case of our present examples, they also may have real consequences for people’s lives: they can foster popular support for harsh and even discriminatory immigration and asylum policies. Thus, far from

claiming that the discourse of exclusionary nationalism is something confined to radical or extreme groups, our endeavour has been to show how, through political blogs, these articulations reproduce the ideology of exclusionary nationalism and brings it into the midst of the public debate, rendering it appealing and, in Michael Billig's (1995) wording, "banal." It is because of the far-reaching consequences that discourse contained in political blogs may have that we argue for the importance of qualitative social psychological research staying alert and developing its capacity to examine and deconstruct this discourse.

Conclusion

In order to see the many layers of nationalist political blog-discourse and understand its influential power, it needs to be examined through a methodologically rich approach. Such an approach is necessary to, first, analyse the discursive, rhetorical, and narrative construction of the verbal message in its social and historical context (e.g., Billig 1987; Bruner 1991; Edley 2001; Potter 1996); second, discover the meanings that it would be difficult or socially unacceptable for words to express but that may be conveyed through images (Jewitt & Oyama 2001); third, understand the meanings that seemingly "innocent" images can gain through the text that accompanies them (Barthes 1977; Penn 2000); and, finally, see the peculiar ways that hyperlinking and blogger-reader interaction allow the blogging politician to take distance from and increase the factual impression of the given argument. In sum, the analytical approach we propose allows the researcher to scrutinize how political bloggers may deliver exclusionary nationalist messages in powerful ways whilst simultaneously efficiently circumventing prevailing norms against prejudice (Billig 1988). By integrating analytical procedures from different research perspectives on political communication and persuasion, we have sought to lay the ground for such an approach. We hope that this ground will be eagerly trodden in future qualitative research into political discourse.

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Appendix: The blog entries in their original languages (Finnish and Swedish)

The Finnish blog-entry

Monikulttuurisuus tuhoaa kansallisen yhtenäisyyden

Monikulttuurisuutta puolustava ja kansan yhteisöllisyyden merkitystä vähättelevä ajattelutapa on peräisin toisen maailmansodan jälkeiseltä ajalta, jolloin sodan raakuudet olivat vielä eurooppalaisten tuoreessa muistissa. Sitä ennen ihmiskunnan historiassa kansanyhteisö ja yhteisöllisyys nähtiin luonnollisena ja välttämättömänä asiana myös läntisen maailman kansojen keskuudessa. Yhteisöjä arvostettiin, sillä ne muun muassa mahdollistivat ihmisten välisen yhteistyön ja luottamuksen sekä loivat turvallisuutta heidän elämäänsä.

Kansallisfilosofimme Johan Vilhelm Snellman (1806–1881) totesi aikoinaan, että pienetkin valtiot otetaan politiikassa vakavasti, kun ne nojaavat kansallisesti yhtenäiseen väestöön. Käytännössä tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että selviytyäkseen maailmassa kansojen tulee olla kieleltään, arvomaailmaltaan, käyttäytymisnormeiltaan ja moraaliltaan mahdollisimman yhtenäisiä. Onkin totta, että vahvan yhtenäisyyden pohjalle rakentuneet yhteiskunnat ovat kyenneet historian aikana pitämään puoliaan paremmin kuin hajanaiset ja heikot yhteiskunnat. Myös ruotsalaisen Per Albin Hanssonin (1885–1946) ajatus ruotsalaisesta kansankodista (folkhemmet) nojasi alkujaan

homogeeniseen väestöön ja yhteisöllisyyteen. Myöhemmin Ruotsin harjoittaman liberaalin maahanmuuttopolitiikan ja monikulttuurisuuskehityksen seurauksena kansankoti kuitenkin mureni nopeasti.

Monikulttuurisuus nähdään yleisesti eräänlaisena yhteiskunnallisena tilana, jossa kulttuurista monimuotoisuutta arvostetaan ja ylläpidetään – kielteisistä seurauksista piittaamatta. Meille on Suomessa ja Länsi-Euroopassa hallitsevien luokkien toimesta pakkosyötetty monikulttuurisuutta itsestään selvänä kehitysuuntana ja eräänlaisena itseisarvona, jota ei voi eikä saa vastustaa. Minä ja monet muut emme kuitenkaan ole sitoutuneet tukemaan monikulttuurisuuskehitystä ja monikulttuurista yhteiskuntaa. Päinvastoin koemme, että monikulttuurisuuden edistäminen ja arvomaailman monimuotoistuminen tulevat ennen pitkää koitumaan sekä Suomen että muun Euroopan kohtaloksi, ja siksi sitä on vastustettava.

Monille tuntuu olevan epäselvää se, mitkä asiat ylipäänsä pitävät kansoja yhtenäisinä ja mahdollistavat vakaan yhteiskunnan olemassaolon. Nyt käynnissä oleva maahanmuuttoaalto tulee väistämättä heikentämään kansalaisyhteiskuntaa. Kun väestö pirstoutuu identiteetiltään erilaisiin ryhmiin, joiden erillistä identiteettiä vieläpä monikulttuurisuuden ihanteen nimissä ylläpidetään, hyvinvointiyhteiskunnan ja ylipäättään kaiken yhteistyön perusta murenee. Tällainen kehitys tulee väistämättä myös Suomessa synnyttämään eripuraa ja vastakkainasettelua ihmisryhmien välille ja johtamaan yhteiskunnalliseen epävakauteen. Uskon, että massamaahanmuuton ja monikulttuuristumisen jatkuessa nykyistä vauhtia kansallisvaltiot tulevat tulevaisuudessa hajoamaan ristiriitoihin ja jakautumaan pienempiin itsehallinnollisiin alueisiin ja yhteisöihin.

En pidä hyväksyttävänä sitä, että jonkin tietyn poliittisen ideologian nimissä, tässä tapauksessa monikulttuurismin, kansamme veloitetaan ottamaan Suomeen vastaan kestämaton määrä ihmisiä täysin erilaisten kulttuuripiirien sisältä. En kuitenkaan lähtökohtaisesti vastusta kaikkea maahanmuuttoa, kuten tuskin kukaan muukaan suomalainen. Pidän esimerkiksi Suomeen suuntautuvaa eurooppalaisten maahanmuuttoa kestävässä määrin hyväksyttävänä asiana, sillä heillä on taustansa puolesta hyvät edellytykset sulautua osaksi yhteiskuntaamme.

Kansallisella identiteetillä on ratkaiseva rooli kansan kohtalon ohjaajana. Terve kansallinen identiteetti on vahva kansoja koossapitävä voima, joka lujittaa yhteisöllisyyttä, ylläpitää yhteen hiileen puhaltamisen henkeä ja mahdollistaa kansallisvaltion koossapysymisen. Juuri tästä syystä kansallisen identiteetin merkityksen hämähäyttämällä on ollut hyvin keskeinen rooli monikulttuuristieliitin kansallisuusajattelun hävittämistehtävässä. On selvää, että kansallisen identiteetin heikentämisellä on nimenomaan haluttu raivata tilaa monikulttuuriselle yhteiskuntakokeilulle.

Todellisuudessa kulttuurisesti liian monimuotoinen ja hajanainen yhteiskunta on kuitenkin monella tapaa kestämaton. Monet hyvät asiat ilmenevät ainoastaan yhtenäiskulttuurissa eli sellaisessa, jossa me suomalaiset saimme elää lähes 1990-luvun alkuun saakka. Tiedyt ominaisuudet, kuten yhteisöllisyys, luottamus kanssaihmiisi, hyvät käytöstavat, turvallinen elinympäristö, yhteiset toimintatavat, kyky luontevasti tulkita toisten ihmisten viestintää, tasa-arvo, suvaitsevaisuus, uskonnonvapaus, demokratia sekä yhteisesti jaetut käsitykset oikeasta ja väärästä ilmenevät vain yhtenäiskulttuurissa, eivät monikulttuurissa.

Monikulttuurisuus pokee edellä mainittujen tärkeiden arvojen ja ominaisuuksien päälle ja lopulta korvaa ne yksilökeskeisyydellä, epäluottamuksella kanssaihmiisi, turvattomuuden tunteella, alhaisemmalla onnellisuuden tasolla, suvaitsemattomuudella, uskonnollisella ja ideologisella ääriajattelulla sekä etnisellä nepotismilla. Nämä arvot ovat tehneet monista maailman maista lähes toivottomia paikkoja elää. Esimerkkinä monikulttuurisesta ja sirpaloituneesta alueesta voidaan mainita Etelä-Afrikka, jota repivät hajalle jatkuvat etniset jännitteet. Myös tällä hetkellä Euroopan päälle vyöryvä maahanmuuton hyökyaalto on seurausta uskonnollisista erimielisyyksistä maahantulijoiden lähtömaissa. Eurooppaan päästyään he tuovat väistämättä nämä levottomuudet mukanaan.

Turvataksemme tuleville jälkipolvillemme hyvät elinmahdollisuudet ja oikeuden suomalaiseseen identiteettiin meidän on määrätietoisesti vastustettava haitallista massamaahanmuuttoa ja monikulttuurisuutta sekä puolustettava hyväksi havaittua suomalaista elinpiiriä, elämäntapaa, yhtenäiskulttuuria ja yhtenäistä kansaa.

Suomi tarvitsee suojelijoita. Kansallisen yhtenäisyyden tuhouduttua, paluu entiseen ei välttämättä enää onnistu. Näen, että nimenomaan kansallismielisyydestä ja kansallisen identiteetin vahvistamisesta löytyy ratkaisu kansaamme tällä hetkellä piinaavaan jakautumiseen.

Olli Immonen
kansanedustaja (ps.)
Oulu

The Swedish blog-entry

BE FÖR SVERIGE CH FOSTERLANDET

Kommentera (47)

Av Thoralf Alfsson - Fredag 30 okt 22:36

Nu inleds Allhelgonahelgen och jag gissar att många tänker på sina bortgångna anhöriga och kanske besöker en grav på kyrkogården och tänder ett ljus. Så har jag gjort.

Tyvärr tror jag dock att väldigt många är väldigt bekymrad över den framtid som vi sannolikt går till mötes. Det är säkert många som noterat den text som Jimmie Åkesson skrev på Facebook under torsdagen. I texten fanns också ett citat från en sång skriven av Simon Ådahl. Idag har jag lyssnat på den och skrev då följande på Facebook.

Jag förstår varför Jimmie Åkesson tycker att låten av Simon Ådahl går som en projektil rakt in i hjärtat. Jag hade aldrig hört låten tidigare men idag har jag lyssnat till den många gånger och den blir bara starkare och starkare för varje gång.

Den uttrycker absolut den sorg jag känner över den utveckling som råder i mitt fosterland och den förtvivlan som jag känner när jag tänker på mina barn och mina barnbarn som inte kommer få leva och växa upp i det Sverige som jag haft förmånen att göra.

Nu börjar Allhelgonahelgen! Sätt dig ner under några minuter och lyssna på texten till "Jag tänker be för Sverige".

Jag kommer be för Sverige och min familj!

Pg-fascisterna vädrade genast morgonluft och började "angripa" Simon Ådahl för hans ca 10 år gamla text och att nu Jimmie Åkesson använde den i sitt inlägg på facebook som berörde tillståndet i fosterlandet och de vidriga morderna i Trollhättan. Men inom den kristna världen finns det också de som vill stå upp för alla människors lika värde på riktigt. Tommy Dalman skrev en kraftfull text på sin blogg.

"Min känsla är att svensk kristenhet fortsätter att bygga in konflikter och en ökande segregering mellan kristna, kristna kyrkor och pastorer genom att bli allt mer partipolitiska. Den hetsjakt som pågår från delar av kristet håll mot ett riksdagsparti och därmed indirekt pekar ut tusentals kristna individer som suspekta är en farlig väg. När kristna individer selekteras i församlingarna utifrån vilken politisk färg man har är detta ingenting annat än kristen rasism. Och de senaste dagarnas hets kring Jimmy Åkessons positiva uttalande om en kristen låtskrivares alster bevisar vart vi är på väg om detta får fortsätta."

Väldigt skönt att läsa att någon utomstående faktiskt vågar försvara Jimmie Åkesson i kraftfulla och raka ordalag. Det skall Tommy Dahlman ha all heder utav.

Det som pågår just nu i Sverige är bara sorgligt. Att vi har en regering med ett stort antal ministrar som inte tar ansvar för vårt fosterland är minst sagt anmärkningsvärt och frågan är om det inte orde liknas vid att förråda sitt fosterland. I veckan kom jag att tänka på en tuff debatt som fördes på insändarsidorna i Barometern för ca 5 år sedan

mellanvärldsmedborgaren och fotbollsspelaren Henrik Rydström och författaren Anders Johansson. Texten är precis som sångtexten än mer aktuell idag.

”Fotbollsspelaren Henrik Rydström har på sin blogg i denna tidning uppmärksammat mig och mina åsikter i den stora fråga som brukar kallas ”invandringspolitik”, trots att jag inte på flera år yttrat mig i dessa ämnen. Trots hafsigt läsning tar han sig friheten att kalla mig ”gubbjävel”, vilket också Rydström kommer att bli, fortare än han anar. Hans lilla älskvärdhet vill jag returnera genom att beteckna honom som ett tomteblomm som sprakar till en stund. Trots sitt påhopp säger han sig vara motståndare till all slags diskriminering, däribland åldersdiskriminering. Logik är inte hans grej, således. Nu läser jag ännu ett uttalande som lyder: ”Det mångkulturella i sig kan aldrig vara ett problem. Det är bara vår inställning till det som kan vara ett problem. Eller rättare sagt, människor som Anders Johansson och den otäckta syn de står för”. Jag antar att Rydström menar ”människosyn” och inte synfel? Han avslutar med att säga att han tar ställning ”Så in i helvete”. Argumenten är ersatta av invektiv på en primalskrinivå. Rydströms stilkonst är en sällsam mix av gorilla vid dörren på en krog, och äppelkäck moralist med pekpinna.”

Anders Johansson fortsätter sedan med ett stycke och ett konstaterande som jag ofta tänker på.

”Här konstaterar jag att Sverige under flera decennier framträtt som det mest invandring-sliberala landet i världen, unikt genom stora kvoter och genom att sällan avvisa migranter. I dag har invandringen nått sådan omfattning att man med en lätt glidning i begreppen kan påstå att Sverige är det enda land i världen som frivilligt bekostar sin egen kolonisering. Det existerar inte en enda opinionsundersökning som förespråkar denna utveckling. ”Nu har vi kommit till ett stadium där vi måste välja mellan mångkultur eller välfärd”. Det påståendet tillhör en socialdemokratisk politiker i Holland men äger än större relevans i Sverige (P1 2009-10-22).”

”Samlevnaden med främmande kulturer är aldrig okomplicerad. Alldeles avgjort är den enorma invandringen, som dessutom snarast tenderar att öka, en ödesfråga för vårt land. När framtiden ska se tillbaka på det som hände i vår tid, medan situationen ännu möjligen var hanterlig, ska den konstatera att majoriteten av den svenska journalistkåren inte bara teg utan dessutom hänsynslöst förföljde de personer som ville väcka debatt. I ett läge där de svenska kommunernas ekonomi ofta är så dåliga att de skulle anses konkursfärdiga, om de tvingades agera på marknaden, ökar inflödet av människor som måste ha sin försörjning av allmänna medel. Sverige påtar sig därmed en försörjningsbörda som redan inom några år ska visa sig nästan omöjlig att bära, och i praktiken radera det som finns kvar av den offentliga sektorns omsorgssamhälle. På kortare tid än vi kan ana kommer det svenska sekulära samhället med dess mödosamma landvinningar där socialdemokratin en gång spelade en så betydelsefull roll att sättas på svåra och hopplösa prov. Det behövs en regering som ägnar sig åt den verklighet som finns bakom alla skenheliga proklamationer, vilket inkluderar en human invandring-spolitik. Till politikerna vill jag säga: Sluta att vara så förbannat goda på andras bekostnad!”

Jag önskar alla min läsare en trevlig och fin Allhelgonahelg!